



UPDATES FROM DOVER

The Victoria Guest House is where I stay in Dover and my home away from home there. The proprietors, Bill and Audrey Hamblin, are so supportive to swimmers they have practically adopted some of us. The Victoria Guest House is “Swimmer Central” in Dover and where much of the updates will unfold.

Wednesday, July 28: I arrived yesterday after a 24 hour door to door commute from La Jolla to Dover. Everyone here says I brought the sunshine with me, as the weather here has been quite uncooperative for channel swimming so far this summer. Today, however, it's a hot, sunny day and the channel is flat as though someone had ironed it. Hoping this holds for my swim dates in a week and a half!

Saturday July 31: Well, I did it!

I called my boat captain to let him know I was in town and he asked me if I would like to swim the next day! The weather was looking good and there was a pilot available to take me. I said I needed a day or two to get it together and get rested up so we agreed upon Thursday evening, July 29 at 9pm for a potential start time. Since my crew hadn't arrived in Dover yet, he put one together for me - all very experienced in the Channel. As it turned out, high winds were predicted for that night so we decided to put it off until morning. Nothing had materialized weather wise by then so I set out at 10:05am on Friday, July 30. Wouldn't you know it - those high winds (up to 21 knots) kicked up a couple of hours into my swim. I swam in that wind and chop for what seemed like forever. I was really worried about having to do the whole swim in those conditions but fortunately the wind subsided as I neared France. My friend Nora Toledano from Mexico City swam a successful double in 1994 and gave me a really excellent piece of advice before I swam. She said that the swim from England to France is the prerequisite swim but your swim starts in France and is finished when you set foot on the beach in England. That really worked for me when it came time to turn around and swim back to England. About half of my return leg swim was done during the night. The moon was full so it was never really that dark. My crew was steady at the helm the whole way and even though conditions were less than perfect they always expected me to finish the swim.

I've had the most amazing support from my friends here in Dover and it's made all the difference in the world to me.

I took me 11 hours and 51 minutes to swim from England to France, landing at Cap Gris Nez and the whole swim was 28 hours and 36 minutes. The tides were strong while I was swimming and on my return leg I was pushed way north of Dover towards Deal. I ended up landing at Kingsdown, near St. Margaret's Cliffs, about 4 miles north of Dover. I'm glad my crew didn't tell me about that while I was in the water - they just kept encouraging me and telling me to keep swimming. The water is warm in the channel this summer. It was 64F on the English side and up to 68F on the French side. The weather has not been too cooperative for channel swimming, though. That's why when a swimmable day came up I was encouraged to go for it - and I'm glad I did because now I've got my double!!!

I am now the:

17th person to swim the English Channel 2 ways
8th woman to swim the English Channel 2 ways
5th American person to swim the English Channel 2 ways
2nd American woman to swim the English Channel 2 ways
and
the oldest person ever to swim the English Channel 2 ways

