

2006 WEST BAY SWIM, PORTRUSH

The 2006 West Bay swim took place in ideal conditions on 17th June. Now for anyone who is in the dark, this swim consists of being taken out in a boat from Portrush Harbour to the Black Rock (meant to be 1km away) where you're booted off and you swim back.

This event is part of the Long Distance Swimmers Association (channel swimmers to you and me, no wetsuits, mad!) and is organised by Coleraine Borough Council.

There are only 25 places available for the wetsuit swimmers, so it pays to get your entry in quick. Five lucky sole's from the club took their places in the boat. Ed McCullagh, Michael Waring, Alan Paul, Reg Swallow and myself.

This was the first time for Ed, Alan & Reg and it was a nervous time for them going out in the boat further and further and fu... until we arrived at the Black Rock. The water temperature was a very warm 12c (lovely) with no wave chop, so hooter off and everyone into their sprint mode.

Ed took off like a rocket, I quickly came to the decision that he was going to quick for a slow coach like me, but I spied big Mick in his snazzy hat and went for him. Did I catch him? Like hell!

It was quite apparent from the finishing times that this year's swim was longer than in the past. Ed finished in second place in a time of 16.30 mins. The rest of us finished in times of the following: Michael Waring 17.20, Tommy Linton 17.30, Reg Swallow 19.30 and Alan Paul 20.10.

Congratulations to all. I really enjoy this event, its low key with a bit of serious training/fun. I spoke to the organiser on expanding this swim; he is keen to see more wetsuit swimmers and is hoping to increase numbers next year. So keep your ear out if you're interested for next year's wee dip.

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