

Celebrating 50 years of The Royal Commonwealth Pool

The Royal Commonwealth Pool made a big splash celebrating its 50th birthday recently.

The Edinburgh institution was opened by HRH Princess Anne half a century ago on her first solo official visit.

It is the only venue in the world to have hosted three separate Commonwealth games and has become loved by the city.

The Royal Commonwealth Pool in Edinburgh turned 50 years old on 16 January 2020 and staff and swimmers celebrated with lots of cake.

Generations of locals have learned to swim within the A-listed building, which is considered one of the finest examples of modern architecture in Scotland.

It is also home to the only Olympic-standard diving facilities – and the capital's only 50-metre pool – and has been behind the success of many of Scotland's swimming champions. But while the facilities have been used by elite athletes, 'the Commie', as it has become known, has also provided years of fond memories thanks to its iconic white flumes and recreational swim facilities and water-based and dry fitness classes for the general public.



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Edinburgh's Got Soul Choir sang Happy Birthday to begin the day's celebrations while Scottish diver James Heatly cut a giant cake, in the shape of the pool. This amazing construction was made by West Lothian Cake-tastic, and was shared with customers and staff. It was big enough to feed 700 people and by the time the day was over there wasn't a slice left.

The candles were blown out by three-year-old Sophie Ramsay, youngest grand-daughter of Charlie Ramsay, who was the first employee to be appointment at the pool in August 1969. Charlie went on to work as the Lifeguard Training Manager until his retirement in 2006.

James Heatly, grandson of legendary diver Sir Peter Heatly, is

another champion who still trains at the Commie, having won medals in each of the past three European Diving Championships, as well as at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia.



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James is a superstar and while he was taking time out of his training, he was happy to accommodate the photographers' request of a staged shot of falling into the diving pool, holding onto two helium balloons. This was definitely a one-shot picture – as the moment James fell into the pool, the two balloons came loose from their ribbon and floated up to the rafters.

There was also a free exhibition in the foyer of the Commie about the history of the iconic building.

It ran until the end of the month and contained some specially commissioned prints by Edinburgh-based photographer, [Soo Burnell](#), which complemented her poolside photographic artworks, many of which are Edinburgh Leisure's Victorian pools.

Soak up the atmosphere from the day here in our video :