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TRiBull

April 2011



Triathlete at Rest

The Editor Says

Phil Parr-Burman



At last the real racing season has started. Tra-nent and East Fife races have been run and Midlothian is just around the corner. Racing is, for many of us, what its all about but don't forget that you can provide a real service to the sport by writing up your experience for Tribull! This is particularly so from any of you new to the sport.

Now some news from the world of Triathlon.

Commie Pool

Three of your committee, Me, Kirsten and Jim (new members—see the back page for who these characters are) attended a meeting about development of triathlon in Edinburgh. The aim is to improve co-ordination between clubs, Tri-athlon Scotland and the facilities in Edinburgh. Of most interest however is probably that there is now going to be some effort to get us training time at the Commie Pool when it opens. We were also told that it would open “early next year”, which was frustratingly vague, however a source close to government has since told Tribull that it will be in April.

Jim is now looking to keep the ET end up in the negotiations with the aim of getting us a couple of sessions a week. We'll need to be flexible so

this might change the shape of the training week a little, but your super Saturday at Dalkeith is one thing that will definitely remain.

Bike Boxes

All you triathlon tourists out there. Remember / be informed for the first time that the club has a couple of bike boxes that you can hire for a mere £25. One of these recently went to Australia with Andrew (see his article in this issue) who gave it an excellent report for looking after his treasure.

Email List to be Purged

It's the time of year when the club email group will be purged of non members. So if this issue finds its way to you and you haven't got around to rejoining, do so now or you'll find yourself cut off.

Finally

Any more ETs abroad? Remember to have your photo taken in your kit, ideally in front of a famous location. Andrew has shown us this month how it should be done!

Summer BBQ

Phil Parr-Burman



Friends and families welcome.

More details to follow. Keep an eye out for the emails and notices on your club website.

Sunday 26th June from 2pm—after the Women's Triathlon.

At Dalkeith Country park we will be having a ET 10km Championship with a BBQ and rounders to follow.

Club Championships—A real prize this year!

Kirsten Sinclair



Check out February's tribull for the reasoning behind the club nominating target races. One of the reasons is the club championship and I'm delighted to announce that we have negotiated the prize of a free physio MoT and massage care of

Scoring system –

- 10 points for each event
- Women – 2 extra points for each ET you beat
- Men – 1 extra point for each ET you beat

- The top 5 races to count
- You must have a Triathlon Scotland race licence

Races

1. Stirling Duathlon 27/3/11
2. East Fife Sprint Triathlon 10/4/11
3. Midlothian Sprint Triathlon 1/5/11
4. Knockburn Standard Triathlon 12/6/11
5. Lochore Sprint Triathlon 19/6/11
6. Kelso Sprint Triathlon 7/8/11
7. Aberfeldy Middle Distance 20/8/11
8. Strathclyde Standard Triathlon 4/9/
9. Portobello Aquathlon 25/9/11

Bike Setup and Skills Session

Neal Doggett will be running a bike setup and skills session on Saturday 7th May at Dalkeith campus. The session will start at 9.30am after the swim and will last for 2.5-3 hours. The 5k run TT will be postponed until the week after.

The session will consist of (i) Bike setup (ii) Bike training/skills and will be part talk/part hands-on

practice session.

We would encourage as many of our members as possible to take advantage of this *free* training session. It is aimed at all levels, from beginners to experienced coaches so everyone will gain from it.

Cycle Time Trials and King of Mountains

The club is re-introducing the King of the Mountains series that we last ran a few years ago. This time they're all going to be a fast and furious two laps of Arthur's seat.

They will be run on the first Tuesday's of the month, also starting in May. This series is a handicap one, with the handicap decided by the race organizing committee (Greg and Phil). Meet up, 3rd May at the car park at Dunsapie loch.

Also the regular, less hilly, monthly cycle time trials will be running as normal this year, on the third Tuesday of the month starting 17th May. These will be in the time honoured mould of four

2.5 mile laps at Silverknowes, starting from the golf club house.

Apart from being good fun these time trials are an excellent way of telling your body what a sprint or standard race feels like.

Watch out for emails telling you the start time.

What are we warming up for?

Richard Foxley



These days everyone knows that it's important to warm-up properly before we start exercising because, well, that's what we've always been told, right? But have you ever asked yourself why you're actually warming up? Like every task in life if you know *why* you're doing something, then it's much easier to understand what you're actually doing and how to do it properly.

It is true that warming up effectively is indeed very important but the true purpose of a warm-up and its potential performance benefits aren't always the best publicised. Ask someone the question, and the most common answer is "to avoid injury", with the most common method being stretching. Whilst this isn't necessarily 'wrong', it isn't completely 'right' either, so we must consider what we're asking our bodies to do and how best to achieve this.

The main reason for warming up properly is to enhance the blood flow and oxygen supply to the working muscles. Participating in any kind of sporting activity is going to put a higher demand on the muscles and respiratory system, so increasing this blood flow allows us to perform at a higher effort level without injuring ourselves and without feeling like we're about to blow out a lung. There is a performance benefit therefore to a good warm up as well as the safety element of avoiding injury.

The body has three separate energy systems for transforming our stored energy into kinetic energy. The first two systems, commonly known as the ATP-CP system and the Lactic Acid (or Anaerobic) system, deal with providing small bursts of energy for short sharp efforts such as sprints, but these reserves deplete quickly so as endurance athletes we must rely on our third energy system, the Aerobic system, to keep us going through longer efforts.

Our aerobic system requires oxygen to work efficiently and with inadequate oxygen supply, the muscles depend upon our anaerobic system which results in the production of lactic acid and

that beautiful burn we all so dearly love. Unlike our anaerobic system which can respond quickly to higher demands, our aerobic system is much slower to react and takes some time to wake up and spring into action. Without warming up prior to exercise we would be reliant on our anaerobic system to produce energy until we gain our 'second wind' when the aerobic system takes over energy production requirements. A good warm-up therefore boots up the aerobic system and allows it to come into play gradually without producing a large oxygen deficit in the first few minutes of activity.

So how best do we warm up? Contrary to the long held popular belief, it is not with the static stretching of individual muscle groups which are going to be strained over the course of our exercise. Thinking about how our bodies are going to produce the required energy, standing still stretching a muscle isn't going to get the blood flowing. The hyper-extension of a cold muscle caused by static stretching is also more likely to lead to tears and strains as the muscle is not ready to be stretched like this. We should therefore be warming up using the motions that we are going to employ during our period of exercise, i.e a gentle jog before a run, a gentle cycle before an increased pace cycle and so forth. Once the heart is working a bit harder and pumping more blood round the body dynamic stretches can be introduced that move and stretch isolated muscle groups, again in the same fashion as they are about to be used. Static stretches should be left till the end of a session. When using our muscles for a sustained period at a higher effort level they are subject to a succession of rapid contractions in order to drive the arms and legs. These repeated contractions can lead to an effective shortening of the muscles and so the now warm muscles can be stretched out with static stretches to counteract the effects of the previous efforts.

So now that we know why we're warming up and how to warm up, how does this help our performance? A 2005 study published in the *Medicine & Science in Sport and Exercise* journal looked at why warming up and removing that initial oxygen deficit was so important. As discussed above, if we are to rely on our aerobic system to power our racing efforts, the speed at

which the system responds to our demands is critical. If we were to start cold and it took 5 minutes for our body to adapt then we would be producing lactic acid for the full 5 minutes. As the start of many races can be quite frenetic, and it is not uncommon to get a little carried away at this point, the large energy demand must be supplied by our anaerobic system at this point which leads to a large amount of acid being produced right from the off. Conversely, if we were to start already warmed up, that period of adjustment could be reduced to 1 minute resulting in a much smaller production of lactic acid and a comparative flying start.

The researchers in the study completed 3 different trials with their subjects. 1 group had no warm up, 1 group had a moderate warm up and 1 group had a hard warm up. Unsurprisingly the 2 groups allowed a warm up showed significant improvement in their time trial performances when compared to the group who was not warmed up. From measuring oxygen consump-

tion the researchers identified that the oxygen uptake was much higher at the earlier stages of the time trial and that those subjects who had been allowed to warm up adjusted quicker, spent less time relying on their anaerobic system and were therefore able to process oxygen more efficiently over the course.

So the moral of the story? Warming up will not only greatly reduce your risk of injury but can also noticeably improve your overall performance too. There is a myth amongst many that warming up may hinder performances by tiring you out beforehand but as long as the warm-up isn't excessive then it's clearly the way forward. So next time you're standing at the start of a race watching all the other people warm-up, ask yourself why you're just standing there watching and go join in.

Richard Foxley

ETs Abroad!



Andrew McMenigall

Las Playitas

Fiona Gilfillan



We (Claire and me) arrive at the hotel, check out the bar facilities, see if there's decent cable TV, dump our bags and hit the restaurant. For the next week we stuff our faces, eat ice cream and lounge by the pool. 'Look at those nutters running/cycling/going to the gym on holidays, eh? What a bunch of eejits.'

So that was pre-2008, when I was 18.5 stone and the closest I got to sport on holiday was running up a tab on cocktails at the bar. Flash forward to February 2011, and we're now at Las Playitas Resort in Fuerteventura, determined to spend our time keeping fit in the warmth of the sun.

Las Playitas is situated in the South West of Fuerteventura near Gran Tarajal, about 40 minutes drive from the airport. If you've ever been to the Canaries you'll not be surprised to hear that the landscape is somewhat volcanic and rocky, and you need to remember that Fuerteventura literally translates as 'strong wind'. It's not a large island, and only has two holidaymaker resorts to speak of, so not really much of a tourist thing going on. We flew there with Ryanair who very kindly added, at no extra cost to us, a squonking kid with an aversion to seatbelts so every time the captain switched on the seatbelt sign the toddler in row 8 let rip. Various methods of silencing it were discussed at the back of the plane during the 4.5 hour journey, but as none were legal we didn't follow through on any of them. Not a great start – things had better improve.

Picked up our hire car at the airport and pootled down the island – we could tell we were getting near the resort as the number of cyclists on the roads (which are, by the way, smooth to start with and are currently being upgraded) was increasing. A good sign! We arrived at the resort and checked in – first bit of excitement was that there is a funicular railway inside the hotel to get you to the furthestmost rooms. The architect of the hotel was apparently Swiss, and the alternative to using the railway was to tramp up the many steps in between blocks to our room; no problem since we were there for exercise, but

handy when you are hauling cases/bikeboxes and stuff about.

Accommodation was of a very high standard – I think the hotel is only 5 or 6 years old and that really showed in the general decor. The beds are all orthopaedic mattresses and the bathrooms have separate bath/shower cabinets and hairdryer, and cable TV. A pointer to the general clientele was the number of German/Scandinavian TV channels, and this was the case based on the various training tops/t-shirts we saw in the restaurant; indeed there was a Swedish aerobics weekend on all week when we were there (work that one out). There's a good choice of accommodation onsite – we stayed in the hotel where you can have either a traditional hotel room or a junior suite, which seemed to be a bit bigger. Alternatively you can stay in the Aparthotel if you can be bothered taking Pot Noodles with you, and there are also some fairly plush-looking villas, all with pools.

So, on to the facilities. Not the biggest of resorts, but on offer there is: Olympic 50m outdoor pool (plus two other leisure pools), a cycle centre hiring out Specialized road/mountain/hybrid bikes, a Nautilus air-conditioned gym, outdoor gym, tennis, football, volleyball, multisports courts, diving centre, tennis, watersports centre, various running loops, spinning, aerobics, pilates, table tennis, 18-hole golf course with practice facilities, pool tables, launderette, onsite supermarket, two hotel buffet restaurants and separate Spanish and Italian restaurants, pool bar/sports bar etc etc. Looks on comparison to offer the same stuff as Club La Santa in Lanzarote.

Activity-wise, you could really bust yourself a lung doing all the classes, so we chose to stick to a loose regime. Spinning every morning at 9am on La Rambla looking through the palm trees to the Atlantic Ocean with some fairly good instruction. I mean – Hugh et al are bloody good in yon sweaty LifesCycle classes, but I'd choose the lovely Annick with her skimpy Nike ensemble overlooking the waves any day! As an alternative we had a Chilean instructor who was there as part of the Swedish weekend, and he was surprisingly good – all very holistic, talking about energy, choices in life, spoke of 'joining the climb' and stuff. He came round the class at the end to give each of us a wee chat, and he thanked me for showing such joy during his

class – take note, John W, I'll be expecting this from now on. Only complaint was that some of the spin tracks were like listening to the Euro-vision Song Contest on steroids – I won't be adding German industrial punk to my iPod play-lists any time soon.

Then onto the swimming – the pool was struck by lightning late last year and the heating system in the main pool is still temperamental apparently, so since we had taken a risk and not brought wetsuits with us, we hired Blueseventy Helix and Orca suits onsite from the (somewhat surly and condescending) owner of the sports shop onsite. He very kindly and carefully explained how not to tear his nice wetsuits with our nails..... no sniggering at the back. At £40 for the week I was miffed as I have a perfectly good wetsuit hanging in the wardrobe at home, but I realised when I got there that it would be plain silly to swim in the pool with only a cossie on – it was colder than the sea. For those of you who know me you will be aware that I can't pass up on the chance of a new gadget, and I added one to the collection whilst there. I hadn't swum for 3 months due to a torn rotator cuff so was pleased to see that they had swim snorkels on sale, and this really saved my bacon as I was able to work on my armpull without having to turn to take a breath with my crappy stroke – yes, I know I need to get coaching and sort it fundamentally, but I had Euros in my purse and the shop was open, OK? The pool also has an underwater viewing chamber, which I am assuming is for coaching on strokework and nothing pervy.

We sampled a lot of the other activities onsite – I did my first step class since the late 90's when, as a result of my hulking weight crashing down on the plastic step at an angle I nearly took some poor lass's ankle off as it shot across the floor and I vowed never to do it again. Again, a good standard of instruction all round. We used the gym which had more machinery, equipment, weights and counterbalances than Anne Widdecombe's foundation garments, and everywhere you looked there were classes of some sort going on. Rasmus Henning was running coaching classes there that week, and the smarter of you will have worked out where you recognise Playitas from – they sponsored Fabian Cancellara and the SaxoBank team of 2010. For cycling in warm weather on great road surfaces with very little traffic and great mountain biking alternatives, you'd struggle to get better. The Erdinger triathlon team were all there, and loads of other 'I Competed in the Wheretheflippistan Ironman' t-shirts were worn. I put ET on the map with my Gullane beach t-shirt....wonder if they

worked out I was just a marshall????

We also tried out the golf course when we were there – Mrs G took a 3-day golf instruction course and I played the 18-hole course one afternoon. Hardly championship standard but a welcome change from the other sports.

Food was befitting of a sports resort attracting healthy people – buffet-style, with a wide array of fruit, cereals, nuts, seeds, cheese/meats, breads and eggs/fish/bacon for breakfast, then similar fruits, vegetables, salads, dressings and meat dishes in the evening. Apparently the tri-athletes are their most expensive customers as they all pile into the restaurant for breakfast at 6.30 when it opens, bomb round the island on their bikes then come back in at 9.30 for a second breakfast! We really enjoyed all the food, that is until the last night when I seemed to pick up a horrific stomach bug and enjoyed it for a second time. Let's just say on the flight home I sat near the loo!

Costs - £570 for both of us for a week on a bed/ breakfast basis; buffet dinner is £13 each if you prebook it, which I'd advise as there are few restaurants in the area worth sampling. Ryanair flights were about £130 each, and car hire for the week was about £120. All in all – at under £500 each for a week with the facilities on offer I thought it was a great holiday and will be finding a date in my diary to return later in the year.



the hotel



Ask Audrey

Audrey



Dear Audrey,
I recently had occasion to wear a pair of pink fluffy ears whilst out drinking in George St. How long should one keep pink fluffy ears on? I wore them late into the evening on the grounds that I felt they revealed me to be a pretty cool cat. The doorman on The Liquid Rooms however said I looked like a tosser. Was this the voice of envy?

Thank you,
A pretty cool cat

Dear Sir,

Audrey has managed to uncover some mug shots from the Liquid Rooms' bouncer who, in fact, thought that you looked like a playful pink panther (and was indeed envious of your evident alpha-maleness.) Audrey recommends that you keep the pink fluffy ears on as long as you can – if you're racing, at least until T1. One should always wear something eye-catching when open water swimming.

Audrey



PS—this is not the (anonymous) questioner, but it just shows that style is catching!

Dear Audrey,

One of our ETs is having a dilemma. Until recently he has been wearing boat shoes when transitioning from the Saturday swim to the Saturday bike but has stopped wearing them due to him getting a lot of stick as supposedly they don't look good with lycra. Should he ignore these cruel jibes or do the fashion police have the law on their side?

Yours,
Versace in Lycra

Dear Versace,

As a man of your fashion calibre should know, nothing looks good with (or indeed in) lycra. That notwithstanding, accompanying said lycra with boat shoes is a fashion crime of the highest order. Boat shoes should only be worn by flappy haired Hugh Grant types on yachts on the French Riviera. So, unless you're squeezing in a quick proscutto with Dolce and Gabanna whilst your team mates do the monthly run time trial, put your bike shoes on and waddle on down to the car park penguin-style like the rest of your ET club mates.

P.S. Will you launch a flattering non-lycra tri suit collection please?

Yours,
Audrey



Overtraining—don't let it get to you!

Phil Parr-Burman

I always thought that the term “overtraining” just meant you'd overdone it a bit, had left your best in the training session and needed a few days rest. But no, it can take several months to recover properly and it's a medically recognised condition, even with its own name (Unexplained Under Performance Syndrome—or UPS).

A few years ago (the 2007 season) I had a good racing year, including 3 standards. Encouraged, I thought I'd follow that with a really good winters training to build on it and head towards my aim of qualifying for the worlds. Looking back at the training diary the signs are there, with a week of training followed by a week of low energy / viral symptoms, most of December off, trying to pick it up through to the middle of March after which I didn't do any training for two months. I was low on energy, my morning heart rate was 6 to 8 beats higher than normal, and even crept up to 10 beats higher over the weeks, and there were yet more periods of viral symptoms. A blood test showed nothing out of the ordinary.

My doctor brother identified it as overtraining and a bit of research told me how to get over it. The answer is, effectively, slowly. But equally just rest isn't enough—you have to train yourself out of it by very gradually increasing the distance and intensity. The heart rate monitor is ideal for this. So starting on 20 minutes at 110 bpm for a few weeks, then the occasional session at 120 bpm. Over a period of 3 months I built up to include long cycles of up to 1.5 hours. I still didn't feel able to race though until September (the Porty Aquathlon).

So what did I do wrong? Standard advice is to take a month off serious training. After the hard racing season, with a lot of races interspersed with lots of interval training. Even though the races had gone well I didn't allow enough time to really recover. It's a complicated subject and maybe there were other factors in the background (there was certainly a lot going on at work around then).

I think the message is that you should listen to your body. That's a difficult thing to do since sometimes training should hurt or you don't get

any fitter. That's what the heart rate monitor is for. With a bit of experience you know what your heart rate is on any given session. If it feels hard but the rate is lower than normal that's sure sign that you're not recovered enough for that session. So do what I didn't do—ignore what it says in your training plan, face up to the facts of life and back off. That means either stopping the session or just easing right off and the next day do a recovery session or even rest up totally.

Here's what one of the articles about UPS that I dug up (<http://www.sportsinjurybulletin.com/archive/overtraining-syndrome.html>) says:

“a persistent, unexplained performance deficit (recognised and agreed by coach and athlete) despite two weeks of relative rest. This contrasts with the definition of chronic fatigue syndrome, where symptoms must last at least six months. In addition to fatigue and an unexpected sense of effort during training, the following symptoms have been reported in UPS:

- history of heavy training and competition
- frequent minor infections
- unexplained or unusually heavy, stiff, and/or sore muscles
- mood disturbance
- change in expected sleep quality
- loss of energy
- loss of competitive drive
- loss of libido
- loss of appetite.”

All cases are different and I didn't have all of these (!) but my morning heart rate was 6 to 8 beats higher than normal. All cases are different.

Team Degani Three peaks cycle, Victoria, Australia

Andrew McMenigall



(235km, 5350m of vertical climb)

These events always sound like a good idea at the time! After bumping into a friend last year who had signed up for the event, the gauntlet was thrown down! A cycle in Australia in March sounded quite an attractive proposition. The thought of a warm weather cycle (or so I thought) had its appeals. It was certainly going to be a challenge, but the extent of the challenge, billed as the toughest alpine race in Australia, was only really evident once the cycle got going.

The challenge started in working out how to train for such a race through the Scottish winter. Lady luck was not helping here, with a considerable time spent on the turbo trainer in the garage. In a funny sort of way I actually came to quite like the turbo trainer. I even managed to work my way through my wife's video collection in the process. I tried to focus on strength work, with lots of lower cadence higher resistance cycling. As ever there is no substitute for getting in the

miles out on the open road. In this regard I really struggled. The longest cycle I managed was the 66 miles of the East Lothian Audax, which, like most of my training cycles I did in pretty poor weather conditions.

I arrived in Australia two weeks ahead of the cycle, and spent the two weeks between in Sydney, Melbourne, Wellington and Auckland. My bike eventually arrived in time for a cycle out of Sydney, a four hour cycle with my companion for the Three Peaks cycle. That took the extent of my outdoor cycling ahead of the event to about a sum total of 16 hours.

The cycle was run in the only real alpine area of Australia, which was about 200km inland from Melbourne. It did not look like what one would normally think that Australia would look like, and it certainly did not feel like Australia. When we left Sydney it had been in the mid 20's and sunny. When we arrived in Falls Creek, it was like a typical Scottish day, misty and cold. So much for my warm weather cycle!

There were about 1200 entrants in what was the second Team Degani Three Peaks cycle, so the registration process took a bit of time. We also had to have our bikes, helmets and lights checked, which I thought was a bit over the top,





but actually made more sense, as the cycle got going. The obligatory briefing reinforced that it was not a race, and that they would not allow anyone to finish in the dark. They even had a resident meteorologist to tell us what weather we could expect. He said that it would be generally dry with sunny spells. All I can say is never listen to the weathermen!

I was cycling with a colleague from my company's Sydney office, and even though he is a stronger cyclist than me (difficult to believe I know), we had decided that we would stick together all the way round. We set off at the back of 7 in the morning, in the mist. The route was circular, which funnily enough covered 3 summits: Towanga Gap (837m above sea level); Mount Hotham (1821m above sea level); and Falls Creek (1580m above sea level). The summit of Falls Creek was the start and finish point.

The first 30km was a downhill stretch, most of which was in the mist. The organizers said that there was a strict speed limit of 50km/h for this stretch. For the life of me, I have no idea how anybody could go down this section at anywhere near that speed, as the road wound its way downhill. The elbows felt sprained after the first 30km, most of which involved keeping pressure on the brakes. While the mist did lift by the time we got to the bottom, the heavens opened. I passed a number of cyclists taking shelter under the trees at this point. I didn't see what their problem was, I actually felt quite at home at this point.

Don't let the smile fool you in the photo below, it was purely for show. This was about three quarters of the way round, and was feeling pretty stiff, at least the sun was shining at this stage!

The first of the three hills, Towanga Gap involved around a 600m climb. This was described by one of the competitors that had taken part in the previous years event as merely a pimple,

compared to what was to come. The gradient was not too bad, but given that it was early on, no heroics here, so in to the granny gear and spin it out. Thirty odd minutes later we arrived at the first summit. We immediately set off on a relatively long down hill come flat leg. The downhill leg was neither as long, nor did it feel as steep as the first 30km.

In the flattish part before the climb up Mount Hotham, we managed to get into a good rhythm. Only slight issue was that a number of times we caught up with and tried to attach ourselves to a group in front of us. On most occasions some faster riders would pass and the group would pick up their pace to catch the faster riders. It is funny how many of these groups we subsequently caught up with again. We did eventually settle with a group that was happy to maintain a consistent pace, but unfortunately they decided to pull off at the water station, just before the start of the climb.

The attached map gives a reasonable indication of the average gradients over the course, but as with any map covering such a distance, the averages quoted, sometimes belie some reasonable variability. The first hour or so of the climb up Mount Hotham was quite predictable, in terms of what we would have thought from the map, a slow steady climb, with gradients between 4 and 7%. Not much need to come off out of the seat, other than to give your backside a rest. It was in the last quarter that it got a bit tricky.

Towards the top of the climb the weather deteriorated, with what felt like sleet in our face. In addition after climbing for the best part of 2 hours the last km was the steepest of the climb. This served to make sure that the legs had that 'nice' strained feeling upon reaching the top. Having never been over the route before, it was somewhat disheartening towards the top, as it

appeared to have a number of false summits, which made it feel almost like the climb would never end. There was therefore quite some relief when we did eventually cross the timer mat at the top of the climb. I managed the climb in 2 hours and 10 minutes. Not exactly King of The Mountain, but compared to the fastest time of just under 1 hour 40 minutes, it was not bad.

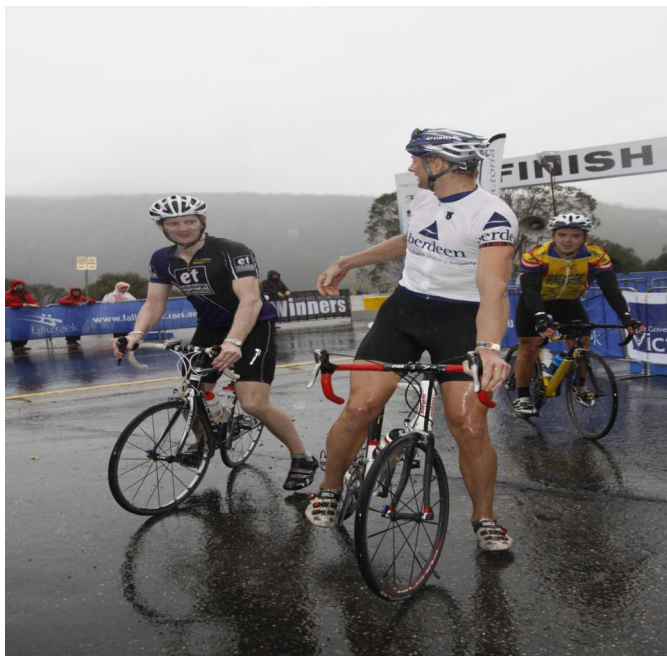
The map would have you believe that the next 50 km were pretty much down hill. For 30km that definitely felt like the case. There was a pretty decent lunch provision at the somewhat appropriately named Dinner Plain. It was good to take on some proper food, rather than all the lu-cozade, power bars and gels that had been keeping me going until then. The Dinner Plain stop also marked the half way mark. There was a provision to send a change of outfit to this stop, which I duly did, but in the end, I did not take advantage of this facility, partially because I was pretty stiff by this point, and I also thought that it would be a waste of time, as the sun had just come out, and the temperature had risen to the mid to high 20's. Given that we had made it round the first 115km in 5 hours, I thought we would be heading for a time of just over 10 hours. This was possibly more wishful thinking on my part.

Between Omeo and Anglers Rest there was one decent climb, but generally it was a reasonably

flat to downhill section. At Anglers Rest I had to even put on more sunscreen, as the sun appeared to be at its height at this point. I could barely get off the bike here to fill up my water bottle, so did not look to hang around here fearing that I would completely stiffen up. The road from Anglers Rest generally continued on for the next 10km or as flattish to slight downhill. By this stage I was pretty much on autopilot, and the level of conversation had petered away to the absolutely necessary. Mostly my vocals on this leg were to reign in my riding partner's enthusiasm, when his pace went beyond a level that I could sustain.

Just when we were in the zone for this leg the final climb began. The climb began with a sharp left turn off the road we were on, to be greeted by a pretty formidable climb. The first two Km of the climb were +10% degree in gradient, and felt like the slowest 2km I have ever cycled. By this stage there were a number of competitors walking with their bikes. The sun was bearing down brightly at this point, which made it feel the warmest it had been in the day. Eventually the slope appeared to become less steep, and somewhat ironically the weather started to close in a bit.

I was cognizant that we needed to finish before it became dark, which was around half past 6 the previous evening. The last thing that I wanted to do was to have come all that way only to be told that it was too dark for us to complete the course. Inevitably the pace in the second half of the course had not kept up with the first half, but given the first 30km



was downhill, that should not be a surprise. The slow progress up the last hill made me worry that we might be a bit too close for comfort for finishing in the light. This impression was compounded by the fact that I was still wearing my sunglasses. This near fear did however drive me on to push for the last 25km.

The last 10km was actually pretty much flat to downhill. The course took you round a lake before turning the final corner down into Falls Creek. The scene from around the lake looked uncannily like a typical Scottish moorland, with heather to boot. Even the weather obliged, by this stage it was tipping it down. The sound and sight of the finishing line was however a sight for sore eyes. We made it in 11 hours and 18 minutes. Of the total number of starters of 1150, I came in 167th, which I was pretty chuffed with. Somewhat ironically they let riders finish for the next nearly 2 hours. So much for the risk of not being able to finish!

The picture below shows me at the finish with

my cycling partner, Toby, my colleague from our Sydney office. Don't worry I have not shrunk, he is actually 6 foot 8 inches, so even I look up to him. Note that I respectfully declined to wear our corporate gear, as modeled by Toby, instead choosing to fly the flag for ET down under

I completed what was the longest single cycle that I have done. The previous longest cycle was the An Bealach 90 miler up near Torridon. I did it after what could best be described as less than optimal training, and managed to finish strongly coming well within the top half of the field. The top rider finished the course in just under 9 hours. I was pretty focused on trying to limit time spent in the 'red zone' through most of the cycle, although the steeper elements of the climbing naturally took me up and over this level. The ride was well summed up by a fellow male rider, who suggested, after completing the cycle that 'that had to be harder than childbirth!' Enough said!

The Corrieyairack Challenge

Fiona Milligan



The Corrieyairack Pass runs between Fort Augustus at the southern end of Loch Ness in the north and Laggan in Strath Spey to the south. At its highest point it is 770m above sea level. It is known for General Wade's military road which was built over it in 1731. This pass was used by Bonnie Prince Charlie during the 1745 Jacobite Uprising. The Corrieyairack Challenge was started in 1993 to raise money for a local charity, the Speyside Trust, which provides outdoor holidays and respite care for people with disabilities. The course consists of a 17 mile off-road section over the pass, followed by a 26 mile road cycle to the village of Kincaig where the event is based. You can cross the pass by walking, running, or on a mountain bike. You enter the event in a team of 4: 3 people to take part and one to join the team of marshals, and you have to raise some sponsorship for the Speyside Trust. A friend, Iain, from the mountaineering club I'm a member of, has taken part in the Challenge for the past 10 years, so I had heard of it, but it was Karl's friend (and fellow ET member) Gareth who suggested that we enter (with Gareth's girlfriend Kirsten becoming our 4th team member.) Fortunately for me, there is no requirement that team members race together! There's obviously been some ET entrants in the past, as the men's 50+ record is held by one Scott Balfour!

So after work one Friday in July Karl and I headed north with a car full of bikes and camping kit. Most people camp in a field where the race will finish, which is what we did. As we headed north it started to rain, which was definitely not part of the plan. However we found the field, put up the tent and even made it to the pub for a drink with Iain and the rest of his team (including Graham Pearson, a good friend of mine who was part of the marshalling team).

Saturday morning dawned with wind and rain. We put together our bags for transition, and labelled bike and bags with numbers. Karl was most unimpressed that he had to put a large laminated number onto the front of his Time Trial bike – and then all the bikes had to go onto a big lorry to be taken to transition. Iain had given us lots of useful advice, but he hadn't mentioned

“worry about your bike!” We went and sheltered down by the village hall to wait for the bus: there were actually two double-deckers and a single-decker! We all piled on and the buses pulled away: up to Inverness and then down the Great Glen to Fort Augustus and the start of the Pass. People chatted, nibbled snacks. At Fort Augustus we had to hang around for quite a long time after we'd registered. I wondered what the tourists made of us... Finally it was time to get out of our extra clothes (which went into labelled bags to go back to the finish), and walk down to the starting point. A man with a loudhailer gave us a few comments on safety and then counted down to the start. I noticed a man with a mobile phone who must have been co-ordinating with the timing chip people. I was stood at the front with Karl and Gareth so they sped off and as I set off very steadily it seemed like most of the field came streaming past me. To start with we were on some narrow tarmac roads which undulated up a valley: but where were we actually headed? Suddenly I noticed people running up a field to my left. I tried to see if I could spot Karl but I'm sure he was further ahead. Took the left turn and decided I could walk as fast as I could run, so I walked. After a bit the narrow path broadened out and we were on the land rover track that we would be on until we got to the far side of the Pass. The first water station appeared and I got into a routine that I would stick with for the rest of the run: walk, take a gel, get a cup of water and drink it, shove the gel wrapper into the cup and leave both with the other empty cups by the side of the track. Still we climbed. Up to my left I could see that the track made a series of zig-zags up the hillside with runners strung out all along them. I walked up the steeper bits at the corners, and the bits where the wind was in my face. I chatted to an older chap with a splendid moustache, and a woman who spotted a photographer, and suggested we run to look good for the photo! At the top of the zigzags the track climbed gently away from us – it was easy to see it with the runners strung out along it. Another water station, another gel. About this time the weather came in and it started raining again. I was OK, glad of the gilet I was wearing over my trisuit, but I hoped Karl was OK as he only had his light, short-sleeved Ironman Austria top on. This was about the point where I noticed a woman in a white tee-shirt, who didn't appear to be carrying anything – most people had a bum

bag or a fuel belt or something.

Suddenly I tripped over nothing much, and fell. "Ouch!", I said and up I got and kept going. I thought I'd bumped my knee, but I was more worried about my hand; I'd got a hole in the palm which was bleeding a bit. "How am I going to ride a bike?" I worried. I decided to see if the next water station had any plasters – especially as I thought it was the one that Graham was on. After a while I came round a corner and spotted a Land Rover in the distance. Alas, to get to it we had to go down to a broad bridge over a river and then steeply up again. I walked the up to take my gel and noticed some people with rucksacks and walking poles: Woohoo! I'd caught up with the walkers! (The walkers and mountain bikers set off an hour and a half before the duathletes did). At the water station I called "Whisky please!" to Graham, and poured a cup of water over my hand. This shifted most of the blood, and things looked more promising. I did get a waterproof plaster but it didn't stay on very well and I can't remember what I did with it in the end. Of course a whole bunch of people passed me while this was going on, so I set off in pursuit. The uphill sections were getting steeper again, and I had to walk some of them, and then there was a long, long, gradual slope: could this finally be the top of the pass? The summits of the hills were quite near now. I kept pushing, but sometimes I had to walk. Still, things were not too bad, I could see white tee-shirt girl again, so I hadn't lost too much time. And yes, I had got to the top, there was a little building and another water station. And the sun had come out. I took my gel and water and headed for the descent. This started out as a series of very steep zig-zags – the track was much more eroded and damaged by water than on the way up. However it wasn't so bad that I couldn't run it – I just went carefully.

I got to the bottom of the zigzags but there was still plenty of track visible in front of me. By now I realised that I was going to have to stop for a pee which was a bit of a problem as I was wearing a 1-piece trisuit with a gillet over the top, a fuel belt and a race belt – all of which had to come off. So I found a suitable spot, dived off the path and had a bit of a faff. I heard 2 or 3 people run past, so once I was dressed again I had to chase them down! Down and down we went. Finally I got to another water station and realised that I'd caught up with Iain and his teammates, who were walking. I said hello. Somebody asked me if I was enjoying myself. I'm not sure if that was the best question to ask me just then, but I said yes and kept go-

ing. The guys stopped to chat to the marshal. Different mindset! Finally I'd got to the 3 miles of tarmac road that lead to transition at Garva Bridge. I'd caught up with white tee-shirt girl again and this time we had a chat and I learnt that she was carrying energy sweets tucked in her shorts, which I thought was quite neat! I seemed to have more pace left in my legs than she did, so after a bit I left her behind. It was nice to be able to set a steady pace on the tarmac, but it was harder and more unforgiving to run on. My thighs hurt, and my right hamstring felt very tight. The road ran along in a series of straights – going uphill, even slightly, even for not very long, is not what I wanted at this stage! Finally I rounded a corner and there were the bikes. Phew. As I ran down towards them I saw a man with binoculars and as I got nearer I heard numbers being called out over a loud-hailer.

As I crossed the bridge I called out my number as instructed – and people pointed further down the transition area where a man in a green coat was already waiting with my bike and transition bag. I got my bike bottle, shoes and helmet, and gave him my fuel belt and running hat, and nearly sent him away without putting my running shoes in the bag as well! I thanked him, headed off and decided that my legs seemed OK. I passed a guy with clip on aero bars and then picked my way along a little cautiously as there was a lot of mud on the road which meant that he came back past me! I let him go, although I could see that I was much faster up hill than him. A steep descent was signposted: I took it cautiously although it turned out to not be that steep, and a guy on a hybrid bike came past me giving me the "Ha, ha, I passed someone on a road bike!" look. I was having none of this, put myself into the big chain ring, gave it some power and left him behind. This acceleration brought me back to aerobar man, who had caught up with a couple of slower cyclists. I decided to pass him again and make it stick, which I did. The rest of the cycle proceeded in the same way – no one else passed me, but I passed lots of cyclists (who were of course a mixture of walkers, mountain bikers and duathletes). The junctions are impressively marshalled – they stopped cars to let us out, and later to let us turn right in Kingussie. That right turn took us onto a little back road which started climbing again! However the sun had come out and I was enjoying myself, helped along by a tail wind. By the time I passed Ruthven Barracks I was tiring: my quads hurt and my right hamstring was so sore I was keeping my right heel high to try and



Here's a photo (by Graham Pearson) of me at the checkpoint on the Corrieyairack Challenge getting a plaster for my hand. (Note the state of my knee as well!!)

avoid straightening it, and doing most of the work with my left leg. The road ran down through Insh, and I decided I knew where I was again. I gave a woman on a mountainbike a fright – I don't think she was anything to do with the race! I got a fright in turn on a narrow bridge over the river – there was enough space for me and the car coming the other way, but only just... Coming through Kincaig village somebody shouted "I'm loving the socks, mate!" I do have to admit that black knee-length compression socks with a trisuit isn't a great look. Finally the route went round a corner and under the railway bridge and there was a nasty little steep hill to get up. This would be the sting in the tail that Iain had mentioned... Over a left and a right to cross a busier road supervised by a policewoman, and then a rather anxious cycle over the grass to the finish. I heard the man on the tannoy mentioning my name. There were 2 people to come and help you off your bike and make sure you didn't fall over, which I thought was good. I did as I was told and got down slowly. They took the bike away, which I thought was nice, it meant I didn't have to think about it immediately. I got my

medal, which had a food voucher with it. I bumped into Kirsten almost straight away, and she told me that Karl had gone to get changed, so as I was cooling fairly rapidly I headed off to do the same. Karl was surprised – I was about half an hour earlier than he had estimated! So I got changed and then we went back to the marquee to spend our food vouchers.

I'd recommend this event if you are looking for something a bit unusual – it is well organised and there's a good atmosphere.

Results:

Karl: total time 3:44:17 (run 2:30:38 bike 1:13:39) 8th overall (5th senior)

Gareth: total time 3:55:12 (run 2:35:18 bike 1:19:54) 17th

Fiona: total time 4:36:36 (run 3:12:06 bike 1:24:30) 74th (13th woman)

F Milligan

Triathlon Objects of Desire: The Ciclotte Turbo Trainer

www.ciclotte.com



Profile: Phil Parr-Burman

Sorry folks, but since I failed to be sufficiently organised to ask any of you to do a profile I've had to resort to profiling myself.

Describe yourself in 10 words

Dedicated follower of Triathlon.

What age group are you in?

Supervet, just.

What's your day job?

Project managing a bunch of highly strung engineers and scientists at the Royal Observatory.

How long have you been an ET member and what do you like about the club?

9 years. I like that its not elitist but you can still get some excellent training sessions.

What are your ambitions in triathlon?

To keep competing and get to some more world championships.

What is your favourite club session?

The swim / cycle thing on Saturdays.

Did you come to triathlon from another sport?

I learned to swim in Australia, used to run a lot (so why aren't I faster?), threw the javelin a bit (was once Clwyd champion). So I guess the answer is no, not really.

What's your favourite piece of kit?

Its so difficult because I love it all. But its got to be my heart rate monitor.

What one thing would improve your performance?

Being able to run properly.

What has been your best racing or training moment?

Beating both my brothers in our annual challenge.

What has been your worst racing or training moment?

At the Chester tri the transition is on a field with rubber matting just before you get on the road. I was third out of the water, first running with the bike but chose to jump on when still on the rubber mat. I came immediately to a dead halt and fell off.

What is your favourite post-race treat?

Cold tomato soup, out of the can, down in one.

If you could replace one triathlon discipline with something else, what would it be?

Replace anything from a perfect sport? What are you thinking?

Women with six packs: yum, yuk or indifferent?

Yum



President	Kirsten Sinclair	vicepresident@edinburghtri.org	07730 651738
Vice-President	Phil Parr-Burman	phil.pb1960@googlemail.com	07919 398612
Secretary	Francesca Osowska	secretary@edinburghtri.org	0131 553 3090
Treasurer	Greg McDowall	greg.mcdowall@hotmail.com	07779 302153
Membership Secretary	Andrew McMenigall	membership@edinburghtri.org	07717 156657
Coaching Director	Steve Law	S.Law@ed.ac.uk	07770 265556
Racing Director	John Whittaker	whittaker667@btinternet.com	0131 454 0900
Welfare Officer	Clare Halpenny	clarehalpenny@hotmail.com	07971 785397
Communications Director (& Bike Boxes)	Phil Parr-Burman	phil.pb1960@googlemail.com	07919 398612
Facilities Director	Jim McGoldrick	jimpmcgoldrick@aol.com	0131 660 5098
Entertainment Director	James Gibson	jamesthomasgibson@yahoo.co.uk	07814 972007
	Liz Richardson	richardson.eliz@gmail.com	07765 882645
Club Clothing	Mandy Whittaker	whittaker667@btinternet.com	0131 454 0900
Club wetsuits	Jim McGoldrick	jimpmcgoldrick@aol.com	0131 660 5098
Race Organisers			
Gullane	John Whittaker	gullane@edinburghtri.org	0131 454 0900
Women's Triathlon	Mandy Whittaker	whittaker667@btinternet.com	0131 454 0900
Junior Aquathlon	Greg McDowall	greg.mcdowall@hotmail.com	07779 302153

Looking for coaching advice?

Contact either:

John Whittaker whittaker667@btinternet.com 0131 454 0900

Doug Steele dougsteele@blueyonder.co.uk

Email group: to join send a blank email to edintri-subscribe@yahooogroups.com

Any problems please email membership@edinburghtri.org