

# Irish Open - Cork

2<sup>nd</sup> may 2009

## Club Performance:

3 swimmers

Marie Concannon, Anne Frost, Dave Buttwell

10 individual swims

2 Gold

2 Silver

2 Bronze

## Individual Performance:

Dave Buttwell            2 Gold, 1 Silver

Anne Frost                2 Bronze

Marie Concannon        1 Silver

## Gala details:

By Marie Concannon

The Irish Open in Cork had long been talked about in the club as the next big trip abroad, following the big success of the Cork trip two years ago. Terry, Neil, Heidi, Anna Stokes, Kate, Anna Walker, Martin and Mike were just some of the people who booked very cheap flights from Birmingham.

This got me thinking, maybe I could fly out, swim the gala, and get some friends to come out for an Irish road trip and see my family in Ireland? In the end, numbers dwindled following inconvenient flight changes (thank you BMI Baby), until it was just Anne Frost and I, with my friends flying in after the gala. Anne, with some dedication, flew from Manchester along with her daughter Helen and Ed, Helen's boyfriend, who were taking a break before Uni exams.

So I flew in on Friday, picked up a car, met my cousin who showed me around, then set off to meet Anne and co at the airport. There are lots of stern signs warning about where you can and can't park in Cork City, but in true Irish style, everyone ignores them. So following my cousin's tour, I ran around the city, frantically trying to remember where this car might be, and how to find the airport. And there is the beauty of Cork. Like the Micra I hired, it had city looks, but was tiny. I stumbled on the car and stumbled on the airport just in time.

The next day, Anne and I set off with time to spare, planning on applying our considerable navigational talents to find the pool. We asked directions at the hostel, and from another five people, arriving with five minutes to spare before Anne's 200m freestyle event. Who needs a warmup anyway?

Anne swam brilliantly, and came third despite the fact she had only walked into the leisure centre about five minutes before. And she looked cool as a cucumber throughout. She also got a third in the 50m fly, only just missed out on a medal in the 100m freestyle and swam a creditable time in the 5m freestyle as well. Well done Anne!

While Anne was kicking off her Cork campaign, I went up to the stands to cheer her on, and was promptly adopted by an Irish club. We even swapped hats! It's impossible not to make friends in Ireland. Anthony and Paul from Askeaton were great company during the gala, and 68 year old Anthony made me feel quite lazy with my three events. He did about six, and seemed to get PBs in all of them. I was quite pleased with my events in the end, silver in the 50m Fly and even happy with my 4<sup>th</sup> place 50m breaststroke, but I won't tell you the time!

Anne and I were delighted that Dave Buttwell and his wife had come all the way from France to compete, as we didn't expect to see him. We were even more pleased when he increased our medal tally with two golds (50m and 100m breaststroke) and a silver (100m IM). Nice work Dave! This also meant he picked up two crystal goblets, which were given out instead of gold medals. Mike may have not made it, but he had entered, and I was sorry he wasn't there to compete since they gave him a lane and read out his name every time. The event was very chilled out and running late until the organisers realised they might miss the Munster/Leinster rugby match kicking off that evening. I've never seen officials move so fast!

In the end, they even had time for a Munster/Leinster/Barbarians relay (ie Southern Ireland v rest of Ireland v. rest of World), but Anne and I decided it was time to head back and seek out some traditional Irish fare (see photo). Dave also had plans in town, so we said our goodbyes. Well done for coming all that way Dave, that's dedication. He wasn't the only one to come from afar though. Anne and I handed out leaflets to swimmers from Liverpool, Belfast and Valencia advertising the next Capital Masters gala. I hope you appreciate our hard work Terry!

The next day, Anne, Helen, Ed and I went to Blarney, where I declined to kiss the stone, as I think I'm charming enough anyway. It was a beautiful day and a great way to end the weekend. Anne, Helen and Ed headed back on Monday, and my friends Clare and Helen turned up for a week of fun and hanging about on beaches in the pouring rain. Thanks for all the fun everyone!

Marie Concannon	100	FR	01:11.54	4th
Marie Concannon	50	BR	00:49.09	4th
Marie Concannon	50	Fly	00:35.19	2nd
Anne Frost	200	FR	03:48.32	3rd
Anne Frost	50	FR	00:48.38	5th
Anne Frost	100	FR	01:45.23	4th
Anne Frost	50	Fly	01:03.04	3rd
Dave Buttwell	50	BR	00:42.75	1st
Dave Buttwell	100	IM	01:31.73	2nd
Dave Buttwell	100	BR	01:34.40	1st