



# Newsletter

Spring 2025

## Competition News

### Rotherham Metro Meet (25<sup>th</sup>–26<sup>th</sup> Jan)

Twelve Dragons made their way over the Pennines to compete in Sheffield at the prestigious Ponds Forge International Sports Centre. The swimming pool is 50 Meters and has held many British Championships over the years. It was an amazing experience for them all to swim in such a large arena.

They competed in 50 races and achieved Personal Best times in 62%.

We came away with 2 medals –  
 Niamh (11) 🥇 50M Freestyle  
 Eva (18) 🥈 50M Butterfly

The whole team managed a further 27 x Top 10 placements, with 8 x 4th places – missing out on some medals by 0.1 seconds.



Steph & Adam were so proud of all who made the journey over and all the team who took part – Alys (9), Eilidh (9), Saoirse (10), Niamh (11), Elenid (12), Elsie (12), Leila (12), Mared (13), Lilly (15), Connie (17), Seren (17), Eva (18)

Thank you to the families too who made their way over to support. A great time was had by all “teambuilding” at the All You Can Eat Buffet.

### Swim Wales Regional Racing Championship 2025 North (7<sup>th</sup>– 9<sup>th</sup> Feb)

Carrying on the competing into February was Saoirse (10), as the sole representative for the Denbigh Dragons, travelling to Liverpool Aquatics Centre to take part. She competed in 50M Butterfly and 50M Freestyle in the 11 to 12 years category and finished an amazing 5th in the butterfly despite not turning 11 years old until April. She achieved PB's in both her races. Huge well-done Saoirse.





### Menai AA & B Meet (2<sup>nd</sup> March)

A huge group of 17 Dragons went to Llandudno to compete. They participated in 64 races, which resulted in 29 medals and 43 Personal Bests. It was also great to see the Dragons trying new races, a total of 12 new events entered for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. This Meet is a great starting point for many starting out their swimming competition journey and gives the opportunity to try new events too.

Medal table for the Dragons were –

#### AA Grade

Saoirse (10)

- 🥇 50M Butterfly
- 🥈 50M Freestyle
- 🥉 100M Freestyle
- 🥇 200M Individual Medley
- 🥈 200M Individual Medley
- 🥉 100M Butterfly
- 🥇 50M Butterfly

Elenid (12)

- 🥇 200M Individual Medley
- 🥈 100M Butterfly
- 🥉 50M Butterfly



#### B Grade

Mared (14+)

- 🥇 50M Breaststroke
- 🥈 100M Freestyle
- 🥉 50M Freestyle
- 🥇 100M Freestyle
- 🥈 100M Backstroke
- 🥉 50M Butterfly
- 🥇 200M Individual Medley
- 🥈 100M Freestyle
- 🥉 100M Breaststroke
- 🥇 100M Breaststroke
- 🥈 50M Backstroke
- 🥉 100M Backstroke
- 🥇 50M Butterfly
- 🥈 100M Breaststroke
- 🥉 50M Freestyle
- 🥇 100M Breaststroke
- 🥈 100M Freestyle
- 🥉 50M Butterfly
- 🥇 50M Breaststroke
- 🥈 50M Breaststroke
- 🥉 50M Breaststroke
- 🥇 50M Backstroke

Kate (13)

Isabelle (12)

Leila (12)

Cerys (11)

Tomos (11)

Eilidh (9)

Max (9)

Ava (8)

### Swim Conwy Spring Meet (22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> March)

We took 10 members to compete at Llandudno in this meet over the weekend. There were 5 medals won, a further 12 x Top 10 finishes and 16 PBs in 27 races.

Saoirse (10)

- 🥇 50M Butterfly
- 🥈 50M Freestyle
- 🥉 50M Freestyle
- 🥇 100M Freestyle
- 🥈 200M Freestyle

Max (9)

Harriet (16)

As always, we are so proud of the entire team who competed. The remainder were – Meredith (12), Connie (17), Eva (18), Eilidh (9), Isabelle (12), Elenid (12) & Lucy (9)







## Volunteer Spotlight: Adam McDonnell (Assistant Coach)

I love sport, both taking part and watching. I played both football and rugby many moons ago and even swam competitively for a while. Now I run across the hills as a means of feeding my health and wellbeing.

I got into coaching Denbigh Dragons as life started to re-emerge after Covid. My daughter Saoirse had joined and was loving it but as with so many things in life, the pandemic had its impacts. The club was low on coaching staff and other volunteers and as a result, sessions were regularly cancelled as the resources were spread too thinly. I offered to help on the basis that however good or bad I turned out to be at it, at least my being there meant that the kids would not miss out on pool time. Once I got started, it was simply a case of soaking as much information up as I could from Steph in particular, so that I could start to add some value to the sessions. The first coaching course was a real step forward as it provided real clarity on why training sessions are set up as they are and how to develop young swimmers. I am now doing a combined Level 1 & 2 teaching course to support new starters as they transition from lessons to club.

Coaching Denbigh Dragons is one of the things I look forward to most each week. Seeing top level athletes doing their thing can be awe inspiring, but I am equally moved though by the efforts of a nine-year-old, whose technique in the pool needs work, whose stamina is still developing and who is struggling to juggle the immediate challenges of a slipping swim cap and leaking goggles. I love the energy that goes in from the swimmers and those little moments when the penny drops and you see them make a sudden improvement in technique, or a gain a PB in a gala.



My abiding memory of competing was the knee shaking nerves that I used to get before racing. My father would tell me that this was a good thing "It shows that it means something – it is important to you!" I don't remember that helping much, but I tell the younger Dragons this when they look at me, wide-eyed in the moments before a race. Whatever the outcome, it is good to be there for them afterwards too, to celebrate or to console.

Coaching with the Dragons is incredibly rewarding, regardless of your background in swimming. The learning and sharing opportunities are endless and the feeling of adding some benefit into the community is really fulfilling. I would recommend it to anyone.

### Next Swimming Meets

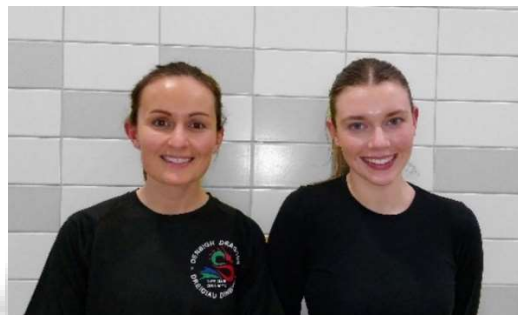
Swim Conwy Whitsun Meet (Level 2)  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May  
Llandudno Swimming Pool

Swim Conwy Len Thomas Meet (Level 3)  
Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June  
Llandudno Swimming Pool



## New Assistant Coaches

Well done to Hayley Scott & Beth Wynne Jones for stepping forward and doing their Level 1 Coaching (Assistant) course. They are coming to the end of the course now, and we are so grateful to you for your help and assistance to the club. Without volunteers like you it would be impossible to run our club.



## Member Spotlight: Mared Parry (14)



1. How did you become involved in Swimming (including the age which you started at swimming club)?

*Mam started taking me to the swimming pool when I was only a few months old. I had Swimming Lessons at the age of 3 and started with the Dragons when I was 7 years old.*

2. Have you ever swum competitively and how far did you get in representing club/area/country?

*I was lucky enough to be able to compete in the last held National Urdd Gala in 2020 and won a silver medal in the Breaststroke competition for Years 3 & 4. I've competed in Regional Competitions and achieved Welsh National swimming time too.*

3. What do you consider your greatest achievement in Swimming?

*Winning a silver medal in the Urdd National Gala has been my greatest achievement. It is such a shame that the Urdd no longer supports the sport in this way anymore.*

4. Who do you most admire in the world of swimming?

*I have had the privilege of swimming with and have been coached by Freya Anderson & Holly Hibbott. I also saw all the medals that they had won, including the Olympic Gold Medal Freya won in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics as part of the GB Relay Team. The medal was extremely heavy!*

5. An interesting Random Fact:

*Astronauts use swimming to help train for the weightless environment of space.*

6. Advice for other swimmers:

*Listen to our coaches, good and bad feedback. They know what can be done to improve your strokes – and enjoy!*







## Swimming Competition (Meet/Gala) Information

A quick explanation –

**Level 1 Meet** – aimed at very competent, fast swimmers who regularly compete and aim for National Qualifying Times. The required entry times will be challenging.

**Level 2 Meet** – the entry times for these galas can still be quite challenging. They will always have a minimum qualifying time for event entry times which means swimmers must be faster than the lower limit to enter the event.

**Level 3 Meet** – typically have upper limit Qualifying Times (swimmers may not enter if their times are faster than the specified QTs) aimed at Regional and Club swimmers, but also certain meets designed to encourage swimmers with no times and who are starting out in their swimming career.

For further information please go to The Basic Meet Info on the DD website. All the abbreviations are explained further, and the **rules** as a swimmer attending a competition.

## Swimming Kit

Swimmers need to purchase the following equipment to make sure they are ready for all types of training sessions:

**Goggles plus spare (essential)**  
**Kick board**

**Mesh swim bag**

**Pull buoy**

**Drink bottle**

**Short blades fins**

Further information of where to purchase the items are on previous Newsletters, Denbigh Dragons website and Facebook page. They also have discount codes too from swimming retailers – in some cases up to 20%.



## Competing at Swimming Meets

One of our experienced members competing at a gala made a mistake during their race. This mistake could have meant getting disqualified in the event, and therefore slowed down not giving their all. But they weren't disqualified as the official didn't see the infraction.

Moral of the story – competitors should continue to give their all in a race, even if they believe they have made a mistake. Officials don't see everything, and benefit of the doubt is always given to the swimmer if they aren't sure of the infraction. There is no VAR that can be played at the lower level meets.

## Photo Consent

Please remember that you need to fill in whether you consent / do not consent for your child to be photographed. This is all available on -



Click on

1. Members
2. Edit
3. Parent's Photography Consent Form

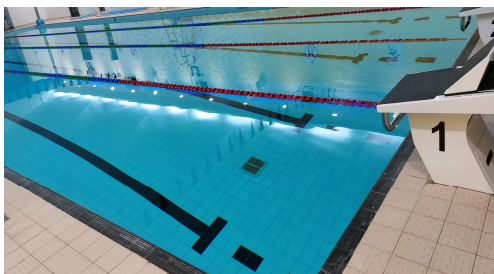
We are appealing to you all to complete this and the medical information (if not already done)

## Denbigh Leisure Centre Request

To help maintain high standards of cleanliness and hygiene at Denbigh Leisure Centre Pool, we're asking for your help too!

Our Pool changing areas and Poolside are a no shoe zone 🚫👟

Please pop some shoe covers over your shoes or take your footwear off.



## Committee Changes

We would like to extend our gratitude to Paula O'Hanlon for her work as Treasurer over the past 8+ years. Wishing her all the best for the future and thank you for all that was done, even when her children were no longer members of the club.

Saleem Althaf will be taking over the role in a period of transition & training from Paula. Stacey-Louise Steel has started her new role as secretary. Wishing them both the very best with their new roles, and hope that all parents will give them their support. Gwenann Parry will continue as Chairperson.

We continue to need parents to help run the club. Please reach out to us, if only to offer an hour of your time every couple of months we would be entirely grateful.

## Sponsorship

We would like to thank the following companies who have agreed to continue their sponsorship again this year, providing us with much needed funding. This support has been vital to Denbigh Dragons Swimming Club, and we are so grateful to them for their assistance.



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CYFREITHWYR SOLICITORS  
**GUTHRIE JONES & JONES**

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If any further business wishes to support us, please visit our website where the latest Sponsorship package is available.

## Keep in Touch

Our website [www.denbighdragons.co.uk](http://www.denbighdragons.co.uk) is packed with all the latest information including our training sessions, upcoming meets, meet explanations, expectations etc.

On Facebook, search for 'Denbigh Dragons Swim Club' Group and follow us for important updates for parents and members. As this is a 'Closed Group' please apply to join and an administrator will allow access, but answer the questions otherwise FB will automatically reject your request.

We also have a Denbigh Dragons page on Facebook, this will be for advertising use, and will not hold updates from the coaches. Please feel free to follow this page, and share with your contacts.

The club will also communicate with members via email. It is important to check emails regularly and let us know if you change your email address.

## Easter Holidays

There will be a few changes to the swimming timetable over the school Easter holiday.

Please keep an eye on e-mails and the closed Facebook page for updates and confirmations.



Enjoy the holidays, and don't eat too much chocolate



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