

# FESTIVE: King's Road campaigners' memories day

**ALAN BUNCE**

CAMPAIGNERS who want to keep the King's Meadow baths want anyone who swam there to join them for a pre-Christmas celebration – including those who oppose their efforts.

They want as many people as possible, including those who voice their opposition on our *getreading* website, to enjoy mince pies and mulled wine and bring their families, photos and memories of the baths to discuss the campaign.

Visitors' photos will be put on display for the event on Sunday, December 16.

The baths were put back on the market by the council earlier this month but the King's Meadow Campaign (KMC) has taken more than £200 during each of the last two weekends to add to its £10,000 funds. An e-petition has just over 200 signatures.

One of the leading campaigners, Anne Jessel, said she was far from demoralised by the council decision and was doing her utmost to drive the campaign forward. The Christmas event was the next step.

She said: "It's a get together for all the swimmers who have used King's Meadow baths.

"We want to get all swimmers, anyone who might have swum in the King's Meadow pool from 1952 (when the pool first used filtered water) until it closed in 1974."

She added: "We want all the 'anti' people to come down and have a look around. At our open weekends



there are no apparent anti people or they may have been anti, but changed their minds."

In an email to supporters Mrs Jessel outlined memories people have shared with the campaigners.

It said: "This opportunity isn't to be missed. Many people have met us at the pool and had long conversations, swapping memories about the cold water, rain and shine, bathing trunks sinking to the bottom, frogman training, being marched from school crocodile-fashion, being put through their stroke techniques on benches by a certain Miss Francis in a long tweed skirt also issuing commands for her unique land drill and then being suspended over the

water from a pole.

"Making a beeline for the communal dressing box where six of them always changed, and before 1952 – the days of unfiltered water, finishing a lovely dive with a beautiful slide along the slimy green bottom seven feet under.

"How that all changed after 1952, when a certain Mr Wicks was left in charge of the baths and a certain Mr Charles Burt took over the swimming training. This was a new era."

Anyone interested in going along is asked to contact Mrs Jessel on (0118) 987 2398 or [anne@kingsmeadowbaths.org.uk](mailto:anne@kingsmeadowbaths.org.uk) by December 1 so KMC can gauge numbers.