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GIRL WINS CHANNEL SWIM

Four o'clock in the morning at Cap Gris Nez - the bit of France nearest to England - but it still seems a long way to the 22 swimmers of 16 nations preparing for the International Cross-Channel Race. There's £2,000 in cash prizes and a 1,000-guinea Silver Trophy at stake, and this year's entry is the biggest ever.

It's the fifth annual race to be organised by Billy Butlin, who's here to start the swimmers on their way. Once the race has begun, a small armada of 30 sailing vessels and two speedboats - not to mention two helicopters - will be following in its wake.

Dawn breaks - and in the lead is a woman - 30-year-old Greta Anderson of Denmark, Olympic gold and silver medallist. Not far behind is Ken Wray of Lancashire.

Brenda Fisher of Lincolnshire, who won the women's section of this race in '51 and '54, makes a late start, and the rest of the field's three-quarters of an hour ahead.

Greta Anderson's American husband is in the boat which accompanies her. She's built up a three-mile lead over Ken Wray, and the cliffs of Dover are looming ahead. Victory could still slip from her grasp - for changing tides have defeated many Channel swimmers within a few yards of the shore.

But the waiting crowds see the gaunt Danish woman struggle wearily ashore. No one dares to help her - for she has to make seven paces on her own after leaving the water. Her energies are nearly spent - but she makes it.

Greta's time - 13 hours 53 minutes. A great achievement - for all the others have ye give up, except Ken Wray, who finishes second. Greta's the first woman to beat all comers in a mixed Cross-Channel race!