

THE OLD HAND

Mike
Hall

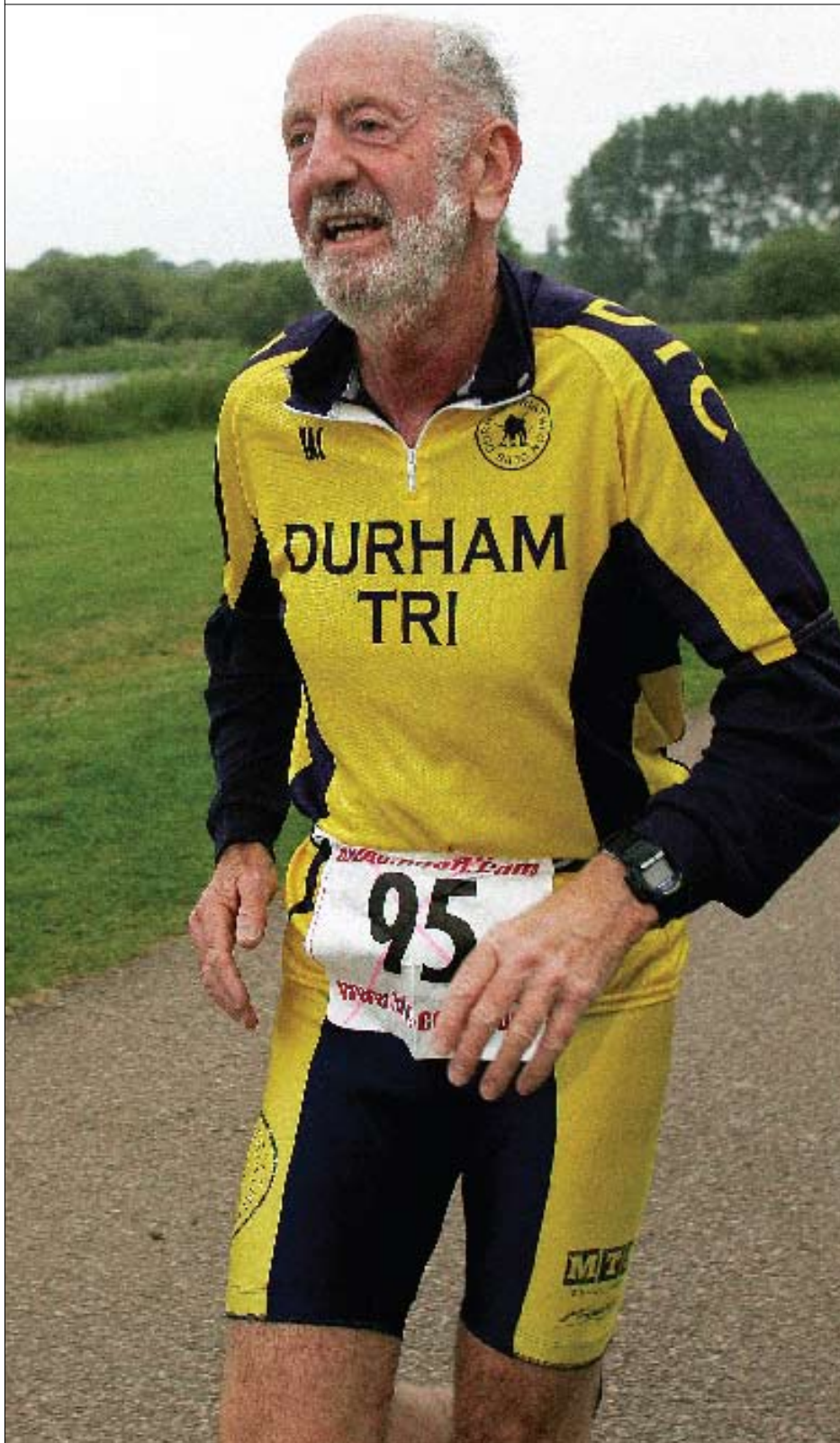
Factfile

Name Mike Hall**Age** 76**Lives** Durham**Years in triathlon** 19**Notable results**

Shropshire Triathlon (75-79) '06, 1st

Various medals at European Duathlon and Triathlon Championships over the past five years

World Champs (70-74), Perth '00, 5th



There can't be many grandfathers who take part in the same sport as their grandson – but Mike Hall is one of them. Despite being just four years off his 80th birthday, the grandad-of-five refuses to let age prevent him from doing what he wants to do. And so the former runner – who could still post sub-40min 10km splits in his sixties – has plenty in common with his 13-year-old triathlete-wannabe grandson.

“When I was younger I never thought I'd still be competing in my seventies,” says the founder member of Durham Triathlon Club. “But my wife and I have always been into sport.

“The grandchildren find it quite funny and have just got used to it as ‘something Granny and Grandad do’. One of our grandsons, who lives in Australia, is into his triathlon, but he's yet to come to us for advice.”

Triathlon is a real family affair for the Halls because Mike's wife, Kim, will also be pulling on the GB kit in Lausanne. Aged 72, she'll be Britain's sole female in the 70-74 age group.

“We love the tri world – the friendships we've made and the atmosphere at the events, it's brilliant,” she says.

Her husband was first enticed into triathlon after joining a local running club. A retired lecturer, his former job had taken them to Thailand and, upon their return in 1986, they decided to get fit.

“I come from a running background, so joined the local running club and it all went from there,” he says. “I did a few pool swim triathlons first but then kept wanting to try different events so found myself signing up for more and more.”

Kim was soon persuaded to enter, too. So while most pensioners their age are content with their free bus pass, the Halls, clad in wetsuits, were diving into freezing cold lakes at various events around the country – and they were soon gaining international honours.

“Our friends think we're completely crazy and wonder whether we're going to kill ourselves doing triathlon, but we'll keep doing it for as long as we can,” says Mike. “We're proud to be representing our country.”

They set off from Durham for Lausanne with their caravan in mid-July to enjoy a gentle holiday travelling through France before heading for Switzerland.

“We packed up the caravan with all our kit weeks ago and have enjoyed a swim, bike and run on our travels towards Switzerland. We aim to reach Lausanne a few days before the race.

“We don't take it really seriously, but I would love to get a medal at the Worlds; that's my ambition for the year. I would be really chuffed with that.” ■