

23RD AUGUST 2003

ERIC BLAKELEY – JERSEY SWIMMER

Pamela and Geoffrey Masden

- Sally greased Eric - with 'banter' – appeared to enjoy it!
- Six boats with swimmers preparing for start – weather cloudy but relatively warm

Sea Satin / Aegean Blue / Ocean Breeze / Viking Princess / Sea Farer / Plus One - Eric Blakeley

07.45 Eric started from Shakespeare Beach – settled down and swimming well

08.16 Stroke rate 62/min

08.26 Sally preparing first feed – sink on deck! SeaCat passing by South Easterly

08.42 Sally rang Jersey local radio to update.

Informed Geoff, Liz and Pam that Eric had climbed 7 highest summits and, once swim completed today, will be only person to have done both. We are with someone who is going to be famous or, as Sally said, “a loveable pratt”

08.48 First feed – feeling fine “fastest half hour” – still has a sense of humour! (Maxim and Blackcurrant)

09.00 Stroke rate 61/min

09.32 Swimming well – SeaCat passing, yacht, ferries, 2 naval vessels (one being towed). Geoff making everyone a cup of tea!

09.48 Second feed – Maxim and Blackcurrant. Sally asked Eric if ok – “yes, any news from home”. Said he would like chocolate bar with next feed. All swimmers' boats appear consistent with speed. Sky clearing, sun may get out.

10.00 Swim stroke rate: 61/min

10.48 Third feed – Hot chocolate drink with coffee and chocolate bar Had a 'pee' – feeling fine

Sally updated Eric on calls from various people/friends. Eddie asked if we would inform him when Eric finished feeds and started swimming – Eric leaving boat behind!!

Sun coming through the clouds.

11.00 Stroke rate 58/min

Jane rang for information – Sally told her he was on third hourly feed – Jane commented that it sounded like baby and hoped his wasn't on the boob!

11.15 Water temperature 21°C

11.31 In shipping lane. Divers going down to wreck on starboard side.

11.48 Fourth feed – Maxim and blackcurrant plus chocolate bar. Eric feeling fine – chatting/laughing. Sally gave news of home. Sun keeps disappearing – plenty of swell from various shipping. Went to toilet again. Asked by Sally if wanted half-hour feed next, but Eric declined said ok for one-hour feed Ships appear to be coming at us from all directions! Managing to dodge nicely!

11.55 'Argonant' freight ship altered course slightly for us – very polite!

12.00 Swim stroke 57/min. 'Nordatlantic' tanker passing by – also altered course slightly. Our boat crew chatting – no good working on that – NO SMOKING!

12.28 Eddie says tide changed early – to Eric's advantage at moment. Yes!

12.48 Fifth feed – Maxim and blackcurrant plus chocolate bar. Eric happy with himself – jovial – very focussed – still wants hourly feeds. Sally gave messages and did some coaching – better late than never! Eddie cooking sausages behind me – yuk!

13.00 Stroke rate 56/min

13.49 Sixth feed (had to wait for waves to flatten) – Maxim gel with strawberry plus Cadbury's chocolate. Eric very alert – no problems, even though Sally hit him on the neck when throwing bottle in! Updated on telephone calls Went to toilet

14.00 Stroke rate 58/min – water calmed more. No sun but bright Small amounts of debris floating by – plastic bag, paper etc

14.20 Gave a warm drink of hypertonic with Lucozade gel. Now going to half hourly feeds

14.50 Maxim gel and Maxim , plus two squares of chocolate. Eric said he was ok but that his stomach was a little bloated – asked for half cup of chocolate only at next feed. Sea quite calm; sun still trying to break through clouds Eric was able to give his date of birth to Sally (09-01-65) – Sally tried to get him by saying 7th but he corrected her!!

15.00 Stroke rate 55/min – sun out

- 15.20 Chocolate mint drink – messages given – short stop. Eric told he was half way – was very pleased – told us name of his daughter. Everything fine
- 15.47 Drink of orange (lime & lemon?) – nothing to eat. Eric alert and talkative Sally going to surprise him for next feed – maybe taking her clothes off!! Eric said that would surprise him. Sea flattened off. 8 hours – in shipping lane going opposite way – excellent!!
- 16.00 Swim rate 56/min
- 16.19 Maxim gel and hot water. Eric in excellent spirits – bantering. 10 hrs wants bacon/chicken sandwich and pork pie (port would also be acceptable) and champagne on ice for the finish! No problems with toilet!!
- 16.48 Hot coffee (black) with fruit sugar. Very short stop – ok – into stroke. Think we can forget sun today!!
- 17.01 Stroke rate 56/min. All ok – Jane on telephone asking after Eric. Liz chatting with crew. Geoff watching Eric. Pam – I was trying to write legibly! Some weed around but not causing Eric any problems
- 17.18 Apple and blackcurrant water plus chocolate squares. Messages given – talkative – in good spirits. “Winkle Nip” story to be told – see Sally!
- 17.39 Just for a change – half hourly report – stroke rate consistent at 57/min. France very clear and detailed landscape
- 17.47 Half sandwich as requested, Lucozade Sport and hot water. Swimming well
- 18.00 Stroke rate 56/min. 4 ½ miles from France
- 18.19 Short drink stop – blackcurrant and apple cordial (hot)
- 18.30 Stroke rate up to 58/min
- 18.47 Hot Maxim – very short stop – drink only. Sally asked if company required – “no thanks” – happy
- 19.18 Diluted Lucozade Sport drink/half chicken and bacon sandwich Still in good humour – asked if it was too late for a two-way swim!! Dusk starting to fall. Sally asked Eric to separate straps on his goggles so that light stick could be attached at next feed. Eric obliged.
- 19.44 Sea Osprey VERY CLOSE approx 50’. Stroke rate 57/min. On return journey, Lance’s boat and crew “popped by” to say hello and offer encouragement. Nice touching thought – typical of Federation
- 19.50 Hot Lucozade Sport with gel. Pam went in and attached light stick to back of Eric’s trunks. Had problem with filming during attachment of light stick

- 20.00 Swim rate 57/min
- 20.15 Blackcurrant squash and small portion of port pie. No problems – happy with light stick. Darkness closing in now
- 20.42 Maxim gel and hot water. Sally encouraged Eric and asked him to “dig a little deeper” – told him that flash light would indicate feed/alter direction slightly
- 21.15 Isotonic drink – short stop – in good spirits. Water flat but swell occasionally Eric asked for chocolate next feed. Reg Brickle’s relay swim just passed on return journey home. Dark now but Eric easily seen
- 21.42 Hot mint chocolate drink with Maxim – two squares of chocolate Eric said he was feeling a little tired, when asked, but was ok – asked how far to go (no answer). Swim stroke rate 56/min . Sea still flat – dark but Eric still clearly seen. Aegean Blue still behind us
- 22.15 Hot chocolate and Maxim drink plus chocolate squares. Feels ok – realises going down slightly with tide – not been for a pee for a while.
- 22.30 Swim rate 55/min
- 22.50 Hot Maxim only – still jovial – what an amazing guy. Quick turn round Still a few gulls flying – sky quite clear and plenty of stars – “Plough” just above us. Mobile phone keeps ringing for updates and best wishes
- 23.15 Strawberry flavoured Maxim gel – didn’t drink much – Sally gave messages from wife and friends
- 23.30 Stroke rate 55/min
- 23.45 Small amount of Maxim Isotonic gel drink. Eddie informed Eric that tide about to change – going to be difficult but can get there. Eric fine with this Been to toilet!

SUNDAY 24TH AUGUST 2003

- 00.15 Isotonic Maxim drink. Sally asked Eric for that extra push now to get us into shallow water. Still positive and swimming at rate of 55/min
- 00.45 Isotonic Maxim drink – drank slightly more than previously. Stroke rate 55/min. Very dark out but lights getting brighter in France! Who’s tired????
- 01.15 Wanted Milky Way only – throat quite “rasping” and repeating food. In good spirit – asking what the time was
- 01.30 Stroke rate 52/min

- 01.45 Mixed fruit squash drink only. Asked how far – Sally said approximately one mile and that land was on radar. Eric’s reply: “I still can’t stand up”!! Wind in Eric’s face, water chopping a little. Stroke rate 52/min
- 02.00 Stroke rate 52/min. Depth: 58’. Sally wanted to know what was sticking up in the distance? It was the moon!!
- 02.11 Eric said feeling sick and may have to stop a little – asked how long to go Sally told Eric to stop whenever and gave depth of water
- 02.42 Stroke rate 53/min. Eric seems to have settled down again. Approximately 1 ½ miles to go
- 02.57 Didn’t want a drink – wanted to know how far – unable to give definite answer. Stroke rate 56/min
- 03.15 Stroke rate 54/min. Breathing a little laboured occasionally. Liz now asleep sitting up!
- 03.40 Stroke rate 54/min. No conversation but swimming ok – obviously wants to get home!
- 04.00 Pam got in water to swim with Eric. Boat put anchor down. Both swam ashore.

ERIC CLEARED WATER BY REQUIRED DISTANCE AT 04.15

No pebbles to be found on beach. Swam back to boat. Eric dried, dressed with the help of Sally and Liz, had some food and went to BED for a well earned rest Eric, what a swim, what a guy!

Text messages received:

John Faria	Fantastic
Dario	Hooray
Ali	Hooray
Helen	Wow! Well done to all
Charlie	Great news well done Eric brilliant
Richard F	Have a good sleep Good swim – now his new job starts!
Dave Minty	Well done
Sammy	Fantastic news Well done Eric your amazing a hero we will proudly be welcoming home. Congratulations you did it. Well done to Eddie, Sally and crew
Lance	Well done Eric