

International open water endurance swimmers cross the Channel

Saudi super swimmer, Mariam Bin Laden, is part of international women's relay team to cross the English Channel

UNITED KINGDOM, July 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A GROUP of international women – who met through their mutual love of swimming – has successfully completed a relay Channel crossing, to mark an historic event.

It is 100 years since Gertrude 'Trudi' Ederle became the first woman to successfully swim the English Channel, on 6 August 1926.



Open water endurance swimmer, Mariam Bin Laden

And now four open water endurance swimmers have repeated that task in relay – also using it as an opportunity to promote to young people the importance of being able to swim.

“

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Mariam Bin Laden

Mariam Binladen from Saudi Arabia – who also did a solo swim across the Channel a decade ago – was joined by Mariana Moura Santon from Portugal, German Nathalie Pohl and Britain's Jasmine Harrison on the epic journey.

Despite a choppy sea with strong winds – so bad that, at one point, the swim was in danger of being stopped after

four hours in the water – the relay team completed the 48km challenge in 11 hours 28 mins.

Each woman spent an hour at a time in the water, forbidden to touch the boat or any other objects and having to keep at least 1.5m away from the boat at all times.

“The conditions were rough,” said Mariam. “We started with winds of around 17 to 18 knots

which gradually dropped during the day to around six knots and rose at night to nine knots and with a water temperature of 20°C, dropping to 17°C.

“And, because each swimmer was only in the water for an hour, you had to maintain a fast pace throughout the entire swim.

“Once the hour was up, we returned to the boat to warm up, Between the wind and cold weather, staying warm between swims was another challenge.”



Taking part in the swim from Dover to Calais had involved six months of intensive training for Mariam, who is also the first Arab woman to swim the entire length of the River Thames.

She has also taken part in numerous other challenges including ice glacier swimming in Austria and swimming from Saudia Arabia to Egypt.

Despite getting stung by a jellyfish during the swim she was determined to carry on and she and her teammates emerged victorious.

“Another reason I wanted to take on this challenge was to promote swimming among children,” said Mariam.

“I believe every child should have the opportunity to learn how to swim as it is an essential life skill that can help prevent drowning and ultimately save lives.

“I hope this achievement inspires more children to take up swimming and gives them greater confidence and safety in the water.”

Along with her love of swimming, Mariam is a dentist, environmentalist and philanthropist, supporting ocean conservation and women’s participation in sports.

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