

2014 REPORT

Perfect conditions and a record number of starters made this the biggest and best Applecross Duathlon so far. 46 took part in the Challenge and 103 in the Race. Spectacular new records were set for the Mens Open, the Ladies Open, the Mens Veterans and for the sale of real ale in the Applecross Inn!

There was drama in the Mens race with five folk battling it out down the coast to finish within 40 seconds of each other. Ewan Taylor, Army Racing Team, took first place in 1.41.01, improving the record set by Alasdair Anthony, Hunters Bog Trotters, last year by more than 4 ½ minutes. Adam Ward's old record, set in 2008, has now been improved by nearly 10 minutes in the past two years. David Wilby, Ben Wyvis Cycle Club, and Alasdair Anthony, winners in 2012 and 2013, were second and third, both substantially improving their personal best times. Fourth and fifth places and the Mens Vet prize, were fiercely contested by Carnethy colleagues, Stewart Whitley and Paul Faulkner. Stewart prevailed, in 1.41.33, taking more than nine minutes off Adam Ward's six year old record.

But it was not just the men that were taking chunks out of the old records. Stephanie Provan, Deeside Runners, breezed round in 1.52.52 to take nearly seven minutes of the record set by Claire Gordon, Hunters Bog Trotters, last year. Jill Morrow, Portobello, retained her Ladies Vet title with a PB of 2.06.04, whilst Ray Wilby, Highland Hill Runners, completed a good day for the family by winning the "Old Farts", Mens Vintage, trophy for the fourth time, in 2.18.25. Ray is now in his eighth decade and inspirationally defies the normal aging process.

One of the attractions of the Applecross course is that it is long enough and tough enough to provide a real test for the serious club racer but yet short enough to be possible for folk of widely ranging ages and levels of fitness. This year's contestants ranged from 12 year old Hugh Morrow, Edinburgh AC, to 77 year old John McNally, Fife AC. Both achieved remarkable times: Hugh 2.29.08 and John 2.55.32, another PB.

Each year there are some remarkable times in the Junior (under 16) category and it is invariably difficult to decide who should win the "Architects Trophy" for the "best performance" by a Junior. This year after much discussion the trophy was awarded to Duncan Hornsby, 14, who took 2.19.45. But, on a day of outstanding performances, perhaps the most impressive was by another youngster, Cameron Young, 16, from Fortrose, whose superb time of 1.51.45 put him in 14th place overall.

I am most grateful to my sister in law, Catherine Shaw, for photographing runners as they approached Transition. For the first time this has given us a record of split times. Andrew ("Chunky") Liston, Fife AC, arrived first, in 58 minutes, two minutes ahead of David Wilby and four ahead of Ewan Taylor, but using a borrowed mountain bike, he took 53 minutes on the cycle and finished eleventh. Ewan took just 39 minutes on his bike whilst Eddie Addis was even quicker, taking 38 minutes.

As always, I am indebted to the small army of volunteers who make this event possible and to Square Wheels, Strathpeffer, the Applecross Inn and the Walled Garden Bistro for their continuing support.

