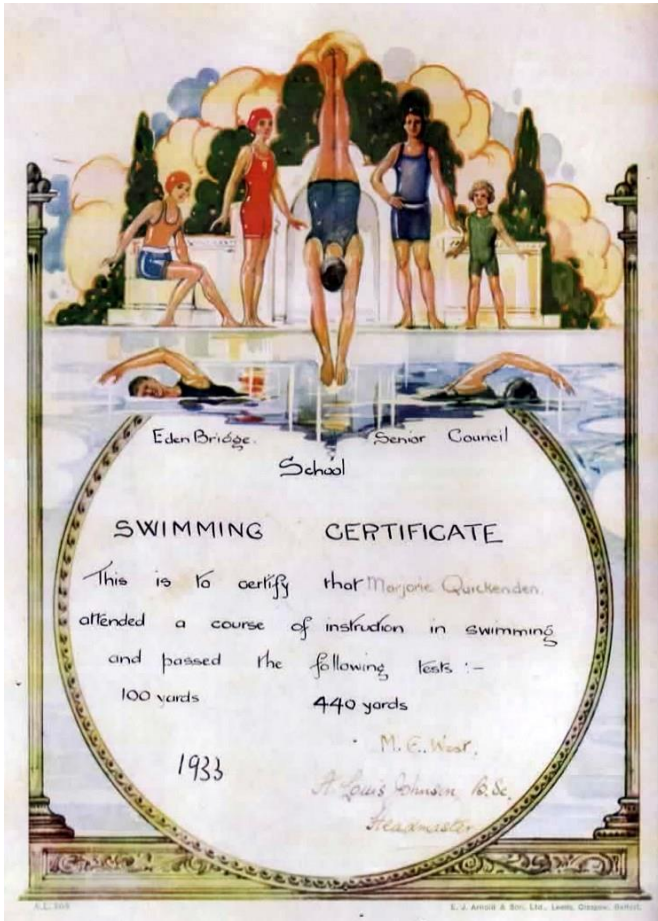


**Eden Valley Museum**  
**OBJECT OF THE MONTH MAY 2023**

**Swimming Certificate - Learning to Swim in the Bather, River Eden**



EDEVT: 319

The museum holds an Illustrated certificate for swimming in the River Eden. The certificate is decorated with pictures of both female and male swimmers, all in swimming attire associated with the 1920-30's era.

The certificate was awarded to Marjorie Quickenden in 1933. Marjorie attended Edenbridge Senior Council School and had been learning to swim in the 'Bather', passing both the 100yds and 440yds tests.

### **The Bather**

During the first half of the last century, swimming lessons and galas took place at the 'Bather', an old Victorian weir pool about a mile upstream from Edenbridge and behind the Lingfield Road Recreation Ground.



Spectators lining the River Eden near the Bather for a swimming gala. Changing huts in background. c.1900. Image: P2003.1028

At this point, the river is only a few yards across with a gravel bottom and both a deep and shallow section. The area was known as the 'Bather' and it had changing huts. For many years it was a favourite swimming spot for children and adults (and their dogs!)



Children preparing to swim at the Bather, c.1930. Image: P2018.3472

### **A Drowning in the River Eden**

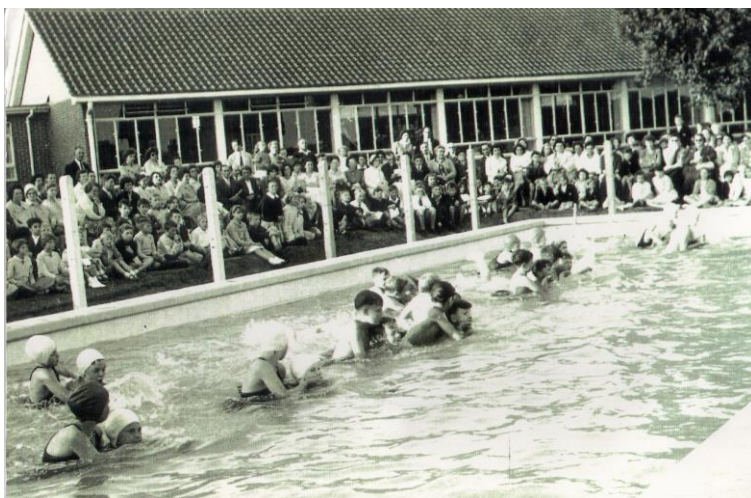
In the 1960's a young girl was washed down stream towards Hever and drowned causing the community to start a discussion about building a swimming pool at the local school.

In March 1962, the Headmistress of Edenbridge Primary School, Miss Cattaway and PTA member Douglas Higgs led an appeal to raise £1,000 and recruit a team of volunteers to build a 50ft by 20ft learner pool at the school. The local Nomads Football Club was the first to donate and a gang of fathers stepped up to dig the hole needed in just one day.

At Whitsun in 1963 a group of 30 fathers of children at the school arrived on the Sunday morning with spades, hammers and saws to work on the last part of this 'do-it-yourself' swimming pool project. The Croft Lane School became the first Primary School in Kent to have its own swimming pool. For the ensuing c.30 years, it was where many Edenbridge children learnt to swim.



Woman sitting outside the changing hut by the Bather, 1930-40. Image: P2004.1149



Opening of the swimming pool at Croft Lane School, 1963. Image: School's Exhibition.

In 1987 a new swimming pool opened at Edenbridge Leisure Centre and the school pool was filled in, in 1997.

**Visit the museum to view more related images in the Schools Exhibition Croft Lane Folder in our ground floor gallery.**