MUNRO MATTERS 2014

by Dave Broadhead (Clerk of the List)

This report covers 1 January to 31 December 2014. Comparing this year's data with last year (in brackets): New Munroists 250 (233); males 76% (81%); resident in Scotland 55% (60%); couples 16% (11%); average age 54(54); size of Compleation summit party 10 (12); average Compleation time 23 (25) years; Golden Munroists 10 (7).

As ever I received a large number of very interesting letters. Some readers may be familiar with Radio Scotland's early evening show "Get It On" whose listeners choose the music following a different theme each day, so I thought it would be fun to suggest suitable songs for Munroists. For example, the first Munroists of 2014 Barbara and Austin Farr (5434 & 5435) may like *Birdie Song (The Tweets)* as they wrote "we were delighted to see our first Dotterel and two of his chicks" when they Compleated on Beinn Fhada.

We Are Family (Sister Sledge) would be good for father and son John and Jonathon Morgan-Hughes (5462 & 5463). Rory Matheson (5542) paid tribute to "my Dad Colin Matheson (4977) who has been my inspiration and companion on just over a quarter of my Munros." Joy, Peter, Karen and Colin Forbes (5550, 5551, 5552, 5553) are brothers and their respective wives who all Compleated together on A'Mhaighdean. I was particularly pleased to hear from Finlay Wild (5534) after reading his account of his amazing record breaking Cuillin Ridge traverse in last year's SMCJ. By coincidence I bumped into him a few days later on Glasgow's Byres Road, a place seldom frequented by either of us on a Sunday afternoon. He reminded me that he was now the third generation on The List, following in the distinguished steps of his grandfather John Hinde (87) and parents Fiona and Roger Wild (2349 & 2350). When I suggested his song might be **Speedy Gonzales (Pat Boone)** he looked at me as if I had taken leave of my senses! Appropriately Finlay Compleated on Beinn Fhionnlaidh.

Grandad (Clive Dunn) Tom Spiers (5436) mentioned his grandfather, William Spiers, describing him as "something of a mountaineering legend". He was SMC President 1956-58. Joe Buchanan (5580) had an even more tenuous link with the Club, explaining "I am by nature a quiet and private person who doesn't seek attention, however, my daughter announced to the world on her Facebook page of my achievement and the number of messages of congratulations I received even from people I didn't know was staggering. One of her work colleagues is the stepson of Hugh Munro, the grandson of Sir Hugh Munro and I was pleased to receive a card from Hugh Munro himself and I enclose a copy for your attention." With a fine black & white photo of Liathach, it reads Congratulations and well done for climbing Grandfather's mountains. Gavin Stark (5619) mentioned that his great-uncle was George Elliot (7) also an SMC member. Apart from Ye Cannae Shove Yer Grannie Af a Bus(traditional) which hardly seems appropriate, I struggled for a song for Isobel Macdonald (5659) who waited for her daughter and 2 grandaughters "coming home from Australia on holiday, and wanted to do my last one with me along with my son and grandson. We had a great day."

Memory (from Cats) William Bruce (5443) described his most notable memories as "meeting a BBC film crew on An Teallach with presenter Nicholas Crane and meting the future Queen, Camilla on Lochnagar." This Years Love (David Gray) Andrew Taylor and his partner Jamie Aarons (5446 & 5447) climbed every Munro between 4 January and 14 December 2013 whilst both were in full time employment. Highlights included "skiing 40 km across 11 Munros from Creag Leacach to Lochnagar." For further details see http://munrosinayear.wordpress.com/introduction/>. *Poetry in Motion (Johnny Johnny Introduction)* Tillotson) John M. Walsh (5449) summed up his Round in one sentence. "While the sun rises I will walk on over hill and mountain by path and wild until the sun sets for me in this magnificent land." As ever, the Compleation poets were busy, including Paul Ashman "the bard of Penshaw" whose ode for Neil A. Hawksworth (5459) starts thus: "Schiehallion's the mountain for Neil's last test/a Munro worth this honour one of the best." Jennifer M. and Richard Johnston (5466 & 5467) were surprised at the summit of Beinn Chabhair by "our choir of eleven singing a made up Munro bagging song sung to the tune of Abba's 'Money, money, money" plus special t-shirts and the traditional champagne." Don't Stop Me Now (Queen) Will Copestake (5470) "started last May 2013 in a sea kayak, kayaked around Scotland and then cycled to and climbed the Munros under my own power across the winter." Further details of this remarkable unsupported Round can be found on

http://www.ukhillwalking.com/news/item.php?id=68922 or on his website www.willcopestakemedia.com. *Lovely Rita, Meter Maid (The Beatles)* Kenny Gaittens (5480) made an unusual claim that he "managed to access all Munros avoiding parking charges. This involved organising some different approaches from the main tourist routes."

My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean (traditional) Belgian Munroist Teugels Bart (5504) required 20 trips to Scotland for his Round. He sent me a copy of an interview with him (in Flemish) in the magazine "Op Weg" entitled "Into the Munro's" (sic). Robin C. S. Verbeek (5539) travelled from the Netherlands for 15 years and plans to keep returning to do the Corbetts. Akihito Tamura (5560) is probably the first Japanese Munroist, though he lives in Livingston. His blog (in Japanese) is at http://tamura-san03.blogspot.co.uk/ and he reported "I have never used camping, bothy or YH for Munro bagging. But I've done always by day hiking (longest is 11hr 40min), and by myself alone."

D-I-V-O-R-C-E (*Tammy Wynette*) Roger D. Williams (5544) wistfully wrote "I have no plans to do any more bagging as a divorce would quickly follow if I were even to mention the word Corbett. My wife has managed 150 Munros and considers that a nice round number to finish on." *Where Did You Get That Hat?* (*Stanley Holloway*) Elizabeth McKinnon (5586) prepared for her big day on Beinn Fhada by knitting pom pom hats for all the summit party to wear plus a garland of pom poms for her dog Molly who has only 40 Munros remaining. *Heroes* (*David Bowie*) Judi Syson and Mary Wilson (5590 & 5591) sought sponsorship for their Round to raise money for "Help for Heroes". Their achievement was all the more impressive as Mary had been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 2004 and was featured in the Daily Record.

He Ain't Heavy He's My Brother (The Hollies) Philip Jackson (5601) started tackling Munros with his son then in 1990 his big brother Neil McNair Jackson (5602) started joining them. The brothers Compleated together on Ben Hope and Neil explained that

"the SMC Guide has been a terrific resource. It has guided Philip and me in our annual 'where shall we go this year?' discussion for a quarter of a century. It has helped us get up the hills in good order. And it has occasionally taken us to places or in conditions where we said to each other 'if it hadn't been in the Guide I wouldn't've come here – AND I'M NOT COMING BACK!" So do, please, pass on our appreciation for that to the Club." Chris and Simon Royle (5664 & 5665) had each climbed around 20 Munros before deciding they "might be the first brothers to have Completed the Munros and been together on every summit" so they repeated these hills during the course of their Round.

Needles and Pins (The Searchers) Robert Poole (5605) highlighted a dilemma faced by many Munroists venturing outside their normal comfort zone. "For many years Skye appeared a barrier to Compleation, especially the In Pinn. I presume it is considered OK from an ethical perspective to have touched the top of the summit rock and had my head above it rather than standing on it, and being lowered from the top rather than abseiling under my own control (this wasn't the place to learn to abseil!)." Ball of Confusion (The Temptations) While Ben More (Mull) remains the most popular summit earmarked for celebrations, Beinn na Lap has also become a regular choice, leading to some multiple Coincdent Compleations. Peter McLaren (5621) reported "my last Munro on 20 September 2014 coincided with at least 2 others." One of these, Simon Randfield (5624) wrote "I believe there were at least 4 other Compleatist celebrations on the hill that day." This also included Anita and Tim Clarke (5634 & 5635) and their "summit party of 22 composed a mix of hill-walking and non hill-walking friends, for 9 of whom it was their first Munro."

Private Number (Judy Clay & William Bell) Many letters suggest little individual idiosyncracys. For example Martin Southwick (5638) clearly has a thing for numbers. From his home in Scunthorpe he worked out "total mileage 1730 miles (2787km), ascent 521,00 feet (159,000m) equating to 6 miles per hill and 1840 feet of ascent per hill. Leaving it a bit late to choose his final Munro he realised "the number for Sgurr a' Mhaoraich (104) is the same as my house number! To celebrate, my partner bought me a t-shirt with all the mileage/ascent statistics written on it." You've Got a Friend (Carole King) Richard Brinley (5681), Nick Bloxham (5682) and Clive Eames (5683) Compleated together on Ben Alder and Richard wrote "as a personal note of interest at nearly 6' 2" and 18 stone I may be one of the larger people to have finished the task! On some of the very remote Munros I have been frequently asked 'how did you get here?' revealing their surprise." A look at the popular on-line photo gallery confirms that Munroists come in all shapes and sizes!

At Last (Etta James) seems appropriate for this year's Golden Munroists who were Hugh Monckton (5448) (56 years), George D. Calder (5516) (51 years), John Corden (5546) (55 years), Hugh Jones (5588) (50 years), Neil McNair Jackson (5602) (54 years), John Danby (5606) (53 years), Ronald Caunt (5609) (50 years), Andrew Rushworth (5620) (51 years), Douglas S. Murray (5636) (58 years) and another SMC member George W. Wilikinson (5656) (54 years).

Never Too Late (Three Days Grace) Andrew N. Boggon (5442) Compleated in 1999, Caroline and John Leaver (5450 & 5451) in 1997 and Neil Macnair way back in 1992. George Bruce (5639) unburdened himself by finally reporting a string of Munro, Corbett

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and Graham Compleations, starting in 1987. After 37 years with Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team he might have learned to be a bit more prompt in submitting reports! I was of course delighted to hear from all these people as I always assure Munroists that it is never too late to register.

Climb Every Mountain (from Sound of Music) Of more general interest, on 13 October 2014 Rob Woodall (816) became the first person to Compleat the "ultimate hill bagging list" ie the Marilyns (1556 British hills to have at least 150m of descent on all sides) when he climbed Stac Lee and Stac an Armin on the St Kilda archipelago, closely followed by Eddie Dealtry (1452) who became the second. I do not think the Clerk of the Marilyn List will ever be as busy as me, though our member William A. Forbes (4483) is very close.

Don't Stop Me Now (Queen) leads me on to the B side of my report:

AMENDMENTS

I was particularly pleased to hear from our inspirational member Miles Hutchinson (23) who reported his Donald Compleation on Carrifran Gans which also gave him a "Full House". Miles modestly omitted to mention his age but I noticed he joined the SMC in 1955. William A. Forbes (4483) became the third SMC "Full House" and Miles the fourth. Other "Full House" reports were Susan and George Henderson (2268 & 2269) who became the first couple and Dave Irons (1933) and Neil Sandilands (2291). While on the subject of Munrosis Proliferens Hamish M. Brown (62) our second SMC "Full House" notified me of a missing "Furth" and with seventeen entries on his line ties with Steven Fallon (1045) as the most prolific Compleater, though Steven, with 15 Munro Rounds has a long way to go for "Full House". Reporting his fourth Furth Round, Michael B. Slater (358) is well on his way to equalling Hamish's five Furth Rounds and notes that "Tryfan is more than 70 miles further away from my home in Aboyne than Lugnaquillia!" William A. Nimmo Smith (641) (aka The Rt. Hon. Lord Nimmo Smith) reported a notable second Munro Round, Compleated on Ben Wyvis, which he first climbed 64 years previously, at the age of 7. During this second Round he also achieved a Corbett Round and kept "records of daily times". Without driving off the public road but using a mountain bike where practicable his total, walking and biking was 1715 hrs 55 min. Total time for Munros 860 hrs 20 min, for Corbetts 855 hrs 35 min, giving an average time per Munro of 3 hrs 3 min and per Corbett 3 hrs 52 min. Proliferens is not restricted to males. Reporting her sixth Munro Round after a very snowy winter, Hazel Strachan (3438) reported "a few challenging days in white out conditions. I walked over a lot of big rounded hills with snow shoes on my feet. Instead of leaving my husband at home most weekends we now have a motorhome to spend time together in. It's certainly made the winter more comfortable." Harry Braden (4335) went one better and Compleated his Tops without even leaving home "following the demotion of Knight's Peak, that being my only outstanding Top for several years."

Reporting a second Corbett Round, Raymond Shaw (1115) mentioned that his dog Grover "Completed a Corbett Round on 12/08/2003 with me on Clisham" making him the first canine Corbetteer. John Edward Casson (2862) reported his final Graham, Creach Beinn on Mull where he "shared the hill with a stalker, who shot a stag." Brothers

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Charles and Michael McCartney (3102 & 3103) finished 4th and 3rd Munro Rounds respectively on Ben More (Mull). John Brewster (409) and Linsay Wylie (248) arranged a rare Corbett *Coincident Compleation* on Beinn an Oir which also coincided with the Jura hill race. Sheila and Bill Simpson (3432 & 3433) finished their Graham Round together and noted wistfully "the weather was wet and windy, which was the same for our last Munro and last Corbett. So much for British summers." In a similar situation, Howard Jones (2774) observed that "having done all 3 rounds from my North Wales base I have kept the Scottish economy going in terms of diesel, accommodation and meals out!" Another couple Compleating their Grahams together, Wilma and Ron Forsyth (2162 & 2318) observed "as many of these hills have no paths, route planning and good navigational skills were essential. We found that information in the book we followed was often out of date, especially as far as bridges and forests were concerned!" Thank goodness then for the excellent new SMC Hillwalkers Guide "The Grahams & The Donalds" which is sure to increase my workload!