

## MUNRO MATTERS 2018

### By Dave Broadhead (Clerk of the List)

THIS REPORT COVERS 1 January to 31 December 2018. The five columns below give number, name and year of Completion of Munros, Tops and Furths as appropriate. \*SMC member, \*\*LSCC member.

#### PRINT LIST OF MUNROISTS HERE

Comparing this year's data with last year (in brackets): New Munroists 178 (184); males 77% (76%); resident in Scotland 59% (61%); couples 9% (13%); average age 54 (56); size of Completion summit party 14 (12); average Completion time 27 (26) years; Golden Munroists 12 (10).

Unlike other sports, the great thing about hill-bagging is that there are not really any rules, apart from getting to the top under your own steam. As Clerk, when asked to make a ruling on some minor point I have invariably knocked the question back as an issue of personal conscience. **For example, some people reset to zero for their second or subsequent rounds, while others are happy to carry over previous ascents. EITHER IS ACCEPTABLE.** Late in the year, I was put on the spot to make a ruling or at least a clarification, about Donald Completions. Page 324 of our authoritative Hillwalkers' Guide *The Grahams and The Donalds* (Rab Anderson and Tom Prentice SMC 2015) explains that 'Percy Donald's Tables are a complete entity. Most of those collecting The Donalds elect to climb all 140 Hills and subsidiary Tops on Donald's list; the Donalds and the Donald Tops.' The issue was brought to my attention by the ever-vigilant Dave Hewitt who noticed that some individuals claiming 'Full House' had missed out Donald Tops and had therefore not climbed every hill listed in the definitive 'Munro's Tables' (Derek Bearhop SMC 1997) which, after all, is the object of 'Full House'. A brief consultation among some SMC members and others fully supported the 140-hill total, so Donald Completions should now include all Hills and Tops. Individuals who have missed out the 51 Tops will not be disqualified, but those claiming 'Full House' should be trying to correct this omission in order to sleep easily with a clear conscience. For my final 'Munro Matters', looking back over almost 12 years and nearly 3000 letters, I have decided to offer not rules but –

#### TEN TOP TIPS FOR ASPIRING MUNROISTS

##### 1) BE INSPIRED

First new Munroist registered in 2018, Dutch born Renate Powell (6287) remembered 'I had always been enamoured by Scotland as a child – it seemed such a mystical place of craggy mountains, eagles and mist when you're living in a flat country.' David Wood (6303) kindly commented 'the existence of the SMC Lists has taken me to some stunning and remote places that I might not otherwise have ventured to and for that I am grateful. The Lists are inspirational.' Under the heading of 'A Few Notes' Derek Ratcliffe (6304) enthused about his Round over almost 6 closely hand-written pages, including his musical mountain inspirations; Mahler's Sixth, the symphonies of Sibelius and musically less familiar to me, Rautavaara (another Finn) and Sir Arnold Bax who apparently spent winters at the Loch Morar Hotel. Tony Bent (6383) calculated 'I have driven over 21,000 miles, walked nearly 2,400 km and climbed over 154,000 metres – and have reached the summits

of the 282 Munros. The whole experience has been far greater than just climbing mountains. The journey has taken me to all corners of Scotland in all weathers. I've seen its wildlife: ptarmigan, red squirrel, mountain hare, deer (and reindeer!), seals and all sorts of birds. I've experienced cloud inversions and a Brocken spectre. I've wild camped and slept under the stars without a tent and stayed in hostels, bunkhouses, bothies, a railway carriage and even a converted railway station. I've walked, crawled, scrambled, rope-climbed, abseiled, waded across rivers and squelched through bogs (so many bogs!). And I've met some great people.'

The mysterious Mr M. J. Hey (6389) 'was inspired by Irvine Butterfield's *High Mountains of Great Britain and Ireland* Vol. 1. Some of those hills featured in this book looked pictorially impossible to do and initially put me off, but a winter hiking course in the Cairngorms gave me confidence.' David Barrett (6406) gave 'thanks to Sir Hugh for his relentless surveying of Scottish mountains (doubtless unaware of the legacy he was creating) and being, in no small part, the inspiration to stay focused and complete the Munros.' David also submitted the inevitable 'heart-warming ode' entitled 'Climb Every Munro' sung to a tune familiar to fans of 'The Sound of Music' and ascribed to a certain Mother Claire – not a nun but mother of eight-year old Verity Beadnell 'who ran rings around us all on the way up.' The song starts 'Climb every Munro/All 2-8-2...' Ashling Dolan (6451) and Richard Holliday (6452) were driving north on their Completion weekend when 'our trusted Fiesta decided to break down on the M90 leaving us stranded before Perth. Our hopes of reaching Seana Bhragh were quickly disappearing but luckily with some quick thinking and a credit card we were able to hire a car.'

## 2) ENCOURAGE YOUR FAMILY

Lesley Turner (6290) started to chum her Mum, Helen Rogers (2688) when she was aged 16 and Helen, now aged 75, joined the family Completion on Sgurr a' Mhaoriach, along with her 8 year-old grand-daughter. Angus C. McNicoll (6298) 'climbed his first Munro, Schiehallion in 1963, aged 17' and Completed 52 years later while his daughter Eilidh F. M. Henderson (6299) started on the same hill, aged 10 and finished a mere 24 years later. Andrew Bell (6358) wrote 'I enclose a letter on behalf of my brother Philip Bell (6359) who started and completed with me, although he had a bit of catching up as he had several years when he couldn't get up to Scotland.' Alan Devlin (6382) Completed 4 years to the weekend after his Mum, Elizabeth McKinnon (5586) and almost 2 years after his dog Molly, reporting 'she is an amazing dog and shows no sign of slowing up.' There were no comments about Mum! Kevin James Renfrew (6385) climbed his first Munro aged 15 with his Dad, James Renfrew (2607) who accompanied him over the next 26 years for his full Round, despite osteoarthritis and a twenty-year old replacement hip. Jennifer (6386) and Alan West (6387) offered a cautionary note. 'By about 2008 we had both climbed about 30 Munros, mainly with our children (three boys) – unfortunately we may have put them off hillwalking!' Brian Tibbs (6421) started hillwalking 53 years ago, when he was 6 and enclosed a family photo on the summit of Ben Nevis when he was 12, with his Mum, two sisters and a younger brother draped in coils of rope whom I recognized immediately as one of our members renowned for his rock-climbing prowess, ski touring and short films. You have not changed a bit, Andy. Completing on Ben Sgritheall, John Strachan (6445) noticed 'my son Harvey pressed on ahead of the group and as I approached the summit he played 'Last of the Mohicans' followed by 'Highland Cathedral' on his pipes, an emotional end that brought a tear to my eye.' Doug Bryce (6453) enjoyed the first snows of winter on

Beinn Eighe's Spidean Coire nan Clach with his father, Ian Bryce (298) where 'a wee dram was raised to Uncle Jim and the hills.' The latter, a Munroist and Corbetteer sadly passed away earlier in the year. Coincidentally they were joined on the summit by 'Penny the 'wonder dog' which has apparently Completed two rounds of Munros and is on track for a third, along with owner Graeme Morrison (1533). Harriet Baker wrote in on behalf of her father, Richard J. Baker (6454) who 'climbed his final Munro, Beinn Mhanach aged 69. What made this day even more special was that my older brother Tom (who now resides in New Zealand) and I were able to join him, the first time the three of us had been together in fourteen years.'

### 3) EXTEND A WORLD-WIDE WELCOME

Marina Amaral Lamont (6318) described how 'the mountains in Scotland helped me to recover from an earthquake and find a husband, John D. Lamont (6139). We got engaged on our first Corbett together. I also believe I am the first Portuguese person to finish all the Munros.' Niko Strassburg (6349) from Koblenz, Germany noted 'I really enjoy the 'freedom' that Compleating gives me: I can actually choose not to head for the hills on a fine day or even take my holidays in places outside bonny Scotland!' Andrew Underdown (6402) noted that for his Completion on Carn Ghluasaid in Kintail 'my son had travelled from the Falkland Islands to join us and my god-daughter left directly afterwards to travel for work to Borneo.' Karen Maitland (6429) wrote 'Scotland became my adopted country in 2005 (moving from the US) and it's quite difficult to prise me away from it. I spend most of my holidays exploring undiscovered corners. I keep a large wall map on which I've highlighted all the roads I've been on; while the West Coast is nearly entirely coloured in, the eastern half of the country has been somewhat neglected – perhaps it's time to change that!'

### 4) GET ON TOP OF HEALTH PROBLEMS

Following some heart problems, Michael J.M. Adam (6291) had started getting back into hillwalking when he was diagnosed with Addison's Disease. His response was 'to attempt a full Round of 'Post-Addison Munros' which he called his PAM's. Success followed 15 years later and Michael reminded me that Patrick Lonergan (2986) was another PAM. Lynne Murray (6353) relates that 'following a bad car accident in 1997 when I was given the news that I probably would not walk again we bought a Munro and Corbett map, stuck it on the kitchen wall and proceeded to tackle such local hills as recovery of my foot would allow. I had a wonderful physiotherapist who aided my recovery no end.' Barry J. Homer (6426) reported 'since my first Munro (in 1984) I have experienced multiple injuries and health problems. These include breaking both patellar tendons, a pulmonary embolism and atrial flutter. So, in no small part my Completion was with the help of the NHS and their excellent doctors and nurses.'

### 5) DO SOMETHING SPECIAL

Colin Dyson (6305) and Paul Robinson (6306) celebrated on the icy summit of Ben Wyvis with 14 family and friends enjoying 'Islay whisky, bubbly, chocolates and even a large pork pie.' Nothing unusual there but on this occasion 'a special event amateur radio

station was in play, authorized by OFCOM, with a unique call sign, part of an amateur radio group who 'collect' Summits On The Air (SOTA).' Prior to Completion the following day on Sgurr nan Gillean, Jim Murdoch (6315) got good value from his guide who 'led me to the top of the In Pin, abseiled down, then back up the South Crack, down again and finally up the West Ridge for a momentous triple ascent.' He also paid tribute to Miles Hutchinson (23) with whom he 'had been on many a trip helping me develop my love of the hills' and who sadly passed away in 2017. Marguerite E. Norris (6316) and D. Graham Norris (6317) started their Round 39 years ago on Ben Nevis, before they were married, when 'on the summit, in the cloud and snow, I was somewhat surprised when Graham got down on one knee and proposed to me!' Dan Watson (6462) organized an impressive Contiguous Completion 'on 28 October, in perfect weather I finished the Corbetts with Stob a' Choin, the Grahams with Meall Mor and finally the Munros with Beinn Chabhair.'

#### 6) LOOK WELL TO EACH STEP

Martin Haigh (6322) noted 'I live in London and the 282 Munros have taken me 148 days of walking, over 56 trips to Scotland. I had an accident on Sron a' Choire Ghairbh in 2010 that I was lucky to survive and required RAF helicopter rescue. Thankfully, I made a recovery and returned to the mountains.' Jonathan Williams (6323), another Londoner whose Round took 15 years mentioned 'the time includes two breaks to recover from a (separate) climbing accident which kept me off my feet for the best part of one year.' Kenneth R. Ross (6341) (full title Rev Dr OBE) noted 'I have enjoyed many wonderful days on the hills and only one unhappy one when I had a bad fall on A' Mhaighdean in 2014 and broke several bones.' Despite this he admitted that 'I have found that the long days on the hills renew the spirit like nothing else.' He kindly finished 'I take the opportunity to express sincere thanks to the SMC whose Munro book has been my indispensable companion on this adventure.' Piers Coutts (6457) Completed on Ben Lomond with family and friends, reporting wistfully that 'all this was, I'm glad to say, conducted without significant injury. However, the ultimate irony was that the following morning, on a gentle stroll to the new Abyssinia bothy, one of our party slipped on the simplest of stream crossings and fractured his wrist. The temptations to overconfidence are ever-present.'

#### 7) GET GOOD GEAR, GOOD GRUB, A GIRLFRIEND AND A FLASK

Just before Christmas my long-suffering postie delivered a mysterious little package, sealed with gaffer tape. Packed inside I found a small glass bottle, half full of a familiar looking amber liquid and over 3 closely typed pages of one of the most entertaining letters I have ever received. The story could have gone under several headings but deserves a paragraph to itself. Robin Struebig (6461) introduced himself as 'from Germany and have been in Scotland since 2014, now working as an electrical engineer in Glasgow. Realising my job would be office based I knew I had to find an outdoor based hobby. The first set of gear I bought was a mere £180 'on sale' in a famous warehouse for mountains.' Starting with Ben Lomond and despite equipment and nutritional shortcomings, Robin was soon hooked. 'My colleagues joked I'd only come to work to recover from the weekend' and life soon became further complicated when 'I met a girl (now girlfriend Sophia). She, initially fascinated by my determination, was really supportive of this ambition.' Especially when he was sent to Thurso for 6 months. With the challenge of the Inaccessable Pinnacle approaching, Robin 'decided to invest in gear and training over the winter instead of a guide.' I will leave you to guess why Robin finally Completed with 16 friends on Ben

Nevis at 2a.m. but will explain the significance of the dram which I enjoyed as soon as I had finished reading. 'One thing I bought during my first shopping tour for hillwalking was a flask. The whisky I included with this letter is a sample that has a high percentage of the original Famous Grouse I took up Ben Lomond. The flask never went below 75% filling and was topped up with Talisker Storm.' Robin's epic letter concluded 'At last a thank you to all those I have met on the hills, at campfires or in bothies. No matter if it was a whole walk, an evening, a quick chat on the top or just wave or nod. These people no matter how old, experienced, background, well or badly equipped have always brought a smile to my face and made me feel part of a community open to all. The way I like to imagine Scotland to be.'

#### 8) FIND NEW CHALLENGES

Reporting Completion of Munros, Tops and Furths, Andrew Carvell (6357) admitted 'my immediate priorities were to soak my feet and have a wee dram. Now I am considering the possibility of another challenge.' Ben Sparham (6384) is 'currently working my way through swimming all the Cairngorm lochs and lochans.' I was particularly envious of Charles Arthur (6388) when he mentioned 'we are going to Bhutan in a month's time.' Neil Fleming (6391) intends 'to do An Teallach on a sunny day and perhaps spend time in Torridon. But mainly I am taking up golf!' Bob Barton (6413) had some fine hills and long days for his final 20 summits and wrote 'the only one I had low expectations for was Beinn Bhuidhe, climbed on a hot day but it proved to be a fine hill and a suitable prelude to six oysters and two litres of ice-cold mineral water in the Loch Fyne Oyster Bar. Perhaps the future is some combination of mountaineering and gastronomy.'

#### 9) TAKE YOUR TIME

Stretching their Rounds out over 50 years or more, this year's Golden Munroists are; Angus C. McNicoll (6298) 52 years, J. Fraser Munro (6308) 56 years, Rod Shaw (6363) 59 years, David C. Haigh (6392) 59 years, David K. Crichton (6397) 52 years, Paul Randall (6408) 52 years, Bob Barton (6413) 53 years, Roger High (6417) 58 years, Brian Tibbs (6421) 51 years, David C. Webster (6430) 50 years, Ian Van Hinsbergh (6439) 50 years, Robert Holmes (6458) 52 years. Aged 80 years on Completion, Rod Shaw (6363) joins the venerable cohort of 'Oldest Munroists'; Robert Waterton (3210), Pamela E. Wigston (4408), Louis Skinner (2710) and Alasdair Macpherson (5305) who all Completed at the age of 80.

#### 10) IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO REGISTER

Some 25 years later Brian Dickson (6300) 'was spurred on to register my hill rounds after reading Dave Hewitt's recent piece in UK Climbing where he explores Completion stats.'

John Olleron (6320) 'Completed on Seana Bhragh in 1993. I didn't register at the time because I was annoyed at SMC tinkering with the List. I still am, but have cooled off a bit after twenty-six years!' A few months later John started the Corbetts on Canisp, finishing the week before he finally registered. On this occasion he reported 'approaching the final cairn was a bitter-sweet moment, the more so because my brother David who was also walking the Corbetts died last year. He had completed 142.' Brian A. Fuller (6295) had 'been recently tidying up mountaineering and expedition diaries and my wife reminded me

that I had never recorded Completion of the Munros and Tops' back in 1998. He also remembered 'in the years prior to '75 I would have winter trips to the NW with Paul Nunn occasionally staying in Tom Patey's bothy in Ullapool.'

## AMENDMENTS

### PLEASE PRINT AMENDMENTS HERE

NOTE: Entries marked NYC are individuals who have not yet registered a Munro Completion so do not have a Munroist number.

In 2018 I heard from 91 (87) Munroists requesting amendments to entries on our Lists (last year's figure in brackets) as follows: New Munro Rounds 24 (20); Tops 10 (10); Furths 8 (13); Corbetts 36 (35); Grahams 13 (8); Donalds 14 (18). Full House 9 (4) (total now 55).

Amendment letters tend to be more prosaic than Munroist registrations, with the occasional gem. Chris Dodd (3556) kindly reported 'I am really impressed with your website and the fact that the SMC has taken so much trouble to include pictures and descriptions. It is a super record for everyone to share.' With ambitions to Complete a second Full House Alistair Deering (5506) commented 'I've enjoyed using the updated section on the SMC website that lists the various compleaters – thank you for your hard work.' He also mentioned 'I did try doing Marilyns for the second half of last year but the excitement of driving to a small hill, nipping up it and then driving to the next one paled in comparison with longer days out on the hills.' No changes were reported to our Imperial Lists this year, which will please Simon C. Jeffries (1701). Reporting his second Munro Round he is still mopping up his last Corbetts. 'Among these is the new one, Cnoc Choinnich which offers a return trip to that quiet land near Lochgoilhead. (Heartfelt plea: what can we do about the 'irrepressible heighters' who upset the established order with their GPSs?' Alan Sharp (4413) reported a rare triple Corbett Completion on Sguman Coinntich along with Alison Paterson (4472) and Maureen Higgs (not registered), all members of the Grampian Hillwalking Club. Reporting his third Graham Round, Bert Barnett (3112) became the first person to achieve a remarkable third Full House. He kindly commented 'I thoroughly enjoy reading your presentation of 'Munro Matters'. Mark Gear (384) reported a Contiguous Completion of his 5<sup>th</sup> Munro Round on Stuc a' Chroin and 4<sup>th</sup> Corbett Round on Beinn Each on 20 July. He becomes the first Corbetteer to achieve the latter. Hazel Strachan (3438) reported her tenth Munro Round with another enthusiastic letter reviewing 'yet another enjoyable Round.' Husband Ian 'is still chief driver and caterer and is proving to be an effective secretary after answering so many phone calls from the BBC and The Sunday Post newspaper on the run up to my last Munro, Carn an Tuirc in Glenshee.' Eschewing the comforts of the campervan she reports 'I've had lots of good bivvies(sic), some of the best I've ever had – on 3 February I set up a bivvy on a ledge cut in the snow at 850m on Sgurr Ruadh. I watched the moon track a line along the summit ridge. This was such a beautiful sight.' If this was not exciting enough, she casually mentioned 'Oh, I have an inflatable boat (called a 'packraft') which I have carried up 14 Munros along with a paddle and life-jacket.' And yes, 'I'm planning on walking an eleventh Round.'

SMC members have also been busy. William A. Forbes (4483) has submitted Amendments for 4 out of the past 5 years. Webmaster Michael Watson (4082) and Club Committee member Fiona Reid (4081) reported a second Round of Munros and Tops and of course I had to write myself a letter again. Approaching my penultimate Tops on Stob

Gabhar in July we were plagued by the worst swarms of clegs I have ever experienced. Iain Thow (5896) finished his second Round of Tops a week later with Meall na Dige on Stobinian reporting 'typical Highland weather – started out in shorts and T shirt, hit summit wearing a fleece, warm trousers, waterproof jacket and a woolly hat, then hot enough back in the valley to jump in the river!' Iain is also ticking some quirky personal lists including 'separate contour rings over 900m.' Having counted 855 such features, he had only 29 left to do, including 'a thoroughly daft zig-zag around the Moine Mhor in the Gorms picking up 9 extremely minor hummocks.' Despite not having lived in the UK since 1989, John M. (Ian) Burley (628) finally finished his Munro Tops, in the company of Iain (Mac) McCallum who was with him on his first summit, aged 19, a mere 51 years before. Rather than watching the Royal Wedding, Robert D. McMurray (3753) finished his second Munro Round on Beinn Eighe's Ruadh Stac Mor in the company of his wife Catherine, enjoying 'a great day in Torridon running the tops and ridges.'

Reporting his fifth Munro Round, Keith Yates (1256) bemoaned 'I am afraid the North Coast 500 has hampered my trips to the North in recent years. It is impossible to find accommodation or, very often, a place to eat when you come down from the hills at 8p.m.' His letter finished by reflecting 'the 489 days spent collecting 5 Rounds have been the perfect antidote to work pressures and central belt life.' Simon Winton (4247) continued his remarkable fund-raising campaign for the charity Crohn's and Colitis UK which started with his Munro Round in 2007. This year he Completed the Donalds in June, Corbetts in July and Grahams in August and has now raised an amazing total of £53,709.01. In January I attended a very interesting lecture by Professor Colin K. Ballantyne MA, MSc, PhD, DSc, FRSE, FRSA, FRSGS, FGS, FBSG – just as well we keep The List informal! At the end of the year Colin (2780) reported his third Munro Completion and remembered 'we met briefly after my lecture on the Ice Age in Inverness. Cairns Dickson has egged me on to write a non academic book on the geomorphology of Scotland's mountains (provisionally entitled *Scotland's Mountain Landscapes*) which is something to look forward to. Anne Butler (3366) Completed her Grahams on Fiarach accompanied by 10 dogs and 56 people, of whom 48 were Munroists and I an Everest summiteer. She also reminded me that in last year's 'Munro Matters' I had mentioned two Munroists who had also climbed the Seven Summits but omitted to mention our member Di Gilbert (4760). Apologies to Di!

Anne is Vice President of The Munro Society and notified me of the sudden death of their President, David Batty, on 20 November. David collapsed on the way back to his car after taking part in a heighting survey of Dugland in the Carsphairn hills. I have always worked closely with The Munro Society and particularly with David, one of their most active and enthusiastic members. He was always very friendly and easy to deal with - despite our differences on the issue of 'heighting' he persuaded me to be more positive in seeing mountains moving between lists, rather than a more negative demotion. He loved the Scottish hills and worked tirelessly to help other people appreciate them. He will be sadly missed.

Alison Coull took over as Clerk of the List on 1 January 2019, so it just remains to me to wish her well in this fantastic job and to thank the rest of the team who work away in the background: in particular Webmaster Mike Watson and Keeper of Regalia Chris Huntley. If you wish to register a Munro Completion or an Amendment please check [www.smc.org.uk](http://www.smc.org.uk) for further details and to view the popular picture galleries of Munroists and Corbetteers celebrating on their final summit.

Enjoy your hills.

Dave Broadhead (Clek of the List ret'd)