



Date	Location	Stars	Cost	Web link	Photo	Comment	
2007	Lymington Hampshire	***	£3.50	http://www.lymington.com/thingstodo/seawaterbaths		Huge seawater pool, recently re-furbished. Half was cordoned off for rowing boats the first time I went. Edged with concrete but a pebble bottom is a bit of a surprise when you first put your feet down. Right on the edge of the sea, behind the harbour. Basic facilities in keeping with its	
STARS	Water quality	Water quality	Water quality	Water quality	Water quality	Families	Facilities
	***	***	***	***	***	****	**


4 June 2009	Nantwich, Cheshire	****	£3.60	http://www.cheshireast.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/leisure_centres/crewe_and_nantwich_area/nantwich_swimming_pool/facilities/outdoor_brine_pool.aspx		Brine pool – water comes from local salt source. Great to swim in but constricted by surrounding walls. Part of a complex including indoor pools. Open until October.	
STARS	Water quality	Water quality	Water quality	Water quality	Water quality	Families	Facilities
	****	****	****	****	****	***	****

30 June	Street – Somerset	***	£4.70	http://www.greenbankpool.co.uk/		Very warm (28 deg), welcoming pool in small Somerset town, opposite Clarks' factory. Strange location on high street separated from shoppers by a chain-link fence. Separate but linked semi-circular children's pool means plenty of space for 'serious' swimmers.	
STARS	Water quality	Water quality	Water quality	Water quality	Water quality	Families	Facilities
	***	**	**	****	**	****	***

1 July	Oxford – Hinksey	**	£3-60	http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decLP/Hinksey_Pool_occw.htm		Strange kidney-shaped pool. Serious swimmers follow fish icons on the bottom of the pool to keep straight. Went on a hot day and the pool is big enough to accommodate a large number of swimmers. Separate children's pool with fountains. Old pool nearby used as a sunken five-a-side pitch. Set in parkland. Pleasant, welcoming staff warned me about quirky parking regulations (it's free but you need a ticket)	
STARS	Water quality	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities
	***		*	****	***	****	***

	Woodstock	*	£4.00	http://www.nexuscommunity.org/my-nearest-site/west-oxfordshire/woodstock-open-air-pool.html		Small pool attached to a school- watch out for opening times. When I went it was open to the public but a class of 30 school children prevented anyone from doing lengths.	
STARS	Water quality	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities
	**		*	***	*	*	*

	Chipping Norton	***	£3.00	http://www.chippylido.co.uk/index.asp		25 m pool heated to 27 deg. Only 3 swimmers when I went and life guarding was done remotely by someone occasionally looking out of the office window. Small grass area, shaded by large trees. Plans to install solar and heat-pump heating (see website for details).	
STARS	Water quality	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities
	***		**	***	**	**	**

2010						
13 January	Hampton	**** *	£5.60	http://www.hamptonpool.co.uk/		Hampton prides itself on 365 day opening & this year proved true to its word by opening at 6am on the days of heavy snowfall. It isn't roughing it to swim there in winter – 28 deg water (covers are even used during the day when the pool isn't being used), heated floors in the changing rooms, sauna for really cold days. Facilities are excellent and they need to be on a cold February morning. The café is legendary – full breakfasts, home-made soup, proper coffee and hot chocolate and the morning newspapers to read on the sun-trap balcony. The staff are welcoming and helpful. Lanes are available for serious swimmers at all times, including Christmas day when 1500 people follow a local tradition by going for a swim in the morning. It isn't cheap – casual swimming £5+ and season tickets £250 for 6 months but you get what you pay for and the quality of the facilities and the fact that the pool opens at 6am every week day and stays open until 9pm on many evenings contributes to value for money.
STARS	Water quality	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families
	****	****	*****	*****	*****	*****

28 April	Tinside, Plymouth	****	£6.40	http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/leisureandtourism/sportandrecreation/swimmingpools/outdoorswimmingpools/tinsidelido.htm		Stunning position, jutting out into the sea below the Hoe. Still closed when I went but the recent re-furbishment looked most impressive with the triangular shaped pool reaching out from the rocks into the sea.
STARS	Water quality	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families
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12 May	Cheltenham	**** *	£4.10	http://www.sandfordparksido.org.uk/		A gem! Same size as Guildford (50*30m) but with a separate, very attractive children's pool with slides and adjacent soft play area. Covers used, despite the size, keeping the temperature at 26 deg +. Beautiful 1930s art deco style – fountains and an original pool-side café serving good quality food remain. 3 * lanes at all times – fast, medium and slow. Staff v. welcoming – explained how to get a refund on car parking. Run by a trust, there is a board outside showing annual admissions averaging 150,000 with a peak of 205,000 in 1976.	
STARS	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities	
	*****	*****	****	****	*****	***	

9 June	Uxbridge	**	£5.00	http://www.fusion-lifestyle.com/centres/Hillingdon Sport and Leisure Complex%20/facility/Outdoor pool		Recently re-opened and re-furbished to a high standard, retaining its art deco style despite now being part of a modern leisure complex with an indoor pool, stadium etc. It has floodlights and is open early and late but surprisingly is unheated and it took 4-6 lengths before I felt comfortable. The children's pool which is sectioned off from the main pool is heated, however. Although the original star shape has been retained, one end has been separated with a movable boom to create a shallower children's area. For some reason it costs twice as much to swim outdoors as inside.	
STARS	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities	
	*****	***	***	**	****	***	

14 June	Abingdon	**	£2.35	http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/leisure_and_arts/sports_and_fitness_facilities/detailpage-1524.asp		Strange L-shaped pool (one arm very shallow) 25 *25m. Stunning Thames-side location; you can watch boats pass on the river. Concrete liner which is discoloured and unattractive in places. Small café and bargain price swim. Tea and hot dog for less than £5	
STARS	Water quality	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities
	**	**	**	****	***	**	**

15 June	Woburn,	****	£6	http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/coin/home.asp?ID=8134		Woburn is a beautiful small (25m) pool originally built as one of three in 1910 by the Duke of Bedford for local villagers. Now re-furbished with new changing rooms and café. Run by the same lady for 21 years; she is lifeguard, manager and café proprietor. When she offered to make me tea (in a china mug), I asked whether she could leave the pool unattended – she pointed to a sign 'when no lifeguard is present, swimmers use the pool at their own risk' A high wall on one side of the pool prevents elephants from getting in from the adjacent Woburn Safari Park.	
STARS	Water quality	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities
	*****	*****	**	*****	***	***	****

15 June	Eversholt	****		http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/coin/home.asp?ID=8134		Similar to Woburn in size but an idyllic location- part of the village community centre, glass windows in the wall at one side of the pool give a view of the village cricket green and church.	
STARS	Water quality	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities
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13 June	Petersfield	***	£3.50	http://www.petersfieldpool.org/wiki/		25m pool, somewhat restricted for serious swimmers by roped off children's area in shallow end. Springboard still in place and well-used by group of teenagers when I was there. Recently re-furbished, with soft textured surround and sunbathing area. Pleasant staff were flexible about closing time on a beautiful evening.
STARS	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities
	***	**	****	*	****	***

21 June	Gillingham	*	£4.00	http://www.medway.gov.uk/index/leisure/leisurecentres/strand/pool-strand.htm		A strange, huge sea-water pool with a (pumped) flowing 'rapids' area circling a conventionally shaped 25m pool flanked by slides in the shape of pink elephants. Unheated and very cold on the day when I went but great to have the buoyancy of (filtered) sea water.
STARS	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities
	***	***	**	*	***	**

22 June	Faversham	****	£3.30	http://www.faversham.org/pages/business_directory_item.aspx?i_PageID=131655&i_DirectoryID=843		Impressive 33m pool. Sill has diving boards (5m, 3m spring and 1m spring) – 3.5m diving pit is part of main pool. Temp approx 26 deg (covers). Separate children's'/fun pool attracts lots of families with young children. Part of complex with indoor pool right in town centre.
STARS	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities
	****	***	***	***	****	***

23 June	Tonbridge	**	£4.10	http://www.tonbridgepool.co.uk/cgi-bin/buildpage.pl?mySQL=8		Similar to Faversham in that it is part of a complex with indoor and children's pools. 25 m and only 1.5m deep. Difficult for 'serious' swimmers when I was there as rather crowded and no lanes. Covers – temp 26/27 deg.
STARS	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities
	****	*	***	***	****	****

9 th July	Brockwell Park (Brixton)	****	£3.00	http://www.fusion-lifestyle.com/centres/Brockwell_Lido		A very hot day. Amazing place when you get in. They coped with the numbers by dividing the pool into areas SIX 25m lanes for serious swimmers, shallow end area for children and free swimming area for adults. Changing rooms re-furbished and sauna, steam room and jacuzzi available. Opens 6am-8pm every day. Every possible social group seemed to be there, from Rastafarians to Dulwich mums with deb daughters – all seemed to be having a great time. Art deco café serves beer, wine and good food – although you can't access the posh bit directly from the pool side.
STARS	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities
	***	*****	****	*****	****	****

12 th July	Tooting Bec	****	£5.00	http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/644/sports_facilities/402/tooting_bec_lido/1		It is 100yd long so it's obligatory to do 18 lengths = 1 mile - but each length seems like a mile. It is unheated but it was really warm on the day when I went- water temp 22 deg. It is open from 6am to 8pm every day with lane swimming in the mornings. New showers/changing rooms (see left) as well as the old multi-coloured ones. Café serves proper food e.g. baked potatoes, pasties, decent ice cream. Open to the public until the end of Sept then the South London Swimming club take it over for the winter (races every Sunday morning). Small children's pool and limited but pleasant grassy area. Staff are proud of the pool and keen to keep its unique character.	
STARS	Water quality	Serious swimming	Friendly staff	Café/food	Families	Facilities	
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Reflections

The best pools make an effort to attract custom. It sounds obvious but clear warm water, friendly staff and family friendly facilities work. Pools with extended opening hours (especially early morning) attract regular swimmers whatever the weather. Pools with good cafes encourage people to linger, as do child friendly facilities such as children's pools, slides and diving boards. The very best lidos have considerable customer ownership and input – this is obvious as soon as you enter Hampton and Cheltenham which are run by trusts with dedicated long-term enthusiasts involved. Weather is obviously a factor but some pools such as Hampton and Brockwell have made an effort to incorporate facilities which will attract people whatever the weather.

Best For	Lidos
Serious swimmers (i.e. swimmers who would swim in lanes if they could)	Hampton, Brockwell, Cheltenham, Tooting Bec
Water Quality	Cheltenham, Woburn, Hampton, Street, Nantwich (brine), Uxbridge(unheated)
Friendly, helpful staff	Woburn, Brockwell, Hampton, Tooting Bec
Cafe	Hampton, Brockwell, Tooting Bec, Abingdon, Woburn
Environment (grass, trees etc)	Cheltenham, Woburn, Street
Families and Children	Faversham, Cheltenham, Hampton, Tonbridge, Petersfield, Brockwell, Tooting Bec, Street, Hinksey.
Facilities (Showers, saunas etc)	Hampton, Brockwell, Cheltenham, Woburn, Tonbridge, Tooting Bec