

Butler wins first quadrathlon

Awesome Foursome

The final race of the season and our national championships for 2018, as ever Bude lived up to its reputation and we were in for some great racing, a strong turnout of athletes, the regular BQA members all fighting for those extra trophy points and age group placings plus a couple of strong newcomers and locals from the local surf lifesaving scene; some compete as individuals but there were also lots of teams or pairs competing too.

It had been wet and windy the day before and there was plenty of heavy swell in the sea. It was a little chilly at 7.00am on race day but we had sunshine and light winds and, as the day went on, it got warmer and proved to be good race conditions, even though most of us found the sea challenging!

After the race briefing we all headed down to the sea lock. The swim consisted of two 400m loops split by a 200m run across the sands of the beach; the tide was higher than expected and the beach was completely flooded so the beach run was a wade through knee deep water instead. In the individual event Alan Cole was out first (20:28) with newcomer Billy Butler in 2nd place (22:10), Nigel Unwin (23:30) and Andy Parritt (23:30) close behind; there were a lot of locals in the team and pairs event amongst the top swimmers, all looking strong in the choppy swell.

The bike was a course of two halves, a very hilly first half along the coast road to Widemouth and then up those 30% climbs out of Millook, the second half very fast down the A39 into Bude. Alan managed to hold onto his lead for a while but his legs were still suffering from the Conwy Mountain Tri the week before. Nigel loves this bike course and put in the fastest bike split of the day (54:49) which took him into the lead. Alan stayed in second (58:58) and there were some good splits from Peter Tindall (56:00), Nigel Leeson (57:01), all looking for those trophy points!

The 10km kayak section consisted of two loops of the canal, with tight turns at either end; it was nice and calm and had started to warm up. Nigel pulled away and opened up a gap between him and Alan but then paddler Billy Butler started to make huge gains on everyone. He produced the fastest kayak split by far (44:52), leaving everyone in his wake! Nigel was still second fastest (51:29), Andy Parritt (53:05) with Alan (53:41) and Nigel (53:54). Race organizer Simon Hammond also produced a strong kayak split (54:36)... so all the age groups were still in contention!

The first couple of miles of the run are along the flat tarmac of the canal towpath, then uphill across fields and down to the coast road into Widemouth Bay, where we climbed up the coastal path towards Bude before a final descent to the canal wharf. Billy had built up a strong lead and maintained his position with a good run split (43:47). Nigel, running the fastest time of the day (42:02), couldn't quite catch Billy so held second place, with Alan in third (45:17). There were some excellent age group performances but the national championship title was well deserved by Billy Butler, producing a fine win in his first ever quadrathlon!

In the ladies' race Helen Russell came out of the swim in first place (22:51) with Jacq Davies second (24:59), Natalie Abbott third (26:23) followed by Alison Parritt, Bethany Goodlad and me. Helen increased her lead on the bike (1:01:00). Natalie, also having a strong bike, moved into second place (1:05:44) with Alison close behind (1:06:25).

Going into the kayak, Helen maintained her lead (57:19) but the positions were to change again. Natalie was somewhat disadvantaged paddling a heavy sea kayak so Alison moved into second (58:45) and Jacq into third (1:00:03). In my favourite discipline, I started to make up time and had the fastest kayak (56:48) which moved me into fourth place.

Helen maintained her lead and went on to take the national championship title for the second year on the run. Alison stayed in 2nd place with me running into 3rd place. There was some excellent racing from the ladies with a good quality of field; it was great to see newcomers to our sport performing well and strong performances from BQA members, too.

A special congratulations must go to two BQA members who have done all six races in the BQA calendar, John Kavanagh and Lance Ball... a superb effort! Lance also deserves another mention; he was just at the start of the famous Millook climb when his chain broke, he quickly got his chain tool out and proceeded to mend it... he then noticed a fellow athlete in distress just ahead of him, who also had a



Simon Hammond gives a briefing before the sea swim.



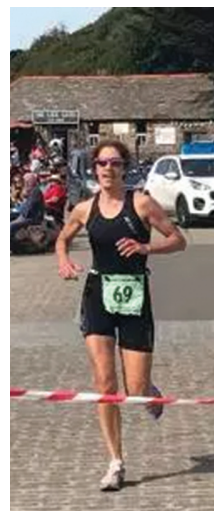
The kayak leg was on the Bude Canal.

broken chain... so he mended hers so they both could continue to finish the race, genuinely a top guy, showing us what a true advocate he is for our sport!

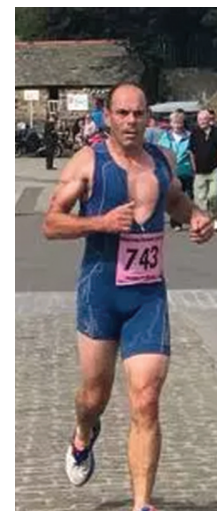
Everyone who completes this awesome course finishes it with a huge sense of achievement; it's a true testament to the standard of all our quadrathletes, some out at the front and some behind... you're all just as important... Strong, motivated and giving 100%, that's what makes you all special!

A big thank you to Simon Hammond and his team for putting on another brilliant race, as always very friendly, plenty of support, great commenting and lots of happy smiling faces!

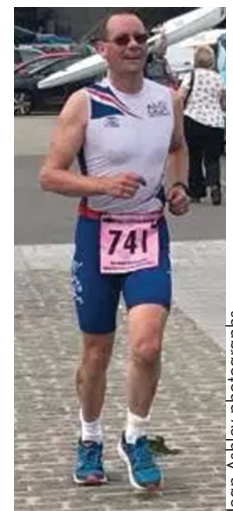
Jean Ashley



Helen Russell.



Nigel Unwin.



Lance Ball

Jean Ashley photographs

L: 1 H Russell, 3:07:33. 2 A Parritt, 3:24:50. 3 J Ashley, 3:28:42.

M: 1 B Butler, 2:51:00. 2 N Unwin, 2:51:42. 3 A Cole, 2:58:24.

Sport with a Purpose

Dame Kelly Holmes was seeking 20 team mates for the seven day Orbis Challenge, a 25km run up Mt Mulanje, a 55km cycle ride across the Zomba Plateau and a 20km kayak paddle on Lake Malawi. The object was to raise funds for Street Chef, aiming to get more nutritious street food out to Malawians, over a quarter of whom are malnourished.