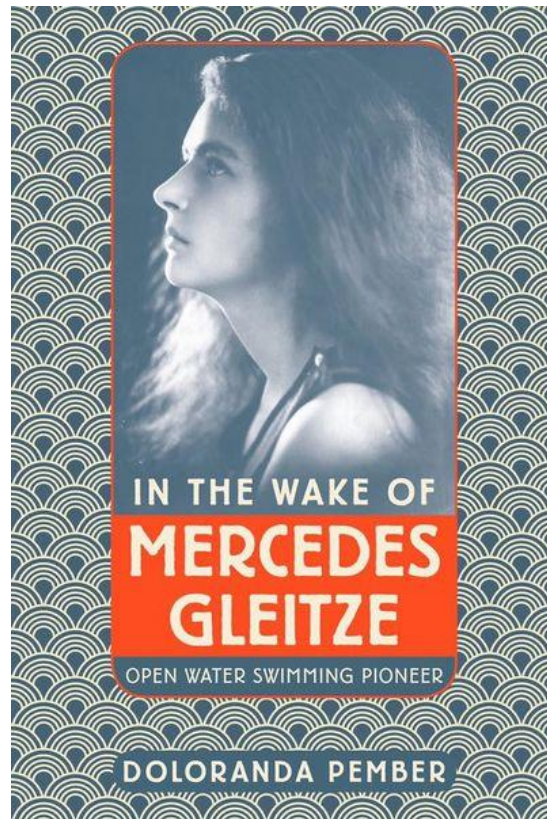




Mercedes Gleitze, Honor Swimmer, Great Britain, 1969



[Personal Website](#)

Mercedes Gleitze became the first English woman to swim the English Channel in 1927 and did a variety of marathon swims in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. In 1923, Gleitze set a British female record of 10 hours and 45 minutes for swimming in the Thames River. In 1928, she became the first person to swim the 12.8 km Straits of Gibraltar in 12 hours and 50 minutes, starting in Tarifa, Spain and finishing in Punta Leona, Morocco. In 1929, she swam Lough Neagh in Ireland in 20+ hours. In 1930, she swam Hellespont in 2+ hours. In 1931, she swam across Galway Bay in 19+ hours and across Sydney Harbor. She swam in Cape Town in 1932 to bring the total number of marathon swims to an incredible 51 with 25 of her swims taking at least 26 hours to complete. With the money she earned from her swims, she established the Mercedes Gleitze Home for the Homeless in Leicester, England which opened in 1933 until it was destroyed during World War II.

She is also an inductee in the International Swimming Hall of Fame (2014).

[Expanded Biography \(Openwaterpedia\)](#)

[Long Swims Database \(Marathon Swimmers Federation\)](#)