

## 'GO TRI' Duathlon: Dalby Forest

As part of the Forestry Commission England and Sport England 'Active Forest' programme a researcher joined the GO TRI event at Dalby Forest in February to interview participants. The weather was snowy and very cold, yet 31 took part in the duathlon. The researcher spoke to 10 participants and 4 volunteers (9 men and 5 women). There was a strong sense of camaraderie and achievement from those who undertook the event in challenging weather conditions.



### Motivations

Participant's motivations for getting involved in GO TRI fell into four main categories: 1) taking up activity because of health reasons such as diabetes, 2) losing and also maintaining a reasonable weight, 3) maintaining or improving fitness and, 4) trying a new activity. Four of the men have not tried GO TRI before; one man cycled but had never run. They all wanted to try a new activity and the combination of a duathlon with running and cycling appealed to them.

### Active Lives

The way in which people engage with physical activity over their life can change. Two women talked about starting to get fitter once their children had grown up. A man and woman described how they had undertaken sport at school but this had dropped away after leaving, however they started to become active again in their late twenties. Health problems (some minor and others more serious) and the desire to try something new were important for half of the participants as they reached middle age.

### Benefits – Bringing people and families together

Most of the participants were doing the activity with friends or family, so socialising was considered important. A mother and daughter-in-law got involved in various fitness activities together as part of their socialising, three men who were friends participated together to undertake a challenge and a couple who met through sport ran together.

#### Benefits of GO TRI

*'Its' nice to be part of a team and you get to meet like-minded people'.*

*'It's a good way of getting outside and meeting new people'.*

*'I've met my fella there who loves fitness and it's just great'.*

*'One thing I find with forestry is that it brings families back together'.*

#### Active Life journeys

*'I've got more into fitness in recent years,... as you get older it's about looking after yourself'.*

*'At Christmas we thought we would challenge ourselves a bit more'.*

*'When my youngest one was eighteen I decided to do stuff for myself'.*

### Changes in behaviour

*'I used to be 21 stone, I was 46... I was walking with stick, I had a bad knee. The doctor.. basically said you need to lose weight. I lost 10.5 stone. I do exercise to keep my weight off and keep my fitness, I know it gives me endorphins and makes me feel fantastic'.*

*'I've never run in me life [he does cycle] we decided to do the no-ego head torch run a few weeks ago and said let's come back and do GO TRI'.*

*'We have been to Dalby before, it's a bit of a distance, we have done the Go-Ape and Segway. Today I was amazed and said let's come back and hire bikes and explore the forest cause it's beautiful, even today though it's snowing, windy and cold – I've really enjoyed myself'.*

Not all of the changes in behaviour were as a direct result of the GO TRI event, however it was clear that the Active Forest programme has provide people with opportunities to try new activities they had never undertaken before, such as running in the forest in the dark and to improve and maintain their physical activity levels.

### Activity in the forest environment

The enthusiasm of the participants for the forest environment, despite the snow and cold weather, was clear. Participants talked about enjoying the fresh air, beautiful scenery and seeing different wildlife including deer, badgers, owls, foxes and many birds. The facilities in the forest and reasonable cost of parking were also seen as important.

*'Fresh air, we are all breathing all this oxygen and your outside and you get your heart going that bit faster than it normally does, and it's just great'.*

*It's on my doorstep, I've been coming up here all my life. There's been a huge change [in the forest], but for the good I think it brings people in, the facilities up here now are brilliant and it's great, it gets people outside and that is not a bad thing'.*

*'When they were little we used to bring them [their children] up here. Where else could you go for £48 that's for a year's membership? There is no way you can take a family out for that kind of money for a day!'.*

Four volunteers were helping to marshal the event, they also assisted with parkrun and the Halloween event held at Dalby. Their efforts were very much appreciated.

*'Really if you're volunteering you're doing it for others, you shouldn't get anything, but the rewards and thanks [from participants] it's great'.*

The 'GO TRI' events are a social activity that provide interest and challenge to the participants, some of whom are friends and others are coming together as a family. Most had visited Dalby forest before and had tried a number of different types of activity. The volunteers make an important contribution and enjoy the connection to the different people they meet as part of their voluntary activity.

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**Funding:** Sport England and Forestry Commission England

**Website:** <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/BEEH-A3HMKM>