



COSMIC BULLSHEET

The Bulletin News-Sheet
of Cosmic Hillbashers

ISSUE No 35
QUARTER 3 - 2003

Editorial

Phill Thompson

A bumper Bullsheet issue this time thanks largely to the efforts of Carl Pryce and his account of his epic, cosmically-ground breaking Charlie Ramsay round success last year. Not only do we have an excellent report but also the pictures to go with it. These replace Elaine's Social piece as this editions "Center Fold". For those Cosmic Chicks who may be interested I do have colour versions of the Center Fold showing Carl and Dennis's legs plus Adrian's body, in all their colourful glory!

Apart from helping out at the Balmedie Beach bash my own injury-prone involvement in Cosmic happenings has been non existent. It means that getting up to date news into the Bullsheet becomes very difficult, so if there is a more active Cosmic member out there who would like to do the Editor job and maybe add a bit more to the Bullsheet it would not be difficult to prise it from my grasp!

Lots of congratulations due this time. To Dan for winning Clachnaben, Millstone, Carn Mon Earn and probably others I've missed; to Tom Bracegirdle for finishing 3rd for Cosmics at the Bamford Sheep Dog Trials Hill Race in the Peak District recently; and finally big congrats to Anne Thompson and Mike Stone who are getting married on 15th August. (see Social Bits)

Cheers,
Phill

Cosmic Social Events – Quarter 3 Year 2003
Social Secretary – Elaine Stewart

Social Retrospective

April

Going to Roo's Leap after the Krunce turned out to be a great success with about 16 people turning up. It's always nice to have something to look forward to after the gruelling pain of the Krunce. If we want to go again then there would be no problem in turning up as Tuesday nights are not busy.

May

Stuic a' Chroin

Nothing much to report as most people went home after the race. But would just like to mention that I beat Jon Crowe, he may be getting faster on the track but these old wifies have plenty of stamina on the hills. Keep training Jon.

June

Thanks to Dan, Clare and Alice for organising the BBQ after the Millstone Race, all food and drink greatly appreciated.

Forthcoming Features

July

Cosmic Jolly Weekend Away

Saturday 19th is the Glamaig Hill Race on Skye.

The race is 4.5miles, 2400ft, it's the steepest and rockiest that you will ever do. When you look at the hill it will seem impossible from the bottom, and even more impossible from the top, you need to feel like a lemming and watch out for the flying boulders. Its known to have 26 different routes of descent. To make up for it, the entry fee is only £3, and for that you get a free hot meal and 2 free drinks of your choice, you'll need them. There is usually a live band in the Sligichan Hotel at night. I have been unable to get the bunkhouse this year so its either the luxury of the hotel or the misery of the campsite, the choice is yours!!

Tuesday 22nd

Forvie Sands Run & BBQ at Hackley Bay

Need to bring a rucksack along for this one, carry some spare clothes for after the run, along with your food and drink for the BBQ. The plan is to run to Hackley Bay deposit the rucksacks then carry on with the run while some kind person lights up the BBQ in preparation for you all coming back. Ian Wilson (Shelley's boyfriend) to arrive by canoe.

Ann Anderson may also be there returned from Doha for a brief visit, so if you want to catch up with Ann's social diary of events in Qatar then come along.

August

Cosmic Jolly Weekend Away

Friday 1st Beinn Lee Twin Peaks Hill Race

This race takes place on North Uist on the Outer Hebrides. Its on the Friday night at 7:30pm, its 6.5 miles long and 850 ft of ascent. The entry fee is £4 and I believe that there is a ceilidh in the village hall afterwards.

Doing the race would mean having the day off on Friday so that you could travel up to Uig in Skye on the Thursday night, in time for an early ferry on Friday morning. It would also mean taking your mountain bike across on the ferry as a car is not necessary and it's cheaper. There is hostel or B&B accommodation available at Lochmaddy. Saturday would be free to explore around by mountain bike then we would take an early ferry back on the Sunday.

Let me know if you are interested.

Thursday 14th

Some of you may want to think about doing the Ballater Highland Games hillrace, its short, sharp and you get £5 if you can do it in 25mins. You need to take the afternoon off, as the race is early afternoon, a good social event, you can be drinking in the hospitality tent by 3 o'clock. This can be followed up by a night on the town, and is usually highly entertaining.

Friday 15th August

Cosmic Wedding

Anne Thompson and Mike Stone are getting married and have invited all cosemics and partners along to their ceilidh in the evening (8:00 till 12:00) at Mary Culter House Hotel on the South Deeside Road. They have requested that you bring no presents.

Could you please let Anne or Mike know by the end of July if you are planning on going.

Address:- 6 Norfolk Road, Aberdeen, AB25 2DZ

Telephone:- 317184

anne@fothers.fsnet.co.uk or orrokmas@aol.com

Tuesday 19th

Scolty Run & BBQ

If the weathers looking good then we plan to have a BBQ after the run. The run will consist of the new race route that was done on Sunday 1st June. So remember to check out the forecast, and bring along some food and drink.

September

Cosmic Jolly Weekend Away

Saturday 27th is the Two Breweries Hill Race. For those who don't know its 18 miles, 4900ft, the entry fee is £8 and the race starts at 12:00 noon. They provide some food and refreshments afterwards along with 2 free pints of Greenmantle ale. There is also the compulsory ceilidh at night in the village hall, and it's quite surprising how many people are up for it even after such a long run.

If I could have a rough idea of who would be interested in going, as I would need to reserve the accommodation soon.

Sad News

Hayden Lorimer (*aka HayDog or HBT swine*) is leaving Aberdeen for a new job in Glasgow. He'll probably be earning more money there so he could probably buy us all a drink before he goes. But I suspect that we'll have to catch him first. Mind you his running is slacking a bit, as I noticed that Tracy Brindly beat him at Scolty.

All the best, and see you on the hills sometime.

DON'T FORGET..... TUESDAY NIGHT IS PUB NIGHT

On Trophies and Things

Race trophies are historical artefacts as well as a pain in the bum! Historical artefacts as they record the previous winners and a pain in the bum because they keep getting lost.

Unfortunately Cosmics are acquiring a reputation for not returning them!

When I took over organising Clachnaben I was faced with a gap year (due to the foot and mouth) and the worry that most of the trophies had gone South with the winners from when it was a British Championship race. It didn't turn out to be so bad as most of the category winners had recognised that they were unlikely to travel up for the next running and had left their trophies with "Founding Father" Brian!

Unfortunately in most local races the category winners seem to take the trophy away and then either turn up the following year without it or just don't turn up at all.

Unlike older established clubs like Aberdeen AAC none of our trophies are of any particular value in themselves but they do represent a historical record of the race which grows with each running of the event. Provided that the winner adds their details to the trophy and RETURNS IT!!

So far this year the full set of trophies has not been available for presentation at El-Brim-Ick, the Club Championship Presentation, Clachanben and Balmedie Beach Bash nor Scolty! (I know we don't organise it but we generally manage to win the odd trophy or three).

Please look on the sideboard, amongst the plant pots and in the hall cupboard and see if you have any trophies which are LONG OVERDUE being returned.

The Scolty women's trophy bears the name of Liz Lynch, better known as Liz McColgan, the Balmedie Beach Male Vets even has Old Grey Beard as a previous winner – as such they are priceless. PLEASE, PLEASE return to me any overdue ones that you possess NOW!!!!!!!

Overdue fines waived for immediate compliance!! (We'll even pay for the outstanding engraving

Ewen

⑤

The Curse is lifted – The first Cosmic Ramsay Round August 2nd
2002 by Carl Pryce

For several years the Cosmics Hillbashers have been afflicted by an evil curse that has denied club members completing the Ramsay Round in under 24 hours. Known as the curse of the Ramsays, it was first recognised by Ewen in his aptly named article 'Ramsay 13 Cosmics 0'. The curse was finally lifted last summer when I snatched a successful mid-week round in just under 23 hours.

The first round was completed in 1978 when Charlie Ramsay set off from Glen Nevis and made an extended Glen Nevis horseshoe returning to the start 23hrs 58 mins later. On the way he traversed 24 Munros, covered 60 miles and accumulated 27,000' of ascent. His route, over Ben Nevis, the Aonochs, Grey Corries, the Loch Treig Munros and the Mamores covered some of the finest mountain scenery in the UK and never crossed a road.

It was a further nine years before the round was repeated within the required 24 hours. Then in 1989 Mark Rigby (who wasn't a Cosmic then!) and Helen Diamantedes went round in a record time of 20 hrs 24 mins. A few weeks later, Adrian Belton reduced this to 18 hrs 23mins, a record that still stands today. In total there have been just 30 successful rounds to date, including four in 2002. Despite several attempts, it has not yet been completed in winter.

The Ramsay Round is probably best thought of as being made up of 3 sections and 4 major ascents. Going clockwise the first section from Glen Nevis to the dam at Loch Treig is perhaps the most demanding and takes in 2 of the major climbs (Ben Nevis and Stob Coire Easain). This section also includes a crossing of the airy Carn Mor Dearg Arete and the Grey Corries. After a brief refuel at the dam (road access only 1 mile away) the second section starts with an ascent of Stob Coire Sgriodain, the third major climb. After a couple more Munros the route drops down to the head of Loch Treig and the start of the third and final section near Loch Eilde Mor. The nearest road access at this point is still over 5 miles away so there is always a feeling of remoteness, one of the most appealing features of the round. The third section begins with the fourth major climb - the hard slog up Sgurr Elide Mor to gain access to the Mamores ridge. Highlights of this section are traverses of the exposed An Gearanach and Devils ridges, made more interesting by having tired and wobbly legs.

Dennis and I both stumbled on the idea of doing the Ramsay early in 2001. Our first attempt during the summer of 2001 ended after 17 hours due to severe overnight weather on the Mamores and we had not been back since.

We began training for the 2002 attempt in January with long Sunday runs on Bennachie, followed by equally long lunches prepared by my wife Rosie. These runs continued throughout the spring and summer, with the occasional race or longer run further afield. During this time Dennis developed a mystery injury to his ankle that only affected him on Bennachie. Even a leisurely one hour run on the hill would bring on the pain, yet long races such as Stuc a Chroin and the Lairig Ghru were completed without problems. We began to wonder whether there was a curse on Bennachie as well.

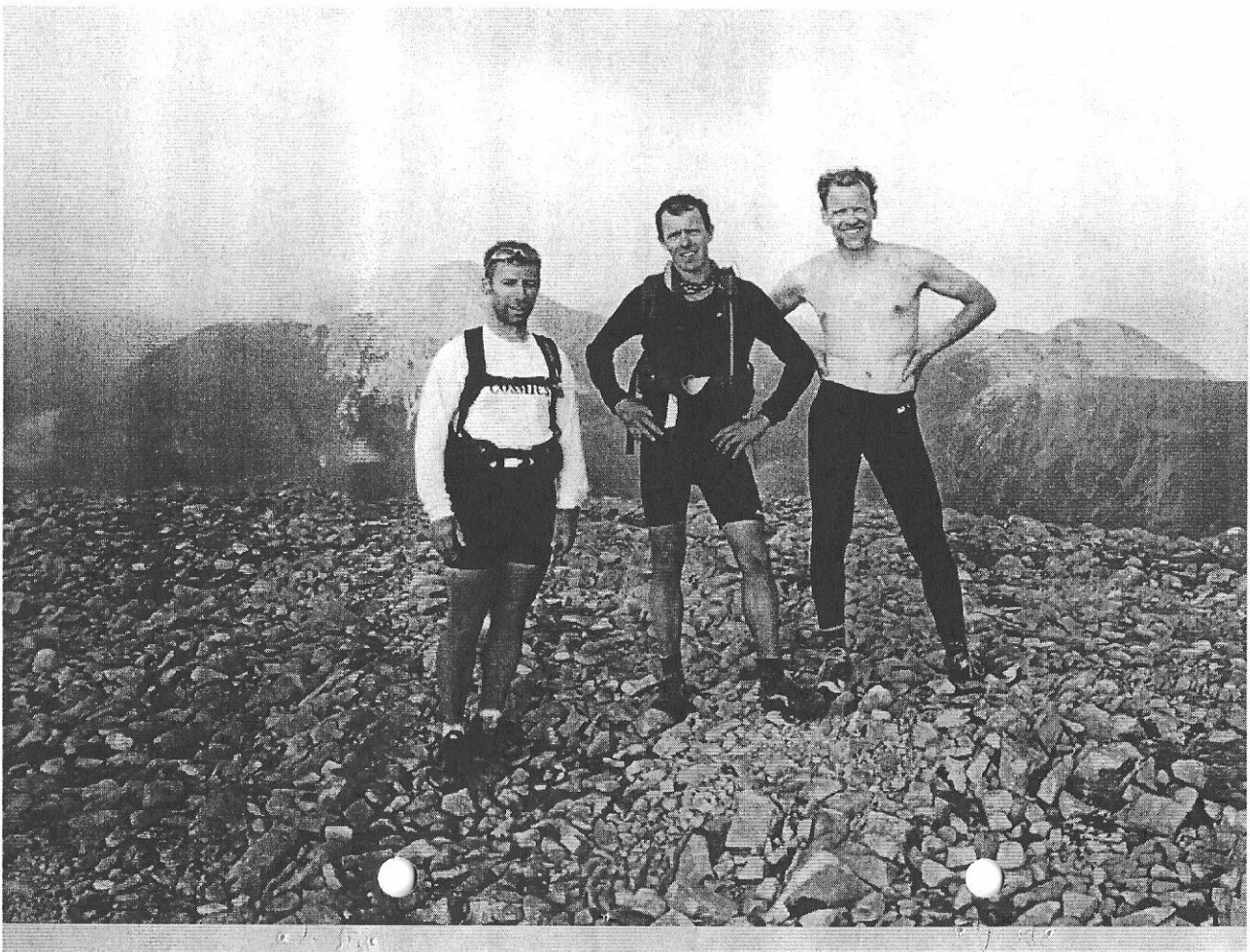
One weekend in May, Dennis, Adrian and I headed to 'Ramsay country' for a reccy of the Mamores. We left Corroun train station at 9pm and jogged down to Staoineag bothy on the River Nevis for a night's kip. On arriving at the bothy we were surprised to find a large group of very drunken and stoned youths having a rave and playing loud music. We tried in vain to sleep through the racket, but it got wilder and louder as the night progressed. At 1a.m., having been unable to sleep at all, we opted to leave and headed downstream to Meanach bothy. Before leaving Staoineag however Adrian made the parting gesture of taking a pair of shoes we'd found at the doorway and hurling them into the river!

The weather last summer was not great, and much of the ground remained waterlogged throughout June and July. Finally at the end of July there was a forecast for a few days of fine weather mid-week. Adrian quickly arranged time off work and agreed to meet us in Glen Nevis as our one-man support team while Dennis and I headed for Tulloch bunkhouse.

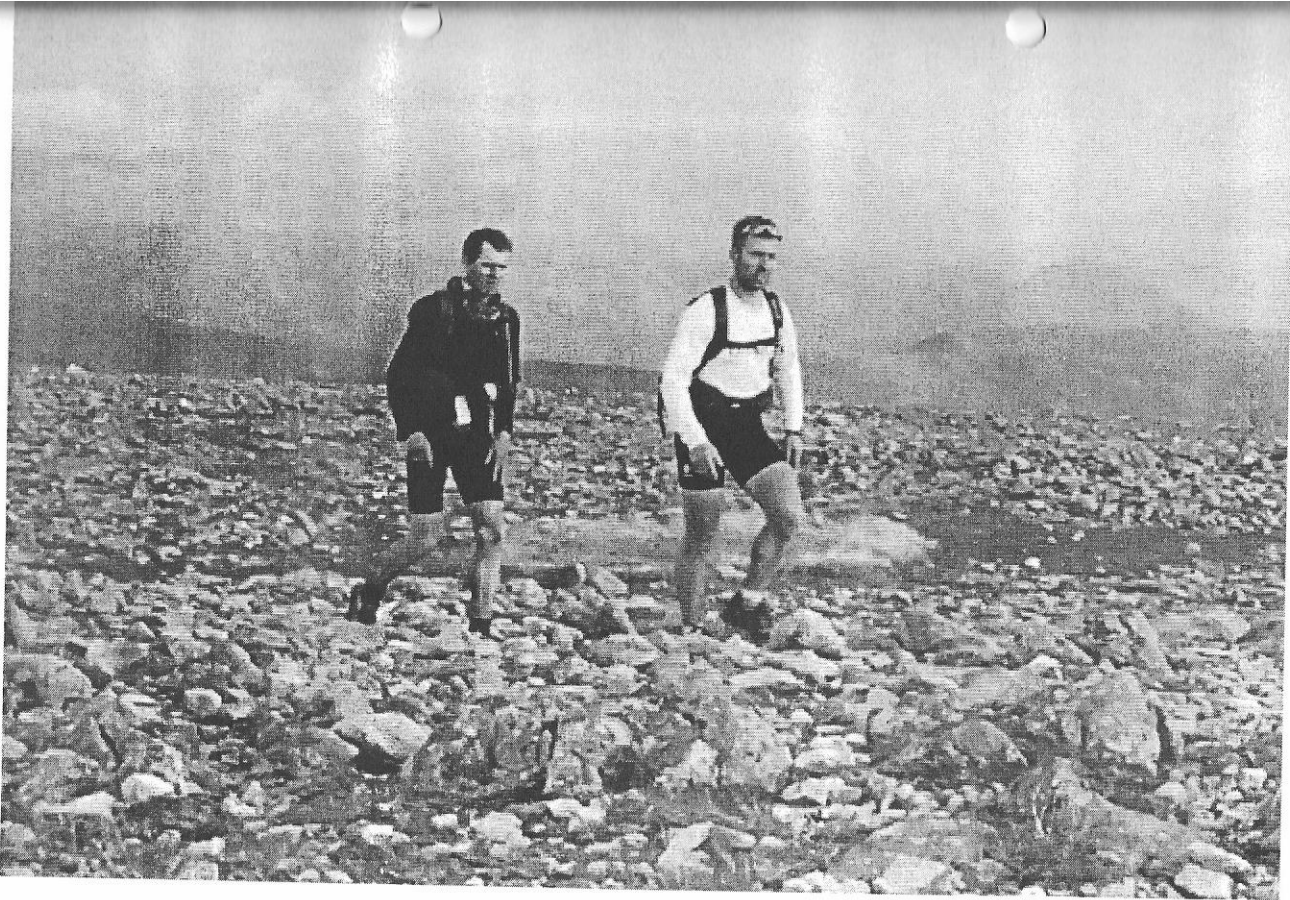
Tulloch bunkhouse is an excellent base for long hill days in Lochaber, being located at Tulloch train station and so providing easy train access to both Corroun Station and Fort William. The previous year Dennis and I had arrived here in a sorry state having completed a reccy from Glen Nevis to Loch Treig in foul conditions. Alan the warden slowly brought us back to life with some excellent hot food and enormous pots of tea. Alan and his wife appear to be quite used to bedraggled Ramsay wanabees arriving on their doorstep and are very welcoming.

Our plan was to start at 10.30am and follow the 23hr schedule available on the internet, as we had attempted last year. However Dennis awoke

Dennis, Carl and Adrian, Mullach Nan Coirean



Carl & Dennis Ramsay 2002



(9)

after a poor night's sleep feeling quite ill. A leisurely day was spent at the bunkhouse but Dennis continued to feel groggy all day. So it was decided that I would start alone at 10.30pm.

Adrian and Dennis joined me at the start. To avoid a 2 mile finish along forestry tracks in Glen Nevis I opted to start higher up the valley at the base of the final Munro Mullach nan Coirean. The midges were out in force as we weaved our way up the zig-zag track to the nominated starting point. Despite the fine weather during the day and the good forecast for the following day, the night weather was already looking ominous with thick clouds descending over Ben Nevis.

Dennis, who was feeling a little better now, joined me for the first few miles and carried my bag. Darkness descended soon after we started the ascent of Ben Nevis. We passed several weary-looking walkers heading downhill, including a distressed German girl who had inexplicably become separated from her partner. At the halfway point Dennis turned back and I continued on alone. By now the visibility was very poor with the cloud base down to about 2000' and a strong wind had started to blow. Cutting across the zig-zags of the tourist path I made quite rapid progress up the scree and was pleased to finally pop out above the cloud. Reaching the summit plateau I began to feel the full strength of the wind, whipping up from Coire Leis below the north face. The lights of Fort William and the coast looked very distant, while most of the route ahead over Carn Mor Dearg and the Aonochs was obscured by cloud.

Picking up the descent line towards Carn Mor Dearg was quite tricky as the metal sign I remembered marked the start of the descent was no longer there. After a couple of false starts I was pleased to find the first of the line of intermittent poles that mark the descent route. Crossing the narrow Carn Mor Dearg arête in the darkness and gusty wind was quite a lonely experience, and I was careful to stay away from the crest to avoid being blown off. At one point my headtorch bounced off and started to disappear down the slope before luckily halting on a ledge.

The descent off the Carn Mor Dearg summit begins as quite a narrow ridge but becomes steeper, rockier and broader at the base. None of this had caused any problems during the daytime reccies, but seemed much harder in the darkness and mist. I lost time slowly down climbing some crags and finally got down to the col at the start of the ascent of Aonoch Mor. After refilling my water bladder I picked up the faint path that winds its way up through the crags that form the western flank of Aonoch Mor and soon popped out above the clouds again.

By now the moon had risen. It was just a half moon and I was surprised how little it illuminated the hills. However it did pick out the cloudbank that had formed along the entire length of the Grey Corries. The cloud appeared to be thickest just beyond Aonoch Beag. This was a concern as despite several trips to reccy the descent off Aonoch Beag (nearly all in poor weather!) I still wasn't sure of the best line. The ground here is steep and rocky and I was forced to make several U-turns to find the way. In the event I did manage to find the way, probably more by luck than judgement. At one point the mist was so thick that I had to run holding my headtorch at knee height!

Once onto the Grey Corries I started to feel confident that the worst of the route-finding difficulties were over. Rising above the clouds again on the way to Sgurr Choinnich Mor I could see the first hint of daybreak with a faint pink glow in the sky. Soon the sky turned crimson and the tops of the clouds started to glow a similar colour. As the sun rose there was a perfect temperature inversion, with the cloud tops about 500' below me and mountain summits poking through all around. It was a great sight and I began to feel quite refreshed. Picking my way along the rocky ridge over the Grey Corries tops was a real pleasure and it came as quite a disappointment when I reached the end at Stob Choire Claurigh.

By now it was 4.40am, and I was already about 40 minutes down on the schedule. Most of the time had been lost descending Aonoch Beag, but I wasn't worried because the schedule I was using was based on completing the first section during daylight. I knew that Dennis and Adrian would already be heading to Loch Treig dam and would have a longer wait than expected.

As the temperature started to rise so did the tops of the clouds and by the time I reached Stob Ban all the summits were engulfed by cloud. After the rough descent off Stob Ban came the long haul over the Easains. This is the second of the four big climbs and is a psychological milestone to get past. With the wind still howling and the clag down I didn't linger on the summits.

The Descent to Loch Treig was very runnable although slippery with the waterlogged ground. I finally arrived at the dam and the welcome sight of Dennis and Adrian with hot food and tea. After 9 hours on the go I was surprised to be feeling so fresh, in contrast to two years previously when I had accompanied Katy Boocock and Karen Powell on this section and ended up feeling totally exhausted. After a short break I set off alone

again, leaving Dennis and Adrian to pack up and start their journey on foot and by car to the next meeting point at Loch Eilde Mor.

A short run along the railway line to the first tunnel was followed by the climb up Stob Coire Sgriodain and back into the clouds. Approached from the north this hill has a number of false summits and it was a relief to reach the trig point having gained a little on the schedule. I cursed the low cloud (aloud at one point!) on the way to Chno Dearg for obscuring the best line over a group of rocky knolls, forcing me to repeatedly lose and regain height. Chno Dearg is the most easterly point on the round, so reaching it is something of a milestone. All progress up to this point had been eastwards, but now the route turned to the west towards the finish. Also, the headwind turned into a tailwind.

The descent from Chno Dearg towards Beinn na Lap is quite steep and rocky at first easing to broad slopes covered in peat hags. The persistent rain of the summer had waterlogged the ground and made conditions very slippery. Staying on my feet was difficult at times. Several large slides and the occasional fall later I reached the river before heading up the slopes of Beinn na Lap. A group of stags high on the hillside watched my progress, probably with disgust at my inability to stay on my feet. The long summit ridge of Beinn na Lap was a real pleasure, now that the clouds had evaporated away and the wind was on my back. I reached the summit at 10.30a.m. exactly 12 hours since starting and was almost back on schedule.

After descending Ben na Lap the route follows a track parallel to the West Highland railway line. By coincidence a train happened to be passing and I got a few hesitant waves from bemused passengers. Running downhill on the track was hard on the knees and feet and by now it was getting warm: the forecast had predicted 28°C in Fort William. Avoiding dehydration was the main concern and here the water bladder and tube worked really well. I was also able to keep eating while on the move, mostly malt loaf and boiled sweets.

Past Staoineag bothy (scene of the shoes-in-river drama) the route crosses some flat boggy ground before joining up with the track from Loch Eilde Mor at the start of the final section. Here I met up with Dennis and Adrian again to run the final section together. By now Dennis was feeling much better and clearly disappointed not to be attempting the round himself. By now I was 45 minutes up on the schedule, so allowed myself a leisurely break of 13 minutes to refuel.

The ascent of Sgurr Eilde Mor is the last of the four big climbs and was a big effort in the heat. On the summit we met some hillwalkers, the first people I had come across since Ben Nevis 15 hours before. Sore knees had reduced my running to a steady jog and I was much slower than Adrian and Dennis. Yet I was still climbing steadily and knocking a few minutes off the schedule at each summit.

The scramble up Binnein Mor requires the use of hands as well as feet and was a good contrast to the hands-on-knees ascents of most of the other tops. Shortly after the summit we passed the point where Dennis and I had abandoned our attempt last year in darkness and foul weather. With the perfect weather we were now experiencing the contrast couldn't have been greater.

The views were superb as we drifted westwards ticking off the summits. The traverses of the An Gearanach and Devils ridges passed without incident in the perfect conditions. Am Bodach (gaelic for 'the bastard') lived up to its name. As we slogged up it I began to wonder how it had got its name - perhaps some misguided shepherd had attempted Ramsay's round in times gone by.

Over Stob Ban with its impressive cliffs the final Munro, Mullach nan Coirean, came into view. By now the sun was low in the sky and the hills glowed pink in the evening light. There was just one 2000' knee-wrecking descent to go before the finish at the top of the forest zig-zags. By lingering on some of the summits to take in the views I had begun to lose time against the schedule, but still completed the round in 22h 51m.

Looking back it was a great day out on the hills, and some memorable days were spent reccyng the area beforehand. For me the process of gaining an intimate knowledge of such a special area is as important as achieving success on the day. The remoteness of the Lochaber hills will probably ensure the Ramsay round retains its special quality. Hopefully by the time you are reading this Dennis will have completed the round himself.

Carl

**Actual Times - Clockwise
- 22:30 start**

Start	22:30
Glen Nevis YH	22:52
Ben Nevis	00:28
Carn Mor Dearg	01:10
Aonach Mor	02:07
Aonach Beag	02:23
Sgurr Choinnich Mor	03:30
Stob Coire an Laoigh	04:08
Stob Choire Claurigh	04:40
Stob Ban	05:12
Stob Coire Easain	06:30
Stob A'Choire Mhead	06:50
Loch Trieg Dam	07:32
Leave Loch Trieg	07:45
Section time 9:15	
Stob Coire Sgriodain	08:50
Chno Dearg	09:23
Beinn na Lap	10:30
Loch Treig	11:15
Track	12:22
Leave Track	12:35
Section time 4:50	
Sgurr Elide Mor	13:53
Binnein Beag	14:41
Binnein Mor	15:33
Na Gruagaichean	15:57
An Gearanach	16:51
Stob Coire A'Chairn	17:18
Am Bodach	17:48
Sgor an Lubhair	18:09
Sgurr A'Mhaim	18:40
Stob Ban	19:38
Mullach Nan Coirean	20:33
Finish	21:21
Section time 8:46	
Total time 22:51	

RACES and Saturday runs

I've avoided organising a run over the school holidays if there is a local race and indicated known local races.

- Sat. 5th July **Bennachie** from Rowan Tree – Hazlehead 9-15am
Scottish Championship at DOLLAR – 2pm
- Sat. 12th July **DURRIS**
- Sat. 19th July **KERLOCH** or **Glamaig HR** (not local but usual trip)
- Sat. 26th July **Ben Rinnes 5 Tops** – Dufftown – Noon
- Sat. 2nd Aug. **Aboyne Games HR** (4pm?)
- Sat. 9th Aug. **WORLD TROPHY TRIALS** (Alva, Fife from 12-15pm)
? **Tarland Show Hill Race?** 3-45pm
- Thur. 14th Aug. **Ballater HG Hill Race** – 3pm.
- Sat. 16th Aug. **Tap O'Noth Hill Race** – 2pm
- Sat. 23rd Aug. **CARN MON EARN** – meet Duthie Park at 9-15am or
out there and **Lonach HG Hill Race**
- Sun. 24th Scottish Champs at LOMONDS of FIFE 2pm
- Sat. 30th Aug. **KERLOCH**– meet Duthie Park at 9-15am
- Sat. 6th Sept. **Braemar HR (or Ben Nevis Hill Race)**
- Sat. 13th Sept. **Cairn William HR** – 3pm
- Sat. 20th Sept. **Morven Hill Race** – 1pm
- Sat. 27th Sept. **BENNACHIE** Preview from Rowan Tree
– meet Hazlehead 9-15am
- Sun. 5th Oct. **Bennachie HR** – 2pm.

Late Summer Tuesdays

Meet at Hazlehead at 6-15pm or venue for 6-45pm approx.(depending on distance from Aberdeen). For Krunces go straight to venue (GR-NJ851055 – remember 50p)

1 st July	KRUNCE 4	GR-NJ851055	Roo's Leap
8th July	KERLOCH	GR -NO768924	Old Mill Inn
15 th July	CLACHNABEN	GR-NO649868	Feughside Inn
22nd July	FORVIE SANDS	GR-NK003270	Barbecue at Hackley Bay
29th July	MITHER TAP	GR-NJ699217	Grant Arms
5 th August	KRUNCE 5	Remember your 50p and number	Roo's Leap
12 th August	DURRIS	GR-N0762916	Old Mill Inn
19th August	SCOLTY	GR-NO691949	Barbecue?
26 th August	MILLSTONE	GR-NJ672190	Grant Arms
2nd Sept.	KRUNCE 6	Remember your 50p and number	Presentation - Roo's Leap
9 th Sept.	DURRIS	GR-N0762916	Old Mill Inn
16 th Sept.	HILL of FARE	GR-NJ743039	Pub in Echt
23rd Sept.	NE KIRKHILL	GR-NJ845116	Bucksburn Manor
30 th Sept.	BRIMMOND	GR-NJ858101	Bucksburn Manor.