

**The Liffey Swim:  
The 1960's Decade – Part 2  
1963 – 1965**

*Cyril J Smyth*

*Dublin University Central Athletic Club, Sports Centre,  
Trinity College, University of Dublin, Dublin 2*

**The 1963 Liffey Swim**

The handicap for the limit men was extended to 6 min and 10 sec.<sup>102</sup> Striving to wear the Liffey Swim crown for a second time were four previous winners – Tommy May (1956, Dublin SC), Cyril Hardy (1957, Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 2 min 55 sec), Seán Heffernan (Clontarf SC, 1960, handicap 4 min) and 13-year-old Tony Byrne (the holder, Dublin SC, handicap 3 min 40 sec).<sup>102,103</sup>

Among the entries there was a sprinkling of familiar names of those who had competed in most, if not all, of the Liffey Swims over the previous 12 years – Neil Kennedy (Dublin SC, handicap 5 min 50 sec), Willie Kearney (Dublin SC, handicap 5 min 20 sec), John “Jackie” Kearney (Dublin SC, handicap 5 min 10 sec), Ultan Kerrigan (North Dublin WSC, limit man) and the oldest competitor, 34-year-old Michael Kelly (Clontarf SC, 4 min 50 sec).<sup>102,103</sup>

The scratch man was very much the ‘new kid on the block’, a 15-year-old Synge Street CBS schoolboy, Donnacha O’Dea (Club Snámha Columcille), who had hit the limelight that season with a series of remarkable wins in open sea events and in swimming championships.<sup>103</sup> He won the Dublin SC 1,000 yards swim<sup>104</sup>, the Kilmartin Cup 1¼-mile swim at Bray<sup>105–107</sup>, and the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Scratch Swim.<sup>108,109</sup> and was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Half Moon SC open sea race for the John Clarke Cup in the fastest time.<sup>110,111</sup>

At the Leinster Swimming Championships Donnacha O’Dea won the men’s 800 m freestyle title<sup>112</sup> and the men’s 400 m freestyle title, in a new Irish under-16 record and Leinster Senior record of 5:01.3<sup>113</sup>, and placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Senior 100 m butterfly championship<sup>114,115</sup> and 200 m freestyle championship<sup>116</sup>, both to Jeff Allen, a South African student from Gormanston College. He also won the under-16 100-m butterfly championship<sup>116</sup> and under-16 200-m individual medley<sup>114,115</sup> and placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the under-16 100 m freestyle to Owen Corrigan<sup>113</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the under-16 100-m backstroke to Anthony Brophy (Gormanston College SC) and Liam Mortimer (North Dublin WSC).<sup>117</sup>

At the Irish National Swimming Championships O’Dea won the men’s 400m freestyle championship, in a new Irish Junior record<sup>118</sup> and Leinster Senior record time, the 800 m freestyle crown, cutting 16.1 sec of the Irish record<sup>119</sup>, and the 1,500 m freestyle championship, the latter in a new Leinster record time of 20:57.3.<sup>120,121</sup> He

also won the Boys under-16 400-m freestyle championship, shaving 4.9 sec off the record<sup>122</sup>, was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the men's 200 m butterfly to Owen Corrigan<sup>123</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Boys under-16 100-m butterfly.<sup>119</sup>



**Donnacha O'Dea with Senior 400 m Cup**  
*(Irish Independent, 26 August, 1963, pg. 12)*

The 1963 line-up included several other talented swimmers. Owen Corrigan (Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 15 sec), a Gormanston student – runner-up the previous year, fastest swimmer in 1961 and 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest swimmer in 1962 – who placed 4<sup>th</sup> from scratch in the Island Swim from Ireland's Eye to Balscadden Beach at Howth in the fastest time.<sup>124</sup> He won the Leinster men's 100-m butterfly championship in an Irish and Leinster record time of 1:10.0.<sup>125</sup> Paul Emmett (Half Moon SC, handicap 3 min 10 sec) won the Independent Gold medal for the Ireland's Eye to Howth swim<sup>124</sup>, was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 1½-mile Vico swim race<sup>126,127</sup>, and placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the Lough Owel 1-mile Swim.<sup>128,129</sup> Anthony Brophy (Sandycove SC, handicap 30 sec), another Gormanston pupil, won the Coughlan Cup for the Lough Owel 1-mile swim<sup>128,129</sup> and the Chicago Cup event at the Muinebeag SC Gala<sup>125</sup> and was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Dublin SC 1,000 yards swim.<sup>104</sup> In addition he was Leinster under-16 100-m freestyle champion<sup>113</sup> and under-16 100-m backstroke champion<sup>117</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Leinster under-16 100-m breaststroke championship<sup>114</sup>, and silver medallist in the Irish National boys under-16 400-m championship<sup>116</sup>, men's 100 m backstroke<sup>118</sup> and men's 800 m freestyle.<sup>112</sup>

Séamus Heffernan (Clontarf SC, handicap 2½ min) had recorded several very good distance swim performances – winner of the 1½-mile Vico swim race for the Murray Trophy<sup>126,127</sup>, 4th in the Dublin SC 1,000 yards swim<sup>104</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Kilmartin Cup at Bray<sup>105–107</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Scratch Swim<sup>108,109</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Half Moon SC open sea swim for the Clarke Cup at South Wall.<sup>110,111</sup> Nicholas Smith (Dublin SC, handicap 1 min 20 sec), scratch man in 1962 and fastest swimmer, placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Swim<sup>108,109</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in the Ireland’s Eye to Howth swim.<sup>124</sup>

Among those with longer handicaps were a few dark horses: Colm O’Brien (Half Moon SC, handicap 5 min 20 sec), 5<sup>th</sup> in 1962, who placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Plunkett–McAllister Cup race from Clontarf Yacht Club slipway to Clontarf Baths over about 1 mile<sup>131,132</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> in the Vico swim race<sup>126,127</sup>; D. O’Donoghue (Pembroke SC, handicap 5 min 10 sec), who had come 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Kilmartin Cup race at Bray<sup>105–107</sup>; Anthony “Tony” Quane (Guinness SC, handicap 4 min 30 sec), who was 5<sup>th</sup> in the Plunkett–McAllister Cup race from Clontarf Yacht Club slipway to Clontarf Baths over about 1 mile<sup>131,132</sup>; and J. O’Sullivan (Guinness SC, handicap 5 min), who was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Lough Owel 1-mile Swim<sup>128,129</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> in the Half Moon SC-sponsored 1,500 yards Clarke Cup open sea swim at South Wall.<sup>110,111</sup>

New clubs were represented for the first time in the Liffey Swim by Eamon Healy (Metropolitan SC, handicap not published) and Des Hickey (Nomads SC, formerly Crusade Aquatic Club, limit man), a backstroker, who was the Art Editor of the Sunday Independent and sole representative of Independent Newspapers Ltd in the race.<sup>133</sup>

The prize list for the 44<sup>th</sup> Liffey Swim was published<sup>133</sup>:

| Race Place | Prize                            |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| 1          | Independent Cup and Gold Medal   |
| 2          | Silver Medal & prize             |
| 3          | Silver Medal & prize             |
| 4          | Set of fruit spoons              |
| 5          | Triple pen set (pen-biro-pencil) |
| 6          | Electric alarm clock             |
| 7          | Carving set                      |
| 8          | Dual pen set                     |
| 9          | Travel clock                     |
| 10         | Gents cuff-links & tie pin       |

| Fastest Swim | Prize                     |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| 1            | Philishave electric razor |
| 2            | Cutlery set               |
| 3            | Electric clock            |

After a gap of 11 years the *Independent Cup* and Gold medal went to a Half Moon SC competitor, 14-year-old Colm O'Brien from Clanbrassil Street, Dublin, continuing the 1960's 'water babe' theme of the Liffey Swim.<sup>134-136</sup> He had been introduced to swimming by his brother, Bert O'Brien, two years previously. This was only his second attempt at the event.

From the moment he entered the Liffey's waters, he set a gruelling pace. He was up with the leading group after Capel Street Bridge (Grattan Bridge). Once he passed Tony King (Dublin SC), a limit man, near the Ha'penny Bridge, the race was his to lose. He varied his strokes judiciously from the Metal Bridge (Ha'penny Bridge) to the finish keeping a wary eye on those in pursuit of him who were trying to take the winner's laurels. He won by 25 yards from the fast-finishing Anthony "Tony" Quane (Guinness SC, handicap 4 min 30 sec) of St Clare's Avenue, Harold's Cross, Dublin.<sup>134-136</sup>



**Colm O'Brien (Half Moon SC), winner of Liffey Swim holding the *Independent Cup*  
(*Irish Independent*, 14 August, 1963, pg. 10)**

Third place went to Liam Mortimer (North Dublin WSC, handicap 4 min) of Fishamble Street off the Quays, who was the youngest swimmer in the event at 13 years of age. Mortimer's storming bid to close over the second half of the race was reported as one of the highlight of the event. Tony King, a backstroker, battled to eventually finish 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>134-136</sup>

The prize for the fastest time went unsurprisingly to the scratch man, Donnacha O'Dea (Club Snámha Columcille), who finished in 16<sup>th</sup> position. His time of 20:35 was a new Irish Native Record, eclipsing that set by Nicholas Smith (Dublin SC) the previous year of 21:29.<sup>134-136</sup> Donnacha O'Dea is the son of Irish actors Denis O'Dea<sup>137</sup> and Siobhán McKenna.<sup>138</sup> The second fastest time of 22:20 was set by Anthony Brophy (Sandycove SC & Gormanston SC) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest time of 22:23 by Des Carney (Club Snámha Columcille).<sup>134-136</sup>



**The Lord Mayor, Alderman Seán Moore, presenting the *Independent Cup* to Colm O'Brien (Half Moon SC), with Mr Brian Barry (centre), President of the Leinster Branch, Irish Amateur Swimming Association  
(*Irish Independent*, 14 August, 1963, pg. 1)**

The battle for the team prize between Half Moon SC and Club Snámha Columcille was the most thrilling for years, with interested spectators trying to do quick calculations on the outcome. When the teams were deadlocked on 40 pts each, it was decided to present four extra replicas of the team shield, with the clubs holding the Independent Newspapers Trophy for six months each. The placings for Half Moon SC were Colm O'Brien 1<sup>st</sup>, Mick Fitzpatrick 10<sup>th</sup>, Paul Byrne 14<sup>th</sup> and Jake Elliott 15<sup>th</sup> and for Club Snámha Columcille, Seán Farrell 6<sup>th</sup>, Seán Ormsby 7<sup>th</sup>, Des Carney 11<sup>th</sup>, and Donnacha O'Dea 16<sup>th</sup>.<sup>134-136</sup>

The prizes were presented by the Lord Mayor, Alderman Seán Moore, at a reception and dinner in the Clarence Hotel.

**Top 10 finishers:** <sup>134–136</sup>

| Place | Name                       | Age | Club                   | Handicap*    | Nett Time |
|-------|----------------------------|-----|------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1     | Colm O'Brien               | 14  | Half Moon SC           | 5 min 20 sec | 24:25     |
| 2     | Anthony "Tony" Quane       | 14  | Guinness SC            | 4 min 30 sec | 23:52     |
| 3     | Liam Mortimer              | 13  | North Dublin WSC       | 4 min        | 23:34     |
| 4     | J. O'Sullivan              |     | Guinness SC            | 5 min        | 24:38     |
| 5     | Anthony "Tony" King        | 13  | Dublin SC              | 6 min 10 sec | 25:55     |
| 6     | Seán Farrell               |     | Club Snámha Columcille | 5 min 40 sec | 25:34     |
| 7     | Seán Ormsby                |     | Club Snámha Columcille | 5 min 40 sec | 26:05     |
| 8     | Ultan Kerrigan             |     | North Dublin SC        | 6 min 10 sec | 26:10     |
| 9     | D. O'Donoghue              |     | Pembroke SC            | 5 min 10 sec | 27:18     |
| 10    | Michael "Mick" Fitzpatrick | 25  | Half Moon SC           | 5 min 40 sec | 26:03     |

\*Time ahead of scratch man

## The 1964 Liffey Swim

For the Sapphire Jubilee Liffey Swim the handicap for the limit men was shortened to 4 min 40 sec.<sup>130,139,140</sup> The entries included four former winners of the race trying for an historic second title – Seán Heffernan (Clontarf SC, 1960, handicap 2 min 40 sec), Cyril Hardy (1957, Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 2 min 10 sec), Anthony Byrne (1962, Dublin SC, handicap 1 min 55 sec), and Colm O'Brien (the holder, Half Moon SC, handicap 1 min 55 sec).<sup>130,139,140</sup>

In the absence of Donnacha O'Dea (Club Snámha Columcille), who was in Spain, there were two scratch swimmers.<sup>130,139,140</sup> One of these was Anthony Brophy (Gormanston College SC). Swimming off scratch at 6 min 12 sec, Brophy had placed 7<sup>th</sup> in the Island Swim from Ireland's Eye to Balcadden Beach, Howth, breaking the five-year-old record for the course when clocking 19 min 55 sec.<sup>141,142</sup> He took 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the annual ½-mile swim at Clontarf for the Plunkett–McAllister Cup in the fastest time, again off scratch at 4 min.<sup>143</sup> In the Kilmartin Cup race at Bray, swimming off scratch at 6 min 50 sec, he clocked the fastest time<sup>144,145</sup>, and in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Swim for the *Irish Times* Trophy, he placed 8<sup>th</sup>.<sup>146,147</sup>

Tony Brophy's nemesis in the pool was Donnacha O'Dea. He was runner-up to O'Dea in several championship events – Leinster 200 m freestyle<sup>148,149</sup> and 400 m freestyle<sup>150,151</sup> and the Irish National 800 m freestyle.<sup>152</sup> He placed 3<sup>rd</sup> on the touch to 33-year-old Francis Hayes (Bangor SC) from Wexford, the Royal Navy 440 yards and 880 yards freestyle champion, in the Irish National 1,500 m championship, again won by O'Dea.<sup>153,154</sup> However, he did claim the Leinster 'Blue Riband' event, the men's 100 m freestyle crown<sup>155</sup>, and the 100 m backstroke title<sup>150,151</sup>, the latter in new Irish and Leinster record figures of 1:10.4, and won the Irish National 100 m backstroke title, setting an Irish record of 1:08.5, a time well up with international standards of the day, and the 200 m backstroke crown.<sup>156,157</sup>

The other scratch man was Owen Corrigan (Gormanston College SC)<sup>130,139,140</sup>, an accomplished distance swimmer with an established Liffey Swim pedigree. In the Leinster Swimming Championships he too found himself at the losing end to Donnacha O’Dea and/or Anthony Brophy. Corrigan was runner-up in the men’s 100 m butterfly<sup>158,159</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 200 m freestyle<sup>148,149</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 400 m freestyle<sup>150,151</sup>. At the Irish National Championships he was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 400 m freestyle<sup>157</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 800 m freestyle<sup>151</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> in 200 m butterfly<sup>160,161</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 100 m butterfly.<sup>162,163</sup>

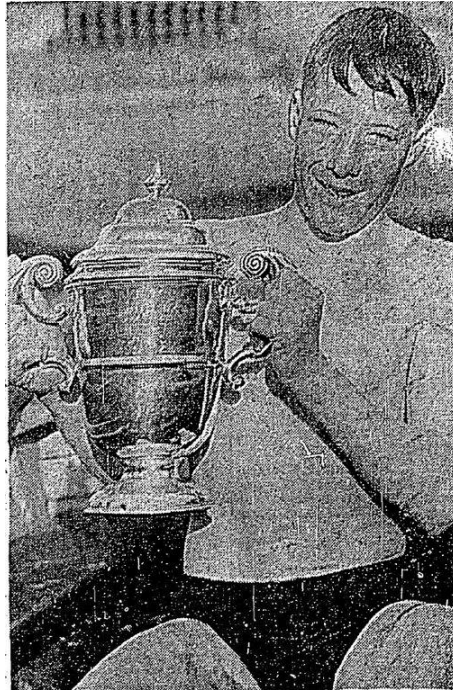
Three ‘veteran’ Liffey swimmers from Dublin SC were making their 14<sup>th</sup> attempts at the title – Neil Kennedy (limit man), Willie Kearney (handicap 4 min) and Jackie Kearney (handicap 3 min 50 sec). In 1962 Jackie Kearney won the Kilmartin Cup race at Bray and his brother Willie won the Crusade Aquatic Club 1-mile swim at Clontarf the same year.<sup>130</sup> Willie Kearney had won the Nore Swim at Kilkenny in 1960 and his brother Jackie, the same race the following year.

Other competitors attracting potential winners’ odds were: Des Carney (Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 30 sec), a 17-year-old, winner of the Findlater Cup for the Dublin SC 1,000 yards open sea race<sup>164,165</sup> and of the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Swim for the *Irish Times* Trophy<sup>146,147</sup>; Douglas Dowling (Half Moon SC, handicap 2 min 30 sec), winner of the Plunkett–McAllister Cup swim<sup>143</sup> and of the Island Swim from Ireland’s Eye to Balcadden Beach, Howth<sup>141,142</sup>; Kevin Page (North Dublin WSC, handicap 35 sec), the 1963 winner of the Plunkett–McAllister Cup race from Clontarf Yacht Club to Clontarf Baths<sup>131,132</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in the current year<sup>143</sup>; Séamus Heffernan (Clontarf SC, handicap 45 sec), 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Findlater Cup swim from Blackrock Baths to Seapoint Baths<sup>164,165</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> in the Howth Island race<sup>141,142</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> in the Kilmartin Cup race at Bray<sup>144,145</sup>; Séamus Hamilton (North Dublin SC, handicap 1 min 55 sec), 4<sup>th</sup> in the Plunkett–McAllister swim at Clontarf<sup>143</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Kelly Cup race from Ireland’s Eye to Howth<sup>141,142</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Swim<sup>146,147</sup>, and in 1963 the winner of the Howth Harbour Race; Barry O’Brien (Clontarf SC, handicap 4 min), 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Kilmartin Cup sea swim<sup>144,145</sup>, Anthony Quane (Guinness SC, handicap 1 min 30 sec), 4<sup>th</sup> in the Findlater Cup race<sup>164,165</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> in the Half Moon SC 1,500 yards open sea race for the Clarke Cup<sup>166,167</sup>; and Joe O’Connell (Half Moon SC), winner of the Greystones Around-the-Harbour swim.<sup>168,169</sup>

The 45<sup>th</sup> Liffey Swim and the coveted *Irish Independent* Cup and Gold medal were won by David “Davy” Page (North Dublin WSC) of Vernon Avenue, Clontarf at his first attempt. The brother of Kevin Page, a newly capped Irish water polo international, he was a pupil of St. Joseph’s CBS, Fairview, with whom he played hurling and gaelic football.<sup>170–174</sup>

The race proved to be yet another ‘teenage’ assault on the race. Davy Page’s club-mate George Caird, a 17-year-old attending The High School, Rathgar, came 2<sup>nd</sup> just 20 yards behind the winner and Noel Buggy, a 14-year-old of St Vincent’s CBS, Glasnevin, was 3<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>170–174</sup>

David Page started 1 min and 45 sec after “go” with half the field in front of him at that stage. By Capel Street Bridge he had made his way past all but five of those who had taken to the Liffey before him. It was not until O’Connell Bridge that he went into the lead and managed comfortably to hold off the challenge of his older club-mate George Caird, who had started off the same handicap.



David Page, winner of 1964 Liffey Swim holding the *Independent Cup*  
(*Irish Independent*, 4 July, 1964, pg. 16)

Davy Page had been swimming for five years and had only previously medalled in the Leinster under-14 swimming championships at 50 m freestyle, 50 m butterfly and 50 m backstroke.<sup>112–114,116,175,176</sup> He would gain medals again in the 1964 Leinster championships.<sup>148,158</sup> The runner-up Caird was also competing in the Liffey Swim for the first time, but had competed in the Ireland’s Eye to Howth sea swim and was a previous winner of the Plunkett–McAllister Cup.<sup>171</sup>

The prize for the fastest recorded time went to scratch man Owen Corrigan of the Franciscan College, Gormanston. He placed 6<sup>th</sup> in a time of 21:49. His fellow scratch man and Gormanston club-mate Anthony Brophy in 7<sup>th</sup> place was second fastest only two seconds behind. Third fastest was Nicholas Smith (Dublin SC) in 10<sup>th</sup> place.<sup>170–174</sup> Owen Corrigan and Nicholas Smith were both previous winners of the fastest time prize and Anthony Brophy was 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest in 1963.<sup>134–136</sup> The team award, the Independent Newspapers Shield, was won by North Dublin WSC with four swimmers in the top ten – David Page 1<sup>st</sup>, George Caird 2<sup>nd</sup>, Séamus Hamilton 8<sup>th</sup> and Jim Kavanagh 9<sup>th</sup> = 20pts.<sup>170–174</sup>



First three in the 45<sup>th</sup> Liffey Swim (left to right): Noel Buggy (Club Snámha Columcille), 3<sup>rd</sup>, David Page (North Dublin WSC), winner, and George Caird (North Dublin WSC), 2<sup>nd</sup>  
*(Irish Independent, 4 July, 1964, pg. 20)*

The prizes were presented by Mr Paul Meehan, Publicity Manager, Independent Newspapers Ltd., at a function in St. Anthony's Hall, Merchants Quay. All the competitors were as usual provided with Bovril after the race at the Tara Street Baths.<sup>170,171</sup>

**Top 10 finishers:**<sup>170-174</sup>

| Place | Name                    | Age | Club                   | Handicap*    | Nett Time |
|-------|-------------------------|-----|------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1     | David "Davy" Page       | 14  | North Dublin WSC       | 2 min 55 sec | 23:52     |
| 2     | George Caird            | 17  | North Dublin WSC       | 2 min 55 sec | 24:15     |
| 3     | Noel Buggy              | 14  | Club Snámha Columcille | 4 min 10 sec | 25:31     |
| 4     | Dermot "Derry" O'Rourke |     | Club Snámha Columcille | 1 min 55 sec | 23:31     |
| 5     | Barry O'Brien           |     | Clontarf SC            | 4 min        | 25:33     |
| 6     | Owen Corrigan           | 17  | Gormanston College SC  | Scratch      | 21:49     |
| 7     | Anthony "Tony" Brophy   | 16  | Gormanston College SC  | Scratch      | 21:51     |
| 8     | Séamus Hamilton         |     | North Dublin WSC       | 1 min 55 sec | 23:55     |
| 9     | J. Kavanagh             |     | North Dublin WSC       | 4 min 40 sec | 26:45     |
| 10    | Nicholas Smith          | 21  | Dublin SC              | 40 sec       | 22:49     |

\*Time ahead of scratch man

## The 1965 Liffey Swim

Details of the 46<sup>th</sup> Liffey Swim are vestigial.<sup>177,178</sup> For ten weeks from the 3<sup>rd</sup> July until 9<sup>th</sup> September, 1965 publication of all Dublin newspapers – morning, evening and Sunday – ceased and 46 commercial printing houses were closed by a strike of printing workers called by the Irish Graphical Society.<sup>179–187</sup> The strike involved over 5,000 workers in printing firms and three Irish newspaper houses. When the strike ended, the *Irish Independent* published a day-by-day sports round-up that included summary results of major sea swims, including the Liffey Swim, and of Irish Swimming Championships.<sup>177</sup> A similarly styled round-up published in the *Irish Times* carried the results of the Irish Swimming Championships but not of any sea swims, including the Liffey Swim.<sup>178</sup>

Based on the few published results, one can only speculate on the swimmers in form who had probably entered the Liffey Swim. Colm O'Brien (Half Moon SC), Liffey Swim winner in 1963<sup>188–190</sup>, had won the opening sea race of the season – the Westclox Trophy 1,500 yards at the Bull Wall.<sup>191,192</sup> O'Brien, off 3 min, had a good margin to make up, but went ahead at half way to finish with a 60 yards' margin over Brian Sweeney (Half Moon SC) and P. Boyle (North Dublin WSC) 40 yards further back in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Colm O'Brien also returned the fastest time. The scratch man was Owen Corrigan (off 5 min 20 sec) who finished 12<sup>th</sup>. Donnacha O'Dea who won the race in 1964 did not compete.<sup>191,192</sup>

The annual Findlater Cup 1,000 yards race from Seapoint to Blackrock Baths was won by Nicholas Smith (Dublin S.C.), the 22-year-old architectural student at U.C.D.<sup>193,194</sup> Dermot "Derry" O'Rourke (Club Snámha Columcille) was 2<sup>nd</sup>, Michael Byrne (Half Moon SC) 3<sup>rd</sup>, Séamus Hamilton (North Dublin WSC) 4<sup>th</sup> and P. Boyle (North Dublin WSC) 5<sup>th</sup>. The team prize went to North Dublin WSC – Hamilton, Boyle, Liam Lyons and D. Breen. The scratch man, Colm O'Brien, finished 17<sup>th</sup>.<sup>193,194</sup> Séamus Hamilton had beaten Liam Mortimer and Davy Page in the North Dublin WSC 400 m freestyle club championship.<sup>194</sup>

The Island Race from Ireland's Eye to Balcadden Beach, Howth, took place two weeks before the Liffey Swim.<sup>177</sup> The Kelly Cup and Irish Independent Gold medal were won by Dáithí Ó Bruadair (Sandycove SC). He was followed home by Dermot "Derry" O'Rourke (Club Snámha Columcille) and Donnacha O'Dea (Club Snámha Columcille). O'Dea recorded the fastest time of 19:12, a course record.<sup>177</sup> The team prize went to Half Moon SC – Mick Fitzgerald, Paul Emmett, Dermot "Derry" Kelleher and Tony Byrne (winner of the Liffey Swim in 1962). The Dún Laoghaire Harbour Scratch Swim was won by Liam Mortimer (North Dublin SC).<sup>195</sup> It is likely that most, if not all, of these swimmers entered the Liffey Swim in 1965.

Eighty swimmers competed in the 46<sup>th</sup> Liffey Swim.<sup>177</sup> A new name was inscribed on the *Independent Cup*, that of Pat Kelly (Guinness SC), who was followed home by Courtney McCarthy (Half Moon SC) and Anthony King (Club Snámha Columcille) who had placed 5<sup>th</sup> in 1963.<sup>177</sup>

### Top 10 finishers:<sup>177</sup>

| Place | Name                | Age | Club                   | Handicap* | Nett Time |
|-------|---------------------|-----|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1     | Patrick "Pat" Kelly |     | Guinness SC            | 1 min     | 22:10     |
| 2     | Courtney McCarthy   | 14  | Half Moon SC           | 1 min     | 24:22     |
| 3     | Anthony "Tony" King | 15  | Club Snámha Columcille | 45 sec    | 23:58     |
| 4     | J. Carew            |     | Nomads SC              | 1 min     | 23:49     |
| 5     | Frank Owens         | 14  | Club Snámha Columcille | 15 sec    | 24:38     |
| 6     | Peter Mulhall       |     | North Dublin WSC       | 30 sec    | 24:26     |
| 7     | Not Published       |     |                        |           |           |
| 8     | Not Published       |     |                        |           |           |
| 9     | Not Published       |     |                        |           |           |
| 10    | Not Published       |     |                        |           |           |

\*Time after "Go"; off time for scratch man not published

Among the prize winners was J. Carew of Nomads SC, the first swimmer from that club to place in the top ten in the Liffey Swim. He had entered the Liffey Swim in both 1963 and 1964.<sup>196,197</sup> In the Plunkett–McAllister swim at Clontarf in 1964, he placed 2<sup>nd</sup> of a field of 48 swimmers, 20 yards behind the winner Douglas Dowling (Half Moon SC).<sup>198,199</sup> In April 1965, tragedy befell the Carew family. His father Michael Carew, a publican in Drimnagh, was found dead in his public house from carbon monoxide poisoning.<sup>200–203</sup>

The fastest time award went to the scratch man Donnacha O’Dea (Club Snámha Columcille) in a new Irish Native record time of 20:00.<sup>177</sup> The Independent Newspapers Shield team award was won by Club Snámha Columcille – Anthony King 3<sup>rd</sup>, Frank Owens 5<sup>th</sup>, and Donnacha O’Dea (placing not published) and Seán Ormsby (placings not published).<sup>177</sup>

At the Irish National Swimming Championships at the Grove Baths in Belfast, Donnacha O’Dea put his name firmly into the pantheon of Irish swimming. In winning the 100 m freestyle title for the first time, he became the first Irish swimmer to break 1 min for this distance – 59.9 sec.<sup>177,178</sup> The final brought together the top freestyle swimmers in Ireland – Jim Hurson (Clonard ASC), Paddy Graham (New Northern SC) and O’Dea – in a dramatic confrontation. Hurson and Graham both clocked 1:00.1 and all three were inside the old record which had been set the previous year by William "Billy" Hanna (Neptune SC, the holder) and Jim Hurson of 1:00.9.

O’Dea also retained his 200 m freestyle, 400 m freestyle (Irish record), 800 m freestyle (Irish record), and 1,500 m freestyle (Irish record, first Irish swimmer under 20 min), 100 m butterfly (Irish record), 200 m butterfly, and 400 m individual medley (Irish record) titles, as well as being an integral part of the Club Snámha Columcille quartet that retained the 4 × 100 m medley relay championship (Irish record).<sup>177,178</sup>

Other Liffey swimmers who won Irish titles in 1965 were Derry O’Rourke (Club Snámha Columcille) in the 200 m breaststroke (Irish record) and Anthony Brophy

(Gormanston College SC) in the 100 m backstroke (Irish record) and 200 m backstroke (Irish record), retaining both titles from 1964.<sup>177,178</sup>

One of the final sea races of the 1965 calendar was the annual Promenade Swim at Salthill, Co. Galway, over 1,000 yards for the *Connacht Tribune* Cup. The event attracted entries from 13 thirteen clubs, including a Dublin club invasion by Clonard SC, Club Snámha Columcille, Dublin SC, Half Moon SC, Neptune SC and North Dublin WSC.<sup>204</sup> Donnacha O’Dea had won the Cup the previous year, off scratch at 4 min, in a dramatic final burst at the finish to inch out A. Callaghy (Gormanston College SC) and John Craddock (Galway SC)<sup>205–206</sup>, who had been 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Toft Cup swim at Salthill earlier in the month.<sup>208</sup> O’Dea had finished in a nett time of 11 min 25 sec for a new course record.

The 1965 race was a triumph for Half Moon swimmers – Joe O’Connell 1<sup>st</sup>, Dermot Kelleher 2<sup>nd</sup>, Paul Emmett 5<sup>th</sup>, Brian Sweeney 6<sup>th</sup>, Mickey Byrne 9<sup>th</sup> and Michael Fitzpatrick 10<sup>th</sup>.<sup>209–211</sup> Dublin competitors took two other top ten positions – Séamus Heffernan (Clontarf SC) 3<sup>rd</sup> and scratch man Donnacha O’Dea (Club Snámha Columcille) 8<sup>th</sup>, in the fastest time, having won the National 1,500 m title the night before.<sup>209–211</sup>

However, the race was somewhat marred by controversy. Colm O’Brien (Half Moon SC), Liffey Swim winner in 1963, crossed the finish line first, but was disqualified because he left the start 1½ min before his time. In addition, the lack of a clearly defined finishing line at Palmer’s Rock caused some swimmers to continue eastwards in the direction of Seapoint before officials managed to halt them.<sup>209</sup>

## References

- <sup>102</sup> Entries and Handicaps. *Irish Independent*, 13 August, 1963, pg. 14
- <sup>103</sup> Scratchman is only 15: Sixty-four Entered for Liffey Swim. *Irish Independent*, 13 August, 1963, pg. 14
- <sup>104</sup> D. O’Dea Wins 1,000 yards Swim Test. *Irish Independent*, 16 July, 1963, pg. 14
- <sup>105</sup> O’Dea Steals the Show. *Irish Independent*, 29 July, 1963, pg. 12
- <sup>106</sup> O’Dea is First in Bray Swim. *Irish Press*, 29 July, 1963, pg. 14
- <sup>107</sup> O’Dea Brilliant in Kilmartin Cup Win. *Irish Times*, 29 July, 1963, pg. 4
- <sup>108</sup> O’Dea is Best at Dun Laoghaire. *Irish Press*, 5 September, 1963, pg. 17
- <sup>109</sup> O’Dea Adds Another Trophy to Collection. *Irish Times*, 5 September, 1963, pg. 11
- <sup>110</sup> Lyons Wins Half Moon Swim. *Irish Independent*, 19 August, 1963, pg. 13
- <sup>111</sup> Swimming: Lyons Takes Clarke Cup After Thrilling Race. *Irish Times*, 19 August, 1963, pg. 4
- <sup>112</sup> Jennifer Breaks Another Record. *Irish Independent*, 29 August, 1963, pg. 17
- <sup>113</sup> Swim Records Broken. *Irish Press*, 31 July, 1963, pg. 16
- <sup>114</sup> Further Swim Records Crash. *Irish Press*, 1 August, 1963, pg. 16
- <sup>115</sup> Leinster Championship Gala: Three Irish Swim Records Go. *Irish Independent*, 1 August, 1963, pg. 13
- <sup>116</sup> Third Title for Miss Cassidy: Five More Swim Records Broken. *Irish Independent*, 2 August, 1963, pg. 13

- 117 Leinster Swimming Finals: Miss Cassidy Wins Her Fifth Title. *Irish Independent*, 3 August, 1963, pg. 15
- 118 Eight New Records: Great Performance by Miss Mayes. *Irish Independent*, 24 August, 1963, pg. 16
- 119 Swimming: Three more Irish Records Broken. *Irish Times*, 2 September, 1963, pg. 4
- 120 Diving Treat at Sandycove Gala. *Sunday Independent*, 11 August, 1963, pg. 11
- 121 Another Success for O’Dea. *Irish Times*, 12 August, 1963, pg. 2
- 122 Records Shattered by O’Dea and Miss Cassidy. *Irish Independent*, 23 August, 1963, pg. 14
- 123 Gormanston Triumph at Belfast. *Irish Independent*, 26 August, 1963, pg. 12
- 124 Emmett Wins Island Swim at Howth. *Irish Independent*, 17 July, 1963, pg. 14
- 125 Irish Swim Records Go. *Irish Independent*, 20 July, 1963, pg. 20
- 126 Seamus Heffernan Wins Vico Race. *Irish Times*, 26 August, 1963, pg. 4
- 127 Heffernan Wins Vico Swim. *Irish Independent*, 26 August, 1963, pg. 14
- 128 Lough Owel S.C. Gala: Adverse Conditions. *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 August, 1963, pg. 2
- 129 Brophy Takes Mile Event at Lough Owel. *Irish Independent*, 12 August, 1963, pg. 11
- 130 Tough Job for Scratchmen in Liffey Swim. *Irish Independent*, 3 July, 1964, pg. 21
- 131 Swimming Victory for Kevin Page. *Irish Independent*, 30 July, 1963, pg. 13
- 132 K. Page Best in Clontarf Swim. *Irish Times*, 30 July, 1963, pg. 3
- 133 Bill Campbell in the Swim: 64 in To-night’s Liffey Race. *Evening Herald*, 13 August, 1963, pg. 11
- 134 Liffey Swim is Won by a Schoolboy. *Irish Independent*, 14 August, 1963, pg. 1
- 135 Native Record for O’Dea: O’Brien 14 Wins Liffey Swim. *Irish Independent*, 14 August, 1963, pg. 10
- 136 Colm O’Brien Scores an Easy Victory. *Irish Times*, 14 August, 1963, pg. 12
- 137 Denis O’Dea. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denis\\_O%27Dea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denis_O%27Dea)
- 138 Siobhán McKenna. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siobh%C3%A1n\\_McKenna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siobh%C3%A1n_McKenna)
- 139 Entries and Handicaps for Liffey Swim. *Irish Independent*, 2 July, 1964, pg. 21
- 140 To-night’s Liffey Swim Line-up. *Evening Herald*, 3 July, 1964, pg. 21
- 141 Dowling Takes Island Swim. *Irish Press*, 7 July, 1964, pg. 21
- 142 Dowling First Home in Island Swim. *Irish Independent*, 7 July, 1964, pg. 15
- 143 A Champion in Embryo. *Irish Independent*, 19 June, 1964, pg. 18
- 144 Birthday Success for Boyle at Bray. *Irish Times*, 13 July, 1964, pg. 4
- 145 Kilmartin Cup for Boyle. *Irish Press*, 13 July, 1964, pg. 16
- 146 Carney Wins “Irish Times” Trophy. *Irish Times*, 27 July, 1964, pg. 4
- 147 O’Dea Fastest But Beaten. *Irish Independent*, 27 July, 1964, pg. 16
- 148 O’Dea Sets Irish and Leinster Swim Records. *Irish Independent*, 31 July, 1964, pg. 15
- 149 Leinster Swim Test: O’Dea Among the Records Again. *Irish Press*, 31 July, 1964, pg. 25
- 150 O’Dea Cracks Yet Another Record. *Irish Times*, 1 August, 1964, pg. 3
- 151 Swim Star Wins Again: Another Record by O’Dea. *Irish Press*, 1 August, 1964, pg. 22
- 152 Another Record Swim by O’Dea. *Irish Press*, 18 July, 1964, pg. 21
- 153 Swimming: Donnacha O’Dea Sets New 1,500 Metres Record. *Irish Times*, 17 July, 1964, pg. 3
- 154 Hayes Created Big Impression. *Irish Independent*, 19 August, 1964, pg. 14
- 155 Clare Small Sets New Leinster Swim Record. *Irish Press*, 30 July, 1964, pg. 28
- 156 Swimming: O’Dea Takes Nine Gold Medals. *Irish Times*, 31 August, 1964, pg. 4
- 157 O’Dea’s 9 Gold Medals and Four Records! *Sunday Independent*, 30 August, 1964, pg. 13
- 158 Donnacha O’Dea Sets Two New Records, Shares One. *Irish Independent*, 29 July, 1964, pg. 14
- 159 Leinster Tests Begin: Swimmers Smash Seven Records. *Irish Press*, 29 July, 1964, pg. 15
- 160 Swim Records Go at Mosney. *Irish Independent*, 28 August, 1964, pg. 21
- 161 Irish Swimming Tests at Mosney: O’Dea Sets 2 Records in 3 Wins. *Irish Press*, 28 August, 1964, pg. 19
- 162 More Irish Swim Times Tumble: O’Dea’s Record First – 6 Titles. *Irish Press*, 29 August, 1964, pg. 23

- 163 Swimming: Irish Championships – O’Dea Continues to Make it a One-Man Show. *Irish Times*, 29 August, 1964, pg. 3
- 164 Des. Carney Was Too Fast for Opponents. *Irish Times*, 1 September, 1964, pg. 3
- 165 Dorgan Cup for Claire Small. *Irish Independent*, 1 September 1964, pg. 9
- 166 Conboy Won But Hayes Put Up Great Fight. *Irish Times*, 10 August, 1964, pg. 4
- 167 Clarke Cup for Hayes. *Irish Press*, 10 August, 1964, pg. 17
- 168 O’Connell Takes Greystones Honours. *Irish Independent*, 22 July, 1964, pg. 16
- 169 Greystones Gala. *Irish Press*, 22 July, 1964, pg. 18
- 170 Won Swim at First Attempt. *Irish Independent*, 4 July, 1964, pg. 3
- 171 Winning Debut for 14 Year Old Davy Page. *Irish Independent*, 4 July, 1964, pg. 16
- 172 Page First Home in ‘Liffey’. *Irish Press*, 4 July, 1964, pg. 20
- 173 D. Page Wins the Liffey Swim. *Irish Times*, 4 July, 1964, pg. 3
- 174 Davy, 14, Wins Liffey Swim. *Evening Herald*, 4 July, 1964, pg. 14.
- 175 More New Swimming Figures: Miss Cassidy Again Among Record-Breakers. *Irish Independent*, 7 August, 1962, pg. 14
- 176 Swim Records Broken. *Irish Press*, 7 August, 1962, pg. 14
- 177 Looking Back on Sporting Scene: Main Events Recalled – Your Sports Round-up. *Irish Independent*, 23 September, 1965, pg. 17
- 178 Highlights...Facts...Figures. *Irish Times*, 13 September, 1965, pg. 4
- 179 No Dublin Papers After Tomorrow. *Irish Independent*, 1 July, 1965, pg.1
- 180 Starting From Tomorrow. *Irish Times*, 1 July, 1965, pg. 7
- 181 Printing Dispute Talks Fail: No Papers After To-morrow. *Irish Times*, 1 July, 1965, pg. 1
- 182 Printing Strike Begins To-day. *Irish Times*, 2 July, 1965, pg. 1
- 183 No Dublin Newspapers From Today. *Irish Press*, 2 July, 1965, pg. 1
- 184 Temporary Suspension of Newspapers. *Irish Independent*, 2 July, 1965, pg. 1
- 185 End of Newspaper Strike May Soon Come in Sight. *Connacht Sentinel*, 7 September, 1965, pg. 2
- 186 Had Lasted Ten Weeks: End of Dublin Printers’ Strike – Rumour of 11/- Weekly Levy on Union Members. *Munster Express*, 10 September, 1965, pg. 1
- 187 Industrial Disputes: 10-weeks’-old Dublin Printing Dispute Ends. *Irish Independent*, 13 September, 1965, pg. 10
- 188 Liffey Swim is Won by a Schoolboy. *Irish Independent*, 14 August, 1963, pg. 1
- 189 Native Record for O’Dea: O’Brien 14 Wins Liffey Swim. *Irish Independent*, 14 August, 1963, pg. 10
- 190 Colm O’Brien Scores an Easy Victory. *Irish Times*, 14 August, 1963, pg. 12
- 191 O’Brien Hits Top Form at the Bull Wall. *Irish Times*, 21 June, 1965, pg. 3
- 192 Colm O’Brien Takes Trophy. *Irish Independent*, 21 June, 1965, pg. 16
- 193 Nicky Smith Wins Findlater Cup. *Irish Independent*, 25 June, 1965, pg. 17
- 194 In the Swim.....with Bill Campbell: Irish Water Polo Team Should Be Better Than Ever. *Evening Herald*, 29 June, 1965, pg. 13
- 195 Dún Laoghaire Harbour Swim: Previous Winners. [http://leinsteropensea.ie/?page\\_id=259](http://leinsteropensea.ie/?page_id=259) (retrieved 30 August, 2013)
- 196 Entries and Handicaps. *Irish Independent*, 13 August, 1963, pg. 14
- 197 Entries and Handicaps for Liffey Swim. *Irish Independent*, 2 July, 1964, pg. 21
- 198 Dowling Takes Swim Trophy. *Irish Press*, 19 June, 1964, pg. 15
- 199 A Champion in Embryo. *Irish Independent*, 19 June, 1964, pg. 18
- 200 Publican’s Death. *Irish Press*, 14 April, 1965, pg. 3
- 201 Dead in Gas-Filled Room. *Irish Times*, 14 April, 1965, pg. 8
- 202 Died From Gas Poisoning. *Irish Independent*, 10 June, 1965, pg. 8
- 203 Acknowledgments: Carew. *Irish Independent*, 11 May, 1965, pg. 22
- 204 Big Entry for Annual Prom Swim. *Connacht Tribune*, 14 August, 1965, pg. 20

- <sup>205</sup> 9 Gold Medallist Donncha O’Dea for Annual Prom Swim. *Connacht Tribune*, 5 September 1964, pg. 5
- <sup>206</sup> Connacht Tribune Cup (Photographs). *Connacht Sentinel*, 8 September 1964, pg. 1
- <sup>207</sup> Donnacha O’Dea Brilliant in Prom Swim Victory. *Connacht Sentinel*, 8 September, 1964, pg. 3
- <sup>208</sup> Performances Were Good in Two Prom Swims at Salthill. *Connacht Tribune*, 15 August, 1964, pg. 21
- <sup>209</sup> ‘Half Moon’ Swimmers Dominate ‘Tribune’ Cup. *Connacht Sentinel*, 31 August, 1965, pg. 3
- <sup>210</sup> Four Provinces in “The Connacht Tribune” Cup Swim. *Connacht Tribune*, 4 September, 1965, pg. 14
- <sup>211</sup> Spotlight on Connacht by Jim Lydon: Looking Back. *Connacht Sentinel*, 16 August, 1966, pg. 3