

The Short Course to me is a good place to be.

With a crystal blue lake, a grassy field and a good comradery,

Whether you're a first timer, or a fast time trailer you're welcome either way.

With marshals galore from a generous club and family members and friends to boot. Linda keeps me in check with the registration whilst I swear with indignation that my "caution triathlon" sign has blown down once again.

With Dick's measurement of the swim course as random as betting on a horse, is it clock-wise, anti-clockwise, who knows, let's see which way they go. Off goes the starters whistle, Rob's van hooter or whatever we can muster, the sea of tadpoles become a rage of surging tide as swimmers jostle for place, and try to protect their pride.

"There's my wife", shouts a proud spectator, "give her a clap", "look she's the one in black".

Listen out for Sandra's friendly toot of the referee's whistle to warn of your impending infringement, try not to get your name on the board of shame.

Off on the bike, from carbon to Halfords bargain it doesn't matter what you ride, fun is the name of the game. The satisfaction of beating that person who doesn't swim like an orca or have a the Zipp which the tools of their profession proclaim.

"Perhaps I'll make it up on the run" you think, those watery potholes are no match for me. The marshals encourage you and don't forget to smile at the runners coming the other way. Maybe you are thinking "I could be at home right now with my feet up, when did it seem a good idea to enter this race?".

The finish line approaches, "oh, hang on, did the organiser introduce a 2<sup>nd</sup> lap" says the demons in your mind, "was I concentrating at the briefing?", "no" you exhale with relief, "that's Sandra's race" so your pace was just fine today.

Jubilant for the occasion, you cross that line, you've done it. Remove your chip, oh no, but my hip flexor is stiff as a board, don't worry we have the personnel who loves to get personal with your ankle. Grab your cup of free water and nervously look at that blackboard. "There must be a mistake", you proclaim, "I had my helmet fastened", "3 minutes, you cannot be serious", oh hang on, my numbers upside down, that's someone else's misfortune.

Eagerly you await the prizes, "what swag has the organiser in that bag of goodies that could be mine?". With sponsorship from Tancred Gravel and Atley Hill Raw Milk you dread to think, could he really, well just wait and see.

So Arthur, you were a master, you took it all in your stride, always a kind word. From our chats about sailing the Scottish waters with your boys, bridge (a game I still struggle to play), local cross-country races, winning the Newport bridge to Tees Transporter swim race and global travels participating in races of mind-boggling distance, you had my greatest respect. Tales of inspirational triumph against the odds. Your legs might have been smashed from that Decca and more recently the pain of that dreadful disease but without fail when we met, "How are you?" said with sincerity and care, a rarity in this day. Arthur, you showed us that success doesn't come from innate ability and that success is possible for all of us but it comes with hard work and self-belief.

Thank you Arthur.

