

# Ambleside AC Newsletter

July 2019

## In Brief

In the last couple of months we've seen Paul Tierney claim the Wainwright record, individual and team successes in events too numerous to mention individually and our amazing juniors crowned English FRA Junior Champions. Faith, courage and strength are the words which have occupied my thoughts in the light of these achievements. Paul's completion of the Wainwright round in a new record time is nothing short of miraculous but to have the courage to plan it, prepare for it and start it displayed immense courage. When the dust has settled and the experiences begin to settle into memory, hopefully Paul will put pen to paper and recount his epic six days. In the meantime there's a wryly written article by Graham Patten, penned five years ago this summer when he accompanied Dan D on his Munro round.

Faith (religious or otherwise) is what keeps us going when nothing else will; gives us victory over the demons in our souls and all of the those voices who tell you what you can and cannot do or what you can and cannot be. Selwyn's poem "Have Faith" is written with heartfelt grace and captures what so many of us feel about our relationship with the mountains and the gratitude we feel for those precious ties with the people we choose to share them with. Which leaves strength.

"You never know how strong you are, until being strong is the only choice you have." Bob Marley's quote is a fine motivator in its own right. Reflecting on twelve months harangued by all manner of "life strife", I've talked with many people and read many interesting things about strength and resilience. Ernest Hemingway writes of how the world "breaks everyone and afterward many are strong in the broken places"; we can take advantage of the adversity; use our skills and resources to become stronger. One of the most interesting conversations I had was with a naval friend talking about the Navy Seals and what their training describes as "The 40% Rule". They argue that when our mind says, "Enough is enough," we have only reached 40% of our capacity, leaving us a wide margin beyond that point to overcome our limits, change our perspective and take another step, and another and another. If you happen to chance upon a runner out in the hills repeatedly muttering, "Use the 40% Rule," that'll be me.

Happy running.

Ed



## Junior News

AMBLESIDE AC ARE ENGLISH FRA JUNIOR CHAMPIONS!!!!!!



The juniors have shown true team spirit and determination since the championship started in March on the gnarly slopes of Clough Head. They have put a team together for all of the 6 races in the championship. A massive thank you to all the parents/grandparents for driving to these far flung fells, we couldn't do it without you! The last race was up the Nab, Glossop, we only had a 4 point lead, the sun was blazing down on a tough hilly route with a 90 degree turn to the nasty uphill finish. As we waited to watch for silhouettes coming onto the horizon, willing them to be blue and green you blasted into the lead and increased our win to 10points!!!!

Not only did the club win but some outstanding individual performances gave us 5 podium finishers;

Charlie Allmond U15B English Champion

James Bowen U15B silver medallist

Rowan Ashworth U13B silver medallist

Thomas Brailsford U15B bronze medallist

Chloe Rylance U17G bronze medallist

Best little club in the world!!!

# Senior Club Champs 2019

Encourage one or two of your club mates to participate and you'll have a blast leapfrogging each other up the table or across the age categories. I'll try and secure some great prizes, like the fantastic juniors, and I'll be as swift as possible to publish results on the web site after races."



Any questions email me: [jimevans68@iCloud.com](mailto:jimevans68@iCloud.com)

Jan 12	Clough Head	S
Feb 9	Carnethy	S
March 9	Blackcomb	M
April 10	Loughrigg	S
April TBC	Orienteering	S
May 4	Coniston	M
June 1	Grasmere Gallop 10km	M
June 9	Howtown	L
July 16	Up Hill	S
Sept 7	Grizedale Horseshoe	L
Sept TBC	Downhill	S
Nov 16	Two Riggs	S
Dec TBC	Kirkstone Handicap	S

## Silver How Uphill Race

**Tuesday 16th July - 7pm start at Tweedies**

**1 mile/1000ft**

The club's annual, red-line, lactic burn up is back with a different course and format. This year, for the first time, it will be a mass start affair on a shorter course that the winners could well see off in under 15 minutes. Tear yourself away from the comforts of Tweedies to line up outside the bar. Once away, tarmac and vehicle track give way to a traditional Lakeland walled path (think assault course) before the fell is reached and the gradient steepens. Only the strongest will run this bit.

The steepness eases as the summit comes into sight, but you are not done yet. The final cruel 'wall' to the top gives a final chance to overhaul your rivals before a collapse at the summit and a short jog down to the bar.

Please park elsewhere in the village - not at Tweedies!

Food (probably chips) will be available after in the bar. The course will be fully flagged.

Juniors aged 12 and above can compete at their parents' discretion.



## Next AAC Races

**10/4/19 Three Shires Fell Race**

Watch out for requests for help from Selwyn.

# AAC Financial Guidance for Race Organisers and Club Trip Organisers

A huge thank you goes to our Treasurer, Chris Giles, who with several other committee members has worked hard to put together this summary of what funding is available for club races and trips.

Michelle

The club would like to thank organisers of trips and races for their efforts in making these things happen. It is no small task and is appreciated by members. This guidance is intended to make the financial arrangements more straightforward and transparent.

If your trip or race 'qualifies' for funding, please either send an invoice or bank transfer details to the Club Treasurer or pay with your own money and reclaim. Don't forget to send any receipts.

Club Treasurer is Chris Giles. Email: [gilesc1814@gmail.com](mailto:gilesc1814@gmail.com) or phone 07393 956533.

## Funding for trips to races

**To British and English Champs races and UKA Fell Relay.** As long as a reasonable number are competing and the event is a significant distance from Cumbria the club will pay for petrol and ferry where appropriate. If eight or more club competitors are travelling the club will also pay for a minibus. Club members are expected to pay for their own accommodation and meals.

**To other races (e.g. Carnethy, Ben Nevis) and other 'non race' club trips (for example weekends in Scotland or Wales) – same as above.**

### Important note to trip organisers

If the trip is to receive club funding, please publicise to all members via email (send to [amblesidemembershipsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:amblesidemembershipsecretary@gmail.com) and Sarah will send round all members) and club website (send to Michelle: [mcrowley@ghyllside.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:mcrowley@ghyllside.cumbria.sch.uk)) If possible, please post details on members closed Facebook group and in the Newsletter (send to Michelle: [crowley@ghyllside.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:crowley@ghyllside.cumbria.sch.uk) )

### Club member only races (e.g. orienteering, handicap, uphill, downhill)

Reasonable prizes, sometimes some food. Total budget for each of these events is £150.

### FRA registered 'open' races (e.g. Loughrigg, Shires, Fairfield)

Organiser works out his/her own budget. Expectation that a profit is made but small losses are covered if they occur

## Other spending

### Equipment

Larger items need committee decision. Small items Club Treasurer decides.

**AGM and club achievement prizes** Prizes and occasionally food paid.

## AAC Committee

29 January 2019



# Training Schedules

Whatever day it is, you'll find something to suit in this lot. All details are also on the website in "training" sections and keep your eyes on FB for updates, last minute changes and informal outings. Print off and stick on your fridge/biscuit tin/whatever...

DATE	TIME	VENUE & SUGGESTED ROUTES	DRINKS & POST-RUN CRAIC
12/3/19	6.00pm 6.40pm	<u><b>Ambleside Rugby Club:</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steady group</li> <li>Trail/fell run</li> <li>7/8/9/10 Hills of Ambleside</li> </ul>	The Golden Rule
19/3/19	6.00pm 6.40pm	<u><b>Ambleside Rugby Club:</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steady group</li> <li>Trail/fell run</li> <li>7/8/9/10 Hills of Ambleside</li> </ul>	The Golden Rule
26/3/19	6.15pm	<u><b>Travellers, Grasmere</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steel Fell Round</li> <li>Alcock Tarn- Heron Pike – Grt Rigg – Stone Arthur</li> <li>Stone Arthur – Grt Rigg – Fairfield</li> <li>Grisedale Tarn – Seat Sandal</li> </ul>	Travellers, Grasmere
2/4/19	6.00pm 6.40pm	<u><b>Elterwater</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lingmoor loop – Cumbria Way return</li> <li>Sil Howe – Blea Rigg – Stickle Tarn – Cumbria Way return</li> </ul> <p>Meet top car park on the common</p>	The Brit, Elterwater
9/4/19  It's Loughrigg Fell Race on 10/4/19	6.00pm 6.40pm	<u><b>Rydal Lane</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classic Fairfield or shortcut at Gt Rigg – coffin route return</li> <li>Trail Loops</li> <li>Nab Scar – Alcock Tarn – Sil Howe – trail return</li> </ul>	Badger Bar
16/4/19	6.00pm – 6.30pm start	<u><b>Loughrigg Orienteering (CLUB CHAMPS EVENT)</b></u>  See info above in main letter for details	The Golden Rule
23/4/19	6.30pm	<u><b>Dunmail Raise</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grisedale Tarn – Seat Sandal – BG line down</li> <li>Raise Beck – G Tarn – Helvellyn – reccie OCT line down to Wythburn – forestry return</li> </ul>	Travellers, Grasmere
30/4/19	6.30pm	<u><b>Conistone</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Race reccie</li> <li>Levers Water loop</li> <li>Levers Water – Brim Fell – Old Man</li> </ul> <p>Meet on the road by The Sun</p>	The Sun
7/5/19	6.30pm	<u><b>Fairfield</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Race reccie</li> <li>Loughrigg/Sil Howe</li> <li>Grasmere trails</li> </ul> <p>Meet on lane at Rydal</p>	Badger Bar
14/5/19	6.30pm	<u><b>Helvellyn</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classic Helvellyn by edges (up Striding; down Swirrel)</li> <li>Birkhouse – Catstycam – Helvellyn – Grisedale Tarn – valley return via Lanty's Tarn</li> <li>Birkhouse – Helvellyn – Grisedale Tarn- valley return via Lanty's</li> <li>Red Tarn</li> </ul> <p>Meet in main car park in Glenridding</p>	Brotherswater Inn

21/5/19	6.30pm	<u><b>Queens Head Troutbeck</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wansfell loop</li> <li>• Ill Bell ridge – Beacon – valley return</li> </ul> Green road to St Ravens' – Stony Cove – Troutbeck Tongue	Queens Head, Troutbeck
28/5/19	6.30pm	<u><b>ODG, Langdale</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race route to Stickle Tarn – Sgt Man – High Raise – Stake Pass – Mickleden</li> <li>• Race route to Stickle Tarn – Harrison Stickle – Martcrag Moor – Black Crag – Rossett Pike – Bow Fell traverse – The Band</li> <li>• Scafell Pike return</li> </ul> Meet at ODG car park	ODG
4/6/19	6.30pm	<u><b>Kirkstone Pass</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hartsop – Pasture Beck – Threshthwaite – Stony Cove – St Raven's Edge</li> <li>• Red Screes- Middle Dodd – cross road – up mines path to Caudale Moor – St Raven's Edge</li> </ul> Meet at main Kirkstone Pass car park	Kirkstone Inn
11/6/19	6.30pm	<u><b>One from the left field...Coledale Horseshoe</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classic Coledale Horseshoe</li> </ul> Loads of car sharing and meet Braithwaite Village (near Keswick!). Miserable buggers without wanderlust can sort something closer to home☺	The Royal Oak, Braithwaite
18/6/19	6.30pm	<u><b>Cockley Beck Midsummer Scamper!</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Straight to the roof of England...the pretty way!</li> <li>• Little Stand – Cold Pike traverse – 3 Shires Stone – Wet Side Edge – Grey Friar – Cockley Beck</li> </ul> Meet Cockley Beck	3 Shires
25/6/19	6.30pm	<u><b>Tilberthwaite</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yewdale Common – Wetherlam – return or Steel Edge return</li> <li>• Yewdale Common – Hole Rake – Red Dell path to Red Dell – Wetherlam – Tilberthwaite</li> </ul> Meet at Tilberthwaite car park	Tba/Rule? As most folk heading back that way?
2/7/19	6.30pm	<u><b>Kentmere</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horseshoe race reccie</li> <li>• Garburn – Sallows – Sour Howes</li> </ul> Meet at Institute by church	Watermill, Ings
9/7/19	6.30pm	<u><b>Torver</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dow – Old Man</li> </ul> Meet in pub car park	Church House Inn, Torver
16/7/19	Be at Tweedies for 7.00pm start	<b>CLUB UPHILL CHAMPS RACE</b> From Tweedies in Grasmere to Silver Howe summit. More details on website and FB	Tweedies, Grasmere
23/7/19	6.30pm	<b>Joint run with Keswick AC</b> Meet at <u><b>Dunmail Raise</b></u>	Travellers, Grasmere or a hostelry to suit the Keswick gang – probably arranged on the run!
30/7/19	6.30pm	<u><b>Ambleside</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle Grove/Wansfell – Red Screes - and then see!</li> <li>• Fairfield</li> <li>• Loughrigg – Sil Howe return</li> </ul> Meet behind Salutation Hotel (start line of Wansfell race)	Golden Rule, Ambleside
6/8/19	6.30pm		

13/8/19	6.30pm		
20/8/19	6.30pm	<b><u>Patterdale</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grisedale Tarn – St Sunday – Arnison Crag</li> <li>• Ullswater shore path – Place Fell – Boredale Hause</li> </ul> Meet by Patterdale School	Brotherswater Inn
27/8/19	6.30pm	<b><u>Hartsop</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endless lovely options!</li> <li>• HB relay reccies</li> </ul> Meet at Hartsop village car park, sheepfold handover on HB relay	Brotherswater Inn
29/8/19		<b><u>RED SCREES DOWNHILL CLUB CHAMPS</u></b> Meet on Red Screes summit 7.00pm – 7.30pm	Golden Rule, Ambleside
3/9/19			
10/9/19	6.00pm	<b><u>3 Shires</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part race reccie</li> <li>• Greenburn Round</li> <li>• Lingmoor – Blea Tarn – Under Wetherlam</li> </ul> Meet on lane above 3 Shires pub	3 Shires
17/9/19	6.00pm	<b><u>Langdale- Langdale reccies</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blisco</li> <li>• Blisco – Blea Tarn loop</li> <li>• Blisco – Lingmoor</li> <li>• Stickle Tarn- Sgt Man –Tarn Crag</li> </ul> Meet NT car park at New Dungeon Ghyll	Stickle Barn
24/9/19	6.00pm	<b><u>Drunken Duck</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black Crag – Tarn Hows – Iron Keld return</li> <li>• Stu S's magical mystery Tour de Latterbarrow</li> </ul> Meet in pub car park	Drunken Duck
1/10/19	6.00pm	<b><u>Staveley Mill Yard</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brunt Knott - Potter Fell</li> </ul> Meet in mill yard	Eagle & Child
8/10/19	6.00pm	<b><u>Badger Bar at Rydal</u></b>  Meet on lane at Rydal	Badger Bar, Rydal
15/10/19	6.00pm		
22/10/19	6.00pm	<b><u>Ambleside Rugby Club:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steady group</li> <li>• Trail/fell run</li> </ul>	The Golden Rule
29/10/19	6.40pm	<b><u>Ambleside Rugby Club:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steady group</li> <li>• Trail/fell run</li> <li>• 7/8/9/10 Hills of Ambleside</li> </ul>	The Golden Rule



# March's Reet Good Reads

## HAVE FAITH

I am not an atheist I suppose  
Though I can't believe in your bishops and hymns.  
'Have faith' you say, and I have none, god knows,  
In any of your purpose; your glory – just whims!  
But let me feel the rock beneath my feet,  
Let mountain air rasp through my lung!  
Run through green hills with squelch of black peat  
And it's on the blessed ridge where my song will be sung.  
In all this I do believe; all this and my mates.  
I'd much rather trust in what I know and can see  
Than have faith in a concept; an idea that skates  
Over the evidence of what physically can be.  
Its people and places and things that I do  
Which carry my love and in which I place trust.  
Tiny as the wren with its zest to renew  
And tall and enduring as Earth's ancient crust.  
For mine is no shallow and half thought through fad,  
My spirit echoes clear like the raven's high call.  
With each craggy corrie my steps upwards pad  
For this I do believe in; on this I stand tall.  
Best trust in each other – look after our friends;  
And 'friends' I should say has a wide definition.  
Live once and live wisely ; there'll be no amends  
Be kind and be happy – let that be my mission.

# Inside a Challenge of Epic Proportions

Whilst wistfully scrolling through my 2014 Munro Round blog recently, I found this report written by Graham Patten from a support runner's perspective. In light of Tierney's recent efforts and the fact that so many of us were involved in that, I thought it might be worth sharing. Different challenge, same supportive friends and club mates helping to make it happen.

Dan D

Five years ago club chairman Dan Duxbury completed a self-propelled round of the Scottish Munros in 43 days. Graham Patten joined him for a largely wet week about half way through his mammoth journey. His largely unseen account of his experience supporting Dan is shared below for your reading pleasure...

An insight into the life of a Munro bagged at first hand...

## **A Week on Dan's Munro Round, 6th - 14th May 2014**

I'm sitting in a doctor's surgery waiting for my appointment. I can't walk properly anymore. Most of my toes are battered and bruised, the nails blackened, and my left big toe is horribly swollen and inflamed with infection.

Let me explain.

I've been up in Scotland for a week, helping my friend Dan achieve a life long ambition to complete a continuous Munro round climbing all 282 of them. For the uninitiated, Munros are all the mountains in Scotland over 3000ft, and the idea is that you do it all under your own steam : running and walking in the mountains, cycling or kayaking between them.

The proposition initially sounded quite simple – just come along to keep Dan company, maybe carry some extra gear for him, going nice and slow for a few hours each day, no worries...

The reality was a little different.

Dan Duxbury is a likeable primary school teacher from Kendal, renowned for his good humour and general bonhomie. Unfortunately for all his friends and family, 20 years ago, Dan read "Running High", by Hugh Symonds. Hugh was an outdoor fitness fanatic who taught at a posh public school in Sedbergh and decided to take time off work for a personal challenge to complete all the Scottish Munros under his own steam. The momentum of his efforts, along with, I guess, a strong desire not to return back to work, made him extend the trip to Wales and then Ireland.

Dan read the book and wanted to follow in his footsteps.

There's nothing like a deadline to get a job done, and I guess Dan turning 40 this year has had the desired effect. A plan was made. A plea was made. The school governors met in secret in the Rifleman's pub in Kendal and after 7 pints agreed to let Dan take some unpaid leave to see if he could emulate Hugh.

It's not as though he'd be needed for an Ofsted inspection or anything ...

So Dan set off on 14th April 2014, determined to stick to Stephen Pike, "Spike's" record schedule, mainly because it was easier to follow Spike's than to create a new schedule of his own. Spike completed his continuous Munro round in 2010 in 39 days, and Dan re-worked the schedule to his own requirements, making his own record attempt of 38 days.

Remarkably, Dan kept on Spike's schedule for the first 14 days until an unlucky twisted ankle forced him to take a day off. Instead of just enjoying a few weeks of freedom from work, he got the ankle strapped up, paid a visit to a pharmacy, and got stuck in.

I joined the team a week ago, as a weak excuse to get away from the responsibilities of having a young family and running a business, and to “enjoy” a week in the mountains of Bonnie Scotland with some good friends.

I travelled up to Scotland with Fred – aka Jon Deegan, a specialist optometrist who works three days a week preying on the rich, old and vulnerable who have come to the Lake District to live out their twilight years. The rest of the week he's out running in the hills or cycling on the lanes, skiing in the winter – he only stops for food and drink. Fred is 47 years old, but could outrun someone 20 years younger. His cheekbones stand out like a challenge, as if to say, “come and have a go if you think you're hard enough”.

Time keeping isn't one of Fred's strong points though, and we eventually set off from Kendal 3 or 4 hours later than planned. We called Ben at mission control with our new ETA. After a short detour to one of Fred's favourite Highland pubs for haggis, neeps, tatties, and a pint to quench our thirst, we finally joined Dan and the team an hour later than expected. We pitched the small two man tent in the pouring rain, crawled into our sleeping bags, and got rudely awoken only hours later at 3am by a cacophony of bird song.

We'd been assured by Dan that the first day was an “easy” day, with a late start, so we didn't need to get up until 6am and could have a lie in. By 7am we were on our way in Fred's car to our rendezvous point near Loch Laggan a few miles up the road. Dan would be cycling there – into the wind, into the rain. We'd been loaded up with all the food for the day, Dan's gear, ice axes, poles etc and headed off in good spirits into the heavy grey clouds where the hills must be. It even stopped raining briefly so we could get our bearings and admire the rainbows. Dan quickly caught us up – this time he was on a mountain bike, having exchanged the road bike at the rendezvous point. He rode as far as he could along the rough track, before discarding the bike. It would be picked up later by Ben & Christeen during a romantic walk in the rain.

So the three of us climbed into the clouds, following the compass bearing to the summit of Creag Pitridh, the first of the seven Munros on today's schedule. Most of the Munros have stupid, made up, Scottish names, a jumbled mix of vowels and consonants that no one can pronounce or even remember afterwards. This adds to the charm of the whole enterprise of Munro bagging, as you can only talk about them in sweeping, generalised terms. These next two days would in future be referred to as the Ben Alder Munros – it makes it sound easy, as though you've only been up one mountain, when in fact the real tally is fourteen.

On the penultimate snow capped summit, we were greeted by the distinctive lone figure of Mark Roberts, appearing like a Ghost runner out of the clouds. Mark had cycled more than 10 miles on a mountain bike, with Sam, to our overnight accommodation, both weighed down with more food, extra clothing and camping gear. Now he'd run up today's final two Munros to guide us safely back down the dangerously steep, narrow snow slope – the only way off the mountain.

When we reached the valley floor eight and a half hours after setting off, the bothy was closed, contaminated with asbestos. “Do not enter, serious health risk” said the signs. But it was raining hard, we were wet through and cold, the bothy was understandably empty and we would have it all to ourselves. It also had a wood burner with three damp pieces of wood and five soggy pieces of peat. The main selling point though was the door was unlocked, so we threw caution to the wind and made it our home for the night.

We got a miserable, smouldering fire going eventually. It didn't give off any heat, but the dense smoke masked the asbestos dust. We kidded ourselves that this was better than camping. We huddled around a “pocket rocket” gas stove boiling water

to rehydrate dinner. To cook, you simply pour the boiling water into a bag of toxic looking dust, leave for 5 or 6 minutes, until the mess has turned into a sludge, then eat it all up trying to guess what the hell it is. It's survival food really, and Dan has been eating this filth since he started. He even had his favourite brand. Sad but true.

It's worth looking on at the scene inside, from the fly on the wall perspective. Not that there were any flies in this particular bothy anymore - they'd all died long ago from asbestosis. This imaginary fly can see four grown men, grey stubble on the chins of three, and a silver beard on the chin of Dan, their "master", all sitting close together in semi darkness, in thick smoke, wearing plastic shopping bags on their feet, stinking of stale goat, and steaming gently, telling stories and laughing. They are ENJOYING themselves! Their wives and children are all watching telly back home in the comfort of their warm living rooms, yet this quartet seem to PREFER the bothy after eight and a half hours of running over seven huge mountains in the rain.

We were woken abruptly early the next morning. The hammering rain on the roof of the bothy suddenly stopped, and an eerie silence shattered our slumber, making us all wake with a start, as if still in a dream. It really had stopped raining though, we could quite clearly hear Fred attending to a call of nature outside, against the back wall of the bothy.

Breakfast was more dehydrated filth, this time the sludge had a porridge like consistency, and it was some relief to find all the dried food had been consumed and we could get outside, get moving, and warm up again. The clock was ticking and it would soon be 6.30am. Dan assured us we were in for another easy day and we spent the first hour dreaming about having a good strong coffee in Fort William later that afternoon, after knocking off the seven Munros on today's list. The only one anyone can remember, is also the biggest of the lot, Ben Alder.

We left Mark behind to tidy everything up. There was no point in all four of us being exposed unnecessarily to the dangerous asbestos dust, and Mark was the oldest. He'd had a good life so far, and it would probably end soon anyway on the ten mile mountain bike ride back to his van parked at Dalwhinnie, weighed down by an impossibly heavy rucksack of wet, used running and camping gear, including Fred's four season sleeping bag.

With the weather looking good, the views were truly spectacular. Yet this also made things a shade harder for us, as today we could actually see where we were going. The mountains on our list looked enormous, and the distances between them appeared impossible.

You can tell the Scottish prefer a wee dram inside a warm pub to hill walking, as there are very few signs of the eroded paths we take for granted in the Lake District. This means you're pretty much on your own in the mountains and you have to find your own routes. Underfoot conditions varied from thigh deep peat bog to ankle deep peat bog, with some rock and snow near the summits. This meant you were literally wading through wet, cold, black bog all day long. It was a relief to cross the streams and rivers to briefly wash it all off before starting the process all over again. With no paths to follow, we simply took straight vertical lines up and down the Munros, and straight lines between them.

After seven hours, we were still some way off finishing, and still had three Munros to climb. We had a food amnesty and pooled our remaining meagre resources to divide up the final calories for the day. In an asbestosis fuelled fit of enthusiasm, Mark had suggested catching up with us for the final few Munros. Providing, of course, he'd survived the weighed down mountain bike ride back to his van. We knew he was out there somewhere too, because we'd passed his "spoor" some time ago - footprints of his size 4 ½ Mudclaws heading off in the opposite direction. Despite the good weather and good visibility, he'd not seen us.

We'd been banking on Mark to bring us much needed extra food, and we chatted amongst the three of us about how selfish some of these elite international athlete types can be. Going off on their own on long training runs when they really should be helping Dan.

After ten hours, there were still two Munros left and we were half way up a vertical incline when the silhouette of a stag appeared on the distant horizon behind us. We were hallucinating slightly as the stag was a small one and only had two legs with no antlers and seemed to be shouting. It was Mark. We were saved. There was still a long way of vertical ascent to go before we would meet in the middle of the col, and we guessed what goodies he may have brought for us. Fresh doughnuts with jam inside, dusted with sugar? Three mini pork pies each and a family sized packet of smoky bacon flavoured crisps to share between us? Sandwiches of avocado, bacon and mixed salad leaves with a light balsamic dressing on thick wholemeal bread plastered with REAL butter?

When we finally met with our saviour, we wolfed down the packet of Jaffa cakes on offer, and headed for the summit. Having saved us from starvation, Mark then jogged off on another long training run on his own and left us to get on with the day's final Munro – Stob Coire Sgriodain. That really is what it's called by the way, I'm not just making it up.

By the time cars and vans had been picked up from various rendezvous points, kit sorted, a quick meal wolfed down, it had gone dark, was well after 11pm and it had started raining again. Fred set off on the long drive back to Kendal throughout the night so he could be in time for his daughter's 10th birthday, arriving home around 4.30am.

Another restless night in a wet tent with damp sleeping bag and the improbable 3am dawn chorus, then into yesterday's wet and smelly gear, then off again at 6.30am with Dan and Mark for a long, long day ticking off the 10 Munros of the Grey Corries – Ben Nevis being the only one of the group that can be remembered, and that beast was the final one of the day. I dropped off Aonach Mor to hitch back to get Mark's van, but that's another story. As was the next day, with the 10 Munros of the Mamores.

So that covers the first few days and the week keeps going and going with the days on the hill getting longer and longer culminating in a mammoth 15 ½ hour day and 8 Munros on Knoydart. I could write a whole book about that experience.

The combination of trench foot conditions for 12-15 hours a day, kicking snow steps with Mudclaws, little sleep and poor hygiene finally reduced me to the damaged state I'm now in. Almost everyone coming back from Scotland is in a similar situation – broken and humbled by the sheer scale of this daily challenge.

Yet remarkably, one bearded, determined, strong, young man keeps going relentlessly and shows no signs of stopping. Despite the pain from his ankle, despite the impossible, monumental task he has set for himself, despite the lack of sleep, despite missing his family, Dan continues to make incredible progress, setting off at dawn and finishing at dusk, day after day after day.

It's been an amazing week in so many ways, yet there is an image that stays with me, of Dan rhythmically climbing yet another almost vertical slope, not stopping for a breather until he's reached the summit, then jogging off in search of the next one on his list.

Dan, you are an inspiration – thank you for letting me play a small part in your amazing Munro round. I'm already looking forward to sharing a celebratory pint with you on your successful return.

“You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you've got”

## Who to send your information to

### For the Newsletter

- Updates and pleas for help from race organisers
- Info about social events
- Captains' updates
- Minutes from committee meetings
- Juniors updates- so the old gits know who's snapping at their heels!
- Club Champs updates
- Relay 2018 updates
- Articles written by you!
- Race reports either from the Race Organiser or a runner
- Pictures to go with any of the above
- Items for sale (running related!)
- Cartoons...Jim T:-)
- Banter and general mickey taking that we're renowned for!

SEND YOUR INFO AS A WORD DOCUMENT TO:

[mcrowley@ghyllside.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:mcrowley@ghyllside.cumbria.sch.uk)

### For the Website

Send your information to one of these people who regularly update that section of the website:

News section (including social stuff and trips away)- Neil Talbott [neiltalbott4@hotmail.com](mailto:neiltalbott4@hotmail.com)

AAC Races pages - Dan Duxbury [danmunro2014@gmail.com](mailto:danmunro2014@gmail.com)

Training pages - Michelle Foxwell [mcrowley@ghyllside.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:mcrowley@ghyllside.cumbria.sch.uk)

Club Champs pages - Jim Tyson [jim\\_tyson@hotmail.com](mailto:jim_tyson@hotmail.com)

Junior pages - Eleanor Knowles [eleanorknowles333@btinternet.com](mailto:eleanorknowles333@btinternet.com)

'Articles' for the 'blog' section - Neil Talbott [neiltalbott4@hotmail.com](mailto:neiltalbott4@hotmail.com)