

Newsletter – Aug 2021



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Chairman's Update

Dear Tri2O'ers

A warm Summer welcome to the August newsletter and another “bumper edition” and holiday read awaits for you below.....

I hope you got a chance to catch some of the Olympics action, so inspiring to see all those athletes from such a variety of sports at the top of their game competing for “Gold”. My favourite was definitely the mixed Triathlon relay, what a great format!

Congratulations to all Tri2O members who have taken part in events over the past two months some great achievements (see results in newsletter below)

A massive thank you to Tash our Social Secretary for organising our first post lockdown club social down at Reading Lake a couple of weeks ago. It was a perfect evening of swimming, running, eating and chatting with club mates old and new. Thank you Captain Neil for preparing the fun Swim/Run team event. We are planning a similar one later in the year, it would be great to see you there.

Our Reading Triathlon Sub-Committee is working very hard in the background preparing for the 12th September, it will be another great event.

PLEASE do sign up to help with the preparation of the site and for Marshalling on the day. It is a real team effort to make this one of the best local Triathlons. Click [HERE](#) to the volunteer signup page – Thank you in advance!

I am excited to announce that the committee is planning to run another off season series of Triathlon related workshops and seminars both live and virtual. Our Events Coordinator Susan along with the Coaching Sub-Committee are drawing up plans as we speak. There is however a real need for some additional help for Susan with the setup of these events, so if you are a good organiser and prepared to help, do drop me an email in the first instance and we can arrange a quick chat about what is needed – chairman@tri2o.club

Enough from me, do enjoy your newsletter once again expertly pulled together by our Head of Comms Sunil and a huge thank you to all contributors for taking the time to share your stories:

- John Braithwaite with his very long day in the saddle – ouch!
- Amanda Gardiner with a windy day out at Weymouth
- Caroline and James Airey with an excellent account of their swim to France!
- Miha Razinger and his Outlaw Half in sunny Norfolk

Enjoy the rest of your summer and hope to see you soon.

Best wishes

Mike Nash
Chairman

Membership Update

We would like to welcome our new member to the club

- Julie Guest
- Louise Guest
- Lucy Anstey

We hope you enjoy training with us!

Reminder about renewals – these are not automatic!

When you are due to renew you will get an email from Tri2O Triathlon Club mail@clubspark.co.uk, so please look out for that. The actual renewal process is easy although if you are a BTF member you need to use the blue button that says “Sign in with your British Triathlon Account” rather than using your email and password in the ClubSpark boxes underneath.

We have also noticed two issues where fields should be mandatory but are not. It does not require you to put in emergency contact details, although we should have them for any issues that might arise during a coached session, so can you please check that you have entered these. Also if have a joint membership, it does not require the details of the additional member, but again these are very helpful if they want to be on the mailing list etc.

Nicky

Membership Secretary

Coaching Corner

As the Olympic flame is doused in Tokyo, I'm sure we've all been impressed and inspired by the athletic and sporting achievements we've been able to watch over the past two weeks (and roll on the Paralympics). For me the Olympics is more than an opportunity to check in with the sports I love such as triathlon (didn't we do well!), track & field and the track cycling, it's a chance to see and marvel at other sports. Did anyone think Freestyle BMX would be that bonkers, windsurfing could happen without any wind and if you'll pardon the pun who knew sport climbing would be so gripping?

But what, I hear you ask, has this got to do with us? Well, whilst watching the Olympics I have also been chatting to various people who since the end of Lockdown 3 have taken part in their first ever sprint, standard or long-distance triathlon race, their first SUP triathlon, aquathlon, or swim-run event, and it got me thinking that there is a lot more to the world of multisport than just triathlon. So rather than offer a standard coaching focused article I thought I'd bring to your attention some of the other, lesser-known activities that fall under the multisport umbrella that you might, when you know they exist, consider.

Duathlon – There's no swim so this a perfect event for those less confident in the water. The swim is replaced by a run so competitors run, bike and run again. Duathlons are generally regarded as the winter version of triathlon and distances in the UK start at super sprint (2.5 km, 10 km and 2.5 km), through standard distance (10 km, 40 km, 5 km) up to long distance (10 km, 150 km, 30 km).

Aquathlon – There's no biking involved in an aquathlon. Competitors usually swim first (because it's not easy to get a wetsuit on when you're a bit sweaty) and then head out on a run. If the climate allows, i.e. the water is too warm for wetsuits, then the format can switch to run, swim, run. The ITU Standard distances are non-wetsuit 2.5 km run, 1 km swim, 2.5 km run, or if a wetsuit is required it's a 1 km swim and 5 km run.

Aquabike – This time there's no running, but the distances are generally longer. At the Age Group World Championships Competitors swim 1.9 km and then ride for 90 km thus mirroring the half-Ironman distances.

Cross-triathlon takes the usual triathlon format and puts it into a cross-country setting. The swim distance is generally the same as a normal tri, but for the bike and run distances vary depending on the terrain and the race. You will use a mountain bike and can expect a very demanding and hilly cross country run to finish your race. Several members of the Club are really committed to this incredible sport and regularly compete in Xterra events and at the Adventure Championships (Slateman, Snowman and Sandman) competitions in Llanberis North Wales. There is a further division of cross-tri where the swim is replaced by kayaking and the running falls into the category of fell running.

So, to the more exotic world of **winter triathlon**. This is perhaps the most confusing of the options because around the world there are different variants and like in aquathlon the prevailing weather conditions can play a role. World Triathlon, the governing body of multisport around the world, has deemed that a winter triathlon will consist of 12 km ice skating, 8 km cross-country skiing and 5 km snowshoeing. But elsewhere the format can be mixed up a little so the first discipline will either be snowshoeing or running, followed by

mountain biking or speed skating and it's rounded off with cross-country skiing or running again.



Swim-run or “OTILLO” (Swedish for Island to Island), is, like the original “Ironman” the result of an alcohol fuelled evening! It’s a team sport for two people. They complete a marked course alternating between swimming and cross-country running whilst at all times having to remain within 10 m of your teammate. Competitors are encouraged to use swim paddles and pull buoys and invariably swim in their running shoes and run in their wetsuits. Of course, there are specific swim-run shoes and suits!

If you want to stick with the swim/bike/run format of triathlon you could consider the challenge of an **ultra-triathlon** where events are generally multiples of the Ironman distances. The most ludicrous one I am aware of is the triple-deca-ultra-triathlon (114 km of swimming, 5,400 km of cycling, and 1,260 km running), that’s an Ironman race every day, for 30 consecutive days!

Now we have come out of Lockdown 3 and are starting to return to a lifestyle which resembles something approaching “normal”, perhaps you might choose to step onto the path least travelled and try your hand at one, or more, of the other races which sit under the multisports banner.

Sean Stewart
Head Coach

We Chased the Sun in 2021...



by John Braithwaite

Deep in Cheddar Gorge, over 300 kilometres in, with Marcus repairing his third puncture of the day, a large rock tumbled towards us, about the size and weight of two bricks it bounced, missed Simon's ankles by about a foot and smacked his frame. The white goat up the hill was giving us the eye, that was close. A deep scratch marked the spot, but otherwise the bike was intact. It would have been harsh if that was our end.

When it comes to ultra distances, tiredness is your main enemy. Darren spotted the rock, but we didn't react. It was the same at stops: fuzzy heads leading to questionable decisions. It was easier on the bike, pedal and watch the wheel in front.

The weather the day before was a mixed blessing. We were so grateful not to be cycling in the torrential conditions, and yet the detritus it brought onto the roads made punctures inevitable.

Rewind to 3:30am my Fenix buzzed. Had I slept? Garmin said I did, I wasn't convinced. I've not cycled longer than 120 miles, so this was almost double. Yet, I've never been this bike fit, 4,000 km in 2021 so far: thanks to the local roads and to Zwift.

By 4am the six of us were trundling to the start line from our B&B, trying to take it as gingerly as possible, but eager to get going. All 950 starters queued along the seafront in the chill dawn air. I had under-dressed, with just a short sleeve jersey, as had Michael, but there was no time to delay. Geared with pink socks, to spot each other, I'd also gone all in with a pink Giro top too: just about the brightest rider on the road.

At 4:40am, released in waves, we quickly merged into a steady stream of riders with red tail lights punctuating the gloom. Cruising off Sheppey in a large pack, we survived four

unexpected deep fords across the road, it was a day to underline the advantage of disc brakes. We picked up Kit in Beckenham who rode with us to Reading and, having suffered the capital's streets, were relieved to head out through Kingston on Thames.

Here we formed into a gruppetto of about 25-30 riders. Our six, two other groups and a few random solos. We ramped up the pace, taking advantage of the quieter roads, and the group draft. Halfway came quickly. Bramley was reached an hour earlier than expected at 11:10am. We stopped there and then at the George and Dragon. Hugs with family and friends, a reload of carbs, gels, water, quick bike check and then back on the tarmac joined all too briefly by Simon B who punctured quickly and urged us to press on as he ground to a halt.

There was good natured support throughout from other riders and support team, all spurring each other on. When we stopped, others passed with orange ribbons trailing, we clapped and cheered. All targeting sunset in Burnham.

We knew more serious climbs were to come, and as we headed past Devizes we tackled the full menagerie: short and steep, testing ramps and long uphill trundles. Zac coped with them, my lungs were stronger than my legs. Though they weren't as bad as advertised, and it dawned on us that the route organisers had been kind, given the terrain. I suspect there is room for a future 'Chase the Sun X' option which could easily add 1,000+ metres of climbing.

Hitting the top of Cheddar Gorge, if it had been clear we might have seen the coast, but it was drizzling and, even with fluorescent arm warmers picked up at lunch, my teeth started to chatter. Moving beyond the incident with the goat, we pushed through the final climb and reached Burnham at 7:27pm, just before our target 7:30pm finish. With a noisy crowd of well-wishers welcoming us in, it felt amazing.

As we stopped we spotted many of the other riders who'd been with us through the day. A few knowing nods and smiles between us, some photo opportunities and then ten miles to the hotel in Weston Super Mare on the finest, flattest tarmac of the day.

Six started, six finished. Memories were made, friendships strengthened and another significant tick in the bucket list.

WMD Sprint Triathlon, Weymouth Beach



by Amanda Gardiner

Weymouth was my first sea swim triathlon. I think it was the scarcest thing I have every done.

The weather played a part, rain, 30mph gusts and waves of 1.5 metres, which are apparently referred to as ‘lumpy’. Standing on the shore watching them fish out folks not getting round from the wave before mine was not overly helpful for the nerves either! Oh and it was a mere 12 degrees in the sea.

I am not a good swimmer, not strong or fast, I merely try and get through it without panicking, focusing on bubble, bubble, breathe. That plan went out of the window when I got in the spin cycle, aka the sea. There was a lot of breaststroke to the first buoy, every time I put my head in to try and do freestyle I wasn’t sure what way round I was going to end up. Once I got to the first buoy, which felt like a massive achievement, the head went in and I swam across to the second buoy doing free style and then started to head to the shore. At least at this point the tide was working with me, just having to correct due to the drag down the shore (again having watched people get pushed way down the shoreline I was very aware of this) – luckily there was a handy ambulance on the sea front as my marker.

I was so pleased to make it out of the sea, without the assistance of a boat! A long transition, up the beach (stones, ouch!) up some stairs and then across tennis courts to get shoes to run back to the bike.

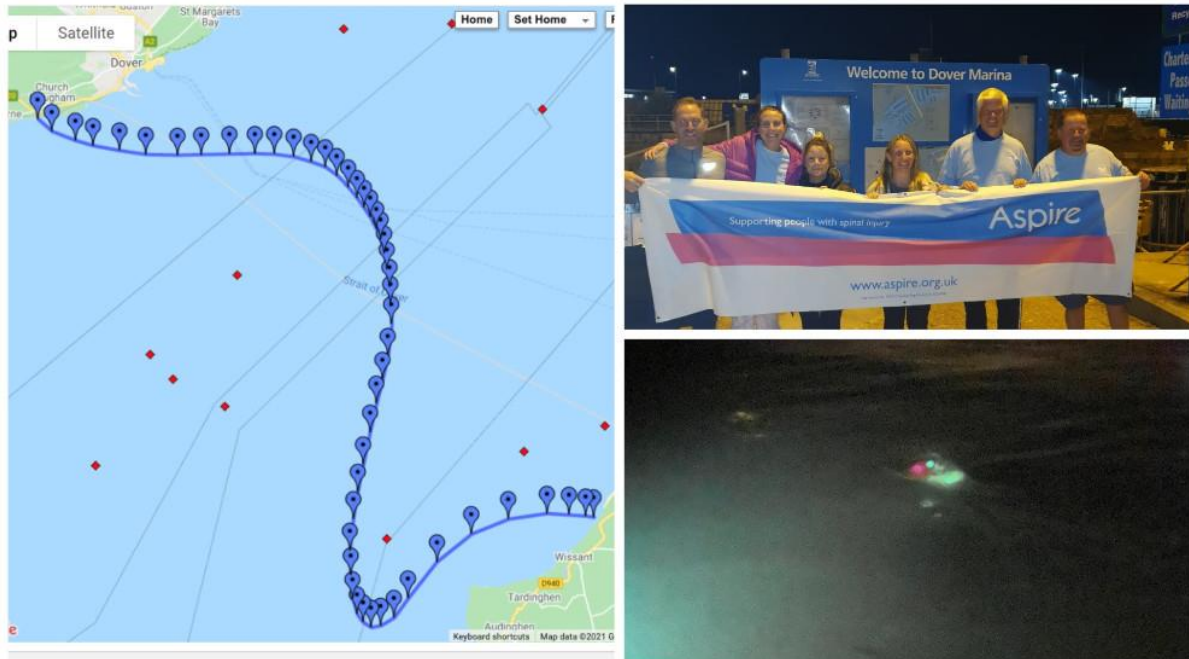


The bike leg was an out and back. The rain had stopped but the cross wind was apparent as you climbed up and out of Weymouth. A couple of local triathletes had warned me to be careful on the roads and a couple of bends which would be extra greasy and indeed a few crashes had happened. I love the bike, but decided rather than put my head down, it was about being careful and getting round safely.

Back safely to a quick turnaround for the run, first half uphill and against the wind (again). The second half was lovely and there was even a water station!

It was hard race for me, but I was so pleased to have got round safely, as several didn't. It's another experience in this new world of triathlons for me and something I am proud to have completed. A friend of mine sent me a picture the following day of beach, blue skies and the sea looking like a pond, oh the irony.

Channel Swim



Clockwise : The before photo (top right) / First swim (bottom right) / Swim track (left) /

When we signed up to do a six person relay across the English Channel we thought “How hard can it be if you are a competent swimmer?”

Caroline Airey

At 6.00 pm on Saturday 10 July we received the text from our boat leader we had been waiting for confirming that we needed to be in Dover at 10.45 pm that evening to meet our boat pilot ready to start the swim. Our bags had been packed for a few days as we knew our swim window was 11 July to 16 July but there is no guarantee that a swim will go ahead in its designated window as the sea conditions have to be safe for swimmers. We had developed a new obsession with the shipping forecast in the days leading up to our window.

Once in Dover we met up with the rest of our team, Jamie C, Stella F, Emma J and Colin P, and had a quick ‘before’ photo. Shortly after 11 pm we loaded our bags and ourselves onto our boat ‘High Hopes’ and set off. There are a number of rules that have to be followed in order for a Channel Swim to be recognised by the governing body:

- Wear one swimming hat, a pair of goggles and standard swimming costume.
- No neoprene/wetsuit is allowed.
- Start on dry land.
- Finish on dry land.
- No touching the boat at any time during your swim.

We had an observer, Brian, on board to make sure that we did not deviate from these rules and to also make sure that all of us were fit enough to keep swimming. Other than bad weather, severe sea sickness and hypothermia are the main reasons swims are stopped. Part of

Channel swim training is acclimatising to the cold. The sea is about 15 degrees in July which is significantly colder than Bradfield pool. James had spent the winter swimming in lakes and the Thames so he was comfortable with this aspect of the swim. I, on the other hand, hate the cold and had only ever ventured into lakes head to toe in neoprene so acclimatisation had not formed a significant part of my preparation. (Contrary to popular belief Vaseline is used to prevent chaffing and not for insulation.)



Start on dry land means that once the boat had taken us to the starting point (a small beach between Dover and Folkestone) the first swimmer (me) had to jump into the sea and swim to shore and stand on the beach waiting for the signal to start the swim. As it was now nearly midnight the pilot had to shine a torch on the beach in order for me to see where I was heading to. Once on the beach I stood for a couple of minutes and then at 00.04 am the boat sounded its horn and off I went. The darkness is extremely disorientating and it took me a good 5 minutes to work out where I needed to swim so that I was close enough to the boat to be guided by it. I knew I needed to swim for exactly an hour before the second swimmer took over and that I would be given a 5 minute warning but I soon realised that not only was it difficult to see anything it was also hard to hear anything so my thoughts were soon preoccupied with how will I know when to stop swimming (we were asked not to wear our watches). I kept going in the dark trying not to let my hands touching unidentifiable objects disrupt my stroke and was relieved when a light was shone in my eyes to let me know 5 minutes to go.

The next swimmer, Jamie C, was on the platform at the back of the boat ready to take over. Another rule – the swimmer taking over from the current swimmer cannot start in front of the current swimmer so Jamie C had to make sure he entered the water behind me and then pass me in the water. All good fun in the dark.

Jamie C swam steadily for his hour and Stella F was up next. Another change over in the dark. Jamie C got out and was really struggling with how cold he found the water so we needed to make sure he dressed quickly and ate / drank something. After Stella F it was James' turn. It was now just after 3:00 am so still completely dark.



James Airey

By the time it was my turn, I had been awake for about 19 hours and should have been tucked up in bed fast asleep. I was very keen to finally get going but was excited / nervous. It was pitch black apart from the boat. The moon was hiding somewhere near Australia, so the only light was from the boat.

I was quite conscious of not getting cold, so kept my dry robe on until the last minute. When it was time to go I stripped off, get vaselined up, put my goggles on and jumped in. The entry timing is like a military procedure and there is no faffing about. You really need to jump in the second they tell you, and start swimming. There's no easing in gently.

Because I had delayed getting my dry robe off, I rushed my goggle routine, and they became misted-up, so not only was it pitch black, the few lights on the boat were a complete blur, and it was nigh on impossible to tell how far I was from the boat. This was very disorienting, and I went off in the wrong direction, and ended up having to turn round and swim back to the boat. Rookie mistake, but these things happen at 3.00 am.

A little way in to the swim, I ended up hitting something soft and squidgy with my hand. You don't really jump in the water, but I jumped. It was a ninja-jellyfish, lying in wait for blind channel swimmers. Oh well, best carry on. And again. And again. Not too many – just every couple of minutes, to keep me on my toes. Or maybe it was the same one swimming round and ahead of me. No stings, but just enough to keep me on edge.

By about 3.40 am, there was the tiniest hint of predawn and I could just make out the shape of the boat. Things were looking up. Then I got a massive handful of jellyfish, “jumped” a bit too much, and got a massive cramp in my calf. Had obviously been holding a lot of tension. Spent a couple of minutes stretching it out, and then what can you do but keep going. No pointed toes, but at least I was moving again.

Emma J followed me and then Colin P. The sun came up as Emma J was swimming which meant we could see the jellyfish soup we were all swimming in – so many different kinds and sizes. We then repeated this rotation, Caroline, Jamie C, Stella F, me, Emma, Colin, each swimming for an hour before the next one took over. The second legs were a bit choppy, but I'd take chop and daylight over dark and jellyfish any time.

By the time Colin was nearing the end of his second swim France looked very close. However the boat pilot said that due to the strong tides in the Channel it would still be another couple of hours of swimming before we reached land. Sure enough after Caroline's third swim France looked no nearer – we were just further along the coast. Jamie C gave it his all in his third swim to try to get us there notwithstanding feeling pretty rough with sea sickness but it was Stella F that landed on a French beach 14 hours and 7 minutes after we had left England.

The reason we took part in this challenge was to raise much needed funds for Aspire. If you are able to make a donation please follow this link:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Caroline-Airey>

So how hard is it to swim the English Channel?

*Apart from the dark, the cold, jellyfish stings, waves slapping your face, cramp, tiredness from missing a night's sleep and sea sickness **it was a great day out!***



The 'After' photo

Outlaw Holkham Half 2021



by Miha Razinger

Another Outlaw weekend was approaching and this time without a severe weather warning in place. Well, one excuse less.

I'd picked Outlaw Holkham Half as my A race for 2021. I always needed a challenging goal to keep my training motivation high, which proved even more important in these strange times. The training programme seemed to be working as my running was better than in ages. I've swapped swimming sessions with strength and conditioning sets and when swimming pools finally reopened I was happy to see that my fitness hadn't collapsed. But the best part were the long weekend rides with Erik, Pete and Martin. Together we explored all the neighbouring counties, the quiet and scenic Hampshire roads were a particular highlight for me. Despite the lockdown restrictions my training was going well.

But then in mid June disaster struck. On a sunny Sunday morning Erik and I were involved in a nasty bike crash. He had to spend a few nights in a hospital as a result and was then condemned to crutches. With his inexhaustible supply of optimism and determination I'm certain that he will recover faster than the doctors have predicted. I got away with just a few bruises and I could gingerly make it back home. Relieved that nothing was broken I stopped training for a few days as a precaution. After a week most of the pain was gone so back to the plan.

During the drive to Norfolk Iggy played Bob Dylan's stomping Outlaw Blues on his BBC6 show. Surely a good omen. Sunil and I travelled together but separately and arrived at the venue on Saturday afternoon with plenty of time to register and rack the bikes. Everything was completed quickly and efficiently. Glancing at my neighbours' wheels in transition I was reminded about the wide appeal of this sport: you could find everything from entry level

Decathlon bikes to a 10k+ non-UCI approved carbon wonder. Everyone with their own story and their own racing goals.

I'd opted for camping on site which made my race preparation particularly relaxed. With a good selection of hot food, several drink stalls, ice cream vans, showers and bed all within a 10 min walking distance, there was no need to leave the site.

The journey to the starting line the next morning was equally short and calm. I was looking forward to this. Beside the lake I was grateful to meet Sunil, who arrived long before his start wave. Last photos and a chat to calm the nerves and then into my wave queue for my individual start. The swim started with a run down a ramp into shallow, muddy and smelly water. A large geese colony calls this lake their home for the other 364 days of the year. Later I was not very surprised to hear reports that some participants got very sick after the race.

Things didn't begin well for me as I had to stop immediately to readjust my goggles. With zero visibility drafting was impossible so frequent sighting was important to stay on course. After a few hundred metres the visibility and the water quality had improved a bit but then thick weeds slowed our progress some more. Still, I managed to get into a some sort of a rhythm and overtook several other swimmers from mine and the earlier wave. At the end it was a decent swim in easily the most unpleasant lake I ever been in.

A quick transition and on to the bike. The course started with a steady climb along the impressive 3 km driveway of the Holkham estate. The rest of the scenic course followed quiet and undulating roads with no serious climbs. I tried to eat little and often and kept the power within the 200-210 W range. Soon after the halfway point I started to feel the assistance of the strengthening southwesterly wind which made the return a bit faster and even quite enjoyable.

And then the run. Always my weakest discipline but as I've mentioned my training was going well and I was hoping that I would be able to do a good run. The course was 3 times around a hilly 7k loop through the estate. The loop started with a short sharp climb. The climb then eased off but continued all the way until the halfway point. I thought I started conservatively enough uphill and then increased the pace on the gradual descent on the back half. However as soon as I started to climb into the second lap my legs were gone. Even if my heart rate was only reaching the upper zone 3 I knew that I would not be able to replicate the 37:20 of the first lap. I made a few stops at the well-stocked feed stations and was relieved to finally reach the famous orange carpet leading to the finish line.

I finished the race in 5:27:27, with a 32:22 swim split, 2:51:01 for the bike leg and 1:57:44 for the run. I was super happy with the swim time (7th in my age group), satisfied with the bike performance but felt I could have paced myself better on the run.

There were so many aspects of the event that were close to ideal. The organisation was smooth and professional, the marshals enthusiastic and encouraging, the COVID procedures sensible and confidence-inspiring, the venue was spectacular and welcoming, the weather dry and the temperatures pleasant. It could have been the perfect race but until they change something about that lake I'll pick another Outlaw venue next time.

Results & Achievements

- **Outlaw Nottingham (25th July)**
 - Lou Gubb – AG winner (F45-49) – 11:07:58
- **Cholmondeley Castle – Castle Race Series (20th June)**
 - Martin Cook – AG winner (Olympic Distance)
- **RTTC National 100 mile Time Trial (4th July)**
 - Teresa Robbins – 4:25:53 (breaking another Reading Cycling Club club record set way back in 1967)
 - Andy Tucker – 3:56:00 (setting a new Newbury Velo Club record)
- **12 hour TT National Champs**
 - Andy Tucker (288 miles)
- **Race to the Stones (100k Ultra)**
 - Nora Holford – 14:44:12
- **Congratulations to the following members who completed long-distance (140.6) triathlon**
 - Zoe Hawkins – Ironman UK
 - Markus Orgill – UK Ultimate Triathlon
 - Lou Gubb – Outlaw Nottingham
 - Tim Preston – Outlaw Nottingham
 - Lee Hinton – Outlaw Nottingham

Dates for your diary

- 12-Sep-2021 : [Reading Triathlon 2021](#)
- 22-Apr-2022 : Club Trip to North Wales (Apr 22nd – 24th 2022)

We would love to hear from you

The next newsletter will be in Oct 2021, please send your contribution to info@tri2o.club before **10th Oct 2021**.

We would **love to hear from you**, particularly if you have taken on a new challenge or are new to triathlon.

