

English Channel

Date: 12 August 1972

Duration: 18 hours 11 minutes



Sunday afternoon, 12 August 1972, before Ted embarked on his successful English Channel swim.

Those photographed include: Tom Hetzel, Bridie Keenan (Ted's wife), Larry Burke and local children admirers.

On Sunday 13 August 1972, Ted set off from Shakespeare's Beach, Dover at 15.23. He was accompanied on his challenge swim from England to France by Captain Hutchinson who piloted the boat and his son Brian.

Swimming front crawl with a stroke rate of 56-60 per minute, conditions were good and the sun was on Ted's back. Every hour he was fed vanilla flavoured Nutriment and peach juice; occasionally he took glycerine mouthwash because of throat irritation from the salt water.

The English Channel is one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. Ted met some challenging obstacles including oil slicks, floating debris, raw sewage and jellyfish. Swimming through the night proved hazardous, due to the dense fog, passing ships blew their fog horns but the ships weren't visible. Ted was only visible from the small lamps at the side of the boat. After 14 hours swimming, Ted was only a mile from a point on the French Coast known as Cape Gris Nez, unfortunately the tide turned and the sea got fairly rough. At 09.34 on Monday 13 August, after 18 hours, 11 minutes swimming, Ted swam ashore at San Gatte Beach. At the time, Ted Keenan was the second person to swim the English Channel, Kevin Murphy had completed the same feat in 1968.

Ted's passion for swimming the English Channel shone through when his daughter was born on 14 March 1973, christened Chanele, after the English Channel swim.



Ted Keenan at Dover Harbour on 14 August 1972, the day after completing the English Channel. Ted is wearing Des Rentford's Australian track suit top. Des Rentford (1927-1999) was an Australian long distance swimmer.



Fermanagh Association Dinner Dance in Dublin circa end 1972.

Gentleman unknown photographed with Ted Keenan.

Ted Keenan & his wife Bridie were special guests to mark the achievement of Ted swimming the English Channel in August 1972.

Logo on Ted's blazer reads 'England to France 1972'.