



Sled Dog Association of Scotland
Kindly sponsored by [Skinner's](#)

Race Report – Darnaway, December 2021 – The Christmas Event

Darnaway Forest, everyone's favourite!

Whether it's your first Darnaway or 10th, you have to agree, it's awesome!! Yes? All the hype, the Leafy Heights chat that takes place in advance has even the most experienced musher trembling just a little ☺

2 storms in the 2 weeks running up to the event were never going to get in our way, this race was happening come what may.



Darnaway Estate staff were amazing, as always, and within days of storm Arwen they were on the ground clearing fallen trees.

Committee members travelled north to check the trail to make sure we had alternative routes in case storm Barra got mischievous.



And what an event! The committee arrived on Thursday night and with massive help from Louise, Tim and Ella Sugars, got to work early on Friday to mark, and clear the trail of debris that had been left in the wake of storm Barra, pace nervously waiting for the toilets to arrive, and "festively prepare" the forest for the race.



Friday evening saw the majority of competitors arrive in advance and after setting up home for the weekend, a few walked the trail to put their Leafy Heights nerves at ease!

It was a cold night and Saturday morning we woke to frost on the ground, making for a fast trail. Racing got underway at 10am and 47 teams made their way round the trail throughout the course of the day. Some fabulous times were achieved and some fears were overcome. Fastest time round the



course was Ashleigh Dean, in a time of 10:02 - amazing time, we know only too well how apprehensive you were! Thomas, of Studio 57 North, was there to capture those expressions as competitors rounded Leafy Heights. Thomas is very kindly sponsoring all 1st places, so if you won your class you can have a lasting memory of that moment!

Saturday evening was a sociable one, many competitors gathered for a mince or apple pie and a warm mulled wine or mulled cider.



Fortunately Sophie never leaves home without her cauldron, so we had somewhere to heat it! Just what we all needed to end such an enjoyable day.

Sunday was an earlier start, and at 8.30 Jeff was off with his 6 dog team, followed by the 2 dog canicross and bike classes – how they make it round is beyond me! Crazyness equalled only by the scooters!



Photographs credit Studio 57 North

We were sharing the forest with an orienteering group on Sunday, and we'd like to thank the group for their consideration and for kindly taking steps to let our race run smoothly, we hope those we passed on the trails enjoyed watching the teams.

As quickly as an event gets underway, it finishes, if only we could stay another day (wasn't that a Christmas tune.....?). With racing over we swiftly got to the presentation, and you have to agree – what a haul!!



Our sponsors, [Skinner's](#) gave a choice of 2.5kg bag of working 30, 26 or 23 to every 1st, 2nd & 3rd place, as well as energy bars, treats and samples. Thomas Salway of [Studio 57 North](#) gave every 1st place winner a high resolution image to remember their race and [Sporty Paws](#) awarded every 1st place a buff and 10% discount to all competitors. We are so fortunate, and grateful to be able to award such great prizes.





Well done to everyone who took part, bet you can't wait to go back!

Ohh...nearly forgot – Fancy Dress!

Our mushing wear isn't particularly glamorous, so we welcome any chance to dress up, and those who took part in our fancy dress competition got properly into the spirit, 1st place was awarded to Rosie Garside, 2nd place to Tim Sugars, and 3rd to Roddy Milne – don't they look great! Maybe we'll have fancy dress at every event, you guys seem to like it!



We are sad to say that our Culbin race, planned for January 2022, will not be going ahead. The storms really have devastated pretty much every forest across the UK, but we are exploring alternatives, we have 3 venues to recce (with a bit of urgency!) and, although we might not meet the same dates, if any of the venues are suitable, we will do our utmost to secure one before Ford.



A massive thank you to Skinner's for supporting our races, and giving us such a selection of goods to try.

Quite a few people spoke to me at the race and have decided to feed their dog(s) Skinner's. Make sure you follow their social media profiles for chances to win superb products and let them know how your dog is performing on their foods. Remember you can subscribe to Skinner's and have products delivered to your door. The sales staff are friendly, helpful and knowledgeable, if you have any questions or need help, give them a call on 01379 384247.

Thank you to Sporty Paws and to Thomas, Studio 57 North, if you want to buy any of the images Thomas has taken, get in touch with him and he will be delighted to give you details.

Thank you also to everyone who helped organise the race and set up on Friday, and to Danny Fitzgerald for helping Ben with the trail following Storm Arwen, and most of all, thank you to all of you, the competitors, we can't wait to see you at our next race. Watch this space for confirmation of venue and date.

Merry Christmas from the SDAS committee to all of our competitors, your 4 legged masters and our fabulous sponsors.

