

The Liffey Swim: The 1960's Decade – Part 1 1960 – 1962

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Introduction

The provision of life-saving and swimming facilities in the form of public baths was no better at the start of the decade than it had been in 1920 when the Liffey Swim was inaugurated. The only baths built by Dublin Corporation, the Tara Street Baths, dated from 1886. The Iveagh Baths on Bride Road, which had been built by the Iveagh Trust, were opened in 1906. J.J. “Jack” Kennedy, the first winner of the Liffey Swim, described the situation as “*civic indifference to the sanctity and safety of human life that is incomprehensible*”, given the annual death toll by drowning.¹

The 1950's had ended with a series of wins and top three placings by teenagers in the Liffey Swim. It was a trend that was to continue in the 1960's. The 1960's became the decade of precocious teenage swimming. In addition to the *Independent Cup* and Gold medal for the winner of the Liffey Swim, a trophy was introduced for the club team competition, which had been inaugurated in 1934 – a silver mahogany-mounted shield, presented by Independent Newspapers Ltd.

The 1960 Liffey Swim

The maximum handicap was set at 3½ min^{2,3}, with twelve limit men and one scratch man, Rory O'Connor (Club Snámha Columcille, red cap), a 6ft 2 in (1.88 m) 18-year-old, the Leinster 200 m and 400 m champion and winner of the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Race the previous week.⁴⁻⁶ The shorter handicaps were influenced by the fact that the race start time was one hour after full tide, the heavy flow giving greater assistance to the swimmers. This possibly led to a more select entry than in the previous years. Of the 41 entrants 40 were from Dublin swimming clubs – Clontarf, Colmcille, Crusade Aquatic, Dublin, Half Moon, Howth, North Dublin Winter, Otter, Pembroke, and Sandycove – plus Cpl. T. Hannigan (Curragh SC, handicap 1½ min, white cap).^{2,3} The problem of identifying swimmers had always been somewhat of a bugbear in the past. Numbered caps had been used, but as the caps were inclined to wrinkle up in the water and thus the numbers became distorted, it was not always easy to make them out. In 1960 some of the swimmers with short handicaps wore

numbered coloured caps – yellow, orange, pink, blue and red according to handicap.^{2,3}

The line-up included: William J. “Liam” Loughman (Dublin SC, handicap 15 sec, red cap), a 16-year-old with two Irish boys and four Leinster boys breaststroke and freestyle championships to his credit⁶⁻¹², the fastest time for the Ireland’s Eye to Balscadden Beach race in July¹³, 4th in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Swim⁴; Seán McKeever (Sandycove SC, handicap 1½ min, yellow cap), winner of the 1960 Dún Laoghaire Pier Race for the Curtis Cup¹⁴; Séamus Heffernan (Clontarf SC, handicap 30 sec, orange cap), winner of the Ireland’s Eye to Howth swim¹³ and of the Dublin SC 1,000 yards handicap², 2nd in the Kilmartin Cup 1½-mile swim from Bray Harbour to Bray Cove in July¹⁵, and 6th in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Swim⁴; Willie Kearney (Dublin SC, handicap 3½ min), winner of the Nore Swim at Kilkenny at the end of July^{16,17}; Mick Kelly (Clontarf SC, handicap 2½ min), four times Irish 200 m breaststroke champion 1956–1959, Irish record holder for the distance, who had represented Ireland at the IX European Championships in Budapest in 1958, a challenger for the 9th time.^{2,3,18}

The youngest competitor was 14-year-old Owen Corrigan (Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 1 min, white cap), the Junior Boys 50 m butterfly champion of Leinster, who took 5.2 sec off his own record^{2,10}, and placed 2nd in the senior 100 m butterfly championship⁶ and won the Greystones ½-mile swim.³ The oldest competitor was Ultan Kerrigan (North Dublin WSC, a limit man)^{2,3}, winner of the ½-mile swim for the Chicago Cup at the Muinebeag SC gala in Carlow the previous month.^{2,3}

Three previous winners Tommy May (1956, Dublin SC, handicap 1½ min, white cap), Cyril Hardy (1957, Crusade Aquatic Club, handicap 30 sec, orange cap), Kevin King (1959, Crusade Aquatic Club, handicap 30 sec, orange cap) were attempting to become the first winner to claim a second title under handicap.^{2,3} Pat Broderick, the winner in 1955, had completed his medical studies at University College Galway and had left for an internship at the Carney Hospital in Boston, Mass.¹⁹

Cyril Hardy had won the “Swimmer of the Year Race” over 88 yards at the Royal Life-Saving Society’s annual gala at Iveagh Baths the previous November and the Curragh Cup for the Men’s Life-Saving Championship with his brother, Anthony “Tony” Hardy,²⁰ and had recently won the Lough Owel 1-mile swim for the Coughlan Cup.²¹⁻²³ Kevin King had placed 2nd in the Lough Owel mile race²¹⁻²³ and 5th in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Swim.⁴ Tommy May’s two younger brothers, Jimmy (18-years-old) and Joe (17-years-old) both went off handicaps of 2½ min.^{2,3} Perennial competitors trying their luck included Tiernan McBride (Pembroke SC, limit man, white cap) and Eric Briggs (Pembroke SC, handicap 45 sec, purple cap).^{2,3}

Before the start of the race, life-saving displays were put on at the finishing barge by the Royal Life-Saving Society and at Guinness's Wharf by the Irish Red Cross Water Safety Section.^{2,3}



The Lady Mayoress, Mrs M. Dockrell, née Isobel Myrick Pound, accompanied by the Lord Mayor Maurice E. Dockrell, Fine Gael T.D. for the Dublin South–Central constituency, presenting the *Irish Independent Cup* to Seán Heffernan, winner of the 41st Liffey Swim. (*Irish Independent*, 31 August, 1960, pg. 12)

Overshadowed by the success of his twin brother Séamus, Seán Heffernan (Clontarf SC, handicap 3 min 10 sec), emerged as the surprise winner of the 41st Liffey Swim at his 4th attempt to take the *Independent Cup* and Gold medal^{24–28}, ahead of his club-mate Michael J. Kelly, a 33-year-old veteran, with Peter Mulhall (North Dublin WSC, limit man), who had placed 6th in 1959^{29–32}, in 3rd place. In 1959 Séamus and Seán Heffernan had filled the 3rd and 4th spots, respectively.^{29–32} Seán Heffernan, a 17-year-old apprentice fitter-turner from Francis Street, The Coombe, had trailed in last the previous week in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Swim.⁴ An injury to his arm in early July had required five stitches and had kept him out of training for a month.^{24,25} Michael Kelly's wife had given birth to their first child, a boy, just 24 hours before the Liffey Swim.^{25,28}

The event, which was swum on a falling tide, produced a fast race. The winner, starting 20 sec behind the limit men, had only 13 other swimmers to pass. Seán Heffernan caught up with the “go” men at Capel Street Bridge (Grattan Bridge). He went into the lead shortly after this and was never headed. The first three men had matters to themselves for most of the race. Heffernan led Michael Kelly and Peter Mulhall under O'Connell Bridge. He won by 20 yards from Kelly with Peter Mulhall a further 10 yards behind. All 42 starters finished with a 3 min 50 sec time span. Little more than a few seconds separated a big following group at the finish, cheered on by enthusiastic spectators. Over a dozen swimmers

arrived at the finishing barge almost simultaneously making the judges' task a difficult one.^{24,25,28} It is noteworthy that six of the top ten finishers were either limit men or in the group which started 20 sec behind the limit men.^{24,25,28}

Top 10 finishers:²⁴⁻²⁸

| Place | Name | Age | Club | Handicap* | Nett Time |
|-------|-------------------|-----|------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1 | Seán Heffernan | 17 | Clontarf SC | 3 min 10 sec | 23:36 |
| 2 | Michael J. Kelly | 33 | Clontarf SC | 2 min 30 sec | 23:00 |
| 3 | Peter Mulhall | | North Dublin SC | 3 min 30 sec | 24:05 |
| 4 | Paul Emmett | 22 | Half Moon SC | 3 min 10 sec | 24:08 |
| 5 | Brian Murray | | North Dublin WSC | 3 min 30 sec | 24:44 |
| 6 | Des Lyons | | North Dublin WSC | 1 min 50 sec | 23:05 |
| 7 | William Kearney | | Dublin SC | 3 min 30 sec | 24:46 |
| 8 | Dáithí Ó Bruadair | 21 | Sandycove SC | 3 min 10 sec | 24:27 |
| 9 | Jimmy May | 18 | Club Snámha Columcille | 2 min 30 sec | 23:48 |
| 10 | Patrick Flood | | Half Moon SC | 2 min 10 sec | 23:33 |

*Time ahead of scratch man

The team trophy went to North Dublin SC – Peter Mulhall (3½ min) 3rd, Brian Murray (3½ min) 5th, Des Lyons (1 min 50 sec) 6th and Kevin Page (2½ min) 15th = 29 pts. Club Snámha Columcille placed 2nd with 45 pts, with only one swimmer in the top ten, Jimmy May (3½ min) 9th, but good packing – (name not published) 11th, Owen Corrigan (1 min) 12th, and (name not published) 13th.²⁴⁻²⁸

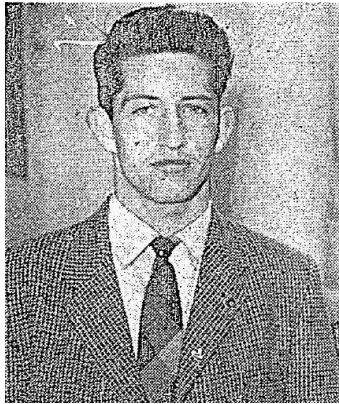


The Independent Newspapers Perpetual Team Shield being presented to the North Dublin WSC team (left to right) Peter Mulhall, Kevin Page, Des Lyons and Brian Murray by The Lord Mayoress, Mrs Dockrell, alongside The Lord Mayor, Maurice Dockrell, T.D.

Each swimmer received a small replica shield visible in photograph.

(Irish Independent, 31 August, 1960, pg. 9)

Rory O'Connor, the scratch man, won the award for the fastest time of 22:17²⁴⁻²⁸, although outside the Irish native record of 22:00 held jointly by Cecil Young (Neptune SC, Belfast) and Paddy Arrigan (Curragh SC).^{33,34} Owen Corrigan (Club Snámha Columcille), who was the youngest competitor and placed 12th, was the 2nd fastest in a time of 22:12.²⁴⁻²⁸



**Rory O'Connor (Club Snámha Columcille),
fastest swimmer in the 41st Liffey Swim.
(*Irish Independent*, 13 August, 1960, pg. 16)**

The prizes were presented at the Tara Street Baths by the wife of The Lord Mayor, Maurice Dockrell, whose brother, Thomas "Hayes" Dockrell, a water-polo Olympian at Amsterdam in 1928,³⁵ had won the event in 1922,³⁶ placed 2nd in 1923³⁷ and placed 13th in both 1921 and 1924.^{38,39}

The 1961 Liffey Swim

The difference in start time between the limit men and the scratch man was 3 min 35 sec, almost the same as in 1960.^{2,3,40} A new system of coloured coded caps was tried to enable individual identification of swimmers. Caps were coloured, with or without contrasting coloured stripes or crosses, e.g., white with red stripe or black with white cross, or were half-coloured, e.g., pale blue and red or pink and black, or were hooped, e.g., white with green hoops or pink with black hoops.⁴⁰

Former winners trying to be crowned "King of the Liffey" for a second time were: Tommy May (1956, Dublin SC, handicap 1 min 15 sec, black cap–white cross); Cyril Hardy (1957, Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 1 min 5 sec, black–orange halved cap), Kevin King (1959, Crusade Aquatic Club, handicap 50 sec, pale blue cap) and the holder Seán Heffernan (Clontarf SC, handicap 1 min 35 sec, green cap–black hoops). Half Moon SC had the largest club entry.⁴⁰

One of the youngest competitors 15-year old Owen Corrigan (Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 15 sec, white cap), a pupil at St. Paul's College, Raheny,

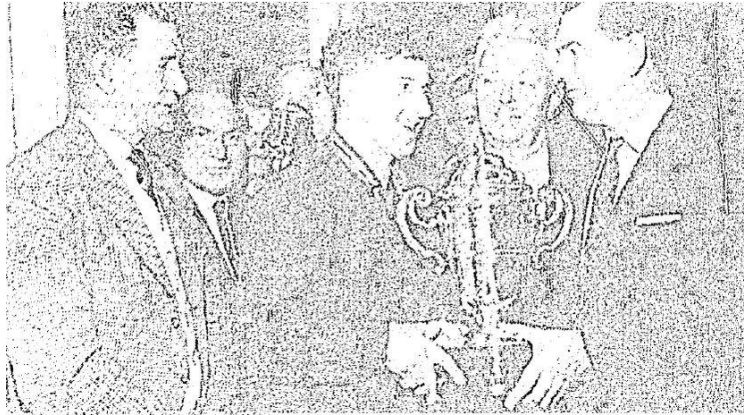
who was the second fastest finisher in 1960,^{24–28} placed 3rd in the *Evening Mail* Dún Laoghaire Harbour Swim at the end of June⁴¹ and won the ½-mile race for the Chicago Trophy at the Muinebeag SC annual gala, Carlow, in a time of 9:26.⁴² The scratch man was again Rory O'Connor (Club Snámha Columcille, green cap), winner of the *Evening Mail Cup* for the arduous Dún Laoghaire Harbour Race in 1960^{4,43} and 1961⁴¹ and the fastest swimmer in the previous year's Liffey Swim.^{24–28}

Among the other potential challengers were the best of the distance swimmers in Leinster : Seán McKeever (Sandycove SC, handicap 50 sec, black cap) who had won the Plunkett–McAllister Cup over ½-mile by a touch from Rory O'Connor two week's previously⁴⁴; sixteen-year-old Patrick Skerritt (Clontarf SC, handicap 1 min 45 sec, green cap–black cross) who had won the Curtis Memorial Cup for the annual Dún Laoghaire East Pier to Forty Foot race 10 days previously^{45,46} and had placed 8th in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Swim⁴¹; Séamus Heffernan (Clontarf SC, handicap 35 sec, yellow cap) who was 3rd in the Kelly Cup race from Ireland's Eye to Howth in the fastest time⁴⁷ and runner-up in the Lough Owel 1-mile race^{48,49}; Willie Kearney (Dublin SC, handicap 2 min 55 sec, yellow cap–black cross), who placed 2nd in the Dún Laoghaire Pier Swim to Forty Foot^{45,46}; Michael Fitzpatrick (Half Moon SC, handicap 3 min 5 sec, pale blue cap–red cross) who was 3rd in the Lough Owel 1-mile Swim^{48,49}; Jackie Kearney (Dublin SC, handicap 2 min 55 sec, yellow cap–black stripe) who was 4th in the Lough Owel Swim^{48,49} and won the Nore Swim⁵⁰; and Des Carney (Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 1 min 25 sec, black cap–white stripe), 3rd in the Plunkett–McAllister Cup swim at Clontarf.⁴⁴

Others who had distinguished themselves were: Dessie Lyons (North Dublin WSC, handicap 1 min 25 sec, black cap–green stripe), winner of the Kelly Cup for the Howth Island race on his 16th birthday⁴⁷; Michael O'Mahony (Clontarf SC, handicap 2 min 15 sec, pink–green halved cap) who was 2nd in the Kelly Cup for the Howth Island race⁴⁷; Charlie O'Connell (Crusade Aquatic Club, handicap 2 min 5 sec, orange cap) and Dáithí Ó Bruadair (Sandycove SC, handicap 2 min 55 sec, yellow–black halved cap) who placed 1st and 2nd in the Kilmartin Cup race at Bray^{51,52}; and eighteen-year-old Nicholas Smith (Sligo SC, handicap 15 sec, pink cap), a student at Clongowes Wood College near Clane, Co. Kildare, who had only taken up long distance swimming that summer and had finished 4th in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Swim.⁴¹

The 1961 Liffey swim completed a family double. Eighteen-year-old Anthony "Tony" Hardy (Crusade Aquatic Club, yellow–red halved cap) emulated his brother, Cyril Hardy, who had won the Liffey Swim in 1957.^{53–56} Tony Hardy, a former pupil of Scoil Mhuire Marino, worked as a commis-chef at Dublin Airport.⁵⁴ With a handicap of 2 min 45 sec, the Donnycarney lad drew ahead of his rivals at Winetavern Street Bridge (O'Donovan Rossa Bridge). From this point on the Liffey Swim was virtually a three-man race. Using an easy rhythmic crawl

Hardy finished some twenty yards ahead of Michael J. Kelly (Clontarf SC, yellow cap–red stripe), a 34-year-old breast-stroker with the same handicap, and Ronan Morrison (Clontarf SC, handicap 3 min 5 sec, pale blue cap–red hoop), a 15-year-old pupil at Gormanston College, Co. Meath, in his first Liffey Swim.^{53–56}



Mr Paul Meehan, Publicity Manager Independent Newspapers Ltd., presenting the *Independent Cup* to Tony Hardy with Kevin King Snr (left), Secretary Leinster Branch I.A.S.A. (*Irish Independent*, 22 July, 1961, pg. 13)

This was only Tony Hardy’s second attempt at the Liffey Swim. The previous year his effort had ended when cramp forced him to retire at the half distance.^{53,54} The old hoodoo of a winner never repeating his success in the Liffey Swim under handicap was maintained in 1961. Brother Cyril Hardy and other prior winners finished well down the field.^{53,54} It was Michael Kelly’s 10th Liffey swim. Second the previous year and second again, it was hard luck once more for this veteran Liffey challenger, who hailed from Whitehall, Dublin.^{53,54}

Top 10 finishers:^{53–56}

| Place | Name | Age | Club | Handicap* | Nett Time |
|-------|----------------------|-----|------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Anthony “Tony” Hardy | 18 | Crusade Aquatic Club | 2 min 45 sec | 24:12 |
| 2 | Michael J. Kelly | 34 | Clontarf SC | 2 min 45 sec | 25:13 |
| 3 | Ronan Morrison | 15 | Clontarf SC | 3 min 5 sec | 24:05 |
| 4 | Paul Emmett | 23 | Half Moon SC | 2 min 25 sec | NR [†] |
| 5 | Séamus Heffernan | 18 | Clontarf SC | 35 sec | 22:50 |
| 6 | Owen Corrigan | 15 | Club Snámha Columcille | 15 sec | 22:33 |
| 7 | Brian Murray | | North Dublin WSC | 2 min 55 sec | NR [†] |
| 8 | Nicholas Smith | 18 | Sligo SC | 15 sec | 22:34 |
| 9 | Jimmy May | 19 | Club Snámha Columcille | 2 min 5 sec | NR [†] |
| 10 | Des Carney | 14 | Club Snámha Columcille | 1 min 25 sec | NR [†] |

*Time ahead of scratch man

†Not recorded in newspaper reports

Honours for the fastest swims went to the young competitors. The fastest time of 22:33 was recorded by Owen Corrigan (15-year-old, Club Snámha Columcille) in 6th place.⁵³⁻⁵⁶ Nicholas Smith, who finished 8th, was 2nd fastest in 22:34 and Séamus Heffernan (18-year-old, Clontarf SC), who placed 5th, was 3rd fastest with 22:50.⁵³⁻⁵⁶ Although swimming for Sligo SC, Nicky Smith's parents lived in Cavan at that time.⁵⁷ At the 21st National Swimming Championships in Cork, Owen Corrigan won the boys under-16 100 m butterfly title in a time of 1:24.7 reducing the previous record by 2.8 sec. It was his first Irish swimming title.⁵⁸ Nicholas Smith placed 4th in the Men's Mile at the Carrick-On-Shannon Swimming Gala in August that year.⁵⁹

Half Moon SC member Paul Emmett again figured in the top ten, taking 4th place as in 1960.²⁴⁻²⁸ Brian Murray (North Dublin WSC), who was 5th in 1960, also took a top ten spot in 1961.²⁴⁻²⁸

Clontarf SC lifted the Irish Independent Shield for the club team – Michael J. Kelly, 2nd, Ronan Morrison, 4th, Séamus Heffernan, 5th and Michael O'Mahony (handicap 2 min 15 sec), place not published.⁵³⁻⁵⁶

The prizes were presented at Tara Street Baths by Mr Paul Meehan, Publicity Manager, Irish Independent Newspapers Ltd.

The 1962 Liffey Swim

The annual Liffey Swim turned into a youths' contest, with the youngest winner in the 43-year history of the race and two teenagers taking the remaining podium positions. The handicap for the limit men was 4 min 5 sec.^{60,61}



Nicholas Smith (Dublin SC, formerly Sligo SC)
(*Anglo-Celt*, 11 August, 1962, pg. 1)

Among the entrants for the 1962 Liffey Swim was Nicholas "Nicky" Smith (Dublin SC, black-red halved cap), the scratchman, Leinster's outstanding long distance

star – Leinster champion in the Senior 100 m freestyle, 400 m freestyle, and 800 m freestyle in a new record time of 11:21.3, which was 14.7 sec inside the old record, and in the 100 m butterfly in a new record time of 1:17.2^{62–67}, winner (as scratch man) of the Dublin SC-sponsored Blackrock Baths to Seapoint Baths 1,000 yards swim for the Findlater Cup^{68–70}, winner of the *Evening Mail* Cup for the gruelling Dún Laoghaire Harbour scratch swim^{71,72}, winner of the Kelly Cup and Irish Independent Gold Medal for the Ireland's Eye to Balscadden Beach at Howth race off scratch⁷³, fastest swimmer in the Howth Harbour ½-mile race (placed 5th)⁷⁴, in the Plunkett–McAllister race⁷³ and in the Crusade Aquatic Club's Westclox Trophy race over 1 mile at Bull Wall⁷⁵, and runner-up in the Lough Owel 1-mile swim for the Coughlan Cup in the fastest time.⁷⁶

Another major contender for Liffey Swim honours was Owen Corrigan (Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 15 sec, blue cap with red spots), who had placed 6th the previous year in the fastest time.^{53–56} He put up new Irish and Leinster figures in winning the 100 m butterfly (under-16) in a time of 1:17.5⁶⁵, placed 3rd in the Leinster Senior 100 m butterfly championship⁶⁵ and 2nd in the Irish Senior 100 m butterfly championship^{77,78}, placed 2nd in the Leinster Senior 800 m freestyle championship^{66,67} and 3rd in the Irish National 800 m championship in a new Leinster record of 10:57.0^{79,80}, placed 3rd in the Irish National 1,500 m championship⁸¹ in which Nicholas Smith had set a hot pace, but retired after 200m, was runner-up in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour scratch swim^{71,72}, placed 6th in the Ireland's Eye to Balscadden Beach, Howth race⁷³, won the Coughlan Cup for the Lough Owel 1-mile swim⁷⁶, and returned the fastest time in the annual Vico Swim at Killiney.⁸²

Cyril Hardy (Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 1 min, blue cap with red stripe), Liffey Swim winner in 1957, toed the start again in an attempt to win the Liffey swim for a second time. He won the Leinster 200 m breaststroke title^{62–64}, placed 3rd in the Leinster 400 m freestyle championship⁶⁵, placed 4th in the Blackrock to Seapoint Baths 1,000 yards swim⁷⁰, placed 5th in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour scratch swim^{71,72}, came in 5th in the Howth race from Ireland's Eye to Balscadden Beach⁷³, was 4th in the Howth Harbour ½-mile race⁷⁴, and took 3rd place in the Lough Owel 1-mile swim.⁷⁶

Other competitors with form included: Séamus Heffernan (Clontarf SC, handicap 40 sec, blue cap with red hoops), 3rd in the Blackrock to Seapoint Baths 1,000 yards swim⁷⁰, 3rd in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour scratch swim^{71,72}, and 4th in the Ireland's Eye to Balscadden Beach at Howth race⁷³; Paul Skerritt (Clontarf SC, handicap 1 min 10 sec, blue–red halved cap), runner up in the Blackrock to Seapoint Baths 1,000 yards swim⁷⁰; and Des Carney (Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 50 sec), 4th in the Dún Laoghaire Harbour scratch swim^{71,72} and 2nd in the Howth Harbour ½-mile race.⁷⁴

Among the possibles were: Séamus Hamilton (Clontarf SC, handicap 1 min 55 sec, pink cap), winner of the Vico race at Killiney⁸²; Liam Mortimer (North Dublin

SC, handicap 2 min 55 sec, yellow cap with black stripes), 5th in the Blackrock Baths to Seapoint Baths 1,000 yards sea swim⁷⁰; Ronan Morrison (Clontarf SC, handicap 1½ min), 3rd in the Vico swim, Killiney⁸²; D. Fitzpatrick (Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 1 min 55 sec, pink–black halved cap), 4th in the Lough Owel 1-mile swim⁷⁶; Jackie Kearney (Dublin SC, handicap 2 min 15 sec, yellow cap with red spots), 6th in the Kelly Cup Island Race⁷²; Joe O’Connell (Crusade Aquatic Club, handicap 1 min 55 sec, pink cap with black stripe), winner of the Westclox Trophy 1-mile swim at Bull Wall⁷⁵; Brian Sweeney (Half Moon SC, handicap 2 min 55 sec, yellow–red halved cap), 2nd in the Westclox Trophy 1-mile swim at Bull Wall⁷⁵, 6th in the Howth Harbour ½-mile swim.⁷⁴

The only entrant from outside the Dublin area was 15-year-old John Craddock (Galway SC, handicap 1½ min, blue cap).⁶¹ John Craddock first rose to prominence as a 13-year-old, when he won the 30th Toft Cup Prom Swim at Salthill, Galway in 1960, a race in which his elder brother James placed 2nd and Brendan Watson, the Connacht 100 m freestyle champion, 3rd.⁸³ John Craddock thus became the youngest winner in the history of the Toft Cup Swim.⁸³ His brother James Craddock won *The Connacht Tribune* Cup Prom Swim at Salthill that year.⁸⁴ As a 15-year-old Brendan Watson had placed 2nd to Cyril Hardy in the 38th Liffey Swim in 1957.^{85–87} The following year John Craddock retained the Toft Cup⁸⁸ and in 1962 he dead-heated with James McGuirk (Galway SC) in the Toft Cup Prom Swim.⁸⁹ He also placed 3rd in the 1962 *Connacht Tribune* Cup Prom Swim.⁹⁰ He retained the Toft Cup in 1963.^{91,92}



Tony Byrne (left) with Brother Paul (right) and the *Independent Cup*
(Irish Press, 10 August, 1962, pg. 13)

Rain had been threatening all evening but held off for the race.⁹³ The winner’s laurels, the *Independent Cup* and Gold Medal, went to a fair-haired, 12-year-old

Tony Byrne (Dublin SC, handicap 3 min 45 sec, white cap with green hoops) from Walkinstown, Dublin, a pupil at Drimnagh Castle School.^{93–98} The previous youngest winner had been Robin Power (Sunday's Well SC, Cork) in 1958 at age 15.^{99–101}

A diminutive lad standing at 4 ft 6 in (1.37m) and weighing 98 lbs (44.5 kg), Tony had been swimming for six years, most of it done in the Iveagh Baths, where his father was the superintendent.⁹⁴ Byrne won a Leinster under-14 swimming championship at age nine.⁹⁴ Tony Byrne's brother Paul, a 14-year-old, finished in 25th position.⁹³

The runner-up was 16-year-old Owen Corrigan (Club Snámha Columcille) from Malahide Road, a student at St. Paul's College, Raheny, and the 3rd place was taken by Des Carney (Club Snámha Columcille), a 15-year-old from North Circular Road, Dublin, who was a student at Belvedere College.^{93–98}



The first three in the Liffey Swim 1962 – Tony Byrne (Dublin SC) (Centre) with the *Independent Cup* with Owen Corrigan (Club Snámha Columcille) (left) and Des Carney (Club Snámha Columcille) (right) (*Irish Independent*, 10 August, 1962, pg. 17)

By the time he reached Queen’s Street Bridge (Mellows Bridge), Tony Byrne had established a 20-yard margin over Colm O’Brien (Half Moon SC, handicap 3 min 55 sec) with Ben Kealy (Half Moon SC, limit man, white cap) third, and Des Hickey (Crusade Aquatic Club, limit man, white cap with black hoops) fourth. By Capel Street Bridge (Grattan Bridge) he had increased his lead to 50 yards, followed by Colm O’Brien, Jake Elliott (Half Moon SC, handicap 3 min 55 sec, white cap with red hoops), Paul Byrne (Dublin SC, limit man, white cap with black cross), Neil Kennedy (Dublin SC, limit man, white cap with black stripes), Seán Farrell (Club Snámha Columcille, handicap 3 min 55 sec, white–green halved cap), Mick Fitzpatrick (Half Moon SC, handicap 3 min 35 sec, white cap with green spots) and Ultan Kerrigan (North Dublin WSC, handicap 3 min 45 sec, white cap with red stripe) in that order. Going under the Ha’penny Bridge (Metal Bridge) Tony Byrne had extended his lead further to 150 yards, with Colm O’Brien in 2nd place, Jake Elliott 3rd, and Seán Farrell, Neil Kennedy, Mick Fitzpatrick, and Paul Byrne in pursuit.⁹⁴

Meanwhile the back markers were swimming strongly through the ranks of the slower men with Des Carney (Club Snámha Columcille) leading Owen Corrigan (Club Snámha Columcille) and Nicholas Smith (Dublin SC). However, by the time Tony Byrne emerged from under O’Connell Bridge it was clear that he would win.^{93,94} The race by the back markers from O’Connell Bridge to the finish line, which was much nearer Butt Bridge than in previous years, provided great excitement for the spectators. Owen Corrigan passed Des Carney for second spot with Nicholas Smith in 4th place. Thus, three of the back-markers made it into the top four positions. Colm O’Brien, who had been second for much of the race, had to be content with 5th.^{93–96}

Top 10 finishers:^{93–96}

| Place | Name | Age | Club | Handicap* | Nett Time |
|-------|----------------------------|-----|------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Anthony “Tony” Byrne | 12 | Dublin SC | 3 min 45 sec | 24:33 |
| 2 | Owen Corrigan | 16 | Club Snámha Columcille | 15 sec | 21:38 |
| 3 | Des Carney | 15 | Club Snámha Columcille | 50 sec | 22:17 |
| 4 | Nicholas Smith | 19 | Dublin SC | Scratch | 21:29 |
| 5 | Colm O’Brien | 13 | Half Moon SC | 3 min 55 sec | 25:55 |
| 6 | Paul Skerritt | 17 | Clontarf SC | 1 min 10 sec | 23:34 |
| 7 | Cyril Hardy | 24 | Club Snámha Columcille | 1 min | 23:07 |
| 8 | Michael “Mick” Fitzpatrick | 24 | Half Moon SC | 3 min 35 sec | 25:45 |
| 9 | Peter Mulhall | | North Dublin WSC | 2 min 40 sec | 24:45 |
| 10 | Séamus Heffernan | 19 | Clontarf SC | 40 sec | NR [†] |

*Time ahead of scratch man

†Not recorded in newspaper reports

The Independent Newspapers Shield for the best team went to Club Snámha Columcille – Owen Corrigan (15 sec) 2nd, Des Carney (50 sec) 3rd, Cyril Hardy (1 min) 7th, and Seán Farrell (handicap not published) 12th = 24 pts.^{93–96}

The honours for the fastest time were won by the scratch man Nicholas Smith, off 4 min 5 sec after the limit men. He clocked 21:29. Nicky Smith had previously represented Sligo SC, but was now a member of Dublin SC. Owen Corrigan, who was the fastest finisher the previous year in a time of 22:33^{53–56}, recorded the second fastest time of 21:38.^{93–96} Both Smith and Corrigan were inside the Irish native record of 22:00, held jointly by Cecil Young (Neptune SC, Belfast) and Paddy Arrigan (Curragh SC).^{33,34}

The prizes were presented at Tara Street Baths by the President of the Leinster Branch of the Irish Amateur Swimming Association, Mr. Harry Kavanagh.

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