

Wendy Figures

Channel Swimmer

8 August 2017

13 hrs 45 min

“NOTHING GREAT IS EASY”

He had:-

- Support team on a rowing boat.
- Woollen costume, no cap or goggles.
- Greased up on goose fat for insulation.
- Beef sandwiches & brandy

I had:-

- Support team on a powerful fishing boat.
- Cheap decathlon costume, 1 swim cap, 2 pairs goggles.
- Did not grease up.
- Fruit & porridge smoothies, 4:1 protein drinks, warm vimto, energy gels

We both had:-

- The same rules
 - no artificial aids ie wetsuit, extra costume etc.
 - Start by standing on English shores - Finish by standing on French shores.
 - No touching the boat.
- Same problems
 - Jelly Fish
 - Strong currents
 - Zig zag line.

Nothing great is easy

- The English Channel remains one of the hardest marathon swims in the world and is undoubtedly the most famous swim in the world.
- 1480 successful solo crossings since 1875.

My Swim

- 7/8 August
- Started at 9.55pm on 7th August
- Finished at 12.40pm French time on 8th August
- 13 hrs 45 minutes

I'm going to talk about

- My swimming background
 - My reasons for swimming the channel
 - My training
 - The week of the swim & the swim
 - Afterwards
-
- 3 Yorkshire swimmers completed the Channel this year. Mark Gardner - July, Me - August, Ray Smith - September.

Background

- Always been a swimmer
- Are you familiar with LTAD?
- Had my family, didn't exercise, got overweight, got ill.
- Started lane swimming again approx 6 yrs ago

Timescale

- Yr 1 = lane swimming session 1 = 800 m
- Yr 2 = open water session 1 = 1k in 16 degrees
- Yr 2 = 1st open water race - Coniston 5.25 mile, 2 hrs 35 min
- Yr 3 = Windermere 10.5 mile, 6 hr 15 min
- Yr 4 = 2 way Windermere, night swim, 21 mile, 12 hrs. Best swim ever!
- Yr 5 = failed loch lomond
- Yr 6 = channel



Reasons

- I hate sea swimming!! I like lake swimming.
- 2WW is same distance as channel
- English Channel is the most famous - The Everest of open water swims.
- It had to be done.

Training

- Sold my business in order to work part time. Training was the other part time job.
- 20k per week prior to channel training
- Winter swimming until Feb - low mileage
- End Feb 35k per week
- Extra 5k per week each month

Wk	Targets	Target	actual
1	(WIC 2-1-17) worlds	7k	6.9k
2	worlds. 9/1	15k	7k
3	16/1	30	11.2k ^{ice} _{tab}
4	23/1	30	17.2k
5	30/1	30	15.3k
6	loch loman. (WIC 6/2)	30	12k
7	13/2	35	ill
8	20/2	35	16.2k ^{total 85.5k}
9	27/2	35	16.5k ^{end Feb}
10	6/3	35	23.3k
11	13/3	35	35k *
12	20/3	35	35.1k
13	swimtrek WIC 27/3	40	26.4k
14	swimtrek WIC 3/4	40	46k *
15	10/4	40	24k ^{max}
16	17/4	40	33.2k ^{+6k}
17	24/4	40	22.7k ^{+6k}
18	1/5	45	19k ^{+8k}
19	8/5	45	30.5 ^{+12k}
20	15/5	45	24.1 ^{+8k} _{lower} ^{+2k} _{lower}

From Wk 16 3x gym per/wk
as 4k/20min rower
100x ab crunches.

Wendy figures			
	Target	actual	monthly Totals
21 WIC 22/5	45	32k ^{2008 tabs}	
22 29/5	45	45k	Jan 42.3k
23 5/6	50	17k	Feb 43.6k
24 12/6	50	24.5	March 127.3k
25 19/6	50	50k	April 136.9k
26 26/6	50	28.2 ^{15k}	May 134.5k
27 3/7	55	19.6 ^{18k}	
28 10/7	50	30k	June 86.7k ^{+45k}
29 17/7	25	20k	July
30 24/7	25		
31 31/7			channel

3.36k

Training

- Didn't hit those targets every week
- Test sets
 - ie; 10 x 400 - Monday in the pool
 - 100 x 100 monthly in the pool
 - 6 or 8 hr sea swims

2017

March

2017

5 Sunday

165k

PF

open all
day.

did it -
Boom.

100x100

LC on

1.50

slowed after

80 but held T/Ts.

had 2x fuel stops.

10x100 ?

10 am cafe

10.30 start

Emma 10 to film

PF said ok.

2 am Spring

May

29 Monday

26th

24 WORRALL ROAD
WADSLEY
SHEFFIELD

Ireland 2017

8 hr sea swim

✓ target
16¹/₂ mile /
~~25.6 h~~

26th

May

30

Training

- Test sets showed weaknesses so, added gym work - rowing & core work
- Targets along the way
 - April Swimtrek holiday - 52k swam in 5 days
 - May Irish swim camp - called “Hit the wall”
 - June 24 hr swim - 1 mile p/hr for 24 hrs lake
 - July Race across Torbay - 8 miles open sea, 3 hr 50 min

Taper

- No events after Torbay
- Tapered for too long
- Should have kept the mileage up for another 2 or 3 weeks before taper.

Leading up to the swim

- Decided to camp near Dover and wait for the call.
- Weather was lovely but windy so, all swims off
- My team were brilliant
- We had a relaxing week
- I got plenty of swims done
- But, worry that the swim may not take place due to the weather.
- I was stressed and bad tempered by the end of the week

The Swim

- Got the call for 10pm start on 7 August.
- My support swimmer couldn't stay.
- We moved to a hotel in Folkstone
- Prepared all the supplies
- Met the pilot at 9 pm
- Full Moon



The Swim

- World record attempt - 2 observers
- Aiming for 11 hrs
- Support team =

Paul - Feeds,

Maggie - Stroke counting & timing of

feeds, Andy - photo's & social media,

Rachel - encouragement/bully.

Theo - support swimmer - back at work!





The start

- Protocol is swim to shore, stand, raise your arm, set off.
- I wasn't calm or relaxed - more of a bad mood
- I didn't settle into a rhythm very well
- Planned to feed every 45 min
- Yellow card showed 5 min to feed
- Red card = stop either for an emergency or for a feed.
- 1st feed & I snapped at my crew
- 1 min to feed, listen to messages - then off again



First half

- 1st jelly fish sting within 30 min of started
- Struggled with demons - kept thinking how long left instead of chunking.
- Then the ferry was on the wrong side - bad
- 5.5 hrs in - “Paul, I don’t think I can do this”
- Once I sorted my head out - the clouds disappeared.
- Next 4 hours were lovely.

The nice part

- I enjoyed the:-
 - darkness/full moon
 - shipping lanes
 - Wake of a cargo ship
 - Messages, so many messages
 - Swimming into a sunrise









2nd shipping lane

- I was happy when the boats were going the other way
- No question of quitting now
- But:-
 - daylight brought choppy water
 - I was tired and not feeding right
 - I was in pain
 - 2nd jelly fish sting

France looked closer

- So, I asked how far
- Big mistake
- I thought maybe 1-2 hrs
- They said 3 - 4 hours
- I was gutted

The last leg

- Observer told me the tide would take me in so, not long now.
- But, I saw my teams' faces
- Next feed made me angry as I got the same message
- The tide never turned - it became a battle
- Sting no 3 made me cry
- Then, they said sprint or miss the tide and stay in for another 4 hrs.
- Feeds became energy gels and no time for messages.

Name	Wendy Figures
Country	Great Britain
Type / Route	Solo, 1 way / England to France
Completed	8th August 2017 11:38am
Time	13:45
Pilot / Vessel	Fred Mardle / Masterpiece
Observer	Kevin Sherman And Samuel Jones



Want to Swim the Channel?

To get started you must first purchase an information and registration pack.

Buy online



Channel Weather

Latest Observations from [Sandettie](#)
16 November 2017, 2pm

- Air Temperature: 0.0°C (32°F)
- Sea Temperature: 13.5°C (56.3°F)
- Wind Direction: SW (225°)
- Wind Speed: 17 Knots
- Wave Height: 0.2 Metres
- Wave Period: 5.0 Seconds

News

Swims

Latest CSA News

View All



Clarrie Pickering - With Great Sadness
Wed 1 Nov 2017

Robert Manning - With Great

The Finish

- Pleased to see the dinghy being lowered into the water.
- Annoyed that no one got in it
- French coastguard came - oh no!
- I could see the slip way







Homeward bound

- Rachel got me dressed before the afterdrop
- We were all knackered
- Fred put his foot down
- The other boat were partying
- It took 2.5 hrs to get back but seemed an age.
- By the time we got back - I couldn't walk!
- They slept - I couldn't get comfortable

Celebration Time

- We went for a meal
- 100's of messages
- I was in agony
- Didn't sleep that night. Pain relief was a bath.
- Next day, couldn't walk but could just lift my arms up.
- Went to the White Horse
- Wrote my name

WENDY FIGURES
Y.O.S 8/8/17
13 HRS 45 MINS
SUPPORTED BY
PAUL HAYCOCK, ANDY
BRIDGER, RACHEL SMITH
MAGGIE HOLDSWORTH
THANK YOU x

BRUCE SALT
03-10-2016
NAMIBIA # salty seal
13 hrs 46 mins

INTERSPLASHIONAL
RELAY (J.C.)
Jon Coulton
08-10-2016
Els Weckmenbol

TIMMY Garrett
Arch 2 Arc
9/10/16 16-38hr
Pathfinder ☺

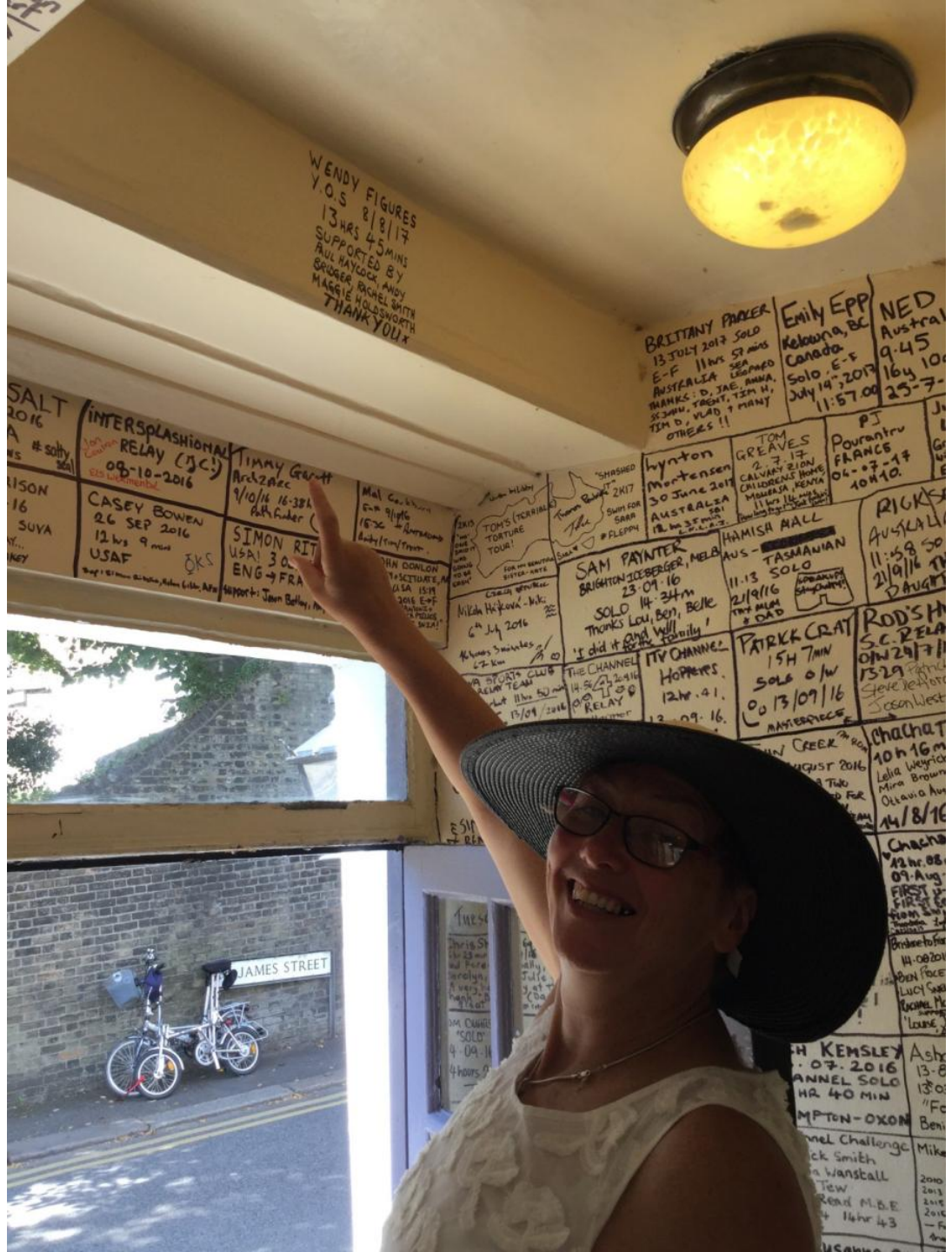
Mal Cockburn
E-P 9/10/16
15:36 to Austr
Andy/Tim/Trent

JAMES HARRISON
26-09-16
16 hrs 15 mins SUVA

CASEY BOWEN
26 SEP 2016
12 hrs 9 mins
USA F OKS

SIMON RITCHIE
USA! 3 Oct 2016
ENG → FRA 11 hrs 24 min

JOHN DO
SUDBURY+SET
USA
OCT 2-3 2016
CREW: JOHN PERA
NO





After the swim

- A man died that night.
- Mixed emotions
- Initial disappointment with the time
- Overwhelmed by the messages of congratulations
- Came home to a party
- Realisation of other people's pride in me
- Cried a lot - physical and emotional battering
- I recovered physically faster than mentally

After the swim

- Lots of card
- Lots of press interest
- TV & radio interviews
- Family pride
- 1 week after the swim - I became proud of myself
- 3 weeks after the swim - Lake Windermere, came 2nd, quite a fast time. 5hr, 15 min

Ray Smith

16 September 15 hrs 00 min



Mark Garner



After the swim

- Didn't train much - ticked over @ 10k per week
- Didn't stop eating - put weight on!!
- Went very slow - frustrating but no surprise
- However, no illness or injury
- Ray has a busted knee and needs an op
- Mark didn't go near water until November.
- Most people suffer for months after the channel
- I suffered far less than most.

Now

- Training hard in the pool
- Doing masters galas to get speed back
- Preparing for the winter ice swim season
- Next year - Loch Lomond
- Hoping to do Triple Crown and North Channel

Nothing Great is Easy

Wendy Figures

Video footage

Questions