

How a computer saved girl, 10, from drowning



SECONDS FROM DEATH: The girl, circled, falls to bottom

HELP AT HAND: Swimmers do not see her, but Poseidon does

RESCUE: Alerted by the computer, lifeguard Karen lifts her up

THIS is the dramatic moment when a girl who had begun to drown was saved, thanks to a swimming pool's computer system.

The 10-year-old swimmer plummeted unconscious to the bottom of the baths after jumping into 12ft of water at the deep end.

Had she not been spotted so swiftly, she would have drowned. Instead she became the first person in Britain to be rescued by the £65,000 Poseidon safety system.

The computer and CCTV monitoring device alerts lifeguards to anything motionless underwater, and within 40 seconds the girl was pulled out and resuscitated by rescuer Karen Gibson.

A swimmer at the pool in Bangor, North Wales, told the Daily Express: "The whole thing happened in seconds. None of us had spotted the girl at the bottom as the pool is so deep.

"The lifeguard heard an alarm, dived into the pool and scooped the girl up from the bottom.

"She was unconscious, so the guard pulled her out of the pool with help and very quickly gave her mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. She

By **Chris Riches**

coughed and the lifeguard helped to empty the water out of her lungs.

"Some people swimming did not even know what happened until it was all over; it happened that fast."

Yesterday the girl - who has not been named and who was visiting the pool while on a camping holiday with a charitable trust - was back with her family in Rochdale, Lancashire,

after making a full recovery following the incident last week.

Lifeguard Karen said: "You can't see anyone on the bottom when people are swimming, especially in the summer holiday when there is so much activity, as the pool is so deep.

"This new system is amazing and saved the girl's life."

Brian Evans, leisure officer at Gwynedd Council, which runs the pool, said he was delighted the high-

tech system had done its job and justified the cost of installation.

He said: "The system spotted her quicker than the human eye. The Bangor pool is a typically 1960s design with many 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. Those two factors led to us installing the system. What is a cost like that

when you can save a person's life the way it did here? It showed how quickly someone can be saved - we got there right in time. Any longer and her heart would have stopped."

Poseidon, named after the Greek god of the sea, is used in more than 120 swimming pools across North America, Japan, Australia and Europe. It was fitted in Bangor in March 2003.

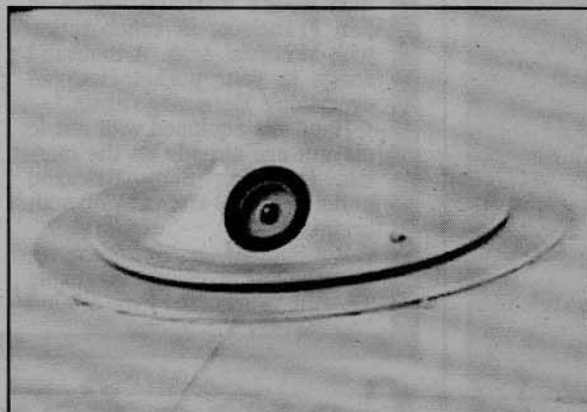
The 33-metre pool is covered by eight overhead cameras and four underwater cameras.

Poseidon uses the extra-sensitive cameras to monitor underwater sound volume, the movement and texture of objects in the water and the trajectory of swimmers in action.

If the computer detects a person in distress, the on-duty lifeguard is alerted by pager with details of the stricken swimmer's position.

Poseidon sensed after only three seconds that the 10-year-old girl was unconscious.

Doctors say that if she had been underwater for much longer she would have died or at least suffered irreversible brain damage as a result of a lack of oxygen.



ALL-SEEING EYE: One of the underwater cameras



HIGH-TECH HERO: The Poseidon's computer screen