

## MUNRO MATTERS 2009-2010

by Dave Broadhead (Clerk of the List)

Thanks once again to all those Munroists who took the time to sit down and write so many interesting letters to register their Completion. Thanks also to the Webmaster, Ken Crocket, and the Keeper of Regalia, Gordon McAndrew. As before the year runs from 1 April to 31 March. Comparing with 2008-2009 (in brackets) the total of 239 (227) new Munroists showed a slight increase comprising 81% (79%) males, 63% (55%) resident in Scotland and 12% (12%) couples. Average age was 52 (54) with an average party size of 14 (14) taking an average of 22 (21) years to Complete.

To share a selection of the fascinating anecdotes and reflections received I have adapted the popular theme of the “Seven Ages of Man” as follows:

### Early starters

Anne Findlay (4265) was on top of Lochnagar aged 2, in the company of her parents Ian and Isobel Hughes (397 & 398). Anne also reports that her home village of Blebo Craigs in Fife (population 170) is home to at least three other Munroists! Colin Ferguson(4283) climbed Ben Vorlich aged 10 with his father George Ferguson (887) and similarly Andy Barnett (4320) “was a lad of 10 when my Dad took me up Ben Nevis, a grand walk of which I have vivid memories.” Over 30 years later he returned to Complete on neighbouring Carn Mor Dearg. Jane Weir (4255) Completed on Ciste Dubh, accompanied by her father, Robert Waterston (3210) aged 85. She started as a seven year old on Ben Lawers, while Robert’s Completion at the age of 80 remains the oldest registered male. James Eccles (4319) remembers “my first Munro was Ben Nevis which I ascended in 1965 during a holiday cycling round the coast of Scotland. We wore basketball boots, carried cycle capes, sou’westers and food in a “musette”(butty bag).” Also starting on The Ben, Gill and Mark Robinson (4399 & 4400) remember “as typical tourists on a camping holiday, we were ill prepared, having taken just a couple of cartons of juice each.”

### Fast finishers

John Preston (4285) finished his last 102 in one go, with the help of a campervan. Trevor Galloway (4391) reported a continuous round “starting April 13 on Ben Lomond and finishing August 10 on Ben Hope” also using a campervan. His blog is at [www.nonstopmunromadness.blogspot.com/](http://www.nonstopmunromadness.blogspot.com/) and he also raised £2000 for Maggie’s Cancer Care.

### Regular rounds

When compiling “Munro Matters” there is never any shortage of interesting material, though the following letter from Jon Mayne (4275) is typical: “Dear David, I am writing to notify you that I completed the Munros (for the first time) on 14 May 2009 with a stunning day on the Fisherfield Six. My last Munro was Beinn a’ Chlaidheimh. I don’t

believe there is much remarkable about my completion; as I cannot believe that either my age (44) or the time it has taken me (12 years since Beinn Sgulaire in August 1997) are in any way unusual.” The great thing about the Munros is of course that every round is unique, and worthy of celebration. The BBC commissioned a TV programme about Munro, and I was contacted at an early stage for advice, as they were particularly keen to film a Completion and needed to find a suitable subject. An extensive advertising campaign followed and in due course I received a letter from Douglas Grieve(4277) who “took up the BBC offer. Let’s hope I have not spoiled the thing!” When I finally saw the results I thought Douglas did very well and conveyed the enthusiasm and emotion that comes across in most of the letters I receive.

Ben More (Mull) remains the most popular summit for Completion, with 16 this year, while Ben Hope saw 11. Not surprisingly, the “Coincidental Completion” is becoming increasingly common. Richard Fyfe (4264) finished on Ben Lomond with a party of 24 friends at the same time as Colin Sturmer (4270) and another occurred on Maoile Lunndaidh where Anne Findlay (4265) arrived at the summit at the same time as Graham Lewis (4274). The latter caused some confusion at the Lochcarron Hotel by asking for a birthday cake reading “Happy 284<sup>th</sup>”! Farshid Namdaran (4275) thinks he is probably the first Persian (Iranian) Munroist and Hamid Khatib (4387) is probably the first Iraqi, though he admits “to have been living in Scotland for 26 years.” James C. Mcleod (4389) and James C. Mcleod (4390) father and son were immediately spotted by the pedants who search the list for errors, which I am always happy to correct. Robert Scoltock (4311) kindly commented “I have had many, many great days on Scottish hills using the great fund of knowledge contained in the SMC District Guides and I wish to express my grateful thanks to the SMC for publishing them.”

### Prolonging the pleasure

These of course include the “Golden Munroists” who have taken more than 50 years to Complete their Round. These include W. Leonard N. Moir (4354) (April 1956 – July 2009); John Halliday (4437) (March 1958 – September 2009) and Livingston Russell (4443) (June 1959 – October 2009). Livingston was one year behind his wife Christine Russell (4201) and sent a photograph of a distinctive commemorative necklace made for her by the Campbeltown goldsmith Grant Logan comprising a “gold Buachaille Etive Mor and a white gold boot-print with my number on.” William Bain (4479) reported a fantastic 61 years (May 1948 – November 2009) while Graham Clark (1686) reported finishing his Corbetts on Ben Loyal 60 years after his first.

### Can’t stop counting

Compleatists are asked to suggest what they plan to do next, when the thrill of climbing that final hill wears off. While many are content to bask in their new found glory, perhaps revisit old favourites or savour views missed in poor weather, some go on to start another round or tick other lists. Christine Murison (1967) finished her second Munro round exactly ten years after her first and Derek Syme (685) Completed his second round while President of The Munro Society. Reporting his third Munro round, Ken MacIver (290) made the following observations: “My first round took 14 years, second round 18 years but only 9 years for the third. My first round summit party consisted of 11 friends, with

no Munroists; second round 22 friends plus 2 dogs, including 4 Munroists, third round 30 friends plus 4 dogs, including 9 Munroists.” John Peel (1066) notified me of an omission in his entry dating back to 1997, commenting that “normally I would not bother about it but some of the young sprogs in my running club are nearing Completion and I want to be able to say “but have you done the Tops?” I received three letters from the ever active Bert Barnett (3112) who achieved a historic first when he Completed a second round of the Grahams. Karl Nelson (1432) Completed his second round of Munros and Tops on Ben Alligin, moving across the country to finish his Corbetts with Conachraig next day, dashing back west to finish his Grahams with Beinn an Eoin the day after. He had finished his Donalds earlier in the year. Charles Scott (568) celebrated his third Munro Completion on Ben More (Mull), bagging the Graham Beinn Fhada on the way up and the Marilyn Coirc Bheinn on the way down. Having climbed his 1000<sup>th</sup> Munro earlier in the year, he commented “you may note an interest in Marilyns – I got Alan Dawson’s book during the winter and have got to 519, but I am finding these hills generally dire.....” Terry McDonagh (700) reported a second Corbett round, commenting “there was nothing particularly special to report about these events other than the fact that these hills are getting higher and further away each time that I climb them!” Alan Taylor (3783) finished his Corbetts with Carn Liath, then “celebrated quietly and reflectively over a big curry and a couple of double vodka and cokes, the next day in Dundee. My thoughts went back to a great many of the hills and the journey of getting there and the varied experiences of an ever changing landscape, the long walk ins (without a bike), the boats to the islands, hostels, hitch hiking, sleeping in my car and the friendly and helpful fellow walkers and country folk. The hills are the best place to be.”

#### Taking a more difficult route

Lacking car and driving licence, Elkie Kammer (4279) reported that “getting to the base of a mountain has often proved more difficult than getting to the top, especially since City Link has booted out most of the local bus companies and introduced rules like only stopping at designated bus stops and not carrying folding bikes.” Mark Webster (4280) summarised his round in rhyming couplets, starting with “Ben Nevis was first in the early eighties I guess/Although Munros were unknown to me then I confess.” In a similar vein, Bert Morris (4394) adapted “The Wild Rover” to entertain fellow guests at Ratagan youth hostel, starting “I’ve been a hillwalker for seventeen years/ And spent all my money on Gortex and gear.” Alan Hunter (4314) Completed on Sgurr nan Gillean, noting that “I’ve had Gillean to climb for almost 3 years now but the delay has been down to me wanting to climb the entire Black Cuillin ridge in a day. It took 4 attempts, all previous ones of course foiled by the weather! This time perfect visibility, no wind and a light pack saw Jim Howe and I just managing the traverse. We set off from Glen Brittle camp at 0300 and stood on Gillean at 2000.” Also in the Cuillin, Trevor Wade Completed on the Inn. Pin. (in August) and commented that “my gang of three waited in line for over 2 hours for a quick dash up the long side – the only time I have ever queued for a Munro.” Alan Lea (4340) was repulsed twice within a month by deep snow on Carn Am Fhidleir, frustrating his plans to Compleat on Skye the following weekend. The elusive summit was finally reached in May. Hans-Werner Meiners (4376) became another German Compleater. I also sent some previous “Munro Matters” to a German journalist writing for an outdoor magazine, so we can no doubt expect plenty more. Pam Wigston (4408) became, at the age of 80, the oldest female Compleater. She explained that “after my

husband died, I still needed an aim in life at the age of 65.....with only 9 Munros left, I broke my back..... this was not a time to give up, but time for great determination.”

Beyond the last climb

The loss of a Munro, Sgurr nan Ceannaichean, was balanced of course by the gaining of a Corbett. The results of the latest “heighting” activities of The Munro Society were announced at a press conference, accompanied by a certain amount of “media frenzy”. The SMC acknowledged the change as soon as the Ordnance Survey accepted the new height and details were immediately posted on our website.

On a more sombre note, there are also some Munroists from whom we will not be hearing again. Irvine Butterfield (105) passed away in May 2009 but his excellent books “The High Mountains of Britain and Ireland (1986), “The Magic of the Munros” (1999) and “The Call of the Corbetts” will continue to inspire hill-goers for many years and his many other contributions to the Scottish mountains have been acknowledged elsewhere. Richard Rogers (4326) had advanced cancer when he Completed in May 2009 and sadly passed away in October. He was disappointed not to have a suitable summit photo for the Munroists Gallery, but was clearly a man with a sense of humour. Recounting to a friend “a daring solo assault that nearly ended in tragedy (due to white-out conditions)” he summed up the experience by admitting “ I can’t say I am fighting to do Lurg Mhor again in the near future – indeed I’d frankly rather go to a Tracy Emin retrospective.” Graeme David McKay (4469) took the unusual step of giving names and addresses of 3 referees, one of whom I happen to know. This mutual friend has since told me that tragically Graeme passed away suddenly a few months later.

AMENDMENTS

An increasing proportion of correspondence relates to the “Can’t stop counting” group. Over the winter, a particularly quiet one last year when the flow of letters stopped as deep snow covered the hills, the website database was extended from three columns to six, as interest in climbing the Corbetts, Grahams and Donalds grows. Dave Hewitt and Alan Dawson keep their own lists of Corbetteers, Donaldists and Grahamists and kindly agreed to share their data. (See [www.rhb.org.uk](http://www.rhb.org.uk)) One interesting outcome of this exercise is that a remarkable 20 people have achieved a “Full House”as follows:

452	Ann Bowker	1986	1986	1983	1992	1999	2002
763	Brian Curle	1990	1991	1991	1992	2000	1994
121	Don Smithies	1973	2001	1998	1996	2000	2002
1298	Graham Illing	1994	1997	1996	1998	2000	2000
319	Ken Whyte	1984	1987	1987	2000	2000	2000
678	Stuart Benn	1989	1989	1990	1996	2000	2004
816	Rob Woodall	1990	1995	1990	1995	2000	1992
1452	Eddie Dealtry	1995	1995	1994	2001	2001	1997
1196	Alan Holmes	1993	1993	1993	1997	2002	1997
1197	George Morl	1993	1993	1993	1997	2002	1997
959	*Mike Dixon	1991	2008	2000	1996	2002	2005

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2494	**Rhona Fraser	1984	1995	1997	1990	2003	2000
1331	John Mackay	1994	1994	1997	2003	2006	2002
2606	Colin Crawford	2001	2006	2001	2006	2006	1996
2009	Alan Dawson	1998	1998	1987	2006	2008	2001
276	Gerry Knight	1982	1982	1983	1997	2009	1986
327	Stewart Logan	1981	1981	1981	1984	2009	200
387	Richard Fuller	1984	1984	1985	2001	2009	2009
1311	Terry Fuller	1994	1994	1994	2002	2009	2009
1432	Karl Nelson	1995	1995	1996	2009	2009	2009

The eight columns of information are ordered Munroist number, name, year of Completion of first round of Munros, Tops, Furths, Corbetts, Grahams, Donalds. \*SMC member, \*\*LSCC member. This information is of course available on [www.smc.org.uk](http://www.smc.org.uk) along with the popular Munroists Photo Gallery. Once you have received a number, a Completion photo can be emailed or posted to the Webmaster. Iain Dow (4262) and Julia and Ian Greenwood (4256 & 4257) registered 17 years after their Completions in 1992, so it really is never too late.

Enjoy your hills.

Dave Broadhead, Clerk of the List