

2013 REPORT

The Applecross Duathlon, on Saturday, 14 September, will be remembered as the fortunate one. Fortunate in that it took place in fine conditions when, a few hours later, the peninsula was lashed by gale force winds, torrential rain and hail.

The tenth Duathlon brought an unprecedented demand for places, on line entries closing within a fortnight. 81 took part in the Race and 49 in the Challenge, the biggest field yet. There was a slight head wind on the 15 mile cycle but, otherwise, conditions were ideal. The Mens Open record of 1.50.49, set by Adam Ward, in 2008, was improved by a massive 5 minutes 14 seconds. Alasdair Anthony, who also won here in 2006, went round in 1.45.35. He had trailed second placed Ross Campbell on the 9 mile run but rapidly overtook him on the cycle.

The Ladies Open record of 2.00.02, set by Angela Mudge, has stood for seven years. Mairi Todd got within 12 seconds of it in 2007 and, this year, it finally fell to Claire Gordon whose time of 1.59.51 improved it by 11 seconds.

Alec Keith, with a time of 1.57.00, added the Mens Veteran trophy to his long list of successes elsewhere, whilst Ray Wilby won the Vintage category for the third time in 4 years. His time was 2.26.23, remarkable for a 69 year old.

A happy feature of the Applecross Duathlon is the number of families who are regularly involved. This year there were 4 Hursts, 4 Munros and 3 Morrows. Harry Hurst and Gillies Munro are both 16 and long standing rivals. After a considerable battle, Gillies finally prevailed, finishing 3 seconds ahead of Harry in the impressive time of 2.00.43. The Morrows had a particularly good day. Jill won the Ladies Veteran trophy, in 2.14.48, whilst twins Hugh and Beth, who turned 11 two days before the event, finished together in just under 3 ¼ hours. At the other end of the event's 65 year age range, the oldest entrant, John McNally, 76, managed a highly creditable 3.05.41.

Once the running and cycling were completed the traditional feast of home baking and other goodies was enjoyed by well over 100 folk in the Community Hall. After the prize giving a special award of a bottle of Highland Park went to Andy Wright, the only person to have taken part in all ten events. In a short speech of thanks on behalf of the competitors, Andy recalled the donor of the Mens Open trophy, Garry Innes. Garry had Cerebral Palsy and died last year aged 46. He was an inspiration to all who encountered him and is remembered with affection by the many who met him at the Duathlon.

For nearly 50 folk the day was completed with a superb dinner in the Walled Garden. Many others, notably some "Bog Trotters" and "Westies" enjoyed the hospitality of the Applecross Inn. Reluctance to face the storm on the camp site may have contributed to the party going on in to the small hours.

Many folk are involved in helping to make the Applecross Duathlon such a popular event. Particular thanks are due to the officials on the course, the registration and timing team, the indefatigable tea ladies, the Walled Garden Bistro for the prize for the

Ladies Open, the Applecross Inn for the prize for the Mens Open and Square Wheels bike shop, in Strathpeffer, for help with the other prizes.