



Northumberland Man 19th July, 2014

Swim #3 - Practice for 'Bigger Swim'

Jeremy Davidson



Stepping into the water at approximately 06:45 on a quiet Saturday morning at Cape Tourmentine, I had no idea what the Strait had in mind for me a few hours later.

Using the Sleeveless Wet Suit so generously donated by [Xterra](#), for my upcoming event in August, and the leg support floaters that come in VERY handy at times, I started what I thought would be my third crossing of the Northumberland Strait. My 'Bigger Swim' event, scheduled for the 23rd of August, 2014, is going to be the greatest challenge I have faced in my very limited long-distance swimming history, and I need all the training and experience that I can manage to fit in during the next few weeks. However, I wasn't planning to practice swimming backwards for two hours!



I don't think I will ever get used to being stung all over my face and arms by the local Jellyfish that inhabit these waters, but before I was even half way across my left arm was so swollen that my wonderful Kayak Support Team member, J Knight, became concerned. Nevertheless, with quite a bit of water still to put behind us there was nothing else to be done but persevere and carry on. Lion's Mane and Moon Jellyfish be damned!

At about three and a half hours things went almost instantly from bad to worse when I found myself being bobbed and bounced round like a lost cork in a washing machine. In 12+ years in the Navy I had more than a few experiences of being battered and bruised from head to toe as the result of heavy weather at sea. Out here however, it was just me and my faithful support team, including Capt. Hanson and his crew standing by onboard

his fishing boat, and the experience of being in those conditions while swimming have to be experienced to be believed; frankly, I don't even think that I would feel safe taking on this task in a kayak!

For two whole hours, although I was swimming as hard as I possibly could, all I was able to manage was to keep myself on the landmark ahead (that is, when I could actually see it), while going backwards! After drinking what seemed like gallons of sea water, and getting dizzy and light-headed from all the bobbing and bouncing around, I realized that I was swimming three times as hard, and accomplishing nothing except letting myself be pulled back by the tide and its currents. With several more hours of tide to contend with, I decided to choose an alternative landing area and angled myself which in effect allowed me to swim 'downhill' using the tide in favor of endlessly working against it.

After what seemed like an eternity, we came ashore at Cape Traverse just after 2 pm. Although I still have quite a bit to learn, I have to admit that now I am more determined than ever to successfully swim across and back in a few short weeks. After all, unlike my dad and some of the folks that he has come to know through the Neil Squire Society, my swim isn't a Chronic Life-Long challenge, and I feel that if they can get the job done with all the challenges they face, then I can too!

THANKS

Of course, none of this would be possible without the support from J. Knight, Capt. Hanson & Crew, [Ecological Adventures](#) for the Kayak and superb gear, and to [Aqua Sphere](#) for swimming gear.

My wife and children waiting patiently on the other side and getting up so early for my past swims; she is the time keeper and my biggest support.

Finally, to all the wonderful people at the [Neil Squire Society](#) who have done so much for my Dad, that I just had to give something back !

I hope that you can give a little something too?

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