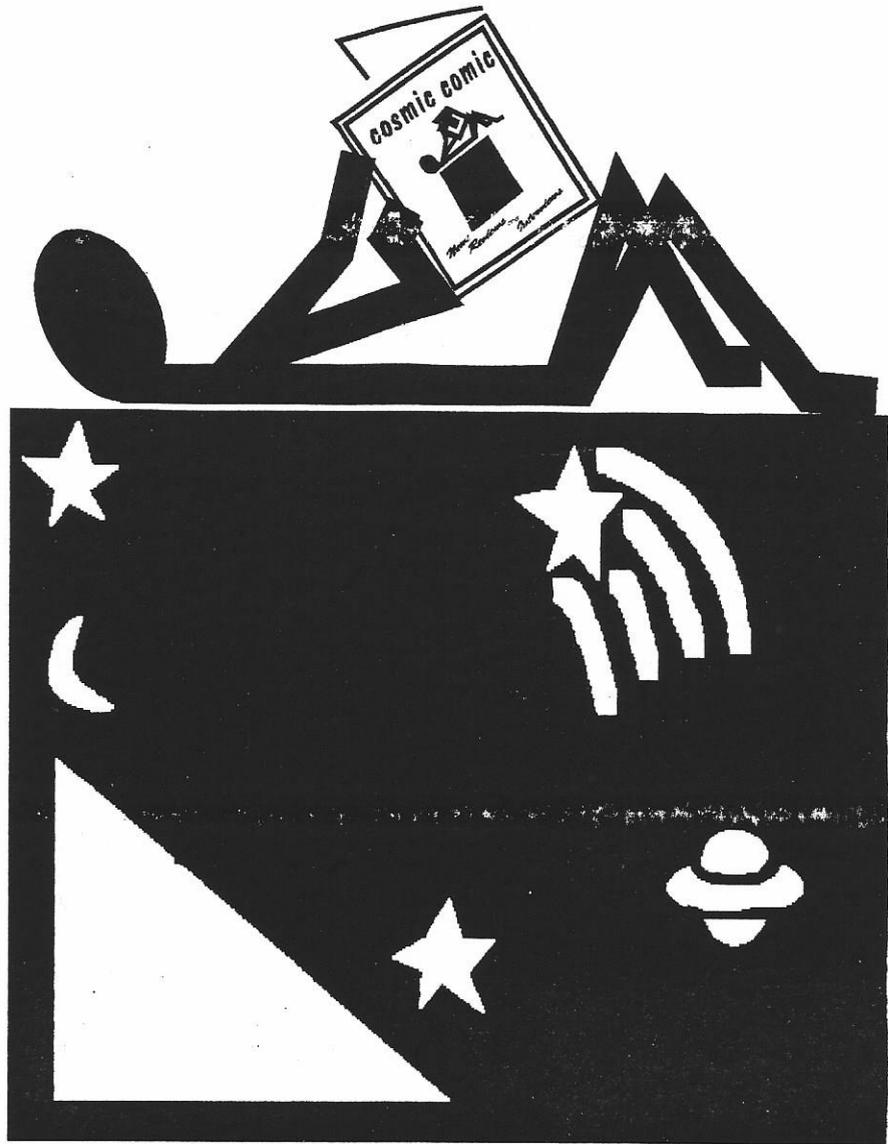


# COSMIC COMIC



*News* *Reviews* and *Interviews*

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2

JULY 1994

# EDITORIAL

BY BRIAN LAWRIE

Everybody seemed to like the first Comic. Already its proved a stimulus for some members to put pen to paper as this issue bears witness to. The summer will be over by the next issue so let's have some articles on what you've been up to.

Again we have to thank Eddie and Kath Butler for the layout and production of the Comic.

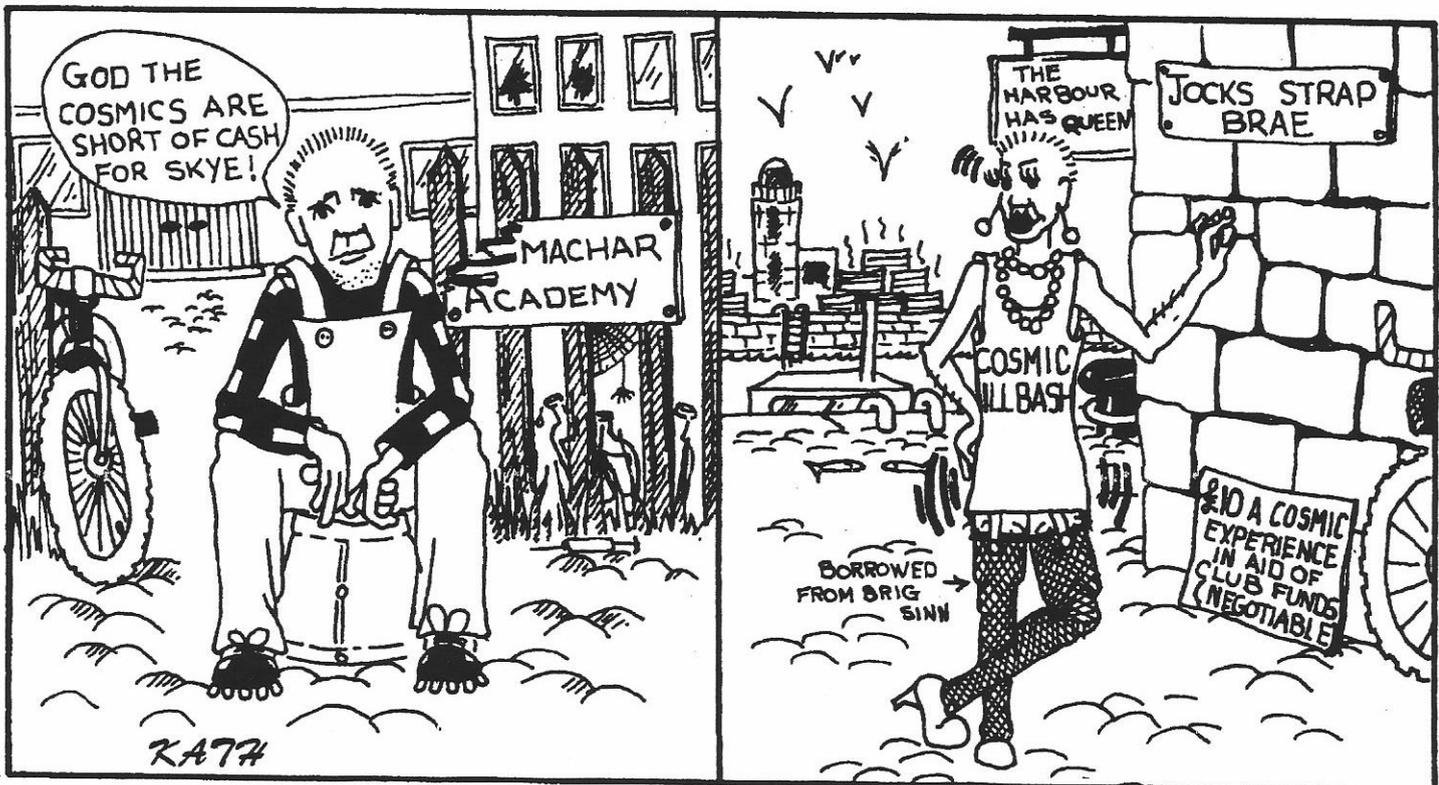
We have plans to spread our Cosmic wings even further next year with a tentative stab at arranging a junior event. If this is a success a series of junior races may follow. The whole question of junior involvement in the Club is a thorny one. For one thing, we come up against the limitation of resources of a small club (not necessarily money but people power). We would have to ask ourselves what sort of structure could be created to give youngsters a meaningful place in a hill running club. Maybe juniors, as some would argue,

should be left to gravitate naturally towards hillrunning as they get older and as the inclination takes them. I have my own ideas on this subject and would certainly like to hear yours. Maybe the next A.G.M. would be a suitable occasion for a discussion?

In this Issue we have an article on the record run over the Cairngorm Six from Phil Kammer. It's good to have an account at last of this effort to parallel the oft repeated (it can stand it, mind you) story of Mels Cairngorm Four run.

For those who like to combine a bit of biking with their mountain running the Highland Cross and Corrieyairack Duathlon present outstanding point to point challenges. Ian Curphey found these events fertile territory for his talents and gives us the low down on his experiences. To complete a fine trilogy of events (over three weekends) he added the Lairig Ghrù.

## 'OOR BRIAN



# THE BIG THREE

by Ian Curphey

Conflicting interests are a fact of life common to all of us trying to combine some sort of dedication to our chosen sports, with making a realistic contribution to the more mundane aspects of daily living. For myself, an ex-hillman, turned triathlete, this problem has been compounded by a long held belief that if a person doesn't do some running in the hills their well being may well be affected. I suspect Cosmics will identify with this sentiment.

The dilemma of course hinges on training. Not only are the requirements for success in Olympic Distance Triathlon (*1500m Swim, 40K Cycle, 10K Run*) fundamentally different to the long hauls and hill-reps that make the Carnethy possible without tears, but finding the time to convince the body that it is capable of both, is about as difficult as trying to knit sawdust. Some preliminary dabbling in Scottish hillrunning, guided initially by Charlie Summers and Mike McCulloch and latterly by the dynamic duo of Lawrie and Kammer, culminated in 1992 with a serious attempt at the Highland Cross (3hrs 45min 17sec) and a less serious (but much more painful) attempt at the Great Wilderness Challenge. (3hrs 48min)

These unique experiences, which take the would be athlete across some of Scotland's most magnificent high ground, created a tremendous desire for more of the same; doubtless due to evoking past memories of magical days in the mountains and combining such thoughts with present objectives of 'running the good race'. In a word - I was hooked!

1993 presented the possibility of two great challenges, which at first I tried to choose between. Firstly, should I concentrate on Triathlon, particularly the Scottish National Championship and the Scottish Triathlon Olympic and Sprint Distance Series, which would involve going for at least 10 top events, or secondly, should I direct my best efforts at the 'Big Three' - A title of my own imagination

- which would involve doing the Highland Cross (20 mile run, 30 mile bike), the Lairig Ghru Race (28 mile run) and the Corrieyairack Challenge (16 mile run, 30 mile bike) on 3 consecutive weekends?

The pull towards both objectives was so strong that in the end, mindful of that useful philosophical dictum 'moderation is for monks' I greedily decided to go for both.

## TRAINING

Escape from the training dilemma referred to previously centred on devising a programme that many real athletes will doubtless find amusing. In addition to pottering about at Kings for three quarters of an hour each evening following work, doing gentle 10K's on the grass or in the pool swimming, I set up and followed an 11 week, 3 phase, weekend training programme, which, while concentrating on the Big Three, made some concessions to Triathlon:-

### Phase 1 - Stamina Training

*W/E 1 (3-4 Apr) - One and three quarter hour run at Brimmond Hill / 60 mile bike*

*W/E 2 (10-11 Apr) - One and three quarter hour run at Kirkhill Forest / 55 mile bike.*

*W/E 3 (17-18 Apr) - Two and one half hour run at Glentamar / 30 mile bike*

*W/E 4 (24-25 Apr) - Race - Aquathon / 50 mile bike.*

*W/E 5 (1-2 May) - One and three quarter hour run at Kirkhill Forest / 65 mile bike.*

### Phase 2 - Cycle Training

*May 6 - 20 Two weeks in Mallorca - on the bike every day - 1200 quality miles in the sun, lots of hills (Cat 1 climbs).*

### Phase 3 - Sharpening up

May 23 - Race - Dumbarton Triathlon

May 30 - Race - Caithness Half Marathon

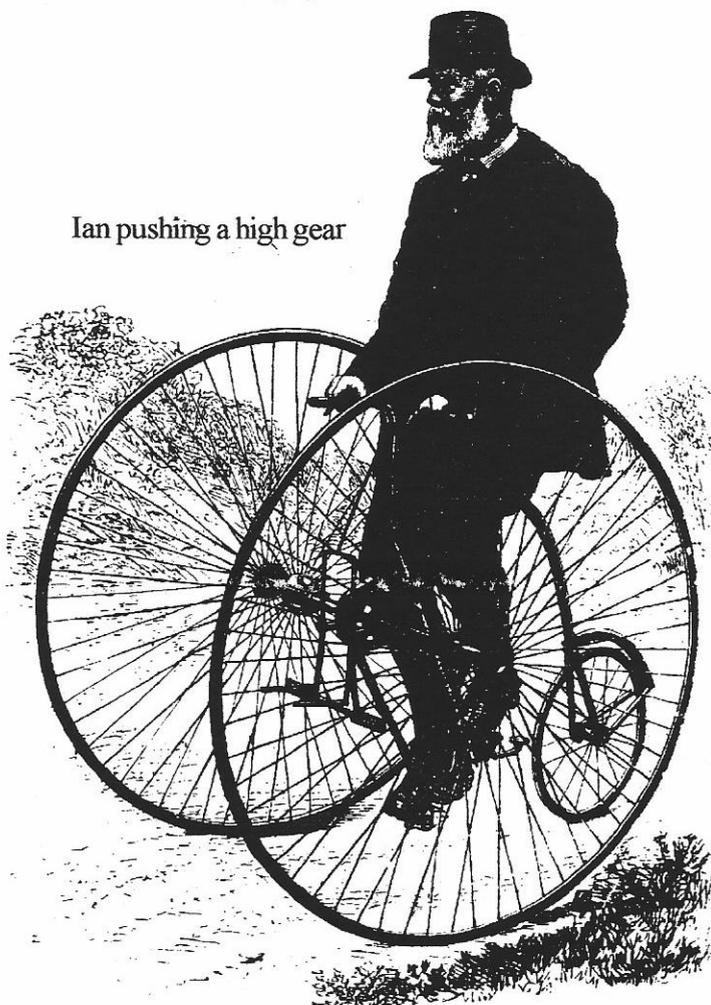
June 6 - Race - Aberfeldy Triathlon

June 13 - Race - Hoy Half Marathon

## The Highland Cross

In 1992, el Primo Cosmonaught, Brian Lawrie and I trained together for the Cross. Both of us wanted to get under the mandatory 4 hour mark and I had additional incentive of attempting to win the 50+ race. Despite encouragement and pace from Brian, a personal

Ian pushing a high gear



best for the course, taking some 13 minutes off the previous 50+ record, Gordon Fraser inconsiderately chose the same day to put the 50+ record firmly on the shelf by coming home in 3hrs 38min some 7 minutes in front of me. A really magnificent performance that must surely take some beating.

The weeks prior to this years event had been very wet and the word was out that conditions would be tough. However, on the day, we

were treated to a fair Spring morning and the prospect of further improvement as the day progressed. On the usual 'spot the opposition' walkabout, Gordon Fraser, the man to beat, was observed warming up in purposeful manner and the unforgivable thought that 'I might be in with a chance if Gordon Fraser doesn't turn up' evaporated as rapidly as the early morning dew.

There's a tremendous camaraderie in the Highland Cross with many competitors returning year after year for this classic event. This is one race where the 'loneliness of the long distance runner' does not apply. The massive field means that there is really always someone to run with, or chat to as you make your way up Glen Licht - or to commiserate with as you grind your way up to Altbeath. The mud and the water and the steep sections somehow seem less difficult to deal with when there are so many of you doing battle with the elements together. The friendliness of the event, coupled with the incredible support from the race organisers and helpers all combine to make the cross country section from Morvich to Altnamulloch about as good a hill run as you could find anywhere.

However, eulogising about the course has to stop at Altnamulloch. Any account of this event would lose all 'street cred' if one said too much that was positive about the infamous 'yellow brick road'. The transition from mixed ground to landrover track can only equate with being bastinadoed for 6 miles! This year I even saw four people changing from Walsh's into well padded road shoes at the 'five ladies tea shop'. Macho indignation at these softies had changed to respect for intelligent planning by the time I kicked off my running shoes and eased aching feet into cycling shoes at the Affric changeover.

A difficult run this year, ground conditions accounting for some, but not all of the 14 minutes I was off the back of last years pace. Not having Brian to follow and seeing Gordon Fraser looking so disgustingly fit were arguably more significant factors.

However, not too discouraged and feeling a bit smug about all the bike miles I'd clocked up in Mallorca, I swallowed a litre of water,

strapped my feet firmly into my highly unfashionable toe clips and set off down the road to Beaulieu determined to give it my best shot.

What a bike ride this is! Beautiful roads, interesting bends and a wonderful contrast to running uphill - it's mostly downhill. Within minutes all thoughts of the run are astern. I love the bike at any time but the Affric to Beaulieu run must be about the best time trial course in Scotland. It's a real gift.

Steaming along gaining places by reeling in the person in front acts as a tremendous incentive and by the time I'd reached the foot of Aigas Brae - a notorious hill of insignificant proportions - I knew I was on a flyer, even half convincing myself (incorrectly as it happens) that I might possibly be going well enough to compensate for my mediocre run and just squeeze in under 4 hours.

However this minor potential disappointment was not uppermost in my mind when overtaking a fellow competitor at the bottom of Aigas Brae I realised that it was Gordon.

This generated some extra pedal power and ensured that he couldn't come back at me. The effort on the bike had paid off and later in the afternoon, full of tea and cheese butties, I unbelievably received the coveted 50+ trophy with a finishing time of 4hrs 3min 34secs.

## The Lairig Ghru Race

In the past, before some people realised that marathon running was hazardous to health, I'd plodded the statutory 26 a few times and engaged in opinionated discussions on the intricacies of carbo loading, shin splints, ratios of road miles to sub-three times and the enigma of the ephemeral wall. Wallowing in the mental security of all this long distance experience (albeit historically placed) the idea of running the 28 mile long Lairig Ghru Race did not hold any particular horrors.



However this confidence was tempered somewhat by having walked across the pass some 10 years earlier when with the usual Sassanach mountaineers ill advised disdain for Scottish conditions I had set out on a summers walk sockless and wearing only shorts and trainers. The result of this somewhat cavalier solo sortie had been extremely cold legs and feet as I waded through thigh deep corn snow which plastered the summit and boulder fields an unplanned and undesired visit to an icy subterranean stream when I fell through a snow bridge somewhere below the Pools of Dee and an enforced, mouse-infested night out in Corrour Bothy when I ran out of time due to the conditions, or more correctly my stupidity for not taking such everyday possibilities into account. Thus was my confidence in my ability to 'do the distance' suitably tempered with some well deserved respect for the terrain. The combination of these two things produced ambivalent feelings about doing the Lairig Ghru, which can perhaps best be described as a sort of 'Fatal Attraction'!

Anyway, I signed up for it and further realised that we would all be in for an interesting time when I received the race literature which informed competitors that the event is the 'antidote to over organised races. You find your own way there, your own way back, there are no changing facilities, cheering spectators or medals. Route markings and feeding stations are very sparse'. (The latter comment turned out to be an overstatement, thereby enhancing the organisers spartan philosophy).

With the odd lingering ache from the Cross the week before, we all lined up in Braemar on a fine sunny day. A tremendous turnout with folk from far and wide turning up to participate in what for me proved to be my toughest event ever.

The route follows the Linn of Dee road for a few miles before crossing the river at the Victoria Bridge, giving access to good track up to Derry Lodge. A steady climb, gentle enough, soon has the runners spread out, ant like along the long rough track that wends its way between the massive bulk of Macdhui and the impressive ridges that links Cairn Toul and Braeriach.

It's a long haul up to the Pools of Dee and the going gets increasingly difficult as the top of the Lairig Ghru is gained. Massive boulders, loose rocks and an indiscriminate route combine to make the going somewhat less than ideal for runners and as by this time you have run something like 14 miles there is an understandable lack of spring in the step which would be useful for the several miles of boulder hopping which make this race both unique and a little bit epic.

Whatever strengths a runner may have at the start of the Lairig Ghru it's probably fair to say that by the time he or she has bashed through the boulders those strengths will be seriously eroded as the rock strewn valley in which he or she is running. While personally struggling across this antediluvian landscape I shared the sentiment with a striking fellow competitor. By this I don't mean that I found him picketing the route demanding better conditions but rather that he was about 2 metres tall and black which is arguably a relatively rare combination of characteristics to come across in such a 'remote' event.

He's a nice chap and having made his acquaintance some weeks before when we both ran the Caithness Half Marathon we chatted for a while - essentially bollocking the boulders for being there. After a while a discernable path reappeared offering respite from the ankle bashing, but, as events were to prove, care was still needed.

The track line sidled downhill traversing obliquely across rocky ground, riven by ravines and tiny burns, but the merest suggestion of a path, after so much 'rough stuff' lulled one into a sense of false security. My newly found long-legged friend, clearly more fitted for louping downhill bid me farewell and took off, leaving me standing. It was as though he was wearing 'Seven League Reeboks'. Down the hill he went, lopping away with the graceful gait of an Afghan Hound in full flight. He vanished from sight round a distant spur and when I rounded it myself, some minutes later, it was with some surprise that I found him standing by the track. I wasn't surprised for long. As I approached him I could see a great deal of blood on his leg and his hands, which were clutched at his kneecap.

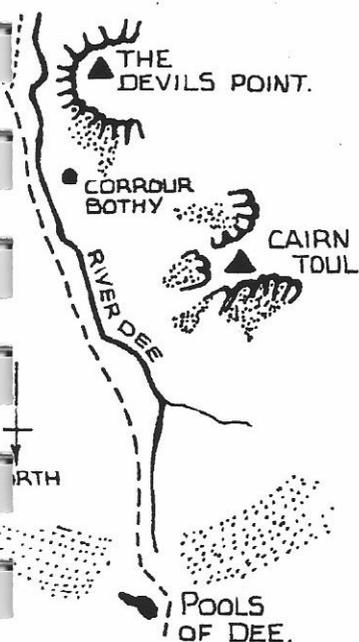
The usual enquiries resulted in him exposing his kneecap to display an enormous cut above it, so deep that his knee appeared to be hanging over his leg, like some gruesome overhang. As he made a sort of bandage to keep things in place he stoically assured me that he was O.K. and that he intended to walk down slowly. As there were plenty of other folk astern of us this didn't seem too foolhardy so I told him I'd report it when I reached the first marshal. I continued towards Rothiemurchus forest, which was now in sight, far below in the widening valley. I met a marshal some 30 minutes or so later and subsequently learnt that he had been successfully evacuated off the hill.

It's a tough race then and one that necessarily commands respect. Tiredness born of sustained effort, combined with difficult terrain and a remote situation make the Lairig Ghru race a very special event and the circumstances just described could usefully serve as a timely reminder to us all that *'the bigger you are, the harder you fall'*.

Water is no problem on the run, despite the dearth of feeding stations, but it's advisable to carry a small plastic cup to scoop water up with, especially if you have grey hair to match the grey skin pallor which was induced in me by this fierce exertion. Lying

down to drink wasn't a problem for me, but getting up again was! While on the subject of food and drink an anecdote may indicate just how close I came to hanging up my Walsh's on this jaunt.

It has been my practice never to eat during a race, mainly as a result of having been seduced by the triathlon scene into trying to eat 'Powerbars' during competition. At every Tri event I went to bicycles were to be seen festooned with little brown blobs of what looked like faeces - actually bite sized bits of Powerbar, or substances of that ilk - to be devoured on the hoof as it were. They were all at it and I started to question my conservatism in the matter and the wisdom of my normal practice of stuffing myself with jam butties and bananas two hours before an event! In the end I succumbed and purchased two Powerbars, having first obtained funds from the Halifax Building Society. I ate one during a long training run. I felt wretched and finished up struggling to hang on to the heels of an elderly couple who were walking their equally elderly dog. All this happened two years ago. I kept the other one, putting it into legal service during the Great Wilderness Challenge in 1992, as evidence that I was carrying the required emergency food.



POOLS OF DEE

Kath

This strategy proved extremely effective for me. Whenever I felt hungry all I had to do was think about the Powerbar festering in my bumbag and the hunger pangs disappeared instantly.

The same rules regarding emergency food applied to this event and the fact that I actually ATE and KEPT DOWN the Powerbar is a reliable indicator of the devastating effect that this monolithic mountain marathon had on my ageing physique.

Once over the top there is solace of a limited kind in that you only have another 14 miles to go but it would be fair to point out that I'm perhaps not the best person to write about the undoubtable joys to be found in wandering in the sylvan glades of Rothiemurchus Forest, for on this occasion at least, I passed through them in a miasmatic and surreal haze. I think I might have enjoyed it but I'm not sure.

Struggling to keep running along the enormously long two miles of sealed road into Aviemore I was overhauled by a man of similar vintage to myself. He was wearing a sort of cap to which he had affixed a handkerchief which hung down over his neck giving him the appearance of a battle-hardened foot soldier of the French Foreign Legion. We fell into conversation, as strangers do in times of great adversity. I suppose my flagging ego was nudged into life by being reeled in the final yards of this long race.

I offered a lame excuse (no pun intended) "I'm knackered" said I heroically. "I did the Highland Cross last weekend (details of epicality etc.) and I don't think I'm fully recovered."

"Aye" he replied "I ken how ye feel, I ran the West Highland Way myself last weekend and it does tend to take a wee bit out of you" (West Highland Way - 90 miles nonstop!!)

Thus it was, with my own perceived achievement put suitably and impressively into perspective, we ran in together in the magnificently unimpressive time of 4hrs 35min. We shook hands and mutually muttered "Never again."

## THE CORRIEYAIRACK CHALLENGE

I suppose, in theory at least, there is a possibility of some small comfort for the foolhardy soul, when, realising that he has bitten off more than he can comfortably chew, tries to cheer himself up by jovially announcing 'Two down, only one to go.' Unfortunately, and doubtless due to the cumulative trauma of two hard events back to back, such a stratagem proved unsuccessful in my case, totally failing to put much bounce in my boots. Shuffling along in a dole like queue, on a grey streaked morn, feigning enthusiasm for what would clearly be a dreich trot across the Monadhliath mountains, I took solace in the fact that no matter what the weather did, skin is waterproof. Not a very positive opening stanza, I admit, but it does reflect my inner feelings at the time. These feelings in their turn were doubtless engendered by my physical state, which, exponentially at least, felt no different than when 'Luck of the Legion' and myself had staggered into Aviemore, but a short week before.

However pessimism was short-lived and when the shout went up and we were away up the hill from Fort Augustus it seemed but a moment before the road was astern and we were splashing along in mud, sidestepping scattered rocks on the rough strewn track and heading up Glen Tarff, hell bent on the mist shrouded slopes of Carn Leac.

Ah, it was good to be at it again! As I warmed up to the occasion I started to feel real joy in pushing through the wet heather with the soft warm rain washing the sweat from my face. My thoughts involuntarily turned to similar wet days wandering in the New Zealand Alps. Once, having spent the night in a hut on the edge of the tree line, I awoke to the sound of torrential rain hammering on the tin roof and great swathes of water lashing across the windows. As I made some tea and prepared myself for a lie-up day, an old hunter, who had shared the billet, ate his

breakfast and then prepared to leave. Stating the obvious, I said to him "Your travelling in this weather?" to which he replied "Yeah mate, rain always looks worse through a window."

After he had gone I reflected on what he had said, packed up and left myself, having decided to brave the elements. During that day I began to appreciate the value of his words. Even though the days travel was hard the experience of being up on the Divide in such wild weather on ones own was tremendous. I realised then that the distinctions we so often make between 'good' and 'bad' days are invariably based on stereotypes. To a mountain man such distinctions become meaningless. There are only different sorts of days on the hill, for the mountain is always indifferent to the traveller, it's simply being itself and should therefore not attract moral categories.

So it was on the Corrieyairack. As I got into the spirit of the day I enjoyed it more and more and I suddenly realised that all sense of fatigue had vanished and that I was out to make a race of it, albeit only with myself.

The long wet slopes and the wind swept rain ceased to be obstacles by being mentally metamorphosed into an attractive challenge. Beauty really is in the eye of the beholder.

The Corrieyairack is a big climb, or so it seemed. It's probably a better hillrunners route than the Highland Cross, though not as picturesque. Eventually, after a final, long raking climb across a barren rain lashed hillside there was a short respite as the watershed was crossed and the descent to the Spey stretched out beneath ones feet. I can't remember exactly how long the climb took, probably about one and a half hours, but certainly long enough to make the saddle a welcome sight.

Dropping down to Garva Bridge and the upper reaches of the Spey involves a long descent and although there's a well benched zig-zag path it's steep enough to be uncomfortable for knackered kneecaps and in the end I opted for the 'Directissima' furrowed by the well sprung legs of my more youthful fellow competitors, although it needs to be said that

in my case, this descent was carried out without the bounding leaps which, if my memory serves me right, used to be so enjoyable. Arriving at the bottom to find I could still run was an unexpected bonus. Capitalising on this and with fellow competitors in distant sight I legged it along the final four miles of undulating and somewhat punishing tar sealed road to the changeover, reaching my bike and completing the 16 mile run in about two and a half hours. No negative feelings now, just sheer joy in completing 'the well run race'.

So to the bike. Feeling elated and inspired, the narrow farm road that leads out to Laggan side rolled effortlessly under the wheels. I even caught up a few of the spring heeled youths who had bounded past me on the long descent from the Pass. The weather was improving, with patches of sunlight dappling the fields putting a shine on the damp road and making an enjoyable day even better.

It's a good bike ride, but not a light hearted affair like the Affric-Beaully run. Fast and easy along the A86 to Kingussie, the route then takes a perverse detour by crossing the Spey and taking the hilly and circuitous B970 to sneak into Kinraig by the back door. It suited me, keen as I am on the bike and I eventually rolled into town in 3hrs 56min 3secs.

Needless to say I was cock a hoop at having completed The Big Three and later at the prizegiving there was also a feeling of unreality when I collected the prize for the first Super Vet home.

To you hardened Cosmonaughts, totally at ease galloping across precipitous crags, with feint wisps of blue smoke drifting from the hot heels of your Walsh's, this self indulgent account will doubtless give rise to sardonic grins.

**But spare a thought for the likes of me, teetering on the very brink of noncompetitive eternity; and look kindly on a last ditch attempt to transform the reality of diminishing ability into the substance of the Peter Pan myth that life begins at 40 - give or take 10 years.**

## CLUB NEWS AND RESULTS

### TRAINING

*We meet at 6.15pm at Hazlehead Academy every Tuesday night. If it is a bad night we train in Hazlehead woods which is very sheltered. Generally we go to nearby hills. Hill of Fare is only 15 minute away. Make Tuesday night a Cosmic night!*

### 100 CLUB

**Tickets left even yet! The money generated is for our own benefit. At Ben Lomond weekend each member got six pounds off his B&B and the ladies got FREE!! On the other hand the more tickets we sell the bigger the prizes will become. £12 per annum per ticket. At the moment there is a monthly first prize of £15 and a second prize of £8. On top of this there is a twice yearly draw for £50. It can only get better.**

### Winners so far!!

<b>JANUARY</b>	Bing Kerr	£10
	Gordon Hope	£5
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	Mike Gibb	£10
	Sarah Gray	£5
<b>MARCH</b>	Malcolm McDonald	£15
	Janet Rennie	£8
<b>APRIL</b>	Sandy Watson	£15
	W. Warman	£8
<b>MAY</b>	Stuart Cheyne	£15
	Dr. Ray Johns	£8
<b>JUNE</b>	Maureen Urquhart	£50

### PHOTOGRAPHS

There is a Club Album with a few photos. It would be good to build it up to look back on. Colour or black and white prints are all acceptable.

### CLOTHING : (ORDERS TO BRIAN PLEASE)

CLUB VEST (Chest Size)	£12
CLUB SHORTS (black) Med. Lge.	£10
SWEATSHIRT Med. Lge. XLge.	£11.50
T SHIRT Sm. Med. Lge.	£6

## RESULTS

### CLACHNABEN HILL RACE

**24 April 1994 - Category AM**

**Distance 10.5 miles - Climb 3,500 feet.**

1. Neil Martin	Lomond Hill Runners	1:19:59
2. John Hepburn	Dundee Hawkhill	1:20:07
3. Malcolm Paterson	Shettleston	1:21:39
13. John Buchan	Cosmic Hillbashers	1:26:52
28. Brian Lawrie	" (v)	1:35:18
35. Gordon Ramsay	" (v)	1:37:30
36. Ewen Rennie	" (v)	1:38:10
43. Graham Milne	" (v)	1:40:37
47. Dennis McDonald	"	1:43:04
53. Graham Elrick	"	1:46:48
60. Graham Marks	" (v)	1:52:15
74. John Stewart	" (v)	2:03:10
77. Doug Leiper	"	2:06:05
80. Alfred Mckay	"	2:08:02
81. Margaret Stafford	" (fv)	2:10:08

### BEN LOMOND HILL RACE

**7 May 1994 - Category AM**

**Distance 9 miles - Climb 3,192 feet**

1. Terry Mitchell	Fife AC	1:08:46
2. Malcolm Paterson	Shettleston	1:08:54
3. Ian Murphy	Clydesdale Harriers	1:09:40
28. Brian Lawrie	Cosmic Hillbashers (v)	1:21:48
38. Ewen Rennie	" (v)	1:23:30
64. Eddie Butler	" (v)	1:28:27
94. Doug Leiper	"	1:33:33
114 Terry Kerr	" (v)	1:38:47
134 Kath Butler	" (fv)	1:46:41
143 Alfie McKay	"	1:49:56
148 Stephen Pryor	"	1:51:51
159 Bing Kerr	" (fv)	2:03:45

**KRUNCE 1****5 APRIL**

1.	Peter Jennings		28.41
2.	John Buchan		28.57
3.	Steve Willox		29.41
4.	Neil Kilner		30.58
5.	Gordon Ramsay	mv	32.22
6.	Brian Lawrie	mv	32.28
7.	Ian Jolliffe	mv	32.40
8.	Douglas Leiper		32.46
9.	Alistair Leiper		33.12
10.	Debbie Kilner	f	34.02
11.	Graeme Marks	mv	35.29
12.	Ewen Rennie	mv	35.37
13.	Peter Fraser	mv	36.53
14.	Stewart Thomson		37.01
15.	Terry Kerr	mv	37.11
16.	John Stewart	mv	42.08
17.	Steve Pryor		42.21
18.	Annette Orme	fv	44.03
19.	Nancy McKinnon	fv	44.04
20.	Rosie Hope	fv	44.05
21.	Bing Kerr	fv	44.05
22.	Andrew Leiper		45.32
23.	Shona Manson	fv	53.16

**KRUNCE 2****3 MAY**

1.	Ray Creswell		28.05
2.	Steve Willox		30.17
3.	Phil Kammer		32.09
4.	Steve Baxter	mv	32.24
5.	Brian Lawrie	mv	32.27
6.	Ian Jolliffe	mv	32.31
7.	Al Leiper		32.33
8.	James Esson	j	33.03
9.	Ewen Rennie	mv	33.23
10.	Dennis McDonald		33.30
11.	Doug Leiper		33.37
12.	Derek Bisset		33.48
13.	Graeme Marks	mv	35.14
14.	Alec Strachan		37.23
15.	Peter Fraser	mv	37.24
16.	George Esson	mv	38.32
17.	Fay Hamilton	fv	40.18
18.	Christine Blyth	fv	42.12
19.	Dan Fraser	mv	42.36
20.	Nancy McKinnon	fv	42.48
21.	Olive Fraser	fv	42.48
22.	Andrew Leiper		42.52

**KRUNCE 3 7 JUNE**

1.	Dave Duguid		28.51
2.	Dennis McDonald		30.46
3.	Alistair Leiper		31.24
4.	Steve Baxter	mv	31.30
5.	Eddie Butler	mv	31.35
6.	Derek Bisset	mv	32.59
7.	Graeme Marks	mv	34.43
8.	Peter Fraser	mv	35.15
9.	Terry Kerr	mv	35.24
10.	Alec Strachan		35.26
11.	Chris Simpson	mv	35.28
12.	Ulie Simpson	fv	35.29
13.	Fay Hamilton	fv	37.40
14.	Alf McKay		39.00
15.	Christine Blyth	fv	41.08
16.	Rosie Hope	fv	42.32
17.	Kath Butler	fv	42.32
18.	Andrew Leiper		42.33
19.	Bing Kerr	fv	42.58
20.	Patrick Walker		43.37
21.	Ruby Kerr	f	49.22
22.	Shona Manson	fv	49.56

**STUC A'CHROIN HILL RACE 30 APRIL**

1.	John Hooson	Ambleside	2.13.10
2.	Neil Martin	Lomond H.R.	2.14.10
3.	D. McGonigle	Shettleston	2.14.54
9.	John Reade (v)	Fife A.C.	2.24.33
11.	Dennis Bell (v)	H.E.L.P.	2.26.54
16.	Roger Boswell (v)	Lochaber	2.23.50
27.	Phil Kammer	Cosmics	2.42.38
73.	Keith Greenwood (v)	Cosmics	3.30.45
76.	John Stewart (v)	Cosmics	3.38.26
83.	Steve Pryor	Cosmics	4.19.40

**HOY HALF MARATHON**

1.	Steven Beavan		1:14:54
2.	Adrian Askew		1:15:04
3.	Ewen Taylor		1:17:50
4.	Andrew Nodrum		1:19:21
5.	Ian Curphey	1st SV (Record)	1:23:10

# COSMICS PARTY

# JANUARY 21

by Brian Lawrie

It didn't take long to start swinging. By eight o'clock you couldn't get near the bar. Harry Butler was already tormenting the over 40's with classic renditions from that failed decade of their lost youth, the sixties. Anticipation was in the air, but first, appetites had to be satisfied.

Cosmics had agreed to cater for themselves. Spare ribs and chicken legs rattled in the bumbags of new arrivals. Pizzas, nut roasts, bowls of salad, salmon, quivering jellies and cheesecakes were all plonked on Sandy Broons tables, generously donated by Cosmics who had been unable to eat them at Christmas. Not a stomach, vegie or carnivore was to be left unfulfilled although Ewens was left sick. No resistance to the listeria you see.

A few more drinks and there was no stopping the action. Anxious father, Terry, reminded Erin's boyfriend that there "wis to be nae f\*\*\*\*\* aroond". Limbs gyrating, the seething tempo rose to an epic fulfilment with a virtuoso disco dancing solo from rubber legs John' Travolta' Buchan.

And what about Rosie and Gordon? Who said Rock n' Roll was dead? Was it Chuck Berry or Little Richard? Can't remember but as they crashed into another flirtatious jiving sequence, who cared. Old timers (those older than Gordon Yule!) clapped until their hands were raw. What a night.

And on it went, the hours cruising by. Without PB's and tracksters on it was getting difficult to recognise these Cosmics. Was it the drink? Surely not. Harry Butler goaded the

company into a rubber burning final thrash, trying to postpone the inevitable. But end it did, at one o'clock on Saturday morning. We cleared the tables, grabbed what food was left and wobbled out into the frosty night, with wild tunes still banging in our skulls.

And would you believe it? Next morning 13 runners turned up at the Bay of Nigg coastal path run to enthuse over the events of the night gone by and to ease their way back into the rhythms of life.

See you next year!



HIC!! WHY DOES NO-ONE DANCE WITH ME!!

# SIX OF THE BEST

by Phil Kammer

*An account of the record breaking run by Dave Armitage, Mel Edwards and Phil Kammer over the six highest summits of the Cairngorm Massif in July 1985.*

Just try to get the Cosmic touch,  
The sense that 'you' don't matter  
much.  
A million stars are in the sky;  
A million planets plunge and die.  
A million million men are sped;  
A million million wait ahead.  
Each plays his part and has his day  
What Ho! The world's alright, I say.

Robert W. Service

To visit the six major summits of the Cairngorms during a single day had been an ambition for some time. The idea had germinated on one of those long hill days spent exploring the seemingly endless bounds of these fine mountains and came to fruition in a conversation with Mel Edwards, my travelling companion on that day to the Chapelgill hill race near Biggar.

I had been recounting a few of my crazier ideas for long hill journeys but soon gravitated to some of the more plausible expeditions. A mention of the 'Cairngorm Six' drew a positive response from Mel as he told me of his intention to run them with Dave Armitage, his companion during a run to establish the standing record for a round of the four highest Cairngorm summits.

We knew of the late Eric Beard's epic run from Glenmore over Braeriach, Cairntoul, Ben MacDhui, Cairngorm and Beinn A' Bhuid and back to his starting point in around nine hours and felt that the same route but with the addition of Ben Avon would be quite an accomplishment. A quick bit of arithmetic showed that our proposed journey would cover some 40 miles and involve about 12,500 feet of ascent.

Nature has arranged these grand hills as three sets of lofty twins presiding over the wild expanse twixt Dee and Spey. To

the east lies the magnificently remote plateau of Ben Avon, a vast undulating expanse of forbidding high land punctuated with bizarre granite tors torn by the elements from the mountains exposed flesh.

Across the narrow wind blasted ridge of the Sneck she holds hands with her near neighbour Beinn A' Bhuid, a great rolling, slumbering hill which like Ben Avon bears the scars from the gouging glaciers of a bygone age where breathtaking corries plunge from the plateau rim to the verdant glen far below.

The western slope of Beinn A' Bhuid progress over the lowly top of Beinn a' Chaorainn before dipping into the Lairig an Laogh or 'pass of the cattle' which runs north to south and is confined to the west by the massive bulk of Ben MacDhui.

The better known and well travelled Lairig Ghru lies between these highest of the Cairngorm tops and its westerly sentinels, Cairn Toul and Braeriach.

The massif is secretive in nature revealing her innermost beauty only to those who range deep into her rugged heart and presenting but a bland face to the less energetic onlooker from Deeside or Strathspey.

From Glenmore, Ben Avon is the most remote summit of the six and mainly for this reason we intended climbing it first. The

approach to Glen Avon is over boggy moorland which we felt would not be a welcome sight after running for some 35 miles. Far better we thought to finish with Braeriach and face the rugged but shorter route home through the Chalamain Gap.

The appointed day dawned clear and bright and a summer which so far had been the wettest I could remember. We arose from fitful sleep at 5am for we knew that we must eat a good breakfast before our 7am start. Having eaten well the previous evening it was an effort to force bananas, gingerbread and marmalade down my throat along with what seemed gallons of hot sweet tea.

The amount of energy required for this type of expedition is enormous and it is evident that in order to move fast we could not afford to carry all our food for the day. We knew that supplies on the hill would be essential and to this end Mel had organised a group of willing friends to position themselves at five points along our route with food and dry clothing.

At 6.45 we gathered in the car park of Glenmore Lodge, providing a tasty treat for the fearsome Speyside midges. With last good wishes offered and the stopwatch tripped it was a relief to jog off

along the track to Bynack stable leaving the infernal insects behind.

We cantered happily past the Lochan Uaine, all three in buoyant mood and taking care not to force the pace, for minutes gained now could cost dearly later in the day should our reserves become drained.

The first climb from Bynack Stable up over the northern ridge of Bynack More was taken at a fast walk. From Coire Odhar Dave took a careful bearing to guide us over Carn Dubh to Faindouran Lodge where we knew that Eddie Butler would be waiting for us. As we crested the last soggy hummock, there was Faindouran directly below us, A striking confirmation of Daves ability with map and compass.

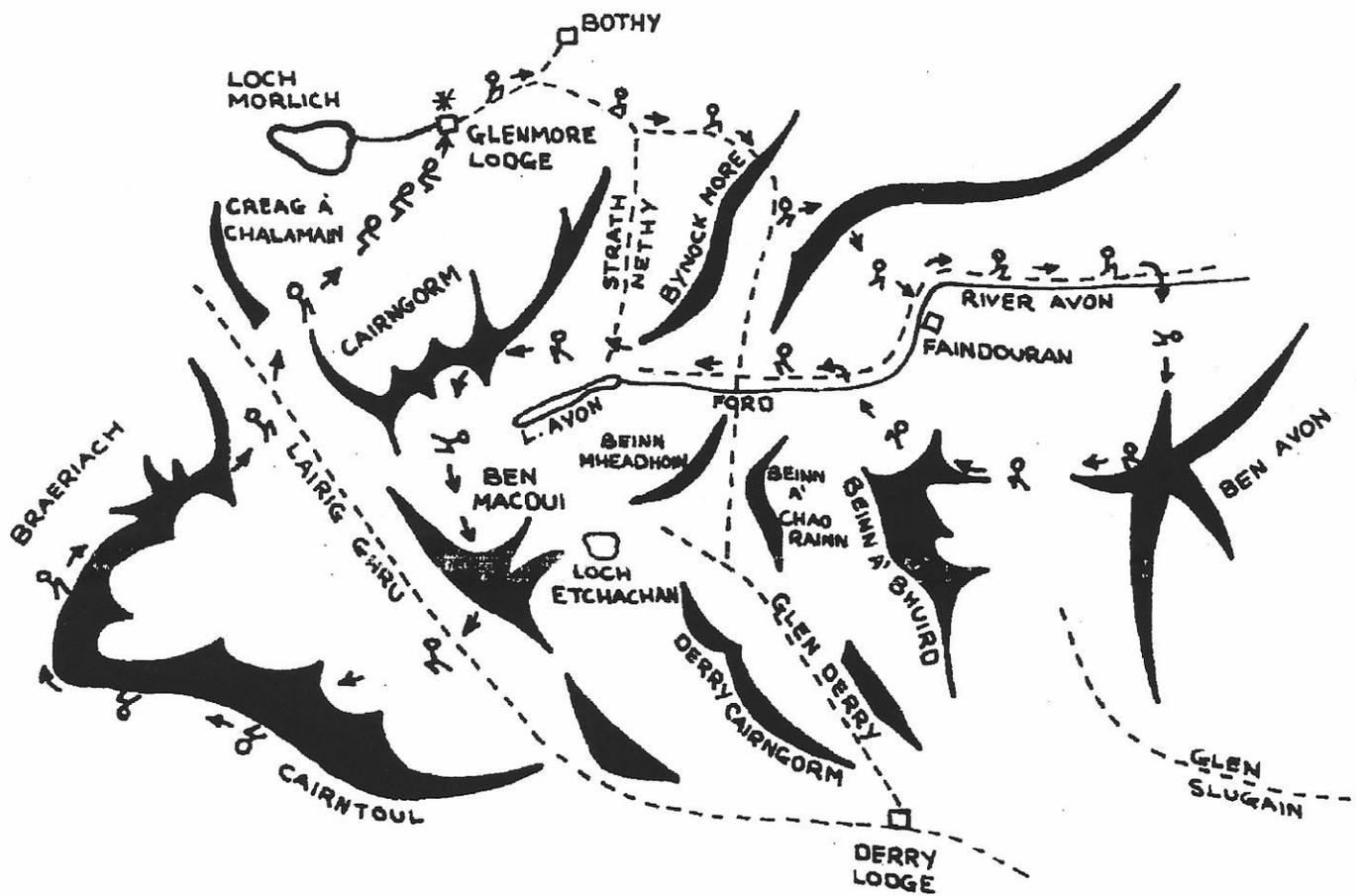
Eddie had all the food neatly spread out and a tasty dixie of hot Bovril was simmering on the purring primus stove. Almost immediately Mel stung his back-side on one of the infrequent clumps of nettles around these parts, drawing much laughter and comment. But we could not afford to linger enjoying the morning sun beneath the gable of the bothy, and so within four minutes of arriving we were off, jogging down the track below Cnapan

A' Mheirlich and towards Ben Avon.

We must have painted a very queer picture to the occupants of a passing landrover; three men jogging along in the beautiful sunshine wearing shorts and T shirts, one with a handkerchief tied on his head, and Mel in his two



*A watering hole for weary runners.*



tone lycra tights! With cheery waves and a quick "Good morning" we passed them by and soon crossed the bouncy little suspension bridge over the Avon taking us into the magnificent gape of the Garbh Coire. Lingering snow patches punctuated the curving corrie rim, outstanding against the bright greens of new vegetation. In the slanting rays of morning sunlight the Mitre ridge was etched starkly, so that every crack and groove of this monolithic buttress was highlighted.

Dave and I enthused about the rock climbing while Mel seemed intent on the job in hand as we breasted the final rise and faced the summit tor. A quick scramble to the top and there before us lay the days task. Across the Sneck the featureless hump of Beinn A'Bhuird with her fine skirt of corries and beyond that Cairngorm, MacDhui, Cairntoul and Braeriach. Back to work! Within 45 minutes we passed the North Top of Beinn A'Bhuird and Dave guided us on and down to an easy splash across the Avon. We had reconnoitered this

area on an earlier visit so there would be no doubts about navigation.

While we had been on the tops Eddie had moved upstream to the bothy at the Fords of Avon and it was here that we took another quick break and feed before tackling the looming bulk of Cairngorm from the saddle at the head of Strath Nethy. Ground conditions in the glens were far from ideal. Weeks of incessant rain had created a strength sapping quagmire and so it was a relief to emerge onto the dry footing of the upper slopes above lonely Loch Avon where a solitary angler stood motionless in contemplation, a definite contrast to our perpetual motion.

Clean socks and another hasty feed in the shelter of the automatic weather station fortified us for the high level promenade to Britains second highest mountain, Ben MacDhui. During a short summer this verdant stretch of high arctic pasture can seem beguilingly benign. Having tasted its worst malevolent tempers in the depth of winters grip I found my present, relatively un-

clothed state, more that a little incongruous and perhaps even arrogant. But on this day all was quiet and we swiftly passed the infamous Curran Bothy at the head of the Feith Buidhe scene of the tragic deaths of those children overcome by the elements in what is now simply called the 'Cairngorm Disaster'.

Here the beaten track gives in to the less forgiving terrain of boulder fields tumbling down from the domed summit of MacDhui. At the very top lies the remnants of a huge cairn which at one time it was optimistically hoped could be built high enough to outstrip Ben Nevis to claim Britains highest point. Unfortunately, it would have to be over 100 feet tall and the project was never completed.

Accurate navigation was always crucial to success but never more so than now as we rattled down featureless slopes to a rendezvous with the source of the Tailors' Burn which would lead us into the defile of the Lairig Ghru. Once again Daves credentials were impeccable as he led us onto a huge wedge of hard packed snow high above the glen. Ahead of me Dave struck a stunning pose in bright red shorts and green top perched on a brilliant white plinth and plunging glenwards with all the aplomb and delight of a seasoned hillrunner.

We had more luck at the Tailors' stones than their legendary namesakes who reputedly perished here in a blizzard. For us there was the reassurance of more food and hot drinks before the scramble up to Cairntoul.

After crossing the infant river Dee heathery slopes climb to boulder strewn screes culminating in an airy scramble over a jumble of huge perched and jammed granite blocks emerging suddenly onto the very summit of Cairn Toul. From this airy top Braeriach looked tantalisingly close across the Garbh Coire to the north but to attain our last top we had to thread the tortuous miles around the coire's rim. It is

on this high plateau at a height of 4000 feet that the river Dee bubbles straight from the granite bosom of the mountain and within the space of half a mile tumbles from the lip of the Coire in a breathtaking baptismal plunge.

We were met again on Braeriach with food and encouragement as we descended to the Lairig for our final climb into the Chalamain Gap; a cliff girt canyon whose floor is littered with the detritus of landscape creation, blocks as big as houses with dark devouring gaps between them and smaller chunks to which move beneath your feet. Emerging from her clutches was a relief indeed and now easy ground on a peaty track took our weary bodies gently downwards to the pinewoods of Glenmore.

Suddenly it was all behind us as we burst from the forest onto the lawn of the Lodge with friendly smiling faces awaiting us. We had set a record of 11 hours 39 minutes and 4 secs, well outside what we had planned but nevertheless it was a wonderful experience and well worth every ounce of effort.

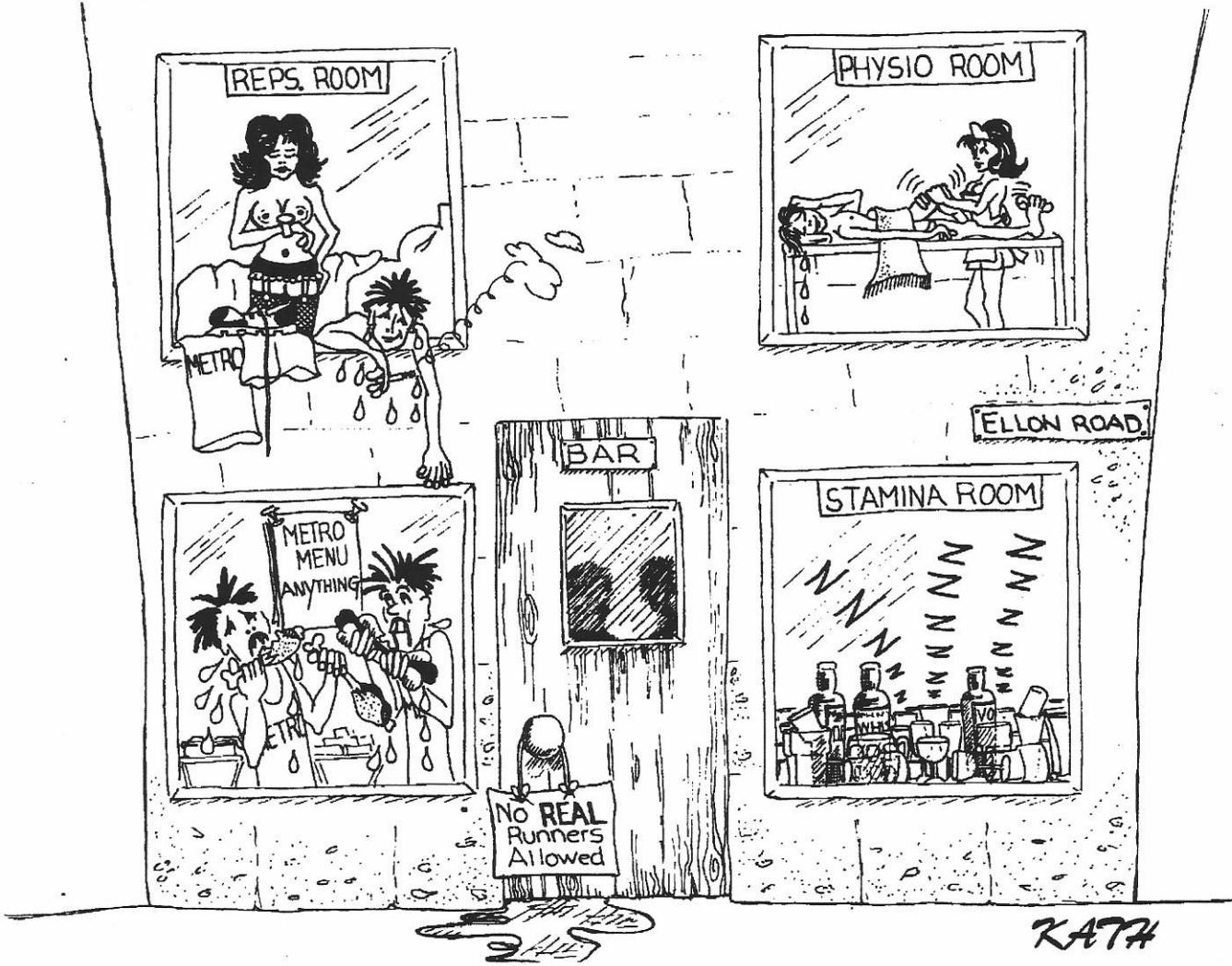
Nine years on the record still stands so why not get the maps out, squeeze into those studs and give it a go.

I know a mountain thrilling to the stars,  
Peerless and pure, and pinnaced with snow;  
Glimpsing the golden dawn o'er coral bars,  
Flaunting the vanish't sunset's garnet glow;  
Proudly patrician, passionless, serene;  
Soaring in silvered steeps where cloud surfs  
break;  
Virgin and vestal - Oh a very Queen!  
And at her feet there dreams a quiet Lake.

Robert W Service



# BRIG SINN - CLUB NIGHT



# SOME MORE MEMBERS

## DOUG LEIPER

Doug wanted a race that was fun and allowed himself to be talked into a Krunce race by, guess who, guru Rennie. That's how his hill career began. Despite a 1st place at the Krunce race of August 92 Doug still feels that he hasn't quite mastered all of the skills required by a good hillrunner. He lists his main ambition as wanting to be able to run as fast downhill as he can on the flat. Just let yourself go Doug!!

## DAVE ARMITAGE

Dave has always enjoyed being in the mountains and took naturally to running up and down them. In 1964 Dave took part in his first hill race when at school camp near Kirk Yotholm. Now that's one for the historians of the sport (no more clues!) Anyway the boy made good. He is British Vets over 40 orienteering champion, so if you can keep up with him he's the man to follow in the mist. He had a brilliant run of form at the tail end of '93 winning Morven, Bennachie and Cairn William. Began a strong challenge for the '94 Scottish hillrunning over 40 Championship with a win in the vets category at Clachnaben. Still hasn't bought a Cosmic vest or run for Cosmics!!

## DENNIS MCDONALD

Dennis got into running in the hills because he liked the challenge they presented. Enjoys other mountain activities like skiing, snowboarding and mountain biking. His first race was Clachnaben '93 and he has real potential. Dennis has sprung high tensile steel coiled inside his thighs which allows him to bound over an 8' fence from a static position in one leap without using his hands. This is the most amazing athletic feat I have ever seen. Dennis can be seen doing this outside the Fittie Bar on Friday and Saturday nights between

8.00pm and 10.00pm for 50 pence (all for Cosmic funds) and on Tuesday night at Club runs (maybe that will get you out?) Stick in Dennis.

## GRAHAM DUDLEY

Don't see much of Graham but like many of us Graham's running in the hills is an extension of his mountaineering background. His first hill race was the Karrimor International Mountain Marathon in 1984 where he gained 11th place in the Elite event. Graham would like to run more of the local races where I'm sure he would make an impact. So let's be having you lad!!

## ALFRED MCKAY

Alfie is an enthusiastic club member. He does nothing in small measures, his first hill race being Ben Nevis. He's not a small man of course and he was seen to consume four cow pies after the Ben Lomond race. Trying desperately to re-capture the form (and size) that took him up and down the Ben in a very respectable 2hrs 5min some years ago. Stick with us Alfie, we're your only chance!!

## IAN CURPHEY

Ian is our leading geriatric. He has a solid mountaineering background but it is really as a triathlete that he has excelled, winning an untold number of events in the Super Vet category. His article in this Issue highlights some of these exploits. Once a notorious traditionalist, he has now made major concessions to modernity with the acquisition of plus fours, stainless steel rims and derailleur gears.

## TRAINING FOR HILL-RUNNING WHAT CAN THEORY TELL US?

What do we mean by hill-running? Clachnaben, Coniston, Ben Lomond and Snowdon are all excellent hill races of length 8 to 10 miles and climb 3,000 to 3,500 feet. However the requirements vary with Lomond and Snowdon requiring one sustained climb followed by a long fast descent down a path whilst Clachnaben and Coniston involve the runner in a succession of climbs and descents. The latter two can be differentiated by the relative lack of paths on most of Clachnaben compared to the well trodden, if dangerous track down through the quarry at Coniston.

Whilst all of these might be considered A-Mediums, the picture becomes further complicated if one takes in variety of length and terrain. The requirements of Chapelgill or El-Brim-Ick, each with winning times of under 22 minutes, are clearly quite different from say, Wasdale or the Bens of Jura at over three hours for the winner. Then of course there are all the 'B' and 'C' type races!

The essential feature of hill-running would seem to be that the major anaerobic component of the race comes in the first quarter rather than the final sprint to the line. (But that may also be required!) The uneven nature of the terrain may be more or less important depending on the race.

So, if you want to win Clachnaben or Ben-nachie how should you train? It is probable, not possible, to give of your best at both of them as they pose quite different problems and are anyway too far apart to cover in a single 'peak'.

Certainly general training principles can take us so far. If you really want to give of your best then you have to periodise your year. This involves a general conditioning phase followed by a sharpening period leading into the actual competition phase. Then after some rest and recuperation it is time to start the next periodisation set. It may be possible to peak twice in a year but you definitely cannot race well all the year round as most of try to do.

During the conditioning phase, quantity rather than quality of work is important although it is probably necessary to maintain at least one session of hill work and/or speed work each week. General body conditioning such as circuit training should also be done during this phase. Some alternation of hard and easy weeks is also desirable.

After twelve weeks, or even more of this one

moves into the sharpening period. During this six to eight week period the emphasis is on quality with the total mileage being tapered down as one prepares for the key races. It is a question of training specifically for you target event. However the sharpening phase should include pure speed work as well as speed endurance work.

The actual competitive phase may last four to six weeks with virtually all the quality being saved for the actual race or races. The rest of the schedule should be maintenance/recovery running.

So, how might this look for a reasonable club runner looking to peak for Morven on 10 September? Morven is five miles and 1,700 feet of climbing with an initial long hard climb. From there it is another mile and a half to the summit followed by a return down the same route with the winners time being just over forty minutes (but likely to go lower in better conditions).

Examining the Calendar shows that Largo Law on the 13 August might be a good fitness tester to mark the transition from sharpening to competition. Two weeks later the slightly over distance Lomonds of Fife could be fitted in leaving three weeks to the intended 'peak' race. Ben Nevis on the 3 September is a definite no-no, too long and too close to our target race. However, we would probably want to fit in some other races to bring us to our climax. Regretably the September Krunce is also too near to our target race so it may be necessary to look at things like the Aberdeen A.A.C. Track 1500 metres or Vets 1500 metres (assuming the dates stay the same as last year) to give the final polish.

During this period one midweek speed endurance session with another blowout at the weekend when no race should be sufficient. Most of the rest of the work during this period will be at 65% to 75% effort with the speed endurance session involving covering race distance in a series of intervals at 85% to 90% effort.

Looking backwards the sharpening phase would start at the end of June - beginning of July. During this period the emphasis is on quality with the quantity of the conditioning period being gradually decreased. The occasional race is permitted - but not every week or even twice a week as some of us do at that time of year. The Krunces are probably ideal in terms of length and severity.

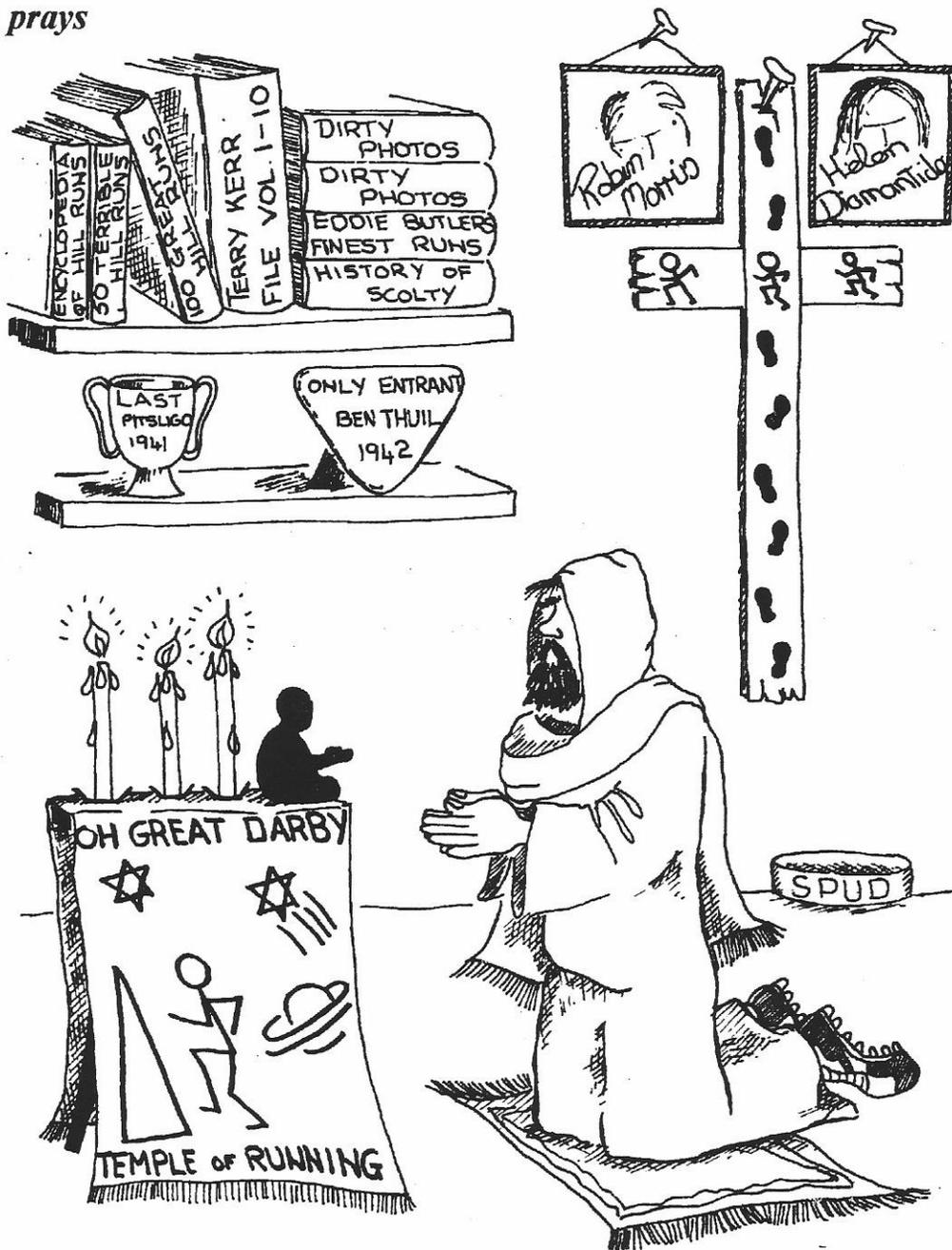
The weekly programme might look something like this:-

Monday	Steady run	30-40 min
Tuesday	Intervals	600-1200m with incomplete recovery. Number increasing throughout period.
Wednesday	Steady run	30 - 40 minutes
Thursday	Hill Reps	Varying distances and climbs 40 seconds to 4 minutes Number radually increased.
Friday	Steady Run	30 - 40 minutes
Saturday	Long hill run	90+ minutes
Sunday	Hill Reps	As Thursday but include 1 or 2 downhill.

From now to the start of the sharpening phase the aim is gradually increasing weekly running time (a better measure for hill runners than mileage) with continued work on flexibility and general conditioning. Most of the work should be done at 70% to 80% effort with once a week blow out either in a race or speed/hill session. Races can be of any distance but should be run in a controlled manner rather than flat out. (If unable to do this- don't race or at least nothing longer than 40 minutes.

Future Issues of the COSMIC COMIC will carry further articles on training for hill running and analysis of how the stars train. If you have any questions that you would like answered on training or racing in the hills pass your queries to Ewen, Brian or Phil. (Questions will be answered in future COMICS withou identifying the source).

*Inside the temple of running  
Guru Rennie prays*



*"Can I drive the Scottish Squad bus to the World Cup"*

# NEWS ITEM

## THE NEW FACE OF THE HIGHLANDS

Reporter B. Lawrie



Lord Jerk of Glen Stishie Estate has come up with an extremely controversial idea, which he believes could, given some time, spawn a whole new industry and re-invigorate the Highland economy.

The idea itself stemmed from a bizarre happening last week when mad Tam Innes, the chief bulldozer driver on the estate, went berserk on lovely Ben Ruine, carving out mile after mile of hillside trail (see drawing).

Everybody expected the worst for Tam. At least he would be kicked off the estate and who would employ a stupid gink like that?

As chance would have it, Jerkers, as his friends in London call him, was making his annual one day visit to the estate the day after Tams berserker. Retribution was obviously going to be swift.

But no; when Jerkers viewed the carnage he astonished local opinion by waxing lyrical about Tams efforts. Instead of the boot; Tam was rewarded, his working day was reduced from 18 hours to 16 hours and his candle allowance was increased. What was Jerkers up to?

We didn't have to wait long for the answer. Yesterday at the four star Stishie Hotel in Stishie village,

Jerkers expounded his plans to an assembled body of pressmen and landowners.

Those, "strange aesthetic shapes" on Ben Ruine he began, were the key to the future. He had been planning something similar, it was only fortuitous, that poor Tam had "forced the pace of development".

Traditional concepts of land use were no longer viable, he continued (a few whiskers quivered apprehensively among Jerkers associates at this point, but the line held firm) and had to be abandoned. Hunting, shooting and fishing were finished. The rivers were poisoned, pine tree moth had killed off all the deer and mad grouse disease had spread to wipe out most flying things. The lairds had to think (this word was so strongly emphasised by Jerkers that Lord McKay of McKay dropped his 'Bells') quickly about the future and not be restricted by romantic notions from the past.

At this juncture proceedings were temporarily brought to a halt while information packs were distributed. The invited audience stood around in groups muttering in subdued library like tones. "Yes, Jerkers is a different sort of chap from the rest of us" Lord McLeod was overheard saying, "but he's right you know, these diseases have been a dastardly thing". A few whiskies were dashed back and then Jerkers was summoning

them to their places. It still hadn't dawned on many of the landowners just where Jerkers speech was leading. They didn't have long to wait.

Taking Ben Ruine as an example Jerkers said he planned to introduce similar features on all the hills of the Stishie estate with different patterns for each hill. There was an audible gasp in the room at this point. Entry would be charged at specific vantage points, "The tourists would love it, he claimed; those of you here today with really big hills within your estates will have tremendous scope for development, if you take up my scheme. Dual Carriageways could be built up the glens for those who wanted to get closer to the new sights, at extra charge of course, floodlights for night viewing might be erected. The patterns on a hill might be changed once they lost appeal, by closing down a hill for a short period to facilitate changes and open up some virgin ground".

For those tourists not beguiled by the surreal configuration on the hill there were to be other inducements. Jerkers was almost raving now and undoubtedly his powerful personality cowed many in the audience who had severe doubts about the practicality of it all. However, there was no doubt that he had really thought this through.

The possibility of a "creative bulldozing competition", as he

called it , between the Scottish estates was aired for 1996. What about "change a Munro in a day , as a catching theme", grinned Jerkers provocatively. It really was a good job that few of Jerkers opponents from the Conservation bodies were present in the room, there might have been a riot. Certainly from the stunned looks on the faces of the audience few were now left with any doubt about the magnitude of Jerkers ideas. How many would have the strength to follow, I wondered?

He wasn't finished. "Thousands could be induced to attend such events", he steamrolled on. "There could be 'beginners hills' with bulldozers out for hire. There could be 'family events' such as 'scree trundling', 'pulling up heather by the roots' or 'dam a burn'. People want something to do, a release of some sort from the daily drag", said Jerkers. The countryside had always provided a means of escape and pleasure especially for our 'urban hordes'. Here was the opportunity to enhance these pleasures".

At this point a reporter from the Stishie FreePress got a squeak in about the wildlife. Jerkers turned his cold grey eyes on the wee lass but bravely she stood her ground. Jerkers had obviously been keen to avoid this issue if he could and had been gathering his notes together in order to finish. He didn't want a sour note now. Wild emotions ap-

peared to be colliding inside Jerkers skull towards this upstart in the corner but he gathered himself and smiled in a mollifying sort of way.

Ben Ruine was indeed a lovely place and that was why he had bought the land that it stood on. But the wee lass had to realise that very few creatures existed in the Highlands now and it was up to men of vision to take matters into their own hands, to shape a better future for the region. (Whether the pun was intended or not it was lost on most of his bewildered audience).

It was the smooth talking politician who was speaking now as well as the visionary. Countless men and women working in the hills had to take priority over those few animals and plants that were left, he told the wee lass.

Designers, artists, electricians, labourers would be set to work for generations. Thousands would come to spend money and take part in fulfilling competitions. Our natural resources must be exploited and should no longer lie dormant.

And then he was gone, slipping away behind a curtain.

Driving to homesville that night the question that haunted my thoughts was; *had I been listening to a madman, or a prophet?*

# THE COSMIC HILL RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIP

by EWEN RENNIE

The A.G.M. in December 1993 decided that we should have a Club Championship with awards to male and female Champions and awards to the most improved athlete. It was also agreed that we should have Club standard awards for hill running. In a moment of supreme weakness I volunteered to co-ordinate all this.

How do I propose to do it? Well, we have seven designated championship races:

EL-BRIMIK	Passed
CLACHNABEN	Passed
GLAMAIG	9 July
BEN RINNES	30 July
MORVEN	10 September
PENTLAND SKYLINE	9 October
BENNACHIE	Date ?

It was agreed that a person's best six runs from the seven races would count and I suggest 11 points for first Cosmic, 9 points for second, 8 points for third etc. (for both male and female).

In the event of the Pentland Skyline and Bennachie falling on the same day we could substitute Meall A' Bhuachaille for Bennachie or just make it five out of six to count.

To decide most improved athlete I propose that for each of the seven designated races we relate each Cosmic's time to the winner's time on a percentage basis; subject to scrutiny (so as to avoid someone just having a bad run or injury). The person with the biggest percentage improvement would be declared the

most improved athlete.

For Club standards I would propose that we have Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards. These would again be related to the winner's time in the designated Championship races. For Gold one would need winner's time plus 25% in any three of the seven races; for Silver winner's time plus 50% and for Bronze winner's time plus 75% (similarly three races out of the seven).

N.B. In the above there would be no age group differentiation. We're all growing gracefully old together (anyway it would be too complicated).

For those who think the above is complicated then try the Krunce scoring system! Remember there are only two Krunces left - 2 August and 6 September, all at 7.00pm at the Rotton O' Gairn car park at Kingshill. For each Krunce your running time is related to your previous best and the differentials rank ordered.

Points go for improvement and for position in each category, male/female; auld mannie/wifie etc. with the proviso that there have to be at least two people in each category. At present Shona Manson with 31 points and Graeme Marks with 27 points are well placed but watch out for Dennis MacDonald or even me.

## INTRODUCTION TO JIM DARBY'S LETTER

*A number of us went down to Meadowbank prior to the setting up of the squad.*

*As you can see from the correspondence something unique and very worthwhile has been established. Cosmics should get involved in this venture and I have offered to organise a squad weekend for 1995.*

*It's possible that some members would like to attend but feel they are not good enough runners or that it would be difficult to get integrated into the squad at this late date. Judging from the tone of the letter this would be a stupid mistake to make and I think everybody would be welcome.*

Dear Brian,

Sorry you could not make it for our first National Hill Running Squad Hill Running Weekend and this is to update you as to what went on and what we are trying to do.

Scotland has some good individuals but very little depth so I decided that the initial step would be to have a fairly large squad, non elitist, to develop spirit, pride and provide an environment where everybody would be encouraged by each other.

This is now in place and with about 50 attending we have a large pool of committed people who all share a common objective.....that of putting Scottish teams in a medal winning position.

Not all of them are great or potentially great runners but they will each contribute what they can do best and the collective energy of all will be 'the wind beneath the wings' of the top runners.

### DECISIONS REACHED

The World Championships are on the 11 September 1994 near Munich, Germany, and is an uphill only race.

The Trial will be mainly uphill and will probably be a variant of Cairngorm with a small descent from the summit and a second climb to the finish. This is not finalised at the moment as there is another option yet to be surveyed once the snow has gone. Women and Juniors will run a shorter uphill course.

The Trial will be on August 14 in order to permit a 'One Peak' season, rather than the usual format of trials June, race in September. The first three finishers will be automatically selected and the remaining three places will be selected on known form. (Women and Juniors, two automatic and two on known form).

It is imperative that you submit your results for June, July and early August to the Selectors by August 7th, especially if you do most of your racing in England or Abroad.

The Selectors are: Alistair Lorimer (Chairman), Dennis Bell, and myself.

I have given my vote on selection to the squad who will meet at the Trial, select their teams and I will present their decision to the other selectors.

This gives the runners the opportunity to be selected by their peers and to run as representatives of the Squad as well as for their Country. What will be more important to them remains to be seen.

We also decided to invade England 'en masse' for two races that are appropriate for this year's preparation.

Pen Y Ghent on June 4th  
Crib Y Disl on July 10th

For a little sharpener  
Uphill only

Hope to see you there. Don't tell the English that we're coming just yet.

#### OTHER DISCUSSIONS

A debate on the use of Heart Monitors took place on Sunday and as a result 25 of the Squad are buying one. I am trying to negotiate a special rate with Polar for the Edge and Accurex models. Let me know if you want to be included or you can jack up a special deal for us with anybody else.

It was also decided to take a Scottish Supporters Magic Bus to Germany so that all the squad could participate.

The weekend was an unqualified success as far as I was concerned with the group befriending one another, putting aside selfish attitudes and all mucking in together. There is a powerful and vibrant spirit, a feeling of common purpose, all pulling together and with this sort of energy I feel sure that the results will come.

The next weekend is to include the Carnethy race and I am anxious to keep the ball rolling so I have requested that everybody stays on Saturday night in the Squad accommodation at Liberton even if they live in Edinburgh.

We've got a big happy family. It gives us a very potent edge over the other countries if we use this advantage wisely.

Keep in touch

Jim Darby  
National Event Coach for Scotland  
16E Melbourne Road  
North Berwick  
EH39 4JX

Tel: 0620 3165

### SCOTTISH HILL RUNNING SQUAD 3rd TRAINING WEEKEND

The third training weekend was held at Castle Douglas on April 16/17 and 53 athletes attended. The weekend consisted of The Screel Hill Race ,Training Runs and audio visual presentations on Pre Event Nutrition and Coping With Heat/Fluid replacement. (Summary attached)

The Squad now has settled numerically to a core of about 50 with very few individuals dropping out. I have vigorously pursued my first goal, that of bringing together a large group committed to our common purpose and "adjusting attitudes" so that this group can work happily together without the usual frictions.

Some of them, like myself, have seen better days but they are contributing in a large way to the development of younger members by sharing their wealth of experience. "Giving" and "supporting" are the key attitudes and I am very pleased with the progress so far.

We are now in position to start to introduce the technical aspects of athletic preparation that will lead to the development of all Squad member's potential and through them to the development of the sport as a whole.

An indication as to how well the Squad is developing into a team was when the majority of them agreed that when the World Championship teams went to Germany in September, the remainder of the Squad, whoever they were, would accompany them to encourage and support, at their own expense. This highlights the development of team spirit and the fact that athletes are seeing themselves as part of a single team unit whether or not they are the ones in the representative vest. This can only strengthen the Scottish Team position in Germany. (Well done everyone, it's generous and supportive), Manuel Gorman (Westerlands) will be the organiser of the Squad bus to Germany and will be reporting back at the next weekend with timings and costs. (a 50 seater will work out at about £80 a head. Start saving)

#### Squad Business

**Heart Monitors** If you want one at a handsome discount, orders to Pete Baxter as soon as poss. 041 958 0574

**Squad T shirts** Orders to Helene Diamantides 041946 5564 within the week. Delivery about 2 weeks.

**Warm Weather Camp** Paul Caban and JBF are preparing cost forecasts for New year 95 and Easter 95 for you to choose next Squad weekend.

**Next Squad Weekend.** Sunday June 19 At Livingstone athletic track (to be arranged) at 1000hrs.  
Topic... Training with Pulse Meters

  
Jim Darby  
National Event Coach for Hill Running.

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