**Mud, Blood and medals at Bowhill.**

On Sunday the 17th February 8 Hartfell Hill Running Club members decided to marry their off road running skills with a often allied sport of mountain biking to attend the final race in a series of 3 winter Duathlons. The series takes place in the grounds of the stately home Bowhill House and Country Estate near Selkirk. The it is made up of a short race, a medium race, and the final long distance race, the organisers are coy about exact distances involved, but do give approximate expected finishing times for the winners. The fastest competitors on Sunday were round the course in less than 1 hour 30 minutes while the slowest finished in nearer 3 hours. The races comprise of a mountain bike section and a trail run.

Prizes are awarded to the competitor with the best results in each age grade over all 3 races, Hartfell had 4 members make the prizes.  Michelle Carruthers finished 3rd in her class, David Pennington and Adam Anderson both finished 2nd in their relevant classes, and Jane Pennington topped it by claiming 1st place in her’s.

For Sunday’s race it was a bit of a case of blood and mud, the overnight rain lead to muddy conditions allied with a bit more technical sections to the bike course for the long distance race meant a few minor spills for some of the competitors, but no serious injuries, our own Jane Pennington having no less than 3 crashes on her way to victory, it was worth I think she said. Despite dark clouds gathering at the start of the race the rain keep away, and in fact most finished the race in sunshine.

The race starts on the main drive with the biking section first, this entails a long uphill climb for 1.7 miles before the first descent, you finally end up back at the Stately Home, where it is a case of rack up your bike take off your helmet and start the run, you have about 2 miles of ups and downs before you start the big club up to the race turn round point, the small stone memorial for a young 27 year old Ecuadorian pilot, Cesar Raul Aguirre, who was killed on 1 November 1978 when his Jaguar plane crashed while training with the RAF.

At this point you are handed a lollypop as a token to recognize you have reach the top, you then turn round and retrace your steps to the finish at the house.

In Sunday’s race Jane was 1st in class, both David and Adam 2nd in theirs. Grieg walker was the race winner, the first lady was Isa Short, and after the bike Isa was leading overall but lost a few places to the stronger male runners to finish in 4th.

A mention for the Hardrock Hoodlums from Dalbeattie who also had great success today, Jock and Ian were second relay team and Ally Wight was 9th overall, they also secured several prizes in the series.

Well done to all, and thank you to Durty Events for staging such a fun event.