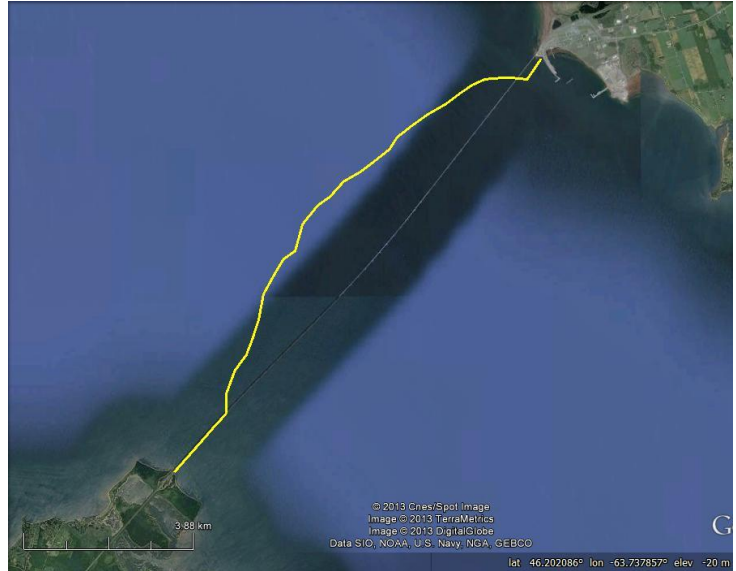


**Lynn De Lathouwer-Rodgers and Stacey Van Wart**  
**Cape Jourmain to Borden**  
16<sup>th</sup> August 2013



**Crossing the Strait to Challenge Diabetes** · 117 like this  
August 17 at 2:43pm ·

Stacey Van Wart and myself, Lynn Rodgers, completed our swim that we have been training-for for months. We crossed the Northumberland Strait, from New Brunswick to Prince Edward Island. We did it to raise awareness for diabetes.

Stacey has diabetes and I am in complete awe of her ability to manage this condition, complete the incredible athletic endeavours she sets her sights on, be a mom to three fantastic kids, and be a supportive and amazing friend. I'm so lucky to know this woman.

The swim was not easy, and we both had a different experience. Here is mine.

We met Captain John and Captain Chris early Friday August 16 at their homes in Cape Tormentine, NB. After a quick briefing, we suited up and headed to the boat launch which happens to be the former site of the ferry to the island. Captain Chris used to operate the ferry between NB and PEI until "someone built a bridge." He then retrained as a paramedic. Stacey and I felt that we were in good hands.

It was chilly in the morning so Stacey and I were doing jumping jacks on the boat launch trying to keep warm. Stacey's dad, Paul and her husband, Steve, would travel across on the boat.

Captain Chris loaded all of us in his jolly little fishing boat (I'm spoiled after cruising on the Exhale catamaran for Madhu's Lake O crossing) at around 650am and headed to the base of the bridge. We were informed that the water temp was 68. For most open water swimmers, that temp is not a problem, but when I heard that, my stomach did a little flip... which would be the first of many. But Stacey wins for stomach upset. More on that later.

We were dropped off on the east side of the Confederation Bridge in New Brunswick and we needed to take advantage of the tides. Meaning we had to start swimming immediately! Unfortunately, that is where we ran into

our first glitch... none of the kayaks were ready to go. There were 3 kayaks that had to be lifted over a highway guardrail, and lowered down a drop off to the beach... all over giant boulders with no discernible path.

The mosquitoes were bad and the clock was ticking. So as the saying goes, time nor tide waits for no WomAn - off we went without kayak support, and with the vague yet obvious instruction to "follow the bridge!" from the boat captain.

Stacey and I set out at about 7:05 am. The waves were crashing around us but the water felt warm. The start was hairy for sure. High waves and a strong current pushing us west. Murky water and imposing bridge pillars to our left. We stuck together with the fishing boat to our right and all the kayaks and kayakers, my husband Kevin, my niece Annelies and her boyfriend Stijn from Belgium and Stacey's sister, Carrie... on the BEACH. Sigh. There went our feeding and navigation plan out the window from the get go.

We managed to stay together for the first hour, fighting the current and waves and keeping to the right of the bridge pillars. After almost being dashed against a large boulder at the base of a pillar, I finally yelled to the boat captain, do we need to stay on this side? To which he replied, "You really have no control over that."

All righty then.

So Stacey and I let the current sweep us to the other side of the pillars with still no kayaks in sight. And that is about the same point where we got separated. The fishing boat was now out of sight for me and if I wasn't so busy trying to sight the bridge and not take in any more salt water, I might have started freaking out.

When Kevin, Stijn and Annelies appeared I was so relieved. Kevin said that they had quite a struggle trying to catch up to us. I was desperately thirsty, and drank a bunch of water before having a gel. It was very difficult to stay put for the kayak and myself, so very little chit chat and off we went. Since the initial navigation plan (boat leading - kayakers sight boat - swimmers sight kayaks) was history, my new navigation plan was to sight the bridge. Which is a good plan if there are no currents. I basically swam at a 45 degree angle towards PEI for the remainder of the swim.

About this time the fishing boat sped up to us and the captain gave us a thumbs up. I asked him if I needed to stay with the bridge, and he said, "Forget the bridge, swim for the island!" I cannot tell a lie. Our response was, "What #€%£ing island?" But they didn't hear that and the boat sped off west, where Stacey was swimming. We were so far apart across the strait, we couldn't even see each others' kayaks.

My neck and shoulders were really starting to ache at this point, so I asked Kevin to take over navigating and I could just keep to his right. He saw a barn roof in the distance and we stuck to that destination point, still keeping fairly close to the bridge. I was starting to also feel very cold and the shivering started. I found out later that Stacey also started shivering at this point in the swim as well, but she thought she was shivering from lack of nutrition since she had started vomiting after the first hour of the swim. Yes. She had some good, old-fashioned sea-sickness to contend with on top of everything else!! She continued to throw up for the entire duration of the swim. I personally do not think I could have completed the swim if I had to throw up for four hours straight, while attempting this crossing.

Finally, the shore came into view, the water warmed and the tides started to come in. It was still tough, but I reached the island, just to the west of the bridge at around 11:50am. Stacey landed on the east side of the bridge, about 15 minutes later.

I guess if it was easy, everybody would be doing it.

Lynn De Lathouwer-Rodgers

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