

UNIQUE INSTALLATION AT SERVICES CLUB

Electric Trolley to Facilitate Sea-Bathing

A two-seater electric trolley running down a 150-foot slipway at the Newton Driver Services Club at Rustington, Sussex, will now make sea-bathing possible for ex-Service people and others confined to wheelchairs on account of war wounds, accidents or polio.

Mrs H Newton Driver, OBE, founder and chairman of the Club, who has personally financed the £15,000 project, which has just been completed, said that many of those who visit her club had been strong and keen swimmers before losing the use of their legs. They could still swim, almost the only exercise possible for them. The difficulty had been to get them into the sea. All people with leg disabilities would benefit from the new installation.

The ramp, 12-foot wide, just built runs down from a bathing pavilion with a sun-bathing terrace and groups of dressing cubicles specially fitted for disabled people.

A store-room houses the specially-designed electric trolley and its winch. The trolley has been built to run on a rail into the sea until the water is deep enough for the occupants to swim from it. A trained attendant will be constantly on hand and there is also a small hoist on the trolley to assist would-be swimmers, if necessary. The ramp will also enable wheelchair cases to enjoy the sands and reach the water's edge below half tide.

The Newton Driver Services Club was built by Mrs Newton Driver at the end of the last war in memory of her husband and to help, from her war-time experience, those who had suffered in the war. The club was opened in 1949 by the Duke of Edinburgh. Mrs Newton Driver has now announced her intention of bequeathing the premises to the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund to be carried on in the same way as hitherto. The present club developed from a war-time predecessor known as the English-Speaking Officers' Club which was started and conducted in London by Mrs Newton Driver in Tilney Street, Park Lane, and afterwards in Talbot Square, while awaiting the completion of the present building at Rustington. The club now has accommodation for about 60 guests. There are bedrooms on the ground floor and specially-equipped bathrooms for anyone disabled and unable to climb stairs.

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