

Ulm Fishermen's Jousting Tournament



originally for the purpose of collecting donations, are the specially prepared donation spears. These have a hook on the end so that the residents of the houses lining the route can hang presents on the spear, even from the upper storeys of the houses. Other members of the fishermen's guild and their descendents who also belong to the boatmen's society also march in the procession. The masters of the guilds, dressed in Baroque costumes, are followed by various guild members: fisher girls ("parish Fair maidens"), young fishermen, a children's group and, to crown them all, the fishermen's wives. A select few of the latter are allowed to ride on the horse-drawn "pageant float".

These processions are just as wet as the jousting in the afternoon – except that the wetting is of an internal nature. However, this also raises courage levels for the afternoon's tournament and warms the blood ready for any plunges into the sometimes cool summer waters of the Danube.

by a man) perform their dance, which probably originates from early modern carnival customs, for the first time. The musical accompaniment consists exclusively of drums; the simple sequence of the dance confirms the formerly held arrogant attitude of the townspeople towards country folk: The cunning urban jesters lure the farmer's wife away from him, which infuriates him when he finally realizes it. More recent is the minuet first performed in 1950, featuring the spear-wielding fishermen in festive red jackets and fisher girls in traditional costume. The tune is that of a traditional Ulm song.

The procession moves off. Ulm free riders in blue uniforms from 1693 head up the procession. The drumming and trumpeting Ulm „gens d'armes“ on horseback and wearing their red coats from 1745 are very impressive. The brass bands wear the blue uniforms of the Ulm Town Soldiers; the outfit dates back to 1770/1780. The drummers, who accompany the jesters' dances in the morning and the jousting in the afternoon, are dressed in the uniform of the Ulm Stuck Company (around 1740). Among the traditional components of the procession,

An original Ulm woman among the jousting figures is Sabina Heilbronnerin, landlady of the Swan Inn. She stood up against hostile Bavarian officers when these drank the health of their prince elector Max Emanuel in occupied Ulm – to be precise, in her inn. The landlady countered with "Vivat Leopoldus" – that was her emperor – and since 1970 she has josted against Max Emanuel. Since then, not much has changed in the cast of characters, except for the "surprise couples" representing current issues.

Since 1950, Ulm's Fishermen's Jousting Tournament has been held every 4 years, if no important events or jubilees occur to upset the rhythm. The two Sundays before Oath Monday have become the traditional dates for the tournament, Oath Monday being the penultimate Monday in July. No Ulm Fishermen's Jousting Tournament would be complete without the procession held prior to it in the morning. Around 10 o'clock in the morning some 300 participants gather in their colourful costumes at the Saumarkt in the Fishermen's Quarter. Here the pair of jesters and the Farmer and his Wife (the lady is played

Jakob Weber, who died in 1920, was a vegetable and antiques dealer infamous for his rudeness and who used to carry his wares around in a basket (= Krätten). He was particularly fond of insulting the law enforcement officers. The historic figures of Karl V and Moritz of Saxony were also introduced in 1950. They were on opposing sides in the Margraves War of 1552, when Ulm supported Karl V. In 1954 the jousting troupe was increased by another couple of war lords whose activities had also affected the fortunes of Ulm: Wallenstein and initially Bernhard of Weimar. But the latter was replaced in 1970 by the better known Gustav Adolf.

Since 1958, "Türkenlouis" (Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm I. von Baden) and Grand Visier (Mustafa Koprülü) have stood as a reminder of the Turkish wars of the late 17th century. With the aid of Ulm boatmen, military supplies were transported from Ulm along the Danube to the battle fields.

The contest from the participants' perspective.



The Fishermen's Jousting Tournament dance: a jester forces a farmer out of the way.

The landlady of the Swan Inn is famous for her ribald wit.



Even the youngest take part. Fisherman's wife with child in festive costume.



Festive boat with fishermen's wives in front of the Stadthaus.

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The drummers in their red jackets beat a tattoo. The jousting boats push off in a set of three from each bank of the Danube. The helmsmen steer the boats towards each other. The jousters stand on the stern, leaning on their 2.80-meter-long lances, called "spears". When the boats meet, the combatants raise their spears, press the crossbar against their shoulder, and aim the leather-cushioned tip at the breast of their opponent.

Spears crash into ribs. Whoever falls into the water has lost. Whoever steps into the boat is also deemed to be "wet". The joust remaining standing on the stern is regarded as "dry" and progresses to the next round. If both remain dry, the contest is a draw. It is repeated until there is a winner. Who are the jousters? The programme identifies the jousters as "white fishermen", "jesters", "farmer and farmer's wife", "Ulm sparrow" and "tailor of Ulm" etc. These figures reflect the history of the Fisher-

men's Jousting Tournament, the spirit of the various ages and not least the history of Ulm and the legends surrounding it.

The "white fishermen" are named after the white costumes they wear for the tournament. There is a variation known as the „white fisherman in festive garb“, who wears a red jacket. The white fisherman's costume possibly goes back to the origins of the fishermen's jousting tournament, namely the carnival of the early modern age. At that time the various tradesmen's guilds preferred white costumes when performing the traditional carnival customs. In those days – not only in Ulm and not only in the fishermen's trade – journeymen tradesmen used to imitate the jousting tournaments of knights on horseback in their own way.

Thus, according to a quirky local legend, two Ulm fishermen named Käßbohrer and Molfenter observed a knights' jousting tournament held by monks from Reichenau Monastery who were resident in Ulm. The two observers decided that they could do that too, whereby due to a lack of horses required for the tournament, they used their boats on the river. It might really have come about like that, since the first records of the Ulm Fishermen's Jousting Tournament originate from the 16th century:

On February 20, 1545 the council refused permission to hold a Fishermen's Jousting Tournament. The corresponding entry in the council records is the oldest indication of the practice of this custom in Ulm. The farmer and the farmer's wife, as well as the pair of jesters, are also figures that featured in the early modern town carnival. For the townspeople, the farmers were the personification of doltishness. The figures of the white fishermen, the jesters, the farmer and the farmer's wife probably date back to the beginnings of the tournament.

When the people of Ulm stopped celebrating carnival – that was shortly before the 30-Years War – the council urged the fishermen to hold their tournament in a warmer season. Thus the date was moved to the Monday following Ulm's parish fair in the last week of July. However, in the 17th century, the date was moved again to "Oath Tuesday". That was the day following the annual Oath Day, the highest political festival in the town: On the Monday after the annual council elections at the beginning of August, the male population swore their oath to the Imperial Town Constitution. This was followed by boisterous celebrations, whereby the Fishermen's Jousting Tournament, held every two years, enhanced the festive character of the event. When Ulm lost its status

as an imperial town in 1802 and became Bavarian, the basis for the Oath Day was lost and with it the event to which the Fishermen's Jousting Tournament was linked. It remained to be rediscovered by the nationalistic movement of the early 19th century, with its nostalgia for the middle ages.

In the 19th century, the fishermen occasionally held jousting tournaments to commemorate the loss of Oath Day. Further occasions were royal visits and other conferences and meetings. Right from the beginning, the people of Ulm had recognized the folkloristic attraction that the event had for high-ranking visitors to the town. The second record of a Fishermen's Jousting Tournament was therefore in conjunction with a visit from Prince Philipp of Spain in the year 1549: The fishermen josted in his honour, before appearing for their regular carnival tournament some days later. Jousting tournaments were also a necessary feature of all the great town festivals and could not be dispensed with, especially not in the historic processions spawned in the 19th century. Such a procession was held in 1877 on the 500th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone for Ulm Minster. These historic processions featured new figures to enhance the repertoire of characters for the Fishermen's

Jousting Tournaments, in which figures from local legends, such as the Ulm Sparrow, for example or the Tailor of Ulm, have also featured since 1877. The completion of the building of Ulm Minster in 1890 offered another occasion for a Fishermen's Jousting Tournament, now enhanced by the figures of "cowherd and councillor": Because the municipal cowherd was found drunk on duty, the councillor wanted to sack him. The cowherd listened in to the conversation through a vent on the stove and pre-empted the sacking, handing in his notice by shouting it through the heating pipe.

In the 20th century, the Fishermen's Jousting Tournament was first discovered by the tourist trade, and in the 1930's it was exploited by the National Socialists to propagate their blood and soil ideology. For instance, they paired Swabianism with anti-Semitism in the characters of "Swabian Smallholder from the Alb" against "Jewish Mortgage Lender". After WWII, the continuously varying cast of characters was enriched by other permanent pairs. In 1950 the successful duo "Krätte-Weber (basket weaver) and Bollezei (policeman)" were added.

Contest between the farmer and the farmer's wife. Both get wet.



The minuet is one of the highlights of the fishermen's procession.

The basket weaver has always enjoyed scolding anyone in uniform.



To date, female characters in the Fishermen's Jousting Tournament have always been played by men.

An army of umbrellas frames the scene of the jousting on 25th July 1836.



A flag-thrower waves the old imperial eagle.