

International
marathon
swimming
Hall of Fame

54 Anniversary

CONVERSATION CORNER

September, 2016

Interview by Ned Denison, IRE. Class of 2012 Inductee
and current Executive Member of IMSHOF

Sally Minty-Gravett, M.B.E, UK. 2005 IMSHOF Inductee

Fast Facts:

English Channel Double and Solos in five different decades (and 2020 booked for six!), Chair of the Jersey Long Distance Swimming Club for 25 years and taught/mentored the world's largest marathon community (26 English Channel Swimmers – some with several swims) with the smallest general population of 100,000.



Early swimming days, the move to Open Water and the Open Water Swimming community in the early days:

Sally moved from Africa to Jersey (in the Channel Islands near France) at age of 3. She learned to swim in the only pool - a lido in the sea. The first indoor pool came at age 12 and hence winter training, more swimmers and speed. Sally moved to longer distances through the challenges of mentor Morris Lakeman: *“Let’s see if you can swim 4 miles from here to way over there.”* By age 17 she completed the 10.5 mile Lake Windermere swim – her first “epic” marathon.

Famous People Along the Way:

Sally is one of the famous channel swimmers and “grew up” with the greats in Dover: Alison, Kevin, Mike, Des, Penny...

The Swims:

Sally's smile after her recent English Channel Double remains. Other highlights include a 1975 Channel Centenary Relay (2nd of 9 teams with average age under 15) and The Windemere Internationals of 1978, 82 and 86.

The toughest swims – very close to home. What started as a simple 5 miles around the Island of Sark in a group – encountered adverse tides and took nearly 5 hours. Jersey to France – never easy.

Lot's left to do! Sally still looks at Rottneest, Cook Strait and Gibraltar.

Olympic 10k Marathon Swim:

Sally prefers the epic swims: point A to B or around an island. Swimming around red, yellow or orange buoys hasn't the same satisfaction.

One thing to Change about Open Water/Marathon Swimming:

Just be transparent – say what you plan to do and what you did. A long swim announcement is fantastic news - just remember to say that you wore a wetsuit.

Training and Staying Injury Free:

In the era of 30,000 to 50,000/week training plans, physios and shoulder injuries – Sally has a different approach. In the winter: spinning, weight, running and maybe 7k in the pool each week. In the summer a base of 15k/week with the occasional 5- hour swim. Into her fifth decade as a record setter – injury free. Part of the secret is a great "***big swim confidence and memory***".

Today:

Sally's year proved to be memorable: moved to part time pool teaching – with all holidays off in December, husband Charlie Gravett's announced induction to the IMSHOF in March, honoured with a M.B.E. in June and her English Channel Double in August.

End with A Chuckle:

Some swimmers finish this big swim in a desperate condition. Near the end of her Double she asked about a time check and smiled – to the minute the 41st anniversary of completing her first solo.

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