

Harriers in Australia



Hi Paul, I thought you might be interested in the attached photo (if it sends ok) of Malcolm and me flying the flag for Wells at the World Masters Games.

We came out to Australia in September, having both been granted a half-term off school as we were competing for GB; first in the World Sprint Triathlon, on Gold Coast in Queensland, in September, followed by the World Masters Games the following month in Sydney, where my sister lives. All sport now finished, we have a brief time to be tourists before returning to the real world.

Triathlon went well - eventually - though we didn't know until the last minute whether or not wetsuits were going to be allowed, which made preparation difficult. I failed to retain my World title from the previous year in Vancouver, but did manage to hold on for silver in the 55-59 age group - led out of the swim, held lead on the bike, but was overtaken by a powerful Australian runner on the last leg. Malc also had a good one: from his usual position at the back of the swim, he was then able to enjoy overtaking people through the bike and especially the run leg to finish 22nd/40.

Following a magic week driving down to Sydney in a campervan, we then had to regroup for the World Masters Games. Due to its proximity to the World Tri, there was no triathlon in this Games, which was actually quite refreshing as it allowed us to revert to our individual sports for a change. Malc is an injured marathon/road runner; I was originally a butterfly swimmer, also now injured, but our triathlon training allows us to keep going enough to compete in these over short distances. I had therefore entered mostly swimming events but also the cross-country run; Malc went for the Individual Time Trial on the bike plus the cross-country; and - legs holding up well - had been going to attempt his first half-marathon for many years until the Dreaded Australian Throat Infection got the better of him.

The cross-country was a flat parkland course held, for some unfathomable reason, in the middle of the day, so was very very hot (the sole reason they managed to get away with providing only 4

Portaloos for about 700 people!). It was 8k for all - a bit long for me - though lying 3rd at the end of the first lap, I had lapsed to 5th by the 3rd and last. Malc ran more cannily, starting cautiously then having fun moving through the field and finishing up 16th/46 in the age group and in the top third over all ages. Curiously, our legs felt quite good the following day; mainly, I suspect, because the heat was such that it limited the work we could actually get out of them.

In our other events, Malc came about halfway up his age group in his bike time trial and I managed a further two 5th places and three top-10s in my individual swimming. I was, however, very pleased to be invited to join my sister's swimming club for the women's relays, where our joint ages added up perfectly and we were able to win gold in both medley and freestyle for the 200yrs+ age group.

We return to the UK at the end of this week to the demise of Sedgemoor Splash, which will make training more difficult for us in Bridgwater. So running may take a higher priority in our lives over the coming winter; legs willing, we hope to be back to the 5k runs and a much colder version of the cross-country genre!

See you soon;

All the best,

Julia Hector.