



MCSA
News

Newsletter of the
Johannesburg Section



June 2010

Quotation of the Month: "Good judgment comes from experience. Experience comes from bad judgment." (Evan Hardin)

CLUB NEWS

New Committee members. Details at back of newsletter.

Welcome to Kyle Meenehan, our new activities support manager

Northcliff Clean up - helpers and climbers required. We are hoping to assist cleaning up Northcliff Ridge. We believe that the grass will be burnt shortly and the rubbish left needs to be collected and removed. We will keep you informed as to when and where. Contact Erik Manson 011 646 2538.

New Members:

We welcome the following new members:

March 2010: Michele Tortutter; Hilton Fryer; Victoria Johnston; Emma Boyd/Bekker; Robert Dugtig; Grant Dugtig; Cara O'Connor; Michael McTernan; Marike Badenhorst; William Mapham; Anna-Maria Lombard; Daryl Martyris; Transfer from Cape Town: Richard Behne. Re-instated: Dave & Desree Tyrer

April 2010: Chris Dykes; Larry Thomas; Jacques Booyesen; Pauline Amez-Dros; Anna-Louisa Fisher-Jeffes; Desmond Morgan; Craig Bartlett; trf from Cape Town Roy Harris and re-instated Tyrone Clark and family members Luca and Kito Lazarus.

June 2010: Sandy Beekhuizen and son Dean; Valerio Ferreira; Jürgen Hellberg; Neil and Justine Grimmer; Bridget Steffen; and family members Alexander and Rainer Visser and Daniel Buchel

Resigned: Erik Verster and Andy Fourie.

Passed away: With regret we advise that Martin Knoetze (March 2010) and Philip Weinberg (end of March 2010) passed away. Our sincere condolences to families and friends.

Land & Access:

Kranskloof: THIS AREA IS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

Castle Gorge and Grootkloof : lock codes from Uschi OR Land & Access convemnor.

Permits for the areas the MCSA owns/ -co owns – members can take one guest when visiting the following areas. If you have more guests please get the necessary permits R30 per adult per day, R20 for students and high school scholars and R10 for children under 13 years.

Castle Gorge permits can be obtained from Marion JHB Hiking Club 087 940 1903 weekdays 8h30 to 12h30

Dome Pools, Grootkloof and Mhlabatini: MCSA Magaliesberg section Kari Low is the new administrator 087 808 3729 8am – 10 am weekdays

Cedarberg/Tonquani MCSA Jhb Uschi- 011 807 1310 weekdays 8- 12 am.

Events highlights:

Forthcoming events:

30 June Wednesday: DVD 'PROGRESSION' - this is a movie that digs deeper than most. It shows dedication, frustration, despair and elation. It truly showcases the best in world climbing. Featuring Chris Sharma, Patxi Uobiaga, Tommy Caldwell, Adam Ondra and others.

14 July Wednesday: DVD 'STONE MONKEY' featuring Johnny Dawes. He is one of the most exciting climbers to emerge on to the British climbing scene.

21 July Wednesday: Talk on 'Arm and Hand Injuries' by Jenny Blenkinsop, an occupational therapist.

28 July Wednesday: COOK – A- THON. This popular event will this year be organized by Peter Adrian. Cook up your favourite dish as you would in the mountains. Prizes for best tasting, most original. Details to follow.

11 August Wednesday: DVD 'The First Ascent' . Join us on a globe trotting journey to witness the exploits of today's top climbers and their pursuit of climbing pinnacle achievement.

25 August Wednesday: Second Gear and Book Sale – yours and ours

15 September: Members slides. Members are invited to bring a few pictures of what you climbed/walked this year.

Annual Campfire and Sing Song will be held at Cedarberg weekend 9 & 10 October

Limestone and Tapas

A climbing trip to Alicante, Spain

It was Easter weekend 2010, and Chris Prinsloo and I had just flown into Alicante airport in the south-east corner of Spain, after the long haul flight from Jo'burg to Madrid. After collecting our luggage and the necessary hire-car, we drove to our pre-booked hotel in the centre of town, itching to get our hands onto some Spanish limestone. We had come for a 10 day break to savour the local crags.

This had been preceded about a month before by the now familiar 'fancy doing a spot of climbing over Easter?' 'Hey, why not. I have heard there is some great multi-pitch bolted limestone routes in Spain.' 'OK, I'll book the flight tickets if you book the hire-car and the hotel.' It was as simple as that.

Alicante is at the centre of the Costa Blanca, a seaside area with super white sand beaches that the Brits have flocked to for some 50 years for

cheap package holidays in the sun. Though the centre of Alicante has kept some of its Spanish feel, nearby Benidorm and Calpe are now concentrations of high-rise hotels, where 'fish and chips', and 'bangers and mash' are the order of the day. To put this into perspective, there must have been 20 to 30 coaches lined up at the airport waiting to take the package holiday-makers to their various hotels. And this was not the high season. Had it not been for the area's great reputation for quality and quantity of limestone routes, Chris and I certainly would not be there.

And quality and quantity there were. That afternoon, we were already getting the feel of the rock at a bolted crag near Sax, about 30km from Alicante centre. We had mail-ordered a route book by Chris Craggs (an apt name for climbing author), which gave detailed access and crag info. The limestone was excellent, being mostly very sound, even sharp, to the point that you had to be careful with hand-holds so as not to lacerate one's fingers. The one and two finger pockets were just amazing.

Another day doing 1 and 2 pitch climbs near Alicante, and I wanted to get my hands on some of the multi-pitch routes. We set our sights on the Via Gene, a 7 pitch trad route (about SA grade 17-18) on the Cabezon de Oro. Fortunately we had done our homework, and brought a pair of half ropes, together with a trad rack; 4 friends and 10 nuts are adequate, though we may have had a little more (Chris was reluctant to over-prune his Blouberg rack). I think all the stances were bolted, as were the descent ab stations.

Like good SA climbers, we wanted to get up early to get to the crags. But it only gets light there at 8am (Spain is in the same time zone as SA). Whilst we got to the climbs at 10ish, the locals would only rock up at 11 or 12. We could see that the Spanish had a different approach to the day.

Similarly, we would get back to the hotel, and be totally ready to eat at 7pm, only to find that most of the restaurant kitchens only opened at 8. Nevertheless, we discovered the tapas. Tapas are Spanish starters, and each restaurant will have its own selection. The more frequented and popular the place, the greater the range of tapas. In fact, we often did not get past the tapas stage, as they are sufficiently varied, filling and really delicious. Occasionally I would end off with a paella, and Chris with a steak. But mostly we were happy with the tapas. Washed down with fine Spanish beer (with alcohol and without), nothing more was needed to make a hungry climber replete.

After moving our lodgings to Finestrat, which was more central to the Benidorm and Calpe crags, we cracked superb 13 pitch trad ridge route of the Espolon Central on the Puig Campana (SA grade 16). The climbing up the fluted buttress was first class for its grade.

But for me, the highlight was the 10 pitch bolted Diedro UPSA (SA grade 18) on the Penon De Ifach. The Penon is an unmistakable lump of rock, 329m high that stands majestically at the end of a spur of land, between two beaches, towering over Calpe harbour. For all the world, it looks like a volcanic plug, and is described as such in some travel guides. But in fact, the rock is coralline limestone.

Whilst most of the climbs away from the coast had possibly been graded softly, I felt Diedro was certainly not. This was possibly due to the lower pitches having a more chalky nature than previously. We took a trad rack, and used some pieces where the run-out between the bolts seemed excessive. But I found the upper sections to be superb climbing.

All good things come to an end. In our 9 possible days, we had climbed for 7. We had notched up some 51 pitches, which amounts to about 1.5 vertical kilometres. My muscles had a warm glow about them for a week afterwards. And sleeping on the plane on the return flight was no problem.

Now I am thinking what rock there is in Greece, because I am sure it goes with their meze.

Chris Ziranek 26th April 2010

Tsunami-like wave caused by Pakistani landslide could wipe out villages.

A lake formed by a landslide in northern Pakistan could burst its banks by Tuesday, possibly triggering a giant wave that could sweep down the Himalayan valley and swamp dozens of villages.

The level of the Attabad lake, which was formed by a landslide in early January, has risen alarmingly fast in the past month and is now within a few metres of its limit.

Pakistani authorities hope that a new, army-built spillway will siphon off excess water when it starts to overflow, probably from Tuesday morning.

But experts say the artificial channel is too narrow, and they worry that immense water pressure could cause the lake wall to suddenly collapse, sending a tidal wave up to 60 metres high into the valley below and affecting up to 25,000 people.

"A flood is now likely, hopefully of just a moderate size, but possibly larger," said David Petley, a professor at Durham University. "The catastrophic failure scenario is unlikely but impossible to rule out. The sensible thing is to plan for the worst."

The crisis is a blow for the Hunza valley, a stunningly beautiful area sometimes referred to as the Shangri-la of Pakistan for the longevity of its people. The Attabad lake started to form in early January after a landslide blocked the Karakoram highway, which links Pakistan and China.

The water level has risen rapidly over the past month, swelled by meltwater from nearby glaciers, swamping 120 houses and displacing about 1,300 people. Another 12,000 people have been evacuated from the potential flood zone downstream, mostly to higher ground above their villages.

The prime minister, Yousaf Raza Gilani, was met with angry protests when he visited the area by helicopter last Friday. Villagers criticised the government for acting slowly and for failing to announce a compensation scheme. Some said that their situation had become so desperate they were willing to return home, despite the dangers. Gilani said a compensation package would be announced by the end of this week. The relief effort is being handled by the army-run National Disaster Management Authority, which was formed in the aftermath of the 2005 Kashmir earthquake that killed over 73,000 people.

Aid workers are rushing food supplies and sanitation equipment to the area. "We are praying the worst will not come to pass but we must prepare for it," said Khadija Jamal Shaban of Focus Humanitarian Assistance, an aid agency funded by the Aga Khan that has been leading relief efforts.

The world's largest landslide dam was formed in 1911 on the Murghab river in Tajikistan. The 550 metre dam has never breached because lake outflows are greater than inflows.

Geomorphologists estimate that 35 natural dams have formed over 500 years in the Pakistani section of the Himalayas. The latest was the Hattian dam, formed by the 2005 earthquake. It remains intact.

"Technically, it's just impossible to predict what's going to happen in this case," said Petley. "There's an element of sticking your finger in the air and guessing."

The mountain crisis comes as President Asif Ali Zardari's government also faces a possible legal calamity. A clash with the strong-willed chief justice, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, looms in the supreme court over the coming days.

Tomorrow the court is due to hear a petition challenging a package of constitutional amendments recently introduced by the government. The case is seen as a proxy for a long-running confrontation between Zardari and the judge, who has appeared determined to degrade the president's authority through a series of interventionist rulings in recent months. Political analysts fear the hearings could catalyse a clash between the two pillars of state that, in the worst case, would trigger calls for army intervention.

guardian.co.uk, Sunday 23 May 2010

Centenary of the first ascent of the Sentinel

WJ Wybergh and Lt NM McLeod first climbed the Sentinel via the standard route on 29 September 1910.

The KZN section of the mountain club of SA plans to celebrate this ascent on the weekend of the 4-5th September 2010. The idea is for as many people as possible to ascend the Sentinel via any route they wish on the morning of the 4th and then have a celebratory jol at the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge that evening. (We are happy to provide top-ropes on the two pitches on the Standard route so you won't need a climbing partner for standard route.) Entertainment at the dinner will be provided by Anthony van Tonder (slides/video on modern day climbing in the Drakensberg), Gavin Raubenheimer (50th anniversary of first ascent of *Angus Leppan* route on the Sentinel – pictures by Cesar de Carvalho) and hopefully someone to tell us about the golden era...

Accommodation options at Witsieshoek lodge (special rates for this event):

1. Double Sentinel rooms: R310 pp sharing (includes breakfast).
2. Bungalow rooms: R280 pp sharing (includes breakfast).
3. Camping with ablutions in adjacent bungalows: R90 pp.

Dinner:

1. Witsieshoek have offered us a fixed evening meal for the Saturday at R75 (including desert), but there is also an *a la carte* menu in the main dining area (we will hopefully be in a separate area for the

presentations and possibly dinner, at this stage not sure if the *a la carte* option will be available there).

2. The cash bar will be stocked.

Contact details for Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge:

Phone: 058 713 6361/2 or 072 223 9744

Email: lize@tfpd.co.za

Website: www.witsieshoek.co.za

Entry fee at the gate on the road: R10 pp.

The permit to hike is R25 pp.

So, if you are keen:

1. Let Hannelie or myself know via our e-mails (I am away for next two weeks so don't expect an immediate response from Bruce). We will start a mail list so you can exchange info, look for climbing partners, lifts, etc. bruce.tomalin@mondigroup.co.za or morris.hannelie@gmail.com
2. Contact the Witsieshoek lodge as above to book accommodation. Mention you are on the MCSA Sentinel centenary weekend (to get the prices above!). All payments to them please. YOU WILL HAVE TO MAKE THIS BOOKING WELL IN ADVANCE, AS WE WILL NOT BE EXCLUSIVE GUESTS.

OTHER NEWS

A 13-year-old American boy became the youngest climber to reach the top of Mount Everest yesterday, surpassing the previous record set by a 16-year-old Nepalese.

Jordan Romero called his mother by satellite phone from the summit of the world's highest mountain, 8850m above sea level.

"He said, 'Mom, I'm calling you from the top of the world,'" said Leigh Anne Drake, who had watched her son's progress on a GPS tracker online.

"There were lots of tears and 'I love you! I love you!' I just told him to get his butt back home."

The teenager, who climbed Mount Kilimanjaro when he was nine, was inspired by a painting in his school hallway of the seven continents' highest summits. He is now one climb away from his quest to conquer the highest peaks on all continents.

The former record for the youngest climber to scale Everest was held by Temba Tsheri of Nepal.

Also yesterday, a Nepalese Sherpa, Apa (he goes by only one name), who lives in Salt Lake City in the US, broke his own world record by climbing Everest for the 20th time.

Jordan, from Big Bear, California, was climbing with his father, his father's girlfriend and three Sherpa guides. He carried with him a number of good-luck charms, including a pair of kangaroo testicles given to him by a friend who has cancer.

At the summit, he left behind his lucky rabbit's foot and planted some seeds that a Buddhist monk at a local monastery had given him for luck.

Jordan continues the recent trend of young adventurers. Earlier this month, 16-year-old Australian Jessica Watson became the youngest person to sail solo around the world non-stop and unassisted. Thousands lined Sydney Harbour to cheer her as she cruised past the finish line in her pink yacht.

In January, 17-year-old Johnny Collinson of Utah in the US became the youngest person to climb the highest peaks on all seven continents.

Just one mountain remains in Jordan's own quest to climb those peaks, the Vinson Massif in Antarctica.

Sunday Times, May 22

Community and rescuers assist injured Magaliesberg hiker

Numerous hikers, rock climbers, volunteers, private and public emergency services organisations

came to the assistance of a man who fell and sustained a fracture to his lower leg in the

Magaliesberg North of Johannesburg on Sunday 9 May 2010. The hiker was hiking with friends in the

beautiful Tonquani gorge (near Mooiooi in the North West Province). He slipped and tumbled some 5m down a gully leading to the bottom of the gorge. He was assisted by bystanders, rock climbers and first-aiders whilst paramedics and volunteer rescuers made their way to the relatively

inaccessible gorge. After being carried out of the 100m deep gorge a South African Air Force (SAAF)

Oryx helicopter airlifted the man to Unitas hospital where he was admitted.

In addition to rock climbers, fellow-hikers (including a school group) rescuers from Lomnin Rescue,

Netcare 911, the Mountain Club of South Africa's Search and Rescue team, the Off Road Rescue Unit as well as a helicopter from the SAAF 17 Squadron rushed to the assistance of the man.

The incident took place at around 12:30 but due to the inaccessibility of the gorge bystanders first

had to climb out of the gorge before being able to raise the alarm via a cell phone. The man was

placed in a stretcher and then carried out of the gorge. Due to the steep terrain the stretcher was

secured during the carry out of the gorge using the climbing ropes of rock climbers who happen to

be climbing the rock faces near to where the incident happened. The Oryx helicopter, which flew

from the Swartkop Air Force base in Pretoria, landed in an open area nearby and flew the man to

Unitas hospital where he was admitted at approximately 17:00.

If you have any contributions, please e-mail me. No guarantees, but most material is accepted.

Newsletter Editor: Neil Lindsay neil.lindsay@jwt.com

Dear Friends,

Namaste and warm greetings from Nepal.

The 2010 Spring Mountaineering season from Nepal side has been very successful. My son, Dawa Steven Sherpa, Leader of Eco Everest Expedition 2010 and his team members returned to Kathmandu at the end of May safely and in good health.

Total Number of Climbers on Mt. Everest

This spring 2010 season we saw a slightly lower number of expeditions attempting Mt. Everest. On the Nepal side 157 foreign climbers and 190 High Altitude Sherpa climbed Mt. Everest. Though CTMA has not been able to provide us exact numbers, during this same season I predict the total number of climbers on the Tibet side to be around 165.

The latest information from the office of Ms. Elizabeth Hawley, chronicler of all Expeditions in Nepal, gives some very interesting facts. Between 1953 and 2009, the total number of ascents was 4557 by 3163 individuals (some having summited more than once).

Adding this year's spring total of 513 ascents, of which 268 are new summiteers and the rest are repeat summiteers. In summary, the total number of ascent until today is 5070. Whereas, the actual number of persons having summited Mt. Everest is 3431 till date.

A new world record



Apa Sherpa on the summit of Mt. Everest holding the flag of Nepal Tourism Year 2011.