

OTTO SEAL DOUBLE CROSSES CHANNEL

Two Americans - and a helpless animal (this is him) put the seal on the silliest story of the season. They've come all the way from California to Cape Gris Nez - to make Otto the seal "swim" the Channel. Nobody - not even a levy of pressmen - know "why, what for or how." How it's to be done becomes clear at the start - they are going to tow the animal all the way. By means of a rope Otto crosses the Channel - and there is nothing he can do about it. If this is swimming then Philip Mickman could swim the Atlantic. Next to the tied-up seal, the biggest sufferers are in the press boat - where they are feeling the effects of a rough crossing.

Halfway across, Otto starts a resistance movement - tries to go back home - but is soon brought back into line. No slip-ups could be allowed. For if Otto gets out of his harness, he might swim to Greenland under his own steam. Lots of seals do that every year. But Otto is different and, as for publicity's sake he had to swim the Channel, he has done it - by remote control.

Still followed by an uncomfortable press-party, Otto is dragged ashore at St. Margaret's Bay. Time taken for the big pull - just under five hours. His trainers say there is a record in it somewhere. Now if Otto could forecast the date of the election, that would be something.