

Ambleside AC

THE BIG-E DOES IRONMAN WORLD-CHAMPS IN KONA HAWAII.

By *Eric Blakie*

When I did my first Ironman in Austria in 2002 I understood little of the World championships in Hawaii only that Ironman was the pinnacle of triathlon. I had a pretty good race just getting under 12 hours with a crappy bike, no coaching and using what nutrition was available at the aid stations. After that race I learnt about the World Championships in Hawaii and the seed of a dream was planted. I looked at the various IM races and thought that maybe I could have a chance of qualifying and off I set to get better. (continued on page 3)

THE CACHE IS BACK!

By *Jim Evans*

I have finally got round to putting the cache out again after it sat somewhere near Esk Hause for quite a few months, with no takers.....though I did consider going off route for the Scooby Snack inside on last year's Borrowdale Race!



If you don't know what I'm on about, basically the first person that visits the location and finds the container gets the treats, refills it with more treats and puts it out somewhere else, publishing the location. A good fun excuse

for a run out paired with navigation skills.

This time it's a little closer to Ambleside AC HQ at Grid ref: NY 353054. See photo to pinpoint the exact location.

Happy Hunting!

THE LANGDALE HORSESHOE -

Memories of a great race!

By *Kate Ayres*

What a race! One of the best, and in my favorite valley too. It was six years since I'd last done it and I'd begun to think I would never get to do it again as every year either injury or just not being fit enough stopped me, but the day arrived and I was fit and injury free. ... (continued on page 2)

NOTICES...

Christmas Do.

Helen would like to know what you want to eat at the Christmas Do. The menu is included in the at the back of the newsletter. Please contact Helen with your selections.

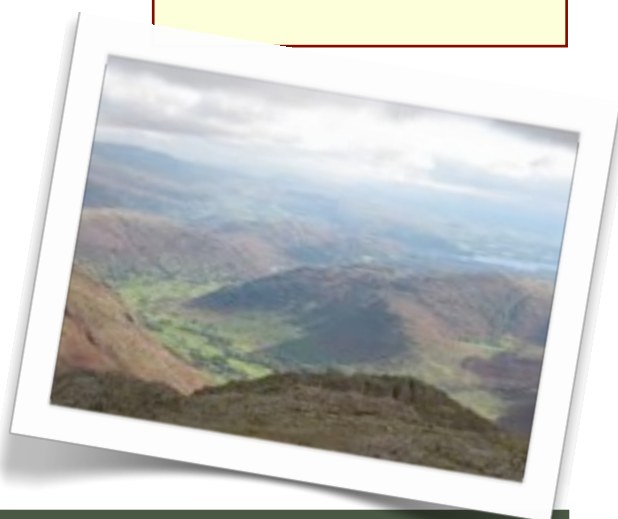
ferguson531@btinternet.com

(This years do will be held at 7.30 for 8 on Saturday 17th December at the Windermere Hydro Hotel.)

Winter Training

By *Ben Abdelnoor*

As part of some winter training I plan on some 'good-paced' runs on the Tuesday night Club runs. I'll try and get down most weeks. It'd be good to have a few along to keep the pace going strong! Give me a text if you want to check I'm going down on any particular Tuesday. 07896 15 11 79.



THE LANGDALE HORSESHOE (continued from p1)

The conditions might not have been great, damp, and very slippery underfoot but I got round and enjoyed it too!

Just a few thoughts on it...

The start...nerves and as usual not being able to decide what to wear; trying to stop myself starting too fast; so many runners - trying hard not to trip over the person in front...

Memories...mud, bog and more mud; slipping and falling; cheerful and friendly marshalls at every checkpoint; the welcome and encouraging sound of Sophie's (Britta's dog) bark all the way from Angle Tarn to Esk Hause shelter!

Worries...of taking the wrong line from Three Tarns to Long Crag - I came off Bowfell with no one in sight, so was relying on my memory of 6 years previous (and of course a compass bearing!!!)...almost got it right!

Stupidity...following a runner with no bum bag, couldn't quite believe it - chatted with him going up to Esk Hause shelter and asked him where it was - reply '... new to fell-running'...

Kindness... runners helping each other down the Bad Step; runners stopping and checking fallen runners were ok (not many other sports where that happens)...

Thoughtlessness...**still** some runners dropping gel wrappers.

Nearly there...coming down Pike O'Blisco with a smile on my face - so glad I recced it - caught a guy up one of Ken's short cuts!

The finish...hitting the tarmac and trying to keep the pace up; such a good feeling to have got round and I didn't fall once (well...except for in bog)!

Thanks...to Roger for great organisation and to all the marshalls for standing for hours in the cold.

Great Results... 3rd (Ben), 5th (John Helme), 7th (Hugh), 1st lady (Hazel), 1st mens team and 1st ladies team, plus good times for many.



Dan Duxbury Langdale Horseshoe '09

Training Night

By Kate Ayres

Please phone or email me to let me know if you are interested in coming to a training session. There are changes: meeting venue will be from the Rugby Club and probably the day will change -Thursday is not such a good night for many, it may be possible to do it on a Tuesday. The Fell and Mountain running Coaching course (1st weekend just completed) which Eleanor and myself are on has given us lots of ideas for good sessions to improve speed, strength and running technique and I'm looking forward to putting it into practice with both juniors and adults! I need some guinea pigs!!! Email - kate.ayres@hotmail.co.uk or phone - 07738 274107.

NOTICES FROM THE CLUB SEC...

By Paul Knowles

Club AGM.

Club AGM..Tuesday 6th December. Ambleside Rugby Club. 8pm. Bar will probably be open. Usual road run beforehand, 6.45pm.

Kirkstone Handicap.

Bottom of Kirkstone, Ambleside, 7pm Tues 13th December.

Who can possibly resist running 3 miles up a steep road in the dark. Thick fog or heavy rain very likely, and a battered old trophy for the winner. In theory anyone has a chance...(cont. on p3)

BIG-E DOES IRONMAN HAWAII (continued from page 1)

My next race was IM Japan the following year selected as it had 3 slots in my age group and the times looked realistic. I really trained hard and lost weight but in the end was a long way off qualification and got quite a shock. But you know me by now and I don't give up easily! I did Austria again that year with others in the club including Black Bob—you'll have to ask Sue about that! I did 11.01 hrs which is still my best time but a good 30 mins off the top guys in my age group. Over the next 9 years I've completed 23 full Ironman races with one DNF in Japan when I was very ill race week and almost passed out half way through the race before being pulled from the course. I've done races in far off lands besides Japan often in extreme conditions of temperature and I've done them when I shouldn't with various injuries (that's my rugby mentality of 'it'll be alright'—bit like the knight in Monty Python's Holy Grail!). You name it I've tried it, coaches, nutrition, bikes, shoes, trisuits, swim aids, the lot but as we all know for every recommendation there is an equal and opposite view.

Well finally it all came together just at Canada on 28th August this year and my 7th time there so I know the course. I've never beaten it but always knew it suited me with a one lap swim, one lap bike with two very long but fairly gentle hills and an out and back run with a few hills in the middle. But it can be hot and windy—apparently the course was chosen as it mimicked Kona the best. After a wayward swim for once I was sensible on the bike and just let it happen as it was very very hot. After the swim I was 38th out of 146 in my age group but after a 5.43 hr bike had moved up to 8th. I focused mainly on hydration and probably only took in 70% of the calories I normally aim for. The run is always my weak point where I get passed but on this occasion I passed a few and ran the whole way. About half a mile from the end I noticed an old guy trying to pass me and a quick glance at his calf showed he was in my age group so I legged it—well it felt like that but probably just looked like a jog to onlookers. Anyway I got him by 16 seconds. They say you should dream the race and I had many times including out sprinting somebody for a slot down the finishing chute—spooky.

I was 4th!! Last year there were 4 slots in my age group but this year when I went down to registration early next morning there were only 3. Had to wait 2 hrs to Hawaii roll down. I popped back beforehand to see one had not been claimed and spent the next hour calmly chewing off all my nails. Now at roll down about 200 people gather—a mix of supporters and hopefuls—I've been there many times. As I'm nearer the front of the queue in terms of age than most my roll down was about last but I'd shouted a big yes before the announcer had even finished—and just had time to notice the disappointed faces on others in my age group who had turned up in hope. I did not feel guilty! So into the tent you go to sign all the disclaimers and pay your \$600. I bumped into Ken Glah of Endurance Travel who'd sorted my entry out for Canada the previous year and accommodation—that's what he does for a living. Anyway he had accommodation in Kona available and I confirmed I'd take it being it was unlikely at such a late date much was left. I naively asked if he was racing Kona as he said he was to be there. He said he'd done it a few times. I thought nothing more until at the Kona welcoming party he was announced as THE guy who's done 27 consecutive IM Hawaii's—and he's only 47—what a numpty!!!

... (continued from p2) of victory, with start times based on runners' form. The winner usually arrives at the Kirkstone pub after about 22 minutes, the slower ones taking around half an hour. If the dark arts of the handicapper have worked, everyone should arrive at the top in close succession. All welcome. Meet at the rugby club as usual at 6.45.

London Marathon.

The club has only one guaranteed place in 2012. Anyone who is interested needs to contact Paul, club sec. paul@ambleside2.demon.co.uk or 015394 31590. If there is competition for the place then it will be decided at the AGM, based on involvement in and support for club activities and participation at races, esp. championships. Priority goes to anyone who hasn't done it before.

Cottage To Let.

To Let: One bedroom character cottage in Kirkland, Kendal with garden and off road parking. Fully furnished, quiet but convenient location £500 pcm.

Contact Jim Tyson for further details. Tel: 07977157263 or 015394 33737. Email: jim_tyson@hotmail.com

(Ads from members can be included in the newsletter, but those from businesses can't.)

My next task was to get to the car and call home and the world! I struggled to talk to Dot first then Sue and Colin—yes me known for my composure! Then it was up to our friends home where I was staying who were anxiously awaiting the news. Funny day as it was the funeral of our friends 99 year old auntie who had passed away on the Thursday but in good old tradition a celebration was to be held at the house in remembrance of her—so a drink was in order—well several!!!

Qualifying on 28th August for Hawaii on 8th October doesn't give you any time to recover and retrain properly but my dream was to qualify and get the tee shirt. Being realistic the top guys in my group are a good 30 mins ahead of me at my best. The further complication was that our daughter Wendy was getting married on 1st October—it would have been the 8th her first preference had I not suggested last year that had she gone for Hawaii race day Murphy's rule may well come into play and I'd have a difficult choice to make—I'm sure she'd like me to be at the wedding! On top of all that I'd done my calf/Achilles a couple of weeks back—no real reason and it didn't 'go' as it were—just woke up one morning and it was sore. I didn't run for 2 weeks and did the best with treatment but it was still sore and stiff—the Achilles that is!

Anyway we arrived in Kona on Monday 3rd October. Straight away you could sense the atmosphere and visually you've never seen so many fit people of all ages hanging around or running/cycling up and down the famous Alii drive where our Condo was situated overlooking the ocean. Kona is not a big place, in fact the whole island is not that well populated although it is the biggest and has 11 of the World's 13 different climates. Kona is a kind of 3 mile holiday strip but tasteful compared to say Puerto del Carmen with small hotels and condo clusters. The Big Island is about 100 miles across with a couple of very high volcanoes one being the highest mountain in the world at 33,000 feet from the ocean floor resulting in a coastal area similar to Lanzarote with lava fields and suffering the same hostile winds.

So race week had begun with registration at the Kamehameha hotel so named after the king who unified the islands a couple of hundred years ago and by the looks of his statues a big lad indeed. The famous Queen Ka'ahumau highway along which much of the race passes is named after the wife of another king who took on his enemies in battle after he was killed. All the time I'm thinking 'can I really be here' after all this time and Dot reminding me 'well you got here!' We had a swim in the warm clear waters and I had a short bike ride to check it was all ok but no running. Well I did jog the Underpants run Thursday morning with several hundred others in fine spirits—a great tradition started to take the pee out of European athletes famed for running around town in basically short shorts—keep in mind the Hawaiians are conservative in dress and exhibitions of public nudity are still frowned upon. That goes back to us Brits for insisting that the savages cover up!! So everybody is in underwear including dolly birds and dogs, competitors and supporters. I jogged along with Witt Raymond who does the commentary on race day and is very good at it—I know him from IM Japan and Phuket. Dot as usual took the photos and some good ones too. Simon from Computrainer UK had a breakfast meeting and I did an interview with him at Lava on the Rocks. Fraser Cartmell was there along with Catriona Morrison both Pro's. Endurance Nation the online coaching service I use also had a breakfast meeting next morning so we were never short of food!! We also spent time with the other two NE athletes Elliot Gowland and wife Kerry plus his Mam, and John Barker with his partner who became his wife race week!

You hear a lot about how tough the Kona course is so we checked it out. The sea is warm around 26 deg C and clear with plenty of fish, turtles and dolphins around. A non-wet suit swim so it would take me a while!! We drove the bike course, a loop around town then basically 40 miles out on an undulating straight highway, through lava fields up a long 6% hill to a turn around and back with the complication on the way back by lunchtime the winds change and blow hard mainly into your face. The run again a long loop along Alii drive then up a steep hill and back along the highway to the famous Energy Lab. You aren't allowed to drive or bike that pre-race as it's a private track—and track it is.

The Welcome Banquet was huge—about the size of three football fields with maybe 5000 people—they reckon the average athlete brings 4 family members with them(er oops). After much Hawaiian dancing and fire-eating just before the race brief it basically chucked it down prompting a mass exodus leaving Dot and I huddled under a small umbrella until we eventually gave up. The next day was the Parade of Nations whereby as many as possible parade behind their country's flag through Kona to the Ironman Village. Per usual I like to get there early and being first Brit on the scene was duly presented with our Union Jack to carry. Great atmosphere!

And so to race day—up at 2.30 am for breakfast and final preparations. Our condo was about a mile and a half along Alii drive overlooking the sea—a great spot. We drove to the start early to get a decent parking spot at 4.30. Then follows the usual goodbye and good luck from my 'Cheering Person' before handing in Special needs...

...bags, body marking and the weigh in—I'd put 3 kgs on in a week !!!!!!!!!!!!! But so it seems had everybody else—that's what upping salt intake, drinking loads of fluids and eating pasta does. Then the waiting with the Pro's going off at 6.30 but the start area is very small and you cannot see much having to watch the big screen. I held back getting into the water as I'd already decided this was a day to enjoy if that's possible and to start off by not having a fight in the swim. Into the water at 6.45 just to the left of the Ford 4 by 4 floating on a pontoon and hanging onto a canoe till the gun. It's difficult to describe that feeling just before the gun, the singing of the Stars and Stripes national anthem, Hawaiian songs and dancing all adding to an electric atmosphere. There was a large swell making sighting of the buoys difficult and the odd canoe right in the way as I found out the hard way. I'd estimated a 1.20 swim and out on the bike in 1.30—I was pretty well spot on and glad I taken my time in the swim—it seemed to go on for ever.

I took it steady on the bike following advice that the first 40 miles seems easy —and it did. The hill to the turn is a grind not unlike going up over Alston Moor but hardly steep. Great coming back down but the cross winds start to pick up and I did chicken out on the aero bars a couple of times. Back on the highway to town the winds certainly pick up and hit you in the face mostly however my conservative first half started to pay dividends as I passed loads of other competitors. Until that is 30 miles before the end I suffered my one and only flat in a race and it was instantaneous. No panic Mr Jones, got the tube out but I could not find the cause so I pratted on for 15 mins before deciding to put the new one in and hope for the best. I didn't think of checking the valve until after! But I came in off the bike feeling fine but slightly frustrated that a steady sub 6 hrs bike leg had gone. Nevermind —out onto the run passing Dot on the way with my usual 'I may be some time' !

Well the calf/Achilles duly lasted about a mile before stiffening up and becoming really sore—no surprise. So the 25 mile hobble began—it's going to be a long day in the office I thought to myself—a pity but my dream was to get here and the objective is to finish, don't push it to the point where you are incapable of doing that so. Just enjoy it. Actually by about mile 22 I'd developed quite an efficient gimp. At various points when you aren't in a hurry you meet interesting people both competitors and supporters the former all struggling with their demons of overeating, undereating, injuries, dehydration, stomach cramps etc. It helps to pass the time helping each other along the way and having some banter with the aid stations. One group of ladies sitting in deck chairs shouted 'you're looking good' to which I replied 'I've never looked good it took a lot of pain to look like this' which prompted 'you look in good shape to us'—on the way back I enquired which lady required glasses !

It gets dark at 6 pm and we were duly issued with luminous neck rings just as we entered the Energy Lab—I say 'we' as I'd picked up a soul mate by the name of Chris —his first Ironman which he'd got into via the lottery. We kept each other going the last 10 miles. He lives on Oahu ie Honolulu and we met him the next week for dinner. The Energy Lab road is a rough tarmac track in complete darkness but if I needed inspiration to gimp faster it came in the shape of a disabled athlete with two carbon blade legs and only half of one arm—the Achilles seemed of little relevance at that point—I don't know his name but bloody hell !! We saw him finish later on to tremendous cheers and well deserved.

The last mile is incredible and the last half mile even more so with supporters hanging from every vantage point whooping and cheering. I let Chris have the honour of finishing first whilst I dug my Union Jack out of my pocket that has been duly waved at every Ironman I've been in. Interestingly enough its part of the Hawaiian flag as the King liked our flag so much he adopted it. The finish has the reputation of being the longest finishing chute at any Ironman —and it is. Just a mass of supporters, spot lights and music with Witt Raymond shouting 'you are an Ironman'—but not just any old Ironman—a Kona Ironman and that feels fantastic after all those years and all that training. True to form with Witt he announced 'I know that man' as I crossed the line and proceeded to pronounce my name Blackie as he always does just to wind me up—its ok as I call him Twit. A couple of minutes later accompanied by my two minders that catch you as you cross the line I collected my tee shirt and huge race medal, posed for a photo and lay down on the grass. That is until Chris showed up and managed to convince some people at the open air hotel restaurant about 10 feet away to buy us a beer—very nice of them. Dot then appeared whereupon I disappeared to the toilets to get changed. I don't know what people thought coming into the toilets as for 5 minutes I was shaking uncontrollably—cold, excitement, ...

...relief or what and making a right racket.

Dot and I eventually retired to get my bike and race bags to take to the car. Grabbed a Burger King on the way back (luxury) and went back to the finish line to watch the final couple of hours. Again what an atmosphere with the crowd of supporters whipped almost to frenzy. The oldest competitor came in at 16 hrs 56 mins—he is 81 years young. One woman came in 4 seconds over the time limit—that's sad!! Next morning I'm up bright and early to get to the tent where the finishers merchandise is on sale—if you don't get there early it's like a bring and buy sale at the church hall—everything decent goes in seconds. Spent a fortune on stuff—but its only once— isn't it????



Spent the rest of Sunday packing my bike and relaxing with a couple of sherberts. The awards dinner was quite spectacular with again Hawaiian dancing/fire eating and lots of speeches. Craig Alexander had broken the course record but he was most nervous about following Chrissie Wellington's winner's acceptance speech which was well delivered even if it did go on for ever. She's a great speaker and what an athlete coming from 22 minutes down after the bike leg and bearing in mind a bad bike crash 2 weeks before—her 4th title in 5 years. You still have your race identity band on for days after or are wearing your finishers tee shirt out but it's interesting that everybody who sees them wishes you well done even if they are other competitors.

So that was it—job done—a dream realised and now for some serious R&R with Dot my wife who has been a dedicated supporter all these years and who I could not have done this without nor wished to!

And lastly I do indeed have a permanent reminder of my World Championship Ironman on Kona Hawaii—at my age too!!!

What next—be nice to give that course a proper work out !!!

PHOTO-WALL.

Send me your photos and I'll stick them on the photo-wall!



Kettlewell & IH Relays



Photos by Anna Forrest

CHRISTMAS PARTY MENU

Trio of Prawns

Peeled Royal Greenland Prawns, Langoustine Tails and King Prawns served with a brandy scented capsicum sauce

Sauté of Lyth Valley Duckling

Breast of Duckling cooked slightly pink and thinly sliced served with a cranberry confit and seasonal leaves

Carrot and Coriander Pate

A smooth Pate of Carrot and coriander served with oatcakes and Cumberland sauce

Cream of Potato and Watercress Soup

A creamed soup garnished with croutons

Roast Norfolk Turkey

Plump Norfolk Turkey roasted on a mirepoix of aromatic vegetables and fresh sage, served with a bacon roll, chestnut stuffing and roast gravy

Roast Rack of Lamb

A trio of Lamb cutlets roasted pink with a herb crust dressed with a Marsala and redcurrant jus

Mediterranean Baked Cod Loin

A boneless dorne of fresh Cod Loin wrapped in pancetta and herbs baked on a selection of Mediterranean Vegetables

Goats Cheese and Apricot Nut Roast

Traditional Nut Roast of Goats Cheese and Apricots served with tangy tomato chutney

Roast Potatoes and New Potatoes

Baton Carrots, Brussels Sprouts and Cauliflower Gratin

CHRISTMAS PARTY MENU

Homemade Christmas Pudding

Traditional Plum pudding served with Brandy sauce

Dark Chocolate and Berry Roulade

A light dark chocolate sponge rolled around a berry compote and served with a fruits of the forest ice cream

Twice Baked Lemon Tart

A pate sable base filed with a lemon cream served with a chocolate cup of raspberry coulis and Chantilly cream

Fresh Fruit Salad

A medley of diced tropical fruits served with, or without, cream

Cheese

A selection of cheese served with celery and grapes

Coffee and Mince Pies

