

2016 Norfolk Superhero Challenge Race Report

The 10th year of the Norfolk Superhero landed bang in the middle of the weirdest weekend in English politics. Luckily, there was a great big impenetrable bubble of happiness engulfing JUSTIN DOWLEY's field and the outer marsh of Burnham Overy Staithe, that meant that the sun shone all weekend and nothing else mattered.

We were able to unload the RAT RACE kayaks with ROB AITKEN and his super family at 11.30pm on Thursday night between 2 huge rainstorms. Friday afternoon check in radiated Pinkness from the HQ tent which blocked all dark vibes. This was going to be an epic event. MUSKETEER EVENTS Flags were flying against a blue, blue sky and the transition zone was beautifully marked out by their very smart posts and rope. PHIL ELLIS in his role as First plumber had re-erected the competitor shower. SIMON WILSON STEPHENS, PHIL ELLIS, WILLIAM GARNETT and MARK LAPPING had marked out the kayak and cycle course. The ADNAMS GHOST SHIP bar was ably manned by, disappointingly injured competitor, TOM MARRIOTT for whom we were doubly indebted as he gave us the first taste of MARSTONS delicious WAINWRIGHT in the East. Again ANTON WIMMER of the KINGS HEAD at Bawburgh organized the whole bar situation and set up up. TYRRELLS crisps were stacked on the bar. We were ready to go.

DANDIS competitor t-shirts looked great on you all, as you rocked that 'Ibiza vibe' at check in. SARA STOCKS of BONALLACK not only stocked your goodie bags with amazing granola squares but fed you all super duper pasta supper and salad. Poor RACHEL who burnt her arm whilst in the kitchen was one of the few casualties OLI KROL of PRO EVENT MEDICAL had all weekend. Lovely NORFOLK CORDIAL's delicious apple juice was in the marshalls bags and it was great to have back our usual incredible checking in team who had you all SPORTS STICKS tattooed and stickered up well before the safety briefing, led by our very own MARVELLOUS MARTYN FLITCROFT. In fact the last competitor seen drinking in the field was JAMES LAPPING and he was tucked up in his tent by 9.30. The same could not be said for the water marshalls, JIM WHITESIDE and SAM KENDRICK, who were busy navigating the swim course for familiarisation reasons or really just to go and gaze at the amazing sunset.

Saturday 25th June started as it meant to carry on, a strangely calm and gloriously sunny dawn. Our parking marshalls, HOLKHAMS very own DANNY and his friend, look splendid in their policeman outfits and even made road closures easy to handle. The boatmen and women all (nearly) turned up on time, walkers set off happily and a couple of teams even took their own boat out to the start. Thanks to BEN on BILLYWITCH, PETER BECK, THE MACLEANS, TARA D-H and PETER BICKELL. As well, The RNLI INSHORE life boat, LOWLAND RESCUE (with him off the telly PAUL CHAMBERLAIN) and the FAKENAHM CANOE CLUB were all out on the water to ensure your safety. STORMY

SAM KENDRICK and his RNLi PADDLE BOARDERS helped us funnel you through the always scary head count and the incomparable JERRY PHILIPPI set you all off at 9:13.58 am. The CHEQUERS INN AT THORNHAM swim had begun. Whoever was standing next to ABBIE 'the fish' THORRINGTON should have held on, as she set this year's fastest time with an incredible 15.45 for the mile swim!

As soon as you were turned around in the transition zone it was out again with your trusty partner, some with a longer wait than others (ABBIE THE FISH and JAMES HADDOW!) The COVERIS kayak leg meant 2 courses, a shorter course for any boat with a women in it, which was well marshalled by inimitable PETER BICKELL, at times I believe wearing a pink wig?? TARA D-H ably marshalled the unluckier mens turn. Heroic tales from the marsh bank came to our ears with ANTON WIMMER and JASON SNOOK (Jaws) helping carry kayaks over the storm wall. Awesome work boys. The start boat under instructions of KEVIN our cameraman for this year (we missed you Ben and Pete of SCHOOLHOUSE DIGITAL xx) was in the melee at one point but luckily our fabulous tiller woman LUCY BIRKBECK was unflappable. Winners of the short course with 34.59 were EMILY LOCHORE and RACHEL SYMINGTON. Winners of the long course with 44.47 were NIALL McCALLUM and DAVE WALKER - get used to those names...

However, as we say - its all about the bike. And this is, after all, the BARRATT & COOK bike, so it was rather marvellous to watch so many extremely competitive people surge out of the field and out of our hair at HQ, oh, for all of 1 hour 59 minutes! NEW COURSE RECORD ALERT - Outrageous behaviour NIALL McCALLUM and DAVE WALKER (I may start using short hand, and yes you can call him 'Neil' or Niall). Using our new improved route avoiding Burnham Market and the opportunity to shout at slow shoppers to 'get out of the way' but also missing the opportunity to pass the medal sponsor CHARLES BOURN'S gorgeous jewellery shop URBAN ARMOUR (sponsors of the medals). JIM WHITESIDE and his 4x4 SUPPORT were on the course all day keeping us informed of progress. Marshalls were hydrating you with BOOKER'S donated water, whizzing BARSBY bananas through the air at you and shouting you on with encouraging noises. Despite our warnings of gravel and terrible roads PETER FLETT of FAT BIRDS didn't have that many punctures to repair which is great but I believe poor JAMES LAPPING still got 5 on his own. Thanks to the SEXTON family for getting the roads swept at South Creak. The LYNN ARMS at SYDERSTONE also put on a party that I think went on long after you had all swept past.

If it's all about the bike for the competitors - for the marshalls it is all about the run! The HOLKHAM run was taking place over midday and it seemed that the East Anglian Air Ambulance may have been cloud seeding inland as we were enjoying uninterrupted sunshine. Again can we thank MATTHEW CLIFFORD, SARAH SHAPEERO and WENDY UTTING for their unending enthusiasm and original ideas as marshalls

to keep us all highly amused. This year was the turn of Lady Anne's Drive to be hosting a Mexican themed tequila party, replete with fancy dress and I had fallen for the decoy of the pink curly wig on the water leg! There was a lot of position changing amongst the front runners on the marsh and this is where the most intense sun tanning took place. Tan lines were properly razor sharp and usually racer back, especially in the case of WILL BARRATT who impressed the office with his sunburn so much on Monday morning that we got an extra donation for the EAAA for his trouble (thanks Will M). HUGH SOMERLEYTON having separated from his previous partner due to lack of running pace teamed up with MATT GINGELL, previous winner to form the dream team not realising that Matt had not followed the diet schedule and ended up divorcing him also.

The fiddly-dee-dee band of PETE ALLISON, was a moving feast on the hard at the Finish line alongside the URBAN ARMOUR medals and VITA COCO. The cry went up at 10 past 1, that figures had been spotted on the marsh. Our upcoming band of junior marshalls including ALEYSHA UTTING, OLLY BEER and MARY CORY WRIGHT were wonderful and in all the right places at all the right times. Medals were held out ready.... no way... it wasn't - NIALL MCCALLUM & DAVE WALKER again! Textbook.

Prizegiving and Supper just hummed by with delicious GRAVES Norfolk hog roast and SARA STOCKS BONALLACK's super healthy salads and unctuous chocolate brownies. The EAAA's wonderful thank you speech made us realise how hard you had all worked at raising money for the baby ventilators and we would especially like to thank you you GOLDEN TICKET holders. You are all on the invite list for next year! (Especially you TEAM FINISH & BLONDE AMBITION who raised over £8,000). SIMON WILSON STEPHENS and MARK LAPPING's excellent speeches summed it all up - the disqualifications, the thanks, the camaraderie, the history, the winners. However another superhero was born that night and he wears purple, rocks peroxide hair and goes by the name of BEN ZAVEN-CRANE, Norfolk DJ extraordinaire! That party was worthy of 210 years of Superhero and it finished bang on 12 midnight people of Burnham Overy Staithe. Dancing mentions must go to BILLY CARLE, OLI PUGH and DYLAN BOGG.

Our thanks also to the morning folk, you guys that come and help us clear up - ANTON WIMMER and JASON SNOOK, you are always awesome at removing all that left over red wine we order in! The RUDD MARQUEE band of boys are always welcome and do an amazing job. SARAH GAY FLETCHER and WILL GARNET - looking great with the bin bags, obviously PHIL ELLIS and THE FINALLY FIRST duo of SIMON and MARK - THANK YOU for all your support during our mild 'living it - breathing it' hysterics! Thank you also to the SUN for shining all weekend.

See you all next year for the 11th (my lucky number) Norfolk

Superhero. Look out on our brilliant website that MARCUS HAWKINS does at BINARYDRIVE for photos, video and information.

But most importantly, those 176 of you who made it back, having completed the race. Massive congratulations to you all.

And so to the Prizes,
with Champagne kindly donated by WILLIAM MASON FINE WINES and
ADNAMS

FASTEST SWIM - sponsored by FINISTERRE
Abbie Thorrington - 15.45
Tom Vickery - 17.08

FASTEST KAYAK (SHORT) - sponsored by FINISTERRE
NO PUNCTURES PLEASE - Rachel Symington and Emily Lochore 34.55

FASTEST KAYAK (LONG) - sponsored by FINISTERRE
OH SO SHELLFISH - Niall McCallum & Dave Walker 44.45

FASTEST CYCLE - sponsored by FAT BIRDS
OH SO SHELLFISH - Niall McCallum & Dave Walker 1.59

FASTEST RUN - sponsored by TRI HARDER
OH SO SHELLFISH - Niall McCallum & Dave Walker 1.04

LORD NELSON TROPHY - sponsored by CHEQUERS INN at THORNHAM
OH SO SHELLFISH - Niall McCallum & Dave Walker 4.10.41

DAME EDNA TROPHY - sponsored by CHEQUERS INN at THORNHAM
PURELY FOR THE MUD - Saya Sheridan & Nicholas Bertrand 4.49.47

LADY HAMILTON CUP - sponsored by URBAN ARMOUR
NO PUNCTURES PLEASE - Emily Lochore and Rachel Symington
4.54.08

LOCAL HERO - sponsored by BRINGING THE OUTSIDE IN (BTOI)
MARMOTTE - Jamie Carter and Andy Nunn 4.33.08

ZIMMER WINNER - sponsored by HOLKHAM
ONE LORD LEICS - Tom Leicester and Geoffrey Garfoot
(awarded falsely, it turns out) 5.07.00
WEST END BOYS - Aidan Bailey & Chris Parker
(faster, but hadn't ticked the box) 5.00.25

WENSUM PLATE - sponsored by CHEQUERS INN at THORNHAM
HITCHCOCK - THRILLER - Harry Hitchcock and Damaris Hitchcock -

5.20.28

SPIRIT OF THE SUPERHERO - sponsored by WILL LOWE of CAMBRIDGE
GIN

ORMERGEDDON - Stephen Langlois and John Holt 5.37.06
special mentions to so many others - we love you all...

WOODEN SPOON

LOOSE HEAD & BLINDSIDE - Ross Haddow and James Haddow 7.02.20

MARSHALL PRIZE - sponsored by HOLKHAM

Boat Marshall - Peter Bickell

Pink Marshalls - Jerry Philippi and Tom Marriott

Long Service - Vicky Ringer, Jayne Bewick, Wendy Utting and Sarah
Shapeero

SMILEY PRIZE - not given on the night but discussed at length by
marshalls at the bar later...

- Alex Gladstone and Tim Stone

xx