

# The Paddy Buckley 24 hour record (and how not to break it)

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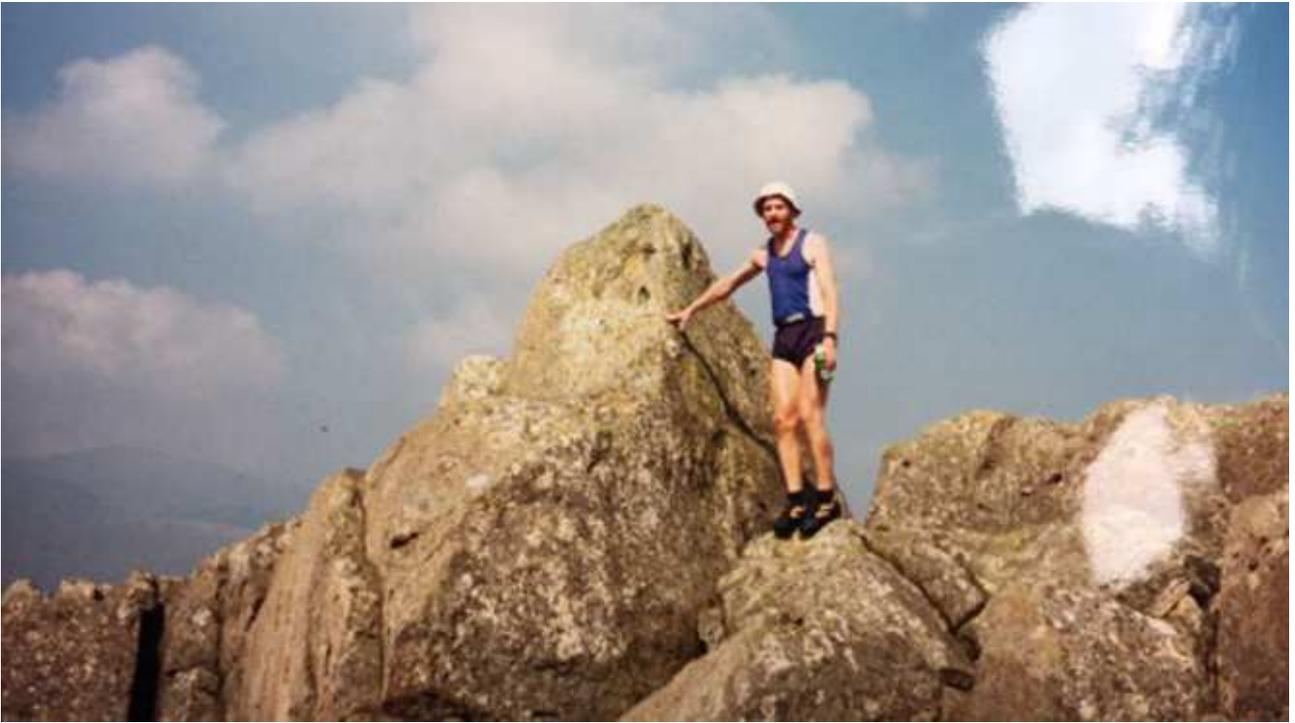
The arrival of an unexpected batch of old photos from a friend set me down the road of unearthing the history of my 3 year's of attempts on Adrian Belton's 1989 record (51 peaks including all the Welsh 3000ft summits [technically excluding the then recently promoted Garnedd Uchaf which he unknowingly ran right past] ) for an extended Paddy Buckley Welsh Classical Round – a record which still stands, although I came close and a few others have tried it, including Mark Hartell a decade ago, and just this July, Tim Higginbottom. With the 24-hour Munros record falling at last, relocating this year to the Cairngorms, and the 1997 Lake District 24-hour record under annual assault, this longest standing 24-hour record seems overdue for some serious attention. Beware though – Belton was in the form of his life and made it look much easier than it is, completing in an outrageous 22 hours on a very hot day.

My first and best attempt was 19 July 1997. After a scratch Bob Graham Round the previous year with Mick Saunders and Andy Illidge (2<sup>nd</sup> time lucky, roadside support) - for the Paddy I enlist the consider-

*Above and right: Boundary Ridge*

able talents of Wynn and Steve Cliff and Yiannis Tridimas (Steve and Yiannis had done an extended PBR the previous year), along with Alan Duncan, Ronnie Jackson, Gordon Johnson, Rick Robson, Wayne Percival and Chris Taylor. Starting at Capel Curig, rapid progress over Section 1 in hot conditions, Hebog group a little slower, still warm over Snowdon with a bruised knee on (extra 3000er) Crib Goch, slow progress over the Glyderau with painful feet putting paid to my record attempt. Reinvigorated by porridge and painkillers at Ogwen I flew around the final section but didn't quite have time to fit in Garnedd Uchaf and Foel-fras, settling for a 53 peak 23:24 Round, with 6 extra summits en route but two 3000ft tops missing.

Never look back - a wise saying which I might have attended to - but would have missed out on some good adventures. 1999 saw no less than two attempts (plus in May a much more successful Cuillin Round completion). 25 June I tried a Friday evening start at Pen y Pass, tagging Crib Goch just before dark. A warm rapid evening traverse of the Snowdon section, still warm on Glyderau overnight, hot on the Carneddau with the out and back to Foel-fras successfully accomplished. Temperatures in upper 20s on the Boundary Ridge slowed my progress; I ground to a halt on Moel Hebog having already completed the equivalent of a Bob Graham in 20 hours. Thanks to support team Les Orr, John Hunt, Colin Donnelly, Chris Reade, Alan Duncan, Craig Harwood, Yiannis Rick and Steve again, Lewis Davies, Nick Harris and Wayne Percival.





Bwlch Cwmorthin

It was Paddy Buckley himself who suggested an autumn re-match; we reconvened on 4 September, this time starting at Llanberis (unlike the Bob, the Paddy has no specified starting point). Warm enough for vest and shorts over the Glyderau overnight, wonderful morning on the Carneddau including the by now well practised traverse out to the northern 3000ers. Again very hot on the Boundary Ridge (that surprise

batch of photos show us in shorts vests and sun hats), cramp set in on Cnicht, I took in some nice little extra tops west of Cnicht en route to Nantmor where I'd decided to call a halt. However, my retirement was overruled by Wynn, and I made a fair recovery over the Hebog group, but all too late; timed out and with sore feet I gave the final Snowdon section a miss. Thanks this time to Wynn Steve and Yiannis, Eileen Bond, Chris and Jess Taylor, Alan Duncan, Chris Reade, Wayne Percival, Gordon Johnson, Nick Harris, Martin Potter, Ronnie Jackson, Roger Boswell.

*My notes continue: The following day Chris Taylor ran the long Stretton Skyline and was 1<sup>st</sup> veteran and 7<sup>th</sup> overall, making his hold on the Mercia vets prize just about unassailable. Evidently that little Saturday morning training run on the Glyders was just the ticket.*

For 2000 I have a schedule for a 20 May attempt with a Llanberis start, no notes but a recollection of a hot day followed by a thunderstorm overnight. Not given to spending time on peaks in thunderstorms I abandoned the attempt at Nantmor having completed three sections including the Carneddau extras, in 12h47 – in the bag you'd have thought. Mercia were out in force with Ian Cowie, Glen Davies, Paul Cadman and Tim Werrett joining Bowlanders Wynn, Steve, Yiannis, Alan Duncan and Chris Reade.

My final attempt, in Sept 2000 during a fuel blockade when the first challenge was getting to the start, foundered early on in dense cloud overnight, but with nice conditions later on I had a great day out, finishing with 55 tops i.e. 8 extras, despite somehow covering slightly less distance than the standard Paddy and not including any of the extra 3000ers (omitting Crib Coch and the northern Carneddau). I think this might stand as the highest number of tops included in a Paddy Buckley Round – a record of sorts but not The Record. Again good Mercia support by Glen, Ian, Rick and Tim joining Wynn Steve Yiannis and Wayne. Great support, good times, a few bad times, variously unsuitable conditions over the years; Belton's 24-hour Welsh record still stands.

Plas Y Brenin



It's been 28 years – it's high time someone nailed it....