



# Growing old disgracefully

How would you celebrate your wife's 63<sup>rd</sup> birthday? Perhaps you would buy her a new spade and a pair of gardening gloves? Or, a bunch of flowers and a box of chocolates? Maybe a meal at a posh restaurant? What about buying her an entry to an Olympic distance triathlon? The last option is just what David Abrams did when his wife, Sandra, turned 63 years young.

Having both taken early retirement at 58, and after we both had a brush with cancer (breast for Sandra and prostate for me) we decided that triathlon would be a good way to spend our time.

When we were in our 30s and 40s, we ran mainly for fun, up to marathon distance, but we hadn't cycled since our school days. In addition, I couldn't swim crawl.

Despite the obvious challenges, we agreed to go for it, starting with the Supersprints in London and Seaford, and Total Immersion swimming training as a 60<sup>th</sup> birthday present. The following year, 2008, we entered the sprint distances at Blenheim and London.

This year, we decided to sign up for some Olympic distance triathlons - the first of which was on Sandra's birthday weekend. So we booked a nearby hotel and competed in the Dorney Lake Steelman Standard Distance Triathlon.

The venue was self-contained, with the swim taking place in the rowing lake, and the bike



Active retirement: David and Sandra Abrams

and run legs consisting of traffic-free laps around the lake. The transition area was located right next to the exit of the swim, so very conveniently placed!

A few days before the event, we were informed that in view of the warm water temperature (23.5°C) wetsuits would be banned. That sent me into a bit of panic because I rely heavily on my wetsuit, both for warmth and maintaining a good body position in the water. However, Sandra was relieved as she overheats very easily.

On the day of the tri, the water was warm with a noticeable lack of buoyancy. Give me the Solent and a wetsuit any day! The run and bike legs were very flat, although later in the day were subjected to quite strong cross winds. The course at Dorney Lake is a good place to achieve a personal best - well it was for us as it was our first full Olympic distance! The organisation was also really smooth.

Despite my appalling goggle-flooding swim leg we managed to finish - 3hours 15mins for me, and just under 3hours 45mins for Sandra. I was very pleased to complete the run in 51 minutes, which was the same time as my first Stubb 10k. And, to put the icing on the cake, Sandra was the women's 60-plus age group winner. All in all, it was a very successful birthday weekend - roll on London at the beginning of August!

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All articles and notices for The Green Runner need to be submitted by the **15th of the month at the latest** (however, the earlier the better).

Please send your submissions to Tracie Jarvis - email:tracie.jarvis@ntlworld.com

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