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Top tips for climbing coaches

1. Don’t be upset that not everyone wants to be a climber - give them credit for trying.
2. If you have to encourage and cajole someone every inch of the way up, you may have chosen the wrong route.
3. Never work beyond your ability, experience or insurance cover.
4. Learn about the local flora, geology and history. Your days out will be richer and so will those of your clients.
5. Protect yourself - if you are not attached to something you are not setting a good example to your group.
6. Try to belay where you can see your seconds, even if that means that you don’t belay where the guidebook suggests.
7. Appropriately used, a guidebook with the grades removed is a good tool to help with the mental issues associated with breaking through personal grade boundaries.
8. A group with time on their hands and nothing to do will find something to do. It won’t always be sensible!
9. If you allow your client to check everything with you every time, what will they do when you’re not there?
10. Don’t second-guess your assessor; you’ll be trying to work out what they want, instead of concentrating on what you should be doing.

The above tips are an extract from “Top tips for climbing coaches” by Paul Smith which is published by Pesda Press www.pesdapress.com. It contains over 300 top tips and handy hints for climbing coaches. The book is a must have for all aspirant Rock Climbing Instructors.

AMA deal available direct to members

Contact Grace for more information:
grace@dmmwales.com
01286 872222

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**A note from the Editor and Webmaster**

Since the delivery of the Winter 2013 journal, there have been a few changes that will be of interest to the membership. The most notable is the launch of the new AMA Website in March 14. The Webmaster has worked hard to deliver the new website on your behalf. Please support him by providing feedback so that it can evolve and improve.

Service life can be hectic considering the amount of times you move around in your career. Please remember to update your contact address with the AMA secretary so that the journal can be sent to the correct address. We still receive lots of journals returned in the post which costs money to re-send. If you have changed address, please use the AMA membership application form (which can be downloaded from the website) to update your details.

The journal can also be accessed online. All the AMA journals dating back to 1993 have been digitised and can be downloaded from the AMA website.

Finally, the journal relies entirely on your support. The journal exists to provide the membership with an update of what you have been doing on the many exceptional expeditions both at home and abroad. Please continue to contribute with articles and high quality images of your various exploits so that we can all read about them. In many cases reading about an expedition becomes the inspiration to plan your own.

**Chairman’s Foreword by Colonel Paul Edwards MBE**

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The AMA recognises that climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions.
Finally, please use these discounts for personal purchases only!

If you have any issues with the various discounts scheme, or know of any other companies willing to offer discount to the AMA, please contact the Meets Co-ordinator. It can only be a success if people make the effort to attend. Car sharing will be advertised on the AMA website and Facebook.

The AGM will be held at JSMTC Indefatigable 21-26 Jun 15 European Military Climbing Championships 2015 and TBSL Round 6. The format for the weekend is still being finalised but the itinerary so far is: Friday evening 31 Oct – Social meet and greet in the bar. This will be a good opportunity to catch up with old friends, make some new ones and also plan your weekend mountaineering activities.

Sat and Sun daytime – Quality Mountaineering Day, there will be instructors available, don’t worry if you don’t have a partner, we will ensure that you are placed with an appropriate partner or group.

Sat evening – AGM followed by guest speaker and social in the bar. This has been excellent in the last few years! The AGM will be a fantastic opportunity for you to contribute and voice your opinion on your association! It can only be a success if people make the effort to attend. Car sharing will be advertised on the AMA Website. More information will be posted on AMA Facebook and the AMA Website in due course.

The Army Mountaineering Association AGM will be held at JSMTC Indefatigable from Friday 31 Oct – Sunday 2 Nov 14. This weekend is still being finalised but the itinerary so far is: Friday evening 31 Oct – Social meet and greet in the bar. This will be a good opportunity to catch up with old friends, make some new ones and also plan your weekend mountaineering activities.

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in the Alps, I was determined to tackle an 8,000 metre peak and Switzerland. Keen to build on my experience of climbing at altitude before on an excellent Joint Service Alpine Meet in Andermatt, My ambition to climb Cho Oyu had been prompted the year Goddess’ had been kind to us so far, I wondered whether our luck and the worsening weather would hold? My ambition to climb Cho Oyu lies in the Mahalangur Himal along the Nepalese/Tibet border and is a technically straightforward climb which provides a fantastic introduction to the world’s fourteen highest peaks.

This was a civilian non-guided expedition that met in Kathmandu, Nepal and then travelled across the border to neighbouring Tibet. Unlike the lush green hills of the Hunku Valley on the Nepalese side of the border, the drive to Base Camp across the Tibetan Plateau was set against a moonscape of rock and moraine. However, the small Chinese military camp and a concentration of yak herders at Base Camp brought the ‘Himalayan Highway’ to an end and signalled the start of our approach march to Advanced Base Camp (ABC) at 5,700 metres.

The move to ABC proved to be an adventure in itself and our truck load of equipment and supplies made their way to our ‘home’ for the next four weeks on the back of a herd of temperamental yaks. Once established, ABC provided the bedrock from which the team could conduct its training and launch five successive surges up the mountain to establish camp 1 (6,400m), camp 2 (7,200m), and camp 3 (7,500m). Remarkably, the height gain (and loss) achieved during the five lifts was the equivalent of climbing the mountain three times and the team welcomed a three day rest period at ABC prior to the summit attempt.

Other than tents and oxygen cylinders, the team elected to carry all of its own equipment and supplies up to camp 3 and did not use porters throughout the expedition. However, the Herculean effort of our three sherpas, Phurba, Lakpa and Gonaithu must not go unmentioned and they were instrumental in establishing fixed lines and forging the initial steps in deep snow during the start of Cho Oyu’s two week weather window. A window that is dictated by the high jet streams which only reduce in speed for a few days a year and allow mountaineers to climb above 7,500 metres without being ripped off the mountain.

Finally, all that was left to do prior to our summit attempt was to participate in the traditional Tibetan ‘Puja’ ceremony where I had my ice axe, crampons and 7 Para RHA’s regimental flag blessed by the local Lama. Neither religious nor superstitious, I was surprisingly moved by the event which served to consecrate our remote ‘home’ and set the right tone for the next five days in which we set out to conquer the remote mountain.

Despite two diametrically opposed weather reports, the decision was made to start the summit attempt on 28th September and six climbers and three sherpas set off with high hopes in clear conditions. By now, camps 1 and 2 felt very familiar as did our bodies reaction to the oxygen starved air. Despite this familiarity however, I still found it staggering that two consecutive footsteps warranted a stop and two deep breaths before moving on. At over 7,500 metres this increased to five deep breaths! Likewise, it took two hours just to boil just one litre of water and simple tasks such as cooking required a great deal of effort and time. Fortunately, bottled oxygen lessened the debilitating effects on our bodies and our cylinders supplied us with two litres per minute between camp 3 and the summit. This lifeline thinned the blood sufficiently to prevent fingers and toes from freezing solid and seemingly reduced the weight of our packs and heavily insulated boots.

On summit night the darkness and morning chill eventually gave way to a crisp day and a breath taking view of the countless 7,000 metre peaks that surround the vast bulk of Cho Oyu. Unfortunately, it also exposed an approaching weather front that denied the team a view at the summit of neighbouring Everest, Nuptse and Lhoste. However, this did not overshadow an enormous sense of achievement and a jubilant team who were quick to take photos and even quicker to descend in order to avoid the worsening weather.

The return journey to Camp 1 now lay several hours ahead and once again I was reminded of the maxim ‘you are only half way at the top’. A mixture of exhaustion and oxygen deprivation is a dangerous mix and total concentration was required on the way down, particularly on the near vertical sections of the climb. The safety of camp 1 proved to be an agonising ten hours away and only half the team actually made it beyond camp 2 without an overnight rest. Fortunately, none of the teams on the mountain had any accidents and everyone eventually returned safely to ABC for a well earned beer and a rest.

Although this was a private venture and personally funded, the expedition simply would not have been possible without the full support of the chain of command. I would also like to thank the Army Mountaineering Association, 7 Para RHA, the Berlin Infantry Brigade Memorial Trust Fund, Royal Artillery Institute, Paras Flanker Charity, Paykhoon and the Royal Artillery Centre for Personal Development for their moral and financial contribution.
Using an altimeter in the mountaineering environment

Written by Sven Hassall

"Right grid reference, wrong map!?"

A wrist watch altimeter offers a more reliable method of sensing altitude than GPS which can be inaccurate under trees, near cliffs or building and in close proximity to some radios. It also provides a much more useful and quicker method of relocation when used in conjunction with a traditional map and compass.

Barometric altimeters don’t actually measure altitude directly; rather they are constantly measuring the relative pressure in the atmosphere around us and comparing it against the pressure at sea level, in order to calculate the altitude (above sea level). Physics dictates that the sea level, in order to calculate the altitude and comparing it against the pressure at the pressure in the atmosphere around us, becomes, due to the reduced mass of gas and suspended molecules around us. Higher up we go, the lower the pressure.

Physics dictates that if you can emulate his proficiency. The book is huge (464 pages), and this short review cannot do it justice. The who’s who of contributing alpinists (Twight, Steck, Habeler, Gaal) adds even more kudos to the text.

Johnston of the most respected coaches in the US and the physical and psychological coaching therein is world class. It is a deliberately deep, often scientific and complex read, and one that can be continually dipped in and out of.

Alpine Mountaineering - Bruce Goodlad

I guess the best short review of this is to quote the footnote to the title ("essential knowledge for budding alpinists"). Bruce is a UIAGM guide and has written almost a Janet and John text on how to prepare and equip yourself for your early alpine adventures. Simple words, loads of pictures, clear diagrams and an annex of suggested training areas and beginners and intermediate routes. Getting started in the Alps can appear overwhelmingly complicated and this book, for less than twenty quid, is a sound investment for any aspirant alpinst.

The Walkers Guide to Outdoor Clues and Signs - Tristan Gooley

This is a truly valuable book. I guarantee in the first few pages alone you will learn stuff you never knew.

Microadventures - Alastair Humphreys

I own about a thousand and have selected six for the months ahead wherever you may be. I am a big fan of scrambling, a few hours. It is a part biography of the legend that was Al Rouse. It created the phrase “feeding the rat” (the rat being the urge to do that thing, that activity that gnaws at your very soul when you’re not doing it). In my opinion, for its brevity, it is one of the most stirring and impactful books written in the mountaineering genre.

How To Connect With Nature - Tristan Gooley

This is a small but important book. Written as part of the School of Life series of “self-help” mini-guides. In short this book will (in a far pithier way than the other Book by Tristan above) change the way anybody that reads it encounters the countryside. It is a stupidly simple manifesto for grasping the basic blocks of the natural environment and then slowly and simply growing and deepening your understanding. If you are a walker or climber who wants to not just see, but understand the features, process and systems in the great outdoors (without a pile of scientific learning) read this book. It is brilliant.

North Wales Scrambles - Garry Gooley

This is hot off the press on 7 July 2014. I am a big fan of scrambling, of the action of spending time in the hinterland between walking and roped climbing, far from the queues and unencumbered by the full trad rack. Garry has revised, refreshed and upped his book on the best scrambles in the Snowdonia National Park. Colour photos, simple topos, and clear and concise writing. A great book that takes the “Rucksack” approach to digitising guidebooks thereby making the Wainwright type guides look like museum items. Thigh pocket size and really well put together it is a must for scrambling aficionados.

From waiting out for a weather window in Carrar A4, to killing the hours until sun up in a Cairngorm snow-hole, a good book on the outdoors is a must. I own about a thousand and have selected six new ones, and one reasonably old one, as suggestions for the months ahead wherever you may be.

Reviewed in brief from left to right on the bookshelf photo, I have left out retailers, prices and websites as an internet search engine will do all that for you in seconds.

Training for the New Alpinism - Steve House and Scott Jurek

Reinhold Messner considers Steve House to be the leading alpinist of his generation. This book is not only everything he knows about the art of training for cutting edge fast and light alpinism, but a training manual for how you can emulate his proficiency. The book is huge (464 pages), and this short review cannot do it justice. The who’s who of contributing alpinists (Twight, Steck, Habeler, Gaal) adds even more kudos to the text.

Johnston of the most respected coaches in the US and the physical and psychological coaching therein is world class. It is a deliberately deep, often scientific and complex read, and one that can be continually dipped in and out of.

Book Reviews

Written by Tomo Thompson

I am now on a one man mission to make us all far better use of our valuable spare time by introducing us to microadventures. A close to home, cheap, simple, short guaranteed way to refresh your life by taking the spirit of a big adventure and squeezing it into a few days or even a few overnight hours. This is a colourful, brisk, get-off-your-backside-and-go-and-do-something call to arms.

Feeding The Rat - Al Alvarez

Yes I know this is 26 years old but I bought a copy of the Bloomsbury paperback version the other day. Feeding The Rat is a book that you can digest in a few hours. It is a part biography of the legend that was Al Rouse. It created the phrase “feeding the rat” (the rat being the urge to do that thing, that activity that gnaws at your very soul when you’re not doing it). In my opinion, for its brevity, it is one of the most stirring and impactful books written in the mountaineering genre.

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**Peak District Meet**

**09/05/14 – 11/05/14**

Never having climbed with the Army Mountaineering Association before, I was slightly nervous about what to expect. Worst case scenarios plagued my imagination on the long drive from Newcastle to the association’s weekend meet in the Peak District.

Over the past few years I had stood atop peaks in the Alps and summited at high altitude in the Himalayas, however, my experience of true rock climbing was limited. It consisted only of a childhood of rain-soaked scout camps, a few days in the Alps and hour after hour spent watching Alex Honnold videos on YouTube. A resume which, I was sure, the AMA’s rock gods would be far from impressed with.

But at least I didn’t have to face them alone. I had roped Dan Thompson, a fellow second lieutenant from 201 Field Hospital, into coming down to Derbyshire with me. Eventually after a few wrong turns, stopping for food, fuel and then food again, we arrived in Froggat, our base for the weekend. We would be staying in a Climbers Club property called The R O Downes Memorial Hut, opened in honour of Bob Downes, a talented young British climber who tragically lost his life on Masherbrum in 1958.

As we unpacked the car outside the hut a horrible thought struck me, perhaps the discipline of the officer training from which I had emerged would also be a feature of this weekend. Looking down at my favourite faded jeans and scuffed trainers, I started to wish I’d opted for a set of crisp MTP or at least some trousers free from holes.

However, all concerns were soon put to rest. We were met at the door by a beaming Mike Smith, the weekend’s lead. “Alright guys, the other lads are already off down the pub if you want to join them”. Maybe jeans weren’t such a bad shout.

The rest of the evening was spent in The Chequers Inn, a short walk down the hill from the hut. Where despite being a group of strangers, the AMA party found common ground over ale and climbing anecdotes, both of which flowed freely until we were all well acquainted.

Saturday dawned bright but with a lingering threat of rain. Mike had risen early to prepare a full English breakfast for everyone which was gratefully received. As the last of the bacon was being polished off, Mike informed us that the weather was due to close in by early afternoon, so an early start was our best bet in order to get some good climbing in. Eager not to miss the weather window, myself and Dan headed off to Stanage Edge along with Mike and Kate Hannaford, both of whom had kindly agreed to give us some tuition on the basics of outdoor climbing.

Although I had visited the Peak District National Park before, this was my first trip to Stanage Edge. It didn’t disappoint. Overlooking the village of Hathersage, the 4 miles of gritstone face extending far into the distance of the Derbyshire countryside was an impressive sight.

Although I was a novice, with 658 climbs of varying grades, this was the ensured place to get to grips with outdoor climbing. After a quick safety brief and being shown how to tie in amongst other basics, it was time to start climbing. So after pulling on my newly acquired rock shoes, which the sales assistant had assured me were meant to be this ridiculously uncomfortable, I made my debut on Derbyshire gritstone.

Grotto Slab (M) was my first test. Mike ascended the 12 metres effortlessly. Myself and Dan followed, and although neither of us would have scored many points for elegance or technique, we both clawed our way upwards and soon were standing proudly atop the edge. Sweeping panoramic views across the surrounding valleys offered a fantastic reward for our efforts.

Emboldened by our success, we moved on to Mantlepeice Crack (D 4a), an attractive 6 metre crack which slants to the right. Again Mike made short work of the face, followed at a more leisurely pace by myself and Dan, before Kate scamppered up the rock with ease to bring us the rear.

Moving now with growing confidence, we set our sights on Small Crack (VD). This proved a more challenging route with some slippery footholds which made me glad I invested in a pair of rock shoes, even though I was now questioning whether sensation would ever return to my big toes.

Next on the agenda was Anatomy (V0), a brilliant 12 metre route with a testing move to the left across the face over to an awkward overhang. However, from the top it was clear that the weather was deteriorating. The wind had picked up and ominous clouds were pouring over the hills ahead of us, but we decided to chance our arm and bag one more route before the inevitable downpour.

Our final challenge was Sociology (S 4a), a 12 metre groove which proved slightly more testing for both us novices. Predictably, as I was halfway up the face feeling above my head for a suitable hold, the heavens opened, and rain lashed against the face in the strong wind. However, all of us managed to scramble up to safety before making a desperate dash back to the the cars.

It appeared as if the day’s climbing was over just as myself and Dan were getting into the swing of it. Luckily Mike had an ace up his sleeve, and we were soon on the move towards Sheffield, to get some practice on indoor routes at Awesome Walls Climbing Centre Sheffield. Although not comparable to the Derbyshire countryside, with 312 routes, 2 bouldering areas and a café all housed in a converted factory, the venue was certainly impressive. And more importantly from a novice’s perspective, the café’s sausage sandwich got top marks.

Kate had taught us how to belay earlier in the day, so we set free to test ourselves against the 15 metre walls, whilst our tutors moved onto routes more suited to their ability. So myself and Dan spent a fantastic afternoon pushing each other to tackle increasingly challenging routes, however, we both agreed to leave the competition wall complete with 12 metre overhang until the next time.

After a tiring but rewarding day, the AMA party regrouped once more at The Chequers Inn where over dinner we caught up with what the different members had been up to. As before, the ale and anecdotes flowed until, once again, we were the last party in the pub. Only taking our leave when the staff began setting the table for breakfast around us, hint taken.

On Sunday we woken to another Mike Smith cooked breakfast special, and unfortunately, wall to wall rain. Although we tried to wait out the weather, spending the time evening up in the surrounding climbing shops, by late morning the weather seemed to have set itself for the day. Sadly we had to accept that further outdoor climbing wasn’t going to be a possibility, and so we set out on the long journey home.

Looking back, I thoroughly enjoyed my first experience of climbing with the AMA, and I hope it will be only the first of many such trips I take with them. I wish to express my thanks to the association for giving me such a fantastic introduction to rock climbing, and I would also like to express my gratitude to both Mike Smith and Kate Hannaford for all their help and guidance over the course of the weekend.

Robert Crooks (2Lt Crooks, 201 Field Hospital)
climbing meets

Roaches Meet

22 – 24 Nov 13

Written by Dave Cross

With fingers (and toes no doubt) crossed for favourable weather 17 AMA members travelled up to the Roaches Bunkhouse in Upperhulme on the Friday night.

Some old friends, familiar (and thankfully new) faces arrived, grabbed a bunk then sat by the beast of a fire that Henry Crosby had sorted for everyone. Most were perusing the guide books and plotting their routes for the next day. It seemed that everyone had found a partner so less work for me already. The arrival of the rest of Henry’s group brought some tantalising smells from the kitchen area; this continued through the weekend and certainly made me have a bit of food envy!

The morning brought one more climber who was swiftly paired up and then a quick brief and finalising of all the groups’, plans and daily risk assessments and out to the crag for a brilliant days climbing.

Name the route (opposite page) which Sam Marshall and Chris cruised up amongst many other classic routes on the Saturday.

Of course you have to try wriggling up Siftas Quid inside route… don’t you? I got stuck. This time! I wish I had. Tanquin Shipley also got stuck but I dare say he won’t be attempting it again in a hurry; the air was fairly blue on that go. Anne Gumbley tried too but alas was denied this time.

Henry used the opportunity of the weekend to finish off some Distributed Training with 3 of his guys from his unit with assistance from Chris Warner. Saturday was spent honing their single pitch skills and the Sunday was used to get a few multi pitch routes in.

Sat evening was whiled away in the local for some great food and a few bevies and reliving the ‘caving’ attempt by a few earlier on in the day.

Sunday brought a less favourable forecast and on this some went to Sheffield for the day. The rest of us set out hoping to prove the weatherman wrong. He wasn’t and it did rain but everyone managed to get some routes in.

Anne and I got a multipitch route plus a handful of single pitch routes in before the wet stuff arrived. Once it did we decided to head for the café. Most of the others had the same plan and we all met up on the way down.

Just before leaving the crag we stumbled upon another group (civilian not one of ours) limping one of their friends along after he had taken a massive fall and damaged his ankle. Tanquin and I were eager to help having come straight from our Mountain First Aid course up at Indy. Instead Henry came along and in typical Sapper style, without breaking step, he hoisted him up onto his rucksack and straight down to their car. Medevac complete it was time for coffee and cake before heading home.

A good weekend for all involved with new friendships made for future climbing sessions I’m sure. It also showed some how easy it is to run a meet and they may be running one for you in the future.
The Dolomites are a large, complex area of limestone mountains situated in the north-east of Italy. These mountains are generally lower than those in the better known central Alpine regions, with the Marmolada at 3343m being the highest summit. However, what they lack in height, they make up for in the sheer amount of climbable rock. Vertical rock walls rising out of green meadows or fields of scree are the norm. Glaciers are small and confined to the highest northern facing mountains, so rarely is the climber faced with snow or ice to negotiate on the routes that access the numerous rock climbing towers which are the main attraction of this area. The weather is generally more stable in this region, although late afternoon thunder storms are an ever present threat. What the peaks lack in altitude they make up for in continuous steepness and what they lose scenically in the lack of large snow or glacier fields, they make up for in the abundance of mountain climbing ratios, six highly qualified and experienced leaders were employed to deliver the training. After investigation, the cheapest option was to drive from Capel Curig via the Dover Ferry which, with stops, was a journey of 26 hours each way. This left us with seven days of training.

Day one was a training day at a one-pitch climbing venue near Torr Sella to check that the students had the essential rock climbing skills to progress to the more challenging aspects of long, multi-pitch climbing routes. Not only was this essential for the instruction of the students, but as importantly, for the confidence of the instructors, who would be belayed by the students! We experienced our first thunder storm that evening, with torrential rain leading to a dull and cloudy morning, so the plan to multi pitch high on one of the Torres was shelved. Instead, we hired the necessary equipment and opted for one of the more challenging via ferrata, the 1500m Della Trincee ridge route on the opposite side of the valley to the Marmolada. This would lead us eventually to a height of 2750m so it would be good for acclimatisation too. This proved a good plan, as the day brightened as we progressed and all cloud had disappeared by the time we got high. As the photographs show, this route was continuously interesting and testing and gave the students a taste of exposure in a safe environment.

The next day dawned gloriously, so we headed off for the iconic Cinque Torri, a collection of five rock towers set at various angles atop a mountain two valleys away. After an adventurous drive of hairpin zig zags up to and down from each pass, we finally caught sight of our destination on the skyline. Once parked, access is gained by a chairlift and a whole 300m walk in! As the Italian school holidays were still in full swing, this popular tourist attraction, with its easy access, was awash with families of all ages enjoying the spectacular scenery, but the best views were reserved for those who earned them, from the dizzy heights from on high on the towers. The rope teams split up and climbed various multi-pitch routes between meeting up at the Alpine hut for well-deserved refreshments and walking back down. This was an auspicious start to the climbing phase.

The following day found us on Sella Torre, the massive escarpment that dominated our own valley. This presented a more difficult route finding conundrum and a more adventurous multi pitch abseil off, but the students were becoming more confident and adept and all went well. The next day we drove one valley away to climb on Torre Grande, then on what was to be our final full day, we returned to Cinque Torri, which we had decided was our favourite of the areas. The next day, which would have been a short day anyway as we had to pack as much as possible before an early departure on Monday, it rained and we decided to chill out and pack leisurely. By now we had amassed a total of 5155m of different rock climbing routes completed, which meant many more metres were amassed by the whole team, as some routes were ascended by more than one rope team. Once packing had been completed as far as possible, we went into town to a large and bustling restaurant and shared a celebratory meal, during which all the students received their coveted CCAT IAM certificates. We were also able to show our appreciation to our leader, Kevin Edwards, for all the planning and hard work he had put into making the expedition possible.

As the accompanying photographs illustrate, these were all very steep, challenging rock climbs that required complex multipitch abseils as well as negotiating steep mountain terrain to descend. The leaders did a magnificent job and more importantly, the students rose to the challenge, displaying growing confidence in their abilities and developing their skills to a high degree of competence. It is highly likely that this is the first time anyone from the Cadets organisation has scaled a Dolomite rock tower. The students confirmed the experience had exceeded all their expectations and they are to be congratulated on their significant achievements.

We had a very impressive tally of routes to our credit:

- Cinque Torri
  - Torre Grande SW Face, Via della Guide 120m Grade IV
  - Torre Lucy, N Face 135m Grade IV
  - Torre Romana, S Chimney Grade III
  - Torre Quarta Bassa, S Face 110m Grade IV
  - Torre Quarta Alta, 100m Grade IV
  - Torre Inglese, SE Face 50m Grade IV
  - Torre Barancioni, N Face 150m Grade IV+
- Sella Torri
  - First Tower, NW Arete ‘Steger’ Route 250m Grade IV+
  - Second Tower, Kostner Route 185m Grade III+
  - First Tower, Via Normal 250m Grade II
- Torre Grande Grupo
  - Torre Piccalo, Guides Route 240m Grade IV+
  - Torre Piccalo, Scolari River Route 310m Grade IV+
  - Torre Grande, Lussato Route 220m Grade IV
  - Torre Grande, W Ridge 220m Grade III
- Torri Sella
  - Kostner Route 185m Grade III
- Torre Inglese, SE Face 50m Grade IV
- Torre Romana, S Chimney Grade III
- Torre Grande SW Face, Via della Guide 120m Grade IV
- Torre Lucy, N Face 135m Grade IV
- Torre Romana, S Chimney Grade III
- Torre Quarta Bassa, S Face 110m Grade IV
- Torre Quarta Alta, 100m Grade IV
- Torre Inglese, SE Face 50m Grade IV
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  - First Tower, Via Normal 250m Grade II
- Torre Grande Grupo
  - Torre Piccalo, Guides Route 240m Grade IV+
  - Torre Piccalo, Scolari River Route 310m Grade IV+
  - Torre Grande, Lussato Route 220m Grade IV
  - Torre Grande, W Ridge 220m Grade III

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What is the purpose of a logbook?

The purpose of a logbook is to help the candidate demonstrate their experience in a given activity. For the purpose of a climbing course, it demonstrates that they have achieved the course pre-requisites, for example 40 independent climbs at a given grade. However the logbook offers far more information than demonstrating course pre-requisites. It is their professional CV, it is a snapshot of who they are showing their variety and depth of experience.

From an instructors point of view the logbook holds the useful information such as:
- Have they climbed in a variety of climbing venues and rock types?
- Have they had to navigate to big mountain routes in different weather conditions?
- Have they had to deal with difficult situations?
- How long the candidate has been doing the activity, is it a few months or many years?
- This information can instantly show the difference between a fast track candidate and one who has a long term passion for the activity. This is useful to help understand the candidates experience, limitations and strengths.

What is the assessor looking for when reading a students logbook?

Using rock climbing as an example, I am looking for quality routes at the required grade. If the course pre-requisite is 20 multi-pitch routes I want to see that the candidate has met this requirement and there is no duplication of routes. A candidate that has satisfied the pre-requisites will usually be able to attend the course and participate fully, therefore gain the most benefit without any concerns. On JSAT courses there is a lot of information to take on board, particularly at the leader and instructor level. Candidates that don’t have the pre-requisites generally struggle to keep up and may fail the course a result.

What are the implications of submitting a poorly maintained logbook?

First of all, it reflects very badly on the candidate. You wouldn’t expect a job interview if you submitted a poorly written CV. Likewise candidates shouldn’t expect a place on a course if their logbook is poor. In some cases candidates have been refused onto the course. In some exceptional cases candidates have been accepted at risk. In a lot of cases the candidate’s lack of experience is abundantly apparent. Their skills are lacking, they are either not safe or overly safe by continually checking everything but failing to do the fundamentals. That last point highlights a candidate that has limited experience.

How much detail is required?

Keep logbooks simple, that way its easier for the assessor to read. Using a Quality Mountain Day as an example, it’s perfectly adequate to enter “Snowdon Horsehoe” as this is simple to understand. A list of grid references is pointless!

What is the worst example you have come across as an assessor?

There have been occasions where it is blatantly obvious that a logbook is an act of fiction. The routes they have logged don’t make any logical sense. Worse still, when the candidates have been questioned they couldn’t answer any basic questions about the route. It is very disappointing when this happens. Thankfully it is very rare!

Is it best to be hand written or typed?

It is always better to use a handheld device that uses Hydrogen fuel cartridges to create power. Despite the fact we can charge our phones up. In normal day-to-day life this pace, which means we are always looking for a plug socket so that we can charge our phones up. I’m convinced we have all been in the situation where your mobile phone battery has died just when you needed it most. At the very least it’s an inconvenience in a worst-case scenario it could have very serious consequences.

Would you advise using electronic logbooks such as UKC?

Electronic logbooks are very useful, particularly when you can search for a route name and the rest of the information is added for you. This greatly speeds things up. If you are going to print off your logbook from an electronic system, make sure that it’s easy to read and formatted correctly, handling the assessor an unorganised bunch of pages is not acceptable. Mountain Training UK now uses the Candidate Management System (CMS), which is entirely electronic.

Summary

Logbooks are an essential to record your personal experiences. They demonstrate to the assessor that you have the pre-requisite experience, knowledge and currency required to attend a course or assessment. When a logbook is not at the required standard, the assessor will begin to scrutinize the candidate which puts them at risk. In a lot of situations?

Have they had to deal with difficult situations?

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Have they had to deal with difficult situations?
This is your chance to be both rich and famous!

Submit your favourite mountaineering photograph along with credits (Who, where, when?) for the famous part, and, if chosen as the best submitted in the edition you’ll get £100, £75 or £50 for your trouble. Ok, so not quite the rich part but it’s a weekend in Llanberis or a slap up meal!

Photos should be the highest quality possible (not less than 2Mb) and e-mailed to the editor, along with a credit and caption:
journal@armymountaineer.org.uk

£100 WINNER

£75 WINNER

£50 WINNER
The Zenith by Dak Ezdins

The Zenith is a small but highly featured climbing sack designed to be carried on long multi-pitch routes. The following features are the hallmark of the Zenith.

- Smooth profile reduces the potential for snagging
- Low profile base allows easy access to harness racking & chalk bag
- Easy access zip panel opening & bucket style design to limit spillage
- External and internal valuables pockets with zip openings
- Weight - 580g

When I received my bright green Zenith climbing bag, my first thought was that it would be impossible to lose it in the dark. This was closely followed by me thinking that it wasn’t going to fit much kit in at all. However after a very short time I saw this little pack very differently.

Firstly, the colour; I am a fan of being as bright as possible when out in the hills or climbing, sometimes to the extent of offending others, so this reason alone meant the pack was onto a winner. However it is available in other colors if you wish to remain a bit more inconspicuous. Secondly the size; as mentioned in the introduction I thought it wouldn’t be very useful with regards to space, however, this was simply wrong. It easily coped with a pair of approach shoes, the guide book, waterproof jacket, belay jacket and a spot of lunch. Overall it is advertised with an 18 litre capacity. The reason for this was that it did not get in the way even when fully packed and I could easily access all my gears loops and chalk bag. If you were carrying more gear than your harness could fit there are the extra gear loops on the sides of the pack that could be used. There inside the pack there were a number of useful features including a hydration sleeve which I did not use however this was simple to work out, a front mesh pocket that could be left open in the case of a very light pack, and also a small internal cover and zip opening. This has a gear loop for your quickdraws and the mesh is designed to allow your climbing shoes to breath. There is also a small internal pocket for other small items such as tape, sand paper and nail clippers.

I wore the sack for the entire day so it was a relief that it was so comfortable. It has an air mesh back that allowed any sweat to dry quickly. It has a waist belt that sits above your harness to stop it moving around. I also noticed that this could be removed if you do not like wearing them. There is also a sternum strap fitted which I did find very comfortable to have fitted.

Zenith Summary

This pack has proven itself to be a valuable addition to my climbing gear and I will not be without it in the future. Rigid your pigtails or chalk bag to the waist belt and once done, you are done. Once the wife need it, and get onto DMM and order yours today.

Flight by Tom Odling

The Flight is a highly featured sport climbing crag sack, combining rope bag and nuck sack. The Flight contains the following features.

- Perfectly sized at 45 litres to carry all your sport climbing kit, plus an 80m rope
- Maximum ‘carry on’ luggage on most airlines
- Suitcase style opening for quick and easy access
- Lightweight for easier packing and unloading
- Quickdraw rucksack with the option to keep your kit well organised
- Flow Armband back system and shoulder straps for comfort
- Grab handles for a quick and easy carry
- Light but hardwearing materials throughout the construction
- Reinforced areas around the lid and base
- Weight - 1560g

Bottom Line Up Front: The DMM Flight is a great pack for a day’s climbing and can carry enough for a full day out but I end up carrying my rope on the top meaning I can’t carry a second rope up there as DMM suggest.

I’ll get to the size of the bag in a bit but before I do let’s discuss the features. The Flight is a 45 litre pack designed to carry all your kit for a day of sport climbing in a clam-shell design with several internal sections for managing your crag admin. It’s a design several manufacturers have followed and it works. DMM’s unique selling point is that the Flight is designed to be just small enough to be allowed as carry on luggage on a plane. Although regulations mean you can’t take climbing gear on the plane you can still fit the Flight with your clothes and put your gear in your hold luggage so it is a useful feature.

On the outside of the pack there is a top pocket big enough for a large guide book and light - great for stashing your car keys, money, wallet, etc. There is also a small pocket on the back that can be removed if you do not like wearing them. There is also a small pocket on the back that can be removed if you do not like wearing them. There is also a small internal pocket for other small items such as tape, sand paper and nail clippers.

I won’t go into too much detail but let’s just say that it has a light and moveable shoulder system and the back is quite comfortable. It has a front mesh pocket that could be left open in the case of a very light pack, and also a small internal cover and zip opening. This has a gear loop for your quickdraws and the mesh is designed to allow your climbing shoes to breath. There is also a small internal pocket for other small items such as tape, sand paper and nail clippers.

Inside there is a bright yellow rope tarp with straps to hold it in place on one side of the open clam-shell, and on the other side is a separate compartment with a mesh cover and zip opening. There is a gear loop for your quickdraws and the mesh is designed to allow your climbing shoes to breath. There is also a small internal pocket for other small items such as tape, sand paper and nail clippers.

All told the Flight is neat, well thought out and effective which brings me to my only gripe; I wish it was just slightly bigger. DMM claim the bag is big enough to carry an 80m rope. On a full day out, I can fit a rope, chalk bag, quickdraws, spare rock shoes inside; and a helmet, water bottle and second rope on the outside, and it is. Unfortunately I tend to also take spare rock shoes, flip flops, shorts, a down jacket, maybe a waterbottle of food, another bottle of water if it’s hot and some other guff to boot. I can’t get it all in with the rope inside. Is this a problem? No not really as long as you stick to two ropes and I simply carry my main 70m on the top; this leaves me with loads of space for everything I could possibly want to take to the crag on the inside so it’s all good. Away from it’s core purpose I have also used the bag for bouldering, families days out and it is now my climbing wall bag of choice, it is superbly versatile.

Flight Summary

The Flight is a great crag pack. I would say it is equally adept for trad or sport climbing (as long as you have a pair of shoes to climb with) and it is also equally good for short haul flights and family picnics!

I question if you could really use it for a full day out with two ropes, an 80m rope, plus loads of stuff. It’s not as easy to store things in, it’s useful for me at all. I think it’s ace! It’s not cheap at full retail of £85 but is broadly comparable to its main competitors and loads cheaper than some. At the AAM discount price it is a ridiculous bargain and knocks the socks of anything else in its price range. Score 4.5/5 (would be perfect if it was just slightly bigger)
I

in the Spring of 2014, twelve soldiers from 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), many of whom had recently returned from serving in Afghanistan, and East Midlands Universities’ Officer Training Corps, completed a 30-day expedition to carry out high altitude mountaineering in the Peruvian Andes, culminating in the successful ascent of Coropuna (6425m), Peru’s 3rd highest mountain. Other than the two instructors, the team consisted entirely of other ranks and junior non-commissioned officers. A key tenet of the expedition was to introduce novice and intermediate mountaineers to alpine mountaineering adventurous training with the hope of inspiring the soldiers to lead similar expeditions in the future. The participants were Maj John Tolan, Capt Damian Warren, Cpl Jim A’Hara, Cpl ‘Chuck’ Berry, Lqpl Art Bayliss, Lqpl Tom Eaves, Spr ‘Benny’ Hill, Spr Dan Sheldon, Spr Chris Wagstaff, Spr Sam Roslyn, Spr Matt Daley and Spr Jordan McDonagh.

This article has two primary aims. The first is to describe the expedition in terms of the challenges faced and the successes achieved. The second is to act as a reference for future expeditions, whether planning to conduct adventurous training in Peru or high altitude mountaineering elsewhere. The Altiplano roadtrip is wide-ranging, from that of novices to knowledgeable mountaineers. It is hoped this article will be useful to all.

Expedition Synopsis

The team undertook thorough preparatory training where all members gained the winter mountain foundation qualification – basic winter mountaineering skills (using crampons and ice axes while moving over snow-covered terrain). Additionally, all of the team completed a Scottish training exercise (based at Inverness), on which three remote Munros, Scottish mountains over 3000ft, were climbed in typically adverse Scottish conditions. During the main expedition to Peru the team completed an acclimatisation phase with everyone reaching heights over 4600m, just 200m below the height of Mont Blanc. The acclimatisation treks were set in rural Peruvian locations bringing home the hardships of the local people who live off the land on the most incredible gradients. The indigenous Peruvians could always be spotted in their colourful attire between the maze and corn fields, normally accompanied by a menagerie of animals, key to their livelihood.

Written by Damian Warren

Cordillera Blanca and Cordillera Occidental – 23 April – 23 May 14

Due to our move to the south of Peru there was an opportunity to visit the world heritage site of Machu Picchu. Although further long distance overnight bus journeys were required, the stunning and simply spectacular ancient city was a highlight and fitting end to the expedition.

With military operations likely to focus on the prevention of conflicts and overseas nations’ capacity building, there were many cultural and geographical similarities with the remote Peruvian regions visited to those likely to be encountered in the future, making the experience even more valuable for the soldiers present. It not only improved fitness but also the soldiers’ understanding of cultural differences and their ability to operate in small teams in remote and hostile environments. The expedition was both mentally and physically challenging and increased the team’s effectiveness as soldiers preparing to go on future operations by fostering qualities of team spirit, robustness and initiative.

Huge thanks given to the very significant support of the Army Mountaineering Association, Ulysses Trust, Support Command, Adventurous Training Group (Army), Richmond Hill Trust Fund, Services Sound and Vision Corporation, Felix Fund, Royal Engineers Corps’ Funds, Blythe Sappers and Berlin Infantry Memorial Trust Fund (BIMTF). Without such kind and generous support, expeditions of this nature would not be possible.
Questions for Snowdonia First Aid

Written by Steve Howe – Snowdonia First Aid

What is the history of REC first aid? Rescue Emergency Care was formed more than 20 years ago by Dr.Bob Phillips. He was one of the pivotal figures involved in the British Association of Ski Patrols First Aid Course. This was characterized by a practical, hands-on, no big technical terms approach. Dr.Bob thought this philosophy could be applied to First Aid in all other outdoor environments.

What is the difference between REC first aid and a conventional first aid course? Conventional (sometimes called “carpet first aid”) tends to help with on-the-go in a relatively short time. REC assumes that help could very well be a couple of hours (or more) away. That means that we have to consider climate and possibly the necessity of moving casualties. In practice, that means that we have to get a bit more physical and robust!

How did you get involved in first aid? I needed a “ticket” for my National Governing Body awards (NLG, etc.) I then got involved in the Mountain Rescue Teams, firstly as a member of the Ogwen Valley Team, then became a Search Dog Handler and am now a member of the Lancashire Mountain Rescue Team. We are the busiest team in the county, literally dealing with about 180 rescues a year. I hold the ECAR (Emergency Care and Resuscitation) qualification (Emergency Care in Mountain Rescue) the highest MRT in House First Aid qualification, I have been an First Aid Trainer for 12 years and hold the position of REC Regional Director for Wales.

What are the 10 most useful items you carry in a mountain first aid kit that most people may not think about? Something to “stick” with (black nasty) (one of the keys to improvisation) • Something to cut with (the other key to improvisation) • Tick Remover • Blister Bag • Aspirin • Face shield • Nitrile Gloves (several pairs) • Tweezers • Dental First Aid Kit (on expeditions) • Glucose Gel

What item is the most versatile first aid item that no one should leave home without? As above, something to “stick” with, something to cut with.

What has been the most rewarding rescue you’ve been involved in? Tricky one that! Some that have actually been life-saving are: You Tube: Snowdon Winter Rescue (where we saw the making of the main and development teams and numbers dropped from an initial 45 as the first weekend to a main team of 8 and a development team of 14.

What is your top tip you would give someone trying to improve their mountain skills? Always test and train. Don’t just go out and discover the worst that can happen on the mountain. Always test and train.

What inspired you to become a climber? My Dad and his friend Mike Park started me off and showed me how to lead and place gear well. Having Mike as a mentor was great as he taught me to not push yourself outside of the comfort zone and try stuff that you’re not good at, then it will be more difficult to improve.

All climbers irrespective of grade have an element of self doubt, how do you overcome this? I have plenty of self doubt – usually self talk and a positive mantra helps but getting the ball rolling is a big thing. Once you know you can do something its easier to repeat.

Does your background in Sports Science assist with mental preparation? Sometimes, I think it makes me more aware of what I can do to help myself.

What is your most memorable route? It’s always changing! There are so many but I guess the one that stands out at the moment is Fiesta Los Biceps, a 7a at Riglos in Spain which I did in the First Aid, inside the yellow group shelter – I’m the one who gets blown off his feet towards the end) and some where it has turned out to be a mate.

What’s the most preventable situation you’ve been involved in? Tricky again – there have been so many! A recurring theme is people going out in winter without crampons and ice-axe (in that order….)

What are the most common first aid mistakes people make when in the mountains? Not insulating serious casualties from the ground. Believing that a casualty has ‘serious’ (i.e. life-threatening) bleeding. (try pouring a pint of water over a tee-shirt!)

What’s the best piece of advice you’d give to someone before they go into the mountains? Come on a Course with us first!

Snowdonia First Aid is run by Helen and Steve Howe and can run courses anywhere in the country. They also run ML and SPA training assessment courses. For further information contact us at: 07885130758 or info@snowdoniafirstaid.co.uk

Interview with Emma Twyford

Emma Twyford became the second British woman to climb E9 with an ascent of the bold arete climb Rare Lichen, in the Ogwen Valley, North Wales. Emma has been at the forefront of British women’s climbing for some time, with onsights of 8a abroad, 8b flash and 8b+ in the Lakes on UK Edmund. Emma kindly agreed to be interviewed by the AMA.

What inspired you to become a climber? My Dad and his friends from the Mountain Rescue team took me climbing. I used to swing on the trees at the bottom and they took me up some easy multipitch climbs at Shepherds Crag in Borrowdale. I got hooked pretty quickly.

I was very lucky growing up in the Lakes. My Dad and his friend Mike Park, started me off and showed me how to lead and place gear well. Having Mike as a mentor was great as he taught me to not push yourself outside of the comfort zone and try stuff that you’re not good at, then it will be more difficult to improve.

I have plenty of self doubt – usually self talk and a positive mantra helps but getting the ball rolling is a big thing. Once you know you can do something its easier to repeat.

What’s the best piece of advice you’d give someone trying to improve their mountain skills? Always test and train. Don’t just go out and discover the worst that can happen on the mountain. Always test and train.

Has the AMA changed over the years? Yes, I think the gap is still fairly big but there are now more facilities for training and as a result, equipment and now we begin ours at a rather slower pace. The journey to base camp took nine days in total largely following the Bush Gandhi route.

Initially this was almost a jungle environment replete with leeches and mosquitoes before slowly cooling down as we moved further up the valley. The journey was through a landscape straight out of Avatar with clouds constantly draping the peaks and the valleys very steep sides amplifying the constant roar of the river with its mass of water thundering down the valley (grade 5 for any paddlers wanting a trip), the constant waterfalls hundreds of metres high and the odd landslide from the last monsoon rain which accompanied us. After 7 days on the trail, we finally arrived at Samagoan (3750m), the last village before Base Camp. We were surprised to be greeted by a sign saying that the AMA group prohibited horse riding in the village. Whilst it is widely known that the RLC have taken over the AMA committee, we were surprised to see that their control of mountaineering movements extended to horse riding at altitude.

After two days acclimatising we started the 4 hour uphill trek to Base Camp, a pretty tough day as you move from 3750m to 4850m and the altitude makes itself felt. The next few days were spent acclimatising and sorting equipment for the hill. In comparison to the commercial expeditions at base camp, we
the hardest day on the mountain. With ice frequently falling around The route from C1 to C2 was the through a large icefall and arguably spectacular views down across to the Tibetan plateau. safe (which proved very useful later in the expedition) and afforded long but took about 30 minutes to get up it. C1 was objectively was needed to get to crampon point - the edge of the glacier. From the first 30 minutes from BC was spent walking through other Back on the mountain, we slowly we made our way to camp 1. The plan went along the lines of: BC to C1, sleep C1, to C2, sleep C2, touch C3 (8800m) then return to C2, sleep C2, to C1, sleep, to BC, Following this we should be ready to make a summit attempt. As it turned out, Chris C and Ben required medical attention in Kathmandu and the schedule had to be amended as Rob (the expedition medic) and Chris A shuttled individuals down to Sama Goan for a finish the Sherpas settled down for some serious Chang drinking and we gathered our kit together for the first rotation to camp 1. The plan went along the lines of: BC to C1 (5400m) stay overnight, back to BC, Rest days, BC to C1, sleep C1, touch C2 (8200m) then return to C1, sleep, then to BC, Rest days, BC to C1, sleep C1, to C2, sleep C2, touch C3 (8800m) then return to C2, sleep C2, to C1, sleep, to BC, So far clothing has just been normal winter mountaineering clothing but at C3 with wind chill at minus 30°C it was time for a full down suit. With the wind hurling the loose snow in our faces, goggles were a must and to top it off, the oxygen mask. Pretty much covered from head to toe we were all quite cosy as it was just like a nice Cairngorm storm (minus the oxygen) and well prepared we watched individuals from other teams turnaround after only a short time in such extreme conditions. With the oxygen flowing and the ability to adjust the flow rate to our exertions, we were all feeling good as the wind tried to blow us off our feet. Progress was slow up the face below the top seracs due not only to the gradient, but our fixed rope was buried under the windblown snow. About 250m short of C4 the ropes were buried under the snow and further on had vanished under avalanche debris. Under the conditions it was unsafe to continue and the difficult decision to abandon our summit bid was made. We stayed for a few moments, gazing east to Everest and west to the Annapurna massif only a short distance away, but before we chilled and remained in the spot forever headed down.

Moving down to C3 we rapidly packed the tents anxious to be out of the freezing wind and headed with colossal sacks down to C2. After a night in C2 we continued down to BC collecting C1 en route. This meant a lot of equipment on our backs and the remainder towed, pulk-like behind us in canoe bags so we could strip in the hill in one go. At BC we began to load all the kit in barrels ready to return to Kathmandu and although extremely disappointed at not making summit, we were all hugely grateful that we returned safely and with all fingers and toes still attached. In the words of Geordie the expedition Sage, “Accept fate, it just wasn’t meant to be. That we tried in such testing conditions is testimony to each and every one of us, should be humble enough to allow ourselves that much”.

The expedition used Summit Oxygen (http://www.summitoxygen.com) and it proved very efficient, very reliable and very comfortable. With the wind hurling the loose snow in our faces, goggles were a must and to top it off, the oxygen mask. Pretty much covered from head to toe we were all quite cosy as it was just like a nice Cairngorm storm (minus the oxygen) and well prepared we watched individuals from other teams turnaround after only a short time in such extreme conditions. With the oxygen flowing and the ability to adjust the flow rate to our exertions, we were all feeling good as the wind tried to blow us off our feet. Progress was slow up the face below the top seracs due not only to the gradient, but our fixed rope was buried under the windblown snow. About 250m short of C4 the ropes were buried under the snow and further on had vanished under avalanche debris. Under the conditions it was unsafe to continue and the difficult decision to abandon our summit bid was made. We stayed for a few moments, gazing east to Everest and west to the Annapurna massif only a short distance away, but before we chilled and remained in the spot forever headed down.

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**WARNING** The expedition used DOGTAG insurance. They have proved highly ineffective in paying the helicopter company for the rescue of the two climbers. The air rescue companies in Nepal are now refusing to fly if the underwriting is by DOGTAG. **WARNING**
Excercise Northern Gokyo Keys

Written by Joshua Ingold

Namche Bazaar was tough in the heat of the day and the first real challenge that we faced. today it was 25 degrees, we were soon to experience what minus 22 degrees felt like. The climb up from the valley to Namche is 800mtrs on the map, however your heart, lungs and legs climb over 1600m during the trek up to Namche Bazaar. The final 600mtrs in the last 4km, despite this, Capt Henry Chandler still found the energy to descend to a considerable distance to collect a misplaced walking pole - his second fineable offence of the day.

Namche Bazaar is a shock to the system in a number of ways. A veritable metropolis high up in the mountains, it is a mix of knock off gear shops and lodges, a lot of whom are called the Everest View, like Val Thorens without the chair lifts, it is perched dangerously in a hanging valley at around 3400m. The views from here were sublime. Everest was, from here somewhat distant but Ama Dablam (6856m), Thamserku (6604m) and Kongde (6186m) were all clearly visible.

The decision was made to ascend up to the famous viewpoint of Kala Patthar. Before the decision was made to ascend up to the famous viewpoint of Kala Patthar.

The day had been spent climbing up the western flank of Gokyo Ri (5360m). Our team, led by the Corps, five Queen's Gurka Signals, one RAMC and one AOC (SBS) had been laboriously handed out we made our way to the hotel. Everyone was amazed that the task of loading our bags required the labour of seven people although they all seemed happy to have found employment. After a short ride through Kathmandu, we arrived at the Hotel Manang located down an improbable looking side street in the Thamel district of Kathmandu.

An administration day followed, where we met our head guide, Kumar. After conducting a day of last minute shopping and final admin, we took an early morning bus ride to the airport for the inevitable flight into Lukla. Despite Capt Andy Williams' confusion as to whether he should present the security staff with a boarding pass or a knife, we made it onto the plane. It is true that the loading into Lukla does look a little precarious as the pilots expertly landed the plane without incident and the team arrived safely at a bustling Airstrip.

Descending once more towards Porthoe the weather, that had been so kind in that crucial 48 hour window, turned again. We decided, following a rest day, that it was no longer viable to trek to Gokyo. Whilst disappointed at this, the group had learned a valuable lesson in the necessity for restraint in the mountains and headed back to Namche knowing that the main aims had been achieved. We found Namche [just] in another snow storm and settled in for a chillied out evening. I will not account for, in full, the events in Namche over the next 12 hours but they involved a local with a lump on his half frozen head, a British tourist who was lapsing in and out of consciousness, a lot of work for Capt Henry Chandler and a stretcher carry that would have brought a tear to the eye of any GMSR! After this unexpected adventure, we headed back to Lukla and our first night's meal in two weeks at a lodge owned by LCpl Tshering Sherpa's uncle, we reached it without incident.

The final days in Kathmandu were principally spent eating meat and buying pashminas and hiwukus. We did however, also visit an orphanage and decided to donate money we had collected as fines for mishaps to the orphanage for the purchase of essential supplies.

Returning back to the UK again via Muscat, we were able to reflect on a highly successful expedition that, for some, will be a once in a life time opportunity whilst for others it will have lit the fires of passion for AT in the Army. As a result of the expedition, two of the team gained their SML in the build up and 6 of the team attained their SMF qualification.
In July 2014 a team of 30 climbers representing the Army overcome stiff competition from the RAF and RN to bring home first at the Inter-Services competition. Three teams from within the military, this event also saw stiff competition. Nonetheless, the CS team put up one-armed pull-ups on fingernail crimps (we wish!) was not necessarily going to stop them falling off 10m up an easy but pumpy lead route. This was never more true than for an un-named female member of the squad who looked genuinely confused when presented with quickdraws as a prize, being unsure how she was supposed to employ such complex pieces of equipment. Nevertheless, dragged into their harnesses by their highly motivated taskmaster (Peté Skinsky), and provided with expert coaching from Steve McClone, Dave Mason, training began.

The lead climbing season broadly breaks down into formation-level comps in Mar/Apr (Sp Comd South, Sp Comd North and British Army Germany), followed by the Army Climbing Championships in May, all of these events being open entry and accessible to all levels of ability. These events are used to select the Army Team to compete in Jun/Jul at the Inter-Services competition, which in turn is used as a selection for the CS lead team, who will compete in the British Lead Champs in October 14 and the European Champs in Chamonix in November 14.

After a series of successful competitions in March and April, the lead climbing season has been extended into May with the first ever 3-day event at the Boulders Climbing Wall, Cardiff. The setter, Andy Long, pulled out all the stops with an outstanding set of route tests to compete, while one of the setters, Tom Whittaker and Dave Mason, training began.

Although used as a means of selecting the Combined Services Bouldering Team, the TSBL is just beginning and it is an appropriate time to reflect on the highlights of the 2013/14 competition season.

Bouldering (October 2013 to March 2014)

Depending on your viewpoint, the TSBL is either: the purest form of climbing and the highlight of the Indoor Climbing year; or a series of enjoyable training events whilst one awaits the start of the real (lead roped) climbing season in the spring. Regardless, the TSBL was a great success this year with strong turnouts at all five rounds held across the UK. It is held on the second Wednesday of every month from October through to January and culminates in a weekend event at Indefatigable, Anglesey – enormous thanks and praise must go to Tom Odling for continuing to co-ordinate and organise this league.

The season finals, doubling as the Annual Army Bouldering Competition, kicked off over the weekend of 21-22 May with a final complete novices trying to figure out how to work their way up an unusual V0 (UK Tech 4b ish), through to the very top Combined Services Bouldering Team members starting in a slightly confused manner at a blank wall (allegedly V7/8, UK Tech 6c ish). This problem of problems makes these rounds an excellent opportunity to bring a minimise full of keen Climbers, as I have discovered in my quest to establish 42 Engineer Regiment (Geo) as a hotbed of strong (and prize winning) competition climbers – the quest continues...

Bouldermania was an opportunity to compete against the best that the European Military has to offer. Given that Switzerland funds its professional climbers by ‘employing’ them within the military, this event also saw stiff competition. Nonetheless, the CS team put up one-armed pull-ups on fingernail crimps (we wish!) was not necessarily going to stop them falling off 10m up an easy but pumpy lead route. This was never more true than for an un-named female member of the squad. Who looked genuinely confused when presented with quickdraws as a prize, being unsure how she was supposed to employ such complex pieces of equipment. Nevertheless, dragged into their harnesses by their highly motivated taskmaster (Peté Skinsky), and provided with expert coaching from Steve McClone, Dave Mason, training began.

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As you read this, in Autumn 2014, the Tri-Services Bouldering League (TSBL) is just beginning and it is an appropriate time to reflect on the highlights of the 2013/14 competition season.

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Into the shadow
by Nick Bullock

Nick Bullock started climbing in 1993 while working as a Physical Education instructor in the prison service. This was a tough job, but it did leave Nick well placed to deal with the harshness of modern alpine climbing and ultimately propelled him forward into an extraordinary climbing lifestyle. Nick has been on over 20 expeditions to places as far flung as Peru, Nepal, Pakistan and India, bagging many first ascents. In 2009, Nick Bullock and Andy Houseman successfully ascended Chang Himal, a 6802m peak in the Kangchhenjunga region of Nepal. “Into the shadows” is a fantastic article and insight into that successful expedition.

A million stars flicker in a slow spinning sky. The moraine, a ploughed rubble strewn moon surface creeks. Old snow cracks. Chang Himal’s north face – 1800-metres of snow, cold rotten granite, thin ice skin, fluted sugar spines – soars.

Houseman and I creep like thieves scared that the mountain should hear our approach. A neon moon lights the way. The weather was settled, but a strong wind had been blowing everyday. And everyday we had watched reefs of ghostly snow pour from Kangchhenjunga’s shimmering summit and possess the Mont Blanc du Tacul like mountains to the north. And everyday spires tore from Chang Himal’s summit crest.

In the moons shadow, the entrance gully was deep and dark. Twisting, turning, leading us in, drools of ice cascade. I thought of writing a will mate.

Houseman remarked feeling weak, climbing slow. I stopped and looked around at the mountains, the moraine, the tiny base camp tents, a twisting track cutting the crumbling brown moraine shoulders, ‘welcome to my life mate’. Houseman was the same age that I had been when I first started to climb; it didn’t seem that long ago but it was sixteen years and I certainly didn’t feel as fit as I had been when I first started to climb; it didn’t seem that.

In the half-light of morning, heading left, back toward the central spur, features we had stared at from BC took form. The seracs above that may, or may not have poured down our line, were thankfully left behind. The angle increased and it was a surprise to find rock a few inches beneath a crust. The plan was to descend on ice screw threads. Kicking, heaving lungs, swinging axes, I pushed the thought of getting down to the back of my mind.

Houseman complained of feeling weak, climbing slow. I stopped and looked around at the mountains, the moraine, the tiny base camp tents, a twisting track cutting the crumbling brown moraine shoulders, ‘welcome to my life mate’. Houseman was the same age that I had been when I first started to climb; it didn’t seem that long ago but it was sixteen years and I certainly didn’t feel as fit as I had been when I first started to climb; it didn’t seem that.

Reaching the snow-cone at the base of what we had christened the narrows relief floods, the snow pack was hard. Then tension twisted, turning, leading us in, drools of ice cascade. I thought of writing a will mate.

“Do you mind leading this, I’m still feeling wasted?”

Ropes were pulled from the rucksacks. We had reached the first in a series of questions, the lower and smaller of two rock bands.

“Do you mind leading this, I’m still feeling wasted?”

Rope ran long, uninterrupted. A block, flat topped, an island in the middle of the pitch gave reprieve. I stood on my frozen block swinging my arm to encourage blood into wooden fingers… controlling myself, warming fingers, placing a good piece of protection, re-warming fingers, swinging an arm… I swept feet; hooked a glass thin piece of ice and pull. The climbing was not really that difficult, but the snow and ice were brittle and rotten, my pack heavy, the air thin, it felt considerably more difficult than a grade would suggest. I scraped through the final bulge navigating crud and established myself at the foot of yet another sweep of snow. An hour later we were back in the centre of the face and digging.

I had been imagining our first bivy in dreams – dreams before reaching Nepal, dreams throughout the ten day walk-in, dreams in the morning, lying warm and safe listening to the soft chime of yak bells – given Houseman’s vomiting, I was amazed we were sitting on a snow step with a thousand metres beneath.

Sitting on the small step, I thought about Nick Fowler and all of his infamous bivy’s. Fowler had a bivy comfort scale of one to five. Five was lying down, one was standing. I respected Fowler for his routes but I respected him more for his quest to fit as much as he could into very little time. Snow sloughed and blew. I zipped up my two jackets, pulled the sleeping bag around my shoulders and watched the base camp tent, a glowing dot in the distance. The previous summer in North Wales Tim Nell and I decided to climb a Fowler route called Helmet Sonata.

“It had rained forty days and forty nights in North Wales, the tourists had departed two by two, but dry was once again with us and the tempo had been getting softer all week. These were not the normal (hard) rock increases that can be explained or boasted about by a number or made instantly available by a bolt. No, as the rock had dried my mind and psyche took me down into the fiery depths – down into a Heronimous Bosch painted world of soft and loose. Down into white guano sprayed, red, yellow grey metamorphosed quartzite. Strength of mind in this world of convoluted twisted seams was the greatest asset to a climber closely followed by a monster rack of gear. Unfortunately it appeared for once in Mousetrap Zawn at Craig Gogarth on the island of Anglesey, a monster rack was surplus to requirements.

Stuck on a lonely ledge, out in the middle of the zawn, the clock slowed, minutes lasted a lifetime. The groove I had to climb was overhanging. Ripples of thick damp mud coated soft grey rock. The ropes ran in a long traversing arc. A quartz boss with a sling wrapped around it and a roiling twenty five year old peg were all that stood between me and a helicopter flight to Bangor A&E. I dug and scratched, scraping mud from the surface of more mud looking like a deranged person searching for a miracle, searching for something solid in a sea of overhanging soft.

I excavated a crack with the wire loop from a nut; the crack crumbled like feta. Why the f**k were we climbing this Fowler horror show? I have been told that climbing is purely egotistical, but how could placing myself onto this climb be egotistical? Only a handful of people in the world knew the true horror and the grade would not impress anyone.

I climbed from the small lump of solid several times before reversing each time. Successful escape from my island depended solely on using a quartz boss jutting from the middle of the overhanging groove, but quartz bands, bosses and fins have a tendency to tip. I stepped-up for a second time wrapping a hand around the smooth boss, it reminded me of one of those breast shaped holds at the climbing wall that sick route setters like to place. This one was covered in mud though.

The Zawn beneath opened into a mess of boulders. Waves, unstoppable, washed in polystyrene fishing floats, tangerine propylene nets, bubbled yellow scum. Seagulls cried and screeched and hung from the smooth quartz band and as I let go with my low hand to chalk-up, the quartz band snapped. I was falling. Time turned fast-forward. I saw mud and madness and pain… the ropes ran and ran, the crusty twenty-five year old peg looked woefully inadequate… I was falling, the clock hands spun, but just as quick, I slapped for the boss and caught it. And I was still there, still in this Bosche bedlam but physically un-injured. I screamed at Tim, who screamed back. The sea swept into the zawn, seagulls cried life. The clock hands slowed. Once more, minutes lasted hours – until eventually I slithered from the mud tunnel’s overhanging exit with experience.

…Houseman led straight from the bivvy. Day two – the second rock-band, and the biggest question of the climb, it could stop us eventually. I slithered from the mud tunnel’s overhanging exit with experience.

Left to right: Nick Bullock, day two starting up the crux pitch. Andy Houseman approaching Chang Himal • Day 2 returning into the rock band. Attempting to find a way onto the upper face, day 2.
It looks ok.” Houseman said. I thought it looked steep and difficult, and so did he after an hour. Seconding, nearly throwing up with the worst hot-caches of my life I clipped the belay; three stubborn screws a poor wire and a half driven peg. I tried not to lean back. Youth pointed a big red mitt, “One of three ways I reckon?”

Looking up, boulders poke from an inversion of thin snow. Three very steep, thinly iced groove-corners presented. I didn’t like the look of any. Jamming into an overhanging corner, calves burn. Fingers for the second time that day were wood. The voice in my head screams instructions, asks questions. The first thirty metres of the pitch had been on good ice and the angle was just off vertical... “It’s going to be ok,” but the angle of the face increased and bulged. The ice became thin and hollow, detached. The ice spoke. “Write a will – make – no rescue – a million miles from anywhere.” I placed some gear and swung left into a runnel and hooked sheen millimetres thin. I still wore my pack and it pulled. “Take the pack off you fucking idiot.” But I didn’t. I always have a feeling of not being good enough when I have to remove the pack. Youth had similar ethics and we were climbing the only way we knew. The leader attempted to free-climb everything and the second follows in the same style.

After only a few minutes of chopping we hit ice. On the Fowler one pulled loose rock... Paul was standing, awkward and off balance. A large support brace wrapped around his ankle, a sling cradled his arm. Paul was standing, awkward and off balance. A large support brace wrapped around his ankle, a sling cradled his arm. “It looks ok.” Houseman said. I thought it looked steep and difficult, but still he refused to give up, he was back climbing and he was still an inspiration. I dug into snow looking for ice but found none. Continuing, I wondered about my future, my remaining time.

Two of my friends from the Shark’s Fin expedition were now gone, time for them had been cut tragically short. Time for Philip Lloyd from Pritchard’s Shark’s Fin expedition had also run out. In the valley, the loss made no sense, but here, up high, surrounded by thousands of mountains, pushing my body and mind to its limit, living minutes that felt like hours, climbing and mountaineering made every sense.

Houseman took over the lead and eventually climbed out of the fluting onto a wild windy exposed summit crest. Delayed to a snow bollard we met. Taking no gear apart from that which I had collected on the way. I continued. The brightness of the sun hit my soul. I kicked and tried not to stop but the gusting wind had me repeatedly dropping onto my axes. Pumice granules scoured. Crawling, I prayed for no false summits. Crawling, I prayed for success. Kicking, a few more metres was everything... and he was there then, back in Wen Zawn, a place he had made his own –

Just for a second he was there. And in that second I was there with him. I could feel sticky salt on my skin. I could smell seaweed. My heart pulsed with camaraderie. The wind ripped through Wen’s, hewn cleft. Grey seals circled beneath white-turquoise turbulent waves. Crashing rock, crashing sea, grey rock – a dark intimidating place but one that had been hit by Pritchard’s legacy – Then we were back in the packed pub, jostling and swaying, feet sticking to the carpet, a tug of sweat... and the rain run down the window. Paul was standing, awkward and off balance. A large support brace wrapped around his ankle, a sling cradled his arm.

“It’s HVS... except for the E7 bits!” Laughing he limped away bumping and blending into the throng, pint sloshing... “…In the morning I climbed and looked over the snow crest just above our bivvy. My heart leapt. A steep runnel sidled led into another runnel system. “It’s on, it’s really on.” We left packs hoping the lack of weight would help with levitation and set off aiming for the completion of our dream.

Deep into the guts, surrounded by candies of sugar-snow like a winter Devils Tower in Wyoming, slicing air branched lunge skin. I took my mind from the pain. Pritchard is badly disabled after a rock took half his head off while abseiling the Totem Pole in Tasmania – Paul had obviously lived too many life-times, burnt too bright, but still he refused to give up, he was back climbing and he was still an inspiration. I dug into snow looking for ice but found none. Continuing, I wondered about my future, my remaining time.

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The survivor’s guide to sea cliffs
(or how to avoid getting wet unless you want to...)

Article by Toby Dunn

Sea cliffs conjure up a range of responses and memories from most climbers. They are a curious mix of the relaxed and the nerve-jangling, the placid and the wildly committing and adventurous.

For me, that is their enduring appeal. The sheer variety and challenge of the environment, and the fact that you can choose to have a relaxed day’s climbing at the seaside, or a level of adventure that you would otherwise have to travel to a major mountain range or remote corner of the planet to experience is unique. Sea cliffs are also infinitely variable; the same crag can be friendly or a intensely exciting depending on the weather and sea state.

Of course, there is the thrill of Solo climbs, tides, birds, sea state, changeable weather, rock rendered greasy by salty sea air, the list goes on. However, for me, it is always worth the effort. Days on sea cliffs in the UK are probably the most treasured, satisfying experiences I have ever gained through climbing, equaling having climbed in Yosemite, all over Europe, Africa, New Zealand... As climbers, we have a precious resource in our coastline, and this article should inspire and inform you to start on your way to being able to enjoy this environment as safely as possible and have as much fun as you can into the bargain; whether you are after a multi-pitch adventure epic, or a quick couple of deep water solos...

Introduction

This article is relevant to those who are keen to get their first experiences of sea cliffs, as well as experienced climbers who might find the odd tip - to make their days out on the rock at the seaside pass a little more smoothly - very helpful.

The presence of the sea is the primary distinction between this and other aspects of climbing. It gives us both the atmosphere, and the potential for significant objective danger. As anyone who has done any surfing or sailing will know, the sea demands enormous respect. A little time spent thinking about tides, wind, and weather is well worthwhile. The presence of the sea can make the perfect day out a total washout. A day at the seaside is not the same without being able to enjoy this environment as safely as possible.

For me, that is their enduring appeal. The sheer variety and challenge of the environment, and the fact that you can choose to have a relaxed day’s climbing at the seaside, or a level of adventure that you would otherwise have to travel to a major mountain range or remote corner of the planet to experience is unique. Sea cliffs are also infinitely variable; the same crag can be friendly or intensely exciting depending on the weather and sea state.

Top sea cliff tips

• Tides. Check the tides, remember they are always printed in GMT, and that it may well be BST and necessary to add one hour. Spring tides mean higher highs, and lower lows, neap tides are the opposite (i.e.: smallest variation). Tidal range can be fairly small - Swanage sea cliffs for example - or enormous: the Bristol Channel has the second biggest range in the world at over 15m.

• Weather. The crucial for successful sea cliffs, tide height can be the difference between a route being safe or extremely dangerous. Access for roped climbing is also often affected: you may have used a tide chart to get to a route, and find out it was a washout - http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coasts/tides/ has times for tides around the country of some help.

• Surf. Check the surf forecast if one is available for your area, the state sea can have a massive effect on your day out, and be the difference between a pleasant mellow day and a gripping nightmare. Some surfing sites also have webcams on beaches, which can give a really good insight into local weather and sea conditions.

• Birds. Check the bird situation; is the route / cliff subject to restrictions? The BMCO: http://www.thebmco.co.uk/bmrcrag/ should have the latest updates on access. Many sea cliff areas are restricted until the 31st of July - meaning August / September is prime season for these places.

• Running away. Think escape routes: sea cliffs can be difficult environments to climb in and it is wise always having an exit plan if your route does not go to plan: is there a route easy enough for you to climb in any weather? Can you prussic / jumar back up the abseil rope? Can you walk or swim around to get out?

• Look before you leap. Try and find a viewpoint for your route before you start to relate rock features to a top description. Knowing where you are going when you are embroiled in the climbing will make it a more enjoyable experience. If you are stranded, you can strap yourself onto a hanging belay just above the water with a dizzying mass of overhanging rock above you, it’s not the time to get the guidebook out for the first time.

• Draining. Take water: routes can be long, time-consuming, and the sun reflecting off the sea can turn some crags into very warm places indeed. Deterioration will not improve your performance, or comfort and enjoyment of the route.

• Take precautions. Always take a belay at the bottom of your route, even if the sea appears calm. An unplanned dip due to a boat wake /’freak’ wave while your leader is mid pitch might seem appealing on a hot day, but is unlikely to prove popular at the eel’s end of the rope. Make sure it can withstand multidirectional loading as well - a wave would lift you up before dropping you down again. A really solid thread or cam/wire combination is ideal.

• Washing. No, not you... washi your gear after close exposure to salt. A good cleaning of rope and a good wash of the cup will result in an interesting powder oxidise residue covering most of your alloy gear (that’s all your crabs, cams etc) and this does not improve their function or strength. Wash in fresh water, and oil cams with a light Teflon based lube, WD40 is not a lubricant (it disperses moisture), and will attract grime to cam surfaces and wear them out. Use something more lubricating so the cup will work better. Check the forum for advice on this. Wash ropes as well.

• Strings. Keep ropes out of the sea, not only because its nicer having freshly washed ropes, but also because the cup will result in an interesting powder oxidise residue covering most of your alloy gear (that’s all your crabs, cams etc) and this does not improve their function or strength. Wash in fresh water, and oil cams with a light Teflon based lube, WD40 is not a lubricant (it disperses moisture), and will attract grime to cam surfaces and wear them out.

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Top ten gear tips

1. **Symphony Crack, VD, Rhoscolyn, North Wales.** Similar rock to the better bits of Gogarth, with a lower level of commitment and technical difficulty.

2. **The Bay of Rainbows, Portland.** The full abseil in, belay above the sea experience, with short, well bolted sport routes on excellent sea cliff routes, mainly VS upwards. Also abounds in sport routes and deep water soloing.

3. **Scramble, Concrete Chimney, Britomartis.** Mostly very solid golden granite, short single pitch and committing multipitch.

4. **Heart of Darkness.** Great crack system, although some sections are very difficult. A quick climb with a great view of the bay below.

5. **Prussic cord / tibloc / ropeman - essential for escaping up a belay rope and un-cliping the various ropes that can be used.**

6. **A fairly skinny diameter rope will cut down on weight and rope drag, which will make life easier at the top of monster pitches.**

7. **A fairly sizeable rucksack fits your foot shape is by far the most important criterion in choosing a rucksack.**

8. **You'll be carrying more gear than you are looking for a good helmet.**

9. **If a helmet is worn on a hill it is essential for escaping up from the top of a climb.**

10. **Re-ascending climbing ropes if you fall beneath your abseil rope should your route be un-climbable or in case of emergency.**

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**Top Destinations & Classics**

This is nothing more than an attempt to characterise each area and give an introduction to some routes there that are really good, rather than a best of list. The areas often vary vastly from crag to crag in character, but take this as a starting point for your investigations and adventures.

**Pembroke:** generally solid limestone, steep and well protected (again, generally) best for E1 and upwards, though there are plenty of easier routes at some venues it is in the extreme bracket that Pembroke limestone really shines. (Usually in a metaphorical sense, it’s rarely that polished...) Mostly simple pitch, abseil approaches.

A selection of routes:
- E1: Rock Idol
- E2: Lucky Strike
- E3: Pleasure Dome, Zeppelin
- E4: Star Wars, Witch Hunt, The Fascist and me
- VS: Darkness at Noony, English Morning
- S: Flannel Avenue
- V: Cavity, Caribbean Blue, Shadow Beast

**Gogarth:** quartzite, very solid on some crags, degrading to substances which may still be rock but resemble something altogether less solid on others. Fantastically, adventurous routes from VS upwards.

**Pembroke:** Scavenger, Convent Chimney, Britomartis

**Northerner:** mostly very solid golden granite, short single pitch and committing multipitch.

- D: Alison's Rib
- E1: Out of the Blue, Heart of the Sun
- E2: The Conger (DWS), Tudor Rose, Calcitr
- E3: Ocean Boulevard, Soul Sacrifice, Freedom Man (DWS, 6c)
- E4: Lean Machine, Relax & Swing, Polaris
- E5: The Cow, any Main Cliff E5!
- E6: The Mind Cathedral, Mark of the Beast (DWS, 7c)

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**West Penwith:** (for the bit around Land's End, if you’re a Northerner): mostly very solid golden granite, short single pitch and committing multipitch.

- D: Alison’s Rib
- E1: Commando Ridge
- S: Fannell Avenue
- V: Little Brown Jug
- VS: Anvil Chorus, Cormorant’s Bill
- E1: World’s End, Bishop’s Rib
- E2: Bow wall, Sampson Arete
- E3: Raven Wall, Dream, Cain, Grande Plage
- E5: Atlantic Ocean Wall

**North Devon and Cornwall:** very variable in rock types and quality, pillow lava, sandstone, cumbrian, greenstone, slate, sometimes more than one within one crag. Sometimes an extremely challenging environment, although some sections are much treacherous (Bridport Point, for example). Also wild, beautiful and eminently rewarding.

- HS: Right Angle
- VD: Scrattling Crack
- E1: Out of the Blue
- E2: The Bay of Rainbows
- E3: Archtemper
- E4: America
- E5: Dankadab the Bightdayter
- E6: Guernica

**South Devon:** mostly limestone, very solid to dubious quality, surrounding the seaside fleshtop of Torquay. Scattered but excellent DWS and sport climbing.

- VS: Gates of Eden
- HS: Moonscraper, Incubus
- VD: Dredmouth, Black Ice
- E1: Call to Arms, False Gods, Renegade, Zuma
- E6: Cavenen, Caribbean Blue, Shadow Beach

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**First sea cliff outing?**

If you are deeply unsure about the whole idea of having the briny sloshing about beneath you whilst you climb, here are five suggestions for em, dipping your toes into the waters of the wonderful sea cliff experience. Also fantastic if you are more experienced but after a fun and profoundly relaxing day out!

1. **The Bay of Rainbows, Portland.** The full abseil in, belay above the sea experience, with short, well bolted sport routes on excellent rock, beautiful day, amazing view, can organise an expedition with a little help and support from others. Would I do it again? Yes, definitely - I might even know what I’m doing the second time around! Thanks to Cstg Lee Magowan for twisting my arm in the first place.

Written by Philip Burrows - Padre 2 LANCS

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**2 LANCS: Adventure training in Spain**

**MARCH 2014**

A couple of observations are worth mentioning. The first occurred on our big Grade 5 multi-pitch mountain day. Having climbed through an overhang, the instructor’s rope became trapped underneath the ledge and he could neither climb on, nor reverse the route. Any hercules at this stage could have made the situation a lot worse. As it was he simply ‘tied off’ to an anchor point, shouted to the two novice to stay on the belay stance where they were secured and waited for help. Climbers ‘passing through’ shortly afterwards freed the rope and they were able to finish the climb.

The second is a more general observation on the perception of risk. Our soldiers have completed several tours both in Afghanistan and Iraq. As a result they assess danger in a completely different way from your ordinary novice. One quote I heard in Canada, when a soldier was warned about ‘Rope Below’ was, “I’m not bothered, it’s an RPS!” Climbers themselves as well as their instructors should be aware of this distortion if novice’s are not to put themselves into situations they can’t handle.

If there is one point to take away from this article, it is that anyone can organise an expedition with a little help and support from others. Would I do it again? Yes, definitely - I might even know what I’m doing the second time around! Thanks to Cstg Lee Magowan for twisting my arm in the first place.

Written by Philip Burrows - Padre 2 LANCS
Hands chalked, straps tightened on my rock shoes and the matter of ‘Climbing Now’ rattling through the wind, the beginning of a typical lead on Exercise Northern Spanish Lion. The sun on my back, the grip of the rock and the rope dragging between my legs so I lead off, perfect.

As a qualified Rock Climbing Leader (RCL), leading multi pitch routes on limestone was an absolute pleasure. The days started early, the driving was long but often to roadside crags where the short walk-in more than compensated. Leading routes from 4 to 5+ at Tox (roughly equivalent to Severe through to Hard Very Severe UK grades) was an experience, especially when the wind started to gust sixty metres up. There was always potential to stray onto a harder route due to the close proximity of the bolted routes, which seriously focussed the mind.

When at the belay stances, it was the bread and butter of the RCL, organising the stance to ensure the rope was being back-coiled correctly, having my back to the exit - my route out - and ensuring the anchor was weighted at all times, all great practise. Bringing the second up, ensuring he was tight but not being dragged up was a challenge at times, often hearing, “Take-in” as the climbers entering the stances the ‘seconds’ displayed a variety of responses. Communication was very hard as the wind was gusting strongly, so we had to call it a day from there. All in all a great days climbing and what the appetite for our big mountain day on the Thursday.

Two quotes sum up the week.
From the Padre. “No one told me that the village of Finestrat was only 10 minutes away from Benidorm!” From WO1 Ryan Lang, one of our military instructors: “I can honestly say that this was the best trip I have been on. Despite the first day being cut short due to weather, it was an absolute pleasure being professional at all times and achieving results far greater than expected (...... multi-pitching effectively on their second day of climbing......). It was also great that you ensured we had a variety of routes ranging from 4 to 6a in difficulty. As we gained in confidence we moved onto multi-pitch climbing. In the afternoon we then put these new skills into action and did two 3 pitch, multi-pitch climbs. Communication was very hard as the wind was gusting strongly, so we had to call it a day from there. All in all a great days climbing and what the appetite for our big mountain day on the Thursday.

A couple of diary extracts from the lads give you a flavour of the trip and the banter:
Day One - Carwyn Dwyer. The day started off just the same as any other; wet and windy. After battling through the confusion of the trip and the banter:

Day Two - Dave Payne and Chris Norris. We arrived at the coastal crag called Sierra de Tox around 0900 on the second day. It was a five minute walk from where we parked the cars and, once there, we set all of our equipment out and started to do ‘top rope’ climbs. The routes ranging from 4 to 6a in difficulty. As we gained in confidence we moved onto multi-pitch climbing. In the afternoon we then put these new skills into action and did two 3 pitch, multi-pitch climbs. Communication was very hard as the wind was gusting strongly, so we had to call it a day from there. All in all a great days climbing and what the appetite for our big mountain day on the Thursday.

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