

Rings Fire



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Loch Enoch & The Awful Hard from Craig Neldricken (by Colin Brash)

ROF has been lurking in my mind for too many years; taking control too much, leaving too many loose ends in other parts of my life. Everything tied in neat bows is boring, but not enough time to tie anything leads to chaos... The apologies & excuses for the lateness of this report are due as usual to that chaos. Regulars will be used to this & be glad of a second bite at the Galloway cherry, but I should explain how, after the event, I am taken by the lug & led on a tour of all that I promised to do before ROF. Those who know my wife will realise that this is a metaphorical lug, but, physical or not, it still hurts & still makes the guilt ratings go sky high. And that guilt about so much not done must be assuaged.

Some have said this fifth one was the most successful ever. We've come a long way from the small financially precarious beginnings where 6 brave souls (including Denis R. who this year completed his fourth B.C.) bivvied on spruce needles beside the Ballochbeathies forest road. We are now secure enough to donate money to local causes & seen this year to have come of age: we had magnificent perennial trophies made by Ronald Turnbull & John Coyle; superb drawings (as on this report) & pots made by Colin Brash & Andy Priestman; our first sponsorship from Lloyds Motors in Carlisle, which enabled us to spend more on prizes, & a 20 min. video of Bruce's Crown has been made by Ronald & Colin - blank tape (no old porn please) & see for return to Colin Brash, 5 Coalpots Rd. Girvan, Ayrshire, KA26 0EH. We also had big problems: our first "missing person"; the bureaucratic shambles characteristic of some parts of Forest Enterprise which made vehicle access to the vital CIP of Gala Lane impossible. It was in overcoming these problems that I think our claim to "most successful" lies. Because of the experience & capability of the people involved with ROF, we coped instead of floundering. We came through by the forces of enthusiasm & determination - just those qualities we hope the competitors will have. And we proved that we have the efficient systems in place to deal with problems. In the final analysis the event for most of us, whether competitors or helpers, is not about results & p.b.'s but about how honourably we acquitted ourselves in the face of challenge, & the spiritual refreshment we found.

Our problems cost some of us a great deal of time, energy, & sleep. The missing man was found by the Police at Murrigaff Y.H. at 3 a.m., & because he's given an apology for not reporting to the finish, & a donation for mobilising the G.M.R. Team I will not add to his already considerable embarrassment by naming him. However I can assure you No 104 that your name & car registration is etched into the memories of Hazel, Mick, Peter & myself! The locked burner incident which prevented the usual top quality CIP from being established at Gala Lane would have been totally avoidable had one F.E. department talked to another. Theoretically there were several avenues, wide & beautifully mown, that we could have taken through the forest, but whichever one we tried soon became snarled up in the tangled undergrowth of bureaucracy. David & Lesley Martin were beaten by the maze even though they managed, after much searching & phoning to find a man with the right key, & another man who we thought could make the right decision to authorise the opening. But not completely beaten - they went in on foot & set up the CIP on time as best they could, with help from John Bell & Denise Steel - petite Lesley now has an impressive C.V. for a job as a porter in Nepal. We all make mistakes & errors of judgement, but I'm glad to report that F.E. have apologised for the time wasted & expense caused to ROF, & made a commitment to avoid such a situation in future.

I welcome your stories written for magazines like Strider or Scottish Hillrunner because this event is obviously being experienced by the sort of people it's designed for & a personal recommendation is the best way to contact more who will enjoy it. However the press can easily give the wrong impression: some helpers who read a local newspaper were astounded to learn that ROF was "Organised, run, & marshalled by Elyn Jones". After heavy-handed editing, probably by people not acquainted with, or interested in the subject this was the remains of a fine article by Dave Palmer which captured the spirit of challenges in the hills. The more complete article in another paper included his full sentence: "... & he insists, 'not possible without the tremendous help & support I receive

from friends'....". Thank you Dave. As many of you know the event is non-profit making, & relies on much goodwill & effort from many people, all of whom I count as friends & to whom I am deeply indebted, & all of whom exceeded what they were originally asked to do. Peter Trenchard, former organiser of Merrick Hill Race gave us his expertise all WIE despite being in constant pain from his eye, & then took a mass of time home to calculate results. Mick Askew wasn't just a tolerant campsite warden, but a friend who helped us way beyond his job remit, especially our missing man crisis. Pat Wallace was the ace catering company who spent all WIE distributing her gorgeous food, having spent the preceding week preparing it. Bob Peace was as supportive as ever & organised the marshalling of the E. side. Colin Butler again had the most austere of jobs at Bivvy B.... but it would take pages to itemise all the multitude of ways in which so many people have contributed. However you all realise I'm sure (despite the press!) how much the competitors appreciate the sincerity & personal atmosphere you create at this small friendly event. I pass on to you the many kind tributes which were paid to helpers on that WIE & in letters since then. To remind you who were involved I list below (in no particular order of merit) all who helped. On the other two pages are the results of the larger group of actors who came with us into that magic land & helped to create, on one of those blinks of summer '98, a real classic.

David & Lesley Martin. Ray McCutcheon. Pat & Tony Wallace. Peter Foulds. Colin Butler. Peter Trenchard. Mick & Kathy Askew. Duggie Gillespie. Reg Kingston. Grace Crichton. Dave Palmer. Helene Diamantides. Adrian Davis. Alfie & Denise Steel. The Galloway Gazette via Iain & Nancy Brown, Wendy, Louise, & Nan. Colin Brash. Ronald Turnbull. Bob Peace. John Coyle. Stranraer Scouts: Duncan, Iain, Alex, Graham & Wellington. Tony McAndrew. Phill Thompson. Andrea Jones. The Holland family: Barbara, Jim, Jill, & Elspeth. Stephen Stables. Alan Whiteside. Paul & Jo McClintock. Nick Creed. Mr. & Mrs. Rab Drennan with Kirkcubright Scouts. Lloyds Motors. Alex Anderson & his RAYNET team of Hazel, Bill, Kenny, Tony Ellis, Jim, Jack, Jake, John, Thompson & Alistair. Andy Priestman. Alan & Charlotte Smith (donation). David Wallace (donation). Barbara Jones.

Barbara, the long-suffering organiser's wife has learnt to tolerate his obsession with the hills, but she's right, R.O.F. is taking over too much of his life. So with much regret I'm giving up the reins. I've enjoyed my years as head bummer because they've brought me into contact with many wonderful people who get a lot of pleasure in their own different ways from the event. I've had great satisfaction in being the organiser who has gathered these same people together for a special WIE in some of the wildest & most beautiful country in Britain - something that Galloway does superlatively. But I've done what I set out to do: create a top-class endurance event on some of the toughest competition terrain in the world for us ordinary mortals, as well as those beings of light & speed who can complete Heart of Granite in under 6 hours, or Bruce's Crown inside 12 hours. People like Billy Blain aged 71, & Gareth Steel only 18 (the youngest & oldest ever on R.O.F.); like Andrew Davies & Mark Hartell who can display the most remarkable feats of time & energy. People who have the stamina to do these most testing courses whether they consider themselves to be challenge walkers, hill runners, or mountain marathoners, because it's not just for the elite of Britain, nor, I hope, will it ever become so.

Should we all strive to realise our full potential occasionally to reassure ourselves that we are truly alive? Going to the limits of our capabilities is always satisfying, but if you don't try you will never know that you can always go beyond what you thought were those limits.... How do we ever grow taller if we don't reach out for goals that are a bit bigger than we can manage easily? Bruce's Crown is never easy whether you bivvy or treat it as Britain's longest solo hill race - just to survive is a triumph. This year 4 people out of the first 8 did B.C. without a bivvy & the net times show how difficult the decision must be whether to bivvy or go straight through: will the morning mist outweigh the dim twilight & tired muscles? What will I be like after a night on the hill? This is as it should be: not just a tough course, but tough decisions to be made, a bit of a gamble for those at the sharp end. Mark H. took that risk & improved Keith Adams's record by 1 min 38 sec. Tremendous running, considering his lack of rest & that he was out on his own after Darroon; but split times show that Adrian D. was always close enough behind to keep complacency at bay. Here I must make a double apology to Adrian: sorry for your time lost at Glom Rigg CIP, & sorry for the miscalculation of times which gave you 2nd. place on 23/8/98, & which, with treble-checking, now has to be charged to 3rd. Apologies also to Duggie - B.C. has an extremely complex timing system.... The fact that it was a highly contested race is shown by the first 6 all being under 12 hrs, with only 46 mins. separating them. At the other end David Adams made a very brave attempt with ankle problems, but ran out of time at Loch Enoch.

Out of the 54 who started on Heart of Granite only 27 had complete cards, thus maintaining the usual 50% rate. First lady home in a new record of 7h. 18mins. was Helene Diamantides from Fife, & both she & Debbie Thompson made a big leap forward from the 1996 record. Andrew Davies from Cumbria was again the winner, by a phenomenal margin of 45 mins, although he was 6 mins. slower than his '96 time. Was this the changed route, rougher going, or not being harried by Camethy? First club was Fife A.C. (7th. 10th. & 12th.). On a course which is tougher than the first day of the KMM Elite, congratulations must go to those who triumphed this year after failing previously: Tony McAndrew (not yet time to hang up those boots Tony!), Dilsa Buchanan, & Dave Palmer; also to Fiona Parker who finished bravely after "popping" her knee cartilage on Mullwharchar. I hope that if you didn't succeed this time you at least enjoyed the scenery & colour (especially those yellow carpets of bog asphodel), & will be motivated enough to try again.

Ideas are easy; putting them into reality is so hard & time consuming. I have been lucky in finding an enthusiastic team of helpers who have coaxed my idea of the ideal long distance event into reality, & we have all again created an event of which we can

be proud. In a world where nobody has enough time to do anything we made time that weekend to help others achieve - & to achieve ourselves, for we all triumphed, whether it was over the terrain or the difficulties of marshalling. For a WJE we were optimistic about the good nature of fellow beings, & we should be glad that that can still happen in these greedy times. The event is now mature. All the systems are in place; all the back up is there. The best time to hand over is when things are going well, & I want this tree transplanted at its most viable stage. So a new century will see Colin Butler as organiser with new ideas but not a new philosophy - I'm sure that he will be as dedicated to the ethos of Rings of Fire as I have been. He has the motivation & concentrated commitment to do the job well, & I will be giving him my unqualified support as he has given me his over the years. I hope you will do the same, & so carry the success of Rings of Fire into a new era. My thanks to all of you for your kindness & enthusiasm.

Glyn Jones, Sept. '98

JOHN MUIR:

"Climb the mountains & get their good tidings.
Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees".

HEART OF GRANITE 20 MILES WITH 6,400 FEET OF CLIMB

START: 09-16	HOME	CLUB	CURLEY.	D. ROAD	CRAIG N.	ENOCH	FINISH	TIME	NO HAND
Andrew Davies	Maryport	Borrowdale	10-18	10-30	11-42	12-38	14-24	5hr. 08m.	
Douglas Brown	Dumfries	Dumfries RC.	10-24	10-39	12-03	13-15	15-09	5-53	
Alastair Matthewson	Edinburgh	Livingston	10-31	10-45	12-20	13-34	15-24	6-08	
Colin Gilmore	Bury	Rosendale	10-34	10-53	12-44	14-11	16-07	6-51	
John Goldsworthy	Drummore	Wig. A.C.	10-37	10-57	12-40	14-07	16-16	7-00 1ST. LOCAL	1
Peter Foulds	Barnegann	Galloway	10-35	10-55	12-41	14-02	16-25	7-09 2ND. LOCAL	2
Helene Diamantides	Ladybank	Fife A.C.	10-42	11-09	13-05	14-27	16-34	7-18 1ST. LADY	
Drew Mackin	Stranraer	Ind.	10-36	10-57	12-41	14-11	16-35	7-19	3
Simon Templeman	Dunfermline	Ind.	11-03	11-21	13-11	14-28	16-42	7-26	
Mike Mitchell	Kirkcaldy	Fife A.C.	10-34	10-54	12-45	14-19	16-48	7-32	
Debbie Thompson	Penrith	Keswick	10-42	11-10	13-11	14-40	17-03	7-47 2ND. LADY	4
Margaret McLaren	Kirkcaldy	Fife A.C.	10-55	11-25	13-57	15-54	18-57	9-41	9
Frank McLaren	Kirkcaldy	Fife A.C.	10-55	11-25	13-57	15-54	18-57	9-41	7
Gary Barker	Kirkcaldy	Fife A.C.	10-55	11-24	13-55	15-52	18-57	9-41	9
Tony McAndrew	Stranraer	Ind.	11-12	11-47	14-26	16-31	19-44	10-28	14
Gavin Squair	Stranraer	Ind.	11-12	11-47	14-27	16-33	19-44	10-28	15
Laurie Hainey	Prestwick	Ind.	10-56	11-25	14-07	16-28	19-46	10-30	11
John Irvine	Prestwick	Ind.	10-56	11-25	14-07	16-31	19-46	10-30	16
Harry Franklin	Hereford	Wye V.	10-55	11-24	13-58	16-01	19-54	10-38	6
Tom Dean	Haverfordwest	Ind.	11-02	11-32	14-10	16-16	19-54	10-38	13
Robert Wills	Surrey	Ind.	11-17	11-50	14-32	16-46	19-58	10-42	
Alan Whiteside	Newton S.	Ind.	11-07	11-50	14-30	16-45	20-00	10-44	18
Ailsa Buchanan	Stranraer	Galloway H.W.	11-17	11-56	14-32	16-45	20-01	10-45 1ST. LOC. LADY	16
Dave Palmer	Stranraer	Galloway H.W.	11-18	11-56	14-35	16-45	20-01	10-45	8
Billy Blaen	Creetown	Galloway H.W.	11-16	11-50	14-29	16-45	20-01	10-45 OLDEST (71)	5
Phil Mullins	Worksof	Ind.	10-55	11-22	13-55	16-01	20-08	10-52	12
Fiona Parker	Worksof	Ind.	10-55	11-22	13-55	16-01	20-08	10-52	
Mick Cooper	W. Yorks.	Ind.	10-33	10-51	12-27	13-46	15-33	6-17 MISSED CIP	12
Adam Anderson	Sanguhar	Solway RC.	10-34	10-54	12-45	13-57	16-12	6-56 MISSED CIP	16
Kenneth Wallace	Prestwick	Ind.	10-57	11-27	13-58	16-01	19-20	10-04 MISSED CIP	14

60 entries + 5 swapped from B.C. 11 DNS. 24 retired or took shortened routes.

BRUCE'S CROWN 42 MILES WITH 13,000 FEET OF CLIMB

START: 09-16	CURLEY	D. BRIE	M'FIRE	GALA IN	LANE OUT	CARMADDIE IN	OUT	ENOCH	FIN.	GROSS	REST	NET
Mark Hartell	10.28	11-50	13.15	14-58 -02	15-16 -40	17-49	17-49	18.54	20-44 -00	11 hr. 28-00	0 hr. 18-38	11 hr. 09-22
Duggie Gillespie FIRST LOCAL	10.28	11-49	13.21	15-10 -30	15-39 -24	18.15 -23	06.30 -00	07.36	09.26 -30	24 hr. 10-30	12 hr. 43-31	11 hr. 26-59
Adrian Davis	10.25	11-48	13.21	15-09 -10	15-35 -18	17-54	17-54	18.57	21.14 -30	11 hr. 58-30	0 hr. 26-08	11 hr. 32-22
Colin Grash	10.27	11-48	13.21	15-10 -50	15-39 -24	18.25 -55	06.30 -00	07.37	09.30 -40	24.14 -40	12.32 -39	11.42 -01
Ian Jones	10.28	11-48	13.21	15-14 -17	15-42 -48	18.33 -33	06.30 -00	07.37	09.30 -00	24.14 -00	12.24 -58	11.49 -02
Steve Sharp	10.31	11-57	13.32	15-24	15-42	18-33	06.30	07.36	09.26	24.10.06	12.14.25	11.55.41
Kevin Harding	10.30	11-56	13.32	15-24	15-37	18-12	18-16	19-26	21-58	12.42.29	0.17.42	12.24.47
Rick Ansell	10.30	11-58	13.32	15-24	15-37	18-12	18-16	19-26	21-58	12.42.29	0.17.42	12.24.47
Philip Gwilliam	10.32	12-04	13.48	16-01	16-15	19.23	06.30	07.37	09.30	24.14.00	11.19.33	12.54.27
John Donnelly	10.34	12-04	13.42	15-49	16-01	19.04	06.30	07.56	10-09	24.53.43	11.37.09	13.16.34
Joe Faulkner	10.41	12-30	14.26	16-34	16-59	20.11	06.27	07.39	09.44	24.28.44	10.39.54	13.48.50
Adrian Walker	10.39	12-28	14.26	16-44	17-10	20.23	06.30	08.06	10-09	24.53.57	10.32.11	14.21.46
Mike Kelly 1ST. 0-40 HAND.	10.39	12-25	14.28	16-38	17-08	20.23	06.30	07.53	10-45	25.29.29	10.35.52	14.53.32
Ian Birnrose 2ND. 0-40 HAND.	10.45	12-44	14.37	17-11	17-29	20.47	06.30	07.57	10-31	25.15.26	10.00.53	15.14.33
Kevin Murtagh	10.41	12-40	14.37	17-11	17-29	20.47	06.30	07.50	10-31	25.15.26	10.00.53	15.14.33
Andrew Addis	10.45	12-49	14.47	17-02	17-22	21.24	06.30	07.51	10-49	25.33.11	9.25.48	16.07.23
George Haines	10.51	12-47	14.47	17-29	17-51	21.29	06.30	08.16	11.21	26.05.25	9.23.27	16.41.58
Denis Rowlands	10.55	12-47	14.47	17-29	17-51	21.53	06.30	08.16	11.21	26.05.25	8.59.41	17.05.44
Felicity Martin FIRST LADY	10.55	12-52	15.07	17-53	05-22	—	09-26	11.14	14.24	29.08.00	11.24.35	17.38.25
Rex Stickland	10.45	12-50	15.03	17-50	18-01	22.27	05-50	08.06	11.38	26.22.35	7.33.36	18.48.59
Pete Edwards	10.44	12-53	15.12	17-50	18-18	—	07-27	09.25	12.29	27.13.26	5.28.09	21.45.17
Paul Fox	10.44	12-53	15.12	17-50	18-18	—	07-27	09.25	12.29	27.13.26	5.28.09	21.45.17
Chris Hall	10.50	12-45	14.50	17-22	17-42	—	07-39	09.31	12.43	27.27.47	5.20.05	22.07.42
Gareth Steel YOUNGEST (18)	10.37	12-38	14.50	17-53	17-59	—	07-39	09.31	12.43	27.27.47	5.06.09	22.21.38
David Vincent	10.50	12-53	15.28	19-29	04-21	—	09-24	12.15	16.38	31.22.00	8.52.12	22.29.48
Jim Drummond	10am ^{ES}	12-19	14.42	17-53	18-09	00.08	06.30	09.13	13.33	29.23.20	6.37.31	22.45.49
Clare Jones	10am ^{ES}	12-27	14.47	17-53	18-09	00.08	06.30	09.13	13.33	29.23.20	6.37.31	22.45.49
Chris Dawes	11-10	14-16	17.08	20-30	04-13	—	09-24	12.15	16.38	31-22.00	7.43.05	23.38.55
Noel Gould OLDEST (63)	11-10	13-56	16.56	20-33	04-32	—	09-37	12.23	17.25	32.09.00	7.58.17	24.10.43
Arthur Vince	11-09	14-04	17.03	20-33	04-32	—	09-36	12.23	17.25	32.09.00	7.58.17	24.10.43



"We are so small between the stars, so large against the sky" (Leonard Cohen)