

## MUNRO MATTERS 2012

by Dave Broadhead (Clerk of the List)

A very busy year for baggers, this report covers 1 January to 31 December 2012. The List of Munroists continues to grow steadily, while the list of Munros has shrunk again, down to 282. Comparing with last year (shown in brackets) the total of 248 (217) new Munroists comprises 79% (78%) males; resident in Scotland 63% (54%); couples 18% (16%); average age 52 (55); size of Completion party 11 (11); time taken 25 (24) years. Worthy of special mention 9(6) Golden Munroists this year are Graeme C. King (4971) (53 years), Katherine McQuitty (4978) (50 years), Elizabeth Culshaw (5030) (53 years), David McAndrew (5091) (50 years), Charles Everett (5109) (50 years), Robert K. S. Gray (5135) (55 years), Dave Palmer (5155) (57 years), Mick McKie (5155) (65 years) and Ian Edward (5176) (60 years). As well as an electronic data base, I also keep a hard copy in an A4 jotter. Looking back through my first full jotter (started in August 2007) I noted the month of first and final Munro which breaks down as follows:

	<u>% START</u>	<u>% FINISH</u>
January	2	<1
February	5	<1
March	4	1
April	8	4
May	17	18
June	14	15
July	15	11
August	18	16
September	8	18
October	5	11
November	2	4
December	2	1

Continuing the calendar theme, I have chosen a month by month selection from my postbag as follows:

### **JANUARY** (2 Completions. 4 amendments.)

First letter of the New Year from John Fleetwood (4953) reported his first and second round, along with his son Ben Fleetwood (4954) who for a short while became the youngest Munroist when he Completed on Ben More (Mull) aged 10 years and 3 months, having started on Ben na Lap, aged 6.

### **FEBRUARY** (5 Completions. 3 amendments.)

Graham Huxley (4956) started his Munro Round with an ascent of Ben Nevis via "Centurion", while Stuart H. Ralston (4958) started with Stob Dearg on Buachaille Etive Mor via "Agag's Groove".

**MARCH** (0 Completions. 0 amendments.)

Thankful for a lull in letters, an opportunity to work on "Munro Matters".

**APRIL** (7 Completions. 5 amendments.)

Garry Adam (4962) and John MacDonald (4963) both Completed as members of Forfar & District Hill Walking Club, adding their names to an impressive scroll of 34 other members who have Completed with this Club.

**MAY** (25 Completions. 4 amendments.)

David Welby (4973) proudly reported "I have completed all the Munros without carrying a mobile phone, nor a GPS instrument and without the use of either a bicycle or walking poles." Peter J. Williams (4980) reported Completions of Munros, Tops and Donalds, observing "sadly the Donalds now offer views of some of the most scenic wind-farms in the world."

**JUNE** (48 Completions. 18 amendments.)

Fellow Inverness jazz fan Donald Shiach (576) kindly invited me to his Graham Completion on Shee of Ardtalnaig. On the summit, to accompany the traditional celebratory champagne and drams we tucked into biscuits baked by Donald's wife Elizabeth, each with the name of a different Graham iced on. A less happy biscuit munching experience was reported by Sue Carroll (4989) and Gordon Hendry (4990) who Completed on the popular Beinn na Lap but "missed the last train from Corrou, started walking and after 20 miles had to spend the night in bivvy-bags with one Kit-Kat each, while family and friends were waiting to celebrate with us at Tyndrum."

Kathryn J. (3144) and Rodger W. Osborne (3145) reported a second Munro Round, distinguished by having climbed every one together both times. Another husband and wife team Margaret (2628) and Rob Pearson (2629) reported their Corbett Completion and having carefully scanned the List assure me they are the 97th and 98th to Compleat all Munros + Tops + Furths + Corbetts. Regular correspondent Anne Butler wrote requesting a certificate for her collie, Molly who made the first canine Corbett Completion on Garbh Bheinn.

Mark Gear (384) reported a Contiguous Completion for the second time, finishing his fourth Munro Round on Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan and his third Corbett round on Sgurr Gaorsaic on the same day. Hazel Strachan (3438) reported a much less obvious Contiguous combination, Compleating a third round of Donalds on East Mount Lowther at Wanlockhead, followed by a fourth round of Munros on Ben Wyvis, more than 200 miles away.

Michael MacKay (4991) dedicated his Munro Round to the memory of his mate Tam McKay (no relation) with whom he climbed most of his first 183. "Sadly Tam was knocked down on his push-bike by a careless driver and died from his injuries on 4 March 2009." John Haresign (5011) had completed all but 5 Munros by 1999 "then developed a condition known as Guillain Barre Syndrome. This rendered me paralysed, with some symptoms of a stroke....lasting 6 weeks and I had to remain in hospital for a further 10 weeks. Having learned to walk again and after a year of physiotherapy I decided to mop up the rest of the Munros."

With the registrations steadily creeping up towards 5000, there was some interest in who would acquire this milestone number, including The Munro Society who generously invited the lucky Compleatist to their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner. Writing a regular "Active Outdoors" feature in a number of Highland local newspapers, Peter Evans (4999) just missed, and I was pleased to see his picture in print a few weeks later, proudly showing off his Completion Certificate. The honour fell to Paul Isherwood (5000) from Falkirk.

Unsung heroes of the Munro List are of course the many and varied postal workers who collect, sort and deliver the endless flow of letters and certificates. I was therefore particularly pleased to receive a letter from Richard Wood (5022), my regular relief postie and was able to give him a personal explanation of the registration process. Reporting from Jacksonville (Florida, USA) Peter Blackwood (5028) "would like to make claim to being the first American to complete almost exclusively by "commuting" from the US." Having accompanied his wife on a 2 year assignment to IBM Greenock in 1998 he returned home having climbed 51 Munros and flew back to Scotland on 18 trips over the ensuing 12 years to finish the remainder. Peter noted that his grandfather was born in Leadhills and emigrated to the US in 1902. John Kentish (5035) noted that "over 50 of my Munros were ascended on skis", while Audrey Litterick (1308) reported having skied 55. This set me checking my own ski tally, nothing like as impressive.

**JULY** (23 Completions. 8 amendments.)

Early in the month I received a surprise invitation from President Nisbet to accompany him on an official SMC heighting of the infamous "Siamese Corbett twins" in Glen Shiel. Having berated The Munro Society for their heighting campaign, which led to the sad loss of two Munros, I was shocked that this affliction seemed to be spreading to our own Club! When the results of these various escapades were eventually published, the term "demotion" featured in several headlines, prompting David Batty of The Munro Society to encourage a more positive view of the process as one of "re-classification". To summarise, Sgurr nan Ceannaichean and Beinn a' Chlaidheimh have been re-classified as Corbetts, leaving a total of 282 Munros. Regarding the Corbett pair, Buidhe Bheinn becomes the sole Corbett and Sgurr a' Bhac Chaolais becomes a Corbett Top. So there are now 221 Corbetts.

Ken P. Whyte (319) reported a remarkable second "Full House" and becomes the first person to achieve this feat. He made a point of emphasising that "these are individual Rounds not started before the previous one completed" ie strictly Golfer's Method!

Graham A. Johnston (5039) summarised his ideal day thus:

- Nice sunny day, stop for a bacon roll
- Followed by a cycle into a remote Munro
- Circular route with a good steep climb with a few mild scrambles
- Easier slopes coming down
- Free wheel back to car on bike.

Sally (5045) and Andrew Cook (5046) saved Ben Nevis to last and Andrew kept his promise to Sally to pipe her to the summit. Mike Whelan (5047) found a simple solution to the common family responsibilities versus Munro bagging dilemma, explaining “twice yearly visits north (from Liverpool) became the pattern mainly involving solo backpacking trips, often dropping the wife and children off at Manchester airport for them to bask in Mediterranean sunshine and me to enjoy the vagaries of the Scottish weather.”

**AUGUST** (40 Completions 13 amendments.)

Donald Terry (5065) introduced himself as “a 55 year old dairy farmer from North Yorkshire.....I knew nothing of the Munro until my wife bought me *Hamish's Mountain Walk* – a great book which was to become “my Bible”. Nick Mattlock (5071) submitted an impressive folio of multi-coloured spreadsheets, bar graphs and pie charts showing fascinating details such as “Munros climbed in a day”, “day of week breakdown” and “By Month”. He also offered to “substantiate the Completion with at least one photograph of all 283 summit cairns”. Any suspicion of geekyness was dispelled by his booking the entire Kinlochewe Hotel for the weekend to celebrate Completion on Slioch with 40 friends. At the age of 79, Brian Kitching (2376) joined his son Neil Kitching (5089) for his Completion on Fionn Bheinn which spurred him on to send a photo of his own Completion back in 2000. Munro and Corbett Completion photos are always welcome for the website galleries. Please email a copy to <smc.org.uk>.

For Alan Brackenridge (5068) Completion “has been a lifelong ambition, which has been difficult to complete as I have spent the last 8 years in Houston, Texas.” A poignant PS notes “Attached photo of me on the summit of Ben More (Mull), could be anywhere, low cloud and storm force winds, July in Scotland!” Stuart Malcolm (5073) admitted to living in Sweden since 1977, while David Paterson (2968) reported a Corbett Completion, adding “I live and work in Yunnan Province, Southwest China and I reckon that I have one of the longest commutes to the hills.” He also notes that “some of my most memorable trips to the hills have been made by canoe and I hope to use this form of transport for a number of the Grahams.” Pete Child (5083) reported a bumper bundle of Completions – Munros, Corbetts, Grahams and Donalds, accompanied on all but the Munros with his partner Peta Jeffrey. I had to write an apologetic letter to Peta explaining that I could not add her achievements to The List until she Completed her Munros and received a number!

Leslie Barrie (1668) observed that “as with the Munros and Corbetts, the Grahams have given immense pleasure in all seasons over the years with many unforgettable excursions, some stand out epics and also not forgetting some scary moments.” Charles L. Scott (568) thought “the Grahams were challenging because of the lack of paths made covering the ground much harder. Also not as many linked together meant more ascent per hill. PS I expect I am the first Eire born Grahamist. Your's must be a wonderful part time hobby.”

Former Church of Scotland Minister, John M. Pickering (5074) used his Round to raise around £3000 for the parishes of Errol, Kilspindie and Rait. Keith Frost (5079)

Completed literally single-handed, explaining that "I have only one hand, my left arm having an elbow joint only." He found the In Pin particularly challenging, as did Wanda Rossiter (5087) who explained "I am rather prone to panic with exposure. I climbed down the Inaccessible Pinnacle the same way I went up, rather than being lowered down the shorter side." Russell Browning (5095) followed his Completion on Fionn Bheinn on 18 August with a trip to Tanzania, where he "reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro on 1 September at 06.48 with an amazing sunrise on Stella Point."

**SEPTEMBER** (38 Completions. 5 Amendments.)

Susan Houstoun (5107) wrote "yesterday I summited Seanna Bhraigh from Corrie Mulzie accompanied by my husband Sandy, and sons Mike and Robbie. Mike carried the champagne and glasses and Robbie carried my accordion to the top where we had a few tunes including a jig called *Sir Torquil Munro* which was written for Sir Hugh's father." Gavin J. H. Kerr (5112) Completed on Beinn Dorain with another musical family party, noting "my son Euan is a fine piper and he piped me onto the top." Twin sisters Cliona (5117) and Nuala (5118) became the new youngest Munroists, aged 10 when they Completed on Sgurr Choinnich Mor, along with Mum Diane (5119) and Dad Neil McCheyne (5120). Their West Highland Terrier called Aonach has only done 224, so no rest for that family quite yet.

Nick Burley (5111) sent a long, interesting and rather crumpled letter, dated 20/4/10 and a covering note dated 10/9/12 explaining "I was clearing out my cupboards in preparation for a 12 month trip to Nepal & India and came across the attached letter." Another apologetic Nick, Nick Taylor (5115) explained the delay of several months between Completion and writing because "I am recovering in the Sheffield Spinal Injuries Unit after breaking my back whilst climbing in the Peak District." Having Completed on Ben More, Mull, taking advantage of a spell of fine weather he "discovered a small unclimbed crag near Tobermory and did 11 new routes there."

Lynda A.(5127) and Peter S. Armstrong (5128) were accompanied by a Border terrier Bella on their Completion, third in a line of terriers which have accompanied them on different parts of their Round. Another couple Completing together, Julie (5132) and Stephen Brooks (5133) reflected that "we have learned to navigate, scramble and improved our winter hill-walking skills. We have worn out three pairs of boots and at least thirty layers of clothing and now own three tents of various size and weight and a mountain bike. We have enjoyed being out on the hills in all weather conditions and have experienced some hair-raising moments!" Stewart Newman (1711) became the 24<sup>th</sup> Munroist to achieve "Full House" with his Donald Completion on Saddle Yorke. He also reminded me that he has Completed all his Rounds solo. My neighbour Sheila Lockhart (5136) Completed on Stob na Broige, in the company of Martin (Harpic) Hind and "celebrated with extremely indifferent tea and scones at the Glencoe Visitors Centre (not to be recommended)."

**OCTOBER** (34 Completions.12 Amendments.)

To celebrate their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, The Munro Society held a dinner in Fort William, to which President Nisbet and myself were kindly invited, along with Paul

Isherwood (5000) and a number of other guests. We were made very welcome and had a very enjoyable evening. Membership of The Munro Society is open to all Munroists - for more details see <themunrosociety.com>.

Simon Grove (3243) reported a Graham Completion on Beinn Dearg's east top from Glen Artney, "having scaled its west top in 2001 and since discovered it is 1m lower." Having endured a purgatorial ascent the same way through long thick grass a few weeks earlier, I was particularly sympathetic to this error. Bring back the sheep! Using Ben Dronaig Lodge bothy as a base to finish a second Munro Round on Bidein a'Choire Sheasgaich and Lurg Mhor, Ian Rae (104) was astonished to encounter two separate parties en route from Land's End to John o'Groats. He also reminded me that the last time we met was ski-touring in Norway, at Spiterstulen, in 1989.

Kenneth T. Milne (5143) actually Completed in 1999, but waited all this time, until he had done his Tops, before registering. It is never too late! Kenneth is well on his way to his 1000<sup>th</sup> Munro/Top. Susan (5150) and Alasdair McKee (5151) reported that not only had they "climbed all the hills together as a married couple (we spent our silver wedding this year on Sgurr Ban in Letterewe) and are also both Vegans, so we may be the first Scottish/English Vegan couple to Compleat?"

Golden Munroist Dave Palmer (5155) sent an illustrated report, including some wonderful black & white photos of a party of five 16 year old boys who in 1955 came up from London by train to Aviemore for a fortnight in the Cairngorms. "Walking into the hills; through the Lairig Ghru; tenting; bothying; sleeping under the Shelter Stone then camping at Derry Lodge; walking to Braemar for more provisions then back again to enjoy a second week arseing about in the streams .....after fourteen days in one of the most beautiful places I know, we had only summited three or four big hills." Mike Brinkworth (5158) described similar trips more recently, coming up by train from the West Midlands, until after 184 Munros and increasing back pain, he required major spinal surgery in 2005. "After months of intensive physio and hundreds of hours of monotonous exercise I was back with the lads in Scotland." Another Cairngorm enthusiast, Mick McKie (5156) finally Completed on Ciste Dhubh, his 637<sup>th</sup> Munro, having climbed "Derry Cairngorm 32 times, Lochnagar 38 times, Glas Maol 18 times, Ben Macdui 13 times, Beinn a'Bhuird 14 times."

Peter J. Holder (5164) and Joe Mann (5165) "are both students studying at the University of Cumbria. This summer we decided to buy a van and Compleat all the Munros in one summer." Starting on Mount Keen on 17/5/12 "we continually walked all the Munros together until we reached Ben Hope on 17/7/12." On Completion Joe was aged 19 and Peter 21, so they believe that Joe is the youngest person to have Completed a Continuous Round. On their return to the Lake District they completed the Bob Graham Round (a classic 72 mile fell run over 24 hours) on 15/9/12 in 21 hours 47 minutes.

One of several friends and acquaintances with only one final summit remaining, Steven R. Beaven (5173) never had a sense of urgency, until his son decided to go

and walk the length of New Zealand. "With Alexander heading off for an uncertain period, I thought we should have a quick trip and did the Five Sisters as a day out from Comrie." Another celebrating son, David Forbes (5173) "toasted Completion on Beinn na Lap by opening a 21 year old Knockando single malt kept by my late Dad who died 10 years ago having saved the bottle for a special occasion...the toast was "Dad and the Munros."

**NOVEMBER** (17 Completions. 8 Amendments.)

Having first climbed Mount Keen on Midsummers Day, 1952, Ian Edward (5176) spread his Round over a remarkable 60 years. When Ian's first wife sadly passed away in 1995 his Munro tally was a mere 3 and he "planned as a widower to spend my retirement on the golf course." Then in 1998 he "met a German lady from Munich who had been a climber and walker in the Alps all her life." Ian Completed on Mullach nan Dheiragain in August 2012, then a few days later returned to Mount Keen with his wife Gudrun Clapier Edward (5175), when she became the first German lady to Complete. Steve Miller (5181) finished his letter outlining his Round by saying "it has taken me into the most beautiful and remote parts of this wonderful country with its vast and varied mountain environment, flora and fauna and it's a great pity to see the mountain environments being industrialised with huge wind-farm developments. Thanks for taking the time to read this and all the good work you guys do."

Keith Harper (1350) Completed a second Round on Beinn na Lap and asked a lone passing walker to take a group photo. He turned out to be Hugh Munro, from Whitehills, Aberdeen. Keith celebrated his first Round with this poem:

From North to South, from East to West,  
I walk in the mountains I love the best,  
Through rain and snow I've battled on,  
But when those midges came I was gone,  
Off to the Alps I did go,  
To see there mountains in awesome mood,  
But back in Scotland, to the land of mist,  
To walk in the mountains on Munro's List.

Tim Searles (5186) also Completed on Beinn na Lap and wrote that "I'd like to recommend the Corroul Station restaurant run by Ollie and Lizzie who took over the lease this summer. They have created a wonderful ambiance, with an extensive bill of fayre, devised using locally sourced produce." I can heartily endorse this recommendation, having enjoyed an excellent meal there last week. They also offer overnight accommodation, an upmarket alternative to the excellent nearby Loch Ossian Youth Hostel. Graham A. Wyllie (5190) noted that he is the son of W. L. Wyllie (248) and nephew of J. Wyllie (279). Mathew Stewart (5191) reminded me that I had congratulated him personally on his Completion on the summit of Stob Binnein, a fantastic clear autumn day a few weeks previously. Murdo McEwan (2183) was particularly enthusiastic about his Corbett Round which "I enjoyed more than the Munros. Maybe because they are "less travelled" and with less distinct pathways. I can't think of any Corbetts that I found to be "miserable", but several

were certainly invigorating and challenging.” Murdo was very keen to get his Completion date 10/11/12 on his certificate.

**DECEMBER** (9 Completions. 7 Amendments.)

Someone else with an eye on the calendar and the clock, Steve Corbett (5197) Completed “on 12/12/12 by touching the summit of Ben Vorlich at 12 minutes and 12 seconds past mid-day.” Paul R. Wheeler (5195) listed the guidebooks he had used but advised “don’t rely solely on the Munros guidebook, use it as one amongst many sources, and sometimes just use maps and your imagination.” Paul also admitted “I find moths fascinating... and claim about half the records by 10 km squares in the national database for one montaine moth species.” Alison McDonald (5198) was introduced to Munros by her then boyfriend a few months after they met. He proposed on top of his last Munro, and as well as gaining a husband Alison has also gone on to compete for Scotland as an international hill, cross-country and road runner. Reporting his second Munro Round, John A. Baddeley (1751) also belatedly reported finishing his Tops on the Northern Pinnacles of Liathach almost 10 years after his Completion, mentioning “I even had a bit of the first-round Talisker saved for the celebration on a stunning day.”

Ron Payne (395) wrote “It is about time I caught up on my List entry! There always seems to be something else crying out to be done. Particularly for the MCof S!” Ron is now on to his Grahams and having done 80 has noticed “they are not as easy as their height would suggest.” Brothers Ian (2172) and Alan Clark (2173) finished a second Munro Round together on Slioch, where they had also Completed together, 12 years previously. Alan Don (2872) finished his second Round on Carn a’ Chlamain a few minutes after an unknown lady had done exactly the same. How rare is a Coincident Second Completion? Colin Simpson (920) accomplished his second Round by a variety of approaches including “foot, bike, rock climbs, winter climbs, ski tours and even sea kayak.”

The final Completion letter of the year came, very belatedly from Mary (5199) and Alex Gillespie (5200) whose fantastic photos of Lochaber will be familiar. Last amendment came from regular correspondent Steve Fallon (1045). “Just a short note to let you know that I Completed the Munros for the 15<sup>th</sup> time on 13<sup>th</sup> November (my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday).” Many happy returns?

With some 363 letters safely filed and on their way to the National Library of Scotland archive in Edinburgh, I look forward to reading more as they arrive.

Enjoy your hills.

Dave Broadhead, Clerk of the List