

WESTERN Climber

NOVEMBER 2014 ISSUE #17

FRONT COVER PHOTO: REMI VIGNALS ON KARMA AT
CASTLE ROCK. PHOTO BY ALI CHAPMAN

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MANDY BOWLER & KATE SWAIN

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PHOTO ABOVE: ANDREA MORGAN AT BLACKWALL REACH. PHOTO BY ALI CHAPMAN

PHOTO PREVIOUS PAGE: CHRIS KAVAZOS ON BAY-LAC DIRECT AT PEAK HEAD. PHOTO BY ASHLEE PEETERS

Ali's photo above makes me long for summers at Blackwall again. I can't wait to get out there...come on warmer weather! Many more people have been venturing south, I've heard lots of trips around Albany, West Cape Howe and the Stirlings are on the go.

This issue is jam packed with awesome tales of adventure, from trip reports and international mountain escapades, to articles about how to be a better belayer and finding a good headspace whilst climbing.

A massive thank you to those people who volunteered their photos for this issue. Keep them coming. Anytime you head away climbing, think of your humble Western Climber eds and snap away and send them in! We love featuring your work and always need extra photos.

Next issue out after xmas so I hope you all have some fab New Year climbs....I think we'll be heading south again for a few weeks so hope to see you all out there on the rock!

Mandy

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The Climbers Association of Western Australia was formed in 1968 and incorporated in August 1979. CAWA's purpose is to promote and develop climbing, especially in WA, and to promote and protect the interests of climbers in WA.

The management of CAWA is conducted by a committee. Any matters that should be brought to the attention of the committee should be addressed to the CAWA Secretary.

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the editor or of the committee. The contents of this magazine are subject to copyright and are not to be reproduced without permission of CAWA.

Western Climber is the magazine of CAWA and relies on contributions from its members. All submissions are welcome! If you have any photographs or articles you would like to submit to the Western Climber, please send them with full details to editor@climberswa.asn.au.

For the next issue of Western Climber, all submissions must be made by 16 January 2015. We welcome all climbing related material - trip reports, new routes, technical, safety, equipment, book/DVD reviews, crag information and climbing gossip. We love photos of locations around the world as well as WA..and most of all, people having fun climbing!



JOE ALBAHARI ON OVER INDULGENCE AT THE GAP, ALBANY.

PHOTO BY STEWART ALLEN PHOTOGRAPHY

CAWA WEBSITE!

Visit the website at www.climberswa.asn.au for more CAWA information, keep up to date with our activities and send us your feedback.



GET INVOLVED WITH CAWA

We are always looking for volunteers and helping hands. Please contact cawa@climberswa.asn.au if you would like to get involved and contribute to the WA climbing community.

CAWA would appreciate being updated on crag access issues, as the Committee is unable to cover all the crags in Perth and WA

Please post any areas of concern to the CAWA forum on the website so that other climbers are aware of any changes to access or climbing conditions in WA

You can also email the editor of the Western Climber as an alternative to posting on the forum at editor@climberswa.asn.au

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Climbing is an inherently dangerous activity. Please give careful consideration and seek expert training before attempting any climbing activities. Undertaking them without proper training, experience, skill, regard to safety, and equipment could result in serious injury or death.

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The Hangout
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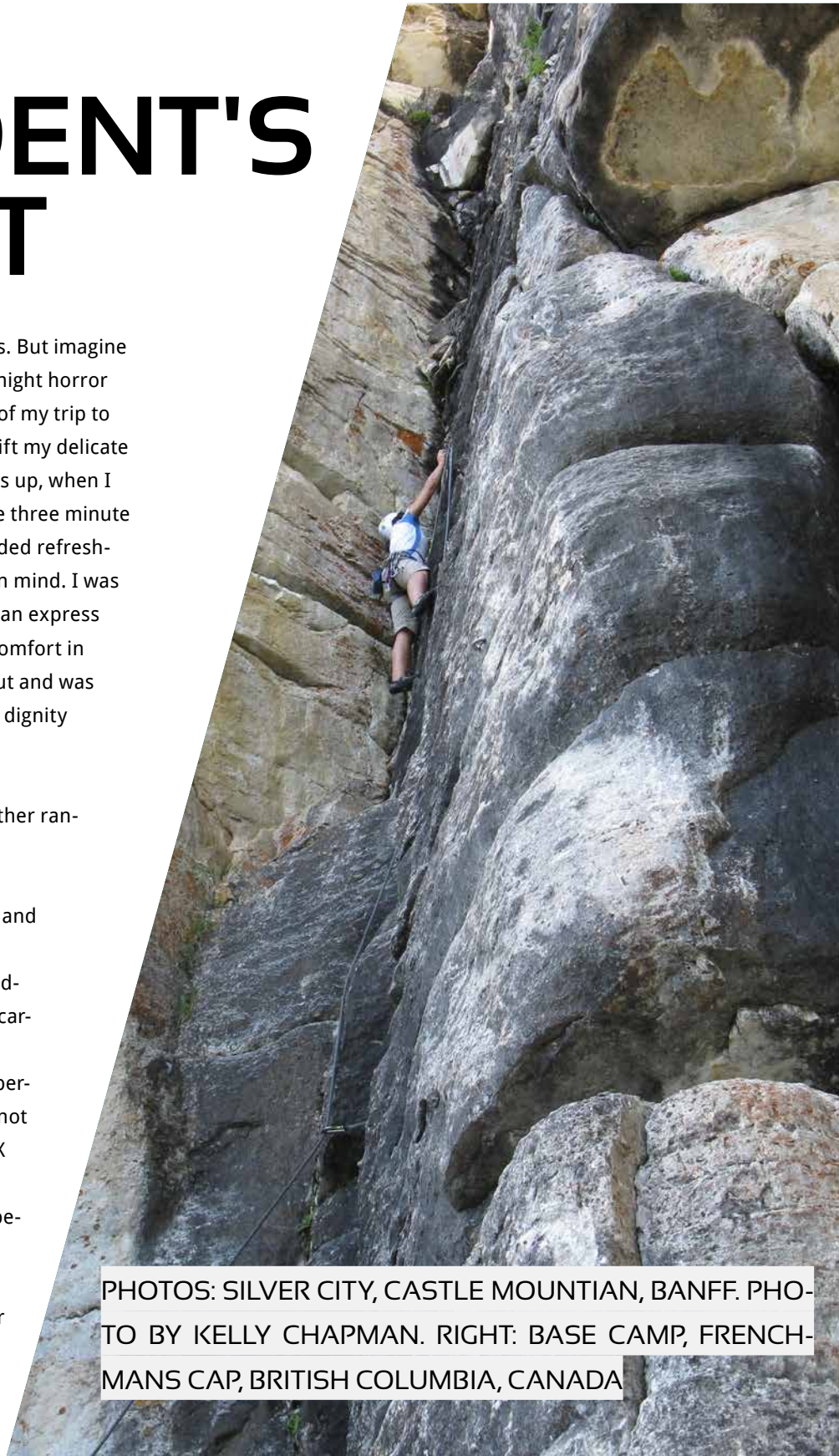
PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I fully support the idea of auto flush toilets. But imagine my surprise, still half asleep after the midnight horror flight to Melbourne that marked the start of my trip to Canada, not even having had a chance to lift my delicate rear from the seat, let alone pull my undies up, when I got the flushing of my life. Was this like the three minute shower limit? Get off or get flushed? I needed refreshing but this was definitely not what I had in mind. I was thinking more of a stiff cup of coffee than an express wash and wax. Feeling violated, I sought comfort in the warm embrace of a Krispy Kreme donut and was not disappointed – I left Australia with my dignity mostly, if not entirely, restored.

Climbing trips are always an adventure. Other random learnings include:

- Virgin Atlantic has generous leg room and plenty of food that isn't half bad.
- The US customs dudes are really friendly, give compliments, crack jokes and carry guns.
- Alcohol is much cheaper in the US. A person who rarely drinks alcohol should not accept a taste of Grey Goose Vodka VX 40% at LAX airport, first thing in the morning, on an empty stomach, just because it's free.
- Babies can actually scream for fifteen hours straight on a plane and ear plugs don't help.
- Poutine, a French Canadian delicacy, is the perfect after climbing food.
- If you pick up your hire car in the

PHOTOS: SILVER CITY, CASTLE MOUNTIAN, BANFF. PHOTO BY KELLY CHAPMAN. RIGHT: BASE CAMP, FRENCHMANS CAP, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA



afternoon, chances are you'll get an upgrade several classes higher than what you paid for.

- Squirrels get really angry for no apparent reason.
- Chipmunks eat tissues.
- Bear poo looks like black soft serve.
- I have no trouble driving on the 'other' side of the road but get confused about how to cross safely on foot.
- You were right to be scared of the intimidating slab with razor sharp pointy bits that limit good contact, because it really is that sharp and it really will punch a hole in your leg when you take a whipper.



Back on the home front, we have exciting news! We have had many circular discussions over the years about our inability to provide training or coaching to members because of liability issues. Knowing that skill improvement is one of the things that people look for when joining a sporting club, I have always felt that this impacted negatively on the association, in spite of all the other invaluable work we do to protect and promote climbing. The reality is that no matter what you call it, anything involving instruction of any kind, means responsibility and the associated liability. Even on trips where there is a certain amount of mutual assistance that goes on, we have had to clearly specify that participants must be independent and that we can't provide training. This is partly due to all the changes that went on several years ago regarding qualifications and the distinction between dependent and independent but also just due to straight out liability. Knowing that this would have the undesirable result of discouraging less experienced climbers, it was a catch twenty-two situation.



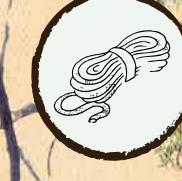
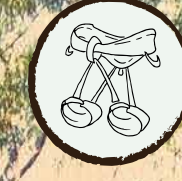
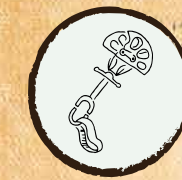


But I am very happy (massive understatement) to be able to tell you that we have secured insurance cover for some CAWA coaching and training. This is distinct from the 'coach in residence' style clinics using imported climbers, which we are still working on. As with any insurance, there are limitations and strict guidelines but we can now run dedicated training and coaching events. It will also give us a bit more freedom on some

trips to help less experienced members. The first clinic will be a basic technique workshop focusing on hand and foot work and efficient movement. Other possible training includes setting up anchors and top ropes; technique clinics for specific types of climbing styles; transitioning from indoor to outdoor climbing; bouldering technique and knot tying and application. Stay tuned for more details.

ABOVE: DENA WITH FRENCHMAN'S CAP IN THE BACKGROUND, BC.

BELOW: GRASSI LAKES; RIGHT: CLIMBING AT GRASSI LAKES, CANMORE, BC, PHOTO BY KELLY CHAPMAN



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Climb Wild in Europe: Final Frontiers

CLIMBING IN THE BALKANS: A LOCAL'S GUIDE TO THE BEST CRAGS IN THE CENTRAL BALKANS.

Text by **Sinisa Vujic**

Rock climbing in the Central Balkans. If you've ever opened the Rock Climbing Atlas for South-East Europe, you may have noticed a big empty space in the middle of the area map. The more popular name for this region is Balkan, which interestingly translates to mean mountain. So, how is it that a huge mountain range has no climbing in its middle! There are, in fact, many known climbing areas all around here, yet until recently, not much published information existed.

The Republic of Serbia lies right in middle of the Balkan area and rock climbing has been taking place here for over half a century. In fact, the Serbian wilderness is probably one of the last real frontiers of wild adventure climbing in Europe. So why the lack of written records?

After World War II, the communists relocated many rural farmers and their families to the cities, encouraging

them to become industrial workers. The Democrats then relocated many to outside of the state borders. This constant change meant few records were kept and the result was deserted mountains with a scattered climbing history. The lack of people has also encouraged wildlife to repopulate the area, and the backyard of Serbia is the perfect place for climbers who like to explore a world of mountains and plateaus crossed by deep river gorges, dark forests and scattered with green, open fields.

In a country that is a few kilometres longer than the distance from Perth

stone and can vary from excellent to poor, with the height varying from five to three hundred metres. Traditionally, the Serbian grading system followed the UIAA, but in recent years, influences from the French grading system can be seen, particularly noticeable in sport climbing. In this article, you will find information about some of the most popular places for climbing among locals, yet for more, you'll need to go and discover it for yourself. One of the highest rock faces in the country is the north-east face of Peak Trem (Трем) on the Suva Mountain (Сува планина) which has some

THE MAJORITY OF THE ROCK IS LIMESTONE WITH THE HEIGHT VARYING FROM 5 TO 300 METRES

to Kalbarri, one can find over fifty climbing crags, most of which are located in the middle third of the country. The majority of the rock is lime-

unique winter mixed climbing. At the foot of the mountain, just twenty kilometres east of the city of Nis (Ниш), are two great gorges for climbing –

– Sicevo and Jelasnica.

Jelasnica gorge (Јелашничка клисура), with over 200 routes, is the biggest and, at the moment, best developed sport crag in the country. Most of the climbs are single pitch but there are also a couple of multi-pitch routes. Some of the most popular routes in the gorge include Lumbago (Лумбаро, VII, 24m, crack), Solaris (Соларис, IX-, 18m, face climb) and the overhanging H2O (IX+, 13m).

Sicevo gorge (Сићевачка клисура), with over 200 metre high rock faces, on other hand, offers some serious traditional climbing. It has the largest number of hard trad climbs in the country. Some routes, particularly more recently established ones, are bolted, but it is still advisable to car-

ry a full trad rack! Not to be missed are: the enjoyable and moderately easy Aca's Ridge (Ацин стебер, IV, 80m); the dramatic and airy chimney climbing of Purple Dream (Љубичасти сан, VI, 145m) and the long, sustained route, Left of Cobra Ridge (Лева Кобра, VI+, 250m).

The best place to stay if visiting either gorge is the spa centre, conveniently located between them and the city of Nis, in Niska Banja (Нишка Бања). The gorges are easily accessible by car or public buses. A train also stops in Sicevo but is not a recommended option to get there, as the frequency is far less, delays occur often, and the town you get off at is further away. The access to either gorge, from where you park your car or from the bus stop, is a

five to forty-five minute walk, with the single pitch climbing close by and the longer routes further away.

Belgrade (Београд) is the capital city of Serbia and it has more than just an interesting history, it also boasts some of the oldest climbs in the country. The large forest of Kosutnjak (Кошутњак), located just fifteen minutes drive from the city centre, hides three small crags named V1, V2 and V3 with over sixty sport routes, varying in height from five to fifteen metres. V (Cyrillic B), comes from the Serbian word 'Вежбалиште', which means place for training. It is easily accessible by car, public transport or even on foot. It is also a great place to go if you only have an hour or two spare after work. Recommended climbs include Enigma

(Енигма, VII+, 16m), with its technical face climbing and the crack route Novice (Полетарац, VIII+/IX-, 11m).

Grdoba (Грдоба) is another sport climbing crag, with six different sectors and over eighty single pitch climbs. It is located 20 kilometres south-west of the city of Valjevo (Ваљево), half way between the village centre of Pocute (Поћуте) and the Pustinja monastery (манастир Пустинја). Although over sixty per cent of the routes are harder than VIII-, there is still a couple of nice easy routes to warm up on. Not to be missed is the overhanging jug paradise, An Old Man and the Sea (Старац и море, VII, 15m). For those who like a challenge, the hardest route in Serbia, Noa Magnus (Нoa Магнус, X+/XI-, 20m) is also found here. The best way to get to Grdoba is by car. Alternatively, catch a bus from Valjevo which goes over the Debelo Brdo pass (Дебело Брдо), to the town of Bajina Basta (Бајина

Башта) and get off at the Pocute bus station, which is located in front of the general store. The best place to stay is the city of Valjevo or the mountain hut on the pass. The hut is usually open for summer weekends.

Gornjak gorge (Горњачка клисура) is located in the eastern part of the country, fifteen kilometres south-east of the town of Petrovac na Mlavi (Петровац на Млави. Serbia's first recorded climbs are found here, and the area remains popular, particularly with climbers from the capital city, as well as locals. There are many crags with over 100 climbs. Mostly easy to mod-

At the northern end of the gorge is the village of Zdrelo (Ждрело). 1.3 km north of the village centre is a Scouts hut surrounded by a lovely pine grove. You may camp here but if the hut is closed, you will be without water, so either make sure you stock up from the general store in the village or bring some containers as water can be collected from the numerous springs around the gorges. Some of the enjoyable old ridge routes include: Manjipov (Мањинов, III+, 160m) and Cold Water (Гребен Ладне воде, V+, 130m. For something more modern, try Shine (Сјај, VII-, 25m) or 29 Alpinists (29 Алпиниста, VII-, 60m).

MT STOL, NEAR THE CITY OF BOR, IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACES TO CLIMB IN SERBIA.

erate difficulty, there is a wide variety, of both single and multi-pitch, bolted, trad and mixed routes, with heights from twenty to 100 metres.

Mt Stol, (Борски Стол) near the city of Bor, is probably one of the most beautiful places to climb in Serbia.

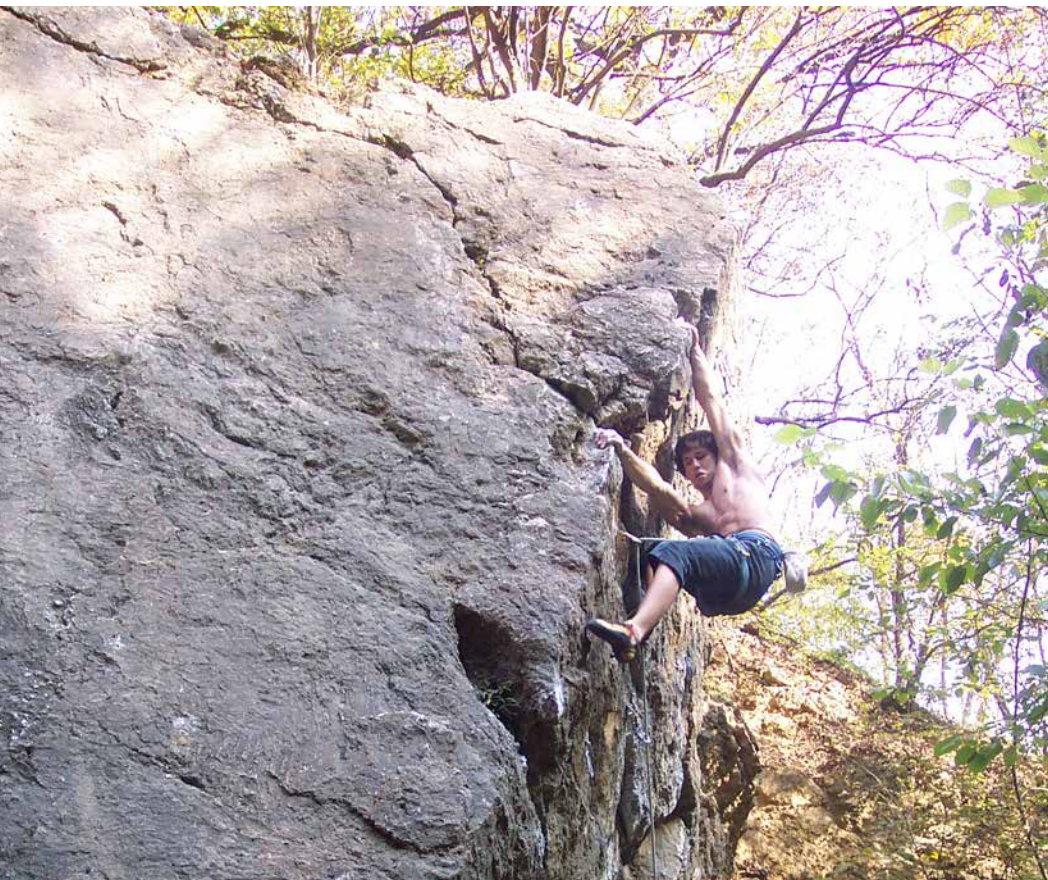
PHOTOS:

FIRST PAGE: GRDOBA - NIKOLA VASOVIC;

BELOW: BOJAN JANEZIC ON SKEPSA VIII+, BELGRADE, PHOTO BY MARKO CIRKOVIC;

JELENA JAKOVLJEVIC ON MALI OD PALUBE VIII, BELGRADE, PHOTO BY BORIS STANOJEVIC;

STASA GEJO ON PNEUMOTHORAX X-, JELASNICA GORGE, PHOTO SLOBODAN GEJO.



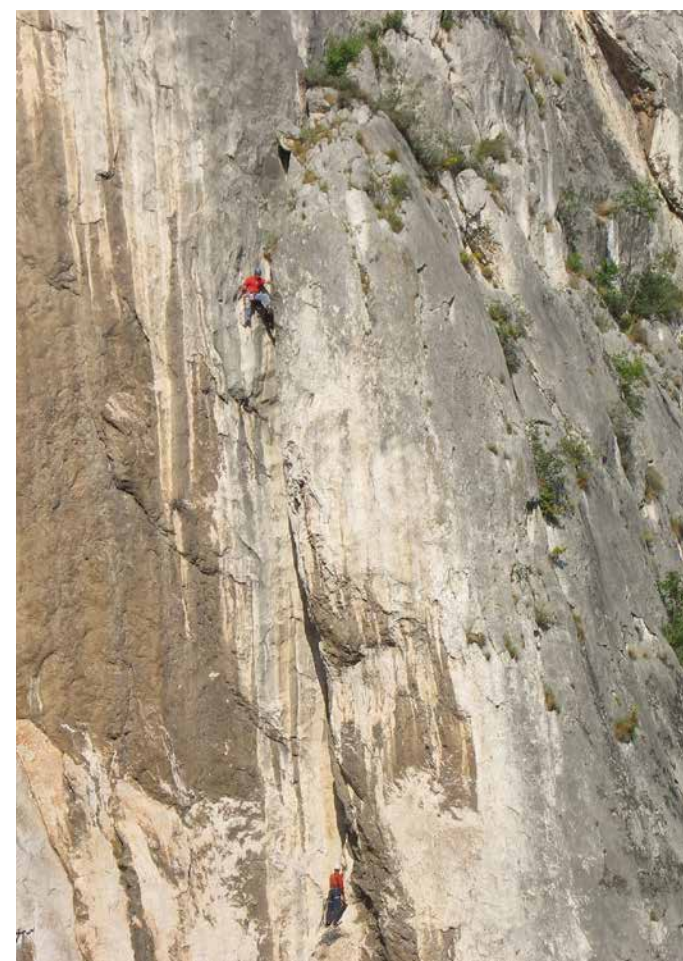


PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE
PAGE: BRANKO PAJIC AT MT STOL JNA VI-
65M. PHOTO BY DIMITRIJE OSTOJIC;

SICEVO GORGE, PHOTO BY SANA ZULIC;

GORNJAK GORGE, COLDWATER RIDGE V+
130M, PHOTO BY SINISA VUJIC

S OBRADOVIC AND N. DJURIC ON PURPLE
DREAM VI - 145M AT SICEVO GORGE, PHOTO
BY VLADIMIR FILIPOVIC





The rockface is no more than 100 metres high but with stunning surroundings and a tranquil environment, it shouldn't be missed. It is located on the far eastern side of the country, twenty kilometres north of the city of Bor (Бор). Car is the best way to get

multi-pitch, varying in difficulty, from II to X+. Suggested routes include: Nirvana (Нирвана, VII-, 100m), Planika (Планика, VI-, 70m) and Yugoslav National Army (ЈНА, VI-, 65m).

The climbing ethic in Serbia is quite

ascents.

The best time of the year for climbing is spring, summer and autumn. During winter, if it is not too cold and snowy, it can also be pleasant, especially on sunny southern rock faces, but the weather is less predictable.

In a case of emergency you can call Mountain Rescue Service Serbia (gss.rs), if you have reception. However, remember that they may take a while to find you, so be prepared, especially if you plan to climb in some of the more remote areas without phone reception.

Places to sleep and eat: Almost all the crags have a town or city nearby, so it isn't very hard to find a bed, restaurant, grocery or coffee shop (serbia.travel). Camping is generally permitted only in designated areas, but if you get stuck, nobody will probably mind if



you do sleep in the bush for a night.

Climbing shops: There are currently only two climbing specific shops in the country, both in Belgrade (zele-nodrvo.com and alp.rs). Except for a port-a-ledge you will probably find everything else you need here, and there are also general outdoor shops scattered around that sell some climbing and camping gear.

Transport: Belgrade International Airport is well connected with other major European cities and some global



destinations. Rent a car, or take a taxi or public bus (gsp.rs) to the city centre, where the main bus and railway stations are located adjacent to each other. From there you can travel to almost all the destinations described in this article. Buses are reliable, but if you are not in hurry and delays don't bother you, then the railway can be a great life experience.

You will notice that littering is common in Serbia. Please don't add to this, and pack your rubbish out.



In 2013, a guide book, Climbing in Serbia, was published (penjanjeurbiji.rs). Though written in Serbian Cyrillic script, with a basic knowledge of how to read a map and climbing topo, it is easy to use. You will also find some good information about some of the sport crags on the internet (vodic.spirit.rs). For more information about trad climbing, you can contact the Alpine Club of Belgrade (aob.org.rs) or the guide book authors. Coincidentally, one of them is me.

Sinisa Vujic

PANORAMIC OF MT STOL BY SANA ZULIC; CAFE IN POCUTA VILLAGE, GRDOBA; RADMILA PEJOVIC ON TOP OF MT STOL, PHOTO BY SINISA VUJIC; GRDOBA BY M. CIRKOVIC

there, however, unless you have a four wheel drive, you will need to park at the junction for village Bucje (Бучје) and walk for approximately two and a half kilometres to the mountain hut. The walk, however, is great, and highly recommended. The hut is open during summer and good weather weekends in spring and autumn. You may also camp outside the hut if the hut is full or closed. The majority of climbs here are bolted single pitch or mixed

simple: no chipping or gluing holds – train more and bolt as little as possible. Old routes are for climbing, not remodelling.

Equipment: for almost all the routes in the country, one sixty metre single rope will work fine. Bring ten to twelve quick draws for sport and a full rack for trad. A few pitons may also be handy for some of the older trad climbs or if you are planning some first

My head is messing with my mind...

SOMETIMES IT ISN'T ABOUT THE TICK LIST, THE GOAL SETTING, THE COMPETITION WITH YOURSELF; SOMETIMES CLIMBING IS JUST ABOUT IMPROVING YOUR HEAD SPACE
BY DENA RAO



Arapiles has amazing traditional routes to offer at all levels of difficulty and the rock just eats gear. It is a fantastic place to immerse yourself in trad climbing and being able to camp at the crag isn't bad either. Do guard your bacon and cheese rolls well – the possums will eat the topping and just leave the boring bit. If you really feel the need for a shower, you can always whip into Horsham and stock up on supplies at the same time. I don't want to give away all of my secrets but it's amazing what you can achieve with reasonable flexibility and an incontinence pad (for the floor, people!) in the basin of a disabled toilet.

I love climbing, in all its forms. Okay, well maybe I don't love them all equally. Anyone watching me crack climb could be forgiven for thinking I was giving birth. Clearly I need to work on that. But when I went to Arapiles earlier this year I had one very specific goal in mind. There wasn't a tick list in sight. My sole purpose was to improve my trad leading head space.



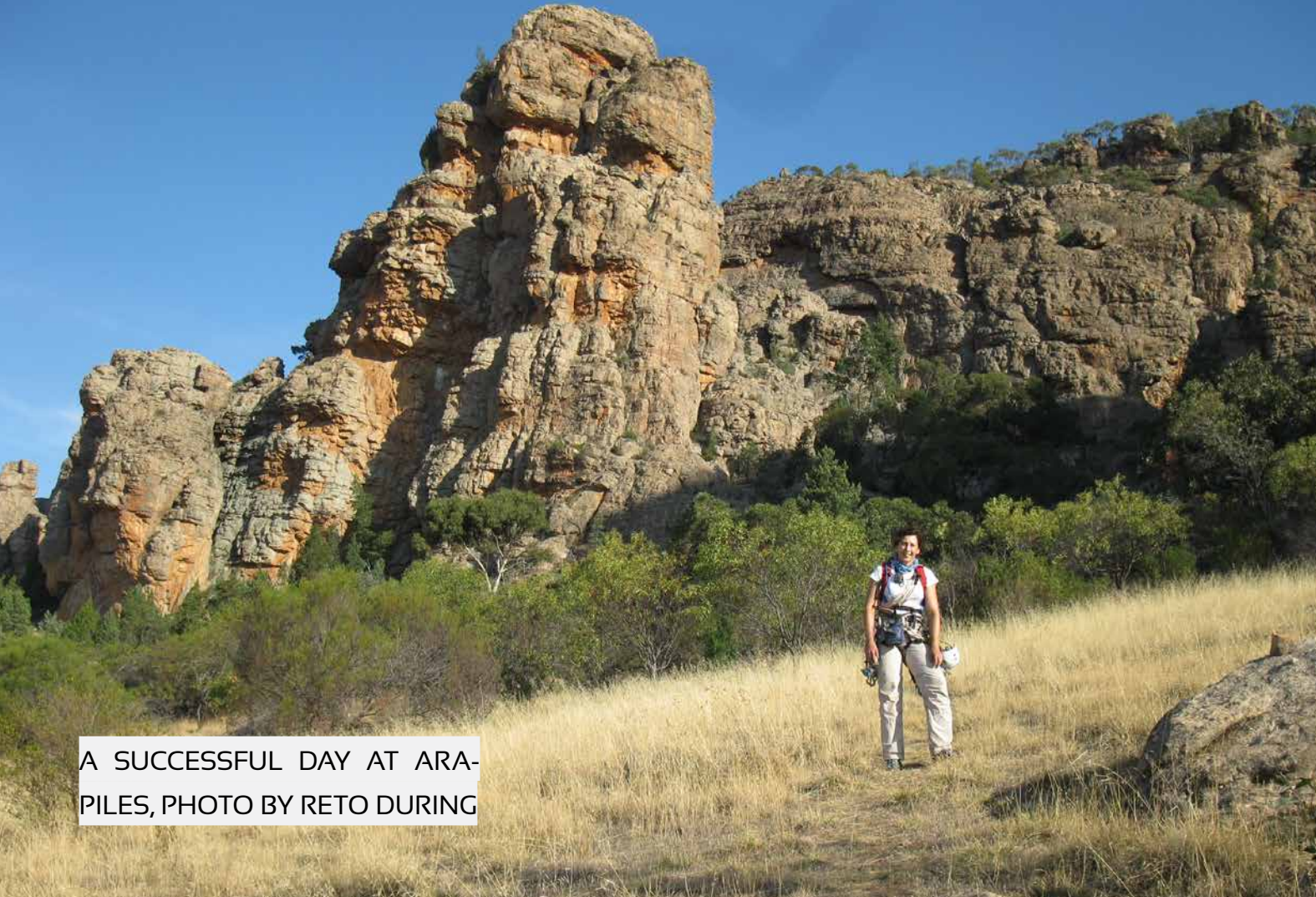
"LET'S JUST SAY THAT BEING PARALYSED WITH FEAR HALFWAY UP A FACE AND HAVING A VERY STERN CONVERSATION WITH MYSELF ISN'T CHARACTER BUILDING. IT'S DEMORALISING"



PHOTOS LEFT TO RIGHT: MITRE ROCK, PHOTO BY RETO DURING; THE PINES CAMPGROUND, ARAPILES, PHOTO BY DENA RAO; DENA AT MITRE ROCK

I started rock climbing the way any sensible person does – with a crippling fear of heights. Sure enough, the girl who couldn't get more than a couple of rungs up a ladder without freaking out did exactly that when attempting her first top ropes at Rockface. But I was determined that some silly plastic holds and a bit of rope weren't going to beat me. And I was pretty keen to clean my gutters. I quickly became hooked and found that I was well suited to the gymnastic nature of indoor climbing. Climbing outdoors, however, presented a whole other set of head space challenges.

It amazes me that when I'm 'on' and it all comes together, I'll have a crack (no pun intended) at anything. And when I'm not, well, I'd rather not talk about that. Let's just say that being paralysed with fear half way up a face and having a very stern conversation with myself (come on you idiot, you can do this, you'll be fine, just breathe, whose idea was this??, bugger off Elvis and a few other things I can't publish here) isn't character building. It's demoralising, especially for a high achiever. Though some level of fear is healthy and not unusual, it varies and many overcome this quite quickly. Others, I have discovered, either won't go outdoors at all or have stopped climbing completely. Not one to give up easily, I have persisted. Why? Not because I'm an adrenaline junkie but because when I'm not scared, which is thankfully becoming a more frequent occurrence, it's totally awesome!



A SUCCESSFUL DAY AT ARAPILES, PHOTO BY RETO DURING

The problem solving, the funky moves and new techniques, playing with the lovely toys on my rack, the sense of satisfaction topping out, climbing routes in stunning places overseas... the list goes on.

A recent conversation with Hazel Findlay about the mental aspects of climbing made me realise that fear of falling is probably the least talked about but most common and significant limitation to realising our potential. Why don't we talk about it? A combination of ego and a simple failure to recognise the issue. So training your brain to cultivate mental strength is just as, if not more important than conditioning your body. I don't have any brilliant insights to share with you, because I'm still working on it. But one valuable tip I do have is to choose climbing partners who are keen to support you in achieving your goals. And of course, climbing often enough to build and maintain that mental strength, which is what I find the most challenging.

I may not be quite as inspirational as Hazel but I hope that by 'sharing' I will provide some encouragement to those who can relate or are perhaps just starting out. There is no shame in fear and working to push through it can be very rewarding and lead to great climbing experiences.

So, was my Arapiles therapy successful? Absolutely. I can't recommend Arapiles highly enough for anyone serious about trad climbing. And as I develop these skills I have started to dream of adventure climbing in remote locations.

It wouldn't be a climbing trip without at least one adventure. This time, it came in the most unexpected way, in the deli section at Woolies. I innocently requested two single chicken breasts. I mean, how risky should this be, right? When the guy reached for the doubles (which looked like they might have been sitting there since the turn of the century) I repeated my request, at which point he became very agitated. No, you can't have those. Clearly missing something, I made the fatal mistake of asking why, when they were both the same price. The full force of his fury was suddenly unleashed upon me. This slightly unhinged chicken protector, now red as a beetroot, started shouting at me that I COULD NOT, under any circumstances have two single chicken breasts. The single ones are, wait for it, ONLY for people who 'specifically' want a single chicken breast. Being a bit naughty, I was very tempted to ask for one and then come back for another. Sensing that this might trigger the first ever supermarket stabbing in Horsham, I instead retreated in bewilderment. Don't say you weren't warned.

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Tips and Tricks

for the time-starved climber

In this article, father and owner of two businesses, John Kettle looks into how time-starved climbers can still get the most out of their climbing through using their time efficiently. All photos John Kettle.

So you have accepted that career, family, and other interests are going to limit your climbing development, but by how much? While elite performance isn't attainable on a couple of climbing sessions each week, with shrewd planning you may be surprised what can be achieved in only a few hours a week of climbing time. As a mountain biker with a pre-school family I decided to spend a year exploring the limits of climbing progress on a tight time budget. I'll share some of my tactics and results in this article.



How much time?

Be totally honest about the climbing time you have available. I decided I couldn't guarantee more than twice weekly evening or half-day sessions (including the weekend). Having accepted that either a full day or a third weekly session would be an unexpected bonus avoided the frustration I'd feel if I'd planned to do more than was realistic.

Over the year I climbed 109 times; 52 indoors and 57 outside, averaging 2.1 times (6 hours) per week. I had 5 full days out climbing (3 of these on a sport climbing trip).



'Man who chases two rabbits catches neither one'.

If you really want to progress then narrow the field of skills you're trying to attain – specialise. I chose to focus exclusively on bouldering as it has the shortest walk-ins, fastest drying rock and isn't partner-reliant. As I knew this was a one-year plan I was happy to set aside sport and trad for the future in order to get better results.

Goal Setting

Motivation is key to success and there's no better way to dampen it than to drift goal-less from one summer to the next. The much loved SMART acronym is a good



FATHER OF TWO, HUSBAND, OWNER OF TWO BUSINESSES, AIM CHAIRMAN AND TIME LORD, PAUL PLATT ON TAPES-TRY (E4, 6A OR EXCITING 22) AT PILLAR ROCK, LAKE DISTRICT, UK.

place to start:

Specific – a particular grade, problem or route? Outside or inside?

Measurable – 'solid at the grade' is not measurable – is that ten VS's or thirty?

Ambitious – if it's not, you won't get motivated.

Realistic – do you have the venues/money/psyche in easy reach?

Time-bound – Knowing there's a deadline will aid focus. I picked a 52 week block for my goal.

Swap Quantity for Quality

The bottom line is if you're going to see continuous gains on less than 8 hours of weekly climbing, the session quality needs to be amazing. Split your climbing performance into the following categories and get feedback on your performance in them:

Technical: Movement quality, body awareness, breathing technique, balance.

Tactical: Move reading, sequence and route planning, visualisation skills, pacing, discipline-specific tactics.

Psychological: Anxiety management skills, fear of failure, performance anxiety, external/internal motivators.

Physical: Finger strength, flexibility, power, power endurance, endurance.

Having received the feedback with open arms, use it to shape your sessions. Constantly revisit these four elements to try and worm out the weakness which will give you the fastest gains. Try and make your training as much like your goal as possible, for me this meant spending my indoor sessions on walls of a similar angle, hold size and number of moves to my goals out-

side. Spending the winter climbing 20 move routes in 5 minutes won't prepare you for 50 move trad pitches that take 40 minutes.

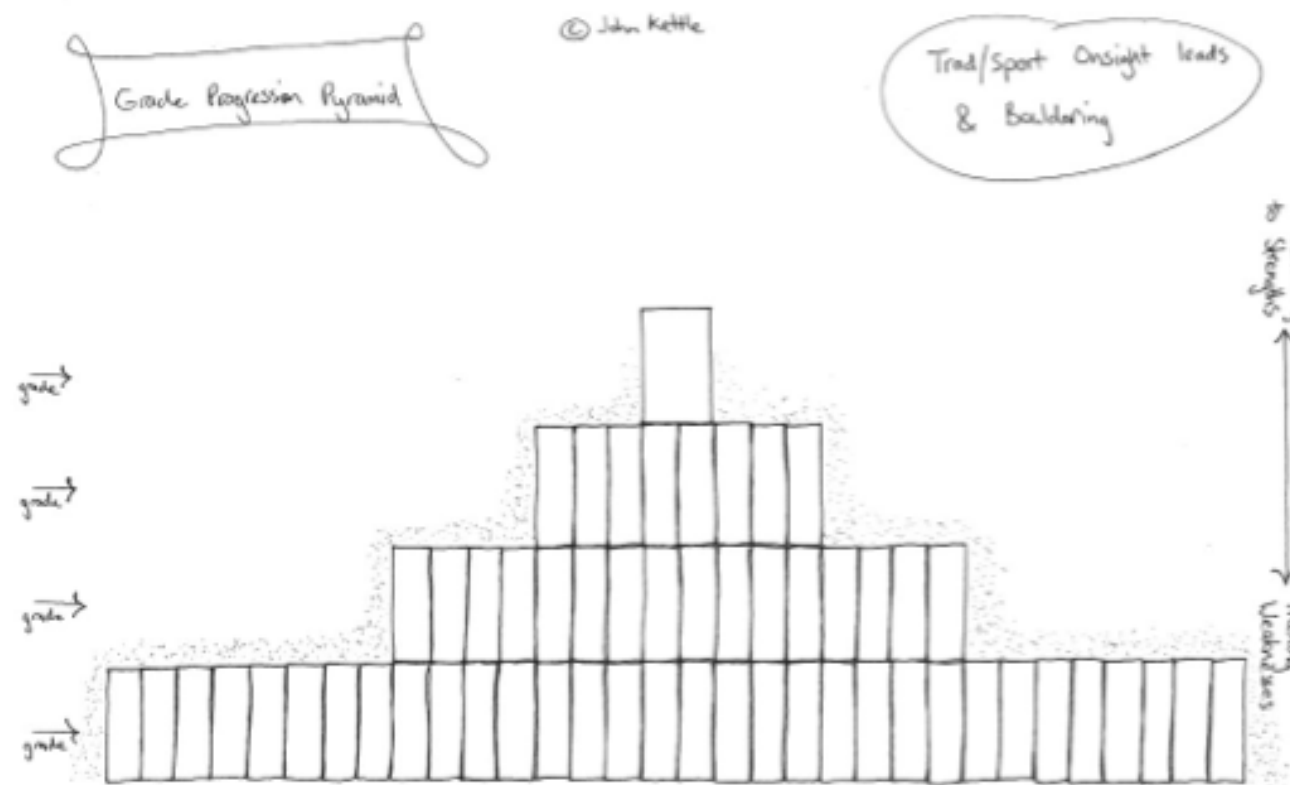
Swap Volume for Intensity

The bonus of not climbing more than 2-3 times a week is that you're well rested for each session, and you can make every session a high intensity one. If you have a local wall, buying a block membership is a good way to ensure you leave when you've still got some energy left (instead of staying to 'get your money's worth'), and still turn up for a session even when you've only got an hour or so. Regular short, high quality and intensity sessions will always trump sporadic mega-sessions.

Injury Reduction and Management

If you want high performance or a long career (maybe both!) in any sport, you must play 'the long game'. Injuries aren't really avoidable; it's more about reducing the rate of them, and managing them well. Talk to any veteran high performer in sport and you'll see they've not dodged every injury, they've dealt really well with (and learnt from) the injuries sustained, however minor. Apply the same zeal and focus to fixing tweaks as you would to getting fitter. Ignoring problems or extended periods of total rest are rarely what the body needs.

The proactive approach: 'before any long journey, check the oil level and tyre pressures'. Rather than wait for something to fail, ask a recommended physio to check your biomechanics and find out what you're doing wrong. If you can't sit, stand, balance and breathe with the right muscles, the foundations are too shaky to build on. You'll leave with a servicing/



maintenance schedule that if followed will keep you from the chronic injuries caused by long-term movement dysfunction such as lower back, shoulder, neck, elbow, hip and knee troubles.

Seeing a physio when I was uninjured was the best £35 I've ever spent on my climbing.

Here's my years injury summary. While it may look a lot, by careful management they remained minor injuries which I climbed through, except the big toe that cost me three weeks off the rock:

- Nine minor finger tweaks
- Minor tennis elbow in both arms
- Minor golfers elbow in both arms
- One muscle strain (Latissimus Dorsi)
- One bruised heel
- One dislocated big toe – 3 weeks off (don't ask how!)

Supplementary Training

Climbing is fundamentally a skill based activity so fingerboards, campus boards, weights and core workouts only work as a supplement to a high volume of quality climbing movement, and mostly at an elite level. If more than 10% of your total climbing time is spent on these, it's unlikely it will improve you more than extra climbing would, and it may make your technique worse. Compare the numbers in my training here to my injury reduction exercises:

Fingerboard sessions: 20 (5 during foot injury period)
Campus board sessions: 2 (whilst unable to climb due to foot injury)
Core workouts, flexibility training, other training: None

What non-climbing training time is really about for the time-starved climber is injury reduction exercises. Your chance to ensure your body is finely tuned and maintained ready for the next climb.

My years injury reduction exercises:
2,861 repetitions of physiotherapy exercises
Elbow eccentrics: 2,745 repetitions
30 Finger icing sessions
22 Foot icing sessions (following dislocation)

Dear Diary

Keeping a training diary or joining a forum of like-minded climbers is a great way to maintain focus and motivation. Remember to record your state of mind, injuries and external influencing factors as well as your climbing - it'll help you recognise patterns and foresee future issues. I draw grade pyramids, pin them on the wall and colour them in as I go - anything to aid motivation. Finally don't forget to celebrate your successes, I know it's not British but it works! I have a pie from the local butchers every time I break a new grade.

So how did I do with my experiment? After a year on my 6 hours a week schedule I'd gone from a five month lay-off to eating three pies and bouldering V10/ font 7c+.

Being short of time doesn't mean never improving. What could you achieve in a few hours a week?

If you would like more great tips for training, you can visit his website at www.johnkettle.com (UK).



MICHAEL FULLER ON 'THE CLIMB' (18) ON THE OLD MAN, WEST CAPE HOWE

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Off Belay

CAWA Events and News

WILYABRUP TRIP NOVEMBER 28-30

CAWA has a trip planned to Wilyabrup on the last weekend in November. Located 26km NW of Margaret River, it's not too far for a weekend trip from Perth.

Wilyabrup is one of the biggest and best known crags in the region, stretching around 400m along a small terrace above the wave line overlooking the Indian Ocean. The climbs are mostly trad or mixed lines requiring a full rack of wires and camming devices, but there are also some sport routes as well. Top ropes can be easily set up in places. Check out the West Australian Rock guide book for more info.

We will be staying at a campground not far from Wilyabrup. Get in touch with CAWA to book a place. Look forward to seeing you down there.

CAWA XMAS BBQ 14 DECEMBER

The annual xmas BBQ is on again at Point Walter in Bicton. Boulder at Blackwall Reach, have a go on the slacklines set up and join us for a feast! Free for members and \$10 for non members (most food provided) so bring the family. RSVP by 5th December please.



PHOTO RIGHT: CHRISTIAN LEE
ON ALBATROSS, PEAK HEAD.
PHOTO BY JOE ALBAHARI



COACHING CLINIC 24 NOVEMBER

Basic techniques covered: hand and foot placements, efficient movement on the rock. More details will be emailed. It will be held at The Hangout!

GYM CRASHES

Always check the CAWA website for events, but the end of year gym crash will be held on Tuesday 11th November at The Hangout.

<http://www.climberswa.asn.au>



PHOTO LEFT: SHOT OF PEAK HEAD,
ALBANY BY MICHAEL FULLER
PHOTO ABOVE: SHOT OF JOHN DUMAS
AT WEST CAPE HOWE, PHOTO BY ALI
CHAPMAN

WISHING WE WERE THERE: OVERLOOK-
ING THE STIRLING RANGE WEST OF BLUFF
KNOLL. PHOTO BY MANDY BOWLER

CAWA 2014 Winter Dinner

Text by **Kylie West**

T'was a cold and wet winter's night in August when a bunch of climbers sought refuge from the harsh, unforgiving elements in a decrepit old pub and begged for some life-saving nourishment and ales.

Or that's how it should read as per some climbing epic, but in reality, it was a mild, clear night and it was The Oxford Hotel in Leederville that was the pre-arranged venue for the annual CAWA winter dinner.

Whilst an old pub, The Oxford has had the obligatory face-lift to remove its original character (read: stench of stale beer, the bikies and overall seediness) and it's now on the cool radar like so many other pubs in Perth. My question is,

where do all the old bar-flies drink nowadays? Having moved to Harvey, I've lost contact with them.

Enough about pubs. Some twenty odd climbers met up for the aforementioned lifesaving nourishment and ales. We had a good cross-section of members there, including some of the original and current trail-blazers of climbing in WA. The conversations were lively and loud, so there was never a quiet moment as stories were shared and new friendships forged.

I myself had some interesting discussions with people (some of whom I'd not met before) around the challenges that face women who are trying to get back into

climbing after having kids compared to their male counterparts. Yeah, yeah, I know men can't have kids, but that's not what I mean, and I know you know that's not what I mean.

Enough about kids. As hoped for, The Oxford's food was hearty pub-grub and our booking was situated in a private room with a lovely open fire going. The ambience was great, the acoustics not so great. The benefit of this was the fact other people couldn't really be sure exactly what grade it was I said I could lead on trad, as twelve and twenty could easily be confused in the din (for the record, I said twelve. I blame the children).

Enough about lying about your climbing grades. It was a great night, good food and more importantly, good company. I no longer climb regularly, but I reflected afterwards how I still felt a real affinity and sense of belonging within the climbing community. Before I get teary and start telling youse all how much I love you, I would like to thank the CAWA committee for organising this event. As Kermit the Frog once said, "it's not easy being green" and similarly, it's not easy being on a voluntary committee, so well done guys (yes, I'm on the committee, but no, I didn't do a thing to organise this event).

Enough about my laziness.



The Hangout 2015 Bouldering Comp

TRACY FROM THE HANGOUT, ONE OF PERTH'S BEST CLIMBING GYMS, GIVES US THE LOW DOWN ON THE WINTER BOULDERING CHAMPIONSHIPS!



Why are competitions that run over several months so wonderful? well for me the wonder is in watching people progress and achieve in a game that they are so passionate about! I hope he doesn't mind, but I can't resist but mention a high school student called Sule.

Sule's school gave their students a project: it was to become good at something! They were given a set period of time to achieve this, and it could be at anything they wanted. He chose climbing. Earlier in the year Sule came to The Hangout and tried climbing with his family and then again with his class. This sport (though we all know that climbing is sooooo much more than just a sport!) fitted him well. He joined the bouldering competition having only ever

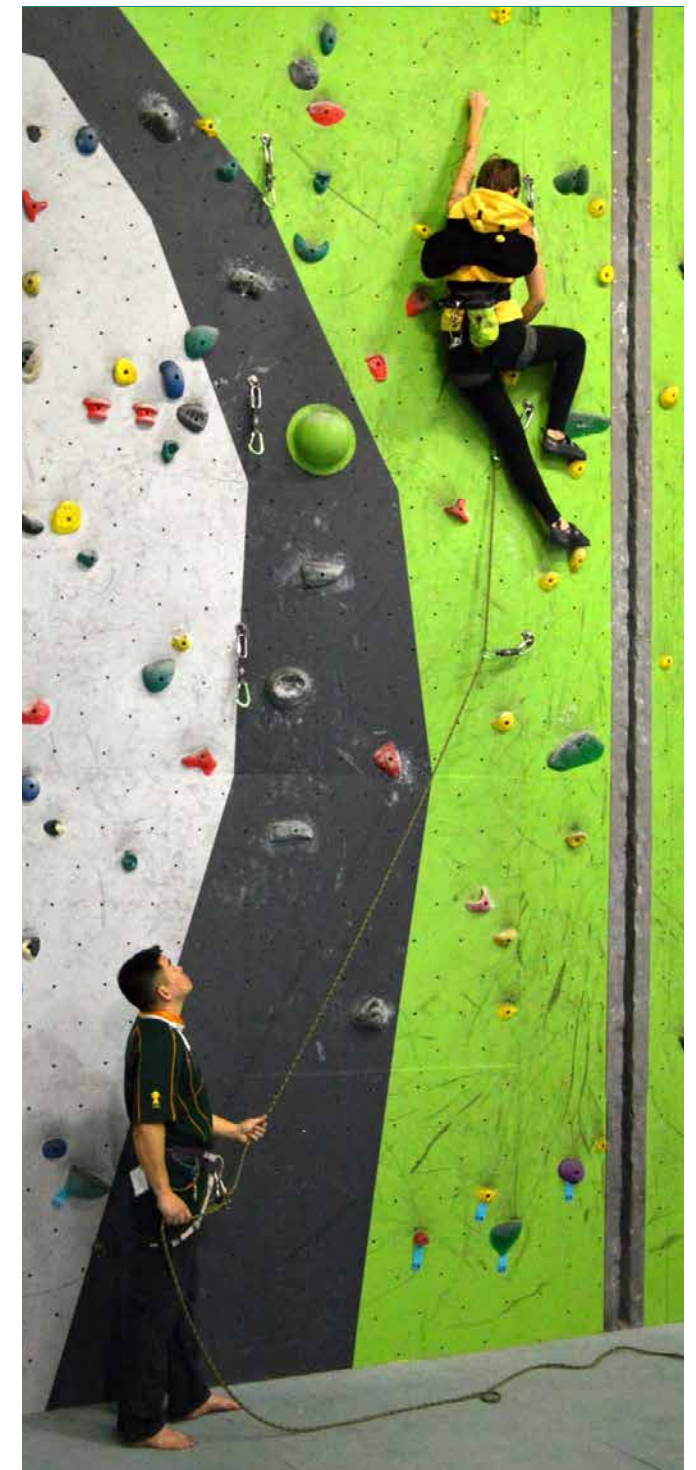
climbed a few times in his life, and over the weeks he went from beginner to being able to complete some of the harder problems in the comp!

Our 2014 Winter Bouldering Competition at The Hangout came to an end as Spring sprung! So to celebrate we decorated the gym with gaudy flowers and insects, and threw a Spring themed competition finale party. We honoured the winners and high achievers of our competition with prizes and trophies.

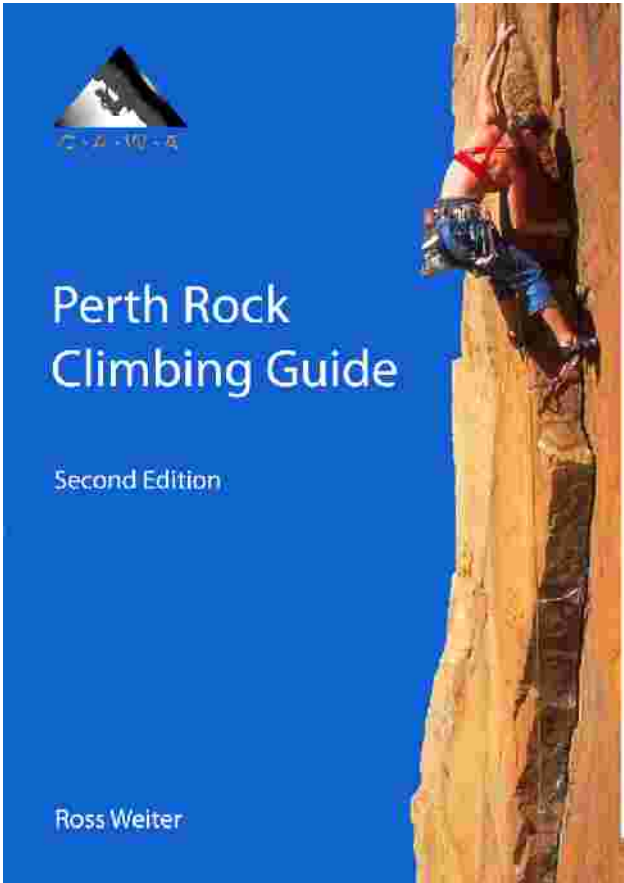
First place for the men's division was once again Karl Laczko, second place went to Artur Deditius and third place went to Liam Bob Green. First place in the women's division went to "Nala" Barbara Ramiro, second place went to Michelle Lim, and third place went to

"Anju the Destroyer". Impressive mentions also go to "Mushy" Glen Ludlam, Jared Harrison, Remi Vignals, Prima Pranoto, Brian "still-semi-retired" Tan, and "Biggy Cheese", who were all in the top ten ranking males. "Fooster", Jolyn Lai, Liz Jesson, Lucy Fuchsbichler, Ruth Murdie, Kate Swain and Tessa Antonelli climbed impressively and made it into the top ten women.

Liz Jesson and "Mushy" not only made it into the top ten overall for their gender, they both also came first in the 40+ age group. Teenage Sule "Souffle" McCraie (mentioned above) ranked 22nd out of over 100 competitors! The Hangout is looking forward to running its next bouldering competition early next year.







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Ross Weiter

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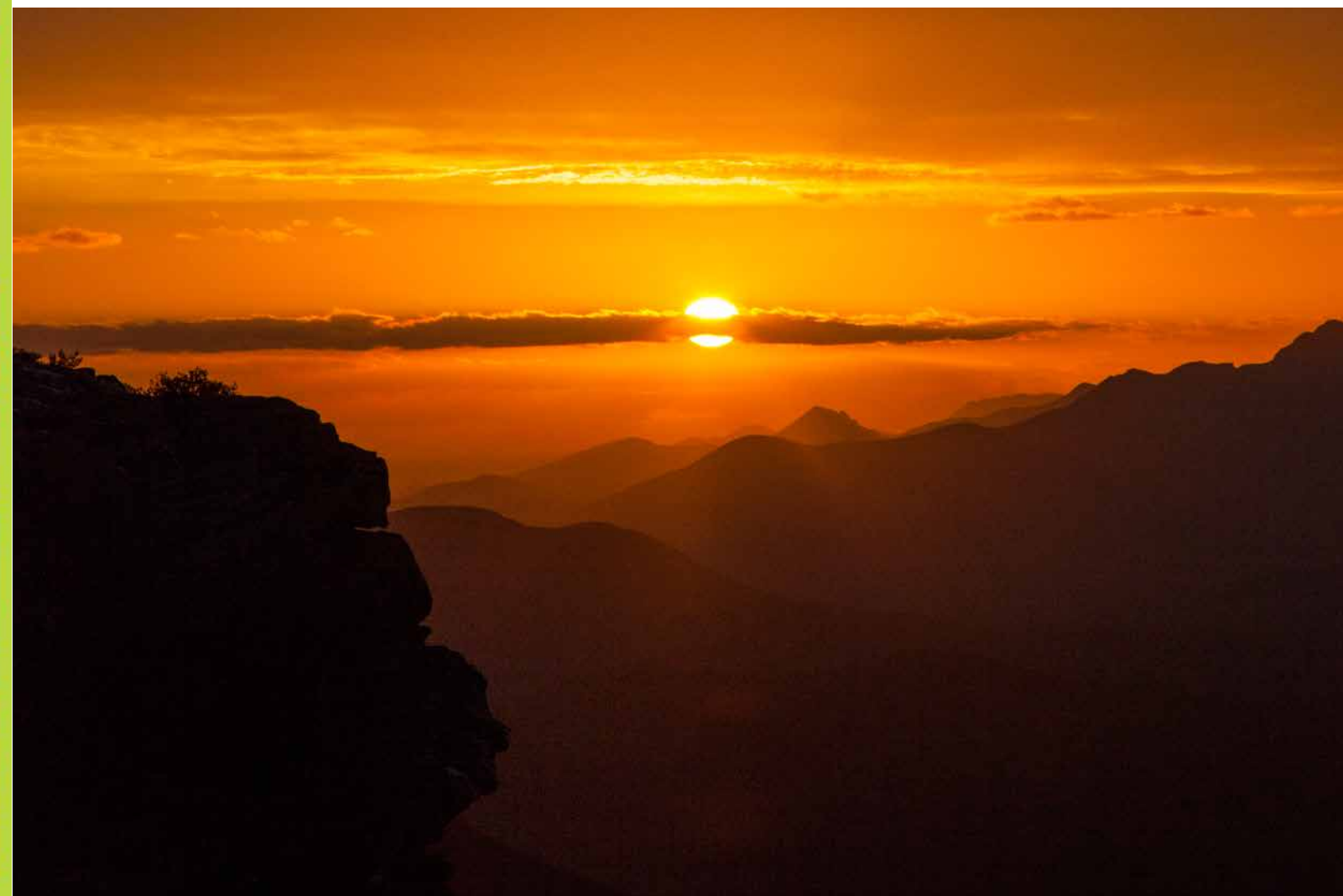
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Eaglestone Rock

OFTEN WHEN PERTH IS RAINING CATS AND DOGS IN WINTER, ALL IS QUIET AND CALM AT THE SANCTUARY OF EAGLESTONE ROCK, ON THE SHORES OF LAKE BROWN NEAR MERREDIN. BY MELISSA KEEFER

The Eaglestone Rock climbing trip was held in the last weekend of August, with the trip on the verge of being cancelled due a bad weather report, we are glad most of us still drove into the Wheatbelt leaving the storm in Perth and heading for what turned out to be blue skies and warm sunshine with the rain clouds passing us by.

Eaglestone brought two new members along who have not climbed in 15 years, they were excited to get back on the rock and get climbing again after so long. With Peter also setting a trad route that the 3 kids could have a climb and enjoy them selves while he belayed from the top, the next generation of climbers can follow in our footsteps.

Our other fellow climbers were hard at work with a couple of climbers new to Eaglestone and its beauty, with the remainder returning to these boulders for some fun and to take on new challenges. "Olivia and I both had a great time

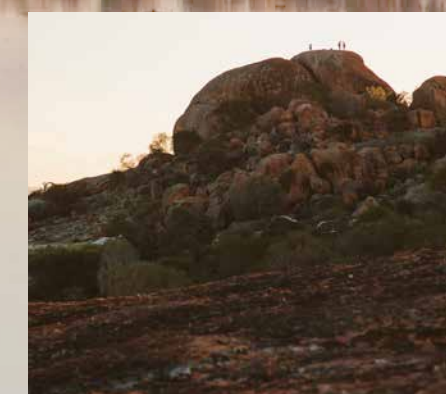
and enjoyed the full Eaglestone experience, the camp ground, salt lake, the amazing sunset and menacing clouds, and of course the camp fire and meeting some nice people.

We started on Bitter to warm up and practice bringing up a second, we soon moved to Nudie which I enjoyed as I like delicate balancy face climbs. Unfortunately Juice it Up eluded me this trip as I was donning a brand new pair of Evolv Primes which I just could not get to stick, so I cannot tick off the Bitter area.

After lunch we moved to the Emu wall. Great sport wall, lots of climbs of mid to lower grades for all to play. I can't remember which order we did, but we knocked off three climbs, fell once as my hand pulled off a good flake, and had a good reconnoitre up the chimney between Emu and Fidget Gene before we decided to call it a day. Took the camera for a stroll down to the salt lake and got some great shots of the rock, brilliant red skies and tormenting clouds before setting up the stove and losing light.

Sunday first up after breakfast was the chimney. Some anxiety clipping the 3rd ring but all in all, a good climb, followed by intense silence as I bought up Olivia. Keen to do a little trad I then set to Capachow, again some nice balancy moves to stance, lots of options for pro and then off up the face. This is my favourite climb of the weekend. Olivia's choice, we then repeated a couple on Emu wall and whatever was left to give Emu the big tick. Feeling quite satisfied, we headed back to Perth after lunch" – Andrew Gree

Overall with the sun above us and chalked up hands it was a successful trip once again, the camp fire bringing weary climbers together for a chat and a drink after a full days climbing. Thank you to all who attended and hope to see you on the next trip. A huge thanks to Mel for coordinating the trip. In spite of being very unwell, she went ahead as planned and though this was not expected, it was appreciated - Dena.



GIBRALTAR ROCK: room with a view



WITH THE CLIMB 'RAVEN' BOLTED AT THE MASSIVE GIBRALTAR ROCK IN THE PORONGURUP RANGE, SLAB ENTHUSIASTS GET THEIR GRIT ON, LUNCH WITH LIZARDS AND ENJOY THE VIEW.

For starters: we need better directions. 'Cause getting in there was hell. Directions that contradicted themselves, didn't make sense. I suspect people had perhaps got home and guestimated the distance from the road to the track. From the sounds of it along the grapevine, many climbers have not taken the right track into Gibraltar and ended up, like Jonas and I, bush bashing our way uphill through the forest. A good workout, but not the one we had in mind. Knackered before we had started a route!

So some updated directions: Drive along the Scenic Drive (having turned right from Bolganup Road) to where you can

first see Gibraltar Rock from the road on the left. An open, slabby section of rock lies from the road up to Gibraltar, it is very hard to miss this. About 30 metres past this is a small turnaround point on the left. Park here. Walk past the gate to the left and go past the small clearing on the left and follow the fire trail down into the forest.

ABOUT 600M FROM THE GATE, IT IS ABOUT 15 MINS AT EASY PACE. THE TRACK LEADS OFF TO THE LEFT, CLEARLY MARKED

Walk about 600m from the gate OR 200m from the second, bigger creek line. It is about 15 minutes at an easy

pace. On both sides of the trail where the track is marked there are pink and blue streamers around trees and branches. The track leads off to the left and is clearly marked. It is very easy walking. If you are having a hard time, you are not on the right track! There are plenty of streamers, pink and white (faded pink perhaps) every few trees.

You will come to a rocky slab, follow the cairns to the top and around through a little thicket

Text by **Mandy Bowler**



MAIN: MANDY BOWLER SECONDING RAVEN. PHOTO BY JONAS HOLLINGWORTH
LEFT: TIM DOVE AND ALI CHAPMAN DESCEND GIBRALTAR ROCK, PHOTO BY CLIVE CULLEN



to the base of Raven. As Raven is not in any guide yet, just on the CAWA forum, we found it quite confusing to find, having not been to the Porongurups for climbing before. It seems others have been similarly confused. After much route finding around the base, we decided just to climb the bolted route as it looked manageable and relatively easy. This, of course, ended up being Raven anyway, as we realised at the end of the second pitch in the cave. There is a notebook in there and a route map clearly stating it was Raven.

We had come down to the Great Southern region for ten days of child-free exploration and a mission to complete the grueling Stirling Ridge Walk, which we had done in the first two days of our trip. That's another



FROM LEFT: KRIS POOLE ON RAVEN, JEROME CHOPARD IN THE CAVE ON RAVEN. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL FULLER



REMI SIGNALS ON KARMA, CASTLE ROCK. PHOTO BY CHRIS KAVAZOS; TIM AND ALI IN THE CAVE, ALI AND THE VIEW. PHOTOS BY CLIVE CULLEN

er story, but comes highly recommend (from us and others) for experienced hikers. Certainly a fitness test! Pack light is all I'm sayin'

With side trips around Albany, we spent two days at the Porongurups at the caravan park there. Perfectly pleasant, although our 2 man old dome tent looked meagre, a far cry compared to the luxurious caravans nearby. Just the way we like it.

I'll preface by saying that I'm not a fantastic climber. Definitely not much of a leader. I don't have a head for heights and exposed climbs freak me out, but I love nature and being outdoors and I really find the technical aspect of climbing fascinating. I especially like seconding trad routes - maybe it just distracts me so much I forget about the exposure! So I have just accepted that I climb to have fun; I don't take on great physical challenges outside of the gym, as I am challenging myself mentally anyway. My mission for the Porongurups was to climb Raven, which I knew was within my range, grade-wise, as I had seen friends' photos of it and it would be my longest climb to date. I had climbed multipitch at Arapiles and West Cape Howe before and love slab, so thought I could cope okay.



I'm glad to say I enjoyed it, especially the last couple of pitches, which are very easy. The crux, coming out of the cave, gave me a few moments of 'ar-gghhh' due to the exposure after the safety and comfort of the cave, but I got there eventually. It was lovely to be at the top, enjoying the view of the Stirling Ranges in the distance, that being our next stop. It was a beautiful day, I certainly would not want to be on that slab on a rainy day!

The cave was fantastic and

I know many people sleep there overnight. We lunched with friendly lizards, obviously used to humans sharing their foodstuffs, or at least leaving crumbs once climbing recommenced.

The walk back down, via the

IT WAS LOVELY TO BE AT THE TOP, ENJOYING THE VIEW OF THE STIRLING RANGES IN THE DISTANCE, OUR NEXT STOP.

I CERTAINLY WOULD NOT WANT TO BE ON THAT SLAB ON A RAINY DAY

path of least resistance, was rel-

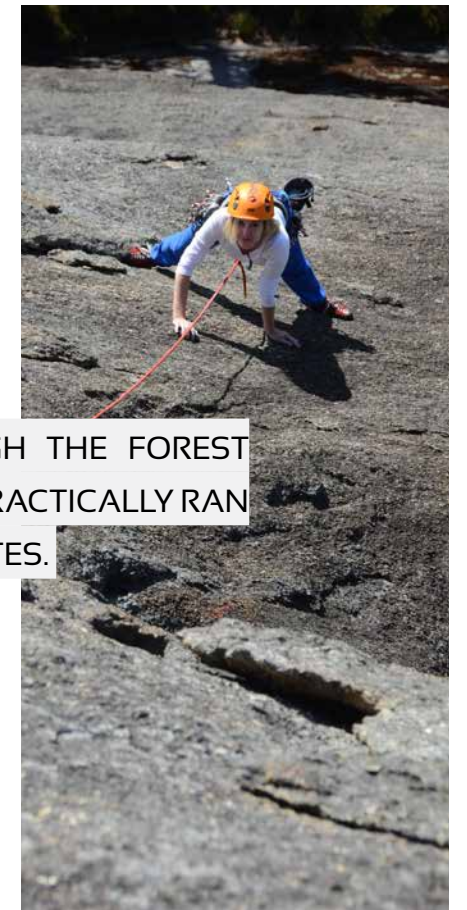
atively easy. There sure is an art to walking on steep slab but I'm sure the walk is so much easier than rappelling all those pitches down.

Being around 3pm by this time, we decided not to do another climb, but had a good look around for potential routes on our next venture here. Finding the trail back, we tried to add to the streamers as much as possible. The route through the forest was easy peasy and we practically ran out of there in about ten minutes.

Thanks to everyone involved in making that track and if other climbers use it, please keep the branches clear of it. It certainly makes life easier.

Maleeya's Thai (a must do if you are in the Porongurups) fitted us in for a last minute booking later that night and we were placed on the verandah, cosied up in down jackets and mossie spray chowing down on Thai green curry and spicy calamari. I don't know about you, but I get pretty hangry after not eating for hours on end so it was well-received!

Day 2 in the range and we hiked up to Castle Rock. A 'pleasant uphill walk' is only slightly less pleasant with a backpack full of climbing gear but still, an easy clear track at least. The new Granite Skywalk seems to have affected the top of a couple of climbs but almost all were too hard for me anyway, and the slabby ones looked slightly dodgy with the rusty carrots! Jonas picked one out that looked relatively recently bolted and had fixed hangers, on the corner under the Skywalk. About three quarters of the way up, the holds suddenly disappeared and try as he might, a retreat was necessary. We found out later it was a project (although no red tape) of Logan Barber and was possibly a grade of 30-32 range. Hmmm, no wonder it became so hard.



THE ROUTE BACK THROUGH THE FOREST WAS EASY PEASY AND WE PRACTICALLY RAN OUT OF THERE IN TEN MINUTES.



FROM LEFT: THE GANG ENJOY THE VIEW.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL FULLER.

TIM AND ALI AFTER THE LAST PITCH OF

RAVEN. PHOTO BY CLIVE CULLEN.

FIONA WALLACE SECONDING RAVEN.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL FULLER.

There are lots of great, short hard routes here, Vous and Karma the most popular. You will no doubt have an audience here, so it does lack the peaceful nature of Gibraltar Rock, which most tourists don't venture to. If you're heading down to Albany, the Porongurups is definitely worth a stop in on a fine day.

And for us, it was onto the Stirrings to explore once again....



* Tomasson Route, Marmolada Sth Face (600m, V, 8:30hrs, 22 pitches)

Text and Photos by **Ross Weiter**



South Face of the Marmolada

COMPETITION ON THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN RANGE IN THE DOLOMITES.

Who needs an alarm clock when your climbing partner farts on schedule? So Pistol Pete and I were up on the 9th of the 9th not at 9am but at 3am, way before the chickens. An hour later we were footing it up the Contrin Valley toward the Ombretta Pass, along a pleasant vehicle track well lit up by a huge full moon assisted by our head torches. It was almost freezing but the path was so steep that I only needed a thin tee shirt, at least until just below the pass where we briefly stopped, stashed some grub and water, and almost froze solid as the cold took hold of our bods. 'Twas a chilly dawn!

By 6:30am it was just light enough and we crossed the scree slope to the base of the Tomasson Route, an old timer grade V#, a 600m long "classic" from way back in 1901, with so many pitches we tried not to think about it. Picture three Bluff Knolls on top of each other, with a 3hr approach and 3.5hr descent along, yee-haw!

Much to our annoyance there were two other teams already staked out at the base of the route, a Japanese couple and two sharp-looking Italian youths. The couple let us ahead of

them on account of our more youthful and powerful looks but the Italians were not budging for exactly the opposite reason. 'Ah well' we thought, hoping they will be as competent as they acted. Fortunately, they were.

THE HARE AND THE TURTLE AND ALL THAT, WE FELT PRETTY GOOD CONSIDERING OUR COMBINED AGE OF 97.

Broadly speaking, the route was a paradise of chimney climbing to start off with, with many chock stones thrown in for amusement and the odd rusty piton for belay. We immediately fell in love. A secure existence, with no exposure at all, stashed inside the womb-like confines of this rock playground, we bridged, stemmed and jammed the easy terrain pitch after pitch. About one third of the way up there was a long traverse left along an easy ledge, which unfortunately brought us to a belay only very slightly offset from the direct firing line of a stone chute, below a massive chasm. Rocks were whistling through the air, sometimes a whole flight of them, and very, very close! Not good. Contemplating being wiped out by stone shrapnel while be-

laying in Chosspile Central, I wished to be a snail and crawl inside my helmet. Alas, it was far too small. A classic Alpine experience.

The route then escaped the bombing range by following an easy right-ris-

ing crack for the middle third, which terminated at an easy abseil. This is where we caught up with the Italian youths, who were looking a bit winded. The hare and turtle and all that, we felt pretty good considering our combined age of 97. However the youths re-grouped and bolted again. The Japanese were somewhere way below us, only once we heard some sounds. There was more traversing across chossy ledges, this time to the right and around a huge tower.

Pete was still going well and tackled a tricky technical pitch in the third act of this rock opera. It was about grade V+ and strangely unmentioned in the guidebook which basically meant that we were a bit off route.

With the Italians quite obviously progressing just above us, however, we had little to worry about route finding.

By now the clouds were all around us, with the occasional hint of drizzle, but no wind. At over 3000m altitude and at 3pm, we really did not need to be on wet rock. There was more than a sniff of madness about our speed, up, up, up and out of here. The last two pitches involved dodging some serious choss and a steep snow bank but by 3:30pm, after 22 pitches and 8 and a half hours of climbing, we finally topped out on the ridge not far east from the obligatory summit cross.

The hut on the Punta Penia summit (3342m) was closed and locked, but had a useful outdoor table to sort out gear for the descent. This con-

sisted of down-climbing a near-by via ferrata. We improvised some via ferrata slings and started descending the "iron way" of the West Ridge as the drizzle changed to gentle rain and it thundered nearby.

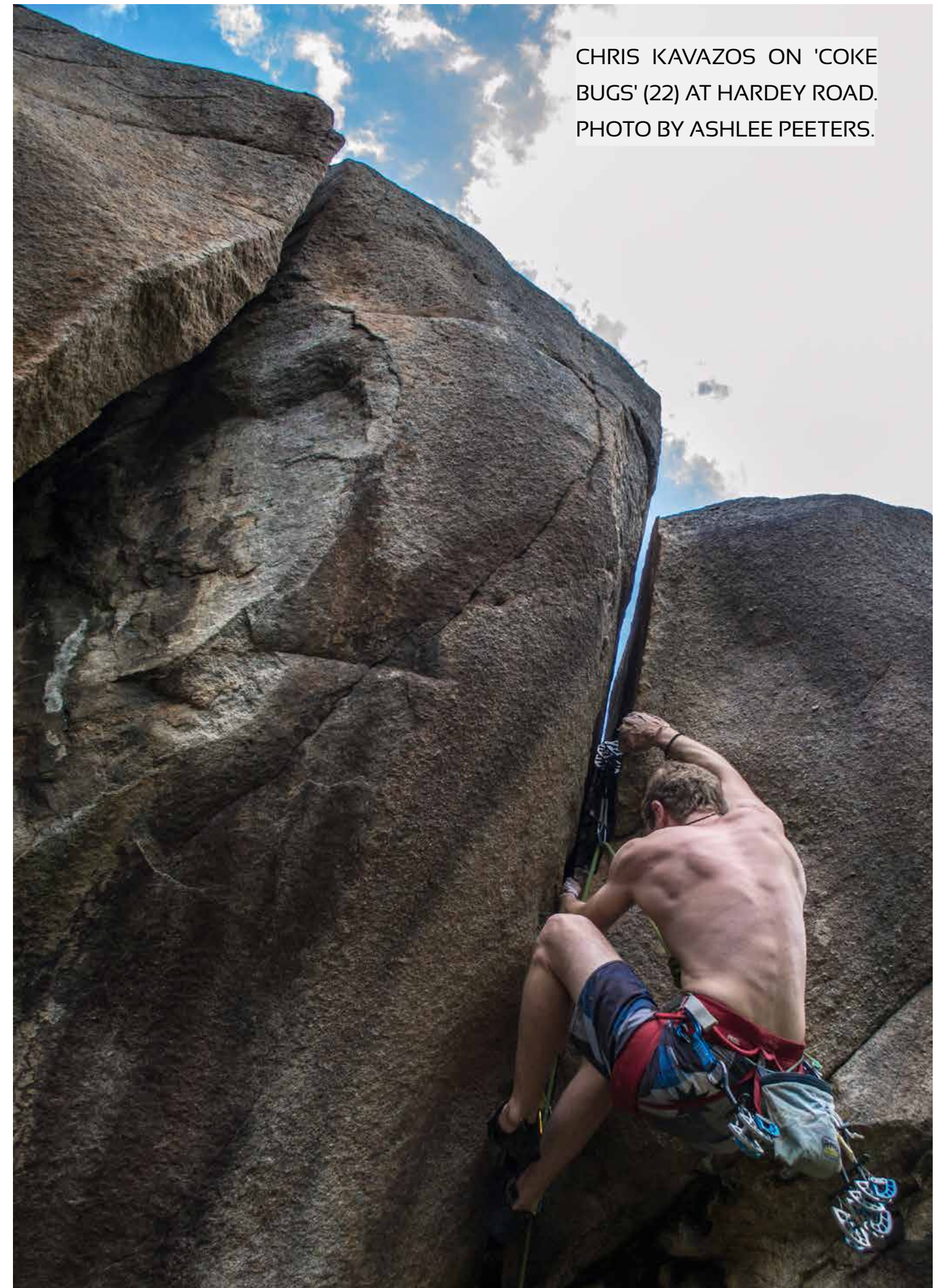
With hoods pulled low, we steadily got out of there as fast as we safely could. We scampered down the steel works to the saddle, skidded down the scree-and-log path 606 to the Contrin Hut, literally ran back down the Contrin Valley and arrived back to the car at the base of the Alba lift station at 7pm, half an hour before the three course dinner menu was served back in our hotel in Canazei. Berg heil!

#1-Editors note: read old-school grade 15/16, with lots of slippery chimneys and little gear.

#2-Editors note: The first ascent was done in 1901, with the team not only consisting of two guides (considered to be two of the best at the time; Michele Bettega and Bartolo Zagonel), but initiated by the third team member, an English woman, Beatrice Rice. When it was put up, the ascent of the Marmolada South Face (done in 12 hrs) was regarded as the longest and the most difficult climb in the Dolomite Alps, and a major landmark in both Alpine and women's climbing. You can read a very interesting account of Beatrice, and her exploits, including the South Face of the Marmolada in an article published by the UK Alpine Journal here:

http://www.alpinejournal.org.uk/Contents/Contents_2001_files/AJ%202001%20105-113%20Reisach%20To-masson.pdf

CHRIS KAVAZOS ON 'COKE BUGS' (22) AT HARDEY ROAD. PHOTO BY ASHLEE PEETERS.



PRIDE cometh before a fall

Text by DENA RAO

There is definitely more than one way to skin a cat. Awful saying really, especially as I'm a vet and I love cats. But when it comes to climbing, it's spot on. There is usually more than one way to approach almost every aspect of what we do. This is a good thing because it would be pretty boring if we were all the same. But what isn't okay is using gear in a manner that is contrary to the manufacturer's instructions or just plain unsafe.

I am disturbed by the number of near misses and amount of gear misuse I have seen in the last year or so. And worse, the casual attitude that often goes with it. A number of the climbers I've been hanging out with are saying exactly the same thing. So with the post, [The New Rules of Belaying](#) by Andrew Bishart doing the rounds, it seemed like the right time to revisit

WE ARE ALL FALLIBLE. EVEN THE MOST DILIGENT AMONG US MAY LOSE THEIR HALOS OCCASIONALLY. THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING TO LEARN. TALK TO EACH OTHER AND KEEP THE EGO IN CHECK.

some of these issues. I would encourage everybody, beginners and experienced alike, to read and circulate this excellent piece. It's a great summary of appropriate belaying and includes a Petzl video tutorial on correct use of the Grigri 2.

Though I'm really pleased that the major climbing publications like Rock and ice are talking about safety regularly, I'm concerned that the message isn't getting through. Never one to shy away from controversial topics, I am well aware that this is a touchy subject. But it astounds me that when faced with a safety faux pas that the only thing some climbers are inter-

ested in protecting is their pride. That they may be jeopardising another person's life appears to be of no concern. I ask you, if you've responded defensively when a climbing part-

ner has raised a concern, to reflect on whether they might have had a valid point. And then ask yourself why, considering the potentially fatal consequences, you refused to stop and consider the situation objectively.

We are all fallible and even the most diligent among us may lose their halos occasionally. There is a greater risk of this happening if we are tired or under stress. It is also possible to misremember things we are taught. Or we may have acquired unsafe habits from someone more experienced, assuming that they knew better. In this way we see dangerous habits being perpetuated, particularly when people manage



PHOTO L:

CHRISTIAN LEE BELAYING ON PEAK HEAD.

BELOW: CHRIS KAVAZOS ON SUPER FUNKY (25)

KALBARRI PHOTO BY RONAN TYRIE

to avoid mishap for years. Experience and lack of serious accidents tends to breed complacency.

There are many facets of this topic that we could talk about. I've seen a lot of sloppy belaying recently including climbers getting dropped, but given how well Andrew has covered this in his post, the area I want to focus on is knowing your technical equipment – intended use and limitations. It sounds obvious to say that if you have a piece of climbing gear, you should know how to use it.

The tricky thing is that some of our gear, like slings and ropes, don't come with much, if any instruction because there are so many applications. Information on how to use them properly comes from a wide range of sources and learning is often an ongoing process. But the more technical our equipment, the more specific its use tends to be. There is a lot of gear we could talk about but one group particularly dear to my heart and commonly misused are belay devices. You hold your climbing partner's life in your hands with one these little dudes. And let's be honest, finding replacement climbing partners is damn hard work, so looking after the ones you've



got is a good investment.

Are you sure you know how to use yours correctly (belay device, not climbing partner)? Did you read the instructions that came with it or did they go straight into the bin? Do you understand its limitations and how it works? Did you know that the Grigri is only an assisted braking device NOT an auto-locking one? Hanging an ATC Guide or Reverso from an anchor by its cable, does not convert it into guide mode. What it does guarantee is an express descent for a second who falls because there is no friction. In my case, that would have been roughly 150 metres. Insisting that you are right and biting your buddy's head off for daring to question because on this occasion you were damn lucky, may only result in disaster at some point in the

future.

So, please, make sure you understand how to use your gear properly. Not all of our equipment comes with good or exhaustive instructions – it's up to us to seek out the information from reliable sources. Every climber has the right to question another if they have concerns about safety. Never assume strength or experience equals safe climbing practices. There is always something to learn and I've acquired all sorts of cool tricks and tips from other climbers. Talk to each other when you're out on the rock and keep your ego in check. Better to be slightly offended than explaining to your partner's loved ones why that person isn't coming home.

WESTERN Climber

The beautiful Stirlings, one of my favourite places in the world. Have you taken any great photos lately? We know many of you have climbing plans for the Christmas and New Year period and we really encourage you to get that camera out and take some shots of your climbing adventures, whether it be here in our gorgeous state, or further afield.

The CAWA AGM is coming up in February (where has 2014 gone!?!) and our annual photographic competition will be taking place. It is attracting more and more people each year with some fantastic creative shots. There will be prizes up for grabs of course, along with the sheer pleasure of knowing you have won and you are therefore awesome.

I look forward to seeing your photos next year. Get busy people!

Mandy

