

## **2009 REPORT**

After the dismal weather of recent weeks and the appalling conditions for the “Bealach Mor” cycling challenge the previous Saturday, it was a surprise to have a near perfect day for the sixth Applecross Duathlon.

14 took part in the “Challenge” (fun run or walk) and 34 in the Race. As organiser it was good to see so many well ken’t faces and family groups, including trios from the Ellis, Lawton and Munro families. There were no injuries or drop outs in spite of an unusual hazard – a belligerent cow about a mile down the track. In response to my warning in the Safety Briefing, a competitor, who had best remain anonymous, observed that most of the guys would be well used to dealing with aggressive females.

A light south westerly breeze kept the midges away but resulted in slower times than in 2008. As last year, Veterans dominated with the notable exception of Mairi Crawford, winner of the Ladies’ Open in 2.14.18. Mairi was closely followed by Moraig Lyall whose time of 2.15.56 was 12 seconds outside the Veteran record she set herself last year.

David Warner, making his first appearance in the Applecross Duathlon at the impressively mature age of 50, won the Mens Open in 1.53.42. David was behind on the run, but a strong bike ride put him 3.46 ahead of Scott Kennedy at the finish. Veterans Charlie Hornsby, Andrew Patience and Garry MacInnes took 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> places. Andrew and Garry have both competed in the last five Applecross Duathlons and their contest has become a race within the race. Andrew “won” this time by just 13 seconds but Garry retains the overall advantage by three “wins” to two.

A new prize this year (a litre of whisky) for mountain rescue personnel was won by Alasdair MacSween, of the Skye team, to the chagrin of the Torridon & Kinlochewe quartet. At the ends of the age range, Gillies Munro, 13, won the trophy for the best effort by a junior, finishing in 2.38.05, whilst Alastair Bulcraig, 63, won the coveted “Old Farts” trophy in 2.43.20.

The warm sunshine and exercise induced thirst made it difficult to move folk from the Applecross Inn, at the finish, back to the community hall for the traditional feast of home baking. Nevertheless, over 50 sat down to tea and we were fortunate that Judith Fish was able to spare time from her busy schedule to distribute the impressive array of trophies and prizes.

Each year I am indebted to a large number of people who generously donate prizes and freely give of their time, making it possible to run the event on a tiny budget. Consequently, in spite of the small entry fee (£5), this year’s Duathlon has generated over £200 income for our community hall.

Particular thanks are due to Steve MacDonald who donated a large number of quality prizes from his marvellous bike shop, “Square Wheels”, in Strathpeffer, and to Mike Arkley of “Mountain & Sea Guides”, Applecross, for a £100 discount voucher for the winner of the Mens’ Open. Other very generous prizes were donated by Roddy

**“Butcher”, Lochcarron, John and Elaine Glover, of the Walled Garden restaurant, and Judith Fish of the Applecross Inn.**

**Thanks also to Donald MacCuish for the use of his shed for bike storage, my wife, Rhona, and her helpers, for the delicious Tea, Angus Robbins for arranging for the VT staff toilets to be available at the start, Donald MacKenzie for the loan of parking cones, Mike Summers and Stuart Johnson for their efforts to move cattle away from the run and David Abraham for being on standby in case of rescue by “Argo” being required.**

**Finally, I am most grateful to the many marshals and other officials who worked so efficiently to ensure that the smooth and safe running of the entire event. It was reassuring to know that members of the Torridon & Kinlochewe Mountain Rescue Team were covering the run and two police officers, Chris and Suzie Warmer, the road sec**