



**Livingston and District Dolphins  
45. Internationales Pfingstschwimmfest  
May 2016**



**Report to West Lothian Twinning  
Association**

**Est. 1984**

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This report is a summary of the visit by Livingston and District Dolphins Amateur Swimming Club (LDD) to the 45. Internationales Pfingstschwimmfest in Arnsberg-Neheim, Hochsauerland, Germany in May 2016.

Fourteen LDD swimmers, one coach, and two Team Managers set off from Livingston on Thursday 12 May 2016.



The LDD team travelled to Hull for the overnight ferry, and drove from Zeebrugge to the Pfingstschwimmfest pool venue in Arnsberg-Neheim. The long journey was broken up with the swimmers practicing German phrases, completing their diaries, and composing a new club song.

The event was held over three days and this year attracted an entry of 759 swimmers with teams competing from Germany, Holland, England, France, Belgium, Romania, Ghana, and Nigeria.

The 14 LDD swimmers were aged from 8 – 13 years. For all of the swimmers this was their first experience of swimming in an international competition, and in a 50m outdoor pool. The swimmers were soon to discover that the pool was unheated.

The weather on the first day of competition was warm and sunny. The swimmers were made to feel more at home though over the next two days of competition with a mixture of sunshine, showers, cold winds, and even hailstones. One of the many benefits of the event was the opportunity to meet swimmers from other countries and cultures and the swimmers also took the opportunity in between events to participate in the crafting sessions hosted in a tent near to the poolside.





At the start of each swimming session the swimmers take part in a warm up in the pool although after sampling this for the first time the LDD swimmers quickly renamed this the 'cold up'. To help the swimmers keep warm in between the swimming events the track "Frazy" by the German artist Synapsenkitzler was played through the PA system for the swimmers to dance along to. The LDD swimmers embraced this with the commitment that we will play this song at our next Club Championships in Livingston in October.

The highlight of the event was the presentation of the nations on the Saturday. The LDD team made plenty of noise, helped by a selection of handheld musical instruments, as they proudly marched behind the Schottland team banner. They added colour to the occasion by wearing wigs and waving their individual Scotland flags. The opening ceremony ended with a selection of music from the local village band and the releasing of balloons by each of the teams.



The team stayed at a local hotel and were well looked after with plenty of local cuisine including schnitzels, goulash, and sauerkraut.

Over the three days of competition the swimmers swam in a total of 94 individual events, and 3 relay events, delivering an impressive 89 new individual Personal Best times. The young team ended the gala with an impressive haul of 2 x gold, 4 x silver, 5 x bronze, 3 x 4<sup>th</sup> place, 3 x 5<sup>th</sup> place, and 6 x 6<sup>th</sup> place finishes. We also had a swimmer finishing in a fantastic second place in the female age group points competition.



Towards the end of the event the LDD swimmers swapped caps with the other competing teams and made lots of new friends. The swimmers gave lots of LDD tattoos to their fellow swimmers, and also gathered lots of signatures from the other competing swimmers on a flag.



The LDD adult volunteers also participated in a range of events and met representatives from the HSK twinning association. On the Friday night the LDD President and Lead Coach attended a ceremony in the Clubhouse where the local Bürgermeister welcomed the competing clubs to the area. They also met Barbara Köster-Ewald (Vice Chair) and Erhard Schäfer (Honoured Chair) from the HSK twinning association.



On Sunday the LDD President and Secretary attended the international morning pint ceremony. They were welcomed to the area by the HSK twinning association. The morning pint ceremony was also embraced in a similar way to the Frazy song mentioned earlier. Although we are doubtful that we will be able to introduce this to our next Club Championships.

The swimmers showed their appreciation for the fantastic hospitality that we received from our German hosts by presenting the SV Neptun Neheim-Hüsten 1960 club president, vice president, and Internationales Pflingstschwimmfest meet organiser with a range of Scottish gifts.



In conclusion, the 45 Internationales Pflingstschwimmfest was a fantastic sporting, cultural, and learning experience for our swimmers – all of whom want to compete again next year. It was a long journey (1,000 miles by road, and 400 miles by sea) for the LDD team but a great experience for all involved.

It is important to acknowledge the help and support we received in organising our trip. We say a big thank you to Gordon Connolly at West Lothian Council and danke schön to Barbara Stobbe, and Nils Langer from the host club SV Neptun Neheim-Hüsten 1960.