

RINGS OF FIRE 2002

The biennial battle between humans and Galloway was rejoined on the weekend of 17/18 August. Once again the Gallllo way terrain defeated almost half of those brave souls who dared to challenge the ascents, tussocks, rocks and holes. The weather was the usual mix of rain, showers, some bright spells; and gale force winds for the competitors on Bruce's Crown who bivvied on Tarfessock on the Saturday night. (At least it kept the midges subdued.)

The Rings are not only a measure of stamina and running ability but also pose one or two tests of careful navigation to provide a complete mountain experience. Newcomers to the Rings can often be caught out by these 'traffic light' controls where running speed must be reduced to give time for the control finding especially in the mist or clag.

As we sat in the finish building on the Sunday morning the door was flung open and in rushed the first finisher, only there were two finishers, dead heating after nine and a half hours. Colin Brash and Rob Blyth are experienced Bruce's Crown veterans and have always been closely matched and so first equal seems a fitting reward for their years of close competition. (They would seem to be ideal KIMM partners.)

On the Heart of Granite John Goldsworthy showed the benefits of the training which he has been doing since becoming a hill running vet for Scotland. No doubt the competition from his sons has also spurred him on to greater things in the hills.

No records were broken this year but given the weather conditions and wet terrain it was not surprising that improvements in Rings times remain elusive.

RESULTS

In the results which follow the intermediate times are shown rounded to the nearest minute, however the relevant seconds were used in the calculations of the gross time, rest time and net time. This explains why there may be an apparent discrepancy of one minute in some of the results.

BRUCE'S CROWN: 42 FLAT EARTH MILES (9.07 START)

[illegible]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: A CHANCE TO SAY THANK YOU

The Rings seem to occupy more and more organisational time as each event approaches. It remains difficult to find enough helpers who are capable of undertaking the responsibilities and in some cases rigours of assisting out on the hills. This makes my indebtedness to the resourceful and valiant people who help at each event ever greater. And so I should like to express my gratitude to

- Bob Peace for putting out and bringing in the controls on the Rhinns of Kells, for manning Dee Brig as well as his many helpful suggestions.
- Archie and Ewan Wylie who offered at short notice to man the forest road/gate checkpoint under Curleywee.
- Ray McCutcheon and helpers for putting out and bringing in controls, for manning the rocky outcrop of Craignairny and helping at registration
- Peter Foulds for enduring the gale force winds on Tarfessock at the overnight bivvy and helping at registration
- David and Leslie Martin for their hospitality at Gala Lane for those on Bruce's Crown
- Sandy White of Forest Enterprise for his assistance and advice about permission and access
- Glyn for his help and guidance from his experience of organising the Rings, putting out controls and helping at registration
- Kenny McKenzie from my old school for volunteering to man Curleywee
- Alan Whiteside, who manned the Sluice of Enoch for most of the weekend
- And thank you to all those who helped at the finish while waiting for friends to return.