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The most fun I've ever had doing an endurance event!

Dear Reader

It was towards the end of 2013 when I signed up to participate in an Ironman Triathlon in Tenby, Wales the following September. More about that next week. In the run up to the event I wanted to participate in something that I thought would give me a glimpse of what I'd experience in Tenby.

I can’t remember whether it was me or my good friend Andrew Jackson who came across the Artemis Great Kindrochit Quadrathlon – you’ve got to love that name! The quadrathlon involved a 0.8-mile swim across Loch Tay in Scotland, ‘bagging’ 7 ‘Monroes’ over a 15-mile circuit on foot, kayaking 7 miles on Loch Tay before finally lapping the Loch on our bikes, which was just under 40 miles. In case you don’t know, a Monroe is mountain in Scotland with an elevation of over 3,000 feet and to ‘bag a Monroe’ is the expression used to reach the summit of one. We both liked the sound of it and decided in true Andrew Jackson style to ‘give it a lash’. It was also due to take place in July which was nicely timed at three months out from the Ironman.

We were both already doing a lot of running cycling and swimming, so we reckoned we’d be grand with the swim, bagging the Monroes and the cycle. We would just figure out the kayak on the day.

So, in early July we set of with all our gear in the car, including a tent for our accommodation and travelled to Ardtalnaig on the south side of Loch Tay in the highlands of Scotland. It wasn’t long after we arrived, that we knew we had made a good decision. The tented village set up to host the event was very well equipped and we soon figured out that the food provided for the competitors was absolutely first class … and even better, there was lots of it. Friday afternoon saw us register and go through the obligatory navigation test with a map and a compass. I hadn’t paid too much attention to that but fortunately just enough attention to pass the test. Hopefully I wouldn’t need it.



That evening there was also a race briefing at which the organiser David Fox-Pitt told us a bit about what to expect. The only thing I clearly remember from his briefing was that he told us there would be lots of cake at the check points. He wasn't wrong!!

Saturday morning was cloudy. Visibility at lake level was good but the peak of the first Monroe, which we could see from our tent, was covered in cloud. Shortly before 6am all the participants walked from the tented village to the starting point, led by a lone piper. It was surreal.

Suddenly we were off. The water was cold, really cold. Since I had started training in the pool, I had been experiencing moments of panic when trying to do front crawl and get my breathing right, with my head below the water. This was one of those days and I ended up having to breaststroke the second half of the swim. I was the 193rd swimmer out of the water. Not a great start, but now for the Monroes.

About half-way up the first Monroe, we found ourselves in thick cloud with visibility reducing as we continued to climb. It was also blowing a gale up there. We would spend the next eight hours trying to figure out our way through the clouds. We climbed rock faces, we walked, we

ran occasionally when the downslopes were gentle enough to allow it. We took wrong turns. Once we got a lot closer to a cliff edge than we'd have liked. We later heard that a few teams had taken a major wrong turn and ended up miles of course. Every now and again there was an extremely, extremely welcome check point with hot drinks and as promised, lots and lots of cake. Most of the time were soaked to the skin, I was freezing … and I was loving it!!

The check point between Monroe six and seven was a lunch stop with all sorts of amazing options. Maybe it just looked and tasted amazing because I was so tired and cold. I did not hold back and filled my boots. There was still another four hours until we would finish. We climbed the last Monroe and on the way down, as soon as the gradient allowed, we started to run. By the time we got to back to the lake for the kayak stage we were well warmed up.

We started the kayak in =112th place. What came next was pretty much what we expected. A seven-mile point-to-point journey up and then across the lake back to where we had started. We were now in =115th.

We quickly ditched all our hiking gear and pulled on our cycling shorts. Ahead was a 40-mile lap of the Loch, which while undulating was fairly flat. We knew this was probably going to be our strongest part of the race and set of at a decent pace. Now that we could actually see, the scenery was stunning as we reeled in the miles. At one end of the lake there was a fish and chip van stationed to feed the participants. We couldn't resist and took a short stop for a fish supper and got back on our bikes. We were going well. I don't think anyone passed us on our bikes and we were regularly passing others.

At about 7.20pm, we parked our bikes and ran the last two hundred meters to the finish line. In true Kindrochit Quadrathlon style, you don't just finish the race. At the finish line each team got presented with a watermelon and a long sword to cut it in two with to signify the end of their race. We got to keep the watermelon, but not the sword. See the picture below!



Thirteen hours and twenty-two minutes after the hooter sounded to start the race, we crossed the finish line in =96th place and I'm pretty sure we finished the whole watermelon between us. 210 people completed the race and just so you know, it wasn't a given that we completed it; 70 people who started out, did not finish.

I had never done anything like this before. The longest multi-discipline event I had completed at that time was an Olympic distance triathlon which took me about three hours. I had never pushed my body as hard for so long. I was buzzing!!

To push myself for over thirteen hours had taken me into new territory. It had taken me into seeing more of what was possible, into seeing what I could do when I really wanted to. I had experienced so much during the day. Panic during the swim. Being cold, really cold in the water and in the mountains and knowing I just had to keep going. Battered by the wind while being totally lost in the clouds and being soaked to the skin as we navigated our way through the Monroes. The pain in my legs as we climbed Monroe after Monroe. Delight and relief

every time we found a check point and while I am not really a big fan of cake … I consumed a lot of cake that day.

As I recall that day, it sounds like it should have been torture. It wasn't. All I remember is that we laughed a lot. Despite what we were up against, we had an absolute blast. I know it may not make sense for some of you, but have I never had more fun on an endurance event … ever.

Just last night a client of mine spoke with me about the idea of 'not seeing the obstacles and only seeing the path'. I think this was one of those times when the obstacles just didn't look like obstacles. We were just on the path to complete the Quad. We were totally committed to that and nothing that was thrown at us ever looked like it was going to stop us.

The feelings I remember most from that day were of a sense of freedom, of exhilaration and of aliveness. There was no fear. No stress. No worry. No sense of 'Why the hell am I doing this?'. No 'What if we don't make it?' It made no sense for me to feel the way I felt … and yet, I did. Which also makes me wonder why I haven't been back to do it again.

After writing that last sentence I had to pause until I could speak to Andrew and ask him if I was exaggerating in my mind about just how amazing our experience at the Quad was back in 2014. He confirmed that he felt a similar way, and we are now in a conversation to make it happen again in 2026.

My friend Deryl Sweeney recently asked a question in the Magic 5 mastermind we are both part of. 'What do you most crave?'

I have sat with this question many times over the last few weeks. I think writing this has helped me clarify my answer. And my answer is that I want to spend as much of my time as possible feeling fully alive. Of course this led me to ask myself the question, 'When do you feel most alive?

It seems to me that I feel most fully alive when I am stretching myself or challenging myself to go beyond what I have done before or beyond what I have believed to be possible. I also feel it when I am

working with someone else to go beyond what they see to be possible for them.

There is another ingredient … I have to be excited about what I am stretching myself to do or excited about what I am helping someone else to achieve. My excitement about the goal or outcome has to be enough that the obstacles just don't matter. It seems to me now that when these ingredients are in place, the obstacles might not even appear visible and all I see is the path.

What is it that you most crave?

Much love

Peter



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