

History of the Pool

The first cheap pool was built in 1942 on the site of the old garden pond. The pond was enlarged and lined with stone in mortar with side 40 feet long. Walls were rough and snakes and frogs made homes between the stones. Some boys felt that it would have been better if the sides were lined with sand paper. The water was cold and covered with algae. But many generations of Thomians were at home in this pool and many inter house Swim meets were conducted.

In 1948 Dr. Hayman decided to build the present pool. Mr. H.F. Billimoria designed it on instructions from Dr. Hayman. The site was the old pool. Few of the better known firms submitted estimates which were prohibitively costly, a small contractor who sent the only reasonable estimate was given the contract. He began work in late 1948 but soon abandoned it, far from complete. The delay had a depressing effect on the boys. In a general knowledge paper in answer to the question, how long will the pool be? The answer was About 25 years. The Mount pool had been held up due to some reason. Gurutalawa fell back on the assistance of the village Masons and to their credit and the close supervision by Dr. Hayman it must be said that they put on such a good finish in the work that they had never seen before[Quote Dr. Hayman]

The filter plant was the brain child of Dr. Hayman. It arrived from UK in the middle of 1950 and was erected using local labour. Mr Ed Scott joined the staff and supervised the work with the help of Mr. ACMLafir. The village mason and black smith finished the work, the levels having been checked by Dr. Hayman and Mr. Scott. Their combined skills were such that it worked for over 50 years. Dr. Hayman mentions the good work of Mr. Jameldeen the chief Mason. The pool was in regular use from 1950 although the Filter plant was commissioned in Oct 1952.

I remember the opening of the Pool on 21 Feb 1953. Lots of teams from Colombo participated in the meet including STC Mt. Lavania, Otters and Colombo Swimming Club etc. I remember the De Saram junior dorm was vacated to host these visitors and we slept the nights in the Dining Hall. Dr. Hayman climbed to the 5 meter Board and declared the Pool as a gift from him and Mrs. Hayman and jumped in to make a big splash that wet some of the spectators- but it was a rainy day – Read the College Magazine September 1953 for more details.

A Concrete Diving platform was planned but Mr. Scott built the wooden one still standing.

- B. Muna