

HILL BAGGING 2019

Life before lockdown. Members write about their hill-bagging year: List completions; Simms completion; Core Europe Ultras completion; island bagging; kayaking; climbing; backpacking; close shaves; poems; book reviews; adventures at home and overseas.

To jump to an item, click on its title (avoid MS edge browser). Press Ctrl+Home at any time to return to Contents

Contents

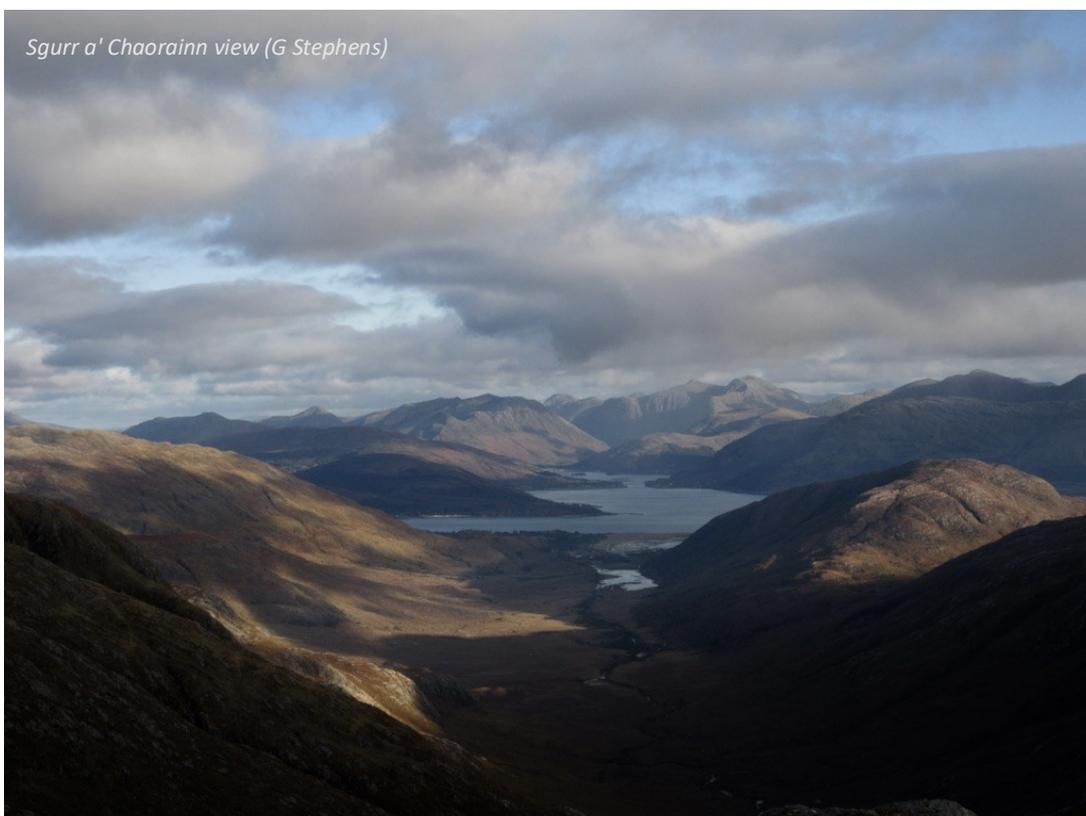
Completions.....	3
Relative Hills Society Events	4
Spring Bagger Rambles, Islay, Port Charlotte YHA: rescheduled to April 23 – 26, 2021.....	4
Dinner and AGM, The Moorings Hotel, Banavie, Fort William: rescheduled to Sat May 15, 2021.....	4
Summer Isles SIB bagging, Ullapool: hopefully rescheduled to May 2021	4
Sept 11 – 15, 2020: St Kilda Island Marilyn, Leverburgh, Harris.....	4
October – December, 2020: St Kilda Stacs	4
November, 2020 – Autumn Bagger Rambles @TBD ?Northern England	4
Top marks	5
Michael Earnshaw - 2019 Baglog: first person to complete Simms as well as Marilyn	5
Jon Glew: 20 lists and 3 HoFs on Coniston Old Man	6
The 2019 Boat Race: 1 year, 2 baggers, 485 SIBs.....	7
Bert Barnett Baglog: Fourth time round the Corbetts	8
Richard Mclellan: Final Core European Ultra - Store Lenangstind, Norway	8
Britain.....	11
Glenshee New Year	11
Eric Young: The Year of.....	11
Chis Crocker: The Database of British and Irish Hills: User survey; briefing	12
Henry Marston Baglog: Leicestershire Hall entry.....	13
Anne Bunn: Wombling over The Simms.....	13
Obituary: Rowland Bowker - Hoffer No 1 (1930 - 2019).....	14
Mam Ban.....	16
Obituary: Nigel Thackrah (1945 - 2019).....	16
Eddie Harwood: Close Shaves: verglass and fighter pilot.....	18
The Unwin Baglog: Dan & Maisie exploits!.....	18
Andy Tomkins Baglog: storms, ants, ladders and teenybaggers.....	19
Dave Irons Baglog: round Britain in 27 Marilyn.....	20
Jonathan Appleby Baglog: Lewis backpack; Kilda anticlimax.....	20
David Stallard Baglog: 1500 th Simm; Wild North and Deep South - of Scotland.....	21
Seeing Suilven.....	22
Really Climbing Suilven	22
Margaret Squires: Marilyn for Newbies: a pictorial guide	23
Ron Bell Baglog: 11 new Marilyn, 2 new knees.....	24
Mark Trengove Baglog: Gt Links highlight; Hirta lowlight	25

Jon Foote: Rescued	26
Margaret Squires: Marilyn for Newbies: a pictorial guide (Part 2)	27
Carn Nan Gobhar	28
Gill Stephens Baglog: 1250 th Marilyn; local Simms	28
Donald Shiach Baglog: Scottish Marilyn; low-key 1000 th	29
Rob Woodall: Hall of Mirrors: 600+ Repeated Marilyn	30
Barry Smith Baglog: in sunshine, storm and bandages	31
Tony Kinghorn: close shave: lightning dodging	31
Ivan Smith Baglog: <i>carpe diem</i>	32
High Up On The Fara	32
Sue & Trevor Littlewood: Close Shave: down in the dark	32
Islanding	33
John Henderson: RHSoc Report: Broken bard	33
Jon Foote Baglog: islanding, breaking and knitting	33
Marion and Alan Mitchell Baglog: the Foula experience	34
Meikle Balloch Hill	34
Norman Wares Baglog: frequently escaping Scotland; Saxa, Kilda & other islands	34
Peter Wilson and Frances Wilson Baglogs: GB island Marilyn; Ireland golf avoidance	35
Alastair Govan: Bagging by kayak	36
Philip Massey Baglog: 1000 th Marilyn; island highlights	37
Andrew Finimore Baglog: savouring Islands and other (Scottish) Marilyn	37
David Gilchrist: Paddling to go Marilyn Bagging	37
Charlie Scott Baglog: in praise of boatmen and lighthouses	39
Omnibagging	40
Book Review: The British Lighthouse Trail: Sarah Kerr	40
Neil Stewart: monumental Tumping	40
Peter Wheeler Baglog: 2000 th Tump	41
Alex Kelso Baglog: Fort to Falkirk; 1000 th Scottish Marilyn; Donalds	41
Gill Stephens: Politics and hill-bagging	42
Lenamhor Farm	42
Kevin Borman Baglog: 8 Marilyn; 1 Memoir; 609 Wolves	42
Chris Watson: A Close Shave: An Afternoon Stroll up Cairngorm	43
Book Review: Beyond the Dark Peak: Kevin Borman	43
Alex Cameron Baglog: all-nighters and 700 th Hump	44
Audrey Litterick Baglog: Labrador backpacking	45
Roderick Manson Baglog: Corbetts; Munros; Knoydart; Adam and Eveing it; Poet's Corner	46
Knoydart Hates Me	47
Anne Butler: There are No Rules	47
Campbell Singer Baglog: Marilyn Wall; last Graham; 2 VIPs; County connoisseur	49
Eddie Harwood Baglog: Corbetts recompletion, notwithstanding	50
Liz and Peter Hastie Baglog: Hills, Humps and Targets (Donalds; Coming out; M-2)	51

Alex Kelso: A Close Shave for Adam	51
Book Review: The Yorkshire 3 Peaks: Jonathan Smith	52
Reg Willis: We can never be sure that we have summited a hill	53
Stob Binnein	53
Margaret and Roger Squires Baglog: Wrath and Wainwrights	53
Jenny Hatfield Baglog: Humps, Synges, dog walks.....	54
Rick Salter Baglog: back to the Humps; twice 500 th Dodd; Synges; Cumbrian All Hills	55
Stop Press: Isle of Man included in Dodds list	56
Steve Bell Baglog: Marilyn's, 2 nd Munros and Furths	56
Richard Mclellan: A close shave: Angle Tarn Gully.....	57
Raven On Sgurr Dubh Na Da Bheinn	57
Book Review: Mountains of the Moon: Alan Rowan	57
International	58
Alan Caine Baglog: Tumps; penultimate Wainwright; Canaries.....	58
Tony Kinghorn Baglog: Scotland; Corsica	58
Sue & Trevor Littlewood Baglog: Britain gradually; Dolomites; Austria	59
Phil Cooper Baglog: Major Italian island; last mainland Marilyn; last Welsh Simm	60
Julie Brown Baglog: sociable Scottish bagging; Bolivian 6000er	61
Denise Mclellan: A close shave: Pyrenees	63
Peter Bellarby Baglog: Getting round to the Southern Uplands; 15 th Ultra; 30 th Ribu	64
Denise McLellan Baglog: 3000 th Tump, SIBs, Ultras, European HPs; skiing in Wiltshire.....	64
Rob Woodall: Close shave - The Battle of Farnham	66
Graham and Tove Illing baglog: Marilyn rewalling; Scrambly Simms; Canary ultra	67
Rob Woodall Baglog: British P90s; 500 th SIB; Ethiopia; Eastern Alps; 300 th Ultra; Japan	70
Alastair Govan Baglog: 10 Ultras; Close Shave on Mt Whitney	71
<i>Fiona (Fi) Clark Baglog: What have we been up to? Ultras, paragliding, Corbetts completion.....</i>	71
Rob Woodall: Northern Ethiopian Ultras, February 2019	72
Rob Woodall: Eastern Alps Ultras, August 2019	75
Denise Mclellan: Ascent of Beerenberg, 2277m, P2277m, Jan Mayen, June 2019.....	77
Rob Woodall: Typhoon and Ultra bagging in Japan	79

Completions

Michael Earnshaw	Simms; Irish Simms; SubMarilyns
Bert Barnett	4 th Corbett completion
Fi and Stuart (Scoob) Clark	Corbetts
David Stallard	Grahams
Bob Taylor	Grahams and Donalds (also 1000 th Marilyn, 1200 th Hump, all on Cairnsmore of Fleet)
Colin Crawford	1000 th Donald ascent
Liz and Peter Hastie	Donalds
Tony Smith	Donalds & SMC Full House
Jon Glew	Region 34 and Cumbrian All-hills and Trigs; 6 Lakes/English lists and the English element of 11 further lists (also 600 th Marilyn, 1,200 Hump, 5,000 th Tump - 20 lists all on Coniston Old Man)
Rick Salter	Synges & Cumbrian All Lists
Jenny Hatfield	Synges
Mark Trengove	Wainwrights
Richard Mclellan	98 Core Europe Ultras (2 nd known completion)
Rob Woodall	300 th Ultra



Relative Hills Society Events

The following events have been organised by RHSoc for Members and Prospective Members. The Covid-19 pandemic has inevitably led to changes. For the latest situation, and for booking details, refer to <https://www.rhsoc.uk/upcoming-events/>

Spring Bagger Rambles, Islay, Port Charlotte YHA: rescheduled to April 23 – 26, 2021

Contact Gill Stephens via rhsoc@rhsoc.uk

Dinner and AGM, The Moorings Hotel, Banavie, Fort William: rescheduled to Sat May 15, 2021

Contact Jenny Hatfield at rhsocdinner2020@gmail.com

Summer Isles SIB bagging, Ullapool: hopefully rescheduled to May 2021

Contact Steve Gillions via rhsoc@rhsoc.uk

Sept 11 – 15, 2020: St Kilda Island Marilyn's, Leverburgh, Harris

A trip to hopefully bag the four St Kilda Islands' Marilyn's (on Hirta, Dun, Soay and Boreraay) is planned once again this September, £350 pp all in for boats, camping, access. Contact Rick Salter via rhsoc@rhsoc.uk

October – December, 2020: St Kilda Stacs

Efforts will continue to get competent climbers out to the St Kilda stacs again later this year, subject to Covid-19, NTS permission and the weather! Contact Rick Salter via rhsoc@rhsoc.uk

November, 2020 – Autumn Bagger Rambles @TBD ?Northern England

Subject to review in August 2020. With Social Event, possibly with Award presentations. Co-ordinating volunteer sought for location and organisation.

If there is a further event/trip that you are interested in and may be happy to help organise, please contact one of the committee members via rhsoc@rhsoc.uk

Back copies of Relative Matters 2 and 3 are available to purchase for only £5 each. Contact the RHSoc Secretary via rhsoc@rhsoc.uk

Top marks

Michael Earnshaw - 2019 Baglog: first person to complete Simms as well as Marilyns

Lists completed during 2019

Simms (16/07/2019 on #6962 Cruach Fhiarach)

Irish Simms (17/09/2019 on #20601 Macklaun)

SubMarilyns (16/11/2019 on #1213 Sgorr Tuath)

A busy bagging year started early with a drive north, reaching Trinafour shortly after sunrise on 1st January. The plan for 2019 was to bag as many Simms as possible while sticking to fair weather walking. After further trips in February (Roybridge) and March (Strontian & Mull) the excellent April conditions meant that, by the start of May, completion before the height of the summer tourist, midge and shooting season looked possible.

I like to have heating and plumbing in the evening so 13 hills from a base at Carnmore in Fisherfield were now the crux, the reopening of the Loch Quoich road having

brought some other hills back into play. The burnt steep southern slopes of #1025 Beinn Dearg Mor in early May indicated how dry it was; I deliberately visited Simms with potentially awkward river crossings soon after. When the weather turned in mid May I'd done over 150 Simms and had 90 left, but few on convenient multi-Simm walks. Reckoning about 40 hill days would do it I decided to keep pushing for a July finish, but managed a day off to visit Sule Skerry - thanks to Bob and Sarah Kerr for organising the trip.

After a long June trip to the northwest and far north only 20 summits remained, all but one south of Glencoe. Favourable weather in early July meant I enjoyed views from most of them, including #4543 Caisteal Abhail Far East Top on Arran - I hadn't fancied the airy summit block at the end of a long day on my previous visit in 2011. Returning to the east side of Loch Lomond after a ten-year absence was a let-down compared with so many superb days elsewhere during 2019; judging by the proliferation of notices, the authorities seem very keen to tell visitors the various things they're prohibited from doing. After a night at Rowardennan hostel and a morning round of #2949 Ptarmigan and #32 Ben Lomond I was glad to leave for more accommodating areas. Completion came on #6962 Cruach Fhiarach near Arrochar accompanied by a small but eminent group of three, the four of us having a combined Marilyn score of 4M-3.



Beinn Dearg Mor E Top with Beinn a' Chlaidheimh behind



Caisteal Abhail Far East Top (M Earnshaw)

After 90 Simm hill days spread over nine separate trips in just over six months and more journeys up the A9 to Inverness than I wish to count, I didn't travel north of the central belt again until two trips in November. After some desultory bagging in farmland and forestry Jim Bloomer helped me shake off the post-completion lethargy with trips to Otterburn and Kirk Yetholm, plus a week in Kerry and Cork during which I bagged my five remaining Irish Simms. I combined a visit to Devon and Cornwall with a second trip of the year to the Channel Islands to complete the Humps up to the Highland Boundary Fault - this time to Guernsey, Sark and Alderney, former home of Elisabeth Beresford. More Womble-related bagging in Somerset (Wellington and Barrington) made up for failing to repeat Tobermory in March on Mull.

Beinn Bhan and A Chioch from A Chioch E Top (M Earnshaw)



Jon Glew: 20 lists and 3 HoFs on Coniston Old Man.

Full list completions:

Wainwright, Relative Wainwright, Birkett, Synge, Elmslie, Fellranger

Partial List Completions - The English Elements:

Marilyn, Hump, Simm, Hewitt, Nuttall, Bridge, Buxton & Lewis, Bishop, Marsh, Hardy
County/Borough Tops (of all descriptions)

Also:

Region 34 completion, Cumbria County Completion (All Hills), Cumbria Trig Completion (All types)

Milestones:

600th Marilyn, 1,200 Hump, 5,000th Tump. 25 Jan 2020

The 2019 Boat Race: 1 year, 2 baggers, 485 SIBs

Records are made to be broken, and the 2016 records set by Douglas Law (104 new SIBs) and Rob Woodall (110 but including several repeats) were broken in 2018 by Jon Glew who bagged 113 new SIBs (not to mention his Tumps record) during the year, as recorded in his [Mapping Mountains article](#). Remarkably, Jon matched his total in 2019, while Bob Kerr surpassed it to record 118 during the year. But these totals passed largely unnoticed in a year which saw the record more than doubled, with the focus on two new contenders.

Andy Sutton started the year on 225 SIBs, and with his sea kayaking skills he wowed the island bagging community with fine photos of a seemingly endless succession of islands, even managing to land on Pembrokeshire's Gwenni in a flat calm, a feat only otherwise achieved by Glew.



Andy's Cetus hauled out on Pabay #19056 (A Sutton)

Alan Whatley started the year on 140, and with a few more to go at, he too made rapid progress, with he and Andy both passing the 100 mark in early summer. A trip to the Western Isles was particularly memorable for Alan, visiting Eilean Kirkibost in "a two seater inflatable kayak which may have been satisfactory for pre teen children but not for Rob and myself. My paddling skills were the equivalent of shaking a cocktail whilst having my head between my knees". A month later, the highpoint was relocated to the south end of the island, so he returned, and with the aid of some local knowledge and a low tide, managed to reach the correct summit without even the need of wellies. Another kayak collaboration had a comic element, when the wetsuited Whatley approaching Eilean Chaluim Chille encountered an (unmapped) causeway under just an inch of water! Woodall subsequently noticed the word Tidal written on his Landranger map, from a previous visit.

Bob Kerr arranged a number of boat trips during the year, whilst Alan Holmes' June trip to Shetland gave us a grandstand view of proceedings, with Sutton kayaking to many islands which the rest of the group accessed by motorised means. But Whatley's appetite for islands continued unabated, and he finished the year with an astonishing year total of 274, with Sutton on 211. "It was a great year never to be forgotten, requiring considerable planning, substantial effort and the ability to manage weather, tides and sea conditions. 274, a record to be broken? Of course but not by me."



Alan Whatley crossing to #18939 Eilean Mor (R Woodall)

Bert Barnett Baglog: Fourth time round the Corbetts

I was mostly visiting the 89 Corbetts in 2019 which topped up a fourth set. Otherwise, snapping plants has continued to keep me interested. Hill planning for 2020 is unusually vague, with no specific list in my sights.



Richard Mclellan: Final Core European Ultra - Store Lenangstind, Norway

Store Lenangstind, at 1624m, P1576m is not a particularly high peak but, located in Northern Norway at a latitude of 69.71 degrees it's the most northerly Core European Ultra. It's a mountain of steep, raw rock rising from a landscape of glaciers and sea lochs. On the positive side it's only a couple of hours drive from Tromso, which is well served by flights.

It was in August 2019 that Denise and I arrived at Tromso, picked up a hire car and drove east through fine mountain scenery. Many of the peaks here are P1000s rising from birch woods, with the middle slopes turning to grass and a carpet of low berry bushes, topped by rocky ridges. A lot of the summits can be reached by the DNT network of well marked paths, but these are for another trip. We take a ferry for the 30-minute crossing of Ullsfjorden to the Lyngen peninsula; here the scenery changes, with soaring rock peaks with steep snow slopes and gullies. Our trail head is Koppangen at the road end on the East coast; we arrive late in the afternoon. We'd been here before, in June 2017, but decided against an attempt on Store Lenangstind when a pair of local climbers returning from a ski tour confirmed our fears that the fresh snow had left the steep gullies at high risk of avalanche.



The summit had now become my last to climb of the 98 Core European Ultras. We shouldered sacs heavy with climbing and camping gear and set off from sea level along the Koppangsdalen, initially on a track through birch woods along the edge of the wide valley. Such easy going was not for long and we were soon ascending over loose, irregular rock scree and boulders. It's a couple of hard miles to reach the upper valley at 400m where we pitch the tent in an idyllic camping spot beside a turquoise glacial lake with a view of Store Lenangstind on the distant ridgeline.



Koppangsdalen camp (R Mclellan)

The next day dawned fine and leaving the tent we continue along the gently angled valley, boulder hop the gushing icy water of the wide river and reach the hard ice of the snout of the glacier. We are soon crunching in crampons, weaving our way around the deep channels of running water. Above 1000m the glacier is snow-covered, hiding the crevasses so we travelled roped-up. It's a fine location, the deserted glacier ringed by impressive rocky peaks rising to blue skies.

The sides of the glacier steepen into gullies rising to the ridge line, but all are guarded by multiple complex bergschrunds leaving deep chasms with upper walls of overhanging ice. Earlier in the year these are filled with snow, and snow bridges provide a means of crossing onto the steep snow slope beyond, but not this August. We try each gully in turn but nothing proves straight forward until we reach the end of the south ridge. For the rest of the day we work our way up a complex crest of crags and gullies and cross the South Top. Finally, we arrive above a 30m rock wall, with no easy way on and the main summit is still a long way off. It's late when we arrive back at the tent. As daylight fades we convince ourselves that perhaps the bergschrunds weren't as unfriendly as first thought and we should give them another look.



On the Koppangsbreen glacier (R Mclellan)

The next morning we depart under skies grey with heavy cumulus, summits in cloud. An hour later, as we crunch over the glacier, the cloud breaks and blinding sun lights the peaks ahead bringing with it renewed optimism. It's 09:00 when we reach the bergschrund in the most northerly gully. It takes us a while to find a weakness through the lower edge of the ice to a ledge where we can look down to smooth rock slab below. I scrape steps down the solid bulge of blue ice and stand on the rock slab. Before I've looked up to assist Denise, she lands beside me with a dull thud having slipped on the ice but luckily missed me. She appears OK and we set off along the rock ledge passing under leaning, dripping blocks of ice until able to climb back out onto the upper slope of the bergschrund. It's further than one might hope as, roped and step by step, we traverse the band of icy snow above the ever deepening

bergschrund. We arrive on the snow field proper; interestingly, it feels a lot steeper than if had looked from below. I set off upwards kicking deep steps in the hard icy snow.

After 12m I cut a stance and, as Denise starts to follow, the sound of falling rock echoes around. I glance initially at the wrong side of the gully to where the sound must be bouncing from; Denise is crouched hedgehog-like in a ball. Football sized rocks bounce down the slope to our left and fragments of ice tinkle around us. The mountain falls silent, Denise uncurls and continues to me. I peer up the steep snow/ice which rises, seemingly interminably; it's going to be another long day.

Our 12m pitches make little impression on the task before us but slowly we gain height on the 50 to 60 degree slope. The edge of yawning bergschrund below just takes a little getting used to. The front points of our crampons must scrape small steps in the snowy ice for 200 unrelenting metres before we reach the ridge and col. From the col the ridge is free of snow and ice but the rock is loose and shattered. There is no hint of a path nor cairns. We leave crampons and axes and pick our way up onto the loose rock. Finding a route around the rock gendarmes is fun if a little frustrating at times. More than once I think we've reached an impasse, but each time we find an alternative route and a way onwards. It's a fine afternoon and warm in the bright sunshine. Close to the summit we reach a 2m wide steep icy gully and I regret leaving crampons and axes. We have to descend until able to cross the ice, but we do find a way across. The difficulties eventually ease and at 14:30 we reach the summit having left the tent at 06:00. The weather is kind and we sit in hot sunshine on the cairn perched on edge of the sheer drop of the SE face. Below a fine vista of rocky peaks, deep valleys and wide gleaming white glaciers. A fine peak on which to complete the Core European Ultras.

Store Lenangstinden summit ridge (R Mclellan)



Britain

Glenshee New Year

A floodlit tow
and a slate-ice run

with tanked-up skiers
in the midnight gold.

There are worse ways
by far
to bury
a year

and welcome its heir
into light.

Roderick Manson

Eric Young: The Year of...

The Year of the Umbrella. We circumnavigated Maol Chean-dearg (982) taking in the Simms of Torridon-like Meall Dearg (4396) and graceful Meall nan Ceapairean (4389) from Coulags; a bright, breezy, showery June day foretold. My conspicuous protruding golf umbrella yelled: "What a softie! A wee bit o' rain'll nae hurt him. You'd think he'd melt". We overtook a pony trail of nine horses multi-day trekking from distant Drumnadrochit towards Torridon. "Just follow the umbrella, cuddies".

We were lucky. The first torrent lashed us on the up slopes of Meall Dearg. Tucked in behind a boulder the broolly became a tent to the tattoo of bursting rainblobs. On top another cloudburst opened on us as we struggled to keep mostly dry. Passing Loch an Eoin a pitter-patter prelude gave us time to reach a stalkers butt. No. 3 downpour and we're snuggled up in the gamekeeper's nook with our multi-coloured canopy protecting us from a pattering battering. Time for a dry snack and a clear bespectacled view of the wild weather. So the old gamp is perfect in the right conditions and given time to stop. Laugh if you like.

It could also have been The Year of the Parasol. A scorching shared Scourie week found us closer to melting on Ben More Assynt's (1183) tops having approached from Glen Oykel and Benmore Lodge. Peace and quiet to enjoy the fresh moraine and lochan evidence of the most recent glacial phase and post-glacial solifluxion terracing on Carn nan Cobhairean (3288). Likewise the quartzite capped Cul Mor (1205), one of my top ten Corbetts, and its uncapped satellites provided superb walking in a great setting.

Meallan Odhar (4367) provided distinct evidence of a Dawson Dismantling and Cairn Reconstruction project. Now that is dedication to providing us with accuracy. Man has left his mark all over the hills. How about the weighty gnome on Sgurr a' Ghlaisein's cairn. We turned him around for a better view westwards. If you are ever inspired to walk up Hill of Cammie (4147) from Glen Tannet you'll have difficulty missing the metre squared granite cube of rock turned into a giant white and black dice. No turning that.

A Year of Wildlife added further interest. We were attacked by a grumpy nesting greenshank above Glen Roy. I saw 50+ deer enjoy mixed bathing in a cool mountain lochan above Strath Rannoch. A dog fox marking its territory with its unmistakable pungent odour. We disturbed a barn owl from its disused barn roost in Strath Dearn. Even a tusked sow boar, its beady eyes sharp enough to find our thrown tatties. Reptiles were well represented by warty toads, newts, a slinky slowworm and a sunning adder ess-ing off to its grass burrow-nest. Here's hoping they all survive our carbon warming world.

Benmore Lodge, Loch Ailsh and Ben More Assynt (E Young)



Chis Crocker: The Database of British and Irish Hills: User survey; briefing

Early last year we published the results of the November 2018 user survey. The time and thought given by respondents were gratifying. Clearly, many users care about the database. It was satisfying to get stuck into the analysis as it's a few years since I retired from my final job as a statistician in market research. As expected, there was a lot of polarisation of opinion, but the sample segmented readily and most readers will be able to identify a segment they belong to. The editorial team then met at Alston YH. The weather was too poor for the traditional hill survey, but that gave us more time to discuss the development of the database. Readers can access the results and a summary of our review on the DoBIH website at www.hills-database.co.uk/downloads.

As in the 2008 and 2010 user surveys, feedback was overwhelmingly positive. In fact several responses were along the lines of "don't fix something that isn't broken". Of the many suggestions for improvement, mobile friendliness stood out as being the most desirable. However, to make the necessary changes to the Hill Bagging site would be a very big task. We think an Android app is the right way to go, leaving the website in more or less its current form. Currently we don't have the programming skills in house, but Simon is looking at the possibility in the longer term. A good iOS app called Hill Lists is authored by Graham Haley, who scrupulously updates it after each release of the DoBIH, though it lacks the Tumps. Adam Coles' Android app, British Hills, is more basic and its data is more than three years old.

We added the Yeamans and Clems in response to the support for historically important lists. These lists were first requested more than 10 years ago and seem more deserving than some of the other suggestions, such as old lists of E&W 2000s for which there are modern equivalents. We've not ruled out further additions if demand is sufficient, but it's not our intention to make the DoBIH a repository for historical lists.

We've had to defer a structural change aimed at simplifying the presentation of hill names. The plan was to split the Hill Name field into two: one field containing a "preferred" name (by default the name currently given first), and the other field the alternative names. This has proved troublesome to program without compromising searchability. Parents are an issue, but not the only one. It remains an objective.

We've decided against giving locally known or historically correct hill names in the database. We were unable to secure the expert help that would be essential if we're to provide them with the degree of authority that we aim for with numerical data, and which our users are entitled to expect.

We continue to devote much effort to reviewing hill data, using online resources (principally LIDAR and OS Maps) that weren't available at the time of our full review in 2012-13. Currently the focus is on marginal Humps. Readers wanting a summary of changes to the main relative hill lists will find them on the DoBIH website in the Database Notes under "Change Registers". Users of the offline versions of the DoBIH will find the Revision History useful. A chronological list of classification changes for all lists can be obtained in the Change Log on the Hill Bagging site by selecting "Classification Changes" in the "Show requests for" box. This will include changes in the pipeline.

Henry Marston Baglog: Leicestershire Hall entry

I started 2019 with 564 on my bagging list and 36 to do. First some I'd missed in the Yorkshire Dales. A trip to the South East to meet a French pen friend in London was extended to the south of the Thames to clean up Sections 41 and 42. Travelling back north, it was getting dark at 2873 Bardon Hill, not too far from home so easy to return to.

Now there was a plan. Bardon Hill would be my 600th, close to an orienteering event near to it on the 14th September, meaning a trip to scoop up 12 (and only 12) other hills. A trip to North Wales via Great Orme's tramway (well, we could have driven up), onto the Llŷn peninsula and a trip on the Welsh Highland railway after the tricky Moel-y-gest at Porthmadoc, with a diversion south to bag or rebag Plynlimon, as I was not confident that my memory of climbing it was correct.

The Bardon Hill expedition was planned to link with the British Orienteering Sprint Championships at Loughborough University. The summit party of 7 (+ 1 dog), comprised Antony Whitehead, Kevin Palmer, Andrew Wilkinson, daughter Maya with Pixie and her friend Kira, my wife (Pat Marston) and I assembled in the evening for a modest 40 minute walk. A nicely balanced group, Antony having visited the Great Central Railway during the day picked out butterflies and benchmarks. With their local knowledge, Kevin and Andrew were able to pick out the best routes, and Kevin was able to use his professional experience to help Pat over the tricky bits. And we were treated to gymnastic exploits on the trig point, as well as well-earned Champagne and Lemon Cheesecake!

Was I ready to put my feet up? No! A quick insurance trip to the Welshpool hand of 5 (+1) to frustrate tamperers who might seek my relegation. 2 GOMLs, 2 WWWWs (We Welcome well-behaved Walkers), 2 ROW access. I feel safe that my 2019 entry to MarHoF will stand!

Data: 2019 Marilys: 44 (42 definite first ascents, 2 for reassurance of having visited) Total: 606 2019 Humps: 46 (44+2) Total: 701 (subject to re-assessment of earlier ascents, etc)

Anne Bunn: Wombling over The Simms

Who needs outdoor shops?

I am referring to the common sight of lost gear in the hills. Not just the usual finds of hats, gloves, broken walking poles or sun glasses. The gloves incidentally seem always to be left handed singletons. There have also been some more unusual finds, either put to use or at least cleared off the hill. Uncle Bulgaria would be pleased. Here are just a few that come to mind.

It was a glorious day in April and we were en route to Gearr Aonach 4023 689m p32, above Glencoe. Lying on the track leading into the Lost Valley there lay what at first looked to be some kind of dead animal. On closer inspection it was one of those Russian style hats. Not too heavy to cart around all day, and later found to be a perfect fit.

In September we had a week on the isle of Lismore. One cycle ride took us past a remote and long since deserted caravan. Amongst the numerous rusting tins of food, there was a perfectly intact and drinkable can of Magners cider. Okay on reflection it was slightly out of date, but after much soul searching I decided to give it a good home. Not quite as bountiful as finding an abandoned rucksack containing 7 cans of Budweiser on the North Yorkshire Moors, but that's another story.

In November we were cycling to the head of Glen Feshie, numerous Simms from there on our agenda. On the return journey there was a black Sealskinz glove lying on the track. Nothing unusual there, other than it being right handed.

However it matched almost perfectly to a previously found left handed Sealskinz glove, which incidentally I was wearing that day. What coincidence.

We were returning from An Torc/ Boar of Badenoch 4054 739m p84. On the track I found a tube of false eyelash glue. Since I had no use for this, I gave it to Eric!

Previous years finds which I am still using include.

1. A pair of socks found on Cut Hill 2879 603m p89
2. A shirt hanging off a road sign in Balquhidder Glen
3. A hanging basket on the summit cairn of Caw Fell 2425 697m p22
4. Outdoor chair in Glen Clova
5. A very useful half full can of Smidge. Found somewhere remote.

One item not yet put to use is a fine pair of false teeth, found on the summit cairn of Carn a Chiaraidh 3043 871m p47 North of Blair Atholl.

If any of these items seem familiar, please let me know. Particularly if you are the owner of the false teeth.

It can go the other way too of course. I seem to have mislaid a bag containing a hat, gloves and head band. So if you are ever in the vicinity of Creag a' Chaorainn 870 998m p37, please keep an eye out for it.

Obituary: Rowland Bowker - Hoffer No 1 (1930 - 2019)

Chris Watson: An era has ended in the world of Relative Hills with the death of Rowland Bowker during 2019. Rowland and his wife Ann started bagging the Marilyn's almost as soon as the 'The Relative Hills of Britain' book was published and, by the time this photo was taken in 1998 on their 1500th, Meall a' Bhainne, they were 350 clear of all but one other Hoffer.



I first met them a couple of years after this on a trip to the Bishop Isles in 2001. Despite Rowland suffering from a bad leg, which dogged the rest of his life, he kept up with me easily. I was amazed that a 72-year-old could walk like that - but that was before I got more involved with Marhohn and discovered that sprightly septuagenarians were the norm rather than the exception!

Rowland carried on bagging hills until his early eighties but threw in the towel once he reached 2501 Humps (and 1546 Marilyn's). This did not prevent Ann and himself from travelling around the world and he visited around 200 countries in total. As you might gather from this, Rowland was a very organised

person and even had the foresight to write his own eulogy which was read at his funeral and is reproduced below.

Rowland was born in 1930 at Winterley in Cheshire and after attending Sandbach school studied Mathematics, Physics and Oceanography at Liverpool University. After graduating in 1954 Rowland embarked on a spell of living and working overseas starting with a year studying Sociology in Stockholm. This was followed by a spell of English teaching in Provence and a year teaching physics and chemistry in Ankara.

From 1957-60 he lectured in mathematics at Wednesbury Technical College. The urge to live overseas soon came back so in January 1961 he flew by Comet to work as an Educational Officer in Malaya. This was followed by two years of teaching English, Mathematics and Science in Bangkok.

Rowland met Ann on a rambler's holiday in Glencoe in 1964. Both keen hill walkers they soon started bagging hills such as Munros, Corbetts and the English and Welsh 2000ft summits. From 1965 - 68 Rowland lectured at Stafford Polytechnic while Ann lectured on Computer Science at Wolverhampton Polytechnic.

Rowland had not lost his passion for foreign travel but Ann insisted that it should be combined with climbing some of the world's significant mountains. Among the many overseas mountains they bagged were Mount Ararat, Kinabalu, Mount Fuji, Mount Etna, Kilimanjaro and Mount Whitney.

They had another spell overseas from 1968 to 1970 where Rowland was an Assistant Professor of Mathematics at the Imperial Ethiopian Air Force College in Addis Ababa. During this time they had their son Martin. Returning to the UK Rowland lectured at Loughborough University while Ann lectured at Trent Polytechnic.

Rowland took early retirement in 1982 and Ann followed suit a few years later. They retired to Cumbria which gave them an excellent base for hill walking. They also became voluntary wardens for the Lake District National Park and joined Keswick Rambling Club.



Ann finished her Corbetts in 1992 and the next day they found a copy of Alan Dawson's Relative Hills of Britain – a list which gave them their greatest challenge yet.

In recent years Rowland has spent quite a lot of time studying and attending conferences in Parapsychology. He concluded that it is highly probable that we survive death.

He is survived by Ann and their son, Martin.

Dee Rogers: I met Rowland often when we were Voluntary Wardens with the Lake District National Park. He carried out a variety of duties – work parties, routine surveys, checking access land etc. On a work party it was always interesting to hear about Rowland and Ann's latest travels which took them all over the world. There was usually more chat than work at these occasions with Rowland. He was also interested in other people's exploits and, if you had been to Scotland asked what you had climbed. When Tony told him that, amongst other hills, we had been up Stac Pollaidh, Rowland asked "Did you get to the summit?" Of course, we found that we had not! He was always pleased to catch you out but always very willing to pass on information and provide helpful advice from his vast experience.

Rob Woodall: Rowland and Ann were a towering presence in the early days of RHB. I have an amusing recollection of him speaking disdainfully of the Synges, then saying he was compiling a list of all map-named points in the Lakes!

Lionel Bidwell: When I worked at Nottingham Trent Polytechnic I shared an office with Ann Bowker in 1977 and Rowland often dropped in. At that time he was frequently travelling abroad to tick off new countries. The first hill list I remember them working on was Bridge published in 1973. Ann was always telling me details of their exploits to the Lake District, climbing hills at home and abroad and how they were completing long distance trails. This last activity was often carried out by using two vehicles and parking at opposite ends of the day's section and Martin, their young son, walking with either Ann or Rowland. When they met, Martin could choose which way to go, back or onwards. This was the method by which they completed the Pennine Way.

It was an exciting day, when Ann came into the office one morning to tell me they had bought a copy of a book of a new list of hills published by Alan Dawson, soon after its first publication. She proudly told me they had already climbed over 600 Marilyns with ticking off Munros, Corbetts and Grahams and other hills in Wales and England. Further Marilyns now constituted much of their time at weekends and holidays.

These stories resulted in frequent visits to the northern Lakes and to eventually follow in their footsteps and retire to the Lake District and join the Voluntary Rangers and Keswick Rambling Club.

After I had been on three annual trips to Scotland with the Voluntary Rangers, Rowland would repeatedly tell me that I would never finish the Munros with one visit a year and this provided me with the incentive to visit Scotland more frequently and complete them in six and a half years.

During this time we would frequently see Rowland and Ann on Keswick Rambling Club walks and Voluntary Ranger work parties. I remember Rowland telling me that his target was to travel on six overseas trips a year bagging new countries and mountains. We were scheduled to travel with them on a trip to Guyana, Surinam and French Guyana, but unfortunately Rowland damaged his tendon in the Outer Hebrides and was flown to hospital by helicopter. Rowland and Ann did later go on a cruise to complete South America.

In recent years Ann has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's and Rowland became a lot less mobile, but on visits to their house in Portinscale he was always interested in which countries we had been visiting and our recent Marilyn exploits. He would get out his maps and the world atlas on these visits and his latest copy of MARHOFN was always on the table.

He was clearly a lifelong tinker because his last activity I was aware of was drawing pictures of National Trust properties.

Mam Ban

This is the Top that never was,
an idea in the pages
and the pictures in mind,
the vision of
my friend
still here.

It may be this point will continue
to languish,
elevation forever denied,
but not every memorial has to be built
to be seen and recognised.

Roderick Manson

Obituary: Nigel Thackrah (1945 - 2019)

Ray Thackrah: Nigel was born in Reading in 1945 and fairly soon started to move Northwards with his folks, first to Bedford and then Ilkley, Yorkshire when he was aged around 5 or 6. This was fitting as Yorkshire had been the home of his Thackrah ancestors for centuries, probably back into Viking times, from where the surname originates. Their house was right on the edge of Ilkley Moor and he and his brother spent a lot of time free ranging across that wonderful place. The fun of rock climbing was soon discovered, on the Cow & Calf rocks and the aptly named Rocky Valley. They managed some solo ascents on boulders that must have been at least.... 10 foot high and despite falling off now and then managed to survive intact.

He studied Chemical Engineering at university and held a number of posts in the Chemical Industry: before his retirement he was the Health & Safety Manager for a large industrial factory. He always led a very active outdoor life, particularly rock climbing and walking. He lived in the Peak District where he honed his rock climbing skills but spent much of his spare time in Scotland.

It was his younger brother Ray that can claim to have introduced Nigel to rock climbing. Ray had been on an Outward Bound course where he learnt the rudiments of rock climbing and abseiling. Together they bought a rope and set out for Cadshaw Rocks near Bolton where Ray led him up his first proper climb. It wasn't long before it became apparent that Nigel was a much better climber than his brother and he started leading, then dragging, him up harder and harder routes.

Nigel completed many long distance walks, including The Pennine Way, The Thames Path, The Coast to Coast, Offa's Dyke Path, The Lyke Wake Walk and many more. He also ran 7 marathons, 12 half marathons and cycled from John o' Groats to Lands End. Further afield he had climbed or walked in USA, Nepal, Corsica, the Dolomites, Pyrenees and Alps. For many years he was a volunteer Park Ranger in the Peak District National Park and an active member of Kinder Mountain Rescue Team. Fellow team members were always impressed by his map reading skills which he put down to early training in the Cadet Force. He also helped run a community hydro-electric scheme which often seemed to involve standing chest deep in the River Goyt clearing the filters of fallen debris.



Rick Salter: His Hill-Bagging bio says *"Since a childhood in the shadow of Ilkley Moor, I have revelled in being in the mountains. This expressed itself in rock climbing & Munro bagging, until completion in 2003. Since then, I have climbed the Wainwrights, Munro Tops, Nuttalls, Furths, Birketts, Donalds, & Tops, Fellrangers. After being introduced to the hill-bagging site, I have discovered the joys of Tumping & County completions. Targets for the future, are Corbetts completion (4 left), Grahams (120 left), WOs & Synges. No chance of finishing the Marilyns, but the Upper HoF would be nice. Live in New Mills, Derbyshire, with a view of Kinder Scout from our front garden"*.



According to the Hill-bagging site, Nigel completed the Corbetts, got to 149 Grahams, completed the Wainwright Outliers and reached 578 Synges (69 short). His Marilyn total stood at 802. Half-way between the HoF and Upper Hall. He completed 86 county and unitary authorities, comprising 1333 Tumps. Putting him then third in the league table for County/UA Tump completions. In 2017 he climbed with a number of other baggers, Arran Tor Mheadhonach 332m P69, his 3000th Tump, only a few weeks after completing a course of chemotherapy.

Nigel Thackrah died peacefully on 9th December 2019 in Derbyshire aged 74

Adrian Rayner: My first time to meet Nigel was on 23rd April 2016 when we met to make a joint completion of Nottinghamshire and for both of us it was our 50th Tump county. Along with Smudge that morning I met Nigel who was wearing a Robin Hood hat that he hired especially for the day. Apparently he was going to hire the entire outfit including green tights but held back as he had not met any of us before that day. On meeting us he soon realised that the full outfit would have been appreciated and he relaxed in our company. A photo taken by Smudge shows Nigel and I on the summit of Ollerton Pits Wood for our joint 50th county completion.



Since then we have met up again and exchanged messages, the latest of which related to a Puffin Island trip which he had to withdraw from as his health precluded him joining us.

A sad loss to this community.

Rob Woodall: I met Nigel in 2017 when we bagged Mount Manisty. I was unable to drive at the time and he kindly invited me to stay at his house, so I took the train to New Mills and on Saturday he drove me across to Birkenhead for the boat trip - then next day he took me to Beeston Castle to complete the Cheshire West tumps. A true gent and an absolute pleasure to meet him and Marie. That day we also found a few Ordnance Survey bench marks - the bench-marks website indicates he subsequently ticked off nearly 2000 BMs in under 2 years - ever the enthusiast!

In his rock climbing days he tackled the Old Man of Storr and one of its neighbouring pinnacles - he didn't summit either but he's the only person I've met who's even tried. He also summited the tricky Gale Common Tump.

TrigpointingUK profile: Hill walker, climber & mountaineer all my life. Mainly hill bagger & list completer since retirement. Introduced to collecting benchmarks last year. Decided to see how many trigs I can log from over the years & maybe find a few more not on hill tops [Nigel logged 1065 trigs, including 846 pillars].

Gill Stephens: I first met Nigel in the 1990s when I joined Kinder Mountain Rescue Team. Nigel was a long-established member and was just about the nicest, kindest bloke on the team, always patient with the newbies and great at teaching us the ropes (literally). He was always full of hugely infectious enthusiasm for the hills. I've also got many happy memories of climbing with Nigel at KMRT's Tuesday night climbing sessions when the team and friends gathered on the Derbyshire outcrops. There were numerous team hut weekends, where I was delighted every time that Nigel invited me to do some longer mountain climbs. He was a much better climber than me so this gave great opportunities to be dragged up harder routes. One of the happiest memories is Nigel's Munro completion in Mull, when a huge gang of friends and family gathered on Ben More to toast the occasion, followed by a convivial meal in Tobermory. When I moved to Bonsall, I lost touch with Nigel for a couple of years but, when a friend told me he was ill, I got back in touch. Despite his illness, Nigel just kept on bagging, always with a hugely positive attitude. He organised a fantastic boat trip for a whole bunch of baggers to climb Ben Aden and, shortly afterwards, he snuck off with a pal and completed the Corbetts. It got harder

to meet up after I moved to Scotland in 2018, but we still managed to catch up a few times. He still kept bagging away as long as he possibly could, steadfastly refusing to be stopped by illness and trying really hard to get towards a Graham completion. Sadly, he didn't make it. I'll always have very happy memories of time spent with Nigel. He really was a true gent and absolutely one of the best.

Eddie Harwood: Close Shaves: verglass and fighter pilot

The theme close shave immediately brings a memory of an 18 year old me taking a school friend of mine up Cruach Ardrain. The temperature was several degrees below zero with a gale blowing and 10m visibility. After crossing Stob Dubh I went round to the sheltered east side and went steeply straight up 500ft + to the top. We only had rubber soled boots. The rock was glazed in a thin sheet of ice in which I cut the tiniest steps up, very quickly realising that there was no possibility of reversing back down. I kept pretending I could see brightness at the top and cajoled him all the way with amazingly neither of us falling off. A year later he showed me his still discoloured toes from frostbite.

However my closest shave was 10 years later. I was standing on the top of the Cairngorm Corbett Sgor Mor but decided to drop down to get out of the strong wind. As I had got about 5 yards away I heard a roar and looked back straight into the face of a terrified fighter pilot who had clearly misjudged his height. 2 seconds earlier and we would both have been wiped out.

The Unwin Baglog: Dan & Maisie exploits!

Our bagging tends to be rather random - we have no master plan, or particular list which we are working to; however, our local Mountain Club had an 'Everest Anywhere' challenge for 2019 - (members tally the heights of every mountain they climb & the highest total wins) and this did influence Maisie's & my aims a little in 2019. So, 2019 saw us bag 234 new hills, of which 22 were Marilyn's, 41 Humps, and 176 Tumps. We managed to get out on about 50 days, with 45 of them seeing new hills added to our totals. We began 2019 seeing the New Year in on top of Beacon Hill - our local hill. January also saw us bag Myarth - which was not as difficult as we'd been expecting. February saw us in the Powys Carneddau which are a fine set of hills. This was the first of several expeditions to the Powys / Herefordshire border area in 2019. Each year we drop Beckie off at Gatwick - and slowly we are adding to our South Downs tally - 2019 was no exception, with Box Hill & a few others being ticked off.

Our first 'expedition' of 2019 (when Maisie & I are in full bagging mode - up at dawn, with a military approach and everything planned to get the most out of the day) was to Anglesey. The planned trip to Puffin Island had to be aborted due to the swell, so instead we spent 2 days bagging every hill & trig on Anglesey, working our way around in a clockwise fashion.

In May we attempted the Berwyn horseshoe for the 4th time - the previous 3 attempts having to be cut short due to appalling weather. Fourth time lucky - we had a magnificent day in the hills, bagging all 14 summits, not bad as the day before we'd been up in Yorkshire bagging hills around Scarborough whilst waiting for the Tour De Yorkshire to finish! Our last hill of the Berwyn round was Godor - Maisie's 400th Tump.



June saw us car camping at Bwlch y Groes so we could attack the Arans over a weekend, 10 hills done & surprisingly dry underfoot. July & we were back in Wales, this time car camping in the midge infested forests to the E of the Rhinogs. A successful two days, in dry & cold weather. Annoyingly we didn't manage to get to the NE Top of Moel Morwynion meaning we'll have to return at some point.

In August we decided to bag the fine grassy hills on either side of the A470 between Dolgellau & Dinas Mawddwy. On the drive up on Friday we stopped off to bag the hills of the Breidden Forest, with three done. Saturday saw us on the hills to the south of the road, with the high point (in both senses) being the fine rounded Maesglase. We descended via the waterfall at Craig Maesglase - a fine place for a wild camp. The following day we had three smaller walks - the first to bag the three hills to the N of the A470, then it was a quick drive back to Bwlch y Groes to bag Moel y Cerrig Duon before another drive - this time heading back on the way home - to finish the Breidden Hills with a fine evening ascent of Moel y Golfa.

Living in the South of England means Scotland is a major undertaking to get to - so our only trip there in 2019 was in August. Maisie had said she wasn't sure about going back to the Alps, so our 'big trip' of the year saw us parking up near the top of Glen Nevis with a traverse of Aonach Beag & Aonach Mor, with a few other hills thrown in, on the cards. Luckily Beckie was with us so whilst she went off on her MTB Maisie & I had a cracking day, starting with a long climb up Sgurr a' Bhuic & finishing with a long descent back to the Nevis Range car park where Beckie was waiting for us. As it turned out this would be the only Scottish walk of the year as the weather was awful for the next few days. So we cut short our Munroing, & decided to hedge our bets by following the good weather - which was in North Wales. This was handy as we had to be there anyway for the rescheduled Puffin Island trip. Arriving two days early for Puffin Island gave us the chance to walk the Glyders from W to E (although we left Tryfan for another day) and the Carneddau from N to S - a fine day which saw us on Drum early in the morning & on Pen yr Ole Wen in the late afternoon, the day having been nothing but eight hills and sunshine. Luckily the swell was fine so the following day Maisie & I & eight others made the once in a lifetime (ie once is enough!!) trip to Puffin Island. Only 4 of us were brave enough to push our way through to the Monastery.

Our last trip of the summer holidays found us in the Peaks - so whilst Beckie took part in an off road bike challenge, Maisie & I had a fine time in the Earl Sterndale area, where Maisie scared herself & me by tackling the pinnacle on the end of Parkhouse Hill, a climb which turned out to be a rather exposed grade II scramble. We managed another 14 hills that day.

Having done all of the Welsh Furths bar Tryfan, we decided in September to finish off the Lakeland ones. Saturday saw us heading for Sca Fell via Foxes Tarn and on Sunday we completed the Skiddaw 'horseshoe' ascending via Ullock Pike & Carl Side before heading back over Cockup. With October we decided to forego camping and were back in Kington & the Powys / Herefordshire border area. This time we managed 13 new hills, including Black Mixen which we ascended in thick fog - finding the top of Great Creigau was not easy in the fog, but thankfully the mist cleared just at the right time. We were back in the same area for another 6 hills just before Christmas.

Just after Christmas we joined a large group in the Lakes, and again, whilst Beckie went off on her bike, Maisie & I managed 24 new hills and several re-ascents. One of the new hills was Beacon Fell, which was fellow RHSoc member Denise Mclellan's 3000th. We finished 2019 by watching the sunset from the top of the Old Man of Coniston. Maisie won the Everest Challenge - she managed to bag 276 hills (repeats are allowed) one more than me in 2019.

Andy Tomkins Baglog: storms, ants, ladders and teenybaggers

Marilyns were few and far between, as the nearest unclimbed ones are now 3 hours' drive from home. I managed 8 in all, kicking off in January with trip to Dumfries and Galloway with James (aged 9) to climb Killyleoch Hill (239.7m P151.6m), together with Beacon Hill (215m P121m) and White Hill of Terregles (212m P30m). The next Marilyn wasn't until June, when James and I climbed Scaw'd Fell (549m P154m), Big Hill (432m P97m) and Yadburgh Hill 474m P75m). We got caught in a thunderstorm on the way down from Scaw'd Fell, which terrified James and made him nervous about dark clouds for a while afterwards. In August James and I climbed Doune Hill (734m P695m) and Doune Hill East Top (701m P79m) on a muggy afternoon with lots of annoying flying ants; this was James' first Graham. The next day we climbed Ben Nevis, on a perfect day with sunshine and good visibility. However, a poor choice of route by me meant that it took us nearly 12 hours. We started at the north face car park, went up to the CIC Hut and then went around to the tourist path to climb to the summit. Still, we did get to see a lot of the hill. Our trip finished with a climb of Bidean Bad na h-Iolair (528m P263m) and we were both impressed with the views down Loch Linnhe and up to Ben Nevis. The last Marilyn of the year

came during October half-term on a trip to the Kingdom of Fife with James and Holly (aged 7). We climbed West Lomond (522m P405m), East Lomond (448m P155m) and Largo Law (290m P197m).

Other notable hills included Great Links Tor (589m P112m) and Amicombe Hill (584m P36m) on Dartmoor, with Mark Trengove. Mark brought a telescopic ladder and we took it in turns to carry on to the moor. It took a little while to find the optimum placement against the base of the tor and we still had some easy scrambling to do once above the ladder but without it we wouldn't have got up the tor. Also, In April I had a great day on the Kentmere Horseshoe, where I got up at 5 am to be sure of a parking place. The next day I did The Dodds, Stybarrow Dodd (843.7m P68.9m), Watson's Dodd and Great Dodd (857m P109m), as well as Clough Head (726m P108m). It was an absolutely freezing day, far colder than any day during the winter and there weren't many other people around.

Whilst climbing Dodd (502m P110m) in March, Holly saw Skiddaw and expressed a desire to climb it. At the end of June, we drove up on a Friday night and camped near the summit of Latrigg (368m P73m) and the next day we climbed Skiddaw Little Man (865m P61m), Skiddaw (931m P709m) and Lonscale Fell (715m P50m). It was far higher and further than Holly ever imagined but I was very proud of her because she did it. Unfortunately, I sprained a knee ligament on the descent and this kept me off the hills for a month and, at the time of writing this in late January, it isn't completely better.

In July, a trip to Vienna to visit family gave James and I an opportunity to go to the Alps. We climbed Schneeberg (2076m P1348m), the most easterly 2000m peak in the Alps and a mountain I'd wanted to climb for years. James was thrilled to have gone above 2000m for the first time and at bagging his first Austrian state highpoint, as Schneeberg is the highest mountain in Niederösterreich. A couple of days later we bagged another state highpoint, when we climbed Hermannskogel (542m P165m), the highest hill in Vienna. It was a beautiful walk in the forests of the Wienerwald and we were looking forward to some stunning views from the tower near the summit, the Habsburgwarte. When we got there, we were disappointed to see that it was closed. We did, however, get some good views of Vienna on the descent.

My main aim for the year was to climb 100 Tumps. The bagging year finished on New Year's Eve with ascents of Woldside (596m P35m) and Redshaw Moss (545m P41m), in the Yorkshire Dales. The latter was unusual because I parked the car at a higher elevation than the summit of the hill and I finished the walk with an ascent. I failed in my efforts to bag 100 Tumps, finishing on 99 but I was very pleased with my successful and varied bagging year.

Dave Irons Baglog: round Britain in 27 Marilyns

I only managed to climb 27 Marilyns in 2019, to boost my total to 1228. This did include some excellent hills in Scotland, notably Beinn nan Cabar, climbed via Glen Beasdale. This is a rough, craggy and complex hill, tougher than some Munros. Several other hills in this area of Scotland also gave me memorable outings; Meall a' Bhainne, Carn a' Ghobhair and Sidhean Mor. Further north in Scotland, I finally got round to climbing Maiden Pap, a truly notable little hill. I visited a few easy hills in England, Win Green being the gentlest. Hutton Roof Crag, with limestone pavements, is also a pleasant easy walk. My Welsh Marilyns included Mynydd Carningli, a bold hill with a rocky summit crest and Frenni Fawr, a hill of green pasture with a public footpath to the top. Bryn Amlwg was my final Marilyn of 2019. This summit is on the edge of Trannon, once a fine moor but now taken over by Carno Wind Farm. The ascent of Bryn Amlwg from Carno is via a lovely grass track all the way to the trig point.

Jonathan Appleby Baglog: Lewis backpack; Kilda anticlimax

I managed 13 new Marilyns in 2019, bringing my Marilyn total to 675.

The highlight of 2019 for me was a two-day backpack over the hills of North Harris in September. A planned St. Kilda trip had been put on hold for a couple of days because of the sea state, but the weather on Harris was clear, if a little windy. Colin Gilmour and I took the opportunity and headed off from Miabhaig, striking up the slopes to reach Uisgneabhal Mòr. A traverse over to Tèileasbhal was enlivened by a terrific wind blasting across the bealach, but from there things calmed down a little on the walk out to Stulabhal, where we surprised a sea eagle in the crags. After a mid-afternoon brew-up we headed down Gleann Stuladail and hauled our weary bodies up to a high camp on the north shoulder of Ulabhal at about 470m. What a glorious spot to watch the light fade and the stars come out!

The next day dawned fine and we continued our daunder over Ulabhal and onto Oireabhal, dropping down into Gleann Chliostair before climbing back up (slowly) onto Tiorga Mòr. Some amazing views from these hills, and we had a crystal-

clear day for it. Another brew-up at Bràigh Bheagarais, and then (dumping the packs at the head of Gleann Leòsaid) we indulged in some shameless bagging by climbing Huiseabhal Mòr. Much later, after the walk out down Gleann Leòsaid we regained the tarmac and prepared for a long walk back to the car on sore feet – but were rescued by three Gaelic teachers who stopped and offered us a lift back to Meabhaig. *Ma bhios sibh a' leughadh seo, tapadh leibh gu dearbh, a chàirdean!*

High camp on Ulabhal, looking north to Lewis (J Appleby)



After Harris, St. Kilda felt a little bit like an anti-climax. The sea state had improved just enough for us to make the voyage over, but our arrival coincided with low cloud and persistent drizzle, making the ascents of Oiseabhal, Conachair and Mullach Bì rather damp affairs. Good navigation practice though.

Here's to a fruitful year in the hills in 2020 for all!

[David Stallard Baglog: 1500th Simm; Wild North and Deep South - of Scotland](#)

I've changed focus a bit this year and last. I finally got round to working out how many Simms I'd been up in the Spring of 2018 and found I'd been up just over 1340. So it seemed worth concentrating on them a bit and I was in reach of the Corridor of Fame mark by the start of the year just past. I finally reached it in July on Breabag's North Top (16E).

Most of my outings have been day trips in the Monadhliath or the Northern Highlands and I've managed to enjoy some great, long days. The highlight of the year was probably 3 days from Duag Bridge bothy exploring the magnificent, wild country south of it. A third ascent of Seana Bhràigh (Section 15A), from the north this time, was special. I ascended by the scramble up the Creag an Duine ridge, with breathtaking views into the northern corries. What a long, steep climb it is from Strath Mulzie to the start of the scrambling! I went out over Creag Dhubh and Meall nam Bradhan which gave a tough but rewarding 12-hour day in beautiful weather. A similar walk, stitching together the outlying Dodds and Simms of that very remote Corbett, Carn Ban (15A again) was also very memorable, though in not such good weather. Strong winds and blowing spindrift tested the determination that day. There is some fascinating geology in this area with numerous crags and interesting solifluction patterns in the gravel and boulder scree on the ridge summits.

Had another great day with fine views going over the western section of the Fannichs main ridge from Loch Droma with my son. These were new Munros for him. We ended up coming off over Sgurr Mor, Meall nam Peithirean and Beinn Liath Mhor Fannaich. It was a hot, hot day and though we kept drinking I still lost 4 lbs that day!

I only managed one long-distance trip this year, basing myself at Abington beside the M74 in the Scottish Borders for 3 nights. I got two very wet days; one involving two separate walks up Cairn Table and Common Hill and the next 3 different walks up other Section 27 Marilyn's. The sun did shine on my last day there, thank goodness, when I completed Section 27A on Blaeloch Hill. What a panorama out over the Firth of Clyde it gives you.

A second, planned trip to the Scottish Borders was thwarted by back problems which have cleared up now but stopped any serious walking for 6 or 7 weeks in the autumn. Och well; they'll still be there next year!

Seeing Suilven

This is not the viewpoint;
this is the view.

The raven shrieks the joy of seeing
what the landbound do not see

and soars
beyond sight.

Roderick Manson



Really Climbing Suilven

Today,
I do justice
to the fortress mountain
which is the mountain of mountains
to me.

Not just in reaching the highest summit -
its perpendicular castle walls
defying the western gales -
that leaves its back door
not wide
but open
along the crest of a weather-racked spine.

Nor yet attaining that sandstone turret
that stolidly centres the ridge,
its myriad ramparts
in ominous prospect
solidifying into steps.

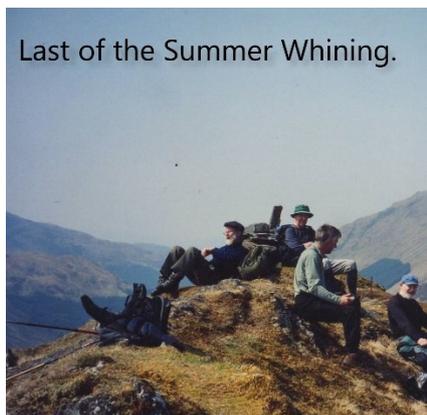
But for the first time ascending the third -
the lowest
(judge not by stature) -
that easy rock climb,
though not that easy
when gravity is not your friend.

Today,
I do justice to this mountain,
always provided this mountain
does not execute justice
on me.

Roderick Manson

Margaret Squires: Marilyn's for Newbies: a pictorial guide

Marilyn baggers often approach Marilyn's having done the Munros, and may expect that the sub2000 hills could hardly present as much of a challenge as their loftier cousins. But think again! This short guide presents some of the new techniques that you'll need to learn. Forewarned is forearmed.



Gill Stephens (the editor of Relative Matters) apologises for omitting Ron Bell's baglog from the printed edition of Relative Matters; this was an oversight. We hope that you will enjoy reading the baglog in this online edition.

Ron Bell Baglog: 11 new Marilyn's, 2 new knees

2018 total + climbed in 2019 (+ armchair bag) = total at end of 2019

Ireland excluded from Marilyn's and Simms totals

Purely Relative

Tumps: $1337 + 29 + 1 = 1367$

Humps: $845 + 12 = 857$

Marilyn's $693 + 11 = 704$

Other RHSoc Approved Lists

Simms: $1087 + 11 = 1098$

Marilyn-Simms: $637 + 11 = 648$

Dodds: $68 + 2 = 70$

Marilyn-Dodds: $19 + 0 = 19$

Sibs: $12 + 0 = 12$

In March 2019 I had knee replacement surgery on both knees at the same time. Apart from one Dodd done in February, this prevented any hill bagging until, on 27th April, I conquered the Tump of Dyker Law (#14063 321m P35) with my wife Jane. This was a less than 1km stroll gently upwards on crutches – but I was ecstatic as it marked my return to hill walking. My first post-op “proper hill”, the Marilyn-Simm of Carn na h-Easgann (#646 617m P173) near Inverness, was done on 5th June, and I am now fully recovered and painlessly hill walking much more quickly and confidently than before.

Because of the need to recover from the surgery, I only managed a total of 29 Tumps during the year, of which 11 were Marilyn-Simms. One of these was the highest point of Dartmoor, High Willhays (#2877 621m P537), done with my wife, and two friends and two dogs with whom we were staying. Nearby Yes Tor (#2878 619m P24) used to be thought the summit of Dartmoor and was visited first, but is now merely a sub-Simm.

My 10 Scottish Marilyn-Simms were an absolute joy and included the Caithness hills of Morven (#1150 706m P574) and Scaraben (#1151 626m P331).



The finest hill during the year, certainly the one that gave me most pleasure, was Carnan Cruithneachd (#856 728m P220). This dominates the South side of Glen Elchaig (fairly near Eilean Donan Castle) as you walk or cycle up the glen towards Iron Lodge – 10 miles in - at the far end. My first attempt at Cruithneachd in July was from Glen Elchaig, but failed due to lack of time caused by a combination of residual slowness from the knee surgery and a 300m very steep pathless slope of waist high bracken. Six weeks later, I tried again from the other (boring) side. This was much easier and the final scramble to the summit was rewarded by the sudden revelation of a stunning panorama of the whole of Glen Elchaig in glorious sunshine.

To complete the SMC “Full House”, I have 42 Grahams left to do plus 21 Donalds and 16 Donald Tops. To complete the Scottish Marilyn-Simms will require only a further 11 hills beyond that, and I might also manage the English ones, Old age, however, would, I fear, catch up with me before I could do the Welsh ones, so I might instead concentrate on the Upper Tier of the Marilyn's Hall of Fame (1000 required).

I am very much looking forward to a good bag in 2020!



Glen Elchaig from Carnan Cruithneachd (R Bell)

Mark Trengove Baglog: Gt Links highlight; Hirta lowlight

Marilyns + 8 = 725
HuMPs + 19 = 1118
Tumps + 72 = 2089
Dodds + 23 = 407

2019 proved to be not one of my best years, in terms of bagging relative hills. Many trips were to Cumbria, in order to finish the Wainwrights. Most of those I had left were of negligible or no prominence. I completed them in October, leaving me free to spread my bagging further afield.

Highlights of the year included a mad overnight trip in April down to Dartmoor to join up with Andy Tomkins to scale Great Links Tor 589m, P112m (Region 4), with the help of a rather heavy collapsible ladder.

In September I was on Harris for a week waiting for the go-ahead to St Kilda. During the wait, in brilliant weather, I whiled away the time with an ascent of An Cliseam 799m, P799m (Section 24B) and a bonus day with Sea Harris for traverses over the high points on Taransay and Scarp on a day of shining seas and white-tailed eagles. Eventually a brief weather and sea window opened for one night on Hirta. The rain and fog began as we landed, and did not really let up until we got back to Leverburgh the following evening. The weather, coupled with the fact that the main island resembled a (M.O.D) building site, did not leave me with a favourable impression. I will not be hastening back to bag any more hills there. Maybe humans should just leave these islands alone to the wildlife, under the care of the United Nations?

In October my meagre crop of more prominent hills ended with ascents of Ben Stack 720m, P531m (Section 16E) and Ben Loyal 764.2m, P609m (Section 16B) on days of rather wild weather. A crawling gait was required on the latter to reach the gale-blasted summit.

My resolution for 2020 is to focus, in Scotland at least, on hills of at least 500 metres of prominence, in order to advance my worldwide peak-bagging totals - 'bagging without borders'.

Jon Foote: Rescued

Slight slip. Unbalanced, rebalance. Tripped, going down. That's not good. Broken? Dislocated elbow? Get up, if I can. On my feet. This hurts. Where's Ian got to? "IAN!" He'll come looking soon. "IAN!!" There he is. "I've broken my arm."

It's a beautiful day, New Year's Eve, late afternoon and we would have been down on easy ground in Mosedale by dusk, then a drink at Wasdale Head before the familiar walk up to Burnmoor Lodge under the stars.

Can I get down there under my own steam and get a lift or an ambulance to Whitehaven? This will be slow and very painful; can I do it at all? We walk for a couple of hundred yards down the broad ridge towards Wind Gap, with difficulty down a little rock step. Then I slip again. "Shall I call Mountain Rescue?" says Ian. "I don't know." That decides him; if Dad, far more experienced, doesn't know, we need someone who does know. He calls 999 and answers a few questions. We can describe where we are accurately.



Then Ian suggests I sit down, which hadn't occurred to me. Feeling left elbow with right hand, I conclude it's not a dislocation. Must be a fracture, quite a bad one. Sun is getting low, shivering starts. Overlayer with gilet, but I can't face getting my arm through the armhole. Right arm through, drape over left. It keeps slipping off.

Message comes in to say Paul from Duddon MR out nearby, will be with us in 40 minutes. Three of them had climbed my old favourite climb, the New West on Pillar Rock. We wait, shivering violently. At least Ian can move around, but mostly he acts as a windbreak for me.

Getting dark. Ian spots movement on Pillar. A figure creeps down, then up towards us. He gives me paracetamol and ibuprofen, which don't have any noticeable effect. The other two arrive, head torches shining bright, and do what they can with orange plastic and blunt scissors. I shiver, which pleases them.

Lights down in Wind Gap Cove, approaching slowly. Eventually the dog Marty arrives and signals to the team. Now it's a hive of activity. "Suck on this." The Entonox works its magic and pain drops almost instantly to bearable. There's a huge bothy bag over us, and soon a gentle mist of condensation whenever the fabric moves. They warm me up with heat mats, cut my expensive sleeves and stabilise my arm in a splint. I am asked a few dozen questions, a repeating theme throughout. They examine me for further injuries; there are none except a tiny graze and a small very colourful abdominal bruise which I notice two days later. I am very alert, high on nitrous oxide, and fascinated by their quiet, kind professionalism. Not bad for so-called amateurs.

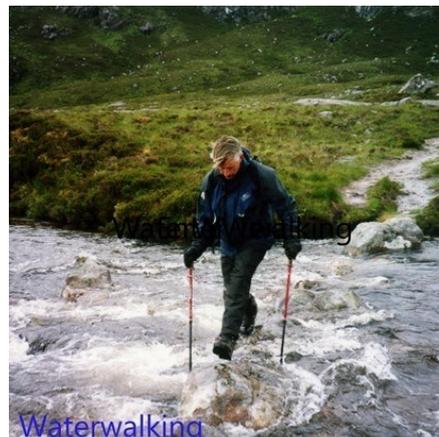
There is talk of a helicopter. They transfer me to a stretcher, strap me in and decide to undertake a carry down to the cove below. This proves to be a bit bumpy and includes some sledging where the ground is suitable. I have a nice view of stars, mostly Cassiopeia, and I can hear the effort the Cockermouth team are making, and their coordinating calls and concentration. All that hard work, for me. Very humbling.



The helicopter arrives at last and is able to land, so no winching. The ride is a noisy disappointment, my view restricted to the ceiling and a few straps. Ian comes too, but is not that impressed either. Transfer to ambulance on Walney Island (can't really count it as an island bag!) and off to Furness General for A&E, a phone chat with Heather (apparently I was still high and ridiculously cheerful), X-ray, then intravenous morphine on the ward. New Year's Day sees a general anaesthetic, pieces of ulna plated together, and the start of recovery punctuated with pain relief tablets.

A lovely day on Scoat Fell and Steeple, one to remember.

Margaret Squires: Marilyn's for Newbies: a pictorial guide (Part 2)



Carn Nan Gobhar

This lichen
sparkles
in the mist-draped gloom

the russet of Autumn,
the silver of Winter,
the green of Spring.

It does not think
to hint
at Summer
yet.

I revel in the metaphor
(not any excuse to stop).

Roderick Manson

Gill Stephens Baglog: 1250th Marilyn; local Simms

A rather disappointing haul of Marilyns for 2019: a mere 148, all thanks to the enormous amount of work that I've been doing to make my shabby shooting lodge habitable. However, I reached the magic 1250 a few weeks ago and the house is nearly finished, so I'm looking forward to a mega-bagfest in 2020. The best mountain days were on Beinn a' Chapuill and Sgurr nan Cnamh, glorious in the sunshine. The best days in the snow were on Cairnkinna Hill and, surprisingly, Hods Hill; blue skies, sunshine and snow make even the smallest hills look stunning, especially when you can see miles and miles of lovely hills all around. The best island days were on Bass Rock and Beinn na h-Iolaire in Raasay, although the Pairc hills felt like an island when we were dropped off at Rubha Briodog and collected at Sgaladal Bheag after a great walk over Caiteseal, Cipeagal Bheag and Beinn Mhor. But the absolute star of the walks show for 2019 was a very fine circuit over Meall Dearg, An Grianan, Beinn Dearg, Creag Riabhach and Meall na Moine, beautiful, miniature sandstone mountains in one of Scotland's finest wilderness areas.

Sgurr nan Cnamh view (G Stephens)



I also had a memorable trip to Unst by plane, bus and ferry in a heatwave, when the rumour mill let us all know that it is finally possible to bag Saxa Vord. I had a fantastic circular walk over Saxa Vord, on round the spectacular sea cliffs of Unst's north coast and finishing with a repeat walk over Hill of Clibberswick (one of my all-time favourites). The next day, I scratched another "itch" by walking a fine circuit around the coast (also spectacular) to the Keen of Hamar (a beautiful moonscape), Swinna Ness, Crussa Field and the lovely Muckle Heog (P29m) and also bagged two cafes. On the last day, I walked over to Hermaness (more sea cliffs) and hitched a lift part way back (too hot for tarmac-bashing). The buses and ferries were great, but it was slightly difficult getting to and from Shetland. My flight out was cancelled due to fog, but Loganair kindly rescheduled both flights for the next week. On the way home, I was 2 days late due to fog, but Loganair paid for stays and meals at the Sumburgh and Lerwick hotels (both very nice) plus taxis there and back. This allowed a good circuit of the hills around Sumburgh head (puffins) and a visit to the Jarlshof.

Of course, there were some absolute mingers amongst the 148. Fell of Fleet takes the prize for the most miserable day, grovelling through forestry and bogs in the rain and mist. Cairnsmore [Black Craig of Dee] comes second, an absolute hole of a hill, but at least I found a sort of path on the way back, so it was only 50% misery. Beinn a' Bhraghad in Skye comes third, a miserable, boring walk through boggy forestry but the views from the tedious top allow it to not quite take the prize.

In between these extremes, I had very good bagging good trips to Newtonmore, Mull, Ardgour, Borders, Galloway, Loch Ossian, Rannoch area, Trossachs, Loch Ness, Glen Affric, Loch Duich, Sutherland, Skye, Applecross, Harris and Lewis, plus a few Marilyn islands. I've also been out on local Marilyns in Aberdeenshire and Angus. To my chagrin, I have sneaked into the TumpHoF. I blame a trip to Orkney with Jon when, in addition to bagging all the Marilyns, we visited an insane number of Tumps. But I confess that I am getting a taste for 600m+ Tumps. Towards the end of December, I started exploring the local Simms in a series of afternoon strolls. There's a huge selection of absolutely lovely hills within 20 min drive of my house. Kind of makes Marilyn bagging look a bit daft really, but I've started so I will finish.

Creag Maskeldie from Hunt Hill (G Stephens)



Donald Shiach Baglog: Scottish Marilyns; low-key 1000th

This was the year I flopped over into the Upper Marilyn Hall of Fame thanks mainly to a trip to Shetland, but I have to say the hills made less impression than the bloody bonxies! Arguably mid-July is not the time to visit...

I have never been good at keeping special hills for special occasions. My last Munro was Beinn Teallach (675, 914.6m, P301), my 600th Marilyn was Carn nan Tri-tighearnan (611, 615m, P333), and my 1000th was Scrae Field (1539, 216m, P178) on Shetland Mainland, celebrated at the trig point with cold tea and cake in the mist. Mmmm.

Shetland has lots of good walking, but most of it is coastal rather than on the heights. The Marilyns that combine these features, such as Noss Head (1542, 181m, P181), are therefore recommended, as is Ronas Hill (1527, 450m, P450) which is not only the highest but has a chambered cairn to wriggle into, and, with luck, wriggle back out again. My companions that day thoroughly enjoyed my efforts to turn round and come out backwards.

Morvern and Mull gave us interesting days out in May, particularly the rounds of Glais Bheinn (4830, 480m, P100) and An Sleaghach (1379, 515m, P310) on Morvern (check out the canal round the NW flank of the former) and a wet and windy circuit of Maol Ban (1325, 338m, P152) and Druim Fada (1320, 405m, P390) on the Croggan peninsula of Mull.

The most challenging hill of the year was Fashven (1116, 460m, P212). Twice I rocked up to cross the Kyle of Durness on the first ferry of the day, twice I was doomed to disappointment as it had already sailed and would not be sailing again till the afternoon. Fortunately I had other options and discovered that the round of Meall Mheadonach (1144, 423m, P196) and Beinn Ceannabeinne (3336, 383m, P140) SE of Durness is an excellent half-day with views over the high hills of the Reay Forest. But getting to Fashven was still a problem... until an ascent of Ghlas-bheinn (1120, 333m, P156) allowed me to see that the bridge over the Grudie River at NC350629 has been reinstated, and that a long day from the head of the Kyle of Durness is feasible. Hard going, though, and I will have to go back for Beinn Akie (1122, 288m, P161).

Somewhat embarrassed by a meagre haul for 2019, I climbed a much-deferred local hill on Hogmanay. Cnoc Mor (1109, 269m, P164) above Strathpeffer on a glorious winter day rounded the year off nicely.

Rob Woodall: Hall of Mirrors: 600+ Repeated Marilyns

The title, with its French architectural overtones, seems to date back to Alan Dawson's article in the May 2011 MarHoFN, [Another headcase in another hall](#): *Then there's the Hall of Mirrors, for those who have climbed 600 different Marilyns at least twice. By definition, this includes anyone who has done the Munros, Corbetts and Grahams twice, i.e. Bert Barnett. With their repeats for trigging and photography then Rob Woodall and Richard Wood must surely be in the HoM.*

Richard Wood (821) has a large number of repeats of a large number of hills – more than 1000 each in the case of four of his local Munros and Corbetts. Golden eagle surveys have contributed to his total over the years.

[rhb] Re: Through the looking glass

cd.crawford@t... 15/08/2012
to rhb

Just a reminder that I'm still planning my entry into the Hall of Mirrors on Saturday 18th. All are welcome to join me. The plan is to leave from Newlands Church (NT161467) at 10am and head for Wether Law. Assuming that there will be some interest in the Hump Craillzie Hill and a couple of P30s (Drum Maw and Wide Hope Shank). I reckon the possible round to be 15k with around 780m ascent, though there are opportunities to shorten it if these don't appeal. Ewe Hill would also be a possible add on but looks out on a limb and tree covered. Personally, I'll give that one a miss.

The first known HoM celebration party was a year later, by **Colin Crawford** (773), in his Borders homeland. I asked him why he's repeated so many hills. *'There's no one reason really. Sometimes I just need an excuse to get out locally, often I revisit hills in collecting Tumps, occasionally I'll join with others who want the hill for the first time. A target helps. Before discovering Tumps, I managed several years of over 100 Marilyns. And this year, knowing that 3000 [Marilyn ascents – almost a double Hall equivalent] was on the horizon certainly provided an incentive to do more repeats. There are a few hills which I simply enjoy being on, Tinto and Culter Fell being cases in point, with nearly forty ascents of each. I guess that growing up in their shadow lends them a certain nostalgic appeal. Another factor is my ongoing participation in the TGO Challenge, when it becomes a point of principle to complete the event at high level. All being well and*

weather permitting, in 2020 I'm aiming to push my tally of Munros, Corbetts and Grahams visited on the event to over 500. Finally, I have to concede that, fine though some of the Tumps are, they often fail to cut it as "proper" hills. It just feels good to be on high and significant beasts on a regular basis.'

Rob Woodall (753): *Consulting my then database, as of 2011 I came up with total of 655, largely a by-product of my trig bagging quest. I wasn't a trig bagger when I was working on the Marilyns pre 2002, so had no meaningful record of them, and thus spent a happy decade revisiting trig-Marilyns. In addition to trigs, many of my own repeats are related to long distance challenges. The classic sub-24-hour hill-running challenges each include a dozen or more Marilyns – the Bob Graham Round in the Lakes (12), the Paddy Buckley in North Wales (15), the South Wales Traverse (9), the Ramsay in Lochaber (15), and Rigby's Cairngorms Round (11) – I've long ago lost count of the number of times I've been up the likes of Snowdon and Pillar: racing, reccying, making my own sub-24-hour attempts and supporting others. Record-chasing outings with Brent Lynam netted numerous Marilyn repeats – 40 in 24(ish) hours on one occasion. Not keeping a hill diary and having moved away from my own database, it's taken me a few years to come up with a reasonably accurate Hall of Mirrors total (753) – reliving a few adventures in the process.*

Eric Young (749) was, apparently, just being sociable: *It was the seating plan for the 2011 RHSoc Annual Dinner on Skye that started it. I was seated beside Anne. The rest is history. No regrets repeating most of the Western Isles, Arran, Islay, Isle of Man, Bardsey and much besides. I hope you'll understand I didn't mean to. Honest.*

Alan Dawson's repeats (656) are mainly related to his prolific survey work; more than 500 of his total are above 600m (Simms).

Several known HoM members are listed by virtue of having completed the Scottish Mountaineering Club Full House twice;

Bert Barnett (673) has completed the 6 Full House lists no less than 3 times – and also has 654 *third*-round Marilyns. The Full House includes 652 Marilyns (excluding Ireland); the 3 Scottish lists alone include 643. His longtime climbing partner **Bill Forbes** also has 2 Full Houses, as, according to SMC records, has **Karl Nelson**. Others I'm aware of are **Gavin Theobald**

	P>150	Scotland	EWMan	Ireland
Munros	202	9	0	0
Munro Tops	0	0	0	0
Corbett	222	0	0	0
Grahams	219	0	0	0
Donalds	(31, included in C/Gs)			
Furths	0	9	5	
	643	652	657	
xMT	1			
xC	1			
Elev>609.6m	645	105	98	750

Creag Toll a' Choin, Replaced 890 Maoile Lunndaigh as Marilyn in June 2014

Kirriereoch Hill: deleted Corbett; new Marilyn August 2015

and **Iain Thow**, 660 and 658 respectively as of November 2019. **Stuart Benn** also has over 600. The highest listing repeatist didn't wish to be outed here, but the complete HoM can be obtained from Rob Woodall via rhsoc@rhsoc.uk, and should be available at rhb.org.uk

Barry Smith Baglog: in sunshine, storm and bandages

Having started the year with muddled objectives (The Grahams, the English or Welsh Marilyns or even the Upper Hall of Fame), I eventually focussed on completing the Welsh Marilyns (hopefully in 2020), which will take me to within striking distance of the Upper Hall.

This gave rise to some interesting trips, I accidentally wandered into an army shooting area while searching for the summit of Great Rhos, couldn't decide whether the summit of the Black Mountain was in England or Wales, and had a horrific time stuck in a bramble forest searching for the top of Myarth (thank you to somebody on the hill bagging website who described how to find a small path to the stick with plastic bags). There were also great times, fabulous weather on the Sugar Loaf and the Skirrid near Abergavenny and a beautiful evening walk on Tal y Fan followed by dinner in Conwy.

My bagging in England, Scotland and Ireland was random at best. I attempted to cross from Hawes to Kettlewell over every Marilyn and Hump in January but darkness fell before Great Whernside thus a return was needed (in floods) nine months later. I found the Trig Point on Baugh Fell in horrendous weather only to be told afterwards that the Trig Point

Dingle Peninsula from Seefin (B Smith)



was at least a mile from the summit, another visit will be needed there too. In Ireland I fell off a barbed wire fence on the way down from Beann ripping my trousers to pieces, bleeding stemmed after a visit to the nearest pharmacy. Memorable days were also spent on the Storr and Hartaval on Skye, and Slievanea near Clonmel in Ireland. Overall a great year, over 50 Marilyns ticked.

Tony Kinghorn: close shave: lightning dodging

I blame Alan Dawson. I really do. At the MarHoF dinner in Helmsdale, he revealed the new Marilyn of Creag an Amalaidh. What was more natural than to visit this wee peak on my way home? Easy, even a path to get you started.

A warm, albeit muggy, afternoon. I quickly reached the top and enjoyed a fine view of Loch Fleet, with a dramatically darkening North Sea behind. A nice cairn to rest for lunch. I had even memorised the place where the path emerged from the wood, so I could easily find it on the way down. And then...Out of nowhere, huge drops of rain began to fall. With a sudden premonition of danger, I grabbed my sack and ran like mad, helter-skelter, straight down the hill. I had only gone fifty yards when there was an almighty crash, a huge flash and the heavens absolutely opened. The lightning must have struck the cairn, but I did not stop to investigate, and just kept on running, the hillside rapidly turning into a river. I missed the path and found myself in steep, untrodden woodland, but thankful to be away from open high ground. By the time I had forced my way through the undergrowth and found the road, I was completely drenched but thankful it was no worse. A fine wee hill and certainly memorable!

Ivan Smith Baglog: *carpe diem*

When, after waiting many months I was advised I would have some bladder cancer surgery at the end of November I was able to spend a week in the Rhayader area of Wales. To get there we had to go through snow and floods but we made it and when we were there we had no rain which was a blessing. I was able to climb 7 new Marilyn's, nothing special but they improved my fitness and feeling of well-being to face the operation. The most difficult thing was to find suitable parking for the car at the start of each walk. I have now heard that the operation was not successful and I am waiting to hear whether they will allow me to have major surgery as I am now 84 and over the official age limit for major operations. However, as I am so fit for my age they may break the rule for me ! There is now only one surgeon in the South East who can do the operation so I just have to wait and see and in the meantime am very thankful to God for every day that I live. Otherwise the only treatment they can give me is Palliative Care which I think I would find very frustrating!



High Up On The Fara

I thought-remembered a drystone wall,
more honoured in the breaches
than the boundary,
hoar-grey with age
and geology,
frosted-lichen beard,
rubble straggling
in memory
of function.

I see it now.
We have aged.

Roderick Manson

Sue & Trevor Littlewood: Close Shave: down in the dark

An anxious hour or so at the end of what was otherwise a simple outing, descending from Barf, (Lakes NW Fells, Hill 469). Last-but-one day of November, leaving the top near dusk, intending to go down by a path close to Beckstones Gill, we ended up missing it (goodness knows how), then seeking it by descending steep heathery ground in the plantation with young trees growing among the debris of earlier felling. An uneasy time needing to tread very cautiously amid lopped branches and other brash partly concealed by heather, pressing between densely packed tree clumps and avoiding the odd outcrop. We had headtorches of course but they were of little use in seeing the way ahead as dusk then darkness came on. We found the path and it all turned out well but the chance was there of a rather awkward situation!

Islanding

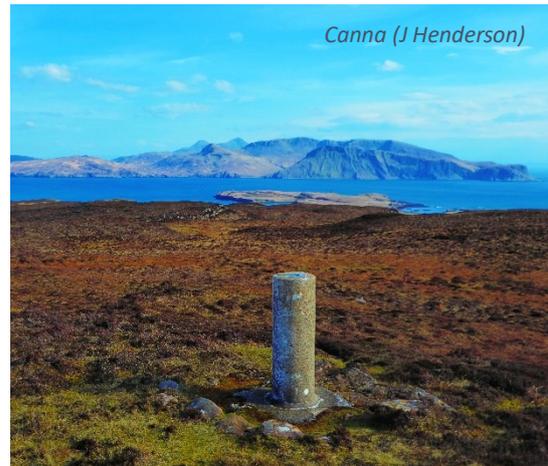
John Henderson: RHSoc Report: Broken bard

Not a great year for bagging unfortunately as I had some injuries caused by over enthusiastic long distance walking training (300 miles completed by the end of February)! I was entered for the annual LDWA 100 mile event in Northumberland in May 2019, but had to cancel due to knee and back problems. I would probably have been better off walking up lots of small hills? Only 10 Marilyns achieved in the year (and a few Humps) but I managed to get over to Scalpay (Skye) in May and meet some other baggers on a short trip organised by Gill. Other highlights were a trip to Canna in glorious weather and finally having favourable tide times for a quick dash up Beinn a' Bhailidh on Eilean Shona. Finally I managed to squeeze in a few more Marilyns east and west of Langholm, with some criss-crossing over the English border (no passport required!).

On yonder hill there stands a Coo
It must have moved, it's no there noo!



Eigg (J Henderson)



Canna (J Henderson)

Jon Foote Baglog: islanding, breaking and knitting

My most productive time for years (35 new Marilyns and coincidentally a little progress on several other lists I will never complete) had something to do with my wife Heather's retirement. First, we were able to accept some kind invitations to share holiday cottages, and second, I felt more able to go off on my own, now that there are no more Occupational Therapist uniforms for me to iron. So there were enjoyable, sociable (insofar as I am capable of that) and productive trips to Aviemore, Foyers, Scourie, Harris, Shetland and Newtonmore as well as my usual work parties at Burnmoor Lodge. Some of the highlights were, as often, boat trips. Pabbay, Taransay and Scarp assisted by Enchanted Isle (Sea Harris), organised by Gill Stephens, provided a memorable day of poor weather, excitingly lumpy seas for a while, and good hills. Another great day was enabled by a boat to Pairc, a superb linear walk over Caiteseal, Cipeagal Bheag and Beinn Mhor 1560, then return by boat.

From Shetland, thanks to Alan Holmes I got a very fine visit to Muckle Flugga with bonus SIBs Cliff Skerry and the delightful Gloop Holm, and Heather had a trip to several islands including the Isles of Gletness, which pleased her because she plays the tune of that name on her flute. We also had an excellent stay on Fair Isle, extended from two to four days when we were marooned there by poor visibility, and met hundreds of puffins as well as several of the islanders, including our most hospitable hosts, Mati and Joe, who gave us brief tours of Mati's Fair Isle knitting business, the control centre for the island's impressive mainly wind-powered energy system, and the North Lighthouse. The encouraging and delightful year ended abruptly for me with my little accident at 3.30 p.m. on New Year's Eve (see separate account), and following a painful but privileged view of the workings of the Mountain Rescue, I found myself being wished a "Happy New Year" by the fine staff of Furness General Hospital.

Marion and Alan Mitchell Baglog: the Foula experience

Summer 2019 saw us on Shetland with the great intention of completing the islands' Marilyn's. We duly booked a flight to Fair Isle but costs were rising so we thought we would take a chance on the ferry when we did Foula. What an experience Foula turned out to be. When we arrived at the ferry departure point of Walls no one was around at all and all we could see were a couple of small boats. Won't be this one said Alan quite definitely but I remarked that there was a Shetland Isles Council flag on it and that maybe it was actually the ferry. Four crew members then appeared out of nowhere, we loaded up quickly – we were the only passengers (it can take up to 12) and for £5 apiece set off for Foula. The mist or haar as we call it was well down for the whole journey and it wasn't until we were almost at the island jetty that we realized we were actually there - no onward views whatsoever.

Now where to camp? We were advised to go along the road and pitch up near the old church and when we got there we realized it was next to the island airstrip which had a waiting room alongside. No bigger than a domestic garage it had the advantage of a toilet and water so our little mountain tent was erected behind the waiting room. What to do with our time we wondered, so we read all the official notices on the walls, not too interesting, and found a week old Shetland Times. This had to keep us going for three days.

Next morning the mist was still down at sea level so being a bit old fashioned in our navigation we did our bearings for The Sneug and set off. It was all very straightforward, we had two Foula lambs for company on the final section but oh we had to imagine what it would have been like in clear weather. Then dropping down to Da Daal fairly quickly we had to climb the steep little face of The Noup. Again our imagination had to come into play.

The remainder of the day was spent exploring the rest of the island via its only road. We met locals stacking their peats, we admired the school/community hall and just wandered. Anyone we met had a bit of a blether with us. What we so admired was the resilience of the local residents who have chosen to live in such a remote part of Britain.

Needless to say the flight we had booked to Fair Isle did not happen and we tried twice more to fly but no flights at all so only Fair Isle remains outstanding. We have decided we will take the ferry next time and perhaps repeat the experience of Foula but without the mist. Shetland was wonderful by the way.

Meikle Balloch Hill

The sign proclaiming
“A hill with a view”
will always be tempting fate.

Today,
the view
is gobbing grey
beyond my dark-cloud pate.

Roderick Manson

Norman Wares Baglog: frequently escaping Scotland; Saxa, Kilda & other islands

When compiling this baglog I realised what a busy year I've had. Concentrating mainly on Marilyn's I've climbed more new ones than ever before in a single year. My total of 256 (over 123 bagging days) is coincidentally, exactly the same number as the top bagger (Jonathan) achieved last year but well short of what others have climbed in previous years.

I can hardly believe that I've made 8 trips south of the border to England and Wales, staying in my caravan, campervan, some Hotels and even (unusually for me) in a Youth Hostel. For the first time since 2011 my totals for these countries exceeds my Scottish total, but (excluding Scotland) I still have 92 Marilyn's to climb (mainly Wales) so I guess I'll get to know the M6 Motorway even better in 2020!

I enjoyed the company of fellow baggers at the Triggers Meet in Okehampton (March), the RHSoc dinner at Peebles in June (including joining in Tony Smith's Full House completion climb) and the RHSoc Baggers Rambles weekend at Slaidburn in November – all these events incredibly well organised. I also enjoyed a fun day out in December, joining Charlie Scott and others on his South Lanarkshire Tumps completion, and this also involved some bush whacking to find the nearby trig.

The best weather I enjoyed was in February in England (unexpectedly benign and hottest February records broken), my hottest day was in June in Ardgour, the wettest underfoot was in Wales in October and the windiest in Sutherland also in October when I climbed Ben Hutig before it becomes part of the Sutherland Spaceport project. (At one stage I thought I wouldn't reach the summit due to severe wind gusts - despite the modest height, 408m). The weather was also a bit unusual in the Hebrides in May when I encountered snow on Roineabhal, and endured a freak hailstorm on Liuthaid.

Memorable highlights for me include summitting Bioda Mor, Dun on the September St Kilda trip, and being able to make a return visit to Shetland to bag Saxa Vord which had eluded me in 2018. Whilst there I bagged a few tumps and a SIB, and met up with Jon Glew for an evening meal. Other special days included a round of the superb Clisham Horseshoe in Harris which had been cloud covered on a previous visit in 2013, and a grand day on Sgurr na Stri in Skye, taking the easier way, sailing from Elgol in glorious conditions after winds had abated. The summit views there are truly wonderful.

SIB bagging took a back seat this year but my modest total of 29 included such delights as the Shiants (twice!), Bardsey, Gigha, Erraid, both Scalpays, Inchcolm, and a good selection in the Hebrides, England and Wales.

I'm fascinated by hill lists so when I discovered that I had bagged at least one hill in every category listed on the Hill Bagging website (excluding Ireland) with one exception, I just had to visit London and pound the pavements to bag a couple of London Borough Tops. I also log my ascents on Haroldstreet and apart from the 5 Ireland-only lists I discovered that there were two categories from more than 100 lists where my score was zero. The MacPhies in Colonsay will have to wait for next year (booked to go in April), but a quick bag of a Tump in Cumbria gave me a total of one in a list of 21 entitled "Double Sub-Fours/Double Sub-Pedwars" – don't ask!

I always like to look forward and in 2020 my target is to complete my remaining 132 Marilyns – that excludes St Kilda. I know I am unable to climb the Stacs but it would be absolutely rewarding if I could get to the top of Boreray and Soay. Who knows? Also I would hope to enter the Simm corridor next year (104 climbed this year, 93 needed) but I'm not likely to achieve any other milestones – it's good to leave some targets for the future, if I'm able. And I haven't forgotten those Haroldstreet / Hill Bagging Irish lists if time permits !!

Peter Wilson and Frances Wilson Baglogs: GB island Marilyns; Ireland golf avoidance

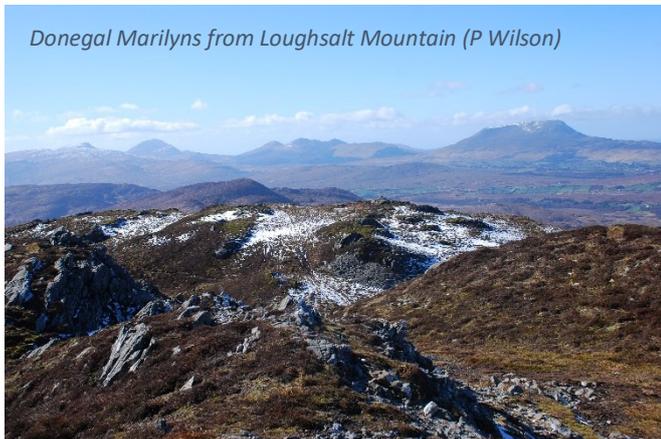
MARILYNS – GREAT BRITAIN: A week in the Isle of Wight would not normally be a first choice holiday destination but that's where we went in May with the intention of gaining two Marilyns and a Submarilyn – which we duly did. In fact, we were at the summit of Tennyson Down (the Sub) on three separate days. We took in St. Boniface Down – or as near as we could physically get to the high point - on a circular route from Godshill that included tea at the Wroxall Donkey Sanctuary on the return leg. On another day we went over Brighstone Down on a route that started at Clatterford and followed the chalk ridge to Freshwater Bay.



Our only other Marilyn was on a rest day (i.e. non-cycling) in June from a base in Oban. We had cycled to Seil and Luing a couple of days prior to the walk and had seen what looked to be the most appropriate access point for Beinn Mhor, starting at the south end of Loch Seil. It turned out to be very straightforward although the cows, calves and bull made us amend the return route which took us via the Standing (and Fallen) Stones beside Dubh Loch.

MARILYNS – IRELAND: Although we have lived in Northern Ireland for more years than the Marilyns list has been available our progress has been far from rapid – there are other hills to climb, places to go and things to do, especially as our bikes and Nordic skis need to be exercised occasionally. However, during the year past we managed to strike off another six Irish Marilyns, equalling our total for the previous year.

Donegal Marilyn's from Loughsalt Mountain (P Wilson)



As the Open Golf circus descended on Portrush in July, we decamped first to Sligo and acquired Slieve Daeane and Benbo, followed by Kesh Corann en route to Achill Island. Although Achill has six Marilyn's we had no new ones to claim there, but Slievemore was revisited in spite of low cloud that prevented views to the north across Blacksod Bay and the Belmullet peninsula.

We then headed to Connemara to a damp and not too clean self-catering property (we complained and got some money back). With an ascent of Cashel Hill, we completed Section 47B, and Cnoc Mordain and Lissoughter in Section 47C brought the campaign to a close.

Alastair Govan: Bagging by kayak

There's a special thrill in landing on and exploring uninhabited islands, doubly so if there's no one else around! A sea kayak is great way of getting to some islands without a boatload of other folk but of course this requires possession of, or access to, gear and expertise.

It was only in 2018 that my partner Margaret and I decided we had sufficient experience to do some paddling on our own, without more experienced paddlers to help out. Margaret is not really a bagger but she indulges my obsession so our first outings included the Marilyn islands of Carna, a lovely paddle across Loch Sunart, and Scalpay, a very short and easy trip from Skye.

In 2019 we grew a little bolder and, helped by some settled weather in May, ticked off Ulva, Scarba (from Luing), and the islands of Taransay and Scarp off the west coast of Harris. Scarba was rather special as it must be one of the largest islands which is uninhabited (most of the time), has quite a remote feel and great views of the rugged north end of Jura and the famous Corrievreckan 'whirlpool' – though this didn't look as fearsome as its reputation suggests! Many of the channels around Luing have very strong tidal flows but, with a cautious approach and careful use of the Admiralty charts I had bought, we were able to avoid any problems.

Tides are not really an issue for Taransay and Scarp but of course they are very exposed to wind and swell from the



Taransay (A Govan)

prevailing southwesterlies. Taransay is a beautiful island and, as it turned out, a fairly uneventful paddle from the beach near Horgabost, and we had a wonderful close up view of a pair of otters on the return trip. Slightly stronger winds a few days later made Scarp a bit more challenging. We judged it too rough to paddle round the south of the promontory of Rubha Huisinis, so after some dithering opted to drive over wind blown sand to the jetty on the north of the promontory. The sand was actually firmer than it looked so we fortunately didn't get stuck. The paddle from there was quite short and not too rough but we chose to land on a small sandy beach instead of the more sheltered harbour, underestimating the modest surf which was hitting it...

Sadly I'm starting to run out of Marilyn's reachable by kayak, so I may need to start on another list – SIBs now seem like a good idea!

For anyone who's interested, I have a plastic Scorpio – very reliable and stable, though a bit heavy, while Margaret has a Cetus LV, said to be the (lighter) composite equivalent of the Scorpio - though I don't get this as it has a very different cross section. We both bought our boats second hand – from Gumtree in my case.

Philip Massey Baglog: 1000th Marilyn; island highlights

The year dawned with the ambition and determination to reach 1000 Marilyns at sometime during the year.

I had completed 899 at the close of 2018 and finally managed my 1000th in November during Alan Dawson's Newtonmore meet. Meall nan Eagan, north of Dalwhinnie proved to be popular as 9 other walkers turned out with me for this historic occasion. Mr Nordicstar also enlightened me into Dodds as he went off to complete his 500th on the same walk. Intrigued I found out later in the day I had 399 under my belt so that gave me further motivation for the future.

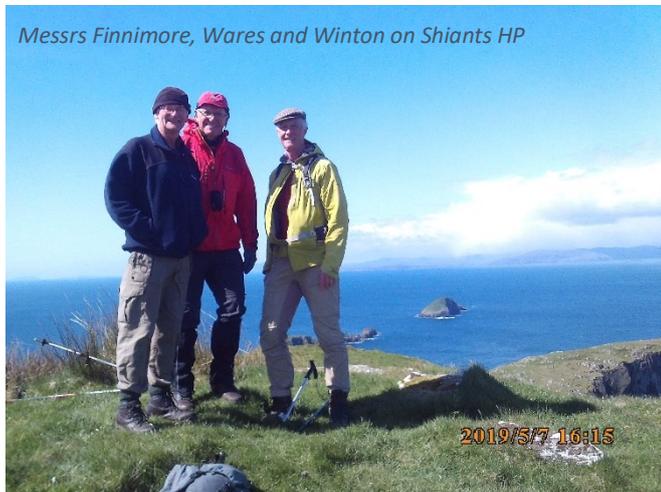
The highlight of the year, even though I did the trio of Pabbay, Taransay and Scarp on Gill's well organised trip on the 26th May, was Mullach na Carn, Scalpay's Marilyn on the 19th May. A week at Druidaig Lodge at Letterewe with Alan Dawson once again proved invaluable for making the most of opportunities that arise. Gill had organised a boat from Kyleakin around midday so the morning was taken up by walking partly up Beinn nan Carn at Heaste with Gill and Chris Meadows. A call to Gill changed all that as the engine on the Kyleakin boat had packed up so we had to retreat quickly and go to the slipway on the A87 near Strollamus to meet Nick the maintenance man for the island who had offered to take us over to Scalpay 4 at a time. The last time I had to abort a summit climb was on Sgurr na Ciche in a February in the late 1980's with Gerry Bowes when ice, high winds drove us both back down. However, I couldn't rest until I had completed Beinn nan Carn which I eventually did in September.

Mullach na Carn on Scalpay was straightforward enough for the 11/12 of us on the day and I was relieved to have finally got over to the island. I had driven past on the A87 scores of times but the island always appeared to be inaccessible even though it was so close to Skye.

The real hard part of the year, however, was the trek up and down the M6, A74M and M74 which I had done on 16 trips from my home north of Warrington.

Andrew Finnimore Baglog: savouring Islands and other (Scottish) Marilyns

Highlight of 2019 was a flight round Mount Cook including a landing on Tasman Glacier but unfortunately this doesn't earn a tick on the Hill-bagging website! This year it was a question of quality rather than quantity, e.g. Conachair (St Kilda),



remote Marilyns on Jura and Lewis, the Shiant's, Scalpay (Skye) and Mull outliers including Staffa. Many thanks are due to the trip organisers Rick, Norman, Richard and Gill for enabling me to bag these hard-to-reach summits. As for 2020, hopefully my dodgy knee won't prevent me from mopping up my remaining Scottish Marilyns (apart from the St Kilda Stacs!) and adding a few more SIBs. I've yet to succumb to the exotic delights of Hump/Tump-bagging, nor am I enamoured with the prospect of countless trips up and down the dreaded M6 in order to collect more Marilyns south of the border. Revisiting some of my old favourites (e.g. this year I went up Stac Polly and the Sgurr of Eigg) sounds like an eminently more sensible idea.

David Gilchrist: Paddling to go Marilyn Bagging

I am a new RHS member with some experience in Sea Kayaking around the Scottish coast. After I read the article in last year's Relative Matters, I thought I could usefully share some of my experience of Paddling to go Bagging in the Scottish Hills with RHS members - so here goes.

INTRODUCTION(s) - or background to show I/we have some relevant experience

I started Sea Kayaking with an active local club-NESky.com-which has a very experienced membership. Our club leader (Donald Thomson) is the first person to have paddled unescorted to all the Scottish Islands (as defined by Hamish Haswell-Smith)-this includes St Kilda in 1991 -before GPS. Sea Kayaking is best done in a group as self-rescue is possible but

difficult/unlikely, while rescuing a fellow paddler is relatively easy. We paddle most weeks of the year and have regular trips to the west coast most summer weekends.

PADDLING - or what type of craft

Various types of canoe/kayak are available, however to safely paddle along the Scottish coast (offshore) it is best/safest to use a sea kayak. Wind and/or tidal streams can make forward paddling virtually impossible. A broadside wind is also much worse as it forces your "boat" to turn up into the wind which results in a significant amount of physical effort just to steer. Sea kayaks are normally fitted with skegs to eliminate this extremely exhausting feature of paddling. Sit on tops and canoes, have no skegs, and are very easy to paddle until the wind or stream is strong and are therefore best suited for inland rivers or lakes. Kayaks are craft with a sealed cockpit (spray deck) and come in various designs. The short white-water/river design are designed to change direction quickly and have minimum volume so are not much good for sea trips. Sea kayaks are long, have plenty of sealed storage volume (that doubles as buoyancy) and have the all-important skeg. Double (two person) sea kayaks are a good option for less experienced paddlers. Most sea kayaks can easily carry sufficient camping and walking kit including food and drink for 1 person for at least a week. Unlike walking where you have to carry everything on your back, paddling is much easier as all the weight in the kayak has a negligible effect on forward progress.

TRIP PLANNING - or do this before you go

A working knowledge of tides and the resultant tidal streams is needed before venturing offshore. This is basically to ensure you can easily launch and recover your kayak without a long walk over a sea weed covered beach or worse and also to ensure you leave your kayak safely above the high-water level when you go walking. More importantly a competent paddler can make progress on average about 5 kms/hr on still water. However tidal streams of 5km/hr (and more) are possible. So, planning a trip with the tide (at least not against it) is very important for both the outward and inward trip.

Wind also tend to be stronger offshore (than onshore) and has a marked effect on paddling speed and effort. Force 3 is a sensible limit for less experienced paddlers.

There are a number of Companies around the Scottish coast who can provide equipment, instruction, advice and guiding. The Scottish Canoe Association (SCA) provides training and assessment for a series of personal performance and leadership awards. So, if you are looking for a guide, they should be 4 star (Sea Leader) to 5 star Advanced Sea Leader. Donald Thomson can also be contacted via Facebook.

PADDLING DESTINATIONS - or why bother with kayaks to go hill bagging

To access the Knoydart hills in Scotland I have (in chronological order) used the following routes of access-

- 1 A ferry across Loch Hourn- Now no longer available but it was a good way to reach some great Knoydart hills.
- 2 Walked from Kinloch Hourn- One of the most midge infested areas I have ever been and a long "walk in" that I have not repeated.
- 3 Used the ferry from Mallaig to Inverie. Barrisdale is, in my opinion, so much better.
- 4 Paddled across from Corran To Barrisdale. I have paddled across Loch Barrisdale 4 times (a 5 kms paddle) that gives easy access to this remote area. I plan to repeat this trip again this year to access some smaller Marilyns I had previously ignored.

In the same area I have paddled along the western end of Loch Quoich to access Ben Aden (747) and other remote hills. Both are great day trips into the wilderness.

Crossing Loch Maree from Slattadale gives access to the Letterewe Forest Hills and avoids the long walk in from Poolewe. The islands on Loch Maree are well worth a visit but watch out for the wind that can funnel down the valley. Also check for possible nesting birds -websites such as Mountaineering Scotland usually give up to date info. I bagged my last Corbett, Beinn Lair 1026 with a group of NESky paddlers in 2014 using this route.

PADDLING TO MARILYNS ON ISLANDS - or accessing Marilyns on Scottish Islands that are not served by a regular ferry.

I suspect that some RHS members may be interested in paddling to the more remote islands, not served by ferry, that also feature a Marilyn. For simplicity I have not included (at this stage) all islands or those with Humps, Tumps or SIBS.

The following routes may be of interest to RHS members AND THIS IS HOPEFULLY THE “Meat” of this article.

Scalpay - An easy 1 kms paddle across Loch na Cairidh from Skye to access Mullach na Carn 1286.

Harris Seaforth Island 1582. Another easy 1.2 kms paddle from Scaladal across Loch Seaforth. Scaladal also gives an easy kayak access point to the 5 Marilyns that lie east of the Loch.

Scarp. A slightly more exposed but short paddle from Huisinis on Harris followed by a longer walk of around 3 kms to the top of Sron Romul 1603.

Taransay. A paddle of 3.6 kms across the sound gives access to Ben Raah 1606.

Vatersay gives relatively easy access to **Maol Domhnaich** 1635 with a 3.5 kms paddle alongside a line of small islands. **Sandray** and Cairn Ghaltair 1630 can also be accessed from Vatersay-a 5 kms paddle or a combined visit to both islands can be made on a good circular trip but be very cautious. The crossings are exposed to the full force of the Atlantic swell and weather.

Eilean Shona and the Marilyn of Beinn a’ Bhaillidh 1347 can be accessed by a causeway which dries out at low tide however a much better approach is via Castle Tioram from the south by kayak which gives many options to explore Loch Moidart. A short 1.5 kms paddle and then an ascend from the south gives an interesting route.

Carna on Loch Sunart is only 100 metres from the shore in Morven but the best route of ascent must be by kayak from Laga on Ardnamurchan across the Loch. It is only a 1.5 kms paddle which then gives access to Cruachan Charna 1383.

Further south the island of **Scarba** can be reached from the island of Luing (which requires a ferry to get there) but only leaves a 3.5 kms paddle to access Cruach Scarba 1457. This crossing requires careful tidal planning as the tides run at up to 8kms/hr on the crossing and 16 kms/hr in the Corryvreckan to the south and Grey Dog to the north.

Pabbay, Mingulay, Berneray and The Shiants are considered to be too long a paddle to be included.

I trust the above brief summary gives sufficient information to allow some RHS members to safely access a few of the slightly more remote Marilyns by sea kayak. The 9 Marilyns listed above could make a great week of remote Marilyn bagging.

Charlie Scott Baglog: in praise of boatmen and lighthouses

In November 2019 I e-mailed the editors of the RHSoc journal saying I wouldn’t be submitting a baglog again this year because I objected to the fiver spent on creating a throwaway journal which you could simply access on line via the webpage, that the Facebook page was more interesting anyway, and that previous journals seemed to be about people telling about how many hills they had bagged rather than the intrinsic qualities of those hills.

I’d like to thank Alan Holmes, Bob and Sarah Kerr, Mervyn Jack and Richard Tibbetts for inviting me along to events and finding skippers such as Derek Gordon of North Coast Sea Tours, Cameron and Struan Smith who run Coastal Connection out of Oban and Duncan out of Croabh Haven. All those guys took me to places in perfect safety that I barely knew existed a few years ago.

I also enjoyed taking part in research for Sarah Kerr’s book [The British Lighthouse Trail](#). There were 3 memorable lighthouses – Rathlin Island West which is upside down, Pentland Skerries which has 2 towers and the Barrel of Butter in the middle of Scapa Flow which is a beacon on a reef with an 8m prominence. Only Pentland Skerries is a TuMP. I also liked the Dutchman’s Cap in the Treshnish Islands.

Later in November I thought I had done Kilncadzow Law (14064) as my 3,000th TuMP with my brothers who had also been at my 2,000th TuMP, but this only lasted a few hours until the Tamperers decided to demote a SIB I had done near Lochinver. If RHSOC wants to encourage amateurs like myself they should rein in the Tamperers – a bit like the VAR controversy which is ruining English soccer just now.

Omnibagging

Book Review: The British Lighthouse Trail: Sarah Kerr

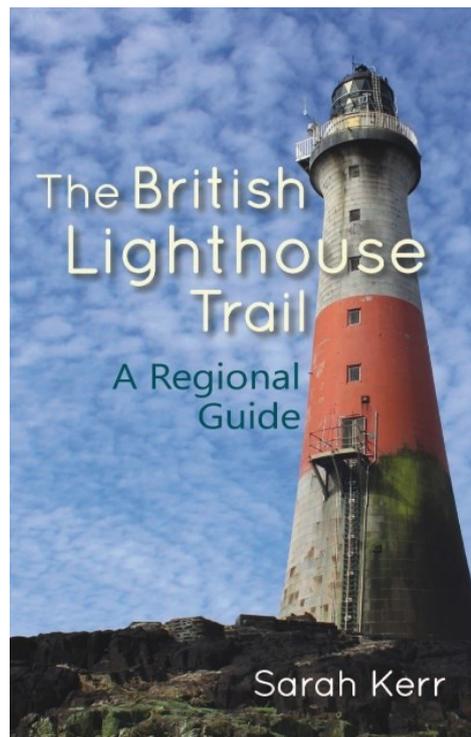
Chris Watson: Sibbers amongst you will be familiar with the sight of Sarah Kerr occasionally leaping, but more often cautiously stepping, on and off boats in her quest to visit and photograph every lighthouse in the United Kingdom, from Shetland to Jersey. Unlike most Marilyn baggers, she didn't ignore Northern Ireland.

She started in earnest in 2012 and has collated an amazing amount of information given that since then she has got married and had two children. The result is a colourful and informative book covering over 600 lighthouses. It includes all the ones you have heard about and hundreds that most of you probably haven't.

The country is covered in 25 Regions, each of which has a chapter preceded by a map for ease of location. In turn, each lighthouse has a brief description together with grid reference and directions. For those who don't think it counts if you don't climb it - isn't that most of us? - it tells you whether there is access inside the tower. All the major lights and the majority of the minor ones have colour photographs included, almost 500 in total.

For the budding pharologists amongst you, there is a box to mark the date that you visited. Even better, the list has already found its way to the [Haroldstreet website](#) .

The book is in A5 paperback format, 320pp and costs £18.99. It is available from the publisher, [Whittles Publishing](#), and all good bookshops.



Neil Stewart: monumental Tumping

As I get older my hills get lower. 2019 was completely taken up with Humps and Tumps, mainly the latter. I was delighted to pass the hundred mark for new hills for the second year in a row. Another Hall of Fame entry however still looks a long way away although I have not quite disregarded the possibility. The consolation of course is the range of summits that I get to visit, although in some cases "summit" is a term to be used very loosely indeed!

As before, my circumstances dictated that the bulk of my new bagging was accomplished on day trips from home. I can be found most weeks avidly scanning the comments on the Hill Bagging website for unclimbed hills that might offer a reasonable passage and a fair viewpoint!



I did manage a couple of trips away during the year. A week of glorious weather when I was based near Oban enabled me to add my only new SIBs of the year, Easdale and Eriska, as well as a variety of Tumps between Oban and Crinan. I had intended to take a trip to Mull where I have a number of Marylins still to climb but the ferry was completely booked for cars that week. The only day I could have got across there was no room for my vehicle on a return boat. That's the pitfall of waiting for a good forecast before making a booking!

In October, I added some days on to the Mountain Bothies Association AGM weekend on Deeside and finally managed to bag the Tump, Scolty, which had been on my to do list for a number of years. It didn't disappoint. I also bagged the Tumps adjacent to the castles of Crathes, Drum and Craigievar but the best castle of the lot was one of Scotland's oldest, the ruin at the top of Hill of Dunnideer at Inch. It is also a fantastic viewpoint.

Hill monuments in fact featured strongly this year. Those on Balshammer Hill (Forfar), Hill of Kirriemuir, Dun Athaic (Dalmally), Hill of Barnwell (Tarbolton), Murrayshall Hill (Scone) and Airngath Hill (Linlithgow) all added interest to the bag. Plus there were also a number of hilltop forts of which the Caterthuns at Brechin and Barry Hill at Alyth were perhaps the best. Our ancestors certainly had an eye for a good high viewpoint!

Peter Wheeler Baglog: 2000th Tump

Great year of hill bagging for me this year, which sees me also now reach the Tumps hall of fame. The hill to reach the 2,000 figure was Red Hill 440ft in Oxfordshire on December 1st. Also did another six on December 5th & 6th so the figure is 2,007. Completed all Tumps in Warwickshire and West Midlands. So totals for 2019 unless a few more can be bagged, doubtful as shall be working up to New Year with the exception of a couple of days. Marilyns total 19 new ones, Humps 35 new ones & Tumps 122.

Alex Kelso Baglog: Fort to Falkirk; 1000th Scottish Marilyn; Donalds

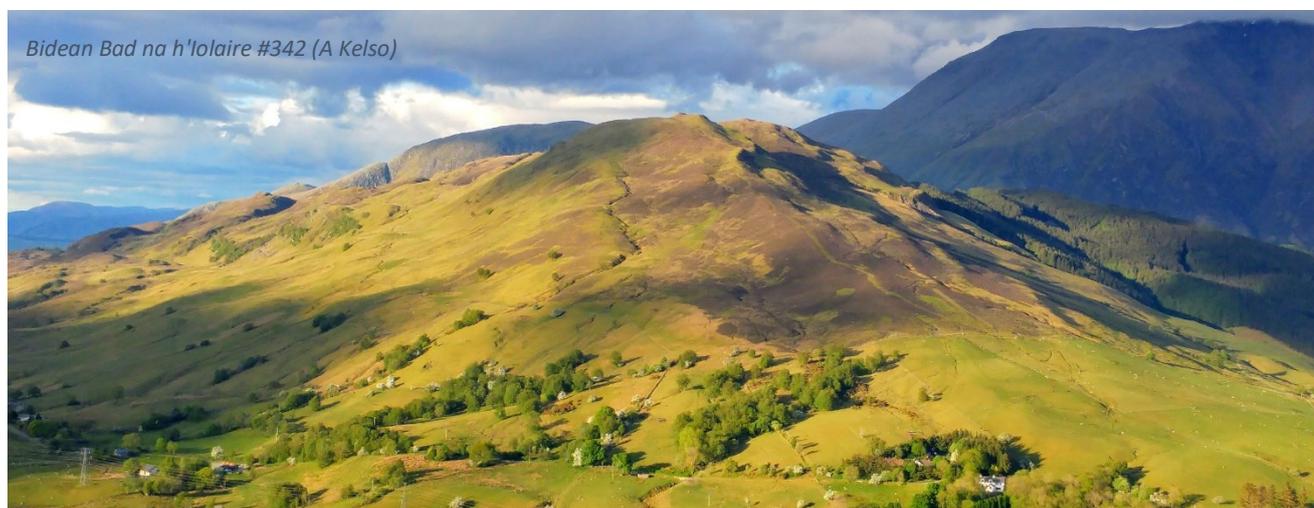
Having lived in Fort William for 19 years, our move to near Falkirk in late 2018 made for an opportunity to mop up the hills previously too far south to manage in day trips. Given that most of the >30m prominences in the immediate FW area had been mopped up, I had been having to go further and further afield to manage any meaningful bags! Refreshing then to manage (new) 89 TuMPs, 67 HuMPs and 50 Marilyns, as well as about double these individual totals in repeats in the various areas (I still work in FW!) in 2019, maybe not in the same league as the more illustrious baggers, but my best year for some considerable time!

Leaving aside the repeats, there were one or two highlights, and a few traditional list bags – Donalds, Donald Tops (though they do qualify in some relative lists too!):

The first major outing of the year, after picking away at Marilyns in section 28 was to the Pentlands, in February, a day spent walking in a T-shirt in balmy summer temperatures, in some of what was to be the year's best weather – from Threipmuir to Black Hill, Scald Llaw, East/West Kip and East Cairn Hill.

A couple of months were then spent picking away at section 27 and 28 Marilyns, aiming for the magic 1000th Scottish, which was Criffel, on the 11th of May, another balmy day. Worth saving a good one for that milestone!

After that I got sidetracked into TuMPs, HuMPs (realising 1200 wasn't too far away) and mostly Donalds (& associated tops!), as well as racking up vast numbers of repeats in the FW area when stuck up there working!



Highlights of the new ones? A round taking in the Saddle Yokes, adding new trips in the Ochils apart from the Cleuch and central hills there (Commonedge Hill is nice!), the superb 3 Marilyn round of the Broughton Heights, re-exploring and adding new tops from the Lowthers and Daer Hills, before rounding up on Hogmanay with the 2 Marylins NE of Ben Lomond (Beinns Dubh and Uamha) – which turned out to be so much better than the hill-bagging descriptions had implied!

All in all – a good year. Here's hoping to finish the Donalds (not the Tops – I don't care what the SMC say!) in 2020, plus maybe also hit the 1200 HuMP figure to get into the HoF! Maybe finish sections for the Marylins – 28, 1 and 19 – also 27? Who knows, but it'll be fun finding out!

Gill Stephens: Politics and hill-bagging

The last year has been a stormy one for British politics, what with Brexit and elections looming over us all year. The first part of the year was dominated by the view from **May Hill** which ended up in a spot of **Foulness** when the UK returned to **Tory Island**, making all of us traipse again over the **Bealach nam Meirleach**. The country really has become a **Luinne Beinn** (colloquial pronunciation), although many people enjoyed their celebrations on **Win Hill** after they decided that there were too many **Beinn Deargs** under **Leaba Bhruic**. The people forced to climb **Lose Hill** have since been crawling higher and higher up **Cross Fell**. It's not quite as bad for them as it was on **Thatcher Rock** but it's hard to avoid their **Inchmoans** when everyone is marooned together on **St Serf's island**. Meanwhile, the Scots look on bemused from the top of **Beinn Bhuidhe** trying to work out how to stop English refugees streaming over **Windy Gyle**. But it's best to be **Dun Sheock** and to climb **Hope Mountain**. When Boris is banged up in the tower, we can celebrate by climbing **An Caisteal**, and, when he is beheaded for treason, there will be further celebrations on **Am Basteir**. I'll get my coat...

Lenamhor Farm

That dead sheep
is looking at me
with a judgement look
in both eyes –

only one
is in the raven's beak.

Roderick Manson

Kevin Borman Baglog: 8 Marylins; 1 Memoir; 609 Wolves

624 Marylins (+8). A modest haul of new UK hills for me in 2019, with half a dozen during a February week based at



Dornie. These included Creag Dhubh (in section 9C, near Tulloch, done en route), Sguman Coinntich, Am Bathach and Sgurr an Airgid. A couple more, Shobdon Hill and Wapley Hill, were snaffled with a friend whilst visiting her in Shropshire in August. A highlight for me was the publication of my mountain memoir [Beyond The Dark Peak](#), a salute to half a century of being hooked on mountains, which collected many pieces previously published in journals and magazines, together with new writing. Meanwhile, nearer to home (I've lived in the Sierra Cabrera mountains of south-east Spain for the past 15 years), by the end of 2019 my cumulative total on my local summit Cerro de los Lobos (265m P177), Hill of the Wolves, had risen to 609 ascents.

Chris Watson: A Close Shave: An Afternoon Stroll up Cairngorm

Eight of us had driven up to Loch Morlich from Crawley for a week in the snow at New Year. After a lazy morning, we decided to stretch our legs with a quick hoof up Coire Cas. Seven of us set off but one was dropped off just below the cornice.

We kicked through it ok and walked towards the summit in the cloud chatting away. We never noticed we hadn't reached it until one of us got out his compass and said 'We're heading south'. A quick rush uphill got us back to the summit plateau just as darkness fell.

Still in thick mist and no idea where we were, we quickly decided to bivouac. We dug a scoop of snow out behind a rock and squeezed into it. We had a couple of sleeping bags, three bivvy bags and a few bars of chocolate between us - really well equipped! It was a long, cold, night but there was no rain, wind or snow.

After about 14 hours we cautiously headed east down broken ground into Strath Nethy and back to Loch Morlich via Ryvoan. We arrived to find an RAF rescue team brewing up and asked 'Are you looking for us?' They were - our seventh man had called them out when we didn't return. Two teams were out searching.

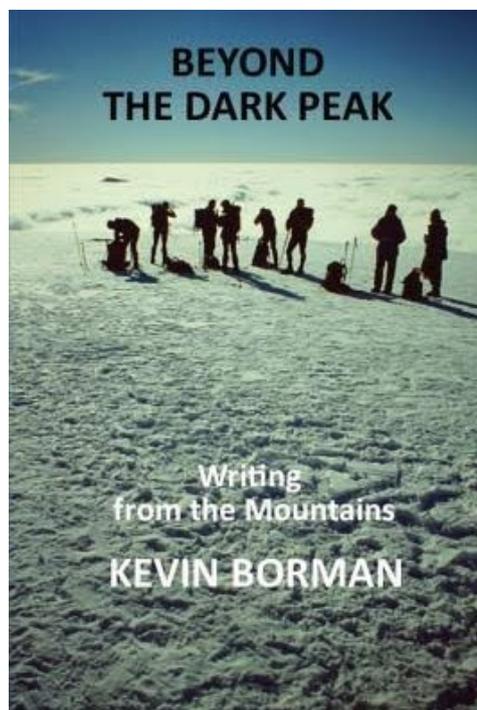
We popped into Glenmore Lodge to apologise and were sternly told how lucky we were. They had a map marked with red pins where bodies had been found. They had six more pins the following November when a group of schoolchildren and teachers died in a blizzard on the plateau - the greatest tragedy in the Scottish mountains. They were not so lucky!

Book Review: Beyond the Dark Peak: Kevin Borman

(FeedARead), ISBN 978-1-78876-874-0, £9.99 or £6.99 as a Kindle e-book

Gill Stephens: This nice book is a compendium of Kevin Borman's memories as a fell runner and hill walker, with a bit of winter walking and scrambling thrown in. It is quite unusual, being a collection of short articles, poems, book reviews and memories, with tales of derring-do on the hills and guidebook style descriptions of walks. Some of the material is new, but the majority of the articles were published some years ago in various magazines. Unlike us baggers, who tend to be solitary beasts, Borman seems to be very sociable on the hills and mainly describes fell races and trips with friends, partners and an unusual ad hoc mountaineering club, Hardy Murphy Expeditions. The book also describes lots of intriguing encounters with birds and mammals.

There are some descriptions of expeditions to far flung places, including Nepal, Pakistan, Ecuador and Spain (where the author now lives), but there are also lots of articles about the Peak District, the Lakes, Wales, and Scotland. I liked the articles about Derbyshire very much, as they contain very accurate and enjoyable descriptions of some of the more interesting and challenging walks and runs. It's an area I know very well, so the articles brought back many memories of Kinder, Bleaklow, and the Derwent Moors. There's a lot of interesting background information too, some of it new to me. The descriptions of walks and runs in the Lakes, Scotland and Wales were also good, vivid descriptions and are also great for bringing back a whole host of other memories. These aren't routes for the confirmed hill-bagger who is out for the quickest possible tick on the list, but, if you just want a good walk, you wouldn't go far wrong with these routes



descriptions. The book could provide baggers with a good excuse to slow down, take your time and really enjoy these lovely areas instead of tearing around from Marilyn to Hump to Tump.

Although I enjoyed most of the book, I did find that a 25-page section of reprinted or personally recorded book reviews was a bit tedious. I confess that I skipped over this section when I found that there is quite a lot of repetition, with some of the books discussed twice. There are also a few repetitions elsewhere, so a bit more editing would have been welcome.

In conclusion, it's nice book to dip into. It's especially good for evoking memories or inspiring new expeditions on the hills. Although it's quite a meaty volume, it is very reasonably priced, so I would recommend getting hold of a copy and having a read. And I will leave you to find out Kevin's opinion of baggers!

Alex Cameron Baglog: all-nighters and 700th Hump

Some memorable outings that come to mind when thinking back over my hill-bagging activity in 2019.

All got off to a fine start in late January with a quick dash up to Edinburgh and a long-awaited boat trip out to Bass Rock from North Berwick. Somewhere I've been intrigued with for many a year ever since seeing it featured in the classic BBC series 'Coast'. Absolutely did not disappoint at all in the slightest, and we were to very fortunate to also land on nearby islands Craigleith and Fidra as well to round out a very enjoyable day.

My main trip of the year was a fortnight long visit to the Shetland Islands. As you'd expect, I had many fine days out all across the archipelago visiting a whole host of new islands and hills up there. The one which stands out most though included a visit to the Shetland highpoint Ronas Hill, followed on by a superlative hike along the gloriously wild and isolated west coast of Northmavine. Time and tide was in my favour, and I was also able to get out to the tidal Island Uyea. Would very highly recommend a visit to this seldom visited spot as it was one of the most impressive I've seen in all the islands.



St Ninian's Isle, Shetland (A Cameron)

After continuing on to the northern tip of Shetland Mainland, Point of Fethaland, the delight of sampling for the first time the experience of staying out through midsummer nocturnal hours at such a northerly latitude then awaited for the long 8 hour walk back to my dorm at the Voxter Centre. It was an overcast evening, but even at 1AM there was still ample light that I could have walked cross-country without a torch if I'd needed to do so. By the time I eventually got back to the hostel it was nearly fully light again, with local sunrise being at 3:37 that morning.

Summer brought a good number of quality days out too. A quick mention of some of my best ones from these months. A Saturday outing for my 40th birthday weekend to Hawkstone Park with lots of fun exploring the fascinating network of follies over there. A long weekend up in Edinburgh again for the Fringe Festival, and a glorious extended hike up and back again to Dun Rig from Peebles. Caer Caradog Hill over Church Stretton for my 700th HuMP. One of my very favourite near-to-home areas and on the day I was very glad to have saved this especially fine hill for a significant occasion.



Fforest, near Llandovery (A Cameron)

Late summer into early autumn I managed to fit a series of big overnight walks: Skipton to Bury via Sharp Haw and Bull Hill, Temple Bar to Peniel via Mynydd Llanybyther and Pen-crug-melyn, Tal-y-bont to Caersws via Drosgol and Llanidloes. And, the most recent of these,

Carmarthen to Caersws via Llandovery and Rhayader, the most ambitious all-in-one trek that I have completed to date. Won't even begin to consider attempting to recount all that I experienced throughout each of these trips, but, by 'eck I didn't half see some sights during those 5 weeks!

Early November saw a number of us get together up in Newtonmore for a few days. I've still yet to walk extensively in the wider area here, so this was a very productive trip for me, including one first outing up into the high Monadliath. Have a minor 'Close Shaves' whoopsie up on top of A' Chailleach to retell from this afternoon. Quite carelessly ended up heading off the hill in the wrong direction after losing my bearings sat down besides the summit cairn for a few minutes in the cold and mist. Did rectify the situation with compass pretty soon, and so aborted my original plan to return over Gael Geal Charn. Following the first burn I came across southward instead. As the conditions brightened up decidedly on my descent, I was fortunate then to still have enough time to nip up Creag Liath which lay only just off route. This definitely proved a great unexpected bonus to complete the day, and it was an absolute treat looking down off the end of the summit ridge at a partial rainbow filling the void into the valley right there before me. One of those super uplifting moments which come along only very rarely that totally define your times out in the hills!



December actually proved to be one of my busiest months and was a great finish to a very enjoyable year. Had a lovely walk on the 25th in superb cold but gloriously bright and windless conditions, with Pressendye being the highlight of this top class unhurried wander around tranquil rural Aberdeenshire. Really made the best of this extended trip away with a good selection of all hill classes climbed over a further four days. Did think that was going to be my lot for the year, but seeing as I was on a roll I decided to keep the momentum going and made a short notice decision to take the train up to Penrith and bike-hike over to Cross Fell on New Years Eve. Had a brilliant day of it with enjoyably energetic walking, fine panoramic views of the great Cumbrian scenery and, right at the end, a quite sublime sunset to see off the 2010's on their way to bed.

Great days! Look forward eagerly to similar in 2020.

[Audrey Litterick Baglog: Labrador backpacking](#)

(+ 17 = 1152) I realise as time goes on that I am not much of a bagger really. My total of new hills is dismally low in comparison to many members of RHSoc and the older I get, the less I seem to care! My best fun comes from exploring the best of British (mainly Scottish) mountains from their quietest and wildest sides. I rarely fly abroad nowadays (as my meagre commitment to climate change mitigation) but I still have amazing adventures in this country. I have amassed over 50 days on the hill this year (not too bad for someone who works long hours in a full-time job), but that has not included many new hills. Highlights for me this year were:

Knoydart – this was to be my third camping trip in as many years to the peninsula and surely it had to rain this time, because it hadn't on my previous two visits! But no: cloudless blue skies and stifling windless heat. It was 29oC as pal Graeme and I arrived with my black lab Hector at Inverie by boat, and an enervating 26oC on the summit of Ladhar Bheinn! I was genuinely worried that Hector might struggle in the heat, but no need to worry: this heatwave followed a prolonged wet spell and there were plenty of pools, streams and rivers for all three of us to cool off in. A truly magical weekend.



Mam Sodhail and friends – A tough one this time. Pal Graeme and I got the boat into the West end of Loch Mullardoch in July with the aim of doing six of the mountains at the

south west end. We had planned to do them over two days, but the boatman wasn't keen to take us back after day two due to forecast gales, so we decided to do all six in a day and walk out ourselves on the second day. The "hill day" involved a fairly arduous 14 hour trot, with a ridiculous number of feet of ascent in every sort of weather from heatwave, to clag, heavy rain and gales. I learnt that it is impossible to tire out a 2 year old black lab, even after that length of day. He still wanted to chase sticks and play with rocks on the beach as we lay comatose in the tent with barely enough energy to eat our dinner.

Lurg Mhor and Bidean a' Choire Sheasgaich – Backpacking. Having got a new ultralight tent with plenty of room for three and two entrances (including one for a muddy Labrador), Graeme and I set off together again, this time with the aim of climbing, amongst other things, the final two peaks of my 3rd round of the Munros. We were carrying a horrendous amount of food and kit, despite the fact that the dog was carrying some of his own stuff, and it felt very tough at times,



Done! Audrey and Hector on Lurg Mhor, final Munro of 3rd round

but the weather remained perfect on the day that mattered most (!), with crystal clear views all round. We camped at nearly 3,000 feet and saw the most incredible skyful of stars in the blackest of black skies, with the magnificent summits of the far north western peaks arrayed all around in the moonlight. It occurred to me as we staggered along under our enormous packs on our way out, that Graeme was the only one of my mountaineering friends (other than Hector) with sufficient fitness, bloody mindedness, sense of adventure and loyalty to sign up to accompany me on trips like this one and the last and I couldn't help but feel lucky to have him as a pal, not least since he'd brought a hefty bottle of champagne along as a surprise treat for the "final" peak of the round!

The South Cluanie Ridge – More backpacking. Yes, it is easily possible to do the south Cluanie ridge in a day, but how much better it is to do it over two, this time with relative newcomer to hillwalking/bagging Keith. We lounged around on each summit in well-chosen perfect weather as we pleased, camped at the summit of Maol Chinn-dearg, and took in Sgurr na Sgine at the end as an afterthought. I felt I knew these mountains so much better after having admired the view from each in all directions for at least an hour. Even better that we met a chatty pair of hill gangrels at the final peak who gave us a run all the way back to our car at the start.

St Kilda – Joined 23 others including my husband Andy on a trip to St Kilda from Leverburgh in Harris. The weather was far from perfect, but for me the highlight was being part of a team of eight which successfully summited the mountainous little island of Boreray. Although the thick mist, prevented us from seeing the whole island, that and the screaming seabirds, the soaking slippery steep grass and rock made it feel like a surreal adventure into another world. I can't wait to go back to St Kilda and have already signed up for the next RHSoc trip.

Roderick Manson Baglog: Corbetts; Munros; Knoydart; Adam and Eveing it; Poet's Corner

(+33; 1368) The year got off to a lively start as I saw it in, after an ascent of the south ridge, atop The Cairnwell in a westerly only slightly down from its 93mph peak less than an hour before. Much of the year was devoted to accelerating brother Garry's dash towards Corbett completion. Winter excursions from Inverness YH took me unintentionally knee-deep in a rather cold river en route to Sail Mhor but there was compensation in an eagle flypast only a couple of hundred yards away, the first of three such close calls in as many months. Garry helped in my hour of distress by standing back from the bank so I did not bounce off him and fall back in and tried to raise my spirits by laughing his head off.

The Corbett splurge was not without its drawbacks. I had to cut out early from two walks due to severe heat exhaustion, but thirty Corbetts for the year (for Garry: I only summited twenty-six) was satisfactory. Knoydart rained heavily upon us with gale force westerlies to accentuate the pleasure. Knoydart hates me. The farm shop operating on an honesty box system was delightful, though; having to dash through the rain to get from the bunkhouse dorm to the showers, less so. Trying Corserine and Cairnmore of Carsphairn in a single day from a base in New Lanark would have been easier had I not relied on an SMC timing for the latter that entirely omitted to add in the (rather substantial) vertical element of the calculation.

To mark the tenth anniversary of Irvine Butterfield's passing, I attempted a traverse of An Teallach but had to go back for a second attempt due to snow on and below the pinnacles (in May!). After a successful circuit of Coire Toll an Lochain, I spent the next couple of days with Irishman Brian Ringland who has succumbed to the HUMP-bagging virus (no, I have not!). It did give me a fine walk to the west of Glencalvie that had been on my to-do list for years but it also gave me the experience of having to reascend Creag Innis an Daimh Dhuibh after I had taken us over every possible summit except the last which I unaccountably bypassed when it was easier to have gone over the top.

My main solo expedition was a thirty-one Marilyn (plus Hergest Ridge and Black Mountain) stravaig through South and Mid Wales (it would have been thirty-four but for the gamie escorting me off Seager Hill). This had some downs. Trying to reverse up the road below Mynydd Marchywel to avoid cattle being driven up said road led to my nearly burning out my clutch (and I missed Llanelli v. Afan Lido as a result). I left my waterproof trousers in the car on Waun Fach and Black Mountain; fortunately some navigational cock-ups gave me time to dry out (several times). On the plus side, there was sufficient low cloud on Aberedw Hill for me to climb into the early morning sun and cast a Brocken Spectre (only the third I have ever seen). The day of days, though, saw me on the north ridge of Tryfan at about half past six in the ante meridian en route to finally getting on top of Adam and Eve (and doing the jump) at the fourth attempt a mere twenty-five years and eight months after my first. This so exhilarated me that I slogged my way through archetypally slow North Wales traffic (I remain convinced they are all fitted with 40mph speed limiters) to Mynydd Anelog, up to the sweatbox of Maes Tegid for Bala Town v. Cardiff Met (it was too hot to walk but not to fry) with an aperitif of the relocated Marilyn of Foel Cedig to go. Based at Snowdon Ranger Hostel, that was a good day, despite some of the hairy overtaking manoeuvres the length of the Llyn Peninsula. I remain surprised that new/relocated Welsh summits have not snowed down upon me in the weeks since.

Not much has happened since then. I freely acknowledge that two Corbett bagging excursions down Strathconon having eaten nothing at all due to food poisoning was probably not wise but we were there so what can you do?

It was a decent enough year but not quite 2017, when I completed the deleted Corbetts on Beinn a' Chumhainn on 8th July en route from Corroul to Rannoch Station, the deleted tops in at times waist deep snow on 10th December on Stob Coire an Lochain (Braeriach) and logged a personal best of 473 hours on the hills. I will not be doing that again any time soon.

Knoydart Hates Me

A paradox.

The weather,
at last,
is dry.

My gear
is not
and has not been

since the moment I stepped ashore.

Roderick Manson

Anne Butler: There are No Rules

To complete the Munros (other hill lists are available) a person must have climbed to the summit of all the hills on the list on the day of their completion. When the SMC first published 'Munro's Tables' it didn't contain a chapter on the rights and wrongs of how this completion should be achieved, there simply are no rules. This leaves the method of and journey to completion up to the individuals own particular code of hillwalking ethics.

If you have climbed all the Munros but haven't yet completed the Munro Tops can you really call yourself a 'Complete Munroist'? After all, when Sir Hugh compiled his list it did contain both 3000ft mountains and their subsidiary tops. Overall only 10% of Munro completists climb the Tops as well and how different would the list of completers look if a Munro round required bagging 510 hills instead of the accepted 282. 39% of the first 100 Munroists climbed the Tops as well with the numbers dropping with each passing decade. Maybe the popularity of guidebooks and websites encouraging people onto routes purely over the Munros and omitting diversions out to the Munro Tops is to blame, but it appears that the vast majority of Munro completers are more than happy with their decision to interpret the list in this way.

The SMC further complicated matters in 2018 when they decided that anyone climbing the Donalds would also have to climb the Donald Tops as well to claim completion. This ruffled a few feathers to put it mildly. Why one rule for Donalds and another for Munros?

Anyway, does it really matter what the SMC decree? Of course it doesn't!

After they have climbed the Munros many turn their attentions to Corbetts, Grahams or Donalds. When you look at these lists in isolation it is apparent that they contain 222, 219 and 89 summits respectively. However there are some anomalies. 7 Corbetts are also Donalds and 23 Grahams are also listed as Donalds. So how does the bagger approach these lists; are they required to climb each one twice to claim the bag of the dual classified Graham/Donald or Corbett/Donald? These three lists contain a total of 530 summits but in reality, how many only climb 500. Really, as each hill is listed in separate lists, they should be climbed twice.

Then we move on to the thorny subject of re-classified hills. These can be a nightmare for many completists. If you completed the Munros before 2009 both Sgurr nan Ceannaichean and Beinn a' Chlaidheimh were firmly lodged in the bottom tier of the Tables. Following heightings by the Munro Society both these hills have now been re-classified as Corbetts. So if you are now aiming for a round of Corbetts do you need to go back and climb them both again as they now appear on this list? Some do and some don't. To complete you need to climb all the hills on the list on the day of your completion. You've climbed them once so why do you need to climb them again? Obviously it depends on how well developed your purist gene is.

An even more contentious issue appears to be the use of guides. Many believe that they must ascend and descend all the hills on the respective lists purely under their own steam. But why? A lot of people start hill walking to challenge themselves and what could be more challenging than finding yourself on the Aonach Eagach or Cuillin ridge with little or no previous experience of this sort of terrain. Not every hill walker is comfortable in this environment and most do not have friends or colleagues with the necessary skills to accompany them. So why not hire a guide? The vast majority of guides/instructors don't just drag their clients over the hills attached to a rope, they will still climb the same hill, often by the exact same route as those who dismiss the use of guides as dishonourable. After climbing the Cuillin Munros with a guide a novice hill walker will have developed a huge amount of confidence, competence and skills on complex rocky terrain and should not be belittled for attaining their goals this way. Indeed, the SMC pioneer Norman Collie was accompanied by John Mackenzie (credited with being the first native Scot to become a professional mountain guide) on many ascents in the Cuillin. But ... how do the small minority of people who have been lowered off of the Inaccessible Pinnacle manage to sleep at night?!

Do you need to get to the top of the hill to say you have summited? The vast majority of those who have reached the bolster stone at the top of the Inaccessible Pinnacle are happy to touch it before abseiling off again and very few have actually stood on top of the summit boulder. Baggers research summit locations with varying degrees of OCD, utilizing 10 figure grid references and identifying which individual rock constitutes the exact location of the summit, whereas others are happy to claim the hill as bagged when they have reached a cairn in roughly the place indicated on the map and when nothing roundabouts looks higher. Can you have claimed to have completed a round of the Corbetts without 'threading the needle' and scrabbling to the top of The Cobbler? I would argue not but to many this is so far outside their comfort zone that they are happy to claim the bag by simply standing next to the summit rock.

Maybe life would be easier if the SMC required proof of summiting each peak. Maybe not, after all we go to the hills to escape from the rules and regulations of everyday life and surely claiming you have summited 282 Munros when you haven't is clearly only deceiving yourself and devaluing the achievement of the completion.

Next, we must turn our attention to how you get to your summit. Do you start walking from the nearest accessible roadside parking to your chosen hill, do you rely on public transport or a pushbike? Over the years it has been interesting to hear the different viewpoints on the variety of ways to access the hills, some are acceptable to the individual bagger and others are considered 'cheating'! Apparently use of the gondola to access Aonach Mor and Aonach Beag is particularly frowned upon. But this defies logic. The gondola will transport the walker to almost 650m, just over half way

up Aonach Mor and this is often considered as cheating. However, the Cairngorm ski centre carpark allows the walker to drive to almost 650m, just over half way up Cairngorm and this appears to be acceptable. Although taking the chair lift to within 40m of the summit of Meall a' Bhuiridh or The Cairnwell may be considered rather lazy! Some view a bike as a perfectly reasonable aid to pedestrianism whereas others view them as interrupting the purity of their walk, either that or they really enjoy sore feet. Boats also seem to split opinion rather vociferously. Kayaking across or along lochs may meet with approval but using a private charter on Loch Mullardoch, Loch Morar or across Loch Hourn to Barrisdale Bay is often met with a frown. Using boats enables many remote hills to be climbed within a day, therefore avoiding the need for camping or using a bothy for those sensible people who do not relish either of these experiences. These private charter boats are akin to a ferry service, no different to those covering the islands. So does it really matter how you get there? No, just make sure that whatever mode of transport you choose you are able to justify your actions to those who shake their heads disapprovingly at your approach.

How do you count yours? An age-old problem, one that many would welcome a ruling on. As Dave Hewitt wrote in The Munro Society Journal (2007), the first round is simple, you just climb all the hills on the list at least once. The Purists (or Golfers) as they are known, believe that you don't start a second or subsequent round until you have finished the last. Then there are the bankers who apply the cumulative mode of counting and simply start the next round on whatever total of repeat ascents that have already been achieved. Neither way of counting is right and neither is wrong but over the years many hours of pointless debate has taken place discussing the ethical merits of each. Obviously, it is down to the individuals own personal preference for one particular methodology and whichever route a person chooses no-one should adopt the moral high ground about their own preferred method of completion. The jury is still out on those people who use the out and back method to claim a repeat ascent. This group are comfortable with climbing over the first summit to the second and then reascending the first summit on their way back to the car and in the process count the reascent towards a second or subsequent round. They appear to be happy with their decision but I do wonder if they can hold their heads high in the bar at the Clachaig.

If Sir Hugh had submitted his list to the SMC with a list of rules and instructions it may have made life a lot clearer but where would the fun be in that?

And finally,.....female Munro baggers must be eternally grateful to J. Dow who set a precedent in 1933 by becoming the first person to complete the Munros without the aid of a beard, consigning the compulsory summit beard to the realms of history.

Campbell Singer Baglog: Marilyn Wall; last Graham; 2 VIPs; County connoisseur

Setting 2019 bagging objectives was pretty straightforward:

- to hit the St Kilda Marilyn wall at 1555
- to complete the Grahams in the process
- to complete 90 counties of Tumps

The winter enabled me to Tump bag in England and Wales. January, February and March were ideal for getting out and about at least once a week down in South Wales. Worms Head at the end of the Gower was particularly enjoyable in calm weather and seas. A brisk walk out with my daughter, Jemma, early in the morning before the crowds arrived was a great start to the new year.

Completing the Tumps by county is an excellent way of appreciating the beauty (or otherwise) of counties. Monmouthshire is such a county. I have driven through it so often en route to Cardiff and have never really explored its hidden treasures. Lovely little towns such as Usk, Abergavenny and Monmouth with delightful Georgian architecture, old pubs and restaurants, are combined with the contrasting scenery of the Wye Valley and the Black Mountains. It is an ignored gem, as is much of the Welsh Borders.

The late spring required completion of five remote Marylins, one of which was my final Graham. Alan Whatley kindly accompanied me on a back-packing trip to An Stuc, above the east end of Loch Morar. Evidently the estate at Meoble no longer allows the small boat from Morar to land at the Oban bothy, so we chose the approach from Strathan and back packed through the forest to the excellent Glen Pean bothy. On a beautiful morning, we walked along the glen and up



Guildden Down, Shropshire (B Singer)

onto the spectacular viewpoint of An Stuc, before bagging a couple of neighbouring remote Tumps and walking out to Strathan.

The following week, the first week of May, I was in Ballater where it snowed every morning. The next week I was in Scourie in glorious weather with Anne Bunn, Eric Young, Iain Brown and the Feete. Eric, Iain and myself had a long day crossing wild country via Sandwood Bay to the new Marilyn, Beinn Dearg. The moor was bone dry and the sun shone all day. With good company, it was a memorable day. Tip: make sure that you summit on the neighbouring boulder which is evidently a few cms higher than the cairn!

Iain and myself then spent the rest of the week bagging numerous previously unlogged Tumps in the Scourie and Tarbert area. Iain took to swimming in one of the deeper pools, entering by falling backwards and almost smashing his head on a large rock. In hindsight, very funny but not at the time.



Iain and Eric on Beinn Dearg

Then on to Shetland. First of all, a big thank you to Alan Holmes. With poor weather, particularly during the first week, the organisation of trips for the SIB baggers was a logistical puzzle of mammoth

proportions. Despite everything, Alan retained his patience and good humour. I was really only interested in the Foula Marilyn and eventually the weather improved and, on the second Thursday, eight of us reached our goal. The hundreds of Bonxies generally behaved themselves and we summited all three hills in sunny clear weather, followed by a late lunch in the Foula primary school which magically transformed at 15.15 into a community hall and restaurant. We were served up a meal of lobster thermidor and gingered curried crab with tropical juice! Incongruous but very tasty and a novel way to celebrate #1555.



Gaada Stac, Foula (C Singer)

The rest of the year has been mainly Tump bagging in the UAs of Flint and Wrexham and the splendid counties of Somerset, Devon and Shropshire which has become one of my favourites.

“Famous” people met during the year:

- the Duke of Hamilton’s brother in law (the Duke evidently owns Craigleith, Fidra and the Bass Rock)
- one of the vicars who presents “Thought for the Day” on Radio Four (also a season ticket holder at Old Trafford. Prayer doesn’t seem to be working this season.)

Worst pollution of the year: a small pebble beach on the shore of Loch Inchar near Kinlochbervie. The beach, from a distance, was turquoise as a result of the mass of abandoned fishing nets, rope and other debris; this only a few miles from some of the most beautiful beaches in Europe. Shameful.

Finally, despite the best efforts of the Tamperers, by year end I’d completed 92 counties of Tumps in total including Nottinghamshire for the sixth time!!!

Eddie Harwood Baglog: Corbetts recompletion, notwithstanding

Total 847 new 12. Another disrupted year as Margaret spent a few months in hospital with multiple heart procedures followed by 2 doses of sepsis and I had yet another contusion fracture of my ankle. I managed 12 new Marilyns including recompletion of the Corbetts having only just noticed the promotion of Cnoc Coinnich. Ben Tianavaig was the most special and the hardest was lowly Meall Meadhonach in hurricane winds on December 29 – it required hands and knees to make it to the top.

Liz and Peter Hastie Baglog: Hills, Humps and Targets (Donalds; Coming out; M-2)

We finished 2018 with Liz having 1552 Marilyns and Peter 1554, so whereas on previous years Marilyn bagging had been our thing, this year we needed a different focus. Up until now Humps had seemed like a bit of a crazy thing to do, but suddenly we were wondering how many we'd done! The best way to find out was to put all our hills since our start in 1988, into the 'hill-bagging' website. Fortunately Liz keeps a diary, so it was possible, though time consuming, to enter all the hills (apologies to those who are irritated by lots of hills going in at once, after the fact). We were suddenly interested in Hump bagging, and realised we'd reached our 1200th Humps in July 2012. We weren't systematically looking at Tumps, given the vast numbers, but as we started to bag Humps and notice related Tumps, we realised we could enter the Tump Hall of Fame, and achieved our 2000th Tumps during a holiday to Coll in August. Our week in Coll was planned as a relaxing, relatively hill free holiday, but once Tumps were on the menu it became a mad bagging round of all the Tumps in Coll and a few we had remaining on Tiree. We were there for a special occasion, so spoilt ourselves by staying in the Coll Hotel, which was excellent.

The other event that focused our bagging activities this year, was a wild and windy day in February, when we joined Colin Crawford with others to celebrate Colin's 1000th Donald on Tinto. We had started the year with 27 Donalds to do, and Colin indicated that he and two others were finishing Donald rounds in August, so we decided to join them and finish our round at the same time. Donalds are relatively easy for us to get to from home, so we spent lots of time in April getting to within 3 hills of completion. The round was finished on Carlin's Cairn on September 1st, with Colin and two others also finishing Donald rounds, and others joining us to celebrate, which was great.

In October we spent a few days in Glen Nevis hostel with friends, and being in that area encouraged us to climb some higher Humps. It would be easy to get a bit lazy, and choose lower and easier Humps and Tumps (though lower is not always easier!), but it was great to get onto the higher hills. A' Chailleach, via the Devil's Staircase from Glen Coe, was a particularly pleasant high level walk, as was the walk out to Beinn an Tuim above Glenfinnan. We approached Beinn an Tuim from Gleann Fionnlighe, over the south top. The views and high level part of the walk were great, though it was a bit of an awkward initial pull up out of the forest. The higher level walks of October, with a bit of snow on the tops, were particular favourites for the year.

The other highlight for Peter was a second trip out to St Kilda, and the ascent of Boreray. This leaves Peter with only the St Kilda Stacs to complete his Marilyns. With his name on the list for that adventure, we don't like to stray far from Scotland until the 'window' for that trip closes sometime in March! Our walking is definitely target driven, so for next year it must be a total Hump target of 2000, but that might be a bit too much to ask. We'll see.

Alex Kelso: A Close Shave for Adam

"Where's the way up?" I said, wearily. Adam is not known for adherence to recognised routes, relative hills the standard nowadays.

"You mean a path?" he says, cheerfully, "who needs a path, beastly things!"

I roll my eyes. Off piste is not an issue, but I prefer to have some plan in place, not a random ascent by a route in the mist or dark.

Did I mention that? It was now dark, and misty. HuMPing in the dark. Romantic.

Never mind the path - where was the bloody hill?

"Straight up" he said, "maybe there'll be shelter here!"

Did I mention it was raining? Sheetting down. As only Glen Nevis rain can, sheeting off the hill in rivers, the distant roar of a thousand waterfalls, not so distant.

Meall Cumhann is a relative hill gem. I love the hill, rain, hail or snow; well, maybe not rain.

A last minute decision, born from boredom, a mid-afternoon, late in the year ascent of a short, steep hill now looking like a life changing ascent. Or a life-ending descent!

The roar of the water deepened, the ground itself began to shake.

“Lordy, that’s some rain” Adam yelled.

The first boulder rolled past at that point. Not rain.

“Get under the crag” he yelled.

“No chance” I yelled back, “you must be joking. Get as far as possible from the face!”

Sheer, gravel impacted, soaking wet ground. Ideal.

Behind us the boulders were careening past at pace, gathering momentum, plummeting downwards. A section of hillside as large as a small van rumbled past, clearing a pathway by flattening birches. I assumed. We still couldn’t see, just hear the racket.

“Oh well, at least it makes it exciting” Adam grinned, panting with the exertion.

He nearly joined the boulder, a close shave for Adam!

I gritted my teeth, “let’s get down”.

“Eh?” he said, genuinely puzzled. “It’s stopped. We can still get to the top!”

Sometimes you act without thinking. I slapped him.

“NO” was all I said. He looked hurt. We went down. We even had to descend to the lower path by the river, there was that much rubble. There was no-one else around. Small wonder.

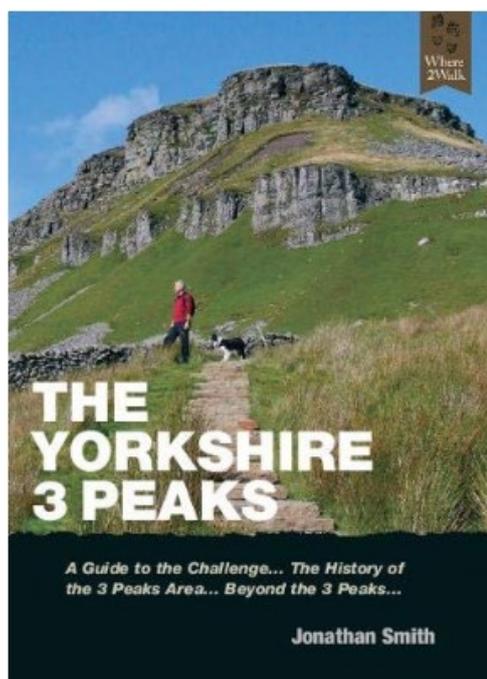
He still maintains to this day that it is the closest he’s ever come to harm on the hill.

I still regret not pushing him off it.

Author’s note – the south face of Meall Cumhann dropped a rockfall into the Nevis gorge, blocking the upper and middle (tourist) paths to Steall meadow. It is clear now, but the fall is still obvious high up on the face.

Book Review: The Yorkshire 3 Peaks: Jonathan Smith

where2walk.com £12.95 ISBN 978-0-9956735-2-6



Gill Stephens: This charming little book is a comprehensive guide to the perennially popular Yorkshire 3 Peaks walk over Pen-y-Ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough. There are lots of excellent photographs, sketch maps and detailed route descriptions of the challenge walk, together with details of routes up each of the individual hills. The layout is especially nice, with lots of clear headlines and information boxes. Although aimed mainly at novice challenge walkers, there is much to interest seasoned hill-baggers, with sections on geology, farming, place names, and the Settle-Carlisle Railway. There’s also a section on the footpath repair techniques used in this popular area. It’s interesting to see short sections written by local enthusiasts about off-road cycling, fell-running and caving, for all of which Yorkshire is a world-class destination. The book ends with summary descriptions of an alternative Yorkshire 3 Peaks walk, the Dales 30 and a number of long distance trails.

Overall, it’s a nice book but there are, of course, some niggles. The price seems rather steep at £12.95 for only 112 pages. It would have been nice to include web links or references to alternative guidebooks for some of the summary route

descriptions. Lastly, there are quite a few typographical errors (especially punctuation) which ought to be corrected in any future print runs. These niggles do not detract from enjoyment of the book; I devoured it avidly in a couple of hours one afternoon.

Reg Willis: We can never be sure that we have summited a hill

A hill is a topographical object which can also be regarded as a geometrical object.

A geometrical object can be defined as a set of points, where a point is a geometric element that has position but no magnitude (i.e. position but no size). As a hill is a geometric object, it can be defined as a set of such points.

The summit is the highest point of a hill, so the summit is a point which must be a member of the set.

Denote the summit by S.

For a walker to summit a hill, consider a point on the walker that is to coincide with S & denote this point by W. (The walker can also be defined as a set of points).

Because of the limitations of observation, measurement, etc, we can never be sure exactly where S is, but we can define a boundary that contains it.

To be sure W coincides with S, it must visit every point within the boundary. No matter how small the area within the boundary is, it will contain infinitely many points & no matter how fast W moves it cannot visit all points in a finite time. There is only a finite amount of time available, therefore it can never be certain that W has coincided with S.

So we can never be sure that we have summited a hill.

NB From a physical context, considering the discontinuity of matter (the relative emptiness of the atom & the probabilistic nature of the position of electrons, etc), can a summit even exist?

Stob Binnein

The second (of two,
and, thankfully, not more)
long,
humid,
near-vertical
climbs.

One eagle,
some birdies,
so it is no surprise
I find myself
well under par.

Roderick Manson

Margaret and Roger Squires Baglog: Wrath and Wainwrights

We had thought that last year's was our final submission to this newsletter, as we can't climb the St. Kilda sea stacks, don't commit to Tumping, Humping or any other sort of small hill-ing, and thought we had climbed all the other Marilyns. We had overlooked the possibility of newly classified Marilyns. The obvious way to climb Beinn Dearg on the Cape Wrath peninsula is to cycle to Sandwood Bay, but we had traded in the car with tow-bar and compatible bike rack, so reckoned the only other way for v-e-r-y s-l-o-w people would be to take camping packs in on the Cape Wrath Lighthouse tour bus and do it at our leisure. After all we had only just managed to do Fashven between the first and last buses, and Beinn

Dearg adds a round trip of almost 5 miles, as the crow flies, not as the hill-bagger squelches. Wonderful plan, except the second day was forecast to be thunder, lightning and torrential rain, and even if we were prepared to sit out the night in a tent, the tour bus was very unlikely to come. So we went in the first day anyway, telling Stuart the driver we would do our best to be back by 3 p.m. I tried to get Roger to turn round at half time, but he refused. I stayed with him returning over the burn and barbed wire fence and then skedaddled across the moor to find Stuart sitting in his bus at 3.50 pm with a third tour group. He was waiting until I could assure him that Roger was all right. Roger hobbled in at 5 pm. We were picked up at 6, which would have been fine had we known it from the start, but Stuart was not to know he would get more customers. As it was we were both very tired.

Apart from that, we have been hauling ourselves slowly up the Wainwrights (41 this year with 54 still to go) and hoping that the massive injections Roger has been having in his knee will see him through to the end of that list. ...oh, and we climbed A' Mhaighdean for my 80th birthday.

Total Marilyns 2019 = 1

Jenny Hatfield Baglog: Humps, Synges, dog walks

Since completing the Marilyns in 2016 my focus, if it can be called that, has been predominantly on the Humps. But focus is perhaps an exaggeration. With our furry friend Bryher as a constant companion, my walks now are spent enjoying her happy high spirits, wagging tail and boundless energy. My objective these days is to be sure she has fun. So I logged 577 hills in 2019. Not all new. Not all relative hills. But together with Bryher, and most often Rick, we had an interesting and varied year.

2019 would be the year I very nearly completed the English Humps. Our New Year's trip to Shropshire, Hereford and Gloucestershire, with a brief foray into the Pennines on the way home clocked up 22 new Humps by January 10th, a great start. Then Valentines in Derbyshire made for some great walks, with plenty of interesting Tumps too. Only 4 English Humps remained to be climbed after that, 3 easily within striking distance from home; the Old Man of Mow still remains to be climbed in 2020.

A beautifully sunny trip to The Isle of Man in August, including a sparkling visit to the Calf: we enjoyed great coastal walking in the south west of the island taking in our last 3 Humps there on the way.

Completing Wales must be the next Hump objective. Scotland just seems too vast a project for now. We based ourselves at St David's for a few nights early April in order to be sure of a visit to Ramsey Island. The weather was kind and we made it out there on the first tourist boat trip of the year. We stayed a few nights at Cerrigydrudion in June, and managed to creep our Welsh Hump total up by another 25 for the year. With just 123 remaining now this could make some sort of target for 2020.

So what of Scotland in 2019? We had a wintry start there in January, a week at Ballater with some superb snowy walking in beautiful glens and satisfyingly high hills. The highlight for our whole year must be a perfect winter's day in Glen Quoich, onto Meall an Lundain (777m) and Beinn Bhreac (931m) and its west top. After several days of sub-zero temperatures the frost bound glen glittered gold in the low sunshine. And on the mountain the snow was pure powder, dry and swishy, and thankfully not too deep. The splendour of the Cairngorms in their winter glory takes some beating.

I was keen to visit Coll and Tiree this year. At the start of June stormy seas and then a problem with the ferry made us doubt our chance of getting out there. We passed the time taking a trip out to Gigha, which surpassed all expectation. A super little island, we managed to scale all the tops during our brief stay. Meall a' Ghلامaidh (79m) must take the prize for the trickiest Tump of the year. Definitely not one for shorts! Brambles abound, hiding in the dense bracken. What a



Jenny Hatfield and Bryher on Lethen Bar

struggle for a tiny hill! We eventually made it to Coll, an island of contrasts, surprisingly rugged at its north eastern end, considering how low lying it is. And to the south west superb beaches and a sand dune Tump, Cnoc Carpach (53m). Whilst on Tiree we took a boat trip out to Lunga. Puffin time there, so thronging with visitors.

More islands in September, this time South Uist, Benbecula, North Uist, Berneray, and finishing on Harris. And we wound up our Scottish travels for the year with three more trips to the Cairngorm area, Grantown, Newtonmore, and finally Strathdon. We've made frequent visits across into the Border country. Humps, Donalds and their tops, Simms and Dodds have all been objectives there. Some good long walks on the ridges, by using both the car and the camper van. Easter weekend we had a good couple of days walking from just south of Peebles over to Megget Reservoir and back, taking in all the tops on the way, and the same on the return by a different route; 22 tops bagged in total and we hardly saw a soul!

I finished with 83 new Humps climbed in Scotland in 2019, bringing my total there to 1561. I still have a mega 606 to climb though. Not something that I am going to rush to do. My priorities for Scotland are more likely to be completing the Donalds and Donald Tops, and the Munro Tops. Quite enough to do there!

I have had one other major project running in 2019. That was to finish the list of Synges in the Lake District. And so Bryher and I took a lot of beautiful walks in Cumbria, right on our doorstep. It was really satisfying to revisit so much of the stunning scenery of the Lakes. And we found that picking off those last 50 or so Synges, away from the main tops, we met few other folks. I finished the Synges on 15th July on Gale Fell East Top, with Rick and Bryher for company.

So looking back on the year, it's definitely been a busy one. Sometimes, in fact quite often, I question how wise it is to be devoting so much of my time and energy to hill-bagging. Yet I realise that were it not for my hill lists my year would have been a lot less interesting. Another year spent in so many wonderful, wild and peaceful places right across Britain. I had a truly great year of walking the dog!

Rick Salter Baglog: back to the Humps; twice 500th Dodd; Synges; Cumbrian All Hills

I finally rediscovered a liking of climbing hills again in 2019, after a two year hiatus from our 2016 Marilyn completion year. I notched up over 360 hills, not including minor Tumps. A great January in first Herefordshire and then near Ballater was the start of this. Hump bagging had taken hold with Munro tops and Donald completion not far behind. We made some great trips in 2019, either in the campervan or staying in rentals: Tideswell in the Peak, Eskdale in the Lakes, and Dartmoor with the Triggers, Pembrokeshire at the start of the season and first landings on Ramsey Isle, Snowdonia and biting dogs are among early year memories. Later followed the North Coast of Scotland and visits to the bombing range island off Cape Wrath, as well as Sule Skerry, Gigha, Coll and Tiree in lovely weather.

English Nuttalls/Bridges neared completion in a Dales trip in July, while Dodds here and there were included in the planned push to get to D500 this year. This coupled with a renewed interest in Donalds during the Peebles RHSoc trip only served to complicate matters. As the result of the RHSoc committee changes plus personal interest in non-RHSoc matters time became short, meaning this year's efforts to organise first the St Kilda Islands trip for 24 and then make another Kilda Stacs trip happen through October left us lean times for anything much else. That said September in the Outer Hebrides clearing out the Humps to all but Lewis Isle was satisfying, and we were able to wave the Kilda boats off.

October saw us spending at last some time in Cumbria, first enjoying Mark Trengove's final Wainwright party, then getting good time in the garden tidying up for winter. It was fun to represent RHSoc at the Munro Society Dinner, and in passing meet the presentation team for the BBC Autumnwatch programme, sharing notes on a love with nature. The year concluded with Alvey House at Newtonmore, where we enjoyed both Ian Galbraith and Phil Massey getting to the Marilyn Upper Hall on local hills. Plus trips to Slaidburn with the RHSoc team, more Border Donalds and a pleasant windy and snowy Lendrick Hill for Peter Ridges M600 celebration. The year ended with a fine trip to Strathdon and Gill's to complete Section 21 Humps in good company and increasingly cold weather.



The year ended well then, with 140 new Humps and quite a lot of repeats, including Marilyns. My final English Hump was Smearsett Scar in the Dales in December, for Jen it marked her 'at the wall' English Hump moment, that is until she gets up the Old Man of Mow sometime in late Spring 2020. Bookended at the start of the year in March was my final Synge and Cumbrian All Lists hills; Raven Crag and Knott Hill respectively above Broughton in Furness. The Synge chapter was similarly closed by Jen in 2019 when she climbed Gale Fell East Top above Crummock Water in July.

My Dodd hall of fame entry came in two walking trips in Scotland. The official D500 being on Creag an Loin out of Newtonmore with Alex Cameron, Rob Woodall, Jenny and Bryher. A week or so before we were on Sron Chon near Loch Rannoch, my 500th if the Isle of Man Dodds are included. It's still not clear to me why these are not included, yet there is a Hump and a SubMarilyn there, which are both Deweys.



Creag an Loin, Rick's 500th Dodd excluding Isle of Man

A very good if busy year, also completed were nearly 30 SIBs and 50 or so Simms. We cleaned off nearly 50 Donalds/Donald tops leaving just 47 to finish off the Donalds and get us both a step closer to an SMC Full House. That said Welsh and Scottish Humps will have a say, as will Munro tops. Final mention has to go to Bryher, our lovely faithful and ever willing spaniel. She must be on nearly 300 Humps now, never complaining. If all baggers were the same!

Stop Press: Isle of Man included in Dodds list

Alex Cameron, February 2020: *The DoBIH team have made the decision to add the five hills located on the Isle of Man which meet the necessary criteria into the grand total of the Dodds listing. The number of Dodds therefore increases from 1339 to 1344.*

Steve Bell Baglog: Marilyns, 2nd Munros and Furths

2019 felt like a bit of an anticlimax after completing the Donalds and Grahams in 2018, though I was pleased to continue collecting Marilyns at a rate of about one/week as well as taking my second Munro round to approaching the half-way mark. I certainly had some brilliant hill days including on Rum, in the Mamores and many happy days spent much closer to home visiting the Marilyns and HuMPS of Southern Scotland. I also had a particularly excellent week in Snowdonia in September, where I was able to complete the 15 Welsh Furths under largely azure skies and even added a couple of the Welsh Corbetts for good measure. The round of the Snowdon Horseshoe was particularly memorable and I included a photo of the great view that can be had of it from the summit of Moel Siabod. This trip also set me up perfectly for a club trip to Kerry in June 2020 when, together with two other members of Inverness Mountaineering Club, I hope to complete my round of the Furths.



Snowdon Horseshoe from Moel Siabod (S Bell)

Richard Mclellan: A close shave: Angle Tarn Gully

Late 1970's. Slipping crossing Angle Tarn Gully while traversing the 'N face of Bow Fell'. Before my ice axe eventually stopped me, my breeches had ridden up and the icy snow grazed large sections of skin from my knees. The following morning I had to tear my sleeping bag liner from the scabbed over wounds.

Raven On Sgurr Dubh Na Da Bheinn

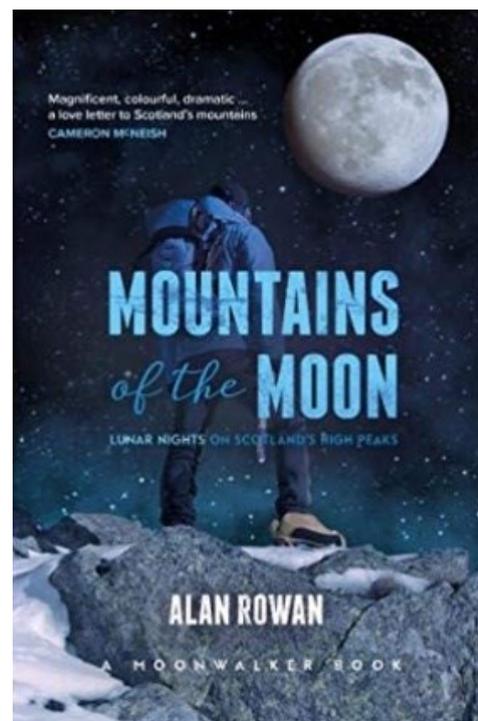
Zip dismembered,
security overcome,
Mars Bar been and gone.

Roderick Manson

Book Review: Mountains of the Moon: Alan Rowan

BACKPAGE 2019 ISBN: 9781909430389 £9.99

Gill Stephens: Another good and interesting book from Munro Moonwalker, Alan Rowan. When Rowan was a full-time journalist, his work shifts pushed him into hill-bagging at night and many will have read his previous two books about nocturnal Munro bagging. Old habits die hard, even after retirement from journalism, but, this time, Rowan set himself a new and unusual night-bagging challenge, to climb a Munro at every full moon. Like all good baggers, he used a defined set of criteria to select the mountain for his "moon" walks. The mountain chosen had to reflect the Native American name of the moon; he used the same criterion to select music for the drive and to choose the celebration beverage afterwards. By doing the walks in 2018, he got 13 moons. So think about this: at every full moon through 2018, he had to go out and climb a Munro. What could possibly go wrong? Amazingly, despite Scotland's fickle weather, he only had one moon when he simply could not get to the hill (snow) and only 2 cases where he did not quite get to the summit. There are tales of moon walks in snow, gales, rain, a nice story of nocturnal kayak-bagging and tales of when everything went almost perfectly to plan to deliver some very memorable-sounding experiences. Rowan has become something of a hill-walking celebrity since his first books were published and there are some interesting tales of night walks accompanied by film crews on Ben Lawers and the Pap of Glencoe. The book is very well written (as expected from a professional journalist) and it's very entertaining, full of jokes and funny comments. You'll also learn more about celestial cycles than you ever thought possible. So what about it folks? Anyone fancy a nocturnal round of the Marilyns or climbing some of the "nicer" Marilyns (e.g. Black Craig of Dee or Fell of Fleet) on a full moon in snow and a gale?



International

Alan Caine Baglog: Tumps; penultimate Wainwright; Canaries



Penas del Chache, Lanzarote (A Caine)

I had no specific bagging aim for 2019 but wanted to clear up some difficult access ones like Knowsley Park on Merseyside and Butchersfield near Warrington. So, my bagging year started on New Year's Day on Butchersfield. Tricky access and requires a covert bridge crossing!

The visit to Knowsley Park by contrast was booked with the estates office and I was chauffeur driven around!

Highlights of the year include getting to within one hill of completing the Wainwrights and a family holiday trip to Lanzarote.

The island's high point Penas del Chache at 672m is a nice p600 to have in the bag but there is a military installation at the summit. I walked all the way around the perimeter and saw plenty of personnel go in and out of the gates but I wasn't brave enough to approach and ask to get in!

However I did manage to bag the second highest mountain on the island Atalaya de Femes 611m p420.

At the start of 2020 I'm on 430 Humps so the plan is to get to 500 by year end. Oh and do my final Wainwright Gavel Fell.

Tony Kinghorn Baglog: Scotland; Corsica

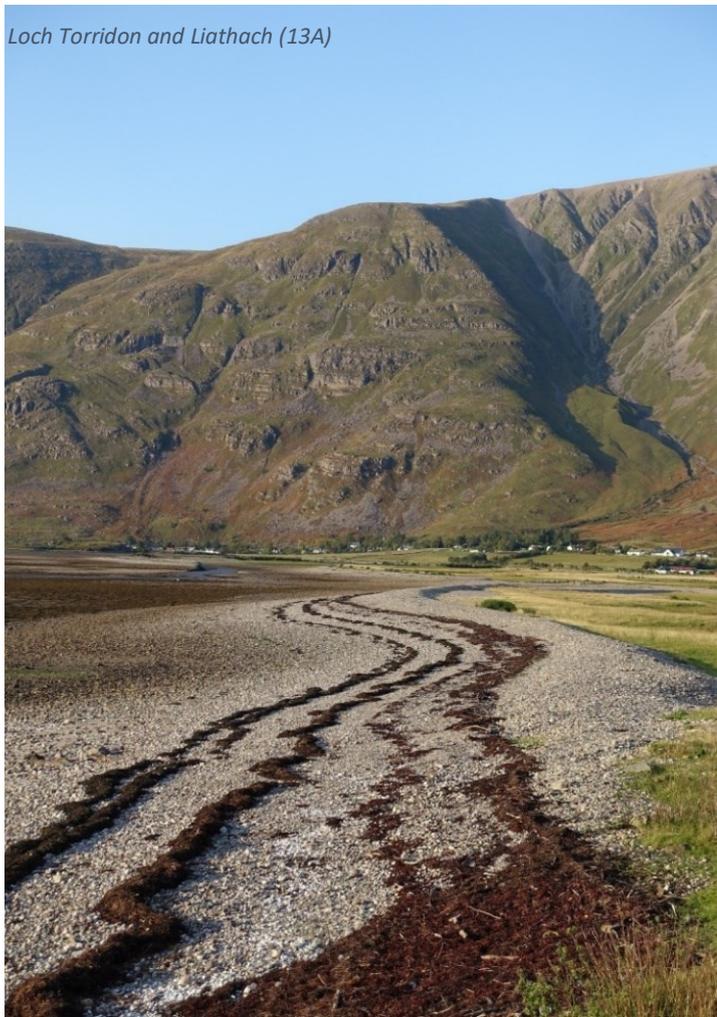
(+18 = 946) Although I didn't get up many new hills in 2019, I still got up plenty of hills- and enjoyed a long-awaited traverse of the GR20 in Corsica, including the highest peak (Monte Cinto)- an Ultra I believe.

Nearer to home, one of the first new hills was Ben Hiant in Ardnamurchan- incredibly windy but with spectacular views over to Mull. January then saw an unexpectedly brilliant day on Ben Vorlich (1D) above Loch Lomond- a dreich, dull day before emerging above a cloud sea with brilliant views in all directions, and an amazing Brocken Spectre!



Ben Vorlich (1D)

Loch Torridon and Liathach (13A)



February saw an entirely snowless visit to hills around Loch Ossian, a big disappointment- where had winter gone? Munros dominated for the next few months, again with little sign of winter, then in June I was off to Corsica for a sixteen day backpacking trip south to north along the GR20. It is a spectacular route, with superb scenery, and with a bit of judicious planning you can have it largely to yourself (let the crowds get away at some ungodly hour and enjoy a good day on the hills an hour or so behind them). It worked in June, maybe not such a good idea in the height of summer though. The other tip is to take your own tent- the huts are small, overcrowded and allegedly infested with bedbugs.

Back home a trip to Shetland gave me the opportunity to add a few new hills- Noss Head (22) in particular was superb, amazing cliffs and enormous colonies of gannets. A foray to Galloway in September likewise gave the opportunity for some new hills- nice country, but some of the going is incredibly rough, Craignaw (27B) in particular proving a tough day, although the rock scenery around the summit (when you eventually rise above the bogs and tussocks) is very good. A visit to

Torridon in September was superb for weather- definitely an improvement after what was a rather wet summer.

A lovely day on Cairn Gorm (8) on Hogmanay rounded off the year- but still no snow!

(Marilyns: Scotland 859, England 86, Wales 1, IoM 0; HuMPs: 1084)

Sue & Trevor Littlewood Baglog: Britain gradually; Dolomites; Austria

2019 proved to be another very active year in the hills with plenty of wear caused to the various boot-pairs we own!

With time marching on the prospect of a Graham and/or Corbett completion for either of us is receding. Only one of each was captured in the year, both in the Loch Arkaig area; the Graham, Mullach Coire nan Geur-oirean (787), was one of the most remote of those we had remaining needing a tramp of over 30 Km. That gave us an easier outing than the shorter distance needed to collect the Corbett, Carn Mor (829) to the west of Loch Arkaig. Both were done on splendid April days.

Our Marilyn scores rose feebly—the same six additions by both of us and including the two mountains above. The lesser tops, Hill of the Wangie, (619), Burgiehill, (620) and Brown Muir, (618), all north of the Cairngorms, were claimed on the same day by motoring between them—not the most satisfactory approach (for us) but an effective bagging method. In October, Cruach nan Caorach (1445) in Argyll & Bute made up the half dozen.

Sue & Trevor on Mullach Coire nan Geur-oirean, Gulvain beyond



The Tump score rose modestly, a number of the year's increase being due to the examination of hill routes walked in the past and the discovery that some of the lesser rises crossed and not considered to be significant at the time, can now be ticked! Actually, we've not managed to become too excited about Tumps, (we rarely set out to walk with a Tump as a main target) but take them in whenever they occur on or close to a route. Humps are much more attractive and more significant propositions; several were added in the year in Highland areas visited where we've already wiped out the Marilyns.

Four weeks in total were spent in European mountains, two among the remarkable rock

scenery of the Dolomites where we feared we could be limited by the devastation caused by a severe storm the previous autumn—there were reports of millions of trees flattened, (we saw plenty of those) and paths closed either by blockage or erosion. In the end, despite depressing lists of path closures on websites and cautionary tales from local tourist information, we had virtually no trouble. The other Alpine adventure—another pair of weeks in Austria's Zillertal, fulfilled the need to see significant areas of glacier at least once in a year.

Phil Cooper Baglog: Major Italian island; last mainland Marilyn; last Welsh Simm

We started the year in March with a visit to Ischia, an island off Naples. The top is 787m Monte Epomeo, an extinct volcano, which we walked up using the easy path from Fontana, a village accessed from the round-the-island bus. We had superb views of the Bay of Naples and more pretty islands.

Back to Scotland in late May, the objective was to complete all my remaining mainland Grahams and Marilyns: these were spread out in the north-west from near Loch Duich up to Cape Wrath. The first day gave superb spring weather for a visit to two remote Grahams, leaving the bike at Iron Lodge in Glen Elchaig. The two were An Cruachan and Carn na Breabaig; the outing taking 8.5 hours. Another highlight was the nine Marilyns of Section 16A, the Cape Wrath area. This took three days plus two short half-days in varying conditions. The toughest walk here from the Blairmore car park (for Sandwood Bay) was a circuit of An Grianan, Creag Riabhach and the 'new' Marilyn, Beinn Dearg. On the way back there was a very dodgy river crossing at Strathchailleach Bothy where my old map showed a footbridge, which I did not seriously expect to find still standing. This wet day was made up for in the evening with a view over a glorious blue Sandwood Loch and the 10pm red sunset. I thought the Cape Wrath track would be too hilly and bumpy to make an enjoyable bike ride, so decided to hoof it the 5 miles from the ferry point to do Sgribhis-bheinn, Maovally (HuMP) and Fashven which is a super pyramid shape. My final mainland Marilyn was Meadie Ridge, a simple moorland walk from the road near Loach Meadie.

Over a long weekend in early autumn I completed my last 5 Welsh Simms which were well spread out from the Berwyns to Fforest Fawr. I'd done all the Simms over 2000ft/609.6m back in the 1970s so have in recent years been doing the others down to 600m. It was good to have a dry afternoon in Fforest Fawr which I hadn't visited in 44 years, and so this Simms set was completed on Yr Allt (604m).

There was a pleasant and sociable weekend at Slaidburn YH in November, actually quite close to home, when I bagged 10 Tumps: (I'm not normally one for driving around the countryside Tump bagging!) I still have two local Tumps which I could do in a couple of hours from home on the bike.

For 2020 the first target is to do my last Graham and SMC full-house on Tiorga Mor, Harris, a walk which I'd be pleased to share, so look out for your invitation!

Julie Brown Baglog: sociable Scottish bagging; Bolivian 6000er

Marilyns (+56 = 973)

My objectives for 2019 were – complete the Wainwrights, complete the 89 Donalds, make progress on the Grahams and 610m+ Welsh Marilyn and climb a 6000m peak.

Well I failed on the 1st 2, only managing 3 of my 10 outstanding Wainwrights and 1 Donald walk obtaining 1 of the 3 outstanding and 4 new Donalds. However 13 Grahams and 7 Welsh 610m+ Marilyn added to the list means completion of those objectives is getting closer with 18 of the former and 8 of the latter remaining. And I did get my 6000m peak.

This is my second most successful year for Marilyn bagging to date with 56 acquired in the year and now in sight of the 1,000 upper hall threshold.

One of the main highlights of my year was my 50th birthday bash where 19 of us congregated at Inverbroom Lodge for a week with an in house chef, so no time was lost washing up and cooking, and minimum work days lost as it ended in Easter weekend so 10 days bagging for the price of 4 days holiday usage (result!!!) so maximum bagging opportunities. With the big hoose booked Sunday to Sunday Section 15 and 12 Grahams were the main agenda for that week, although a stop in Pitlochry on the Friday night enabled a bag of Carn na Tri-tighearnan on the Saturday and a stop in Inverness on the Saturday night enabled a bag of Beinn na Muice on the Sunday before we even got there.



The Monday was windy and I had planned what I expected to be a fairly low numbers interest in climbing Beinn Bhreac (#1077), however this was clearly a much more exciting plan than anyone could have ever envisaged and everyone decided to come along so with a bit of car manoeuvring we did an end to end with 17 of our 19 party declaring interest in my plan (the only non interested were Dr Illing on a separate Simm Quest (but who magically appeared on the summit at the same time as us as part of his itinerary) and David Armin on a Corbett quest, who got blown off and retreated from his bag, but it was successfully completed the following day). I am not certain my 75 year old parents planned to do the whole walk, and neither did my sister with my 12 year old niece who had always moaned at anything over about 8 miles, however everyone managed to complete the 12 mile end to end. Unless someone decides to elect it as their last Graham I doubt Beinn Bhreac has ever seen 18 people on its summit at once.



Further adventures took place in the week with another highlight being Tove Illing and my 26 mile bike/hike from Black Bridge to the double Graham bag of Meall a' Chaorainn and Beinn Tharsuinn.

It was also nice to have the lower Marilyn of Meall Glac Tigh-fail in our "back garden".

One of the other highlights of my week was a repeat (for me after 29 years) of An Teallach which was a 3rd/4th Munro for my eldest niece and a 2nd/3rd Munro for my youngest niece who had just done her first Munro on the Fannaichs 2 days before.

The 12 year old then declared later that week she would like to do all the Munros and has since set herself up as mini bagger on hillbagging. I think I may be repeating a number of Munros again soon !!!!



In May I joined a trip to Tomintoul for the weekend and 5 new Marilyn were bagged including Little Conval which as Keith Craig (Hall of Fame member) is pointing out below has a view of many distilleries from its summit.

At May Bank holiday I had the great pleasure of attending yet another (my 8th) Munro completion for one of my ex University colleagues in Glencoe although it turned out to be not one of the greatest days ever (in fact the weather was pretty awful) for a Munro completion but a good night was had by all in the Clachaig and it was great to see 4 of the 8 of us who summited Mt Elbrus in 1994 (before we knew anything about Ultras) at the completion.

In June we had a trip arranged by the Illings to Skye the weather wasn't Cuillin fantastic but as my objective was other smaller Marilyns that didn't deter my plans, and I'd recommend Biod an Athair, Ben Tianavaig and Beinn na Cro to anyone who hasn't done them. 10 Marilyns done that week still 22 left on Skye



Little Conval - distillery spotting



Biod an Athair



Sunset over the Cuillin from our cottage



Beinn na Cro summit, Bla Bheinn behind



View back to Beinn na Cro

In August I went to Wales with the family where I ascended Moel Hebog my last British 2500ft+ Marilyn, and also did Tryfan with the family (a first Welsh 3000er for the nieces) amongst a number of other Llŷn Peninsula Marilyns.

My international bagging success of the year was Cerro Acotango in Bolivia, my 1st peak at over 6000m and a height I thought I'd probably struggle to get to, so very happy to have succeeded. Given the salt flats at 4000m are higher than most places in Europe the acclimatisation is brilliant and for those not totally obsessed by summits there's a good variety including acclimatisation walks etc. Incahuasi Island in the middle of the Salt flats with its giant cacti is one of the most amazing places I have ever visited.



Summit of Incahuasi Island – Bolivia Salt Flats



Red peak Summit of Tunupa looking to the real summit- (a climbers Peak) Bolivia



Summit ridge of Acotango



View from the Summit of Acotango



Sahama – Ultra not on my itinerary

Denise Mclellan: A close shave: Pyrenees

During a weekend scrambling in the Pyrenees, my partner, Richard suddenly grabbed me backwards into a gully. I looked up to see boulders tumbling past my nose. The dust filled my eyes and I could smell the shattering rock. At work the following week, a social worker took me on one side and said, 'it's very common, you know...nothing to be ashamed of....; we have a domestic abuse helpline you can call. Bruises on your arms are a classic sign.'

Peter Bellarby Baglog: Getting round to the Southern Uplands; 15th Ultra; 30th Ribu

Britain: Early in the year I was pleased to finally get to Bass Rock (5108 112m P112) after some months waiting for suitable conditions and courtesy arrangements made by Alan Holmes. It is an iconic landmark, which provides a conversation topic with non-hillwalkers.

In the past I rather looked down on the Southern Uplands, preferring the more rugged grandeur of the Scottish Highlands. Now I am older, and maybe wiser, I see them as having their own interest and character providing lots of opportunities for pleasant walks. So I have been there quite a lot in 2019. The Marilyns in Section 28A have been finished; there is always a good feeling when a section is completed.

On a visit to the Shetland Islands I completed the ascents of all the Marilyns there, apart from the two on Foula and the one on Fair Isle where bad weather interfered.

I claimed in the past that my first Marilyn was Dufton Pike (2775 481m, P163), climbed when I was very young. I withdrew that claim as I cannot be sure that the summit was actually reached. Early in the year I made up the deficiency by getting to the top in snowy conditions.

A visit to Shropshire allowed an excursion into Wales and the ascent of Aran Fawddwy (2083 905m, P670) from Llanuwchllyn by the north ridge, a fine route. That gave me a total of 140 Majors with only one still to do in the UK.

International: 2019 saw a determined effort to reach the target for ultras of 15 and for Ribus of 30. A visit to Switzerland gave one for both categories. Then in October a visit to Sardegna (Sardinia) allowed Punta La Marmora (1834m, P1834) to be ascended. This was an easy high-level walk from the now closed Rifugia Sa Crista. The hardest part was the tortuous drive to the start! So both targets were met. I am also not far short of the 150 target for Major peaks.

Denise McLellan Baglog: 3000th Tump, SIBs, Ultras, European HPs; skiing in Wiltshire

Tumps +414- total 3008

Sibs + 36- total 143

Ultras +12 total 232

This year the focus has been on UK Tumps and SIBs with a continuing international focus on Ultras and European Country High Points. 200 nights have been spent away from home, over half the year, plus various day trips, with some freelance work and RHSoc secretarial work in between.

We have had three major international trips: Jan Mayen in June about which I have written a separate [Trip Report](#), Ethiopia in February, which Rob Woodall has summarised and Norway in August, which Richard McLellan has submitted.



In January and February we travelled up and down the UK in search of good weather. In January, around Eppynt, we enjoyed frost and clear skies and were amazed by the 'pretend' alpine village- for military training. We had a snowy alpine ascent of The Tower (460m, P35m), Alport Castles, Derbyshire. We also managed a cross country ski trip in Wiltshire – I recall pink skies over the snowy domed field of Horningsham Common (229m, P31m). The weather was finally calm



enough for trips to the SIBs Craigleith (49m, P49m) and Fidra (33m, P33m) and we stayed in the Berwick area for some excellent bagging and beer drinking by real fires.

We returned from Ethiopia at the end of February to see spring underway and, having recovered from two weeks of Imodium and coke, went north to Hadrian's Wall, again impressed by the skills of the Roman Empire.

In April we started a sail from Plymouth to our new Marina at Portsmouth, with a plan to bag Tumps from each overnight berth over a fortnight. The trip took twice as long as expected as the prevailing South Westerlies refused to prevail, and we had gale force Easterlies on the nose. The consequence of this was an enforced stay at Noss on Dart, and we are now in the top 4 of the Devon and Cornwall Tump league.

May began with a rainy traverse of the Glyders with a group of inexperienced but enthusiastic friends who all returned safe and sound. We then went up the Western Isles with kayaks and had some superb calm weather for island bagging and camped

within yellow primroses, corncrakes rasping. A highlight was a kayak to Gunna, (36m, P36m) south of Tiree through azure seas to an extensive pale sandy beach.

The date for our long planned Arctic sail to Jan Mayen to climb Beerenberg finally arrived in June and exceeded all expectations.



It was great to see everyone in Peebles at the Annual Dinner, an excellent venue, a short walk from the campsite. We returned to Scotland later in July for superb weather on a boat trip to the Garvellach Islands, but got soaked the day after in nearby woods, failing to reach a planned summit. A window of calm weather at the end of July gave us further kayak/ island bagging opportunities, this time in Pembrokeshire. Unexpected currents made St Margaret's Island (40m, P40m), next to Calvey a memorable trip. I was subsequently identified by the Sunday Times as 'Queen of bagging' as the female with the most islands bagged! This was entirely coincidental - not a goal actively pursued.

In August we visited the Lyngen peninsula in northern Norway and succeeded, finally in climbing Store Lenangstind, (1625m, P1575m), Richard's final Core European ultra.

August's heatwave saw us in the Forest of Bowland- seems such a long time ago now; we were so hot we could hardly move!

A cycle trip seemed the best way to bag the Lincolnshire Wolds; it's quite surprising how hilly it is, but also attractive in September with golden harvested fields.

We then had a week's backpacking in the Carpathians, with Tony Jenkins, including the Ukrainian High Point, Gora Goverla (2061m, P721m). In 4 days, we did not pass a road or through a village. This was a contrast to our October trip to Belarus, taking advantage of new visa freedoms. We struggled to find any hills in the super modern city of Minsk, but we did tick the country High Point, Hara Dzyarzhynskay, (345m, P185m) named after the Belarusian founder of the Russian Secret Service.

A cheap short notice flight got us to Nice, France in out of season ski accommodation- we had superb weather in the Maritime Alps, climbing deserted limestone peaks. On our return we hurried to the Norfolk marshes with Jon Glew and Rob Woodall and developed the new sport of mud kayaking whilst bagging flat highpoints on saltmarshes.

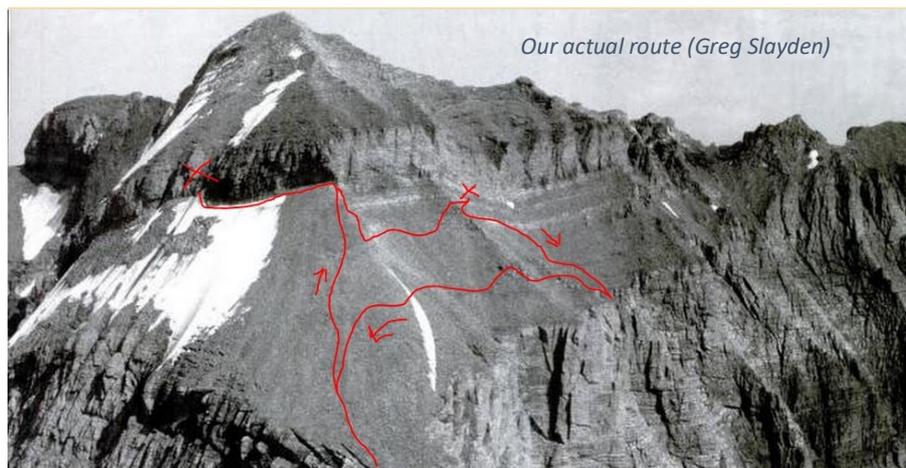
We escaped pre-Christmas frenzy by a two-week trip to Monterrey, Mexico, bagging a few more ultras. The danger was not drug dealers but avoiding being fatally stabbed by the huge spiky plants.

The last couple of months turned into a bit of a Tump fest, as I realised I could reach my 3000th Tump by the year end. I was slightly hampered by tendonitis in my ankle but made good progress at the Slaidburn Bagger Rambles Hostel trip, some local walks and then finally in the Lakes in the last week of December, where we were staying with friends at Thurston Outdoor Centre, Coniston. 34 friends joined me on Beacon Fell (255m, P128m), a fitting end to the year.



Rob Woodall: Close shave - The Battle of Farnham

Mt Farnham looked quite doable from the info on bivouac.com - a superb castellated peak with a choice of 3 routes, not very technical. Not easy - not much in the Canadian Rockies is - but Greg and I had the gear, and a fair bit of experience between us. We'd located the trail (hidden by clear-fall) the previous evening, and next morning we arrived in good time at the foot of the peak. Relating what we saw to the description we'd brought,



wasn't easy. The south ridge - looked complicated. The couloir - which one exactly? Hammond-Farnham Col then - up to the obvious col. The gully was loose and unpleasant. The left side seemed to offer decent scrambling, but needed the rope. Escaping right, the reddish rock was better, but with poor holds - wouldn't want to descend this way... Right at the top, nice scrambling, then we teetered left above steep scree, avoiding holding onto the wall of rotten limestone. Then climb the short steep couloir, it said. Covered in ice. Not equipped for ice climbing, so we teetered back right. We could see a possible way up the final 100m, but unsure whether it would go, and we'd reached our turnaround time. Except we still needed to locate that descent route - or reverse our unpleasant ascent route. Speculating above a clean looking rock gully, we watched as a rock spontaneously detached itself from the wall and clattered down our suddenly less appealing descent route.

In over our heads, Greg observed. Back down the way we came, then.

Back down at the col we cramponed across an exposed snow arete, then Greg clambered down a short messy bouldery mud slope. A boulder he was standing on, detached, leaving him teetering with a fingertip hold. I followed him, already knowing my boulder would do the same. Descending the unpleasant gully was as bad as expected, and we soon escaped left and scrambled back down the red rock - the way we were



glad we didn't have to descend - which now seemed an excellent descent route! We were thankful to get down onto snow, although it was a little steep and icy for a few minutes before we could call ourselves safe.

There were several hours during that descent when it wasn't clear whether we'd get down. All we could do was rely on our skills, determination and a lot of care, and hope for the best. Luckily, that was enough.

Counterintuitively, I had a sense of invulnerability for the rest of the descent: the feeling we could handle anything. Fortunately it soon wore off. But we did find the famously loose Mt Assiniboine comparatively straightforward two days later.

Farnham is the range highpoint of the well known Bugaboo Spires. The peak itself is largely unknown. Now we know why. But we do now know a guide who knows the way.

Graham and Tove Illing baglog: Marilyn rewalling; Scrambly Simms; Canary ultra

Marilyns: The Marilyn bagging year commenced in Cape Wrath picking up the new Marilyn, Beinn Dearg (1117). We had an excellent walk in from just north of Gualin House and under the cliffs of Creag Riabhach (1114).



Tove made further progress on the Marilyn and I made more progress on the sub Marilyn as part of my main focus on Simms (see below).

Another great day for the memory was a traverse of Ben More Coigach (1208) and Sgurr an Fhìdhleir (1210). A fine view of Suilven (1209) will always be a priority for me.

Simms: I managed seven Scottish Simm bagging trips during the year focused on Roy Bridge, Inverbroom, Tomintoul, Skye, Glenfinnan, Inveraray and Ballater. This helps keep up the target of 100 Simms / year post retirement.



To Tove's delight the Tomintoul trip served up the best weather of the year.



A tour of Ben Avon and outstanding Simms, sub Simms and deleted Munro top was the highlight of the trip. Thank goodness I climbed the tor and visited the cairn of Big Brae (584)!



The sub Simm Clach Choutsaich (547) was also climbed although it seems Tove's photos aren't eligible for the DoBIH! So here is the photo they refused to publish. The gully described by Alan is the snowy ramp in the centre right of the picture. Would have been handy to see this picture beforehand...



The Skye Simms remain the big challenge for me. Poor weather limited our ambitions although we managed Caisteal a' Garbh-Choire (6855) and an epic day out on Sgurr na h-Uamha (4495) as can be seen below (The secret is the "Yellow Brick Road" on the west side!). Bidein Druim nam Ramh and Sgurr Dubh Beag remain outstanding problems for our 2020 visit to Skye.





The Simm bagging year ended with a week based in Ballater hostel. The weather wasn't particularly kind, although the challenge of the trip came when driving back after a late and dark finish on the Simms south side of Glen Muick. A stag jumped out of the inky blackness, I swerved and put the car in a ditch. There was no mobile signal. Fortunately I had my mountain bike in the car and I proceeded to cycle down the icy road to the first house in the valley. A very friendly couple took pity on me, and after a quick coffee, called a friend with a pick up truck who then pulled me out! Fortunately modern cars seem to "zip" back together, so I was able to drive home. No stags were harmed in this incident!

Ultras: For the third time of asking, and after everyone has told us they went up on the cable car at the age of 5, Tove and I managed to summit Pico Teide, Tenerife. It was a cold and windy day, but we did get some fine summit views.



Tove even bought me a badge.



In November we enjoyed an excellent 22-day trek to Kangchenjunga North base camp (Pangpema 5,115 m) and South base camp (Oktang High Point 4,700 m). The views confirmed that my days of attempting 8,000 m peaks are over...

Close encounter with an Ultra:

[Kangchenjunga](#)
8,586m (90003)



Rob Woodall Baglog: British P90s; 500th SIB; Ethiopia; Eastern Alps; 300th Ultra; Japan

The January highlight was the Forth islands Craigleith and Fidra, fine steep islands enabling a long awaited East Lothian Tumps completion for several of us. Chapeau to Alan Holmes for his persistence over several years in making these trips happen.

A February fortnight in Ethiopia netted 5 ultras, the first 4 rather obscure, then in the better known Simien Mountains a 6 day trek including Ras Dashen to complete the African subset of the World 50 most prominent peaks, the whole trip a fascinating glimpse of this distinctive country: memories including oxen-ploughed fields above 3000m, the rugged Blue Nile gorge, camels, queuing tuk-tuks, and endemic wattled ibis. (See separate [article](#)).

The Triggers weekend was in Devon this year, followed in April by the highly obscure low prominence Wattisham Airfield - a historic county top and an active RAF base, with a museum conveniently close to the Lidar-determined highpoint.



Seanna Chnoc from Bearasaigh (R Woodall)

May included 2 weeks in Scotland, the first with Alan Whatley, bagging mostly tidal SIBs, but the crux was Seanna Chnoc - third time lucky with this hard to land SubHump, the most exposed of the wonderful Outer Loch Roag islands. Week 2 targeted the splendidly remote Sule Skerry with its lighthouse and trig bolt (the hardest to reach of the Passive trig stations). Thanks to Bob Kerr for organising, and it was good to meet some lighthouse baggers and to compare obsessions.

By June on Shetland, Andy Sutton and Alan Whatley were well into their astonishing multi-hundred SIBs tussle, Andy making good use of his sea kayaking skills. Just 9 new for me - now just 13 missing in Shetland. I missed Horse Island, High Holm and Fugla Stack but that day my boat got Dore Holm, Skerry of Eshaness and Muckle and Little Ossa. This set the scene for week 2 with different boatloads vying with each other for new islands. The 2nd Muckle Flugga group cheekily added Rumbings. Then my group added the dramatic Outer Stack to Gloup Holm and Gruney; others got Hoo Stack and the Gletness pair, which I somehow missed in 2013 too. I thought of kayaking them, but in the strong westerly I'd have likely ended up in Norway! Alan Holmes did a brilliant job juggling logistics in the face of challenging weather.

An August fortnight for 11 Eastern Alps ultras included the well known Triglav (my 300th ultra), and the superb Hochtor, Jof di Montasio and Willder Kaiser. In Europe we are lucky to have such top quality peaks relatively close by. The area is bristling with Ribus too - so much to do in this wonderful area. (see separate [article](#)).

Back home, I took my kayak north for a dozen Scottish islands to make 500 SIBs, including some bridged and tidal, and some sunny west coast paddling.

4 weeks in Japan completed my remaining 13 ultras there plus most of the Ribus, also including volcanos, wonderful Autumn colours, airy scrambly ridges, an impromptu week's bagging with a retired Japanese semiconductors professor, and 7000km in a little Suzuki WagonR ! (see separate [article](#)).



Corr Eilean, 500th SIB (R Woodall)

November included Bagger Rambles in Bowland, Alan Dawson's Newtonmore event, and a few recently discovered Norfolk SIBs making fascinating paddling amongst the saltmarsh creeks. December saw Dewey's Notable Tops completed, and a flurry of newly discovered Tumps saw 13 counties recompleted this year, which finished with a companionable 5 days Simm bagging around Strathdon

Alastair Govan Baglog: 10 Ultras; Close Shave on Mt Whitney

Ellmauer Halt ascent



I completed all the European country high points in 2018 and, always needing a list to tick, I soon found the Ultras. Subsequently I became aware of the Ribus and Majors but have (so far) resisted ticking these, simply because the numbers are too daunting.

I retired from work this year so have been able to do more (and longer) trips – of course, not all focussed on Ultras but I've managed 10 this year to take my total to 40. Highlights included Mount Whitney, highest point in the US Lower 48 states, and the Austrian trio of Ellmauer Halt, Hochkonig and Hoher Dachstein.

Mount Whitney (4421m) is a very long hike, 22 miles round trip with 1900m of ascent, most of the time spent above

3000m so you certainly feel the altitude. Most hikers either camp en route or start before dawn but we opted to do neither, starting around sunrise and getting back to the car at dusk, 14¼ hours later! My calculation using Naismith's rule did not adequately allow for altitude or for the snow cover which was unusually extensive for the end of June.

There's a steep 500m snow slope known as the 'shute' which I knew would be a challenge so we hired/bought ice axe and crampons, not having taken them with us and uncertain how essential they were. Turned out not absolutely required but certainly made it safer and a little easier. Most hikers slid down this on their return, so it was a horrendous mess of steep mushy snow, footsteps and slide marks, extremely tiresome to ascend. The usual trail zig-zags up the slope but was invisible under the snow and no one had bothered to try and follow a similar line. Basically every man (or woman) for himself! We were almost the last ones off the summit and, short of time and energy, opted to slither down on our bums/sides relying on our ice axes. I'm not normally keen to do this, not least to avoid trashing my Goretex, but trying to come down the steep slippery mess in an upright position would have been just too slow, tedious and tiring.

On Mt Whitney summit ridge



So we got back to the hotel after dark, in quaintly named Lone Pine (and yes, the surrounding area has featured in many movies!), exhausted but rather pleased with ourselves. Then we discovered our eyes felt very dry and gritty.....having forgotten to take sunglasses, we both had a touch of snow blindness! The June sun reflected off snow at 4000m in California is way stronger than anything in the UK or even most of year in the Alps. Another lesson for next time.....

Fiona (Fi) Clark Baglog: What have we been up to? Ultras, paragliding, Corbetts completion

This time last year I made a start on an entry for Relative Matters as a general thought piece, but never did polish it off: [It's All Relative](#). I was pleased to see another article making a similar point though; we really shouldn't worry so much about numbers and just enjoy whatever we do.

This year, I'm going for more of a round up of what Stuart (Scoob) and I have done in 2019. I've been meticulously recording all of our figures for each walk since the summer of 2017; mainly because the WalkHighlands site aggregates them automatically and I like to see the yearly totals, despite my comment above! So, relative to the previous year, our stats were quite low - around 980km with 66,000m ascent across 68 trips compared with 1200km and 86,000m in 84 trips in 2018. However, we've had some excellent 'memorable moments' in 2019.

We visited 3 different countries, climbing 6 Ultras (P1500). We reached the highest point in Gran Canaria, El Morron de la Agujereada, which [I likened to the In Pinn](#) due to the scramble up and abseil down. In the height of summer we returned to Canada, where we climbed 4 Ultra peaks and had a visit with my mum near Nelson, BC. This included [Cond Peak](#), close to where I was born, and [Mount Temple](#), which had eluded us on our last attempt. Our final Ultra was [Mount Babadag in Turkey](#) - I highly recommend the paraglide trip back down to the beach! That was my favourite part after a tough climb in the heat, and even Stuart enjoyed it once he'd finally relaxed.

Back home, restricted to weekend walks fitting around the day jobs, we focused on the Corbetts as this was our next most complete list. We had just 37 left to do at the start of the year, [completing them on Hart Fell](#) in October with just the two of us, as a result of a late decision given a promising weather forecast. Other Corbett highlights before then included Ben Aden, where we [paddled back along Loch Quoich in the dark](#), and Beinn na Caillich. For this one, we got a boat in to Knoydart from Arnisdale and [walked a circuit](#) that took us over our last remaining Munro Top in this area and on to Ladhar Bheinn. We also made our first ever [trip to Jura](#). We'll be back one day, as there are so many other relative hills and places for us to explore.

Still enjoying the 'big walks', we're back on the Munros again with their Tops this time, or doing any [combinations of smaller hills](#) that generally fill our daylight hours and often beyond. Towards the end of the year we had a [stunning day on the Grey Corries](#) and then finished it off with [Christmas Day on Mayar and Dreish](#), having already held our family celebrations.

Rob Woodall: Northern Ethiopian Ultras, February 2019

A two-week trip featuring a near-P4000m summit, two P2000s and two P1500m ultras, a six day trek in the Simein Mountains and an insight into a fascinating part of East Africa. The main focus was Ras Dashen, the 23rd most prominent peak on the planet.

Ethiopia had been on my to-do list for a decade, and it was Petter Bjorstad who initiated proceedings, at quite short notice – I recall an email conversation conducted from the top of an obscure clear-felled Scottish Tump, the prospect of being somewhere warm and sunny seeming quite appealing. Richard and Denise Mclellan made four.

Our first peak, [Choqa 4100m P2225](#) was a little more than a day's drive from Addis Ababa. After an hour's tailback ascent on the poorly surfaced main road, we crossed a plateau, with haystacks beside the road and donkeys carrying neatly trimmed bundles of wood. A mile of elevation was lost and gained crossing the dramatic Blue Nile gorge: super-slow trucks, tight zigzags, a modern cable stayed bridge seeming out of place; roadside baboons and vervets passed on the steep slow climb out. The colourful town of Dejen marked a change to a good wide new highway (extensive highway construction ongoing, Chinese funded), enabling good progress passing more hayfields, and flat-topped acacia trees. We spent the night in Debre Markos, a lively little town, a church service with very Ethiopian gospel music relayed via external speakers; Denise chatting with locals and managed to pass their



Choqa summit plateau (R Woodall)

university entry history exam! We wandered until sunset with playful kids, until shooed out of a park at sundown. Next morning, we took a minor road, mostly unpaved and slow but fine for minibuses and our Toyota Landcruiser, passing

Our holidays are now based on where the Ultras are! We



Mt Temple summit, Canadian Rockies



*Babadag, Turkey
paraglide descent*

rough pasture, some crops, villages, pied crow, endemic wattled ibis common above 2500m. The peak itself was a short grassy amble, with near-twin summits to test our Abney and hand levelling skills.

[Amba Farit 4270m P1919](#) was a little more challenging: even finding a trailhead wasn't straightforward: our first four peaks were relatively unknown, even to our Ethiopia guide Meles, and the trip had a pioneering feel about it. We investigated a couple of options, with some debate with the driver over the capabilities of the Landcruiser, then took the main unpaved road to a convenient point where a suitable looking trail started, seemingly miraculously being met by a local scout/guide whom Meles had contacted - they apparently hadn't agreed a meeting point. The trail passed meadows and cultivated terraces, an impressive outcrop of columnar basalt, then alternating tussocky grass and low shrubs led to a rocky summit. Petter was there just inside 3hrs, Richard Denise and I an hour later suffering various ailments. Then a 3-hour drive to Dessie, arriving after dark, all of us seemingly recovered in time for dinner.

Our third ultra [Abune Josef 4280m P2071](#), was a full day's drive from Dessie. Sights included camels (a surprise!), *tuk-tuks* queuing for fuel, mangrove timber piled at the roadside, identikit new timber daub and galvanised sheet houses. At Lalibela we were surprised to find ourselves based in the quite fancy Mountain View Hotel. Late afternoon we wandered through town to find one of the rock carved churches, an impressive spot, a nice viewpoint, with a trig point - the only one I saw all trip. The ascent next morning consisted of a 2 hour drive up on a decent dirt road, then an easy 2km round trip hike to a rocky summit, with 3 candidates within 20m (and 10cm elevation) of each other. Our pre-booked overnight at Hudade Lodge on the way down, didn't seem the most efficient arrangement - but a fine scenic hike and a superb location, reached via a rocky arete, our home consisting of huts on a large level mesa surrounded by cliffs with views across deep dramatic valleys to a distant plateau rim.



Abune Josef summit (R Woodall)



Next morning, a sunrise breakfast was followed by a 2km hike down to the road, then a 5-hour drive west brought us to Debre Tabor, ready for [Guna Terara 4120m P1510](#) the next day. Mid-afternoon we made an unscheduled 8km round trip hike from our hotel to a nearby P200m summit south of town with Iyasus monastery near the summit, with a viewing platform at the highpoint with a view down over the town. Initially a stick-wielding security guard was unwilling to let us near the summit area, until a robed cleric came over and approved us. Next day the ultra was climbed via a half-day traverse, ascending mostly on grass. Crossing the lower north summit we passed a flock of endemic wattled ibis then



Guna Terara summit ridge (R Woodall)

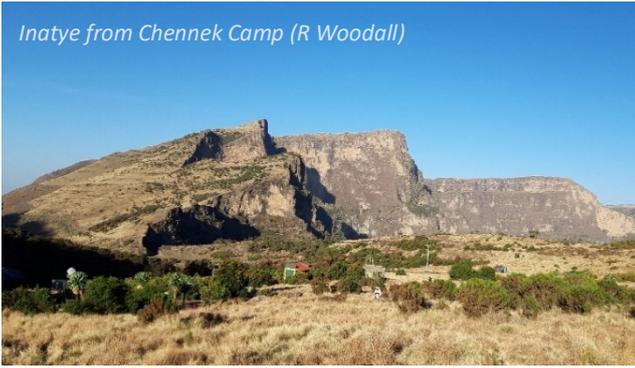
descended to the road, initially on grass then negotiating small terraced fields to reach trails leading down to roadside houses. I detoured via a couple of minor summits, surprised by a small leopard crossing one of the tops! There was a delay due to our driver becoming mislaid, but we were back in Debre Tabor for a late lunch, then drove to Gondar, stopping en route to admire the Finger of God rock tower, a challenging looking technical climb. Our hotel was again a quite fancy tourist place.

Our four 'unknown' ultras done, we were to spend the last week in the much better known and impressive Simein Mountains. A half day drive took us to Debarq, the Simien Mountains Park HQ. We signed in, Meles dealing with paperwork and park fees. Beyond the National Park gate, the road became dirt, with dramatic drops to left and right, then higher up passing ploughed fields.

[Inatye \(4070m P470\)](#) was our first Simein peak, typically an acclimatisation peak, although we were well used to 4000m by this stage. We hiked the gentle grassy southwestern spur of Inatye, with an armed ranger for security; horses, cattle, sheep, short yellow grass, giant lobelia, sunshine, packed lunch, 2 lads failing to sell us coke; thickbilled raven, lammergeier, mountain wagtail, baboons, a large troop of human-sounding chilada monkeys. Inatye has two summits, with a huge drop to the north, 3947m Imet Gogo to our left with spires and towers below, 4420m Silki prominent across

deep valley, 200 wheeling redbilled cought, a good path descending to the dirt road, passing 6 metre tree heather festooned with moss, visiting the peak's key col, a notch in cliffs sporting bright yellow crucifer flowers.

Inatye from Chennek Camp (R Woodall)



After a leisurely 3h30 hike we arrived at Chennek camp (3626m), a short while before sunset, watching a wildcat seeing off 2 ravens. Our tents were set up ready for us, with tea, coffee and popcorn recalling Tanzanian trips, a tasty meal of fish, vegetables, rice and wine taken in a large circular hut around a convivial but smoky fire. Today our overnight bags had arrived by vehicle. Although a good dirt road continues, from here the mules would take over.

Overnight a fine starry sky left a slight grass frost. Breakfast was porridge, bread and honey. Inatye's cliffs were superb in the morning sun. Leaving camp, we immediately detoured off the dirt road busy with trucks, minibuses and mules, very different from last week's 4 obscure peaks. We passed a clifftop lookout with the lower peaks to the west looking very good in the morning light. On the trail to [Bwahit](#) (4430m P800), we passed a German party on their way down. The summit had a tall cairn and fine views. We descended on a good trail, lunching then continuing down through terraces to the surprisingly large village Chiro Leba where we stopped to buy cokes, watching a thunderstorm across the valley towards Ras Dashen, which we caught the edge of, donning waterproofs briefly. It's apparently possible to drive to this point for a much shorter ascent (I've heard hikeinethiopia.com have done so), but the longer outing is well worthwhile. Descending past a school compound we zigzagged down on a good trail to cross a shallow river on stepping stones, then a 300m ascent warm in the afternoon sun, passing trailside *Rumex nervosus* bushes with sorrel like fruits.

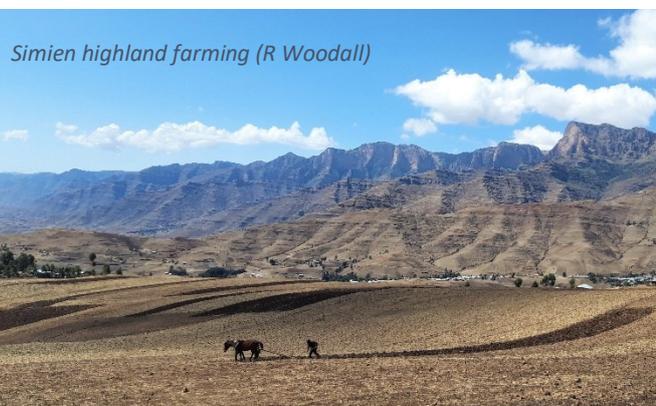
Giant Lobelia on Ras Dashen (R Woodall)



We reached Ambiko village (3130m), after a 8h30 hike. Camp was a level grassy area at the edge of the village, the mules here ahead of us with tents up and pre-dinner tea and coffee much needed! Ambiko is a noisy place at night: dogs howling and babies crying until after midnight, then a drumming and chanting wedding party moving around the neighbourhood until after 2 a.m. At last a couple hours sleep before our 5 a.m. breakfast - not the ideal prelude to summit day.

We departed at 6, initially by torch, on a good trail, a few turns and shortcuts, a rough road passing numerous giant lobelias coming into flower, bright morning sun, at the pass taking a trail leading to the east peak of [Ras Dashen 4543m P3990](#), some YDS3 scrambling higher up on good rock. There's a small concrete block inscribed with *Ras Dejen 4543*: we were told there was an Austrian team up there for two days so this is presumably the accurate height determined by differential GPS, consistent with the listings and our GPS readings. Careful hand level and Abney sightings indicated the west summit is just 1m lower. We were joined by a couple of young lads who helped with route finding - and eventually on the descent managed to sell us a few drinks. After the west summit we descended, some easy scrambling, 30 mins steady rain early pm (seemingly normal here), finishing in hot sun, a 9-hour day, these timings fairly typical for a small experienced party; large parties can take 12h. This completed my set of the six world 50 finest peaks which are located in Africa: Dashen is Africa's second most prominent after Kilimanjaro.

Next day we hiked via fascinating cultivated fields at 3000m elevation, to Arquaziye camp ready to climb our final Ethiopian summit [Silki](#) (4460m P268) the following day - more impressive rugged terrain with some scrambling (by the time I worked out that Kidis Yared (4435m P705) was the more prominent peak it was too late to include it). Day 6 involved an intricate well-made route contriving an improbable ascent of the huge headwall leading back to Chennek Camp. Our Simien circuit at an end, we headed for Addis Ababa and home, with 5 Ethiopian ultras bagged - this remarkable country has another thirteen ...



Simien highland farming (R Woodall)

Rob Woodall: Eastern Alps Ultras, August 2019

A two week trip featuring two P2000m summits, nine P1500m ultras, six P1000s and some world class limestone scenery with plenty of good scrambling and via ferrata. Peaks included the well-known Slovenian national highpoint Triglav – my 300th ultra - and Austria's Hoher Dachstein of woolly mitts fame.

My first week consisted of a clockwise tour of eastern Austria and Slovenia, dipping into the NE corner of Italy for Jof di Montasio. A few days ahead, it became apparent that the weather might challenge my ambitions; the 2-hour queue at Munich airport for my hire car seemed academic with the first afternoon very wet. However, the stair-rod rain stopped as I arrived at the trailhead for the snappily named [Berchtesgadener Hochthron 1972m P1278](#) and I managed to sneak in a pre-dusk ascent, dodging rocks sent down by the confiding ibex. [Hoher Dachstein 2995m P2136](#) was the most prominent of the trip, and one of the most spectacular. A cable car led rapidly to the summit snowfield, then I felt my way in low visibility to the start of the summit ridge then followed a slow party up the via ferrata to the busy summit. On the descent, folk seemed to decide that an old guy descending rapidly with no ferrata kit is best let by, and I was fairly soon down. The afternoon's peak [Zirbitzkogel 2396m P1502](#) lay a couple of hours drive south-east, a 2-hour ascent in pleasant scenery reminiscent of the Cairngorms, contrasting nicely with the morning's crowded peak. Then up and over a high pass into Slovenia, the sporty Fiesta I'd somehow ended up driving, very much at home on the empty pre-dusk hairpins.

[Grintovec 2558m P1706](#) wasn't quite as advertised: there had been a re-route since Petter and Martin's 2012 ascents. The new route was well marked, and I was soon at the hut. Ahead, a few groups of locals were following the well-made path winding its way between limestone crags, its cloudy summit offering tantalising glimpses of big drops – an impressive landscape. My plan for the next 2 days was to be Triglav then Montasio - but Wednesday's forecast for Montasio had been looking wet for some days. Suddenly, tomorrow was good for [Jof di Montasio 2753m P1597](#) and Wednesday OK for Triglav. My meteorological dilemma resolved, I made the short diversion to Italy. Next morning I awoke at the trailhead – in cloud! However I was soon above it, with some impressively impregnable looking cliffs above to my right, while across the valley the near-ultra Kanin drew the gaze. Intermittent scrambling, copiously paint-marked with occasional cable protection, led to a scree slope, and above it was the famous Pipan's ladder – all 60m of it. An interesting ridge led to the summit. 2 young lads I met there, were evidently heading down the non-ladder route – I'd read of it, but decided to stick with what I knew. The grassy lower slopes were busy with non-summit folk enjoying the scenery and sunshine.



Pipan's ladder, 60m

There was thunder in Wednesday afternoon's forecast so it was a pre-dawn start for [Triglav 2864m P2052](#) – this iconic peak serving very nicely as my 300th ultra. Passing a couple of parties, I was soon climbing towards a headwall. It was hard to believe there's a route up there. There wasn't – I'd missed a turn! Having added 300m ascent to an already long day, I descended, located the Prag Weg and enjoyed the scrambling route with its frequent cables, ladders and staples taking



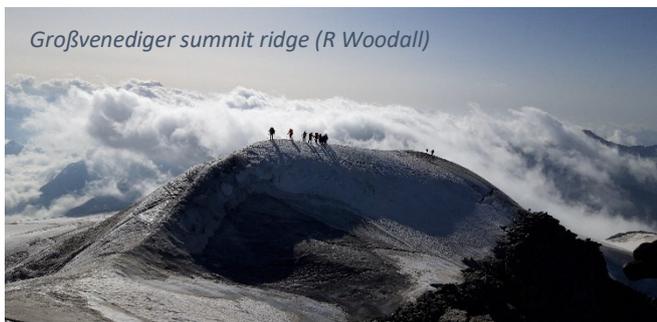
Triglav, ultra #300 - Tominskov route (R Woodall)

the fear out of this fun packed route. Above was a longish complex stretch of karstic limestone which needed concentration even in good visibility. Passing the large hut, I was back on steep – and very busy – territory. I tucked in behind a couple of young lads and progressed rapidly onto and along the narrow ridge, loving the exposure and scrambling, all well cabled. A little lunch at the chilly summit (in cloud) then down, catching up 4 locals not much younger than myself, descending at an efficient pace. Returning to the top of the Prag Weg, I kept right and took the more sporting (slightly less well protected) Tominskov route (overall it's probably more comfortable in ascent). Late afternoon I headed back to Austria for [Polinik 2784m P1580m](#), again making an early start with rain forecast for the afternoon. The peak has plenty of steep ground and a little scrambling near the summit. I was lethargic after Triglav's 2000m day but it's a fine ascent with plenty of variety. Friday's main target was the magnificent, surreal Ellmauer Halt/ [Wilder Kaiser 2344m P1552](#) – again looking impregnable but this time there really was a route up through all the verticality, involving a fair bit of ladder and cable work before the tiny, exposed summit was reached.

Again, I'd followed a swift local on the way up. He disappeared before I summited – but on the way down he reappeared and passed me like I was standing still, making light of the exposed precarious footings. In the evening I was due to meet Adrian and Lee – and an ahead-of-schedule Lee prescribed a cable-car-assisted ascent of Unterberghorn 1773m P1013 before he and I climbed Spitzstein 1596m P851 then met Adrian off the train.

Our first peak as a threesome was [Birnhorn 2634m P1665](#) in the morning, a shuttle bus and hut climb; in the afternoon the hut guardian assured us the weather would hold for a summit bid, which it did, albeit viewless. The Passauer Hutte is

in a superb location overlooking the impressive Mitterhorn. Next morning, we hiked down, got the minibus out and drove to [Großvenediger 3666m P1199](#), making the hut climb in time for dinner. This was the only 3000er of the trip, a glacier climb, with a few crevasses to cross and a strong crosswind making the summit ridge a little challenging. Narrowly escaping a soaking on the walk out, we drove out of the rain to the eastern edge of the Alps, near Graz, selecting [Geierhaupt 2417m P1172](#) as our next target. Not missing a chance to make an easy



Großvenediger summit ridge (R Woodall)

day difficult, we made a circuit, which included the slightly too interesting Hirschkarlgrat - unscheduled unmarked Alpine II scrambling on a chilly drizzly afternoon. Thursday, [Ameringkogel 2187m P1232](#) was a pleasant straightforward Cairngormesque ascent. With the weather cheering up, we spent the evening gazing up from our campsite to the summit of [Hochtor 2369m P1520](#) a dizzying 1800m above us. Next day we enjoyed a sunny intricate route, improbably reaching the summit of this superb hunk of limestone. The descent route extended the improbability further, tracing what in the event, turn out to be straightforward ledges then a zigzag cable route then a late hut lunch before walking out. Our last peak as a threesome was [Kasberg 1747m P870](#), stealing a dryish ascent on a wet day, even managing a minor bushwhack to safeguard the second of the twin summits, before enjoying a farewell beer on the sunny terrace of the Hochberghaus before Lee headed home.

We were now close to [Großer Priel 2515m P1703](#), and Adrian and I spent a leisurely afternoon at the trailhead before starting early Saturday on the steep rocky 1800m 20km round trip, with more impressive limestone scenery and a nice summit arete, busy on a sunny Saturday.

The grand finale was [Grimming 2351m P1518](#). The peak has no really easy routes but is very popular, with parties starting to head up a couple of hours before daybreak. With a flight to catch that evening, we were on the trail at first light, initially up through woodland, then a ferrata-protected headwall, then a scree valley hemmed in by cliffs with no evident way of escape. Where the path ends at a gully, we followed the well-marked intricate route with plenty of unprotected scrambling (though provoking later in descent), keeping us guessing as it zig zagged around obstacles to eventually reach an exposed cabled arête leading to easy summit slopes. The summit view included yesterday's Großer Priel, Hochtor, and Hoher Dachstein where I'd started my journey 2 weeks earlier.



Grimming descent (R Woodall)

This eastern end of the Alps has been a revelation to me; with the Alpine ultras mostly done, there are plenty of great looking P1000s to go back for.

Denise Mclellan: Ascent of Beerenberg, 2277m, P2277m, Jan Mayen, June 2019

The speck on a map on the middle of the Arctic Ocean which is the ultra-prominence called Beerenberg has had a fascination for me for some time. The Peakbagger website says that geo-politically it's not in Europe, yet being in between Svalbard and Iceland, it's an obvious aspiration for anyone who wants to climb European ultras.

After several false starts, a group of 10 of us chartered a 15 berth 50 m metal-hulled yacht called 'Valiente' through a Norwegian company called Seil Norge. The plan was to sail four days / 570 miles to Jan Mayen island, land, ascend Beerenberg and a few other peaks, leaving crew on board, and then sail back, all in two weeks. As is familiar to island baggers, landing was absolutely not a guarantee, and the prospect of seasickness both ways was included in the price. Weather was uncertain with gales, low cloud and poor snow conditions highly possible. And, of course, Beerenberg is a volcano classified as 'dormant' not 'inactive,' with eruptions recorded several times in the last 50 years. The island has no fresh water supply.



The yacht had three professional crew, but we were expected to assist with general duties. The crew and 5 of the mountaineers were Norwegian, with one Finn, one American (Greg Slayden of Peakbagger.com website) and 4 Brits- Richard McLellan, Chris Ottley, Tony Jenkins and me.

We were greeted at Longyearbyen airport, Svalbard by a huge stuffed polar bear and a warning not to leave the town's boundaries without a gun. Luckily, polar bears, after whom Bear Mountain (or Beerenberg) was named, have long left Jan Mayen island.

We soon adapted to life on board, taking turns to cook, make bread, wash down the decks and assist at the helm as we preferred. We learned that those who take seasickness tablets were not seasick, but full marks to Chris and Tony for acting as controls! Actually, the weather was fairly kind to us with light winds and motoring most of the way. The water generator malfunctioned which meant showers were limited but it was generally a comfortable, warm boat with en-suite cabins. We spent much time discussing equipment and approaches to the mountain, trying to plan for all possibilities. There was, of course, no mobile phone coverage, but we got a forecast by satellite phone each day. We saw almost no other ships the whole trip but did get great whale sightings.

Finally, at 01:40 on 11 June 2019, day 4, cloud-topped rocky cliffs came into view. It was our first sight of land since



Svalbard. As we had lost any real sense of day and night in the 24-hour daylight, and the weather was relatively calm, the decision was made to attempt landing immediately. The crew felt this was the riskiest bit of the trip and insisted we wore full survival suits as we were ferried ashore on a tiny rubber dinghy with outboard. As the beach (of volcanic grit) shelves very steeply, we had to wade ashore, feeling any moment that the buoyancy of our suits would 'capsize' us. Loads of kit and food for an army was also brought ashore in large waterproof sacks.

After all the planning it was simply magical to have arrived in this dramatic amphitheatre. Walrus Bay was backed by steep grey cliffs disappearing into cloud. Huge, bleached whale bones protruded from the grey volcanic sand and gulls called as they soared above in the swirling greyness.

Jan Mayen island has a permanently staffed Norwegian weather station; the following morning most of the base crew came to visit us as they get few visitors during their 6-month posting here. The non-Norwegians had to get formal permission to stay and our passports were duly stamped. The base crew told us the forecast for the next few days was exceptionally good and that we would soon climb above cloud into sunshine. They stressed we had to be self-reliant as they had no means themselves of getting off the island.



Beerenberg, Jan Mayen

So, we decided to start our summit attempt that day at 16:30. The landing bay is c 30 km from the peak and although there is a gravel track around the coast, the route goes up and down over the mountainous spine of the island. Carrying three days of food, bivy stuff plus glacier gear meant we had heavy packs.

We were all feeling weary at c 22:30 when we suddenly left the valley of fog and entered a mountain of sun and bright snow. The transformation was uplifting! At 23:30, at 650m, roughly at the snowline we bivi-ed in bright sun; the views of sharp snowy ridges all around us were amazing. I could hardly believe our luck with the weather.



Traversing the crater rim of Beerenberg

We set out at 08:30 the next morning, leaving bivy gear behind and crossed the snowfield. We roped up where the angle changes and crevasses appeared. It was a straightforward plod in sunshine up the snowy mountain, zigzagging to avoid obvious icy slots and manage the steepness- such a joy to see the whole island above the cloud level.

Finally, at c 16:00, we reached the mighty crater rim, seen from our bivy site, and I realised we really were going to make it. We added crampons for the final icy crest walk to the small, domed and snowy summit and let out a whoop of delight as we reached it, drinking in the cool crisp air and stupendous snowy views.



View SW of Jan Mayen from summit of Beerenberg

Then, it was time to go down. The cloud briefly lifted off the whole island revealing the coastline- a rare sight indeed. However, the sun made the final snowfield very porridgy. We regained our bivy site at c 21:00 and had another dried meal and rehydrated, before going to sleep in the brightness, getting burned lips, but drying soaking socks on a rock to a crisp.

The crew warned that if the forecast changed we might have to leave the island at short notice, but in fact we spent a further four days on the island exploring the other even less frequently ascended

peaks in small groups, bivi-ing out above clouds in continuing amazing stable, sunny, dry weather and enjoying a unique feeling of remoteness. In total I walked 95 miles on the island, ascending 14 (some did 16) P100m summits (of 18 in total). This number includes two P600s and the one P1500m ultra prominence.

The lower terrain was most unusual with thick, unstable moss, with some warm and sulphurous gravel patches. Higher up there was snow. We saw lots of birds- Puffins, Terns, Fulmar, Great Skua, Arctic Skua and Little Auks and some interesting World War 2 defences, amazingly preserved by the cold. It's said to be the only part of Norway not controlled by the Germans during WW2, but the defending troops must have felt very isolated!

The return sail had some final, unexpected excitement. On the second day, in stronger winds and rougher seas, the crew announced that a 'Russian' canvas trawler bag had become caught in the propeller and we could not use the engine. We thus set sail for Bodo, and later Tromso, in northern Norway, many miles further than planned. Luckily, contrary to the forecast, the sea calmed 24 hours later, and the



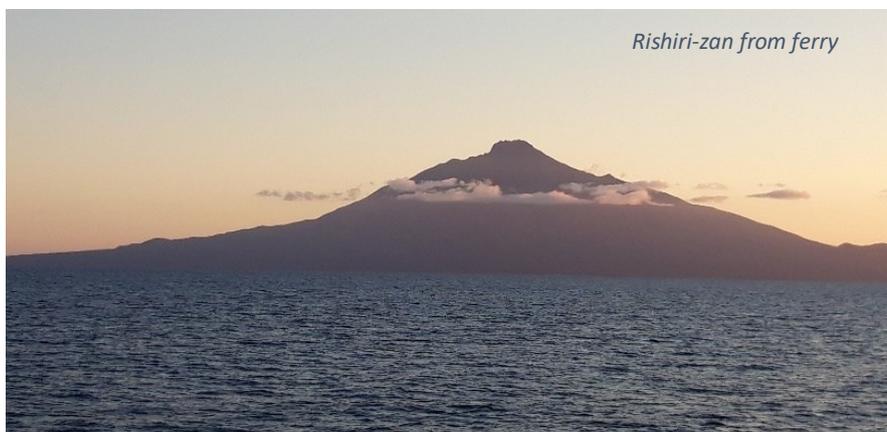
determined crew cut the bag off (2 hours in the cold water). It then transpired that the prop shaft coupling was damaged, and we could only go at low speed. We cooked waffles to boost morale. However, the wind obliged, and the crew also eventually managed to repair the coupling, such that we actually arrived in Longyearbyen only 18 hours later than planned.

Svalbard is a wild 'frontier town' of migrant miners, tourists and reindeer and also a Norwegian tax haven. This makes it just affordable to drink alcohol there. So, it was with mixed feelings that we said goodbye over a beer that night, all delighted that we had achieved our objective with no serious mishap.

Rob Woodall: Typhoon and Ultra bagging in Japan

Japan is an ideal venue for peak bagging, with good trails and well-developed infrastructure. It has 21 P1500m ultra-prominent peaks – one of the biggest 'doable' national totals (Italy has 22 ultras - if Cima Brenta turns out to be a P1500 – it needs a survey; Greece has 18). Adrian Rayner led a very successful trip in 2012 when we visited 8 ultras, including Fuji, Hokkaido's 2 ultras and several in the Japanese Alps. By good fortune we bagged Ontake-san; 2 years later the peak erupted with tragic consequences, and remained closed for several years. We travelled by public transport and one abiding memory is our commandeering a Shinkansen bullet train coach as a drying room! A return visit was long overdue.

Most of my 13 outstanding peaks were straightforward, but a few stood out as more challenging. The first of these was 1721m [Rishiri-zan](#), a volcanic island summit off the NW tip of Hokkaido, which I did by public transport. Arriving at Tokyo's Haneda airport Saturday evening, I put my main bag in storage, took the underground to a pre-booked bunkhouse, then on Sunday took a morning flight to Wakkenai on Hokkaido. A bus was waiting at the airport to take us into town, and in the 3 hours before the ferry I was delighted to discover a 'new' (unlisted on Peakbagger.com) P100m HuMP – with a view of Rishiri.



Rishiri-zan from ferry

On the ferry I had the company of Andreas from the USA – we'd discovered via the chatty and informative [Hiking in Japan](#) Facebook group that we were both on the same ferry - and in the same bunkhouse. His meticulously planned 10-week trip made my 4-week trip seem a hurried, disorganised affair. Next morning, I and a few fellow hostellers were delivered to the trailhead at first light and I enjoyed a good ascent on a well-defined trail. The upper section was severely eroded and there was talk of closing the peak, but instead the authorities have put considerable resources into stabilising and trail construction. The south summit is highest, and a little tricky to reach, involving some bushwhacking. It's a spectacular peak, even though the top was in cloud. My leisurely descent included a few bonus summits before catching the afternoon ferry back to Wakkenai. Walking back across town I was amused by the trilingual road signs - English signs are common in Japan, but this port is only 65km from Russia's Sakhalin peninsula. Booking.com options are limited in town, and the place I booked, looked like a closed-down retail premises. The owner appeared, reprimanded me for entering my room with my shoes on, then cable-tied the cupboards after I made a brief search for kitchen utensils! I slunk next door to McDonald's. Next morning, I was out early to investigate the trig symbols scattered liberally across the Peakbagger app's topo mapping for the town. I was having so much fun that I nearly missed my flight back to Tokyo. A feature of ANA's in-flight service was ... cold green tea. By and large, even the Japanese passengers showed no interest in it, but I needed to rehydrate after my airport dash; I didn't let the foul-tasting liquid beat me!



3 languages,
Hokkaido

The logistics of my 3-day trip to Rishiri worked well, but I'm not sure I'd have survived a month of it. I met Pete at the airport and we picked up our rental car. We got stuck into the Tokyo rush hour traffic, but soon discovered that we couldn't work the in-car navigation system and neither of my phones could find the satellites. In time we sorted ourselves out and arrived at the **Mt Fuji** trailhead late evening. Fuji was Pete's highest priority target and I'd planned to drop him at the trailhead, bag another ultra and then collect him in the evening. This turned out to be an unrealistic plan; fortunately the weather forecast came to our rescue. With a wet weather forecast for the next day, and Pete's body clock still on UK time, he bagged the big peak overnight while I slept in the car. Then next morning I drove to [Shirane-san](#) (2578m P1608) which we climbed together in the rain. It started with a cable car, then a forest trail, then a twin-topped summit followed by a rocky scrambly descent. The next Booking.com offering was again eventful: we foolishly tried to navigate there by postcode; Pete only later recalling that Japanese postcodes aren't always reliable indicators of location. After a phone call, we met our hostess at the local Seven-Eleven store and were soon installed in a friendly homestay. We were well placed for [Hiuchi-yama](#) (2462m P1632) – a long but gentle ascent through woods and marshland traversed by lengthy sections of boardwalks – with passing places! In the afternoon we drove to the fine old city of Matsumoto,

settling into a peak-a-day rhythm which would serve us well for a week (until Miyanoura, an island peak with logistical issues which would take some research and perseverance to solve). Next day was an early start to catch the shuttle bus to the [Hotaka-dake](#) (3190m P2305) trailhead; an excellent scrambly peak, the most European-Alps-like of our trip.

Mae Hotaka Dake



After two good-weather peaks, the rain was back with a vengeance for the next two (straightforward) peaks. An evening drive was punctuated, as came to be our pattern, by a Seven-Eleven meal. These convenience stores are in every town - uniform layout - we always knew where to find what we needed. Even better, they'd microwave the ready-meals for a small charge, and a hot water dispenser assured us Englishmen of our evening cup of tea. [Haku-san](#) (2702m P1892) was straightforward, and surprisingly busy for a wet Saturday. A long drive saw us at the [Hakken-zan](#) (1916m P1731) trailhead just before midnight, in the hammering rain – the onset of a typhoon which would be at its height the following afternoon. A first-light start therefore, and a woodland ascent, meant we avoided the force of the wind until the very summit. Back at the trailhead we were accosted by the car park attendant who insisted on a few extra Yen for the half hour of the

previous day which we'd spent in the car park, as apparently attested to by his CCTV! We paid up, drove off and dried out, treating ourselves to an Airbnb. Arriving late afternoon in heavy rain, we were greeted at the door by a rather nonplussed resident – the owner wasn't home. We soon matched the photos with the spare room and settled in for a relaxing evening. The owner arrived later with his family for a quick hello – they lived elsewhere and we had a well-equipped kitchen to ourselves.

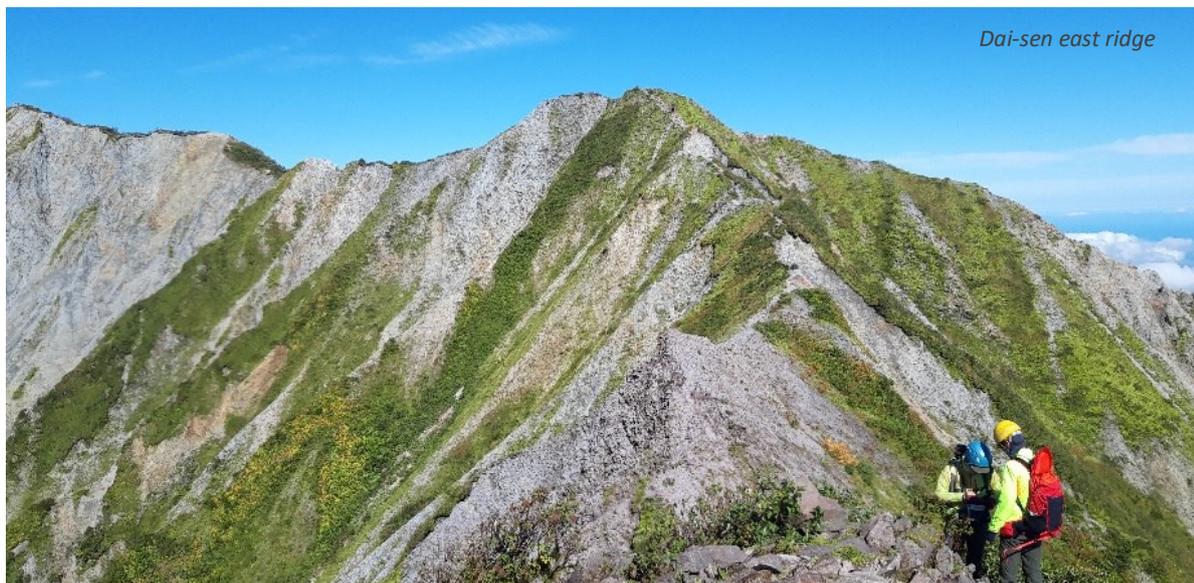
Rainy board-walking on Haku-san



We were now on the island of Shikoku which has 2 ultras. [Tsurugi-san](#) (1955m P1535) was the lower of the two, by a few metres. Our fairly short drive to the trailhead nearly turned into a very long one, with the *Ishizuchi-san summit ridge* tortuous mountain road closed due, we assumed, to typhoon damage. We also assumed the sign was probably precautionary. We soon encountered a digger – fortunately not blocking the road – and passing assorted minor storm debris we were soon at the trailhead for a relatively short and almost rain free ascent. That afternoon, our fairly easy day became more difficult when our little Wagon-r blew a tyre on the expressway. 3 hours and several long translator-mediated phone calls later, we made it to a tyre repairer just before closing time, and to our next trailhead by late evening, in rain which cleared by next morning. The standard ascent of [Ishizuchi-san](#), the 1982m Shikoku island highpoint, starts with a cable car, then a woodland trail punctuated by several steep chains (which we bypassed in

the greasy conditions) and substantial metal staircases. The first of the 3 summits has a large shrine; the second has a tiny shrine reached by an exciting scrambly arête; the third involves more scrambling, and as far as I could tell from my cloud-interrupted hand-levelling, is about 1m lower.

Our next peak [Dai-sen](#) (1729m P1629) was my second crux peak, with a crumbly arête which had turned Petter Bjorstad back three years earlier. Subsequent research by Denise Mclellan established that the east ridge was less crumbly and



Dai-sen east ridge

occasionally done. We'd been tracking a 2-day good-weather window for the last week, with our schedule built around climbing this peak in good conditions. The sketchy route info was good enough – we missed a turn on the way up and had a rather excitingly steep ascent which we hoped we wouldn't have to reverse, and the summit arête was rather exciting in a couple of places where the vegetation didn't hold it together so well, with a cross-wind raising the stakes, but we made it – and enjoyed our first summit view in five days, out over the sweep of Honshu's west coast. We passed several other parties on our way down; the route is well established and much easier than our off-route ascent.

Down well before midday, we headed SW for the island of Kyushu, with our next ultra a long drive and a ferry ride away. An early morning ascent of [Kirishima-yama](#) (1700m P1363) (its impressive crater disappointingly hidden by drizzly cloud) left us with the rest of the day to make ferry arrangements for Yakushima, a small island 200km south of Kyushu. We'd decided to take the car across on the overnight ferry – but the *Hibiscus* was out of service for maintenance. So we booked our vehicle onto next morning's ferry, found a rather comfortable hotel room at a knock-down price with a view of O-take 1110m P1035 (Japan's most active volcano; look don't touch) – and enjoyed a lazy afternoon. The morning ferry got us to Yakushima at 1230, we hustled across the island and were walking by 1400. [Miyanouura-dake](#) (1936m P1936) is one



Active crater near Nakadake

the wettest places on earth and our 5h40 round trip was in mostly heavy rain; our last hour was by head torch. At least it wasn't cold (we didn't wear waterproofs), and the cedar forest is very good. The following afternoon's ferry got us back into Kagoshima at dusk, and an evening drive got us within range of the Kyushu island highpoint. [Nakadake](#) (1791m P1791) is a popular mountain, with a couple of optional extras including some scrambling and a view of an active crater – and good weather which was to last for the next three days.

Re-crossing the bridge to Honshu, we reached Osaka by late evening. Searching for somewhere high which will be cool enough for sleeping, we spotted the near-drive-up [Mt Rokko](#) (930m) which on-the-hoof research indicated to be a P600m summit. This was a quick easy bag the next morning, then we completed our northward drive back to the Alps in time for an afternoon ascent of

[Kisokomaga-take](#) (2956m P1746), involving a cable car followed by a fine scenic hike, and the entertainingly scrambly Hoken (P61m) on the way down. This was a repeat for me but new for Pete, part of his plan to reach the 100-ultra mark on this trip. Next day, however, Pete's plan for Kita-dake was abandoned as the need for a shuttle bus won't quite fit into the day. Instead his 99th ultra was Yatsuga-take; instead of repeating it I drove north for [Asama-yama](#) (2568m P1251). On arrival at the trailhead I discovered it had erupted just 2 months earlier! Brief online research suggested the normal (western) approach was out of bounds, but signage at the eastern trailhead just said to go at own risk. There was a good trail all the way (regularly used by volcanologists – there's a buried shelter near the crater rim). The crater was enjoying a quiet smoke and probably quite safe, but given its recent history I was soon jogging back down. Next day we bagged one more peak together, [Norikura-dake](#) 3026m P1236 before Pete headed back to the UK.

Unexpectedly I had new company for my last week. Denise's contact for the Dai-sen route was a Japanese peak bagger, and after our ascent, I'd sent him a courtesy email thanking him for his help. He was keen to meet us, and somehow a plan evolved for him to join me for a few days. So at Matsumoto I left Pete, collected Tsutomu and we headed north for some P1000s (my last 2 ultras were also in the north). Our first was [Nishi-Azuma-Yama](#) (2035m P1046). This involved a rather elderly cable car followed by three chairlifts and a hike. The cable car was out of commission so there was a replacement van service – this information was conveyed at some length in Japanese and I was glad of my local guide! That evening we stayed at a traditional Japanese hotel with futon beds and a communal (gender separated) bath. Memorably the first thing that Tsutomu did on arrival was to complain about the view – we were given a free transfer to the next floor with a view out across the city. We also had a restaurant meal – the only one of the trip. Ironically it turned



out that my Japanese 'guide' also preferred Seven-Eleven meals! [Zao-san](#) (1840m P1278) coincided with typhoon #2 of 4. It's a short hike, windy but we're early enough to avoid a soaking. We're joined in the fancy visitor centre by 3 coach loads of tourists. They omitted the crater viewpoint walk, and were happy to follow our lead and settle for being photographed next to the spectacular photos of the colourful crater. Next day our ascent of [Hayachine-san](#) 1917m P1465 was dry but very windy - we could barely stay on our feet at times, although the summit itself is quieter. [Kurikoma-yama](#) 1627m P1155, on the first Sunday in October, was overrun with foliage hunters: Autumn is a big deal in Japan, (much as it is in Northeastern USA) with people turning out in large numbers to enjoy the spectacle of the changing colours.

My last peak with Tsutomu was [Chokai-zan](#) (2236m P1886) my penultimate Japanese ultra. Despite the reasonable forecast, it was a little wild on top – all the way up we were passed by people descending dejectedly having failed to summit. We had both travelled a long way so we persevered: it was windy, wet for a while, but not too bad. After the slightly lower Shichikozan with its trig point (a first-order trig station, as Tsutomu explains) in poor visibility we found the chain-assisted descent to the col then enjoyed a complex blocky scrambly ascent, including a short tunnel with a mini shrine, to a fine rocky summit, surrounded by several others which my hand level confirmed to be lower. Ideally I'd have climbed near-ultra Gassan (1984m 1489). But with typhoon #3 arriving, I decided to join Tsutomu and his friends for a visit to [Yahiko](#) (634m) – some on-the-fly research having established it's a P600; indeed nearly an island. In the event they settled for a look at the (famous) shrine. I bade them farewell and made the rainy ascent solo, glad the whole route was in trees as the weather was very wild.

My final ultra was [Dainichi-dake](#) (2128m P1588), timed to coincide with 2 days of good weather. Petter had climbed this in 2016 by a long route (in bad weather) but mentioned a more direct route from the south may be possible. After some online research helped by Tsutomu, I decided to give this a try. With a first-light start I made good progress along the gated-off road, but when it ended I had difficulty following the overgrown route, getting into a few precarious situations before it became clear I wouldn't have time to summit that day. Retreating, I drove round to Okawa, to climb the peak from the ESE. Another first-light start, but this time on a good trail. I passed a couple of folk – then was passed by a runner.



Yahiko shrine

Emerging from the forest, the trail followed an entertaining scrambly ridge, then a mostly easy trail led past 3 huts, with many ups and downs and frequent fine views including my objective. Iide-san, at 2105m only 23m lower than the ultra, was reached in 4h15, and Dainichi itself just inside 6 hours, in excellent weather. On the way back I stop off to find 2 well-hidden trig blocks. Japanese triangulation points are only 30cm tall, and in scrub they can be hard to find, and the last one cost me half an hour (but was the only 2nd-order of the trip – and I never did find a 4th-order trig). I'm down just before dark – it's been a superb, long day, completing my quest for the 21 Japanese ultras in the best possible way. Logging my ascent, I'm first on Peakbagger.com to complete this list. But not for long – Petter Bjorstad has taken advantage of the same weather window to complete his outstanding 2 ultras, and he completed the list on Dai-sen about an hour before I submitted Dainichi (albeit a day after I planned to summit that peak)! As I'd been following his excellent trip reports, and he was unlucky in 2016 to have been stopped by Ontake (closed by the fatal 2014 eruption) and Dai-sen (due to lack of good route info), I could hardly complain, and it was a nice coincidence that we finished on the same day. Petter's trip was quite an adventure, as he realised all too late, after he had booked the flights (and after he had already left Norway) that he needed an International Driving Permit. Hence a hastily contrived public transport plan.



Dainichi - Japanese ultra #21/21

an hour before I submitted Dainichi (albeit a day after I planned to summit that peak)! As I'd been following his excellent trip reports, and he was unlucky in 2016 to have been stopped by Ontake (closed by the fatal 2014 eruption) and Dai-sen (due to lack of good route info), I could hardly complain, and it was a nice coincidence that we finished on the same day. Petter's trip was quite an adventure, as he realised all too late, after he had booked the flights (and after he had already left Norway) that he needed an International Driving Permit. Hence a hastily contrived public transport plan.

I had all of Friday to get back to Tokyo for my Saturday flight home, with [Sanbonyari](#) 1917m P1010 lying neatly on my route. It's very wet overnight, with the next typhoon (a big one) on its way, but the morning is almost dry and the ascent much more interesting than I'd guessed from the map, with chain-assisted scrambling giving way to an easy-going summit – even a view. **Asahi-dake** 1896 P60m on the way down is the last peak of my trip, with an easy drive back to Tokyo. Memorably a 20km stretch of expressway through Tokyo was in tunnel all the way, with frequent junctions – an impressive feat by my civil engineering colleagues. Equally memorable was an encounter with the Japanese love of orderliness, just before dropping off the rental car. The filling station is placed awkwardly at a road junction, and I save myself a long detour by going in via the exit - the pump attendant is highly indignant! Niconico rental cars are



Sanbonyari summit

nonplussed by the expressway tolls we've incurred – 700USD! The little Wagon R has covered 7000km – with nothing worse than a flat tyre, so I can hardly complain.

As it turns out, my Sat am flight home is cancelled due to Typhoon Hagibis, nineteenth of the year and fourth of my 4-week trip – but this one the worst for half a century. Quoting from my (Facebook) [diary](#):

The Saturday turns out an unexpectedly adventurous day. Cancelled flight rebooked by 0900 😊. Next evening - but from Haneda airport 😞 just a simple 90 minute train or bus ride away 😊 (Booked a hostel near Haneda as nothing affordable near Narita, even the gruesome pod accommodation used last night was full.) Express Bus and Narita Express both cancelled due to typhoon 😞. Keisei Line limited express still running 😊 Except it stops halfway at Aoto: typhoon 😞 (it's above ground, surprised it was running at all). Continue on local train in vaguely right direction til it stops.



Then an official gives me a Tokyo Subway Map, clearly used to lost tourists 😊. Orange line (Asakusa) to Daimon then monorail to Haneda, then 3 stops along the Keikyu line, sounds simpleish 😊. Monorail quite exciting, I guess they are quite hard to blow over 😊. Get off one stop before airport at Tenkubashi to change to Keikyu line, but all closed up, info boards blank, apparently closed down due to typhoon 😞 Monorail closed down 10 mins later. Only a mile from hostel now 😊. Station phone has number for taxi in English 😊 but just a recorded message in Japanese 😞. Head outside, not too wet, just a mile walk, only proper rain for 5 mins. Then how to find anonymous unmanned hostel 😞. Automated check-in system, standing out in the rain, doesn't work 😞. Luckily 2 friendly Japanese lads let me in, quick email gets check-in sorted 😊. Neat little room, kettle, and I have a teabag left 😊 😊.

It had been an excellent trip, with many good peaks, a few obstacles overcome, interesting culturally – the Japanese love their mountains and there are plenty of them, mostly very accessible. Recommended!