

FRANK CONQUERS SLIEVE DONARD FIVE TIMES

AT last year's Newcastle AC AGM Kevin Quinn suggested that the club recruit 20 runners to climb Slieve Donard 100 times in 24 hours — five times each.

Having consumed pints of the 'falling down water' it seemed like a good idea at the time. In the cold light of day, however, good sense returned and the scheme faded into memory, except for evergreen veteran Frank Morgan.

Frank went into training and decided that 24 hours was too easy — he decided on five ascents in 12 hours.

Saturday morning at 8.10am was the starting time for this charity challenge. Frank, in the company of Dave Watson, Micky Devlin, and the long lost John Savage headed off into the mist for the first climb. The route was up the Glen River, up the Black Stairs, through the boulder fields to the top and down the same way. The first run was trouble free for Frank but John Savage got injured and had to stop.

On his second run he was accompanied by Micky McAlinden, Gerard McAlinden and Dave Watson. Having completed the first leg in 1 hour 30 minutes Frank was in good form and again had a clear run up and down with only a slight deviation in the mist. The second leg was the quickest of the day, 1 hour 29 mins.

TOUGHEST

The third run was the toughest of the day and the slowest at 2 hours 9 mins. With Watson again keeping him company the pair talked

ATHLETE'S RUN FOR CHARITY

the biggest load of gibberish to pass the time. However, having run out of chat on the top of the Black Stairs the long struggle was on.

With no water and hunger setting in Frank was feeling the strain. At the top of Slieve Donard Frank decided to descend by the saddle to get some food from others taking part in the challenge. In the saddle the pair were offered a packet of biscuits and Frank, being a good natured generous person, divided the packet — Watson got one and he ate the rest.

After the third leg large quantities of food were taken on board as Frank does not run well on an empty tank. With the majority of the climb behind him he set off in the company of Marty McVeigh and a second run for Mickey McAlinden. Having consumed enough food for two men and three wee fellas Frank was back firing on all cylinders and completed the fourth run in 1 hour 44 mins.

The fifth run was in the company of Marty McVeigh and Dave Watson. It was at this stage that Frank realised that he would complete the five attempts well within the time and he skipped up and down the mountain with renewed vigour.

The charities to benefit from Frank's efforts are Children's Cancer Research

and MS.

Frank would like to thank everyone who helped, not only those mentioned in this report but all those too numerous to list for their support and all those who sponsored him.

Newcastle AC and all who took part in this charity challenge extend sincere sympathy to the wife, family circle and many friends of Pat McDonald who passed away during the challenge. Pat was connected to the event in his capacity of chairman of the Downpatrick Branch of the MS Society and will be greatly missed.

ROBIN THIRD

Robin Bryson carried the club colours with great distinction in Northern Ireland's premier 10K Road Race, the Daily Mirror Classic when he finished third in a time of 29min 24sec.

Robbie followed Englishman Dave Long and Dubliner Richard Mulligan home taking many notable scalps including Gerry McGrath (Dundrum/South Dublin), J Omae (Kenya) and Deon McNeilly (Willowfield). Robbie is in training for the Dublin Marathon and all looks to be going according to plan at this stage.

It is also time to wish all those connected with the club good luck in next week's two day mountain marathon.

An indepth report will follow next week when there will also be news of Newcastle AC members competing in last weekend's Fell Running World Cup taking place near Innsbruck in Austria.