

Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland
Edinburgh Section

Edinburgh
October 2008

Dear members,

Newsletter – Autumn 2008

welcome to the autumn newsletter. On the following pages are reports on the summer meets, details of forthcoming meets, and articles by members on their recent mountaineering exploits.

Enjoy!

Robert.

A Few Words from the President

by Patrick Winter

This year will not perhaps go down as an *annus mirabilis* in the annals of the club. We had a pretty poor winter and an even worse summer. I suppose to be fair we had some nice spring and autumn weather. My summer was constrained by a collar bone injury after falling off my bike whilst cycling back from work via the Pentlands. Injuries from bike accidents seem quite common in our club!

Anyway that meant that I had a bit more time than usual to try and press on with our plans for the Cabin.

A fundraising letter was circulated to members appealing for loans or donations in the event that an application for lottery funding was not granted and I am pleased to say that some very generous pledges were made. The outcome of the Lottery Grant Application is still unknown. The first was rejected on some relatively minor constitutional grounds. A second application has been re-submitted but they haven't got back to me yet. As far as I'm concerned no news is good news! We may know by the time of the AGM however at which time I will be able to report in more detail of the progress of the Cabin Project.

So we may still have to prevail upon those members who made pledges and I hope that your generosity will not need to be revised as a result of the credit crunch! By the way it is not too late to make a pledge if you want to! Anything gratefully accepted!

Returning to the subject of accidents and injuries briefly, I am sure that the whole club will join me in wishing Mike Wicks a speedy return to climbing after his mishap in Skye and also our relief that the an even more serious outcome did not occur. In fact without the intervention and prompt action of some of our other club colleagues this could have a very serious incident. Well done to all concerned!

Anyway by the time you read this newsletter some work in the Cabin will be complete because Alan, the builder / joiner who undertook to do the work has been up there doing what he can. The committee have spent many an hour debating as to whether or not he would get his white van loaded up with tools and materials up the steep vehicular track. Alan himself seemed confident enough, but I had more than a few doubts. Well the answer is he didn't but our cheery and ever helpful landlord, Richard Spencer intervened by lending him his quad bike. Thank you Richard!

On other hut matters Helen and John have had some niggling matters to resolve in relation to the renewal of the Smiddy Lease. It looks like it will all come right in the end and we owe them a big thank you to them for all the time and trouble they have spent on this vexed issue. More details no doubt at the AGM.

No less time consuming is the effort Bryan has made to try and get the Club registered as a CASC reported elsewhere in this newsletter, which culminated in a semi-farcical tribunal. For the time being [at least] the Committee have abandoned this Holy Grail; it seems that the sticking point is that unless we allow minors to be admitted to the Club, CASC status will elude us. This is a shame because this status would have afforded some very useful tax advantages for us that we could well do with just now.

Prompted partly by our frustrating encounters with bureaucracy in this last year or so Bryan and the Committee have attempted to modernise and simplify the Club Rules, the result of which, is also included in this Autumn Newsletter and will come up for discussion at the AGM. Please let us know **before** the AGM if you have any substantive objections to these proposed changes in order that we may try and iron these out before hand– otherwise we might not get our dinner – or our breakfast for that matter!!

Anyway talking of the AGM, I hope to see as many of you there as possible. Big thanks to Helen for all the organisation thus far and not least, for securing our first female after dinner speaker! I'm sure that will go down well in some quarters!

With best wishes
Patrick Winter
Club President

CASC Status Update

by Bryan Rynne

For the last year or so I have engaged in a long running discussion about the club becoming a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC), which would have given us some tax advantages with respect to donations.

HMRC have repeatedly turned us down because we do not allow minors into the club. The law states that clubs are allowed to discriminate if the discrimination is due to the nature of the sport, so I spent a long time arguing that we don't allow minors in due to the dangers in climbing and mountaineering. The HMRC representatives agree with that view of the dangers, but claim that this simply means that we cannot become a CASC.

This appears to be a dogma of HMRC, rather than anything in the legislation. Hence, I appealed to the independent General Commissioners of Taxation. The appeal took place in late September, and the results of this are summarised below (I sent this to the committee after the appeal took place). An update on what is below is that I have now formally withdrawn the appeal, pending sorting out the constitution.

JMCS CASC appeal (24/9/08)

I presented my case about minors and danger.

HMRC came up with various other grounds for turning us down that they had not told me about (various rubbish bits in our constitution that can be sorted trivially). They admitted they hadn't told me about these grounds but went through them anyway, and noted that they felt this meant that the appeal couldn't succeed anyway, whatever the commissioners decided regarding the minors issue.

The lay chairman (and the others) obviously felt that this was a bit unfair, and between the chair and me we opted to proceed to discuss the minors issue and leave aside the rest (at that point I conceded the point about the constitution – it can be sorted with minor redrafting – the minors bit is the substantive point).

Unfortunately, a couple of minutes later the legal clerk's eyes lit up when he spotted a piece of legal pedantry: since I was appealing the decision I had now lost – I riposted that I was appealing the grounds for the decision, as communicated to me by HMRC, but he was having none of that. I was appealing against the decision, and I had to be able to rebut all the grounds for the decision, even the ones I hadn't been told about (Kafka would have enjoyed this bit of the proceedings). Actually, the latter half of the last sentence was implicit rather than explicit (even as he put this view I felt that he was slightly embarrassed by it, despite his legal training).

Anyway, at this point HMRC and I got sent out while the panel conferred about this point. They spent about 45 minutes conferring, so clearly someone was on my side – I suspect that all the lay members were, given the tenor of the fairly sharp questions they were addressing to HMRC at this point (2 HMRC people turned up). However, the clerk overruled them and so essentially I had lost. At this point I withdrew my previous tactical withdrawal on the constitution, to keep the show on the road, but it was now 1.00 (i.e. lunch time), so the clerk announced an adjournment – until 5 November ...

We never even got to HRMC's case on the minors issue. When we emerged it was clear that the HMRC reps were a bit disgruntled with this turn of events, even though they had brought it about. Essentially, what they wanted was the appeal to run so that they could win the substantive point, but they wanted the rules to be such that, even if they lost, they won the game – if you see what I mean.

There is little point in continuing the appeal as it stands – I can't defend the constitutional issues, and they are easy to sort anyway. Hence, really I have to go back to square one and submit another application, that will then get turned down, then appeal all over again. However, there is no point anyway – I was chatting to the HMRC reps for 45 minutes before we went in, and they made it clear that they will not abide by any ruling against them on minors, and will simply keep appealing to ever more expensive courts until we run out of money, and they then win.

CORSICA – JUNE 2008 – Alarms and Excursions

by Helen G S Forde

During our island visit, John Fowler and I stayed 15 kms. from the North – West coast in an historic hill top village called Luna, living in vaulted rooms of a 15th century house, where the rough rock on which it was built intruded into, and was part of ,the interior walls, probably the original wine cellars. When night fell it certainly felt curiously cool.

The view from the garden, which was full of fig trees and flowering hollyhocks was stupendous, especially the sunsets which entertained and dazzled,a glorious backdrop to swallows and martins swooping and calling in the twilight.

But I digress. The days were planned and re-planned with the aid of Guide books and maps according to the rather erratic and fickle weather during our first week. Cloud was low on the first day so we made our way for crags at Lunin and managed two climbs before the rain came on, so, Supermarket then a walk beside the sea.

Hurrah, sun on day two. Breakfast outside, then we drove (actually every day we drove somewhere, down and round and across and through) to d'Illes Rousse, a delightful Frenchified port and climbed at popular sea crags in the hot sun. Usual bolted mixed grades on great scoops of golden granite.

Day three A petite expedition to Cap de Corse, with sun hats and small rucksacks, over torturous roads to St Florent where we shared a small boat by the very Corsican name of "Popeye" across the bay to a distant promontary. Then, dear readers, we walked the 10 miles back along a fascinating indented coastline. Coves of aquamarine sea, expensive yachts at anchor ,a massive yellow ochre Martello tower which had been bombarded during the Napoleonic wars and a bright blue lighthouse which was wonderfully cool inside. Home, tired and a little sunburnt.

Day four. It was at this point when I became very aware of my sore shoulder but just took pills and soldiered on, little knowing that worse was to come. Low cloud which we hoped might clear darkened as we drove South to Calvi, which is in central Corsica,and the temperature fell by 11degrees. We had set out to climb Arete de Corte but it proved too cold and misty. Instead, we drove up the zigzag road to Restonica Valley, precipitous nerve-wracking driving, missing passing wing mirrors by millimetres. Arrived at the parking area and somewhat glumly followed the tourists up to Lake Melo at 1000 feet. A stoney ascent with evidence of heavy rain as torrents and mini rivers cut across the path. Sat by the lake which was not beautiful but set about with darkly dramatic peaks, the red legs of the Alpine choughs the only colour amongst this mood indigo. Even cooler on the way down and as we were descending the metal ladders, John inadvertently stood on my fingers with his 14 stone and size 10 boots. I screamed out and cried quietly much of the way down in utter agony but decided they weren't broken just flattened. By then I felt sick with reaction – the drive home was not the best. I went to bed, low mist shrouding the house and all of Luna – a bit sad.

Friday 13th June a lovely sunny morning, I felt better and my fingers were black and blue but unbroken. Drove to a crag positioned above a village called Monticello with sea in the distance. Good granite slabs with only two other people there. I climbed badly, nervous about injuries but John climbed well a 4 and two 5s warm but windy. Went to the beach but

it was too windy to swim but the sea looked very enticing.

June 14th Drove south to tackle the Arete de Corte again but there was great difficulty in finding it because there had been a forest fire in 1999 when the guide book was written ,changing the whole landscape, the paths were now completely covered in impenetrable maquis. Not to be put off we drove to Crags at Cuccio high above the road beside a dam. We both led 3 climbs all 5 's then "Sulana" which only I led ,which was very airy and acrobatic- people stood and watched from the road all of which made me feel a little bit better. Home and planned for Monte Cinto tomorrow.

Up at 6 and away by 7am, a reasonable drive towards the mountain but then we realised with horror that we couldn't get up the track to the Refuge in our hired car. The track was half washed away with 2ft deep ditches and enormous insurmountable boulders. What a swine! We sat and fumed then made our way back to Lama. Very disappointed. Used the afternoon to take photos and paint pictures of Lama's architecture .Tomorrow we attack Monte Cinto from the North

Monday 16th June Up at 6 am beautiful morning and the Expedition set off for Monte Cinto again. Drove up the valley parallel to Restonica but much softer in aspect, with scarlet poppies lining the roads. Reached the car park at 7.45.am. Looking up at the vast rocky 10,000ft mountain, covered with patches of snow it seemed quite a daunting proposition for someone with a sore shoulder and bruised fingers. But hey, the sky is blue with cirrus clouds, and the path through the trees looks very inviting, so lets go! Walked briskly until the steepness and rock formations slowed us down and we were glad to see the occasional painted red dot, as route finding can be tricky. After two and a half hours we arrived at the snow line and changed into warmer clothes. Working steadily upwards the skies were still clear and although I was mildly affected by the altitude, it soon wore off when I sat down and shared a cheese baguette with a solitary chough. Made our way across the shoulder to what we thought to be the summit but soon realised that the true summit of Monte Cinto was much further away and much higher. Looking at the now cloudier sky we conferred and of course decided to go on. More gullies, huge boulder fields and daunting descents to gain the peak. Both tiring but we persevered and finally the white cross and marker came into sight . Took photos and ate nuts and raisins then started off down just in front of a quartet of very lightly equipped young Germans who we knew would overtake us pretty soon .This was really the hardest part of the day. Virtually twelve hours on our feet making ascents and descents on every kind of rock terrain imaginable, granite slabs, boulders, scree and long descents on snow. Equipped with decent boots we made a shockingly fast pace down the snow fields leaving the other party to negotiate the stones running with melting snow. Of course the youngsters caught up with us in the pine woods but were very politely impressed . The last stumbling steps saw us back at the car where we enjoyed the sensation of unbearable lightness on being parted from our boots and rucksacks but quietly pleased at our endeavours.

Tuesday 17th Market, lunch out ,beach.

Wednesday 18th June Lovely morning, up early ,drove with climbing gear and bathing costumes (a dated expression !) to the west of Calvi into the National Park area. Very bad, rough ,winding roads and yours truly felt very car sick. Extremely hot in the car park ,lots of people following the G20 trails. We walked through broad-leaved woodland beside a massive bouldered river and saw the crag on the other side. During the ascent I slipped on

wet mossy rocks and fell about eight feet, really shaken, bruised and a little cut. We continued to the base of the climb and I sat in the shade to recover while John went back to the car for more friends. After that things got better, a wonderful 4 pitch climb with good friction, a little cloud cover and a slight breeze. I led the most sustained pitch and felt justifiably pleased. Descended back down into the shade then drove down to the coast. Although it was 5pm we went to the beach to swim in the waves, as I reckoned it was good for my war wounds. Played frisbee on the sand then drove home to Lama in damp bathing suits for food and champagne – great day. “ The Lizard 5.5/ 5 /5 /4 “

Thursday 19th Sunny, drove high into the hills around Calvi where we left the car at a working monastery then followed an old Mule Trail. It was truly like paradise walking through the shoulder high grasses and myriad flowers, on an ancient narrow track. Butterflies flipped around us and kites circled in the wide blue sky. Back down to the beach about 5pm for another enjoyable swim

Friday 20th June Gloriously hot day, up at 6am and drove for two hours south to Ajaccio.

Eventually found the massive cliff, Monte Gozzo and made a very hard slog up through thorns and bushes, so hot! After an hour of this we arrived at the rock. I led first, anything to escape upwards into a breeze, then John. The climb wound upwards but was not as good as expected and became rather contrived. Six absails in the baking sun, now 92 degrees then down the dreaded path fighting our way through the thorns etc. The most super thing that happened today was spotting a wild tortoise on the path to the cliff, about soup plate size, coloured olive green and yellow. Its head was out so it was alive and not too traumatised by the encounter. Copious liquid refreshments were taken on the way home.

Saturday 21st Packed and finally left Lama. Last swim then picnic on the beach. Drove to Bastia the largest town on Corsica. Utterly charming, houses all around a harbour, hundreds of yachts bobbing at anchor, forty restaurants to choose from, wedding bells chiming from two church towers and bands playing. Fantastic last evening in Corsica.

January 2008

RJUKAN

A great weekend away!

David, Ruth, Sue and Terry nipped away for a weekend in Norway for some reliable ice.

Roadside ice climbing. It doesn't get any better than that!

JMCS ICE CLIMBING TRIP TO RJUKAN

An easy four day weekend destination to get some reliable waterfall ice

This is a short report of our January 2008 trip to the Rjukan area in Norway. There were four JMCS members on the group, Sue Marvell, Ruth McArthur, David Small, and Terry Lansdown.

Preparation

Well, frankly we didn't do much. We did manage one trip to the Ice Factor in Kinlochleven, on perhaps the best day of the

season 2007/08. Accommodation in Rjukan seems to fill up pretty quick, so we booked in early December for a late January trip. We got flights in November, but they could have been arranged late, as they were still the same price and with spaces still available just before we left.

Travel

We travelled out of Prestwick into Oslo Torp, a nice little airport. The flight was only a couple of hours but you effectively lose a day getting there and another getting back.

Picked up a hire car from the 'National' at the airport. The roads were pretty dicey, so it took us a three hours to get from Torp to Rjukan.

Digs

We stayed at the 'Rjukan Hytteby' cottage complex in the middle of the town. The self-catering cottages were up to typically high Norwegian standards, warm, clean and

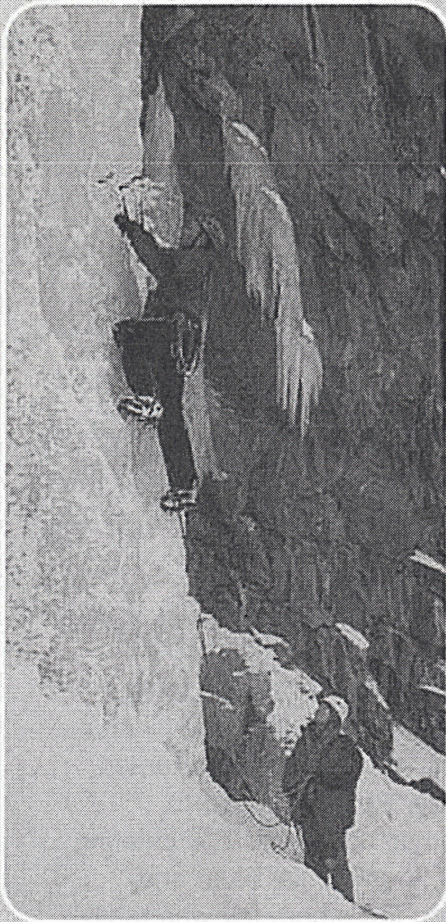


convenient. You can walk to multi-pitch routes from here in less than half an hour.

1st Day Climbing

A cracking day with David and I climbing and Sue with Ruth. We headed out to the 'Ozzimosis' area, a good 'warm up and get used to the grades' area. Conditions were quite warm, so the ice wasn't 'dinner-plating' at all and felt rewardingly malleable.





Of course, in the 'Scottish style' we'd got up to get on to the routes before dawn, so by mid-afternoon we were all knackered! The climbs were so convenient it really wasn't necessary to go so early.

2nd Day Climbing

In the morning, we were in the 'Upper Gorge'. Sue and I climbed: Lettvann (3* WI 2) with three pitches. Sue led the middle one and we abbed off on our own thread rather than do the scrappy finish. Overnight some powdery snow had fallen making the easier routes hard work to clear the snow to get at the ice. The steeper routes would have been better choices.

In the afternoon, we all got together to climb Svingfoss (1* WI 4), led by David. A fantastic route, and great fun to do some roadside climbing!

You can make it as tough as you like



Routes completed by David and I were:

- Anakje (WI3) - DS Lead
- Not in the guide (WI3) - TL Lead
- Not in the guide (WI4) - DS Lead
- Minidisker (WI2) - TL Lead
- Not in the guide - (WI3/4) - DS Lead
- Skrueis (WI3) - TL Lead.



Food & Booze

The supermarkets that we found were best were the 'KIWI' ones. They had a good range of stuff, reasonable prices and long opening hours. We only had one meal out, which was ok. Booze was, of course, very expensive. However, picking up bottles at the UK airport served us well.

Evenings

We rounded the activities off in the evening with a trip to the superb local swimming pool, complete with pool-side climbing wall, sauna, and an outdoor hot-tub with a great view of the snowy peaks, fabulous.



Timings

Between January and February are supposed to be the best times to go.

Guidebook

There is enough information online, but the Rockfax guide is great.

Costs for Four Sharing

Over the three nights and four days:

- Flights £50 per person
- Car & Fuel £40 per person
- Digs £90 per person

...plus your own bits & bobs.

JMCS TRIP REPORT

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