

Club Spot

The Rock-Up Club



By John Williams
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Photos by the author

The 'Rock Up' Mountaineering Club was set up in 2007 by students at North Glasgow College who were studying for an HND in Sports Coaching with Development. Initially there were 14 members and membership numbers have remained about the same. The Club was initially set up to broaden skills and employment opportunities amongst the students who traditionally have followed a formal College programme that is mainly skiing and paddle sport based.

However, fundamental to the establishment of the Club was the notion or expectation that members must have a genuine interest in mountain walking and/or climbing. In establishing the Club I was keen that this ethos of taking part in mountain activities for their own sake was central and that the Club was not viewed as a way for the students to "tick off" walking or climbing qualifications.

The Club is, however, related to some extent to the formal College course curriculum as in the second year of the HND course, the students are required to complete a unit called "Managing Volunteers in Sport and Recreation".

Rather than simply talk about virtual clubs or carry out some paper exercise I thought that it would be beneficial to set up a new club to complement the kayaking club that the students already successfully ran.

In establishing and running the mountaineering club the students were able to adopt good practice from the existing club as well as gain first-hand experience of writing a constitution, electing a board, co-ordinating membership, deciding meets, fundraising and all other matters relating to club management. All of this was great experience for the students which facilitated opportunities for them to go and walk and climb with staff and each other.

What I personally found most rewarding was the speed at which the Club gained momentum. Within a year all of the administrative structure was in place and the Club was affiliated to the MCofS.

The support from the MCofS office was fantastic and importantly it meant that all of the members were appropriately insured and were able to access the wide range of benefits that association with the MCofS offered.

One of the most useful practical benefits was the visits by Roger Wild and his



Megan, Mark, Alan and JD at The Quadrocks



Megan, JD and Mark tackle the classic Quadrocks VDiff

interesting mountain safety talks. From my perspective I was pleased that Roger reinforced the ethos of the Club which I had fostered at the beginning – that mountaineering should be done by choice and for enjoyment.

I am pleased that the students, most of whom are or were new to climbing and mountain walking, have been given a safe foundation of good practice by Roger from which to build future experience from where preventable risk can be successfully managed.

Those members who have stayed with the Club and who have been at the forefront of its development have been involved – in my opinion – for the right reasons and are now looking towards instructional qualifications as a natural development.

The Club started with no equipment and as the students had limited gear it seemed appropriate to engage in some fundraising. One of the students worked at Morrisons and the opportunity conveniently presented itself through this contact for the students to engage in bag packing before Christmas in 2007. As a result of a hectic six hours' work, both the kayak club and the mountaineering club had £1,000 to share between them from the combined effort of their respective members.

The proceeds raised were then added to the money that North Glasgow College had already lent the Club to get started. The funds were used to purchase harnesses, helmets, some hardware and a rope from the online Outdoor Shop who the Club had an account with.

More recently, the Club was successful in obtaining a grant from the Andy Fanshawe Memorial Trust who we heard about through the Scottish Mountaineer. This kind donation is being used to purchase more hardware and to subsidise future outings.

The new equipment meant that the Club could at last start operating in earnest and, come spring 2008, outings began to happen with regularity. Although Rock Up is a mountaineering club, the committee decided that better use of spring and summer evenings and limited resources would be best directed towards rock climbing.

The formal programmes that the students are involved in are so full and

with most of them working at weekends it seemed that activities that could be engaged in during weeknights would be more appropriate. The long term intention though is that the Club will engage in the full scope of mountaineering activities as it develops.

Contacts have also been established with Ardentinn Outdoor Centre, Ratho and Glasgow Climbing Centre which will likely lead to all year round activity.

To date there are a few talented climbers emerging from the club, with the Club Chairperson Mark Foggo recently completing his first E1 lead. Members who are on the Board show enthusiasm and the desire to make the Club work.

Numerous meets have now occurred at the traditional Central Belt, Lakeland and coastal locations such as Aberdour, Rosyth, Neilston, Quadrocks, Loudon Hill, Craigmore, Auchinstarry, Borrowdale and the Isle of Arran. The latter was a two-day trip that the Club organised in May 2007 and was the first time that members had tackled multi-pitch climbing.

Several members who had never undertaken this kind of climbing before got the chance to savour classics such as *Sou Wester Slabs*, *Caliban's Creep* and *Blank*. I am confident that the Club has a bright future ahead of it. This optimism is shared by the Chairperson Mark Foggo.

As I am about to leave my position at North Glasgow College and, sadly, my involvement with the Club, to emigrate to Australia I can confidently say that the Club is in good hands and I would like to take this opportunity to wish the

Club and its members all the best for the future and to thank the MCofS for their fantastic support.



Above and below: Caliban's Creep (VD), Isle of Arran



A Word from the Chair:

Since being handed the role of Chairperson in June 2007, the Rock Up Mountaineering club has been further developed into a more structured and recognised club. When the club became affiliated to the MCofS in 2007 it became more attractive to fellow members, which at the moment are students and former students of North Glasgow College.

Due to this fact the committee has changed each year (apart from myself) which is good because new people come in with new ideas. Being voted in for a second term of office I am able to provide some continuity to the running of the Club which is really important for its sustainability.

My own personal achievements with the club include running different trips, organising gear and setting up courses. A full rack of equipment has been purchased which can be borrowed by members and which allows them to get out and participate by themselves.

Goals that I would like to achieve in the near future are to organise more trips away, making the club more active out in the field, and to branch the club out into other fields of mountaineering such as summer and winter hill walking.

All in all a lot has been put in place so that people can participate in climbing and mountain activities who wouldn't necessarily be able to do so. Hopefully Rock Up will continue getting stronger throughout the coming seasons and become a nationally recognised club.

Mark Foggo

Setting up a club for children

By Kevin Howett, Development Officer

The MCofS was set up by the premier clubs in Scotland to represent their interests. These clubs (indeed all our affiliated clubs) are active mountaineering and walking clubs that bring people together to engage in what can be a hazardous activity in the hills. The MCofS has long recognised that with all the issues regarding child protection, leadership qualifications and insurance many clubs do not wish to take a 'loco parentis' role with children whose parents who are not active members of the club themselves.

However, such worries should not put off those clubs who do wish to engage with child development and advice on duty of care and liability is available in our 'Safety & Liability for Clubs' document at: www.mcofs.org.uk/safety-liability-clubs.asp and general advice at www.mcofs.org.uk/kids-info.asp, including the 'Children: hill walking, climbing, mountaineering... Information for Parents' on-line free booklet.

A few years ago the MCofS looked into the development of a specific form of club primarily set up for children that could affiliate (and so gain benefits such as civil liability insurance and advice) but also adhere to the requirements of our Articles of Association regarding the aims for such clubs to encourage self-sufficiency and a sharing of knowledge.

Such a club needed to allow the children and their parents to be an integral part of decision-making, to allow parents to understand the sport and its risks, decide who can take responsibility for their mountaineering and coaching, whilst meeting requirements of child protection and essentially being a club of young people.

The MCofS provided advice and a template for such a club (see: www.mcofs.org.uk/clubs-for-young-climbers.asp) but it was not until last year that the newly formed Quickdraw Club was developed by parents as a first example; there are already

clubs being investigated in other areas: closely linked to their local indoor climbing wall, where they gain much support, and affiliated to the MCofS for insurance and access to benefits.

The MCofS, and a recent Youth Development Working Group, wish to see a network of such clubs across Scotland and help and guidance is available from us as well as the parents of The Quickdraw Club. If any parent is interested, please see the web pages above and contact me at: kev@mcofs.org.uk or Tanya Tennant through the website: www.quickdrawclimbingclub.com.

ClubSpot

Does your club have a story to tell? Use this feature in Scottish Mountaineer's members News Section to highlight your club activities, history, achievements or forthcoming events. Simply send details to the Editor, Kevin Howett.

