

Gris Nez, where one tends to finish. I knew, however, that it was not going to be an easy stretch ashore. Channel swimming doesn't just mean swimming in a straight line - I can't because it is dependent on tide and current. Little did I calculate that 3 miles away (normally a 90 minute swim), would take me another 4 hours. Yes, because of the tide and current, I have to swim up the coast, waiting for the tide to turn to come back and then land.

I like swimming in the dark

By now the light is starting to fade. I see Joe get in the water to attach my light stick to my costume. This is for safety reasons so that I can be seen in the dark.

I don't have any fear of swimming in the dark - its quite relaxing really, seeing the lights on the French coast. My only problem is my goggles steaming up and the fact that at water level it is difficult to see ahead. From the boat it's another view - they can see so much more.

The water started to feel very warm

By now I'd been 'butterflying' many hours. I do feel a little tired, not cold, but more frustrated that the shore has been so close for so long. Then I see the dinghy being prepared. Great! I'm only 500 metres away. Viking Princess lays off shore, as it is shallow water ahead, while the dinghy accompanies me to shore by spotlight.

The water suddenly feels very warm and a voice tells me I can stand. My feet touch the bottom. What a moment - I can't describe it!

I begin to wade ashore amidst the gentle breakers. Then I reach the end. I clear the water and the boat hooter sounds. I've done it - what an awesome feeling! Sitting on the pebbles I take it all in. My dream is now a reality. After collecting a few pebbles I climb into the dinghy and return, to cheers coming from the boat. Not only have I become the first British person to swim the Channel butterfly, but I've smashed the world butterfly record by over 9 hours. My time, a staggering 14 hours 18 minutes.

I've also raised money for my charity,

Rainbows Children's Hospice in Loughborough.

It's now four months later, the date 16th November 10.00pm. I'm sitting in Dover Town Hall waiting to receive my certificate and trophy for the greatest feat of endurance, presented by the Channel Swimming Association at their annual dinner.

All the hard work, the many hours of training, the dedication, has all been worth it. I'm sure this will not be my last record swim. In fact I've already got a ladies relay team set to do a 2-way Channel (England-France-England) next August 2003. Yes, it's that world record we're after. It should be fun - just need sponsorship towards the total cost of the swim, which will be £4,500. If anyone out there is interested in helping us out, I'd be very grateful (07941 - 467291).

But for the moment, I remain content in the fact that I've achieved my dream to 'fly' the English Channel.

Julie Bradshaw

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Canvey Island Swimming Club

Presents their 5th Annual

Sprint Meet 2003

To be held at

Waterside Farm Leisure Centre
Somnes Avenue,
Canvey Island, Essex

Sunday 27th April 2003

Age Groups: 9/10, 11, 12, 13, 14,
15+ years. Age on the day of gala,

9 year olds Relays,
Age as at 31st December 2003

9 year 4x25m Freestyle &
Medley Relays

50m All Strokes + 100m I.M.
Plus 50m Freestyle SKINS

Closing date for entries Saturday 5th April 2003



For further information please contact:

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