

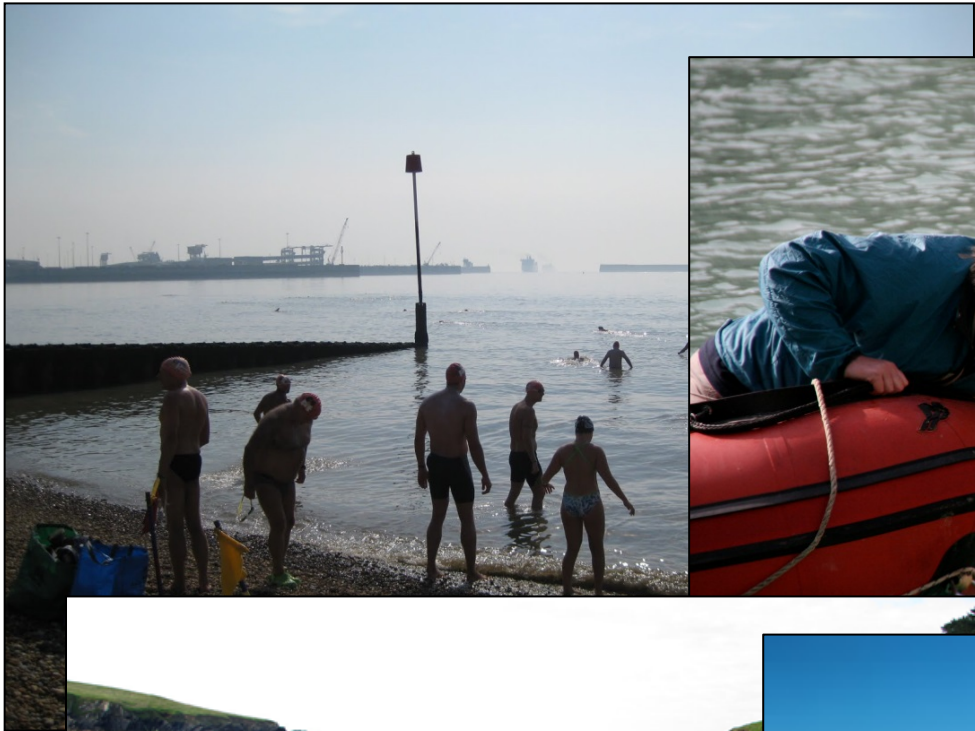
Immersion: Boundaries and Borders in Marathon Swimming

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(auto)ethnography





www.thelongswim.blogspot.com

The Long Swim

WEDNESDAY, 16 MARCH 2016

Why wetsuits aren't biscuits....

I had a conversation last week with a prospective English Channel swimmer who wants to start getting some outdoor distance under her belt as soon as possible, but doesn't live close enough to an open water venue to make it worth what would inevitably be relatively short dips at first because of the early season cold. Her suggestion to some marathon swimming friends that she might use a wetsuit in the spring as part of her training had been met with derision, arguing that she needed to acclimatise, and that she risked becoming dependent on the wetsuit in ways that would damage her Channel swimming plans.

This latter is one of the core objections from within the marathon swimming community to the use of wetsuits - that they create a dependence both in terms of body position in the water and their insulating effects. This talk of the risks of over-reliance on wetsuits reminds me of the conversations that happen routinely among dieters - that some foods have to be avoided because we can't be trusted around them. The 'biscuit' (or cookie, for my US friends) is the conventional unit of risk in these discussions - that you can't afford to have biscuits in the house because of the risk that you won't be able to stop eating them.

TWITTER



LINKS

[Becoming a Channel swimmer \(research website\)](#)

ABOUT ME

 **Karen Throsby**

Coventry, West Midlands, United Kingdom

Hi, I'm Karen, and in September 2010, I swam the English Channel. I've also swum Round Jersey

A photograph of two people jumping from the back of a boat into a large body of water. The person on the left is wearing a blue and white geometric patterned swimsuit and a red swim cap, with their arms raised in a 'V' shape. The person on the right is wearing black swim trunks and a bright yellow swim cap, with their arms bent. The background shows a calm lake, distant green hills, and a small town under a clear sky. The boat's green railing is visible at the bottom.

New
Ethnographies

Immersion

Marathon swimming,
embodiment and identity

KAREN THROSBY

“80% mental and 20% physical”





MAN VS OCEAN

by Adam Walker

Adam Walker is not your everyday record-breaking sportsman. He took on arguably the toughest extreme sport on the planet - to swim non-stop across seven of the world's deadliest oceans wearing only swim trunks, cap and goggles. It is not a test for the faint-hearted: swimmers face **FREEZING** temperatures huge **SWELLS**, treacherous **CURRENTS** potentially **DEADLY** marine life (from **SHARKS** to Portuguese men o' war) vomiting and **BURNING** off a week's calories in a single swim!





