

Two Rounds in 16 days.

The rigby round had been an obsession of mine since my friends Bryan & Simon had talked about it a year before. Having spotted a weather window for the 22nd June I'd made my way up to the Cairngorms and with friends Tracy Dean & Jon Gay. Tracy & Jon are both super tough athletes and I couldn't help but wonder if I would be able to stay with them. The intention had always been that we would set off together and see how we went, not waiting for each other as we were essentially independent and self supporting but as we got further into the round I think we all felt it would be nice to finish together. Tracy has written this round up in the summer fell runner magazine so I'll not cover it again but we had a great day out & completed it anti clockwise in 23 hrs 32 mins. You would think that this would be box ticked, round complete but I couldn't help but think it'd be faster clockwise. Also I was curious to see how it felt to have a go at another big round so soon, a couple of friends had tried and blown up half way but Rob Woodall had managed it. My legs felt ok, I was about half a stone lighter, what could go wrong.

Another 7 hours up the motorway and I was parked up next to the yha again looking up at Cairngorm.

The forecast was for a clear day on the 9th July so great views & top my tan up too. A problem free round I thought.

I set off at 2am, ran 200 meters & had to stop to take stones out of my trainers, already wasting time. The clag was down to about 500m, so much for clear skies. I only wear 1 contact lens so that I can see the map better with the other eye. Unfortunately the lens didn't seem to be working & my eye watering like mad. the lens finally came out ½ way up Cairngorm so the next 5 mins we're spent trying to get it back in correctly at nearly 3am 1000m up a mountain in the clag. I hit the top of cairngorm in 1 hr 18 mins and was moving really well. The only section on the whole round that concerned me was the drop off Cairngorm in the dark as the map showed a few crags; thankfully I took a really good line & hit the path spot on at 900m. Although the clag was quite low it was cool and I was covering the ground well. My attitude towards the Rigby was that it was a long omm elite, it has more of that feel to it, carrying food & navigating; except that the trigs/checkpoints are really easy to find, big fat trig points.

On the 1st Rigby there we didn't meet anyone till late in the round but this time there were lots of tents and campers around; a group packing up at 5 am near the Fords of Avon looked surprised to see me run past.

Except for a short stop after Beinn a' Chaorainn to remove grit from my Walsh's I was making good time. Ben Avon was a bit hairy in the wind and on the wet rocks and I was more than happy to be off and running back.

The skies finally cleared as I was heading over the peat bogs to Beinn Bhreac. Glorious sunshine and hardly any cloud, the views were fantastic. It was around this time trudging through the bogs looking at the massive climb up Beinn Mheadoin that I came to realise that my legs we're dead, hardly a surprise I suppose. I'd been catching my feet a lot and had already fallen a few times but took rather a nasty fall off Beinn Mheadoin; i couldn't help feeling a smug that I'd remembered to pack 4 Nurofen in my extensive 1st aid kit (4 Nurofen, a small piece of surgical tape & a shoe lace).

Ben Macdui was very busy; a group of German walkers covered the trig point. I tried unsuccessfully to get them to take my photo on top.

By this time the heat was affecting me, my legs were dead, my guts were awful & my feet were killing me; I'd developed a bit of an obsession about ice cold coke cola and gels, neither of which I had. I contemplated asking the groups of walkers if they had any but thought better of it.

The last time I ate was coming off devils point (13 hours into the round). i tried a few times but threw up every time food hit my stomach. To make matters worse I ran out of water too over the next 4 trigs.

With 3 trigs left I felt almost home but I still had 7 ½ hrs of running/ trudging to go. I refused to take my trainers off to remove grit anymore; I figured my feet would hurt the same anyway so I was just wasting time.

Thankfully my nav was good & as the sun went down & it cooled off I started to recover; my line through the messy ground above Loch Einich was good & I climbed Braeriac quickly. I raced off the trig desperate to cover as much ground as possible before the light finally went, the descent went on forever. The round

decided to have the last laugh as I was unable to spot the turn to Rothiemurchus lodge so took a slow windy path through the woods until I could pick up the trail and road to the yha.

I finished in 23 hrs 17 mins, completely wasted, sick & battered. Did I enjoy it, no; it was too hard & too soon, despite the fantastic views. Am I glad I did it, yes!

After the anti c/w round i thought it would be quicker c/w; swapping the difficult descents for ascents and more obvious on the nav. The nav did seem easier and I certainly got the lines better, so perhaps that did help, but although I'd swapped some of the nasty descents I'd not allowed for making the rocky ascents into unpleasant descents. The drops off Ben Macdui and angel's peak were difficult on rough unforgiving boulders and the run of Braeriach was slower than I'd thought on the narrow stoned path.

For safety & proof of completion I'd carried a tracker. Great piece of kit but when they stop tracking, which mine did for an hour, it can make for difficult decisions; the guys at home nearly had the mountain rescue out, luckily it blinked back into life adding the missing track before they rang anyone.

For the final "what else could go wrong" I managed to leave my Walsh's on the lay-by, I'd put them under the car as they stunk so much & forgot to retrieve them the next day.

Kit list

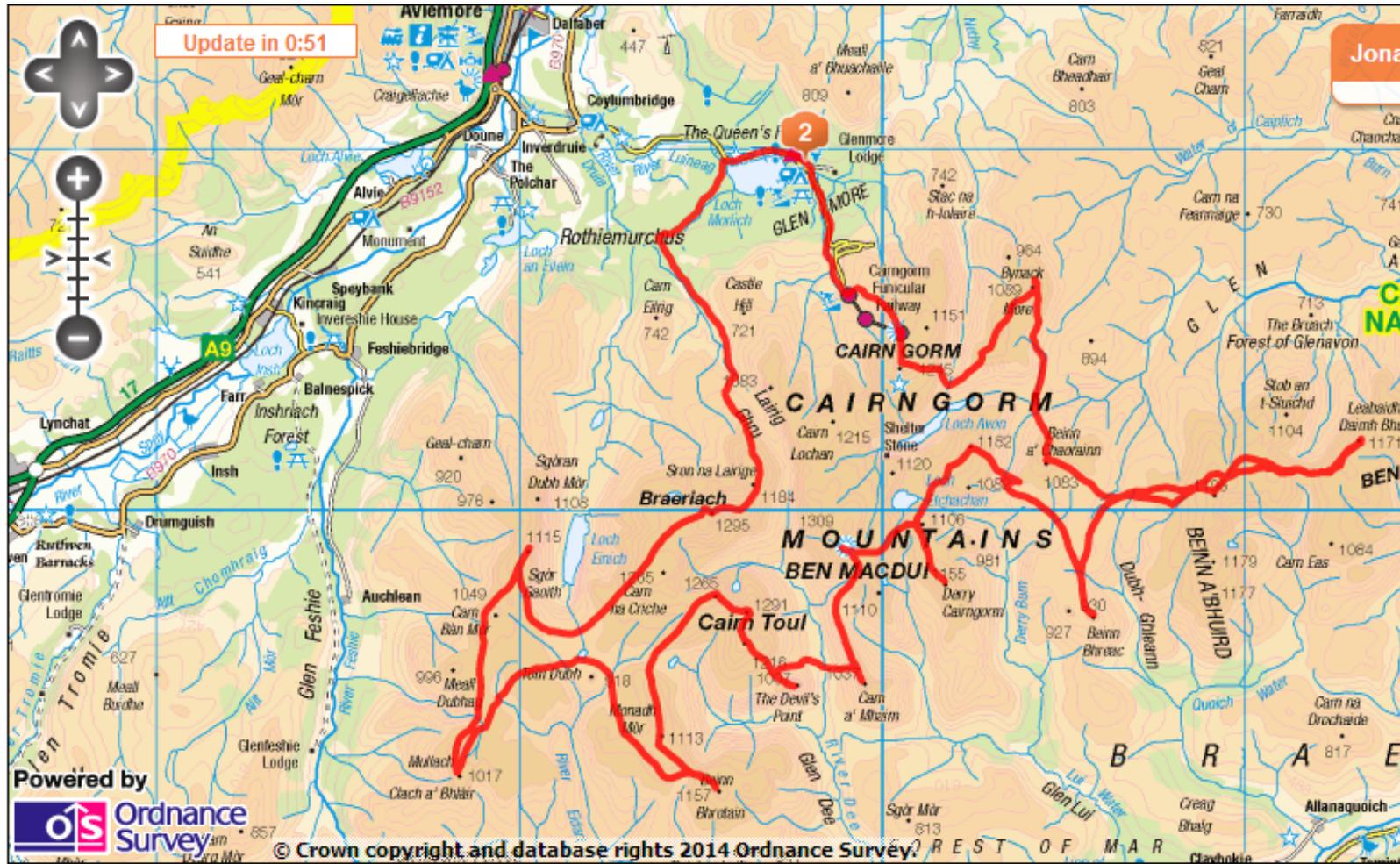
Walsh trainers (still the best), more mile socks (didn't lose any toe nails or get any blisters), omm rucksack, cheap petzl, ¾ Nike leggings (now with big hole in knee), breathable long sleeve top & thermal long sleeve top, Haglofs ozo waterproof top, omm kamleika bottoms, emergency bag, gloves & hat.

Food

2 cheese & salad wraps, 1 cornish pastie, 3 bags crisps, malt loaf, glucose tabs, choc & other horrid bars. Didn't eat all the food. Also started with a bottle of Aldi's sport drink and then used the bottle for water on route.

Update in 0:51

Jona



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