

This report covers 1 January to 31 December 2017. Comparing this year's data with last year (in brackets): New Munroists 184 (202); males 76% (77%); resident in Scotland 61% (66%); couples 13% (13%); average age 56 (55); size of Completion summit party 12 (13); average Completion time 26 (24) years; Golden Munroists 10 (10). This is the first year since 2002-2003 that the annual total of new Munroists has fallen below 200. I can suggest no obvious reason for this, especially since the other figures have remained steady. It does however suggest a theme for this year's report:

MUNROISTS BY NUMBERS.

86 Munro summits saw Completions in 2017 and the TOP TEN were: Ben More (Mull) 19; Beinn na Lap 10; Gulvain, Meall nan Tarmachan 6; Ben Lomond, Bla Bheinn 5; Beinn Sgulaird, Ben Hope, Braeriach, Stob Dearg (Buachaille Etive Mor) 4.

1 item of FAKE NEWS caused a few red faces over the summer. On a short visit to Edinburgh I nipped in to the National Library to see the excellent "Enduring Eye" exhibition featuring the familiar Frank Hurley images of Shackleton's ill-fated "Endurance" expedition, recently scanned and digitized, along with a few other artefacts and background details of members of the party. In the section about geologist James Wordie I was surprised by the caption claiming "he had climbed all the Munros before he was 21." A remarkable feat for a young student before the Great War which prompted some on-line research, spurred on by Hamish Brown (62) who dropped me a note expressing his surprise too. An enquiry to Archivist Robin Campbell produced a scan of Hurley's SMC application form, submitted in 1912, which confirmed that he had climbed some Munros, easily accessible by railway from Glasgow. Finally, the curator of the exhibition sent an apologetic email confirming "the statement is a mistake. I meant to check the numbers, but it slipped through the edit." Reassuring to know that it is not just your Clerk who makes the occasional error!

2 Scots have now Completed both the Munros and the Seven Summits according to the second, James Ogilvie (6164). (The other is Vicky Jack who has not yet registered).

"18 years, two pairs of boots, two pairs of walking poles, five cameras (they seem to get bashed about a bit!) and lots of amazing experiences" summed up Jeremy Voaden's (6173) Round. He also mentioned that he only has 4 of the highest points in all the Scottish counties still to climb, having finished England and Wales.

1,345m "did not seem like a serious mountaineering outing" to Emmanuelle Tulle (6177) a French woman who, on the day of the 1982 World Cup final climbed Ben Nevis "wearing only a tee-shirt, shorts and trainers. I never knew the enormity or foolishness of what I had done until many years later." Older and wiser now, she has become the first French Munroist, though she does live in Falkirk. Jennifer White (6106) also remembered the hot sunny summer days of yore and noted "my only claim to fame is soloing the Cuillins in a green bikini. Being booed for putting clothes on to abseil off the In. Pin. was a new experience."

3 more Germans registered. Frank Muller (6225) started in 1991 with Beinn Alligin while Cord Wischhofer (6224) joined him in 1993 on The Saddle. Cord reported "At that time we

were completely oblivious of the rather compulsory nature the passion of hill-bagging can take in humans. Later we realized that there is a list of the highest hills in Scotland compiled and maintained by the SMC. An online documentation of our hill-climbing efforts is given on the website “Bloody German Munro Baggers” (www.bgmb.de). Maja Staerke (6229) “was born in Germany but have lived longer in Scotland.” She described one of her favorite trips “where I swam across Loch Quoich to climb Gairich – possibly the only lilo approach to a Munro?”

£1,000 was the cost to climb Gairich for Jennifer Sessions (6169) “the most expensive Munro I did, the only one we managed in a hugely wet and windy week in September 2016.” She also remembered “Raptor Day” on Carn a’ Chlamain “when we saw an Osprey, a Merlin, a Golden Eagle, a Peregrine Falcon and a Hen Harrier.”

£3,500 was raised by Carl Sugden (6204) “for a local hospice, Martin House, in memory of my daughter, through a series of sporting challenges, of which completing the Munros was one.” Celia (6200) and Stuart Watson (6201) raised £1,600 “for the Calvert Trust, an outdoor centre in the Lake District that provides holidays for disabled people. We put a pound aside each time we climbed a Munro, so were able to start the pot off with £282.” They also supplied some numbers from their Round: “144 days on the hill, 2300km travelled, 144000m height gain 530km cycled, views from 222 summits.” Elaine H. (6212) and Garry J. Smith (6213) also “did 144 walks to complete the list ranging from 3 to 18.75 hours” and reminded me “our home town of Kirriemuir is where Munro lived at Lindertis Farm and the town has an engraved paving stone in honour of him so it feels good to have finished this journey here.” Stan Hutchinson (6235) also did some calculations and worked out that his Round “involved 61 trips to Scotland and 139 days in the mountains. My accommodation was a tent for 181 Munros and our family caravan for 90.”

400 yards from the car, after his Completion on Sgurr na Banachdich on Skye, Scott McCormick (6202) “broke my leg in 2 places and had it operated on in Broadford hospital before being transferred to Paisley Royal Alexander Hospital for further treatment. The Mountain Rescue and Medical Team were amazing.”

88 years old, the father of Anne Brown (6238) was unable to join her Completion on Beinn Fionnlaidh in Glen Etive, though “he was there in spirit”. Grateful that he had started her on her way, back in 1968, aged 8, she went on to describe how “the Munros have been a constant throughout my life, always a joy and a grounding experience, giving a real sense of space and time and putting life back into perspective.” Anne’s 49 year Round means she just missed joining the GOLDEN MUNROISTS who were Malcolm H. Fitter (6109) 62 years; Tony Gladstone (6130) 60 years; Colin A. Roberts (6139) 52 years; Steve Ingleby (6142) 50 years; Roderick MacLean (6152) 56 years; Richard Winsborrow (6168); Alan Hewitt-Dutton (6195) 53 years; David Lever (6206) 52 years; Jim Foster (6247) 50 years; Stephen Garsed (6281) 52 years.

77 days after starting on Ben More (Mull), on 3 July, Lisa Trollope (6268) and Libby Kerr (6269) completed a continuous self-propelled Round on Ben Hope on 17 September. They believe this is a new female record and reported “we had an absolutely fantastic trip and have fallen in love with the Scottish mountains. We hope our adventure will inspire more women to get out into the mountains and challenge themselves.”

131 Munros in 5 months was a challenge to another feisty female Sunny He Huang (6275) who became the first Chinese Munroist. She explained “living in Scotland for over 13 years, currently working for NHS Lothian as a Cardiothoracic Theatre Nurse, I started walking in 2015 for Christian Aid 70 Munros Challenge. Once I completed 70 I took the 282 Challenge for charity fundraising.” Only 2 other Munroists gave their occupations, one a brickie, the other a postie. Sunny also explained “I work 37.5 hours and have been picking up most of the on calls and overtime during weekdays to support the department because of staff shortage issues. I used all my days off and weekends in the mountains regardless of weather conditions.” Her future plan “is to do some cracking Corbetts and Hadrian’s Wall and other hills at a leisurely pace.”

5 attributes required by David Lever (6206) for future outings will be “a summit of decent prominence, an OS trig point, a good walk in, a good view and the prospect of some peace and quiet. Since Compleating I have been on Dun Caan on Raasay, which ticks all these boxes.”

22 members of the Ochils Mountaineering Club accompanied Nigel Webber (6271) on his Completion on Beinn Fhionlaidh from Glen Etive. He explained “one’s last Munro should be a bit special so we did it in dresses!” and enclosed a fine photo to prove it. 27 other clubs mentioned this year, whose members presumably favour more conventional attire include Aberdeen MC; Aberdeen Grammar School HWC; Aberdeen Young Walkers; Bishopton Walking Group; Cairngorm Club; Calderglen Harriers; Castle MC; Corriemulzie MC; Edinburgh University MC; Forfar HWC; Friockheim HWC; Grampian HWC; Inverclyde Ramblers; Inverness MC; Karabiner MC; Lomond MC; Lylecraigs Walking Group; Moray MC; Milngavie MC; Nevis HWC; Nottingham University Munro Society; Ochils MC; Paisley HWC; Perth HWC; Peterborough MC; Reading MC; Starav MC.

0 members of the SMC or LSCC registered in 2017. Come on ladies and gentlemen!

2 Contiguous Completions were reported. David Raffe (6134) mopped up his final Munros, Corbetts and Grahams by traversing Belig, Garbh Bheinn and Bla Bheinn via Clach Glas on the Isle of Skye, where Jon L. Edgar (6161) managed Munros, Tops and Furths, Compleating on Am Bhasteir, followed by the Bhastier Tooth and climbing Helvellyn on the way home to Surrey. He notes that “a meeting with Malcolm Slesser started me on the Tops, to complicate matters.” Malcolm would have been particularly interested to learn that 7 celebratory whiskies were mentioned this year, including Lagavulin 16; Glen Moray single cask; Highland Park; Cardhu; Glenmorangie; Talisker; Loch Lomond, Old Pultney. Other whiskies are available - no sponsorship deals for the SMC yet!

AMENDMENTS

In 2017 I heard from 87 (75) Munroists requesting amendments to entries on our Lists (last year’s figure in brackets) as follows: New Munro Rounds 20 (14); Tops 10 (6); Furths 13 (11); Corbetts 35 (40); Grahams 8 (11); Donalds 18 (12). Full House 4 (4) (total now 48).

Amendments are still a growth area, keeping your Clerk increasingly busy. The heighters, in particular Alan Dawson, have also been busy and in Spring 2017 announced the discovery of a new Top, Mullach nan Coirean East Top (NN137656) 916.6m (3007 feet).

Another lady remembering that we have not always had such bad summers, M. Clair Bale (5318) reported her Graham Completion on Suilven at the second attempt. On the first, "at least five years ago, the weather was too hot." A few months later I received another letter from Clair, reporting "my last Donald, New Donald, Donald Tops on Larg Hill, Newton Stewart. This was a second attempt (again!), the first being thwarted by 1) hummocky land 2) too many trees 3) no path 4) heavy rain." These lower hills clearly present different challenges. This determined lady acknowledged "I would not have been able to achieve this if I did not have such a supportive husband who has kept his counsel and been a superb "Sherpa", keeping his pace at my plodding level and occasionally carrying my flask. OK, always carries my flask." The gallant gentleman concerned is an active SMC member who will remain nameless, to save embarrassment! Reporting her record 9th Munro Round, Hazel Strachan (3438) also acknowledged her supportive husband Ian, "chief driver and caterer." She reported 110 days out on the hill, fitted around her full-time job!

Reporting Furth Round 6, Michael B. Slater (358) still remembers his first 3000-foot hill as Snowdon in August 1953, as a ten-year old. He is half way through his next Round already. Clearly lured over to the other side (the metric lists), Norman Wares (4151) informed me that his last Graham, Drum na Sgriodain was also his 1000th Marilyn (150m prominence), 1200th Tump (100m prominence) and 2000th Hump (30m prominence). "In recognition of this eccentric behavior several members of the Relative Hills Society also joined me on the climb, including three of only ten people to have climbed all the Marilyns." George Hall (2511) sent me an interesting spreadsheet of distances, ascents and times of his various Rounds and concluded "Corbetts are harder than Munros, both in terms of distance and ascent per hill and Grahams require the longest walks." Fiona (5361) and Stuart Clark (5362) Completed their second Munro Round on A'Mhaighdean via Ruadh Stac Mor on 25 December, reporting "we had already celebrated Christmas with all the children and grandchildren together a couple of weeks earlier, leaving them free to be with others. That left just the 2 of us with no time pressures and a reasonable forecast for the day." Nigel Morters (1279) reported finishing his Furths on Broad Crag in the English Lakes on St Georges Day, having finished his Irish summits on St Patricks Day. He was clearly upset at the circumstances which lead to finishing his Grahams the day before St Andrews Day.

5.5 years ago, Tony Stone took over as SMC Webmaster and his efficient support has been much appreciated over the years. At the end of 2017 he gave the website a major make-over before handing over to his successor, Mike Watson (4082). Many thanks to Tony and welcome to the team Mike. The new Keeper of Regalia, Chris Huntley (903) has also been kept busy satisfying the insatiable demand for ties and brooches.

22 years after Completion, Edmund R. Mansion (6113) finally got around to registering. Remember it is never too late to add your achievements to our six Lists.

Enjoy your hills

Dave Broadhead (690)(Clerk of the List)