

Triathlon Newsletter Number 10 (February 2025)

Introduction

Hello everyone, and welcome to the tenth newsletter focussed on the Triathlon section of ERC.

As always email me, fraser_arnot@blueyonder.co.uk or call me 07910 756806 if you want to contribute.

We should all be over dry January by now and back on the “lash” but hopefully not to the detriment of performance.

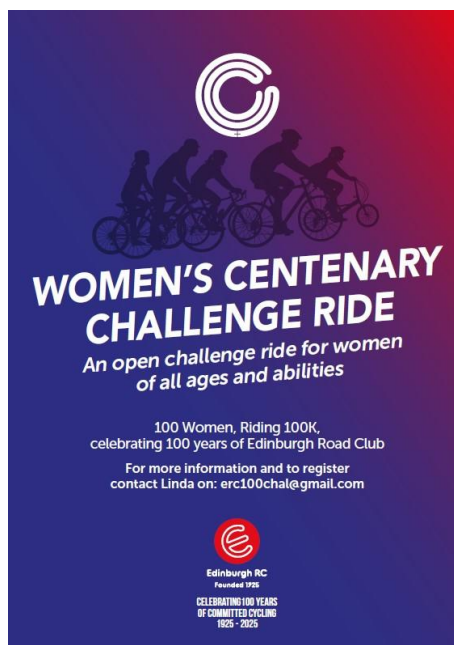
I hope you haven't forgotten the merits of gym sessions / core. You know it makes sense and is great for injury prevention. It's not too late to start and get a couple of months under your belt before the summer.

So, what have we in this edition? Well, fairly new on the committee is Stephen McCollough who is the triathlon coordinator, and he has provided some words on his role and background.

There's a great piece of the Ullswater Chillswim in July – read on and find out more, plus a NYD race report from Alan Dean. Where would I be as editor without such fantastic contributions so don't be shy and tell your story too.

Centenary Celebrations - Women's Centenary Challenge Ride

I hope you all saw the mails in January from Graham Jones regarding the Women's Centenary Challenge Ride. Linda Maclean is coordinating the ladies and so far, has 38 signups. Please encourage friends and family to help celebrate the club centenary. If interested contact, her at Linda erc100chal@gmail.com



New Club Kit

And under the same banner of celebration the club has designed new cycling and triathlon gear and is being generously discounted by 20%. Keep your eyes peeled for a more formal announcement shortly...I don't want to steal anyone's thunder.

Triathlon Section Coordinator – Stephen McCullough



The Current Triathlon Coordinator Postholder is me, Stephen McCullough. I attend regular meetings and have voting rights on the Edinburgh Road Club Committee as the triathlete / multisport representative. I provide updates to the committee on triathlon / multisport activities, discuss and agree budgets, and coordinate multisport activities and support to members, you!

The role is made much more effective with your support and the hard work undertaken by others such as Penny Rother (Coaching), Sue Slater (Vice President), Oonagh O'Brien (swim lets), Fraser Arnot (Newsletter), and Linda McLean. We all get together regularly as part of the Triathlon Group and would welcome others who want to

get involved.

I have been a member of the Club for over 15 years after going along to the Dalry swim session that we used to have on a Tuesday. I had done running events before then and quickly fell in love with Triathlon, doing my first tri in my mid-40s and continuing to do them in my sixties. The club supported me by giving me the confidence to believe that I can do multisport events, which have included middle distance (half ironman), standard, and sprint triathlons. My favourite race is the Gullane Beach Triathlon, and I have completed races across the UK and Ireland, with a favourite being the Slateman in North Wales.

Personal objectives include completing a full distance (ironman) triathlon and getting coaching certificates. Objectives as Triathlon Coordinator are to increase the 'fun' that members have through the club, increase membership, and support the creation of a junior section. The Triathlon Group wants to support members to get involved in a wide range of multisport activities and events.

We invite you to join us at our meetings and please feel free to share your experiences or ideas with us. You'll gain confidence and have fun while improving your skills. I look forward to hearing about the events you have entered and completed and any ideas you have to improve the support we give you as members. Contact me Smccullough1961@hotmail.co.uk

Aquasphere Chillswim Ullswater 7.5 Miles End to End – 12th July 2025

Three intrepid ladies from the club Sarah Caughey, Libby Dale and Sarah Morrison are all swimming the length of Ullswater, all 7.5 miles on July 12th.



Sarah, Sarah and Libby (not sure if that's the right order 😊) after Coniston Water Swim in 2023

Some background on the ladies.

Our open water swimming together started a few years ago at Porty. It's fair to say we are all a wee bit competitive, some of us more blatantly than others. We realise that a dip in the sea wasn't quite cutting it, and we were looking for a bit more.

In 2021 and 2022 we entered the Loch Tay Go Swim event, starting with 1k and 3k distances and progressed to the 5k. Swimming round the buoys gets a little repetitive and then next challenge in 2023 was to swim the length of Coniston Water 5.25miles.

Note from the editor: The ladies swam an impressive 2hrs 47mins (Sarah C and Sarah M) with only 1second between them (who was drafting who?) with Libby coming in at 2hrs 35mins.

An important part of all our activities is the planning and we have special meetings for these, usually involving a curry and a few drinks. The planning is very important...The 2024 plan was Loch Ken 10k, the marathon swim. That for anyone looking for an event of that distance was amazing, and we'd highly recommend it. Brutal headwinds and not much to sight on but you're one to one kayaker keeps you company and hands you your food. Sad to say Sarah M couldn't be with us so we needed to make 2025 a good one. The next logical distance at 7.45miles or 12k is Ullswater end to end on 12th July.

We've a lot of miles to put in the training bank before then and juggling work and families makes it hard to fit in. Especially when early mornings are not your thing. The ladies supplied me with a short bio on their experiences. There text is below.

Libby:

Libby was a very mediocre swim club swimmer in her teens. She was always a strong swimmer and open water swimming was always part of family holidays it just wasn't called open water swimming then. She's no stranger to competition though having represented Great Britain at Underwater Hockey winning World and European medals.

Sarah Morrison:

Sarah M was a very mediocre club swimmer and gave up pretty early as wasn't cutting the grade aka not fast enough (unlike her younger sister!) but has always enjoyed getting in the (open) water at any opportunity! For Sarah M, it's about having a personal goal to work towards and giving herself a challenge. Running her own growing business and a young family, making time for herself is so important as is having a goal/purpose out with work. Lots and lots of miles to get in so fingers crossed the water warms up soon.

Sarah Caughey:

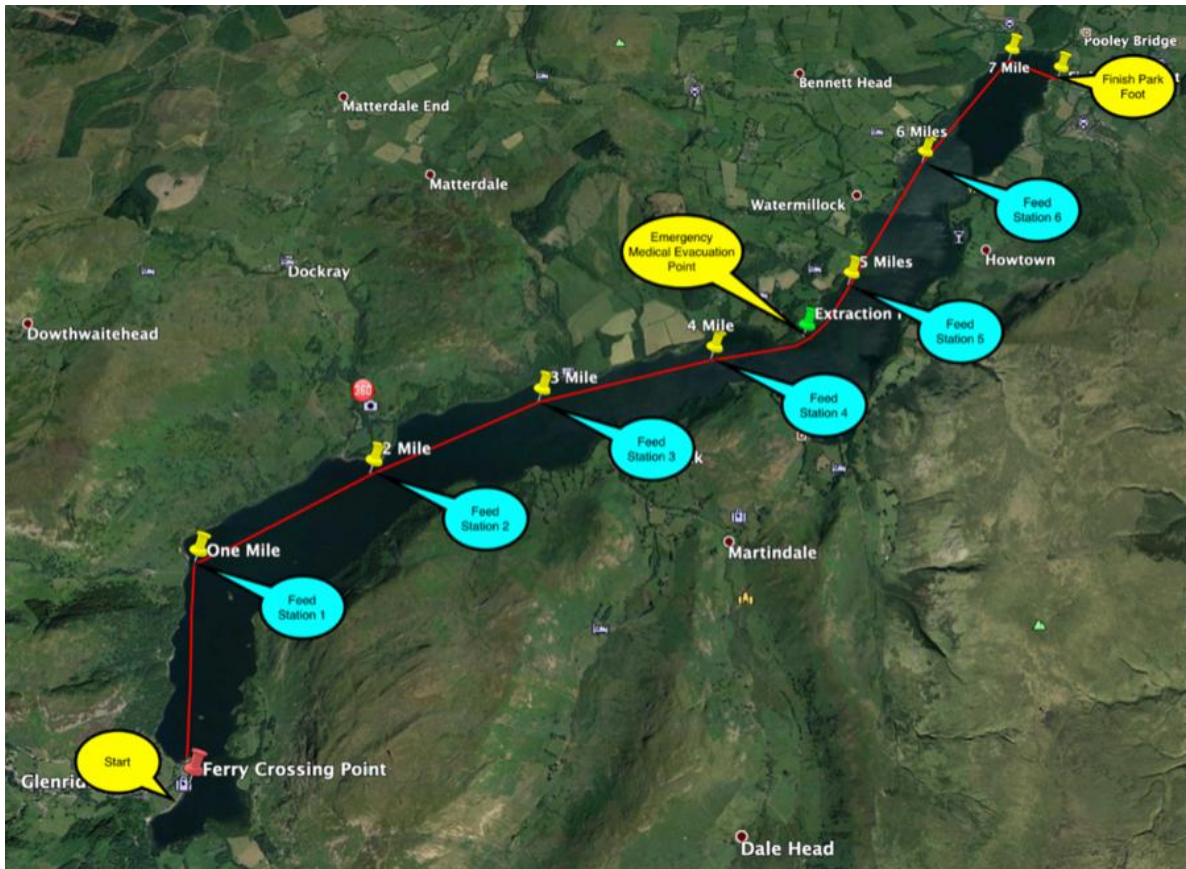
My background is a little different, I was never a club swimmer or even that sporty (just ask my folks!) but always adventurous. When we had our first child, my partner started getting into long distance events as a way to focus his training. With his encouragement, it got me thinking what would I like to do for me to keep fit and focused. Swimming is something I always enjoyed but never really thought of doing as an event. In fact, I'd never really done training before, just the twice weekly underwater hockey sessions!

With a couple of friends, we signed up to do a mile at Go Swim Loch Lomond and I loved it. Things have just progressed from there. After our second, I challenged myself to do Firth of Forth swim, only 6 months after birth. Still love announcing as we cross the bridge, I've swum this!

A couple of years later COVID hit and with swimming pools closed, Libby and I hit the sea. And she also swam with Sarah M. After a year of this and when events started coming back, we thought what can we do to see how our swimming is and hence the Loch Tay swims. I've also dabbled with swim runs, my favourite being Loch Lomond. And as, Libby says, distance has started to appeal to us first 5km then 10km now 12...something.... but we also love something different, the night swim at Loch Ken last year was amazing, clear pitch-black sky with the most stunning Milky Way. And love the fact our kids are getting involved too, Libby's and my youngest came to Loch Ore. They're grins were just as big as ours with their medals!

Having a yearly big challenge which requires training focuses the time we have available with our families, so the swimming sessions the ERC run are ideal and then we try to fit in a couple of swims, perhaps pre-underwater hockey. Come spring, we'll head to the sea to get those miles in and hopefully come back successful in July!

The best part is coming home and sharing how it went with my partner and our family. Well, that and making sure you give the full encouragement 'Your blue t-shirt/medal is won on a wet cold Feb morning' as the other has to get up early in winter. My partner's tale is getting a little duller than mine, he's stuck on the Celtman (Year 7 or 8 I think). For me, my bucket list is always growing so who knows what next year's adventure will be...Gower swim run, Rockman, Downhill, cycle touring....'



Race route

New Years Day Triathlon Race Report – Alan Dean

I have a great respect for anyone who does NYD as invariably the weather is foul or freezing cold or both and I think it's right dangerous to boot (especially on a possibly ice decent down from the Commie pool!)

Anyway, enough of my "wussiness" and a report here from Alan Dean

Pos	Time	Name	Age Group	AG Pos	Cat Pos	AG	Swim	Run To				Run
								T1	T1	Cycle	T2	
42	01:08:32	Alan Dean	Open 40-49	13	37	00:13:38	00:09:25	00:00:33	00:01:25	00:24:33	00:01:51	00:30:43

Tri and tri again

I'm not a natural triathlete - my swimming ability is lamentable, and running is only better due to it needing a good bit less technique. Cycling I'll admit to being a bit better at, but I hadn't done much competing in late 2024 having abandoned the season early, due to needing further recovery from a bad accident the previous winter. But having done enough laps of Arthur's seat in winter training rides, and enough 20-odd minute bike efforts in club Wednesday ten-mile time trials, I knew I'd do ok there. One out of three ain't bad...

My plans of a more intensive training programme started well, with a few swim sessions at Dalry and Portobello. It was great getting coaching for the first time since learning to swim, and everyone was really welcoming - but my stroke is definitely needing a lot more than a few weeks' work to get anywhere decent. And my runs were a bit too sporadic to get my legs used to getting forcibly pounded against a pavement.

2025 dawned. Or didn't...the sun must have had a heavy Hogmanay, as there was no sign of much light. Instead, it was dark, cold and wet. Riding over to the Commie it was difficult to tell if it was snowing or raining. More worryingly my chain came off a couple of times and couldn't work out why.



The swim leg started out ok. Not fast, not pretty, but up until halfway at least felt I was making reasonable forward progress. Gradually fatigue increased, with a vague worry that I was drowning slightly. Focus was now on getting enough oxygen rather than propelling myself forward and eventually got to the end of the 400m swim.

It was not the slickest transition in the cold, and included a soundtrack of complaints from an official over my kit (I'd no tri suit, so I'd gone for a pair of neoprene shorts over cycling shorts, both of which are apparently a no-no.) At least the addition of a base layer, winter cycling jersey and gloves kept me warm enough. I was safely away in my natural element (but still battling the after effects of waterboarding myself) ...but just about as quickly the chain was off. Curses. Got it on as fast as I could and focused on the rider. Digging in up the climb and the horrible top ramp to the loch. All was pretty good, apart from the chain, which came off at the bottom of the descent literally every time. The last time I freewheeled to the last roundabout and rather than faff about putting it on, started the run leg, barefoot, a hundred metres early.

Running shoes...feeling slow and laboured, trying to settle into a rhythm. Onto the climb. On the flat, still a long way to go and it is worryingly sore. Oh well, plod on, feeling everything get tighter and slower. Some fast guys zip past, as do some I'd struggled past on the up. Struggle downhill and force as much speed as I can from very sore legs and finished 42nd...not a patch on 5th the previous time I did it, but was just glad to survive it!

It's a great event - fairly relaxed, not too long and a much better way of spending new year's day than nursing a hangover.