

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2018

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1. PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS

ON GLOBALISATION

I have remarked before (I think) on the benefits of being married to the Club Librarian and having first dibs on all the overseas journals that come into the Club. While I may have reached the age and stage at which I am not able to make full use of the ideas for climbing trips and expeditions that still come to me when I read these various journals, they are still a source of inspiration and provide much food for thought... The American Alpine Club Journal - with its sub-title of “The World’s Most Significant Climbs” - is notable. That sub-title is not hyperbole – the accounts of climbs and expeditions takes up a large proportion of each Journal and is undoubtedly the most complete record (in English) of international climbing that exists.

I was recently dipping into a couple of old AAC Journals. The 2004 Edition – which has an absolutely stunning picture of the eastern aspect of Jirishanca in the Cordillera Huayhuash on the cover – is a case in point with respect to the records of the “world’s most significant climbs”. Some 277 pages (of the 496!) are taken up with climbs and expeditions from 2003. That is a huge number of trips that are recorded!

While a great number are what might be termed “parochial’ in world terms – we have to allow our American cousins their local dreams – an equally great number involve climbing around the rest of the world (including South Africa in case you are wondering). I tend to look first at areas where I have climbed – Patagonia, Peru, Greenland, East Africa – and then spend some time looking at what other areas have to offer.

And what variety there is! Everything from super-hard rock ascents through to quite easy exploratory trips involving little technical difficulty. This begs the question as to what are MCSA members contemplating in terms of trips to other mountain ranges... We have a long and honourable history of “expeditioning” to the greater ranges from East African trips in the 1920s and 1930s through the pioneering efforts in the Himalaya of the Graafs in the 1950s through to the Paul Fatti-lead trips (and others) of the 70s and 80s and the more recent efforts of Alard Hufner *et al.*

These trips do tend to come in bunches, as it were. Brief spurts of intense activity followed by relatively quiescent periods when only a few trips happen. It is often the case that people do not always write up their trips in any coherent form (*mea culpa!*) so these are effectively lost to the Club.

I have also learnt that, as the old adage has it, you can lead a horse to water...! On the occasion of our 125th anniversary, the National Expedition Sub-committee put out two or three ideas for an expedition to the Lago O’Higgins region of Chilean Patagonia. A trip did take place but not in the format that was originally intended and not to the area that had been proposed. From this, I took the lesson that ideas developed by third parties cannot

necessarily ignite the passion in the people with the physical and financial capacity to make them work. In other words, trips/expeditions need to be generated by the people who are actually going on them. A fairly obvious and simple conclusion – but I am a slow learner!

The other thing that came out of both this experience and my readings of the AAC (and other) journals is that there are many areas “out there” that do not require participants to be hard, technical climbers. Yes, there are still hard, new routes to be put up on “established” peaks in many well-known areas but there are also fine objectives which can be the target of relatively non-technical climbers. Such was the idea behind the abortive O’Higgins trip.

All this buys into the generally-understood concept that climbing/mountaineering, call it what you will, is a world activity not limited by geography. Your Club is an active participant in this world movement both by actively encouraging members when they look to broaden their activities to other parts of the world and also by its membership of the UIAA, another invaluable source of knowledge and expertise.

Membership of the UIAA brings with it a considerable source of general expertise coupled with “local” knowledge of many areas. I recently, through some serendipitous circumstances, had the opportunity to spend a long lunch with the Japanese UIAA representatives and this involved an exchange of ideas concerning trips/expeditions. One of them has climbed a number of the 8 000ers but still looks to encourage Japanese mountaineers to go the further-flung places as he realises that the age of exploration in the very highest Himalaya is largely gone – it is now the second- or third-tier peaks which offer tremendous scope for first ascents of all grades. [The reader is here directed to Tom Nakamura’s writings and (particularly) photographs on the eastern end of the Himalaya – simply stunning! We have his stuff in the Club Library.]

In essence, there is a whole world of mountains out there to explore. And sticking to our own back-yard, while admirable in its way, really limits climbers from “finding themselves”. As Maurice Herzog put it in the last line of his book on the 1950 ascent of the first 8 000 metre peak – “there are other Annapurnas in the lives of men...”.

2. HOTTENTOTS HOLLAND SECTION - ANNUAL JOINT MEET – re-scheduled from September to October

The Hottentots Holland section would like to invite you to the annual Joint Meet held at the Johnson Hut in the lovely Hottentots Holland mountains.

Arrival **20 October, 3pm** at Vergelegen Estate, Somerset West. Relax at the hut or dip in the pool while planning the next day’s activities. Bring n braai merriment while enjoying the sunset over Table Mountain and False Bay. Sleeping mattresses available in the hut (20 of) or sleep under the stars or tent.

On Sunday we offer:

1. a gentle hike up the Landroskop gorge, with a variation into the Koffie Kloof. (2 A+).
2. a more strenuous but interesting scramble up the Landroskop Needle (3C).
3. a possibility to trad climb the Lang Klippie (4D).
4. hike up to Chipaway cave and spend the night (3C)

3. UIAA

Some selected highlights of recent UIAA activities are provided below. Members are encouraged to go to <http://www.theuiaa.org/> to find out more about the UIAA’s important activities.

3.1 ACCESS TO THE MOUNTAINS OF NEPAL - UIAA MEETS NEPALESE AMBASSADOR

With eight of the fourteen world's highest mountain peaks located within its borders, Nepal is well known as one of the greatest destinations for climbing and mountaineering. Over recent years, the climbing and mountaineering community, often through UIAA member federations, has expressed its concern regarding the increased restrictions proposed by Government of Nepal. The latest plans, muted at the close of 2017, recommended restricting access to those who would travel with guides and considered banning solo climbers.

It is the belief of the UIAA that climbers should have unrestricted access to the mountains provided they do so in a respectful and responsible manner- with respect primarily for nature, the environment and local cultures.

The UIAA also took the opportunity to share details of its work in improving climber safety, one of the concerns which prompted Nepal Government to consider implementing new measures, notably its international Safety Label, training standards and high-altitude medical advice, all designed to improve the access to knowledge, safety and experience of mountaineers worldwide. The UIAA offered support to Nepal Government in making these important messages even more available to those planning on visiting its mountains

3.2 2018 UIAA MOUNTAIN PROTECTION AWARD: ASSESSMENT COMPLETE

Profiles of 12 of the 18 projects nominated for the 2018 UIAA Mountain Protection Award are now published on the UIAA website. The remaining six projects will be showcased by 31 August. The 2018 nominees encompass a wide range of initiatives from earthquake recovery programmes in Nepal to a scheme aimed at conserving natural ice in the United States; from a project conceived to eradicate the graffiti polluting Iran's mountain landscape to one focused on the preservation of Bolivia's Chachacomani glacier.

3.3 ALPINE SKILLS SERIES - NOW AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD

The UIAA Alpine Skills Summer guide was first published in 2015. Produced in collaboration with the Petzl Foundation, the guide and has been well received worldwide and is currently available in five languages. To mark the launch of the English language digital version of the publication earlier this year, the UIAA is running a series of articles from the guide designed to help hikers, climbers and mountaineers develop their skills and knowledge of the mountain environment.

To purchase the guide, please go to: <https://www.magzter.com/CH/UIAA-Training/The-International-Alpine-Handbook-English-language/Sports>

Latest articles:

- Single & Multi-pitch climbing: Gear Requirements
- How to provide assistance to a partner stuck mid-rappel
- Equipment requirements for an ice, snow, rock or mixed route
- How to quickly protect a belay station

3.4 UIAA GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2018

The final agenda and programme for the 2018 UIAA General Assembly to be held in Mongolia on 6 October are now available to view and download. All information related to the event can be accessed from the UIAA website.

4. FACEBOOK AND WEB PAGES

4.1 National: abbreviated link for the national MCSA Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MCSA125/

4.2 Links for all the sections' web pages are on the MCSA national webpage.

5. SNIPPETS

5.1 NEW BOOK

"Almost", is Mervyn Prior's recently self-published autobiography - quite an achievement for a 91-year-old. Apparently his MCSA membership application was at first rejected due to his reputation as a singer of bawdy songs. He matured into a stalwart of the Club in the north, spending almost every weekend out in the mountains and he helped to open up many new climbing areas. People familiar with Transvaal climbing will re-encounter many old crag companions. His many adventures include ascents of Mount Kenya, Mount Kilimanjaro, 'unofficial' climbing trips in the Himalaya, Mount Lenin. (The story of the east face of the Central Tower of Paine is recounted in another book). His final chapter says everything about the fun of this book: "How to get lost in your own back garden" – he and Jean set out mid-afternoon to recce the route for a visit by the local Dendrological Society, the sun set, the bush got thicker, they tried a short cut

The book is selling in bookshops for R300, but MCSA members get a discount of R20, so it costs them R280 if they show their cards. They are available at Rose Eedes Estates in Observatory. You may also buy directly from him, post-free. [<spriormerv@gmail.com>](mailto:spriormerv@gmail.com) cell phone 072 729 4767.

5.2 HUMAN IMPACT OF CLIMBERS/BOULDERERS IN THE CORDILLERA BLANCA, PERU.

Obviously, other countries also have problems with climbers and thoughtless behaviour, poor toilet habits, leaving gear behind (as happened all too often in the Himalaya). 'There's so much joy packed into climbing, yet the areas where we climb are so fragile'

<https://www.climbing.com/places/trying-for-invisible-the-impact-of-climbing-on-perus-cordillera-blanca/>

5.3 WOMEN CLIMBERS IN AFGANISTAN

[Ascend athletics](#), has a mission to help Afghani women develop into leaders through learning to climb. 24-year old Afghani woman Hanifa Yousoufi made history recently by becoming the first female climber from her country to summit Mount Noshag, the highest peak in Afghanistan at 7492 meters (24,580 ft). The summit push took place back on August 10, with the team led by experienced American mountaineer and guide Emilie Drinkwater. This is a remarkable achievement for a woman who lives in a country as war-torn and conservative as Afghanistan. See more in [Outside](#) magazine and <http://theadventureblog.blogspot.com/>

6. NEWSWORTHY ITEMS

Please send any newsworthy items for inclusion in MCSA National News Editor, Ineke Moseley at: inekemos@zsd.co.za

QUOTABLE QUOTES:

"The best climber in the world is the one who's having the most fun" *Alex Lowe* - the best climber in the world.