

NEW 24 HOUR MUNRO RECORD SET IN LOCHABER  
RAMSAY'S ROUND EXTENDED TO 28 MUNROS IN SIMULTANEOUS SUMMER AND WINTER  
ATTEMPT

It is Tuesday, 28th May, 9pm; I am sitting in Fort William Hospital awaiting the consultant surgeon's verdict on a suspected fractured elbow. Various thoughts flash through my mind; will this be an enforced retirement from mountaineering and running; surely no chance of a record attempt this coming Saturday; what about all the other activities in life that require use of one's elbow (I conclude there are far too many to contemplate - just imagine all your favourite and intimate activities and trying to do them without use of an elbow!)

My mind wanders back seven hours earlier to the gory scene coming off Beinn Bheoil, having only just burned my buttocks off on a snowfield descending Ben Alder. It was only the thought that there was no-one around for miles that kept me from fainting at the sight of the bones moving through the gash. By then I was half way round recyng the eastern extension to Ramsay's round, and experimenting with the Ben Alder plateau to see if 32 Munros in 24 hours was a serious possibility.

A week of clear blue skies, scorching sun and brilliant weather saw me shaping up perfectly for another attempt at extending Ramsay's round, after two attempts last year were thwarted by bad weather.

I had successfully duped the usual willing band of pacers into accompanying me again, on the basis that, if I succeeded this time, I really would retire from this head-banging game. They had a vested interest in attending this time to ensure I retired! And now, would it all be called off with only three days to go? As luck would have it, the junior doctor treating me was a Munro bagger himself and was interested in getting me fit for Saturday. Severe bruising was eventually diagnosed, and stitches were inserted as we swapped stories about Munros. To that doctor I am eternally grateful.

The next few days were spent lazing in the sun, getting regular weather outlooks for the weekend, and persuading the pacers that the injury wasn't serious enough to thwart an attempt, despite the discomfort. The trouble with the Scottish rounds is that it is so far for the pacers to travel, that only weekend dates are feasible for an attempt.

I latched on to one particularly helpful weather service - "Weather Watchers" who publish a weekly outlook in "Scotland on Sunday". The meteorologist was interested in the attempt and gave me very detailed forecast wind/cloud/temperature conditions for the glens and summits. Thursday afternoon he was predicting snow(!) by Sunday, possibly even by dusk on Saturday. He urged me to think about a midnight to midnight attempt on the Saturday, rather than the 9am start. Other forecasters were not quite so pessimistic; even John Blair-Fish's contacts at Edinburgh University's Meteorology Department reckoned the weak front would cause temperatures to drop to more comfortable levels, with the possibility only of a little drizzle - certainly no precipitation or high winds.

More importantly, the pacers could only make it on the Saturday morning, so I reluctantly ruled out a midnight start. By Friday, my friendly forecaster was predicting stable conditions for all of Saturday, extending into Sunday, as the weak front remained stationary. Nevertheless, I scheduled for 29 peaks, rather than 30, on the basis that, if all went well, we could perhaps add in the 30th en route.

So all looked set for near perfect conditions and we ate and slept well on Friday evening. It was particularly touching and inspiring to get a 'phone call from Charlie Ramsay himself, wishing me well.

Saturday, 1st June dawned with high cloud cover, cool air and perfect weather. By 9am at Persit Dam, our chosen start point, there was not a cloud in the sky, my only protection from sunburn was a huge bandage over my elbow; sun block seems to be impossible to obtain in Spean Bridge.

I scheduled 7 hours to Glen Nevis, along the Grey Corries and over the 4000 footers, with Mark Rigby adopting the pacer-in-chief title this year. Being so hot, we left out all the usual kit, and opted for extra water bottles instead. Helene Diamantides witnessed our departure and embarked on the food and kit preparation for the remainder of the day and would meet us In Glen Nevis.

The early peaks fell quickly, and we had the most amazing views over the Grey Corries and out to the west - rarely is one privileged such views; time was only lost to capture some of them on camera. As we thirsted up Stob Coire Claurigh, I noticed Mark's absence; eventually we re-grouped as he sheepishly admitted having left the extra water behind us; we had no water now until we met Roger Boswell Just before Aonach Beag and the heat of the day approached. Meanwhile, my arm was suffering elephantiasis beyond the elbow, down to my knuckles.

The relief in meeting Roger and his dogs was immense; he had carted up what seemed like a tanker of water and we tackled Aonach Beag, direct route, to clip the schedule further still. A new hazard was introduced at this stage, Roger's dogs, whilst fit and entertaining company, had the habit of running up ahead, dislodging rocks and then descending under one's feet. Little did they know how far they were to go that day!

Mark Elder appeared on Aonach Mor to ply me with sunhat and suncream, whilst Val prepared the picnic in the col below. After acquiring an unexpected pacer on Carn Mor Dearg - a friend of Mark Rigby's on a training run - we submitted the Ben itself, clad in shorts and sunhats only (much to the bemusement of the whole world who seemed to be on the plateau that particular afternoon). But more spectacular scenes were to follow as we shot down 2000 feet of snow slopes in Red Burn - burning the buttocks yet again. How the dogs kept up never ceased to amaze me.

Entering the cauldron of Glen Nevis all the pacers could be seen lazing by the bridge, watching with some bemusement until, spurred into action, one was sponging me down, another plying suncream, another harrying JBP into pacing, another feeding me rice pudding and Dr Jill prescribing removal of the bandage to ease the elephantiasis. If only I had known the near scenes of panic only minutes earlier, as several pacers had still not arrived!

And so with the dogs pacing me and Roger and JBP straggling behind, we crawled up the heathery slopes of Mullach Nan Coirean half an hour up on schedule.

Still the weather looked set for a clear, sunny evening, but the breeze was cold, and my kit was not with my pacers, but with Andrew Addis, who was scheduled to meet us below Devil's Ridge. Somehow we lost a little momentum on this section, but revival came in the form of Mark Greenwood on An Bodach, and Mark (R) and Helene on An Garbanach – Helene choosing this knife-edge ridge to feed me an apple pie in one hand, a custard pot in the other, and then coolly producing a camera as I balanced along. Such is the humour of my support team.

Meanwhile, JBP had called it a day, and Roger's dogs were relieved to descend into Glen Nevis off An Garbanach with Mark and Helene.

We matched schedule along the Mamores, and had an exciting snow slope to descend off Binnein Mor. Andrew would leave us here as Mike and I plodded over Sgurr Eilde Mor to meet Quentin Harding, who should have been at Loch Eilde Beag. By now, 21 Munros had been done in just over 13 hours.

Dusk gathered, and although still twenty minutes up on schedule there was no sign of Quentin. Mike and I were oblivious to the cold, but poor old Quentin was at this very moment shivering himself awake in the hut at the other end of the loch, unable to see us. Mike abandoned me with the food and sprinted back to locate Quentin. I was getting annoyed - precious daylight was ebbing fast and the night section beckoned with a supposedly fast track run down to Loch Treig.

In the ensuing rush to get back into rhythm, Mike began to exhaust with his sprinting back and forth and I slipped and fell down the waterfall in the Abhainn Rath - banging my elbow and getting a complete soaking. Time slipped away alarmingly quickly and we found it difficult to restore the momentum, until the main track by Loch Treig. I had badly underestimated how long it would take to cover the track in the dark, and we arrived at Corrour Youth Hostel twenty five minutes behind schedule with the clag descending. Thankfully, Steve Libby's lights on Carn Dearg and his earlier marking of the route up enabled Quentin and me to get a good line; poor Mike meantime went round Loch Ossian to locate the pacers' car at the Lodge. I was falling asleep on my feet at this stage and lacking willpower; a sense of déjà vu came over me about abandoning attempts after only 16 hours due to bad weather. If I had been on my own, I would have given up there and then; it was the thought of my long-suffering pacers that inspired me to keep going for their sake. They would never forgive me if I gave up again.

Seeing the clag clamp down on Stob Gaibhre and finding it difficult to descend Carn Dearg convinced me that we would have to omit the far eastern Munro (another Carn Dearg) and go for 28 Munros instead. Val and Mark (E)'s lights over Stob Gaibhre and that welcome flask of coffee pulled us through to the heathery contour run; the only worry now was about abandoning Mark Rigby who had gone out to Carn Dearg. Thankfully he saw our lights cross the stream below and he raced back to Strathossian as we battled up Goal Charn in driving snow and bitterly cold winds.

With Quentin navigating supremely well in near white out conditions we picked off the next few summits and descended with relief to Strathossian, where Mark (R) and Helene would take over from the tiring Steve and Quentin, and lead me back into the snow and wind on the final two summits; but I was only three minutes ahead of schedule and conditions were deteriorating rapidly. Somehow the others convinced me that I had to do it and so with grim determination (and painful memories of how easy it is to get lost between Chno Dearg and Stob Coire Sgrìodain), I stumbled and slithered through the snow, following Mark and Helene who were pace-counting on compass bearings and doing the most unbelievable job of navigating in what seemed to me to be impossible conditions.

With snatched words in the bitter winds - ice was forming in my beard and my lungs were rasping in the cold - we agreed on the direct western descent off the last peak, down to the railway line, along which Mark reckoned we had a three kilometre run to return to Persit Dam.

I allowed myself to freefall down that last slope, forgetting about elbow and survival, simply concentrating on the watch ticking away the final minutes. With 16 minutes left, we hit the railway line and it was eyeballs out to the dam to meet incredulous pacers who had not seen our unexpected line of approach. With only 3 minutes left I collapsed against the dam end - too tired to cry, but feeling incredibly relieved and pleased. Charlie was there, as was the whole team, and just as we posed for a team picture the inexhaustible Roger turned up on his bicycle, having cycled against the wind and rain for the past two hours to get there. Where were the dogs?..... "Oh, they're b.....d", he says, grinning and producing a welcome flask of coffee.

It was too cold and wet to celebrate there, so we retired to Mark (E)'s house at Kentallen and changed, then rang the meteorologist to congratulate him on the perspicacity of his Thursday forecast. Meanwhile, national warnings were being posted to keep people off the hills as the arctic conditions gripped the area. We were lucky to complete the round with just 3 minutes to spare, but desperately unlucky to be plagued with such bad weather for the final 7 hours. Perhaps I can count this as a simultaneous summer and winter attempt!

I'm often asked what I eat on such runs; well, the usual fare of quiche, chicken legs, cheese spread butties, honey butties, rice pudding, tinned fruit, apple pies, custard, fig rolls, chocolate bars, mint cake, jellied sweets, peeled oranges, and cereal, banana, orange juice at "breakfast" time I drank mostly water, with coffee in the early hours and the bitter cold. Incidentally, the menu can be consumed in any order and at any time of the day, but usually every 30/45 minutes.

Apart from consuming at least two pints of rice pudding, key statistics of interest are that I covered about 75 miles and 34,000 feet of ascent. The remaining peaks to give the total 30 in Lochaber are Beinn na Lap, and the eastern Carn Dearg. Now what about adding Ben Alder .....I am bored being retired! Oh no, I can hear the pacers groan! My thanks to them all - maybe one day they'll get some good weather to support a Munro record attempt!

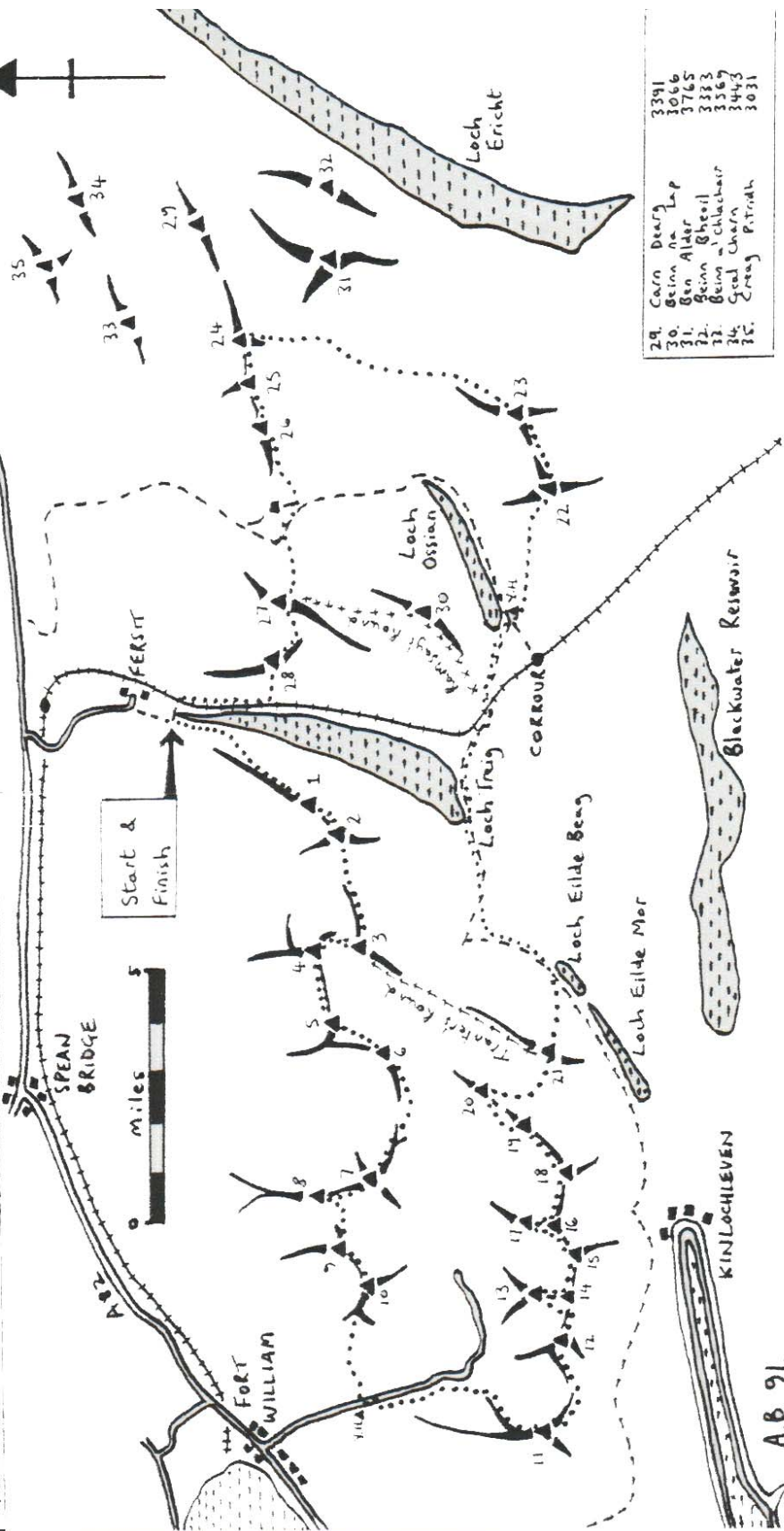
Adrian Belton  
JUNE 1991

# SCOTTISH 24 HOUR MUNRO RECORD : 28 MUNROS

Adrian Belton

1st / 2nd June 1991 75 Miles 34000 Feet

Start	Finish	Time	Height	Notes
9:00	11. Mullach nan Coirean	3:07	3277	Railway Bridge
10:01	12. Slab Ban	3:24	3274	Carfour Y.H.
10:12	13. Sgorr n' Mhainn	3:50	3601	21. Carn Dearg
11:06	14. Sgorr an Iuchair	4:38	3284	22. Sgorr Garbhare
11:36	15. Am Buidach	5:32	3382	23. Sgorr
12:01	16. Slab Gairn n' Chathra	6:19	3219	24. Geal Charn
12:26	17. An Garbhach	7:10	3230	25. Annach Beag
13:12	18. Na Gruagachan	8:02	3462	26. Beinn Eibhinn
13:31	19. Sgorr n' Mhainn	9:00	3700	27. Sgorr
14:10	20. Sgorr n' Mhainn	10:00	3083	28. Sgorr
14:47	21. Sgorr Eilde Mar	11:00	3279	29. Carn Dearg
15:27	22. Loch Eilde Beag	12:00	3211	30. Beinn Alder
16:00	23. Loch Eilde Beag	13:00	3124	31. Beinn Bheil
16:56	24. Loch Eilde Beag	14:00	3656	32. Beinn 'Chlachair
17:30	25. Loch Eilde Beag	15:00	3647	34. Geal Charn
18:38	26. Loch Eilde Beag	16:00	3611	35. Creag P. Tridh
19:21	27. Loch Eilde Beag	17:00	3437	
20:28	28. Loch Eilde Beag	18:00	3437	
21:23	29. Loch Eilde Beag	19:00	3437	
22:16	30. Loch Eilde Beag	20:00	3437	
23:42	31. Loch Eilde Beag	21:00	3437	
24:43	32. Loch Eilde Beag	22:00	3437	
25:43	33. Loch Eilde Beag	23:00	3437	
26:43	34. Loch Eilde Beag	24:00	3437	
27:51	35. Loch Eilde Beag	25:00	3437	
28:57	36. Loch Eilde Beag	26:00	3437	



- 29. Carn Dearg 3391
- 30. Beinn Alder 3066
- 31. Beinn Bheil 3765
- 32. Beinn 'Chlachair 3383
- 34. Geal Charn 3569
- 35. Creag P. Tridh 3443
- 36. 3031

A.B. 91.

## 24 hour Munro record attempt Adrian Belton (1st/2nd June 1991)

Start Time 9.0 Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June

Top/Crossing Point	Leg Time	SCHEDULE			Leg Time	ACTUAL		
		Hours	Min	Hours		Min		
Persit Dam	0	9	0	9	0			
1 Stob a Coire Mheadhoin	3610	67	10	7	61	10	1	
2 Stob Coire Essain	3658	14	10	21	11	10	12	
Track		21	10	42	17	10	29	
3 Stob Ban	3217	38	11	20	37	11	6	
4 Stob Coire Claurigh	3858	30	11	50	30	11	36	
5 Stob Coire an Laoigh	3657	30	12	20	25	12	1	
6 Sgurr Choinnich Mor	3603	26	12	46	25	12	26	
7 Aonach Beag	4060	56	13	42	46	13	12	
8 Aonach Mor	3999	16	13	58	19	13	31	
9 Carn Mor Dearg	4012	41	14	39	39	14	10	
10 Ben Nevis	4406	39	15	18	37	14	47	
Glen Nevis		42	16	0	40	15	27	
11 Mullach Nan Coirean	3077	78	17	18	89	16	56	
12 Stob Ban	3274	39	17	57	34	17	30	
13 Sgurr a' Mhain	3601	42	18	39	47	18	17	
14 Sgorr an Iubair	3284	21	19	0	21	18	38	
15 Am Bodach	3382	18	19	18	18	18	56	
16 Stob Coire a' Chairn	3219	25	19	43	25	19	21	
17 An Garbhanach	3230	20	20	3	19	19	40	
18 Na Gruagaichean	3442	45	20	48	48	20	28	
19 Binnein Mor	3700	23	21	11	22	20	50	
20 Binnein Beag	3083	35	21	46	33	21	23	
21 Sgurr Eilde Mor	3279	50	22	36	53	22	16	
Loch Eilde Beag		24	23	0	27	22	43	
Railway Bridge		90	0	30	120	0	43	
Corrour YH		22	0	52	34	1	17	
22 Carn Dearg	3080	58	1	50	74	2	31	
23 Sgor Gaibhre	3174	38	2	28	47	3	18	
(Track/Col)		90	3	58				
Stream					75	4	33	
(24) Carn Deag	3391	54	4	52				
24 (25) Geal Charn	3656	45	5	37	51	5	24	
25 (26) Aonach Beag	3447	16	5	53	16	5	40	
26 (27) Beinn Eibhinn	3611	18	6	11	21	6	1	
Strathossian Bridge		35	6	46	42	6	43	
27 (28) Chno Dearg	3433	60	7	46	68	7	51	
28 (29) Stob Coire Sqrìodain	3211	30	8	16	32	8	23	
Persit Dam		34	8	50	34	8	57	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>23 Hours 50 Minutes</b>			<b>23 Hours 57 Minutes</b>		
			<b>DISTANCE 75 miles</b>			<b>CLIMB 34,000 feet</b>		