

HiElbow IM Tour

to

Frankfurt

You have heard the cliché “Been there, done that, got the tee shirt and came back to tell the story”. Well here’s my story:

T – 3 Days

After many many many days of hard graft on the saddle or pounding the roads or being shouted at by Jen for “being hungry” while working my swimming technique the time has come to put it all to the test and see whether it will all come together. Yes ladies and gents my first ever IM is sooooo close now. There are four of us making the journey, Bob, Dickie, Bryce and myself. Dickie and I are the newbies. We also have four support crew with us, Fiona, Grace, Julie and “five Euro” Ben.

Bryce picks me up at 12:30 am to get to Bob’s house to leave at 2:30 to be down at the airport for the 7:00 flight. We get to Bob’s house and maybe because it is too bloody early to be up there is a distinct lack of conversation in the air. Wonder why that is? Oh yeah that’s right Dickie hasn’t turned up yet.

Onto the bus and off we go, try to get our heads down for a few hours shut eye as we have a long day ahead of ourselves. The weather’s gradually getting worse as the journey progressed. We ended up arriving in Dublin in a thunder and lightening storm. The same weather is forecasted for Frankfurt as well. Not a good thought.

Into the airport we go and find out we are to go to terminal 14. Bob and Bryce announce that it is downstairs. In arrivals? Yes go to the lift and go down one flight. Fiona, Julie 5 € Ben and I get in the lift and select the next level down. Door closes and about 15 seconds later opens again to see that we haven’t moved yet. “What the F**k you doing woman” comes from Dickie’s mouth to Fiona. And there it all kicks off with the happy couple. We get down and wait for the rest to arrive, in arrivals..... Walk about and decide to go back up to departures to walk to the far end of the building to go down that flight of stairs into arrivals again to gate 14. True Irish form.... Once again we all eagerly look at the check in desks to see if anybody is being stung for excess luggage. One person just before us is emptying her bag to reduce the weight. Bigger! Here we go again! Bryce was on the phone earlier with Air Fungus enquiring about weight restrictions and was told the bike will be ok but you will have to pay €18 for luggage. WTF!! My ticket says 1 bag and 1 bike so why do I have to pay again? I am ready and prepared with my speech if that statement comes. And you can imagine the smile that comes with it. However it transpires that some didn’t pay for their luggage when buying the ticket. Now what muppet would do that I ask you? Our thoughts are distracted by Dickie announcing that he could easily take his darling Fiona and beat the living daylight out of her with some ease but since he is still in taper mode he will let her off with a mild slapping instead. They do love each other, honest. Bryce starts the rumour that big “D” is going to propose to his true love as they both run up the shoot and over the finish line. You will have to read on to find out though.

So we landed in Frankfurt, meet up with Chris our Nirvana rep, wait for Tim from England to arrive and make our way to the hotel. The bus is indicating C23°. Weather forecast states

that it is going to be heavy thunder showers throughout our stay here with rain on race day. Bryce sums it up with "it is what it is. Get on with it". It's a good attitude to have. Anyway the hotel is not ready for us so we leave the kit in a lock up and head down to register as we are only about a 5 minute walk to the finish line. It's going to be a long walk home on Sunday night though. Expo is pretty busy with loads of stalls so as we droll over the bikes and stuff, the girls do the same over the tanned Goddesses walking about in their hot pants. This, we did take the piss out of but making sure that our comments were well out of earshot. Only because of Dickie's earlier comment that we are still in taper mode that's all. I think the girls wanted to go back and get their camera. They even discussed which one of them they will be cheering on come Sunday.!!!

Back to the hotel and get to our rooms. Cosy let's just say and leave it at that. We get the bikes out and rebuild them to see what damage, if any, has occurred. "Mistress" is fine and dandy. Tape the photos of the kids to the handle bars to help me through rough times on the bike. Thanks Steve for the advice. Dickie and Fiona try to make amends to previous "disagreements" shall we say, while building his bike. *Fiona* "you know honey we should show more love and devotion to each other" *Dickie* "F**k off!!!"

We finished off the night with a walk around the corner to an Italian restaurant for the start of carb loading. Problem is we cannot speak German and the waitress can't speak English. Even if she could she would have had problems as most of the group from Cookstown for God's sake. Bob tries to emphasise the need for her to speak English but that doesn't work so we resort to pointing and get there in the end. Great meal and cheap it becomes the team chow pot.

Quote if the day Bryce going on about how he couldn't be bothered with following the likes of Lance Armstrong on his "twater" blog. ☺

T – 2 Days

Another relaxing morning. Cycle up to the expo for a bit then decide to cycle about 20Km of the route so as to see what the first climb of the day is going to be like. It seemed ok but as Bryce says it won't be as easy the second time round at race pace. Thanks Bryce! And here's me trying to psychologically prep for the big day and there's you with a swift kick in the gonads for good measure. So back to the hotel to wash and change before lunch in one of the town squares. Pizza and letch. Something is missing here. Oh yeah BEER!!!! Later on we meet with Colin Pollock who wins the funny of the day. A group of them were down at the lake doing a practice swim and came across none only but Terenzo Bozzone one of the pros taking part in the race. Colin politely asked if he could take a photo to which Terenzo modestly agreed. Colin got out the camera and gave it to him asking to make sure that the lake was in the background when he took the photo of Colin. Classic. Oh there was another funny for the day. I went off to get some stuff for myself and Dickie at the local chemist. I needed talc and Dickie needed talc, vaseline and hair gel. Off I go to the shops and when I ask the shop assistant for the hair gel she burst out laughing. What's that all about? And I thought Germans didn't have a sense of humour.

T – 1 Day

Up to get our T1 & T2 bags ready to bring to the lake with our bikes. Pack and unpack to make sure I have everything. Bring everything with me just in case. Take it all out and pack again!! Bloody hell I have done enough of these to know what I need and don't need but is this the sign of pre race nerves creeping in? I haven't had any nerves all this time but the enormity of what I am about to embark on is coming to the fore now. What if they find something wrong with my bike or my helmet is out of date. What have I forgotten? Unpack and pack again just to make sure. But what if...what if...what if...aaaagggghhhhhh!!! Bugger lets go and face the music see what happens. Nothing, that's what happened. Got escorted to my rack (after getting photo of me and the "Mistress" entering T!), covered her up, said good night and got escorted out again. Next time I will see her will be race day. Meet up with the rest and took a walk down to the lake. This is when we first saw what we christened Hamburger Hill. As you exit the water you have about 100 metres climb up a sand bank. And when I say up it really is. Just what you need to get the heart pumping after a 3.8Km swim☺. In saying that, the water did look inviting. Clear as a bell and pretty warm too. Rumour has it that the water is warm enough to sanction a non wet suit swim but the pros wanted to break the course record and insisted on donning the good old rubber gear! I am all in favour as well and pass my thoughts onto the race director who must have taken my view on board and acts upon it. Good for him I say! Anyway, back to the square for more alcohol free pizza and letch before we go back to the hotel. Again back to the Italian for more carbs. This time we struck gold as we found the waiter who could speak French so asked for double helpings, garlic bread for the other mingers and even ice cubes for the water. The ice cubes ae a bit of a problem though until Dickie in his best culchie accent clarifies things for him. Totally stuffed we wobble out of the restaurant, round the corner for an ice cream and back to our rooms. Lights out for 9 pm as we have a busy day ahead of ourselves tomorrow.

Funnies for the day

While waiting for the bus to the lake watched Bryce's mate pet a lady's dog and them proceed to go for a grope of the dog's nuts. Must have squeezed a bit too tight as you could have heard the dog yelp a ~~mile~~ 1.6Km (sorry in Europe now) away. The dog wasn't happy and the owner was none too pleased either. All Bryce's mate could do was smile and go back to drinking his Buckfast.

Staying on the topic of dogs the other funny of the day was watching our two elderly neighbours back at the hotel leave the room with their precious dog. One was carrying the mutt under his/her arm (get the jest of this) and the other carrying a Mickey Mouse baby blue water bottle satchel. Bob and I just watched in disbelief. Bob said that he watched the two of them at the breakfast table yesterday. One of them had taken the dog out for a walk without the other and he/she proceeded to tell off the both of them for doing so. Only in Germany!

D – DAY

The big day has finally arrived. Out of bed at 3:30 shower and down to the restaurant with my new BIG bowl and porridge in hand. Big thanks goes to Fiona and she gets on my Christmas card list for getting the bowl as the ones in the hotel were way too small for what I need to eat to get me through today. Some fella was tucking into what can only be a huge fruit or chocolate cake. It was massive!

Breakfast complete we all make our way to the bus, Bob in tow with his 30 foot mast with the red hand of Ulster at the top. That's going to create a bit of a drag on the bike Bob! Arrive at the lake and Bryce and I quickly bid our farewells to the support crew and make our way through T1 check in. Bob and Dickie, well lets say took a bit longer. Was Dickie checking he still has the ring?...lets read on to find out. I think after the conversation on the bus ride here, to the lake, put a bit of a dampener on that topic. If I remember correctly Fiona said something along the lines of "why the f**k would I want to marry a pr**k like you?" We are here nice and early and there is nobody around my area which is good as it gives me plenty of space to get all my stuff unpacked and see how the Mistress is. She seems ok and is happier when I pump her tires up. Had to slum it a bit as there were a few Cervélo around but it was better than being left alone. The field starts to get busy and I realise that I am in with all the other Irish contingents as IM do things in alphabetic order. I recognise Mick from last years Mourne and get talking. It is his first as well. Surprisingly I still feel very relaxed with no pre race jitters at all. Mick's mates are still taking the (funny enough) mick out of him about "not to forget the *green* bag for T1". He was at one point convinced that the race organisers hadn't given him his bag. Poor fella. Bryce came round to say the bogs were magic as he got a fresh one that nobody had been to yet. Thanks for that info Bryce, makes me feel so much better knowing that. Dickie comes down as well and the three of us take a walk to the lake to see the conditions and check Hamburger Hill again. We can only get so far before we get refused to go further. I ask if the sand is covered with the same carpet we are currently standing on. Yes it is. Well at least that will make things easier. Back to get the sun block on (SPF 50), lubed and suited up. Dickie and I make our way down to the lake to find that the fellow native we talked to earlier was a lying toe rag as the hill is just sand and well chewed up as expected. ARSE!!!!

In the water we go and it is like getting into a bath honest. I have had colder sessions in Antrim Forum. Happy days. Dickie and I stick together and bob our way to the right of the buoys. This is magic, really is. Dickie says "Larry, this is it, we really are going to doing an IM" It is a fantastic feeling as we turn to the banks of the lake and see so many people shouting and cheering us on. We turn around and see that we are waaaayyyyyyy to close to the start line. "Shit Dickie start swimming away!" people going in the opposite direction that's fine with me. Don't want to be in the thick of it when the hooter goes! I am really loving this experience and the atmosphere. All swimmers start to whistle and cheer to get the spirits lifted even more and then Kurt Denk announces 30 seconds to go. Quick glance to Dickie and a nod of the head for "all the best mate, see you when you cross the line" and that was the last I saw of him for over 16 hours.

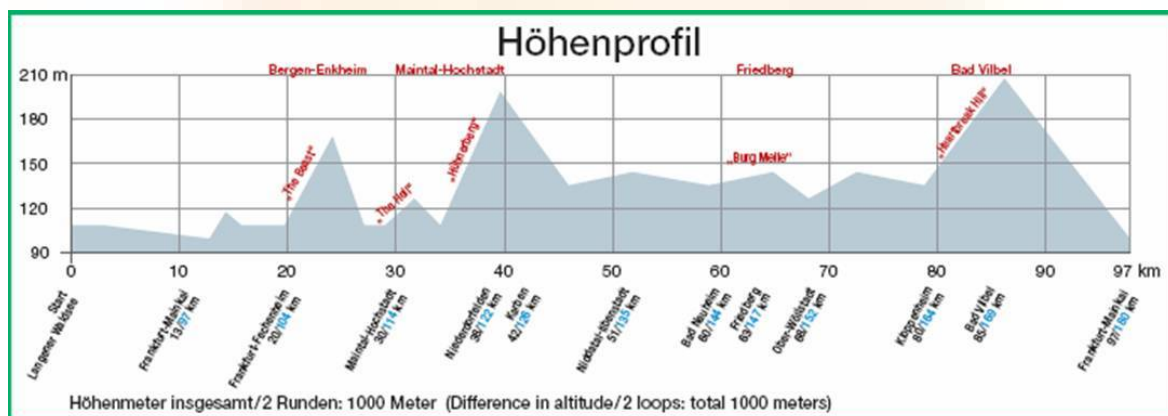
Bang and we are off. Luckily I've a nice space around me so am able to get swimming with comparable ease and not the normal boxing match that sometimes goes on. I choose to stay well to the right of the buoys and out of trouble which works well but I think others have decided to do the same so it starts to get a bit busy. I come across white goggles man. Ah there's the baul Dickie. I get a kick from Orca man. Time to pass him pretty pronto. Ok that's that done time to settle back into a rhythm. "You hungry Larry" keeps coming into my mind as I remember what Jen keeps on saying to me. OK! so try and not cross over the arms. There's also Rich telling me to "lengthen your stroke; you're coming out of the water too early". OK! so think about that AS WELL then. Bugger me, there's Orca man again in front of me. Let's get past him before I get another kick. First Buoy turn and it all gets a bit hectic. I think this is where Bryce had the pleasure of the fella in front of him doing a breast stroke and kindly kicking him in the goggles. Could have been worse mate! So it is a bit of doggy paddling to allow for a bit of space to continue. White goggles man is still about. Is that Dickie? Bugger there is another white goggles man on my other side. So which one is Dickie? Shit, kick in the ribs again. Time to speed up again and get away

from this. Orca man is again in front of me. How is this so? Ah maybe he has a twin, triplet, quad..... Honest the things that goes through ones mind in these situations. And these are the ones I can print. Had to laugh at the time when I was swimming in between two other fellas and the one on my left hit me on the right ear followed by the one on my right hitting me in the same place straight afterwards. Synchronised bashing but that is what you get when you try to squeeze past two swimmers side by side. Again it wasn't as bad as what Bryce experienced. He had a fella grab his left arm and more or less pull it out of its socket. So he was left trying to compensate the left stroke with his kick. Dickie was not any of the white goggles men next to me as he was far too busy floating about doing a Bryce and swim at the same time. Bob was the fish of the squad, a blinder of a swim. Times on stage 1 are:

	1 st Lap	2 nd Lap	Overall
BoB	37:05	29:33	01:06:40
Larry	39:52	30:54	01:10:50
Dickie	40:37	33:56	01:14:30
Bryce	42:15	36:31	01:18:50

Into transition I go but before that Hamburger Hill. To be honest it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. I think the fact that I was lapping up the whole atmosphere thing I didn't really find it hard to run up. And yes I did run up it. I got to my bike and found that I was the first of the Irish group out of the water. Anyway, I proceed to get ready, put my SPF 50 on all over the place making sure that I don't miss any exposed skin. Thanks Helen for the reminder. Mick turned up and we had a bit of a chat at how magic the water/swim was. Bit of a funny here. I was going about applying a big dollop of Vaseline to the nether regions when a young German helper comes over to ask if "I needed a hand with what I was doing?" Me and Mick just looked at each other not knowing what to say. However he realised what I was doing and explained he thought it was sun block to which Mick took him up on the offer to put the stuff on his shoulders. I bid my farewells to Mick and Co and head for the mount point.

There were loads of us on the bike. I was really conscious of the drafting rules and felt uncomfortable at being so close to others but it couldn't be helped. With over 2000 competitors this must be expected. I hadn't even got 1 mile down the road before I saw Cervélo man at the side changing a tyre. "Well that's what you get for buying such crap mate" 😊




The bike course starts with about 12 Km cycle into Frankfurt before you get onto the 2 lap course. Conditions were perfect. No wind, the sun shining and a lovely smooth flat surface into Frankfurt. Onto the first of the 2 laps and the crowds are already busy at this time of

the morning. I am comfortable sitting at about 21 – 23 mph but am very conscious that it is going to be a long day. One thing I did take on board was a comment that you should ride as if you could always ride faster. So I ask myself that question and with no doubt in my mind I know I can so decide to keep at the tempo and review again later down the road. We come onto the first climb of the day “The Beast”. I had already cycled this part last Thursday so I knew to expect the wee bugger at the end. That is you climb for about 5 Km and think that just around the corner and it is finished. Wrong answer. Keep it going for another bit yet. Good thing is that the feed station is at the top so time to fill up. The aero bottle was great for this as you just do a quick refill and also it is always in front of you so you don't forget to drink. Especially days like today. Next was “The Hell”



buying cheap crap!

As you can see this is the cobbled part of the course so I made sure that my aero bottle was pretty empty coming into this. Again there were loads of spectators all sitting out having their breakfast and or having a beer. There were a few bottles lying about the ground so some poor sod was going to have to do without until the next feed station. Dickie said that he saw another Cervélo man lose his one and only water bottle and cage on this part of the course. See what I mean about

After that it was pretty much open countryside. A fair few folk are standing at the side of the road wondering what to do with their puncture or mechanical. Need I tell you what bikes they had? It wasn't a 

Another memorable part of the course is the last climb called Heartbreak Hill. This probably the closest I will ever get to know what it feels like to be in the Le Tour de France.



The crowds in their thousands are cheering us on. Last year they counted approx 8 thousand spectators on this part of the route. Again like everywhere else the music is playing, beer is being drunk and parties are happening. Kids are at the sides waiting for the hand slap but I for one am not, cannot let go of the hoods to oblige. I do at other parts of the course

though. It is a fantastic atmosphere and an absolute joy to experience. Second time round is hard as I am suffering with stomach cramps that prevent me from going down on the tri bars from about the 80 mile mark onwards. I pass Bob at the 60 odd mile mark and we exchange a few gestures. Bob looks fine and comfortable at the pace he is going. How he sticks wearing an aero helmet on a day like this I will never know.

The biggest shock for me is when Bryce passes me at about 75 miles in.

Larry - “F**k me Bryce what happened you? You OK as you look like a bag of s***e”

Bryce – “Na mate. Got my left arm pulled out on the swim and can’t keep anything down. You know you have a marathon to run after this?”

Larry – “No s**t Sherlock. Nobody told me about that. Anyway on yeah go before we get done for drafting”

He goes on but he isn’t the normal animal on the bike that we all know of. I am able to keep the same distance from him the whole way up Huhnerberg climb and even dare say that I am catching him. Things are not going to plan for our Bruce. A thought comes into my mind that if this was a usual Centurion training session The Drum would have sniffed out the situation and “taken the sword to him” and enjoyed every minute of it!

Around the 80 mile mark, along with the cramps, the outside of my right foot starts to hurt. The heat made my foot swell and my shoe wasn’t giving it any space to expand. The dull pain increasingly get worse as I get closer to T2.

Current standings after two disciplines:

	Start to F/furt	Lap 1	Lap 2	Total	<i>Cumulative Total</i>
Bryce	22:03	02:20:00	02:31:10	05:13:20	06:32:10
Larry	22:59	02:24:30	02:41:50	05:29:10	06:40:00
Bob	23:54	02:33:10	02:48:50	05:45:59	06:56:40
Dickie	25:29	02:58:20	03:15:50	06:39:40	07:54:20

Into T2 and the folk take the “Mistress” for me. First foot on the ground for several hours and “Oh S**t Larry, what have you done?” That pain in my right foot suddenly becomes a major concern. I jog to my bag pick up point and make my way to changing area. I just sit there and inwardly assure myself that all will be ok when I get the shoe off. Wrong!! It is as if somebody has stuck a needle into the outside of my foot and pumped acid into it. It is getting worse as I try to take my shoe off. I leave it and attend to my left foot, changing the socks giving it a dry, applying Vaseline and then the shoe. So back to my right foot and I try to do the same to it hoping that the few minutes of freedom has helped but no it is just the same. “I have a marathon to run now. This isn’t going to be good” I can honestly say that even at this point I still believe that I will pass the finish line but in what state? Up I get and head for the exit and my foot isn’t great. As soon as you come out the first section is on cobbles which makes my foot worse. I try to compensate with my left leg which makes my hips hurt. Wonder if Bryce is having as much fun as I am. Onto flat ground, the pain seems to subside and I kind of get into a rhythm. I spot Grace who is jumping and shouting to spur me on which is appreciated. Other people are shouting: “come on Larry!” and I initially think there was another Larry who is either famous or has brought loads of support with him. I then realise that my name is on my race number. What a numpty!!

I am coming into the second half of the first lap and hear Bob shout my name. Well that’s Bob going well! At least, I can have a chat with him for a while until he moves on. I will try and keep with him for as long as I can.

2 Km from the area where you get the arm bands that indicate what lap you are in, I get a shout again. I look around to see Bryce doing his IM shuffle. I daren’t stop to talk to him as I fear that I will never start again. I give him the thumbs up and a few words of

encouragement: “Bryce you look like s**t” (only kidding) and keep going. I was happy to see that he was in fact running. I did hope that he was going to be able to run it all though.

First lap over and the other three are pretty much the same. My foot seems to get better and move more freely. Either that or the aches in other parts of my body fade that pain into insignificance. The heat is a major factor in the run. At every feed station, I first have water then coke followed by lovely cold sponges over the head. Later on, it is ice then water etc. Never before has ice down the front and back felt sooooooo good. Not that I have done it before or considered it or talked about it Oh you know what I mean.

One person stood out for me in the crowd. I nicknamed him GI Joe. Imagine this **big** dark American, Mr Motivator you may say. He keeps popping up all over the run course giving speeches on how: “we can do it! to keep focused! not to let the head drop! don’t give up! yada yada yada.....” But it just isn’t doing any good as it feels like a typical drill sergeant, so condescending that I am sure there were plenty of people who wanted to bitch slap him. He gave me a laugh so I was happy when he showed up. For me it was something to look forward to. To see where he would pop up next and what he would say. The last time I came across him he was trying to keep another contender, called Kirk, motivated. It went something like this: “Kirk, I want you to look at me.... Kirk!.... Kirk! you are not looking at me!... over here Kirk!” I think Kirk was motivated to keep going or else he would summon up all the remaining energy he had to stop and be the one to slap him. I can imagine GI Joe would probably have turned the assault around and tell that “this is good now focus your energy into getting around the course on the double!!!!”

I see Bryce one more time more or less the same spot, coming up for my 4th lap armband. A gentle pat on the back for encouragement as he is walking at this point and again I fear if I stop I won’t go again. So far, I spent the whole time of the run on water and coke, for fear the gels will mess with my already bad guts. However in the final stage of the race I decide to take a gel. I felt ok as I catch my 4th armband. The crowd is really cheering me on: “Come on Larry home straight, you have done it, well done, you are only about 15 minutes from the line!” It is great feeling, well with whatever feelings I had left that is. I was numb from head to toe. Maybe it is the gel or the fact that I am beginning to realise that I am going to become an Ironman that gives me that last drop of energy to pick up the pace and dash for home. I cannot put into words the feeling of the last 1 KM, when you are identified because you are wearing the 4 armbands (4 laps) and directed towards the finishing line and others have to go on straight for other laps. It feels like running on hallowed grounds. The crowds cheers over and over. One last 100 meters of quiet as there are no spectators on this stretch and then you turn right and see the blazing red carpet in front of you. The finish line is about 200 meters away. Thousands are crammed into the square. Their noise is, funny enough, muffled as all I am thinking about is the finishing line and it is now approaching so fast. A child is running up with his dad and I think of my children and wonder if they are watching me, cheering me on, which in fact, I found out later, they were.

This is it! I get shown to the rest area and I decide to go for a shower and massage before I head for the beer tent and food. My stomach has shrunk so I eat and drink slowly. After a while I meet up with Bob who congratulates me on becoming an IRONMAN. We talk about the day, Bob is happy with his race. I am surprised he didn’t pass me on the run. I forgot he was so close to me at one point but he said that he was having to dig deeper into the fuel tank to get round. Bryce and Dickie make it round as well. Dickie tells us later that he saw Bryce on the last lap and shouted over to him to wait up so that they could do the home run together. Bryce heard Dickie shout something and gave him the thumbs up but

kept going so there was no team finish for them ☹️. Leg three of the days finishes off like this:

	Run 1	Run 2	Run 3	Run 4	Run Total
Larry	56.07	01:02.0	01:08.1	01:13.0	04:19.5
Bob	55.12	01:06.6	01:20.5	01:14.6	04:38.0
Bryce	01:16.3	01:43.4	01:52.6	02:11.4	07:04.5
Dickie	01:12.4	01:22.0	01:29.6	01:39.2	05:43.5

I loose Bob and the support crew so I go out to the finish line one more time to soak up the atmosphere. It really is a fantastic feeling and I love it. The crowd cheers each competitor as they make their way up the shoot. The only annoying thing about after the race is having to wait about 2 hours to pick up the “Mistress”. The last thing I want to do is stand in a queue. The finishers are also getting impatient. I decide to make my way back to the hotel and then go back to the finish line to watch the closing ceremony. The last IM comes through at 22:58:?? He is certainly getting his money worth by taking 15 hrs 58 minutes out of the allocated 16 hr cut off. The crowd is going mental. I feel really good that he made it. I thought he is the last one out on the course but sadly he isn't! Someone came in, in 16:08:?? And there were others behind him.

HiElbow crew's final standings:

	Swim	Cycle	Run	<i>Cumulative Total</i>
Larry	01:10.50	05:29.10	04:19.50	11:16:46
Bob	01:06.40	05:49:59	04:38.00	11:37:34
Bryce	01:18.50	05:13.20	07:04.50	13:52:28
Dickie	01:14.30	06:39.40	05:43.50	13:53:01

I eventually meet up with the rest who are making their way back to the hotel. Fiona was texting to Agnès on and off during the day with updates.

Now for a few thankyou acknowledgements.

Sunday 5 July 2009, has been the end product of a 2 year journey and I couldn't have made it if it wasn't for the help from all at HiElbow. Special mention has to go out to the Centurions especially “Captain” Ian Lyle. The hours of fun and pain I have had on the bike through the winter months and racing season have brought my fitness to a new level. For that I am deeply grateful. Ian you are a true ambassador to your sport. Drum as you flew past me up the climbs you always had encouraging words for me. Thanks for that. And I can't forget our very own “Cuddles”. Beast master he is, he is an inspiration to us all. Thanks for always being available when needed. Just a few of the many like Reg, Darren, Cathy, Ian, Andy P etc who helped in many different ways but none the less attributed to the success of this chapter in my life.

Thanks also goes to Jen. Your hours of making training sessions for the pool and coming down to take the P out of my swimming hasn't gone unnoticed. A huge thank you!!!!

Finally to my two bestest mates, Aidan and Gil. Thanks for understanding that I needed to do all this training. I did it for you as well. To my fantastic wife who supported me every step of the way. I will be eternally grateful.

To close, I loved every stroke in the swim, every rotation of the peddle and every stride on the run. If anybody out there dreams of doing something great in their lives there can be no true expression of the feeling when crossing over the line knowing that you have joined the ranks of the Ironman. Take from the lyrics of Nickelback and do what it says:

My best friend gave me the best advice
He said each day's a gift and not a given right
Leave no stone unturned, leave your fears behind
And try to take the path less travelled by
That first step you take is the longest stride

If today was your last day and tomorrow was too late
Could you say goodbye to yesterday?
Would you live each moment like your last
What if, what if, if today was your last day?

