

Across the Counties

The popular sea-side resorts of Bundoran and Creevy Pier outside Ballyshannon will always be memorable places for Ted's children: Brian, Tony and Chanele. Ted spent a lot of time in these places either training or completing swimming challenges for local charities. Endless trips to Bundoran and Creevy Pier became routine for the Keenan household. Ted always determined to train and not to miss the next conquest.



Ted Keenan swimming the Mullaghmore to Bundoran swim in June 1968.



Crowds gather at the Boat Quay in Bundoran. Getting ready to congratulate Ted Keenan on completing the swim from Mullaghmore to Bundoran, June 1968.

Significantly, Ted's swimming challenge from Mullaghmore to Bundoran on 28 August 1968 proved noteworthy. Ted swam across three counties – Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal, covering approximately 10 miles. The swim was completed in 6 hours, 15 minutes. Remarkably, Ted completed the same challenge swim in 1982.

In 1976, Ted eventually achieved his swimming goal crossing Donegal Bay from St. John's Points near Killybegs to Bundoran.



Ted Keenan receives a cup donated by the Bundoran Boat Quay Development Committee to mark his successful Donegal Bay swim on 29 August 1976. Presenting the trophy to him is Whitey Gilbride, a former marathon swimmer, who accompanied Ted on the swim.
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He succeeded on the third attempt, the previous two occasions he was defeated by the strong out-going tides when the shore was in-sight. Ted was disappointed, but his determination and endurance to repeat each attempt paid off. Documented by the Belfast Telegraph, it highlights Ted's achievement:

**'Yesterday he did the swim in 7 hours 55 minutes. The direct distance is 11 miles but he reckons that he swam about 16 miles because of the tides'.
(Belfast Telegraph, 30 August 1976)**

Conditions for swimming in the sea were harsh. Before each swim, Ted's body was covered in heavy car grease called 'Marafax', used to protect him against the excessive cold. On the Channel swims ordinary Vaseline was the protection applied all over his body.

Ted was undoubtedly a remarkable man; but amidst all his achievements he remained a modest man. His family and his swimming were at the heart of Ted's life. Throughout his swimming challenges, both locally, across the border and the Channel swims, his family supported him, which Ted cherished and was always grateful of.