

‘The Kilkee Thirteen’

The weekend of the 27th June saw thirteen of the finest athletes on the NI Triathlon scene descend upon the seaside resort of Kilkee (just as a forewarning this weekend round up may be slightly exaggerated in parts!) to race in the highly acclaimed Hell of the West Triathlon.

The Journey Down

After months of planning and preparation, backed up by hundreds of emails from yours truly the final details of the trip were put into action. Leave Antrim at 9.30am in a 9 seater people carrier and a van to carry the eleven bikes, all seems very straightforward. Note to self – remember to find out what time the van hire opens in Cookstown, so whoever is picking it up doesn’t have to sit in McD’s for an hour (sorry Jo!). Revised leaving time 10.45am!



So we were off, slightly late, and as you can see from Reg’s face not at all phased by the slight delay!?!?!?

To cut a very long journey (7 hours) short we stopped a couple of times for the usual Saturday morning cycle like pee stops and food stops (well we did have Brian Campbell with us – the human Hoover). In addition to the ‘committed’ athletes we had Tommy, Robert and Larry with us.....so a Guinness stop was requested with an hour to go.



I'm not sure whether we had so many stops because they were needed, or whether Jen just wanted to get out of earshot of Robert and his 657page 'The Greatest Blonde Joke book Ever' recital.

Arrival Kilkee – 7pm, registration 7.45pm, dinner 8pm.....and more beer for Larry, Robert, Terry and Tommy (some people just weren't taking this race seriously!??!)



Not to go into the sleeping arrangements in too much detail, 'what happens on tour stays on tour' and all that, but the evening's entertainment was definitely centred on the double bed banter. Let's just say 'cuddles' turned out to be the favoured name for one particular club member. Other topics of great entertainment included Robert, Reg's tongue, Robert, Larry swimming with his eyes shut and Robert.

Race Morning

Up at 6am for a group five mile run – yeah right who am I kidding! Most of us opted for the 'spray yourself with deep heat' warm up and 'eat as much breakfast as physically possible' while Brian headed out for a thirty minute warm up run (is it becoming clear yet why Brian wins races??).

The morning kicked off with clear blue skies, cooling gentle breeze and calm ocean, perfect conditions for a triathlon.....and very shortly the subtropical climate that the SW Irish Coast boasts about changed to black hurling clouds, lashing rain, gale force winds and waves mimicking those found on OZ surfing coasts. A day fit for that old saying "it's all about character building"

Bikes racked, vaseline on, transition boxes checked, trisuits on (just about), wetsuits on and then the realisation that you needed a comfort break! For some this involved taking off what you spent forty minutes trying to get on, for others it was simply standing in the transition zone with 400 other people with pee running down the inside of your wetsuit and subsequently producing a puddle around your feet for others to walk through....also now known as 'Doing a Bryce'.

The Race

Overall this was a fantastic race. Nothing flat and never a dull moment. Swim was a combination of body surfing and getting beaten by fellow competitors, the bike was undulating, wind tunnel like and draft busters paradise and the run was a mere 5k uphill into a head wind followed by a knee breaking 5k downhill.

Brian came into T2 in third position down about 3.5 minutes and stormed the run to take first place in the last 1k.....apparently he was even out of breath as he crossed the line!!

Jen took some great action shots which we'll get posted on the website, along with the results.

Picture below after the finish...note to self - club trisuits would have been a nice touch ;-)



Post Race

It wasn't long before the Guinness was flowing. First stop prize giving, second stop Murphy Blacks restaurant, third stop the pub round the corner, fourth stop the post race party at the Cove hotel, final stop the B&B lock in.

I'd love to be able to write on but unfortunately it all becomes a bit hazy at this stage. The pictures do kind of tell a story but as far as the detail it shall remain a mystery to most of us



Drive Home

////////////////////////////////////
////////////////////////////////////

Ending

Overall, a great weekend away and great craic, oh yeah and the race was well worth it. If you haven't raced Kilkee before definitely one to put on your list for next year.

Thanks again to all the drivers, Terry in particular from our van who not only drove the whole way back but also had to put up with myself and Reg wittering on for a total of 14hours in a confined space. Jen thanks for support and photography over the weekend, great to have you there spurring us all on.

Highly recommend the Strand Guest house and Murphy Blacks restaurant; both proprietors were doing the race and both very pleasing to the eye ;-)

So here's the top ten things I've taken from the weekend:

- 1. Brian Campbell must have hollow legs as quite clearly he eats more than 99% of the population;

2. Larry's wife is obviously looking rid of him, buying him t-shirts that practically put him up for public auction;
3. Drew Millar is the funniest man alive;
4. Never swim behind Bryce in a wetsuit (actually never stand near Bryce when he's in a wetsuit);
5. Don't argue with a draft buster as they are on a vehicle that has 600 times the power of you and your bike.....they will win every time!;
6. Tommy is definitely to appear on 'Britain's got talent' to re-enact his rendition of Jive Bunny, although this may have to be fuelled with numerous pints of Guinness;
7. Jo-anne is the most flexible person I know and can get into positions I never realised was humanly possible – and before any of you start the innuendoes I was talking about her doing yoga in the morning and evening!;
8. Bring a translator to Kilkee the next time I go. I had twenty minute conversations with people and am still trying to figure out what they said!;
9. You can get sunburn when it's lashing with rain and windy; and
10. Club tri kits look great when on tour – for those clubs that have them ;-)

Thanks to Brian, Jen, Jo, Bryce, Larry, Gary McG, Robert, Tommy, Terry, Reg, Helen and Stephen for a great weekend away.