



As the Proverb goes, *No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow.* Well winter certainly seems to have lingered long enough this year on UK soil, but I think it is safe to say that with the longer days and warmer air (not to mention the pretty daffs), spring seems to finally have arrived and put a spring in our step. And with it, I bring you the new Oxford Tri newsletter.

Coming to you once a month, here you will find an array of race reports, information on upcoming events and a few dates for your diaries.

This month we have news on the open water swims from **Ian Loades**, **Tim Doole** gives us a quick fire guide to the BaR which kicks off on the 27<sup>th</sup> April and **Team Moore** gets us all in the fighting spirit with a reminder of the Club Champs and the Team Relays.

There are also reports from members who managed to make it to warmer climes earlier this year. Find out how **Adam Moore** got on in the Abu Dhabi triathlon and how **Allan Mollyneux** coped with the cobbled streets at the Rome marathon. And in another (not so warm) cobbled land far away, **Vicky Pearson** gives an warts-and-all account of hers and **Steph Page's** epic journey as they conquered the Tour of Flanders.

With Blenheim not far off, newer member **Charlie Wilson** is counting down to the big day through his *Diary of a novice triathlete*, guaranteed to put a smile on your face. And for those of you who are also preparing for your first triathlon, read how **Mike Dunmore** can help you conquer those open water swims.

Finally, the better weather brings more training sessions and with it, the need for more volunteers. Whether it's the pre-Blenheim swims, safety officers at the lake, time-keepers at the BaR or volunteering at Blenheim, there are plenty of ways for you to get involved with the club. Read on to find out how.

Thanks to all of you who have contributed this month. If you want to contribute something for the next month's newsletter, please get in touch.

Until then, *keep tri-ing...*

Sarah

sarahodriscoll79@yahoo.co.uk

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## Dates for the diary

BaRTT	27 <sup>th</sup> April
Open water swims	1 <sup>st</sup> May
Pre-Blenheim swims	8 <sup>th</sup> May
<b>Grendon triathlon (club champs)</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> May</b>
BaRTT	11 <sup>th</sup> May
	25 <sup>th</sup> May
<b>Salisbury triathlon (club champs)</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> May</b>
Little Beaver	29 <sup>th</sup> May

**Open water swims** Abingdon Road, Dorchester on Thames, OX10 7LP.

For years the club has enjoyed open water swimming at Cassington Lake. But, as I'm sure you all know, this arrangement has sadly come to an end.

But every cloud has a silver lining.

**Welcome to open water swimming at the Dorchester sailing club.**

The sailing club has been most helpful and welcoming and cannot wait to see a bunch of mad triathletes jumping in their lake. It should be quite a spectacle for them.



The first session is scheduled for Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May (temperature permitting), then every **Saturday morning** from 8am-9am and a **new** slot of **Thursday evenings** from 7pm -8pm.

**\*\*\* ON PRE-BLENHEIM SATURDAY MORNINGS CLUB START TIME WILL BE 7am-8am \*\*\***

The temperature on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April was 12 °C so hopefully with the recent spate of some warmer weather there should be no ice to break!

This is looking to be a fantastic venue with the use of showers, toilets and maybe even a kettle! There is a cost for this venue so it does dip into the club's coffers, but the benefit is that it gives us a professional relationship with the sailing club.

This is a new venue that we would love to use for years to come so please be aware of caring for the facilities and area in our normal impeccable way.

**Safety officers required**

With the open water swims soon to be underway, help is required from members who can act as safety officers at the lake for the duration of the session.

If you can:

- check in members
- deliver a safety briefing and
- observe swims and direct assistance if necessary

Then, this is the job for you! It'd be great if everyone who is planning on using the lake facility could volunteer at least once. Without a safety officer on hand the swims can't take place.

If you want to pop your name down, contact Peter LARBALÉSTIER.

[peter.larbalestier@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:peter.larbalestier@tiscali.co.uk)

**FAQ: Bike and Run Time Trials** Bletchington Green

**What is it?**

The Oxford Tri Bike and Run Time Trials (BaRTT) is a ~1.4km run / 18km bike / 4.8km run which takes place every other Tuesday from the end of April until the beginning of September. It's a timed event and allows members to build and test fitness in a measurable environment.

**Who's it for?**

Everyone! Slower athletes start earlier and faster athletes start later meaning no one gets left on the course on their own and everyone finishes at around the same time. It's a great opportunity to practise the bike, run and transition whether you're a seasoned pro or a newcomer to the sport.

**How does it work?**

Each athlete's overall time and leg times are recorded. Over the season the results will be tracked on the OxfordTri website along with a season-long points' competition to reward effort and attendance. Check out the website for more information.

**And points mean?**

Prizes of course! As well as the ten rounds there is the grand finale – a handicap final with a prize for the first finisher.

**I'm in. What do I do next?**

Dig out that lycra and get yourself signed up. The first BaRTT is now full but there are plenty more to pick from.

**Can I go now?**

Not yet. This event only runs WITH YOUR HELP. Each week we require at least three volunteers to marshal and timekeep. If you take part in a BaRTT please help in order to make sure this event can keep going. And if you want to see what it is all about before signing up, then timekeeping is a great way to find out what's involved. Please email Tim Doole via the website to offer your help.

**BaRTT dates**

Round	Date
#1	27th April
#2	11th May
#3	25th May
#4	8th June
#5	22nd June
#6	6th July
#7	20th July
#8	3rd August
#9	17th August
#10	31st August
Final	7th September

## Club relays

21 August 2010

Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham



Last year, we took six teams to Nottingham and I think everyone who came had a cracking time. It truly is a fantastic weekend away and it would be great to have the mighty blue and white of Oxford Tri present again this year.

The club helps towards the cost of entering so there's no excuse not to get involved.

In a nutshell, it's a 500m swim, a 15km bike and a 5km run. Any four triathletes can get together and make up a team and race in one of the range of team categories available.

If you would like to get involved with this event you just need to email me to express your interest and state your best time for a sprint distance to date.

Thanks.

Team Moore



**Club championship series 2010**

The Oxford Tri Club Championship is already underway with the first of the series, The Big Cow Duathlon, which kicked off on 11<sup>th</sup> April. **Julian Lhomme** was first home for the club scoring a maximum of ten points and finishing 19<sup>th</sup> overall. Next in the scoring with eight points was **Howard Waller** who had an outstanding bike and finished 83<sup>rd</sup>. The race also saw **Steph Page** achieve a 10K PB. Well done to all.

But there is still plenty to play for with Grendon, the first of our sprint triathlons, taking place on 9<sup>th</sup> May.

The races for this year’s Club Championship Series are as follows:

<b>Duathlon</b>	Big Cow 11 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>Ironman</b>	Germany 4 <sup>th</sup> July Outlaw 7 <sup>th</sup> August
<b>Half Ironman</b>	Bala 13 <sup>th</sup> June Vitruvian 5 <sup>th</sup> September
<b>Olympic</b>	Shropshire 27 <sup>th</sup> June Steelman 4 <sup>th</sup> July Cambridge 15 <sup>th</sup> August
<b>Sprint</b>	Grendon 9 <sup>th</sup> May Salisbury Fast Twitch Triathlon 16 <sup>th</sup> May Blenheim 5 <sup>th</sup> / 6 <sup>th</sup> June Thame 25 <sup>th</sup> July

Check out the website for information on how it all works.

Look forward to seeing you on the start line!

Team Moore  
Club captain

**Abu Dhabi triathlon** 13th March 2010

Flying out on Thursday, only a couple of days before the event, didn't leave much time to acclimatise myself to the heat but I think I was just about ok. Staying at Hotel Sheraton, which was located about 5k from T1 and about 3k from T2, was ideal. The hotel was excellent and offered good value for money and everything a triathlete would need: comfy quarters, staff to carry your bags and porridge on offer for breakfast! The only real problem was that the hotel was about 20k from registration which was a pain as travelling from one side of the city to the other proved to be very costly. Taxis are the only means of transport, and though the fares are not terribly expensive, the cost soon mounted up.

Friday was hectic – registering and racking. There was also the chance for a pre-race swim between 7 and 9 but to be honest they were pretty flexible about going later. With that all done Friday was all about resting. I had a stroll down to the beach and then chilled around the pool trying to get used to the heat which I knew I would experience the following day. Early dinner then bed was in order. Final race checks and I hit the sack.

At 4.00am a knock on my door announced the arrival of breakfast which I had ordered the day before. Toast, cereals and apple juice were piled in. Final checks on everything and I headed down to reception and outside to grab a taxi. It was a short journey to T1 and I was there in plenty of time to prepare. Luckily, it was a clear morning bearing in mind previous days had seen heavy fog, which made everyone think there could be delays. Although we were expecting to go off at our predicted wave time this hope was soon to evaporate when we heard on the loud speaker the police had not finished closing roads. I think they are very relaxed about starting on time here! So the start went back to 7.30. This gave us time to take in the stunning back drop the swim start presented. With the sun rising behind two of the most stunning buildings you will ever see, The Emirates Palace and The Etihad Towers, it was a truly breathtaking moment.

With the elites and the age groupers in for the long distance we were called to the

start. Tension and excitement was all round me. "30 seconds to go" was called and with that I got near the front and waited for the buzzer to go. A beach start with a short run to the sea – I love these big dive-ins. And the race was under way. I went pretty hard to get clear of any arms and soon had a good line. The water was as clear as a bath and warm as one too (no need for a wetsuit). The course was an out-and-back in the shape of rectangle. To be honest I had a really good swim, apart from when I lost my line on the way back, as the buoys were deceiving and lead you away from the exit, which I should have noted. Then out of the swim to a good crowd. With no wetsuit I was straight to the bike –helmet, sunglasses, socks, shoes and race belt. With only a short run to the cycle mount I was on the bike looking forward to this fast, flat straightforward ride...well that's what I thought!

Heading out on the bike course I felt really strong and was well positioned after the swim only to have a mishap with the bike course. Panicking at the short course turning point I asked the marshal if this was where I should turn to which he replied "yes". I should have just trusted myself to go straight on but turned anyway to discover I was doing the small lap of the route first instead of last. I did lose time here with all of this commotion but I was not going to let it ruin my race. I hammered down and off I went back on track. The bike course proved to be mentally challenging as well as physically, with long straights and cross winds with the odd rolling hill (nothing too major). The highlight of the bike course was the lap around the grand prix track which was just stunning. Whizzing round the corners and flying out of hairpin bends was a great turning point to have in the race. Eating up the miles on the way back I started to feel myself pushing harder about 55 miles. At this point I was not going to hold back or slow down!

Coming into transition there was a really good buzz with crowds gathering to see what it was all about. A short run to T2 and my legs felt good. The bike was racked by a marshal which is always helpful. Into the tent, shoes on and I headed off for the 10k part of the race, which involved an out and back in 34°C heat. Hitting the run, my legs were feeling pretty good until cramp started to attack both quads. This was not going to stop me, slowing down and focusing on my breathing and taking on fluids, I managed to keep a steady pace to the first turn point where I upped the gears knowing I was close to finishing. It was a great feeling on the second part of the run with people cheering us on and the great support from the marshals who were supplying water and sports drinks. Into the finish at pace I had finished!

What a race, what a great event. I can't wait to go back next year. It lived up to all my expectations and delivered one of the best races on the circuit...well that's my opinion anyway!

If you want any more info on the event just give me a shout or visit the website.

Catch you all soon.

**Team Moore**

**Rome marathon** 25th March 2010

WOW! I'm stood in the shadow of The Colosseum surrounded by 10,000 excited people with one shared aim. With euro pop pumping out of the PA system and helicopters hovering overhead (beats the hell out of Blackheath in the rain and hail!) we were about to do a 26.2 mile foot tour of Rome. As we were funnelled into the start area the music changed to the intro of *The final countdown*. With the sun out I knew this was going to be a good day!

The first half of the race was a lesson in how *not* to run a long distance race. Placed in a pen four by four surrounded by much slower runners I spent the first 20K either dawdling behind someone or sprinting into gaps. In this time I passed the 5h 30, 5h 15, 5h, 4h 45, 4h 30, 4h 15 and 4h pace makers. Had I done too much in the first half? No! I still felt great, the sun was out, the crowds were great and I settled into a pace heading for my top goal – a dream race of a sub 4h time. 10k later and things changed. My legs still felt good and I could keep going but my head was broken, I needed to stop and have a break. My concentration was gone and I couldn't push myself. It came back at 35k as I was passed by the 4h15 pacemaker (hadn't even noticed the 4h pacemaker). This meant that my secondary goal – Tim's IM marathon time goal – was about to slip by too. But with renewed vigour I set off again just as we got back onto the cobbled streets. Those things REALLY hurt at this point. The streets led us back into the centre of

Rome past some of the most beautiful and significant sights in the city. As I saw two of the most beautiful sights - the final kilometre sign and The Colosseum goal – I gathered what I had left and roared (literally) up the final hill and down to finish in 4h 17, a pb by 40mins and a minute faster than Tim's IM marathon time. A really good result!!!

Within 20 minutes I met up with the Oxford Tri runners: Adam 'Team' Moore, James Currie, Richard Dumbabin and the travelling support crew in a bar near the finish. They had a really good day out all finishing around 3h 30 and we spent the next 12 hours rehydrating quite heavily.

Next day with aching limbs and comedy walks all round we turned into tourists and realised the significance of the route: the Vatican, Trevi fountain, St. Paul's Basilica and the Spanish steps which, I won the sprint up!! The cherry on top of a fantastic cake.

On behalf of the runners I would just like to thank everybody who sponsored us and helped out Sobell House Hospice. For those of you that haven't sponsored us yet- just get in touch and we will soon be waving a sponsor form under your nose!

**Allan Mollyneux**

***Flanders Baby!***

De Ronde Van Vlaanderen 4<sup>th</sup> April 2010



“I’m so relieved!” were Steph’s only words as we gently crossed the finishing line, soaked to the bone, shaking with cold and somewhat delirious...and, to tell you the truth, so was I. Yet a wave of emotion came across us both, something which other people have often described, and brought tears to our eyes. Whether that was due to lack of sleep or exhaustion, I don’t

know. But we had done what we had set out to achieve...To finish the 140km cycle route and to conquer those cobbles.

The Tour of Flanders was the brainchild of Karel Van Wijnendaele, a journalist by trade and keen road cyclist. Van Wijnendaele, having been influenced by the Paris-Bruxelles and Paris-Roubaix tour, created a Flanders tour in 1913 which was originally 330km in length. Today sees the course set at 260km and runs from Brugge to Ninove, punctuated by the legendary cobbled streets, steep climbs and some typically wild weather to produce a spectacle that is unmistakably Belgian. Taking place the day preceding the professional race, the Tour of Flanders Sportive offers three route choices: the masochistic 260km or the pragmatic 140km and 75km routes.

*“Vicks...what’s the time?..”*

*“.....Twenty past five....”*

*“...may as well get up then?”*

*“.....yep”*

It was a 5.45am call for breakfast leaving at 7am to head off to the start in Ninove. I made a quick cup of coffee and tried to eat a bowl of cereal but was too nervous so resorted to bread and bananas. I still had to actually enter the race and we both had to register so were keen to set off. We arrived at the start a little intimidated. The town of Ninove was bustling with cyclists with zero body fat, shaved legs and tanned muscles. They all looked serious and fast...the men especially had very nice, i.e. expensive, bikes.

We passed the start line at 8.10am. “Here we go mate...*Flanders Baby!*” Our conversations nervously skirted around predicted half-way points, how many kilometres were left to go...What’s that in miles and are we in the right race? However, here we were in Belgium - distracted by scenery, architecture and other friendly riders, and loving it.

We had heard how tough the cobbles and climbs were going to be and they weren’t wrong. They were as awful as described. Nevertheless it is misleading that 75 per cent of the course is cobbled. Half the distance was either cycle track or gravel. It certainly wasn’t a comfortable ride but it was better than the cobbles. At best the cobbles were cut coarsely, laid unequally and sometimes miles apart which made your back wheel do something different to your front wheel. The trick was to relax and get over them quickly. I saw one guy slide past me at high speed near the beginning down a steep and sharp turning as well as numerous punctures along the way so we were lucky in hindsight.

The route fluctuated between gravel roads, ridiculous cobbled climbs and brilliant downhill stretches, all heating up toward the penultimate challenge: the *Muur van Geraardsbergen*.

The *Muur* is a steep narrow cobbled road located in Geraardsbergen (also known as Kapelmuur) and is the famous climb of the race. The hill starts near the river Dender at 18km and reaches the top of Oudentry at 110km. With a maximum gradient of 20 per cent it truly was hard to get up. But as Steph and I (slowly) reached the top I could see the silhouettes of a crucifix and chapel which certainly stirred the soul. This was the climb we were both determined to get up.

Unfortunately for us the weather Gods weren’t on our side and from then on it rained and it rained and then it rained some more. Sheer determination and belief saw us complete the final 16km in the cold rain and we finished at 4.20pm.

“I’m so relieved too mate.” I answered back to Steph.

This was an awesome event and with the right preparation is doable for the cycling enthusiast. I’m from a swimming background and Steph is from a running background so if we can do it anyone can. If you’re up for an event that lets you see another country first hand, that challenges you and your self-belief, then this is the race for you. The rewards are great (mine was in beer) and doing it with like minded people is just lovely. Great friends, great country, great beer and a great race. What more could you ask for?

**Vicky Pearson**

If you would like any more information on The Tour of Flanders you can visit

[www.rvv.be/en/](http://www.rvv.be/en/)

## Diary of a novice triathlete Part 1

**An occasional (and occasionally truthful) record of my preparation for my first triathlon**

I blame my son. He has done a couple of triathlons and is planning to do Blenheim this year. And so I thought I would surprise *him* by turning up at the start line... and *myself* by turning up at the finish line. At the age of 53 I have just had a career-change and am now self-unemployed as a management consultant. I used to be quite fit (and the older I get the fitter I was) and am still in possession of three of the four cartilages that should be in my knees (stupid game, rugby). However, I seem to have spread out a little over the last couple of years and, having decided to get back in shape, I need a goal to motivate me. What goal could be better than a triathlon?

I started by looking at the distances involved in triathlons. Given my dodgy knee / back / commitment, my concern was the running. The Sprint looked doable, as long as it was strictly understood that "Sprint" referred to the distances not the speed. The next step was to start exercising regularly again. In line with the "tidying up before the cleaner gets here" I thought I would make a start on getting fit before going to any Club sessions. Given decades of various sporting injuries I am a firm believer in cross-training and the need to fit some strength training in with the endurance stuff. With my recent purchase of a year's membership of the local gym came some sessions with a personal trainer and so, choking back years of blokeish refusal to seek advice, I booked myself in. My trainer turned out to be a triathlete himself and I was quite pleased that he did not burst out laughing when I told him my plan. We started with an assessment of my current fitness. I was stood on a souped-up set of bathroom scales and held onto a pair of wires so he could tut about my body-fat. Then I was put on the treadmill so he could look disapprovingly at my heart-rate. "OK, you need to start with an hour a day on the running machine, keeping your heart-rate within the fat-burning range." An hour a day? I made a mental note to load up my iPod with some suitable tunes and buy some sweat-proof earphones. We moved on to the weights section where I pulled and pushed things. The last exercise was 'walking lunges'. This involved doing Billy-big-steps down the corridor with a dumbbell in each hand. "Do 16", he said. "... 14, 15, 16", I counted. "Right, 2 more" he said. "17, 18" I went. "No, 2 more sets of 16", he quipped merrily. Some time later, with legs like handfuls of rubber bands, I staggered back to the car. (Yes, I know, driving to the gym is a bit naff, but give me a chance, this is early days.) I thought to myself, "This has got to get easier".

In keeping with the cross-training theme I start going to Pilates again. I turn up for the first session and am proud to be, once more, "The only boy in the Pilates Class". Pretty soon I am "drawing my navel to my spine" with the best of them and "holding the connection" between bits of my anatomy that I had no intention of separating anyway. Halfway through the instructor tells us to check the tension in our buttocks. "If you are feeling confident," I suggest, "why not check the tension in the buttocks of the person next to you." By the time we have all stopped giggling and reset our bridges, it is time to go home. A month of this and I should be able to start actually doing some triathlon training.

**Charlie Wilson**

## Pre-Blenheim open water swims

If you are entered for Blenheim but have never taken part in a triathlon before, the open water swim can be quite a daunting prospect! For the fourth consecutive year Oxford Tri is organising the now legendary pre-Blenheim Open Water Swim Sessions. These are four sessions in the lead up to Blenheim Triathlon run by our experienced coach Mike Dunmore and supported by other coaches and many experienced members of the club. It is an ideal way to familiarise yourself with open water swimming and ensure that your Blenheim experience is as memorable as the location. These sessions are also invaluable if you are doing other open water triathlons as well.

These sessions are perfect for:

- Helping you acclimatise to the water temperature
- Giving you the opportunity to get used to your wetsuit
- Learning how to put your wetsuit on and take it off
- Learning how to swim in a straight line - not as easy as you think!
- Making you confident in the water
- Learning how to do transitions
- Practising open water swim starts
- Giving you a taste for how it will be on race day
- Ensuring you fully enjoy the race

### How Oxford Tri members can help

Remember what it felt like the first time you got in that wetsuit and tried open water swims? Your experience in open water is invaluable to others and these sessions rely heavily on us to help out with the swimmers in small groups: to give advice, share stories (the good, the bad and the ugly), to put less experienced swimmers at ease and if nothing else, to prove what a jolly nice, helpful club we are!

There are usually about four swimmers per member, so if you are an experienced open water swimmer, please offer your services. Sessions start 8.30am on Saturday 8th May at the Lake near Dorchester on Thames (water temperature permitting) and then each Saturday until 29th May.

For further information please contact Mike Dunmore on email [mikedunmore@ntlworld.com](mailto:mikedunmore@ntlworld.com) or mobile 07973 273172.

### Blenheim Triathlon Volunteers required

We have again been asked to provide volunteers by the organisers of the Blenheim Triathlon which takes place this year on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> June. This is an excellent opportunity to get involved and see the running of a triathlon from the inside. And, being the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest race in the UK at a world heritage site, this is the one to be a part of! So please don't be shy, let me know if you are able to volunteer some time over the racing weekend and be a part of the 'tri crew'. Ideally we need people to volunteer for a whole day (although half days are possible too) or even better, the whole weekend.

Contact Sean Nicolle by the end of the month if you can help. [sean.nicolle@btinternet.com](mailto:sean.nicolle@btinternet.com)