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# Elizabeth's adventures...

Adventure racing, triathlon, mud, hills and mountain bikes

THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2009

## Stage 2 - a true adventure



### About Me



Elizabeth A

Got into adventure racing in 2003 and since then have been trying to learn to kayak, mountain bike, swim and have plenty of fun along the way. I've set up this blog to share my photos and adventures with friends and family, as well as track my big goals for racing in 2009. (I've entered them because they're far away and therefore easy)

[View my complete profile](#)

Races, Goals and Dreams for 2009



Found me a map of Portugal so you can sort of see where we went!!

The thing I love about adventure racing is that you never quite know what to expect and you don't have to stick to the beaten track. The second stage of the race began gently enough with a trek. We'd already made our minds up not to go for any of the additional checkpoints (which added on miles and ridiculous height gain) but we would make straight for the canyoning section.



I'd made a rather bold assumption that the canyoning would be fairly short and therefore could be done without my glasses - who needs to see anyway? 3.5hrs later, still in the depths of the canyon, I decided that had been a bad call. Life gets very scary when you can't see and I think I was pretty nasty to my team mates because I felt so panicky. We'd started the section with a massive abseil, which I quite enjoyed but sent terror to the hearts of my less height-loving team mates. We then swam, slithered, slid and jumped our way down miles of canyon. It started off as really exciting - especially some of the bigger 'flumes'. However, wearing a bizarre combination of wetsuit and climbing harness and dragging ourselves constantly in and out of freezing cold pools and up onto slidy rocks definitely takes its toll. By the end of 2hrs we were all totally knackered and starting to think 'enough of the canyon'. I fell over several times, simply through tiredness and got a rather huge bruise on my hip.



Ironman

Half Ironman - done (Aberfeldy)

Run the Red Cuillin on Rum,  
after paddling there!

Trekking in Patagonia

Everest Marathon

Cycle the Manali-Leh Highway  
(India)

Kayak round St Kilda

Visit Greenland

Race across the alps (running or  
biking???)

Take part in an expedition  
adventure race

Swim the channel (maybe in a  
relay)

Visit Orkney

Deerstalker-done!

Glen Affric Duathlon-done!

Cairgorm mountain classic 15  
June-done!

Open 12-done!

Open 24 - done!

Durty Triathlon-done

Scottish Coast to Coast -done!

Paddle into Fingal's cave

Traverse of Cuillin Ridge

Learn to roll in a kayak (got the  
new 2\*)

Big Ben Nevis Triathlon

A century ride! -done!

Swim three times a week and  
get faster-done!

## Blog Archive

▼ 2009 (81)

► December (4)

▼ November (6)

Night orienteering

The final countdown

Stage 3 - enter the  
sleepmonsters

Stage 2 - a true adventure

A Portuguese Rat Race



Like I said, every stage in the race was as tough as they could make it (but awesome :))

Next up was a biking stage (this is going to get achingly familiar). An icy cold mist had descended which meant navigation was hugely tricky. We were biking along a ridge with wind turbines along the top. With the high winds and the poor visibility, the noise of these was quite overpowering. Our average speed must have been about 5mph, particularly given that my glasses kept misting up and I did most of the ride blind. In some ways this was the hardest stage of the race - so cold and difficult. They'd warned us about the cold and at one point I had on all my clothes, including a down jacket. I don't even wear a down jacket to bike in Scotland! We descended a steep hill on road in the mist and the light of my head torch was mesmerising to the point that I started weaving. The first telltale signs of tiredness.

Somewhere during the night we arrived at one of the schist villages that part of Portugal is famous for. They had filled an office with bread, ham and cheese but evidently 300 hungry racers had been there before us and it looked a tad the worse for the hungry locusts. I managed to find a bar and, with much miming, indicated that I wanted as many espressos as I could fit into two plastic cups, to take away to my shivering team mates. They must have thought we were pretty nuts!

Back on the bike again, this section seemed to last forever but eventually we made it to the next transition. We'd anticipated the whole of stage 2 would take around 24hr, to be followed by some blissful sleep. At this point it was 26hrs in and looking at the maps for the next section we could see 40km over the highest mountains in Portugal with 4000m of ascent. Unlikely to take just a few hours. We made the decision at this point to throw away the route book and choose our own adventure - drawing a line straight from where we were to the next Assistance Area. What we got was a beautiful mountain trek bathed in glorious sunshine. We passed through what I can only describe as a climbers' paradise with stately boulders and impressive rock faces. I did a bit of the map reading for this stage but it wasn't too hard. We'd been leaving all the tricky stuff to Lizzie and Dan all night and for the rest of the race really.

### The arrival

- ▶ October (6)
  - ▶ September (10)
  - ▶ August (4)
  - ▶ July (10)
  - ▶ June (10)
  - ▶ May (6)
  - ▶ April (10)
  - ▶ March (7)
  - ▶ February (3)
  - ▶ January (5)
- ▶ 2008 (2)

### Blogs I like to look at

#### The Corbett Round 2009

Number crunching instead of bones...

### Fond memories of the Heb...



After nearly 36hrs we made it to the assistance area for some microwave rice and sleep. Except that I couldn't. Despite knowing how tired I was and seeing my team mates snoring beside me, I just couldn't switch off. I tried putting my buff over my eyes and ears (transitions are a noisy place) but still nothing worked. In the 2.5hrs of designated 'rest' I think I got about 20min of kip. I knew I would suffer for this later!



Posted by Elizabeth A at [11:55](#)

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