

## **DURISDEER**

**June 12, 2010 – 10.5 miles 3,800 feet of ascent**

Two years ago this was a British Championship race and attracted a field of 229. This year 34 turned out on a beautiful balmy summers' day, warm but not too sunny, making for ideal running conditions amongst the rolling hills of the Southern Uplands around 30 miles north of Dumfries.

Twenty different running clubs (if you count that famous "Unattached" club) made up the field ranging from as far afield as Northumberland (guess who?) to the Calgary Canoe Club of Canada (actually over visiting relatives in Glasgow!).

The men's race was won by Tom Owens of Shettleston, deploying Phil Sanderson like tactics and being over the first brow and away into the distance before most of us had even had time to get out of breathe. His winning time of 1 h 28 m was 12 minutes clear of the second placed runner. His fellow Salomon team mate (who I note also boasts one Nick Swinburn amongst their ranks) Natalie White, now running for Kendal, took the honours for the ladies, also 12 minutes ahead of her nearest female pursuer.

The race goes up and down a delightful mix of rounded grassy hills and up and down narrow cleughs, similar in nature to those encountered in the Howgill Fells, along streams and sensibly fits in a couple of road crossings with drink stations attached. With another day of perfect visibility route finding was never too much of a problem and the scenery just magnificent. This was just as well because with a small field and a succession of hills and glens to negotiate the field did get very strung out and people who you think are just in front can disappear out of sight around or down a steep narrow path.

As an extra insurance policy I found myself running in proximity with a Girvan runner who clearly knew the course and so I tactically tracked him to the penultimate hill before making my move to claim the all-not-so-important 19<sup>th</sup> place, trusting myself to make it to the finish without any navigational malfunctions.



Never mind the rolling hills – where are the Swiss Rolls? JT smells the tea tent  
Photo : Chris Upson

If the race was a joy it was nothing to the spread laid on the by the organisers. The finishing field was a picnic of weary runners, sunning tired limbs whilst tucking into a vast array of sandwiches, cocktail sausages, cakes, biscuits and tea. The location of the finish also afforded a fantastic view of the (few) remaining runners as they traversed around and down the last hill to the finish.

A tremendously laid back affair in beautiful settings and apart from another slice of raspberry sponge cake who could have asked for more!

Results :

<http://www.shr.uk.com/RaceResults.aspx?RaceID=RA-0060&RaceYear=2010>

**John Telfer**