

THE RINGS OF FIRE AUGUST 14/15 2004 RESULTS

SHEEP, EXAMS AND THE BACK OF BEYOND.

One hundred years ago the wool from a large flock of sheep was enough to pay the wages of a shepherd. In modern times the wool is almost worthless and so the economics of sheep farming means that fewer and fewer sheep now roam the Galloway Hills. In turn this has given the infamous tussocky grass and heather the opportunity to grow to new heights, and depths, and so to make the going underfoot ever tougher. This, combined with a hot, humid Saturday produced some of the longest winning times on Bruce's Crown in recent years and longer than average times on Heart of Granite.

At the same time as mere mortals were battling against the Galloway Hills the exam results in Scotland and England were being announced, with the customary comments that exams are becoming easier. No matter what may be true about the exams, the Rings seem to be more difficult than ever and just to complete the Heart of Granite or Bruce's Crown is a real achievement. Almost half those who set out are defeated by the demands of the Rings. If you were one of those, then put it down to experience and please come back in two years' time and show the Galloway Hills who is in charge. You or the hills?

One of the attractions which make the Rings so different is the remoteness of both Galloway and the routes of the two races. I think this aspect of the event can be summed up by Philip Musson's description that 'This is the event in the back of beyond'. Yes Philip, that's the whole point of the Rings.

BRUCE'S CROWN

Rob Blyth showed that once again he is the master of Bruce's Crown. His stamina and navigational strengths ensured that he pulled away from Douglas Brown over the closing stages after these two 'weel kent' rivals had kept close to each other throughout the event. The early morning mist on Sunday led many astray on the confusing fingers, or rigs, coming off the Merrick, and even experienced Ringers made mistakes here, trusting perhaps to intuition rather than the map and compass. Gareth Bryan-Jones produced the fourth fastest run, at his first attempt, and at the youthful age of 61, however he was chased by a dog on the Rhinns of Kells and ran past the cairn on Millfire without punching. You'll just have to try again, Gareth, in another two years.

HEART OF GRANITE

Kenny Richmond was one of the few in either race to significantly improve their time over the last Rings. Kenny ran strongly throughout to better his previous best by almost 30 minutes and so to become a very deserved winner and also gain revenge on John Goldsworthy, the 2002 winner. A newcomer to the Heart of Granite, David Atkinson, produced an excellent first event to finish second, twenty minutes behind Kenny Richmond. Adam Anderson ran superbly but navigated 'like a headless chicken', (according to his uncle who was waiting at the finish) and so probably did not do himself justice on the Heart of Granite.

Even though it's only 20 miles, the Heart remains a formidable test of crossing rough ground and hill navigation.

HEART OF GRANITE (2004) 20.2 FLAT EARTH MILES (9.11 START)

NAME	HOME	CLUB	DEE ROAD	ENOCH SLUICE	FINISH	TIME					
(1) KENNY RICHMOND	GLASGOW	BELLAHOUSTON	10:52	13:53	15:52:30	06:41:30					
(2) DAVID ATKINSON (V40)	HOUGHTON	NORTHUMBRIA	10:55	14:15	16:14:14	07:03:14					
(3) ADAM ANDERSON	SANQUHAR	CARNETHY	10:48	14:05	16:14:15	07:03:15					
(4) JOHN GOLDSWORTHY (V45)	PENPONT	GALLOWAY	11:00	14:34	16:52:09	07:41:09					
(5) = TOM BEGLEY	KILWINNING	IRVINE	11:04	14:52	17:27:12	08:16:12					
(5)= SCOTT McKENDRICK	KILWINNING	IRVINE	11:05	14:52	17:27:12	08:16:12					
(7) NIGEL PRIESTLEY (V)	LOCKERBIE	ANNAN	11:23	15:04	18:09:30	08:58:30					
(8) NICKY SPINKS (F)	MIRFIELD	PENISTONE	11:25	15:37	18:12:12	09:01:12					
(9) PHILIP LIVERMORE	LEEDS	INDEPENDENT	11:26	15:37	18:12:12	09:01:12					
(10) IAIN POVEY	CARLISLE	CUMBERLAND	12:00	17:11	20:02:24	10:51:24					
(11) ROB EVESON	YARM	INDEPENDENT	12:35	16:56	21:09:15	11:58:15					
RETIRED											
NAT TAYLOR at Mullwharchar, WILLIAM BLAEN at DOW LOCH, RAYMOND BROWN at ROUND LOCH, ALAN ROWELL at CURLEYWEE											
GISELLE DUDLEY at CURLEYWEE, GAVIN SQUAIR, TONY McANDREW, RICHARD WINSBORROW											

BRUCE'S CROWN: 42 FLAT EARTH MILES (09.11 START) 2004

NAME	CLUB	DEE BRIG	GALA LANE IN OUT		CARMADDIE IN OUT		SLUICE OF ENOCH	FINISH TIME	GROSS TIME	REST TIME	NETT TIME	PLACE
ROBERT BLYTH (V)	HELM	12.10	16.11	16.41	20.04	06.30	08.28	10.26.39	25.15.39	10.56	14.19.39	1
DOUGLAS BROWN (V)	DUMF	12.10	16.09	16.39	20.04	06.30	08.28	10.33.58	25.22.58	10.56	14.26.58	2
DAVID ROGERS (V)	WEST	12.27	16.54	17.17	21.12	06.30	08.01	10.25.20	25.14.20	09.41	15.33.20	3
JAMIE THIN	CARN	13.36	17.49	18.21	22.23	06.30	08.22	11.12.55	26.01.55	08.37	17.24.55	4
MICHAEL DIVER	CLYD	13.06	18.16	18.21	22.23	06.30	08.22	11.12.55	26.01.55	08.12	17.49.55	5
BOB CARSON	IND	13.32	19.32	04.11	08.24	08.26	**	14.00.30	28.49.30	08.39	20.10.30	6=
IAN PATTERSON	WHISK	13.32	19.32	04.11	08.24	08.26	**	14.00.30	28.49.30	08.39	20.10.30	6=
PAUL GARNER (V)	IND	13.39	20.10	04.59	09.31	09.38	**	14.39.15	29.28.15	08.49	20.39.15	8
PHILIP MUSSON* (V)	LDWA	12.03	17.54	18.21	06.52	06.53	09.04	13.09.00	27.58.00	00.27^	27.31.00	9
GARETH BRYAN -JONES (sv)	OCHIL	12.33	17.16	17.46	21.15	06.30	08.03	10.40.40	25.29.40	09.45	15.44.40	missed 9
NICK GORDON	IND	13.47	20.10	/	/	/	/	/				
IAN MURGATROYD (V)	DUMF	13.47	20.10	/	/	/	/	/				
CHRIS SHAW	IND	15.03	/	/	/	/	/	/				
MATTHEW EASTBURN	DALL	14.58	/	/	/	/	/	/				
RICHARD CLARK	IND	15.05	/	/	/	/	/	/				
MATTHEW NOBLE	DALL	15.05	/	/	/	/	/	/				
DAVID FOWLER* (V)	IND	14.49	/	/	/	/	/	/				
MIKE FOWLER* (V)	LDWA	14.49	/	/	/	/	/	/				
GAVIN STEWART	MERC	13.36	/	/	/	/	/	/				
JOHN VERNON (V)	DARK	14.13	/	/	/	/	/	/				
KEITH FOSTER* (V)	IND	/	/	/	/	/	/	/				

NOTES (1) *EARLY STARTS: Philip Musson 07.00, Keith Foster 07.01, David and Mike Fowler 07.03.

(2) ^ Philip Musson bivvied overnight between Gala Lane and Carmaddie Braes so no rest time is available for Carmaddie

(3) Gareth Bryan-Jones completed Bruce's Crown but forgot to punch on Millfire after being chased by a dog!

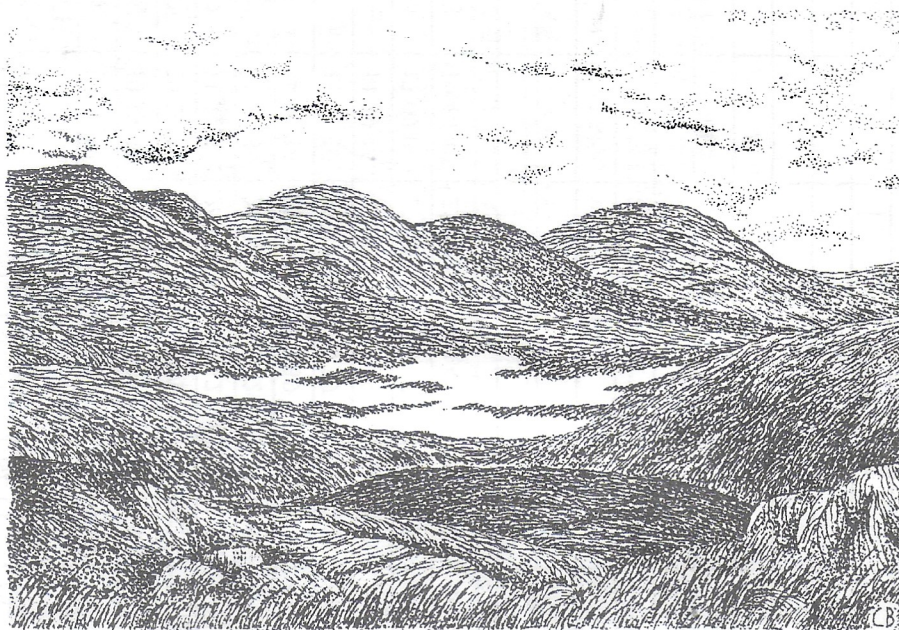
(4) **Bob Carson, Ian Patterson and Paul Garner reached the Sluice of Enoch after the marshal had left.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This gives me the opportunity to say thank you publicly to the devoted and selfless team who help to put on the Rings. Without them there would be no event. I hope that there are no oversights in the roll of honour below:

- Peter and Liz Foulds for putting out and bringing in controls and for the loan of equipment, and Peter and David Cain for taking charge of the bivvy on Carmaddie Braes
- Bob Peace for putting out and bringing in controls on the Rhinns at short notice
- Alan Whiteside, John Everard and the Minnigaff Scouts for once again manning the Sluice of Enoch
- David and Leslie Martin for their hard work and support at the Gala Lane bivvy
- Sandy White of Forest Enterprise for his unfailing help and assistance to promote the event
- These Rings were fortunate to have the services of the Dumfries and Galloway RAYNET team who provided essential radio cover, giving the organiser peace of mind, knowing where everyone was. The team were led by John McCulloch and I should like to thank John and his team for their eternal good humour and helpful approach
- Ray McCutcheon for his help at Registration and during the event at Dee Brig
- Glyn Jones for bringing in controls
- Archie Wylie for manning the Forest Road crossing.

And thank you to all who took part for supporting the Rings. The event will never be a big-time race, deliberately so, to protect the Galloway hills from the emergence of paths and from human contact, and to maintain that feeling of being alone, far from other competitors.



RINGS OF FIRE is sponsored by Lloyd's Motors Ltd, Chandler Way, Carlisle
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