

Buttermere 10k swim report - September 2016 - Penny Hickson

As the sole representative of GMSC I made my way up to the lake district to attempt my first (non-tide assisted) 10k swim. I did a 'reccie' of the area first - which was just as well as I hadn't realised that it would take so long to drive through the very narrow lanes to the event from my first overnight accommodation.

The location was fabulous - idyllic in fact - and water looked beautiful and calm. See accompanying photo.....

The water temperature felt OK when I dipped a hand in - one of the staff setting up told me it was 16-17 degrees which cheered me up no end as I am a wimp in the cold!

The day of Sept 11th dawned and I made my way up to the event. To start with the weather looked great - it was sunny and slightly breezy - but to my horror the water temperature was definitely NOT 16-17 - more like 12-13!

The first lap of 5k went OK (ish) despite feeling very cold - and I made it in a reasonable time to be on target for my estimated 3 and a half hour finish. However upon starting the second lap I realised something was amiss - it started to blow up a storm - white peaked waves and howling wind made swimming incredibly difficult - especially when my tow float was towing me at one point - or bashing me on the head! Not to mention the fact that several of the marker buoys went AWOL! Myself and the remaining unhappy band of back-markers battled on and finally all made it safely back - although not in the times we had hoped for I'm sure. I finally limped in at 3 hours 56 minutes. The hardest open water swim I have ever done - I think the picture says it all!

Thank goodness I had booked a room that night at the Bridge Hotel just 500metres from the finish..... ☺

Penny Hickson