

OUTDOORS

LYME DISEASE TEST TICKS ALL BOXES

A Scottish company have launched a crowdfunding bid for a new tick removal and Lyme disease testing kit.

Garrapat are seeking £20,000 to develop what they claim will be a revolutionary Lyme disease diagnostic product. Currently, Lyme disease is detectable through a blood or urine test carried out on a human who has been bitten by a tick.

The test is only 50 per cent accurate and can lead to people suffering with the debilitating and lifelong parasite-borne illness. The Garrapat device will remove a tick at the push of a button and capture it in a capsule.

The tick is then sent for testing of the Borrelia parasite and provides a 99.89 per cent accurate result for the existence of Lyme disease.

Garrapat founder Dr Bruce Alexander says: "We want to get the message out that nobody needs to suffer this horrible disease. Prompt diagnosis can protect everyone."

■ **To offer support to the crowdfunding bid, see www.garrapat.com and www.garrapat.com/indiegogo**

MAY DAY RACE CALL

Boost your running motivation over the winter by entering one of the Edinburgh Marathon Festival races next May.

The festival takes place over the May bank holiday weekend – May 28 and 29 – and includes a variety of race distances. There's a full marathon, half-marathon, team relay, 10K, 5K and junior races. The Edinburgh Marathon is rated as one of the world's fastest and boasts an elevation drop of almost 40 metres.

■ **For more information see www.edinburghmarathon.com**

KIT OF THE WEEK



BOGS SIDNEY PLAID WELLIE BOOTS

These are a practical yet stylish solution to bad winter weather.

The footwear has a Wellington boot waterproof lower with a neoprene-style tartan upper.

The boots are ankle high and lace-up so they are useful for a range of outdoors activities.

In addition, there is a Neo-Tech Lite insulation that provides lightweight warmth down to -5C. Women's Sidney Plaid Boots cost £80.

■ **See www.bogsfootwear.co.uk**



THROUGH THE GEARS
Bowhill stages one of the oldest duathlons in Scotland

Get blast of dual power this winter

Have you tried?



FIONA RUSSELL

Like running and cycling? Combine the two activities in a growing sport – the duathlon. Held from October to March in Scotland's picturesque landscape, it can be a real challenge and also lots of fun for all the family.

WINTER DUATHLON

What is it?

A duathlon is a three-stage running and cycling race.

The usual format is run, bike and then run, with some events on road and others off-road, which take place between October and March.

Tell me more:

Like triathlons, duathlons are growing in popularity and attract ever larger fields of men, women and kids.

Many events, especially in winter, appeal to off-road fans because they include trail runs and mountain biking stages.

In Scotland, one of the longest standing winter duathlon series is at Bowhill, near Selkirk, in the Scottish Borders.

Originally held at Glentress Forest near Peebles, it has witnessed greater success since moving to its new home in 2012.

The events, organised by Durty Events, are described as a "low-key, back-to-basics off-road duathlons".

The races start "short" in November, with a "medium" length in January and then a "long" race in February.

Paul McGreal, of Durty Events, said: "Since we moved it to Bowhill, we've sold out every year. We pull in around 230 entries for each round. We do get racing snakes taking part, the type who want to stay fit over the winter by racing, but we also get a lot of newbies. The races are usually cold and muddy, or snowy, so appeal to a certain adventurous demographic. Yet



ON YER BIKE For the Bowhill duathlon attracts 230 entries for each round

people also really enjoy them because they are low-key, fun and a bit different."

In Monikie Country Park, near Dundee, the Angus Bike Chain Winter Duathlon Series returns this winter for three more rounds.

The duathlons include a cycle time trial that is on-road rather than mountain biking.

In December, the first event comprises a 4km run and then a 21.5km cycle. The following two rounds in January and February include a 4km run, 21.5km cycle and 4km run.

Aberdeenshire also plays host to a Winter Duathlon Series with five events between November and April and including a children's duathlon.

There is a youth duathlon as part of the New Year's Day Triathlon in Edinburgh. As spring approaches you can sign up to the South Lanarkshire Leisure duathlon and the Stirling Duathlon.

An Edinburgh Duathlon Festival took place earlier this month for junior and senior competitors.

Anything else to know?

They are great for motivation to stay fit during the chillier months. David Anderson, of Glasgow, is looking forward to doing the Monikie series again.

He said: "It's quite tough, especially coming off the bike to run, but it is great fun."

Who is it for?

For novices through to experts and solo competitors plus relay teams. Different events stipulate minimum ages for entries.

When can I do it?

Autumn and winter.

Cost? Various although membership of Triathlon Scotland brings reduced entry costs for many events.

Contact: See Bowhill at www.durtyevents.com; Monikie at www.angusbikechaincc.com; Aberdeenshire at www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk; Edinburgh New Year's Day Youth Duathlon at edinburghtri.org/concrete5/SouthLanarkshireLeisure at www.southlanarkshireleisure.co.uk and Stirling at www.stirlingtriathlon.com

Advice and ideas

Join me on my adventures in Scotland's great outdoors by checking out my award-winning website at www.fionaoutdoors.co.uk – you'll find lots of great information about walking, cycling, running, other outdoor activities and kit reviews.