

Triathlon Newsletter Number 2

Introduction

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

We have some good content for issue 2, a race report, a second "Great Races To Do", and our first athlete profile - Sandy Cavaghan, plus an update from Sasha Baggaley.

Hopefully this will encourage others to follow suit!

As always email me fraser_arnot@blueyonder.co.uk or call me 07910 75680 if you want to contribute.

Lastly, as I mentioned in the email it would be great if some (all??) of you doing the Loch Ore Sprint in June could send me a short summary or your race mentioning how you got on in each discipline as it might be interesting to see what could be very different perspectives of the event! Go on- you know you want to!

Race Report - East Fife Sprint Triathlon and Aquabike April 14th

By Penny Rother

Four ERC members travelled to Cupar to compete in this pool-based triathlon/aquabike.

It is a long running and well organised race (East Fife Triathletes) which I first competed in last century!

The race comprises of a 750m pool swim, a 24k bike and for those doing the triathlon a 5k run.

It was cold, windy and at times rainy/hailing- April in Scotland.

Oonagh O'Brian and Linda McLean (both aquabike) were up first, and both swam better than they expected. Then it was out onto the 2-lap bike course. It's a hilly course and both found it a challenge. It was Linda's first race in 12 years and Oonagh's first in 5 years following hip surgery. Oonagh was first Female Vintage and Linda was 3rd Female Supervet. Well done to both of them – it was great to see them back racing.

Stephen McCullough and I raced towards the end of the proceedings. The weather hadn't improved and there were points on the cycle where I questioned my decision not to put on bike top/jacket. Out onto the run I soon warmed up.

Stephen raced well and finished 4th Open Vintage. I managed to win Female Vintage.

A mention also to Kirsty McBirnie who swims with us but races for Pentland Triathletes- she finished 1st Female Vet and 4th Female overall.

Overall, a successful day out.

Full results here <https://results.sporthive.com/events/7184861609282822656/races/6>

Sasha Baggaley – Quick Update

Sasha kindly sent me a note having received the first edition so I thought I would share. I think a more detailed follow-up up though is warranted to get a Celtman Race Report.



“So far this year I have done some of the cyclocross series (can’t seem to persuade anyone else to come along) - a great way to get some fun winter racing and improve bike skills; East Fortune Duathlon (didn’t see anyone else from club there sadly - felt very lonely), Dirty Reiver gravel ride at Kielder (same story, travelled, camped and cycled on my own). I’m also signed up for Kinross sportive, Muc n Mac gravel weekend and the Celtman solo point five (2.26km swim, 85km bike and 24k swim)

having done the full Celtman twice now and think that may be my limit! Hoping to do Gullane also - will have to see how the body is doing!! I am a kayak safety crew member for the 2 race days at Lochore, as I believe it’s vital to put something back into the events we love to attend - more people volunteering to marshal would also be a great way to get a club feel (this was evident at the Gifford Road race, a great ERC event which I also marshalled). It would be nice to get more triathletes trying out different forms of cycle racing - it’s great for skills, fitness and fun.”

Great Races To Do (Northumberland Festival of Sport – Druridge Bay Country Park)

I wrote about Bassenthwaite Triathlon in the last edition but The Northumberland Festival of Sport (as it is currently known) is a very close second on my list of favourite races. It’s run by VO2 Max Racing (<https://www.vo2maxracingevents.co.uk/events/1>) and takes place over the first weekend in June. I have done the Standard Distance, once in 2008 I think it was and the sprint race probably 5 or 6 times since.

It’s a great race. The venue is fab. The swim is in the lake in the country park and is a lovely swim but can be a bit weedy in places. Parking is not an issue either. The race is never huge with around 150 to 200 in the sprint and standard races and there are kids races and an Aquabike on the Saturday.

The bike is on a dual carriage way (quite safe) and providing it’s not too windy is a bit of drag strip as it’s pretty flat the whole way with only one rise in the middle near where you join the carriageway. The race is well marshalled and organised.

The run is round the lake and is flat and is 5.75km in distance.

I do like this race, as you can tell, and I make a weekend of it. It’s only just over a 2hr drive from Edinburgh so if you are mad enough (like Sandy – see below) you can get up at 4am and drive down in the morning! I prefer to go down on the Saturday afternoon and register then to save the hassle in the morning.

I can thoroughly recommend Togston Hall Farmhouse (<https://www.togstonhallfarmhouse.net/>) as a place to stay. It’s very reasonable at £65 a night and is about a 5-minute drive from the start. Leslie who runs the place is very laid back and leaves a simple self-catering breakfast in the morning. Even better she lets you leave all your stuff and come back for a nice shower before heading back home.

I can also recommend the Fish Shack in Amble for dinner. Very reasonable and fabulous fish and chips – food of champions for a pre-race meal! (<https://www.boathousefoodgroup.co.uk/fish-shack/>)

Athlete Profile – Sandy Cavaghan



Sandy as you can probably guess from the picture is a doctor though started off life as a biochemist and later qualified as a doctor in 2006 and served time in the services (Navy) along the way.

He is married with 2 young children. On talking to him, between work and family life triathlon training had taken a back seat for a number of years though as a “youngster” Sandy competed for GB at the 2001 Edmonton Age-Group World Championships over the standard distance in a none too shabby 2hrs 10mins!! Apparently, he could give a young Fraser Cartmel a run for his money as a junior as well.



Sandy’s very first race was NYD in 1995 NYD where he promptly fell off his coach’s bike and broke his wrist!! Coming 2nd Junior in 1997 NYD made him think maybe I’m quite good. In 1999 he was 2nd in the Scottish Duathlon Champs. Along the way he also formed Dundee Uni Triathlon Club (modelled on ERC).

When I first met Sandy, he had alluded to “past experiences” at training at Dalry but his quality pedigree now explains why he started to whip my a** in the pool as he got fit over the winter of 2022/23.

I chose Sandy as the first athlete profile for his amazing achievement of doing 17 events during 2023, including 2 in the one weekend!

What made you want to do 17 events? *It was a life goal to get back into racing after the demands of Navy and young children and re-engage in the sport and basically race myself fit (after a re-start at Aberfeldy middle distance in 2022.) I really just aimed to be a serial competitor and liked the fact I could benchmark my performances.*

What was the first race and when was it? *East Fortune Duathlon.*

When was the last race? *Kelso Sprint.*

What were the 2 races you did in the same weekend? *Craggy Island followed by Peebles.*

Which was the best / most enjoyable race? *They were all good fun, but Aberfeldy takes it due to the setting and organisation and the timing from a fitness perspective being in August. It’s very rewarding effort wise and not a race you can take lightly. The Beastie probably came second (loch swim a favourite) although the Scurry Off Road Events are up there too.*

And the worst? *The Long Hard Durty due to the very hard mountain bike due to technical difficulty (black run terrain).*

What are your plans this year? *Not doing quite so many. Aberfeldy will be the focus and I'm planning to do 10 events this year! Northumberland & the Beastie again with Floors Castle Duathlon being a notable new one for this year.*

What is your next major race goal? *I plan to maybe take on an Ironman in 2025 if this year goes ok. I have an eye on Sweden, Finland (though maybe a bit hilly) or possibly Estonia.*

And finally, a list of Sandy's events (in order of appearance):

1. *East Fortune Duathlon*
2. *Gala*
3. *Bishopbriggs*
4. *Edinburgh Half Marathon*
5. *Selkirk*
6. *Northumberland (Standard)*
7. *Loch ore*
8. *Eyemouth (DNF due to puncture)*
9. *Ullswater Standard*
10. *Monikie (got ill so DNS)*
11. *The Beastie*
12. *Loch Ore Off Road*
13. *Long Hard Dirty Triathlon*
14. *Craggie Island*
15. *followed by Peebles the day after*
16. *Aberfeldy Middle*
17. *Kelso*