



Peter Fergus resting in Dover today after his Channel swim.

'SWAM LIKE THE CLAPPERS' TO BEAT CHANNEL

PETER FERGUS, the first Coventry man to swim the English Channel — he had to battle against 6ft. high waves for the first five hours — told "The Coventry Evening Telegraph" today, "I just put my head down and swam like the clappers."

At his Dover hotel, recovering after his 16 hours 31 minutes in the water yesterday, the burly 24 years old member of Coventry Swimming Club, 6ft. 7in. tall and weighing nearly 19 stone — expressed surprise when told today that he would be accorded a civic reception by the Lord Mayor of Coventry on his return to the city.

"But I've got to get to tech," he protested.

Holiday Swim

Fergus, who made his greatest swim during a short holiday in Dover, is returning on Sunday in time to be at technical college the following day. On Tuesday he will be back at his job in the transmission laboratory of the General Electric Company telephone works at Stoke.

He left Coventry unaccompanied and would have had no one to assist him had not Michael Jennings, of Greenhithe, Kent, who swam the Channel on August Monday, offered to help.

"I don't think I could have done it without his advice," said Fergus.

Jennings cooked meals for Fergus, helped him apply about 1lb. of lanolin to protect his body, and was one of those who was in the accompanying boat.

The swim was made after a 5.30 a.m. start from Shakespeare Beach, Dover.

Fergus, who trained throughout the winter in the icy waters of a gravel pit at Kingsbury, near

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FERGUS TELLS OF 16½-HOUR SWIM

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Tamworth, said he did not feel the cold as he forged ahead doing the crawl stroke.

"I felt a bit panicky towards the end," he admitted. This was because the tide turned and it took him an hour to swim the last quarter-mile. "When I was 200yds. off Cap Gris Nez the tide suddenly washed me back out to sea again."

He was very fatigued as he was helped up the French beach, but he soon recovered. Then, on his way back to Dover by motor boat, the diesel fumes made him ill.

Fergus, who is single and a native of Liverpool, lives at Stoke Hill Guildhouse, Coventry.

When he was an apprentice in a Liverpool shipyard he broke his back and had to give up swimming for about two years.

Clubmate to Try

Arthur Ayres, of the same swimming club, said of Fergus: "He's got guts that boy—he would fight to the last inch." But he was astonished that Fergus had succeeded in such difficult weather conditions, which forced several other men to give up.

And Ayres, who has been on many long-distance swims with Fergus and came second only last Saturday in a 20 miles event at Morecambe, had one more comment to make.

"I definitely mean to have a go at the Channel myself next year," declared.

(Pictures on Page 14).



Peter Fergus being greased before his successful Channel swim. Below, a farewell wave to watchers on Shakespeare Beach.

