

Eastern District lectures

Eastern District lectures will continue this season as usual in the Quaker Meeting House located at 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, EH1 2JL. This is the galleried terrace above Victoria Street and the easiest access is from George IV Bridge beside Pizza Express opposite the National Library. At this time of day, parking is usually available in the Grassmarket at the foot of Victoria Street.

The lectures are sponsored by the SMC, the Edinburgh JMCS and the Alpine Club and I hope all that Eastern District members will come along to support the speakers. Talks commence at 7.30pm prompt as we are obliged to vacate the premises by 9.30pm. The number of excellent hostelrys in the area – the Bow Bar is usually favoured afterwards - should not make this a difficult task!

We will continue the tradition of entertaining the speaker before the talks and if you would like to join us for a meal then please contact the appointed host to book a place.

The following talks have been arranged.

14 November 2023 – Stephen Venables - Cathedrals of the Earth - Mountain Painting from the Quattrocento to Julian Cooper

Stephen is of course an international mountaineer with a formidable reputation but on this occasion he turns his hand to another passion - mountain art. He takes his title from the Victorian artist, critic and alpinist manqué John Ruskin in this personal look at mountain art from the fifteenth century to the present day. He will include paintings from some of the great names like Dürer, Turner, Loppé and Roerich, interspersed with his own photos from climbs in Scotland, the Alps, the Himalaya and recent expeditions to Antarctica. There may even be a musical interlude! This promises to be wonderful talk. The evening will be hosted by Geoff Cohen. Please contact him by the day before the lecture if you would like to dine.

geoffrcohen@yahoo.com

12 December 2023 - Wil Treasure - Authentic Desire

Factor Two is a climbing podcast with impact compiled by Wil Treasure and UKClimbing. Stories are how we understand the world and many climbers are great storytellers. Here Wil has explored how our storytelling influences the heroes we make and the risks we take. Over the past 6 years he's recorded compelling interviews with climbers from all walks of life, including notable names like Jerry Moffatt, Rick Allen, Hazel Findlay and more. Each episode is a piece of cinema for the ear - a structured, reflective story, with a flawed hero at its centre. Whether self-rescuing from high up El Capitan, convincing themselves to make one more move on that bold lead, or putting in another shift on the project that might never happen, they are all linked by desire. In this talk, Wil questions if that desire is really their flaw, or is there something more authentic at the heart of it all?

The host for the evening is Tim Elson and if you wish to join Tim and Wil for a meal beforehand then please contact Tim not later than the previous evening.

timmyelson@hotmail.com

07954 369181

9 January 2024 - Simon Richardson - Looking around new corners in the Alps and Canada - We are very pleased to have international mountaineer Simon Richardson with us for the first lecture of the New Year. Simon is a Past President of the SMC and is currently President of the Alpine Club. His list of first ascents in Scotland and abroad is formidable and he is the author of the SMC's Ben Nevis winter climbing guide. But on this occasion he will describe recent new routes on the Grandes Jorasses and Mont Blanc and first ascents on Monarch and Mount Waddington in the Canadian Coast Mountains. Tim Elson will host the evening and if you wish to join Tim and Simon for a meal beforehand then please contact Tim by the previous evening.

timmyelson@hotmail.com

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13 February 2024 - Stephen Reid - Climbing in Galloway

SMC member Stephen Reid will be well-known to many Lakes enthusiasts as the proprietor of Needle Sports in Keswick. Together with friends he realised that the south-west of Scotland had more climbing opportunities than previously realised and some routes such as the Colonel's Corner on Dungeon Hill have become classics. He also developed many of the surprisingly good winter routes. Stephen will describe the development of this much overlooked area and as a preamble, make sure to read the splendid article entitled *Connoisseurs' Choice* by Andrew Fraser and Stephen Reid appearing in the 2023 SMC Journal.

John Fowler will host the evening and if you wish to join John and Stephen for a meal beforehand then please contact John not later than the previous evening.

johnrrfowler@gmail.com

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12 March 2024 - Willis Morris - Spinning Plates

Willis Morris is a self-taught climber who operates at trad E8, sport 8b and winter grade VIII9. He is a member of the GB ice team, an Alpinist and a Jottnar pro-team athlete as well as a professional speed-wing pilot who uses this high-octane descent method to regain the valley floor. He is also President of the Scottish Dry-Tooling Club.

To quote Willis himself.....

I started climbing at ten, competing in the Scottish indoor team. I spent my teenage years scrambling, sport, trad and even aid climbing. At fifteen, winter in the Scottish Highlands became my playground. I really pushed my limits on hard mixed routes in tough conditions. This 'art of suffering' led to the Alps' vast north faces including the Cima Ovest and the Eiger.

But no matter how gnarly my ascents, the descent was relatively unexciting. Then I discovered speedflying. I started non-traditionally - self-taught. Through perseverance I quadrupled the weekly flights of any UK pilot in my first year. I envisage a new mountaineering form not limited by heavy kit or confined by specific launch requirements, conquering the biggest, baddest, pointiest routes then shredding down in seconds – the most challenging way up and the gnarliest way down.

I think there are the makings there of an exciting talk so I hope we will have a good turn-out for the last lecture of the season.

Chris Huntley will host the evening and if you would like to join Chris and Willis for a meal beforehand then please contact Chris not later than the previous evening.

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