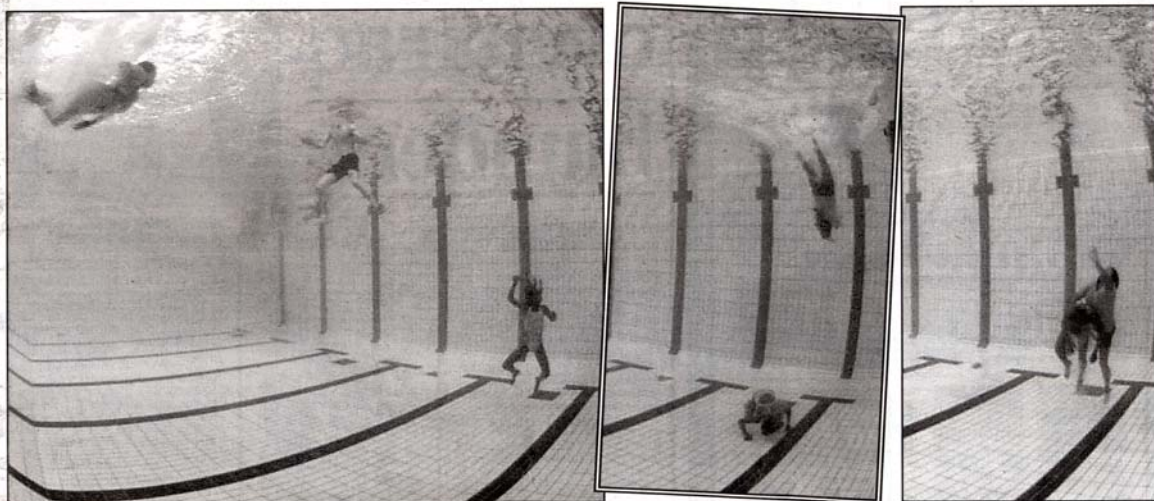


## Saved by magic eyes

Amazing pictures show how a pool's underwater cameras alerted staff to a girl of 10 unconscious in the deep end



The rescue: The girl sinks to the bottom of the pool (left) as swimmers pass over her. Then lifeguard Karen Gibson dives in (centre) and pulls her to safety (right)

### Daily Mail Reporter

LYING unconscious at the bottom of a 12ft deep swimming pool, the little girl was only seconds away from death.

She had got into difficulty after jumping into the deepest part of the baths.

With the sun glaring off the surface of the water, the ten-year-old was almost impossible to see on the bottom of the pool.

So it was fortunate that the leisure centre in Bangor, North Wales, is among only six in the country to be fitted with a computerised drowning detection system.

The 108ft-long pool is constantly scanned by eight overhead cameras and four underwater cameras which act as 'magic eyes' to protect swimmers.

The £65,000 Poseidon system is so precise it can pick up volume, movement and the texture of an object and analyse the trajectory of swimmers.

Three seconds after spotting the girl's body, its alarm alerted lifeguard Karen Gib-



Karen Gibson: 'Pretty scary'

son, 26, to tell her where she was. She dived in and pulled the girl, who was on a camping holiday with a charitable trust from Rochdale, to the surface.

Pool staff managed to resuscitate her before she was

taken to nearby Ysbyty Gwynedd Hospital to recover.

Yesterday Miss Gibson relived the rescue, which was the first of its kind in Britain. 'It was pretty scary when I realised there was someone at the bottom of the pool, but my training just kicked in and fortunately we were able to resuscitate her quickly,' she said.

'There were 100 people in the pool and even though there were five lifeguards on duty it was so hectic that we only noticed when the alarm went off.'

The total time between the girl dropping into the pool and being rescued was less than 40 seconds.

If she had stayed underwater for two minutes longer, she would almost certainly have died or suffered brain damage.

Yesterday Brian Evans, leisure officer at Gwynedd council, said: 'The system spotted her quicker than the human eye.'

'The Bangor pool is a typical 1960s-designed baths with lots of windows, which create a lot of glare on the surface of the water and can make it difficult for lifeguards to see what's

going on.

'It is also very deep at over 12ft with diving boards. Those factors put together led to us installing the system.'

'It showed just how quickly someone can be saved. Any longer and her heart would have stopped.'

Poseidon is fitted at over 100 pools around the world, including the Roseblatt Pool, Oxford; the Pavilions in the Park in Horsham, West Sussex; Canon's Leisure Centre in Mitcham, South London; Leaplish Waterside Park in Falstone, Northumberland, and Impulse Leisure Centre in Grays, Essex.

Francois Marmion, general manager of Vision IQ, the French company which developed the system, said: 'It is impossible for lifeguards to see everything that is happening in the pool all of the time, given the warm, noisy and crowded environment in which they work.'

The Institute of Sport and Recreation Management supports the system. But a spokesman pointed out that in many pools, other safety measures such as reducing surface glare were more cost-effective.