



Captain Matthew Webb, Honor Swimmer, Great Britain, 1963



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Captain Matthew Webb was the first, in 1875, successfully swim across the English Channel in 21 hours and 45 minutes on his second attempt. He swam breaststroke the entire way. 35 years passed before the second swimmer replicated his feat. He won the 1879 Trials of Endurance when he swam 119 km in a 6-day endurance race.

In 1875 he swam 32.2 km down the Thames from Blackwall to Gravesend and 31.4 km from Dover to Ramsgate. Webb swam 16 km from Sandy Hook Point to Manhattan Beach, New York in 8 hours in 1879. In 1880, He drowned while trying to complete a dangerous swim through the Whirlpool Rapids below the Niagara Falls in 1883.

Captain Webb wrote a book, *The Art of Swimming*.

He is an inductee in the International Swimming Hall of Fame (1965).

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

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