



FOUNDED 1891

Mountain Club of South Africa KwaZulu-Natal Section

ESTABLISHED 1919

P.O. Box 50649
Musgrave Road
DURBAN 4062

E-mail: mcsakzn@gmail.com

Website: <http://kzn.mcsa.org.za>

NEWSLETTER April/May/June 2014

Club News

by Anne Rodwell

- WELCOME to the following new members to the Club: Michael Owen, Robyn Kime, Daniel Kirkman, Johan Steenkamp, Kathryn Steenkamp, Bethany Steenkamp, Conall Steenkamp, Faran Steenkamp, Leigh-Anne van der Veen, David Olds, Tor Åge Schunemann and Lauren Snell. May you enjoy many years with the Mountain Club!

- The AGM was held on Saturday 15 March, with 26 members attending and 25 apologies given by those who could not attend. James Voortman was re-elected as President, also Beth McLeod as Treasurer. Dan Ryding is taking over from Anne Rodwell as Secretary.

All other members on the Committee, plus co-opted members, will be listed on the Contacts List on the back page of the Newsletter (subject to confirmation at the next Committee meeting). Thank you to all the members who attended, especially the ones who travelled from Hilton and beyond - I believe they had to drive through a storm on the way home!

- Those of you knew Heidi McInnes, wife of Jim McInnes, will be sad to learn that Heidi passed away recently. The President, Committee and members of the Club extend sincere condolences to Jim and his three daughters, his twin brother Neil, and their families.

- Michael Owen and Robyn Kime, who have recently joined the club, are at present travelling in Nepal - they are an adventurous young couple and are posting accounts of their travels on their blogs. If you are keen to view stunning photos and read about their travelling experiences, go visit: <http://robynkime.wordpress.com> and Mike's blog: <http://mikeshorizons.wordpress.com>

- THE RORY LOWTHER MEMORIAL CHALLENGE:

KwaZulu-Natal's Jason Salt (son of Dylan Salt) and Jordan Pillay, aged 19, have emerged as the champion team in South Africa's premier mountain climbing event, known as The Rory to the climbing fraternity. The annual Rory Memorial Challenge attracted over 70 teams plus their supporters and was held at Rensburgkop, Swinburne and Eagle Mountain at Mount Everest near Harrismith in the Free State during the March 21 - 23 long weekend.

Challengers, ranging from U13 to Open and Masters, competed for honours in Sport Climbing, Bouldering and Mountain Trail Running or Hiking. The Rory is unique in that it is the only competition of its kind in South Africa that offers these three categories at one event. Participants tackled all three disciplines and combined their scores to determine the winners. This year's theme was a Festival of Fun and Competition.

For more reading on this very popular climbing event, go to: <http://www.climbing.co.za/2014/04/rory-lowther>

- ANNUAL DINNER

This is to be held in Bloemfontein and will be at the A-Lodge on 31 May at 18h30. The cost of the dinner will be R230.00. The Guest Speaker will be Rose Gardner, a member of the Free State Section who has completed 4 of the 7 summits.

Contact Charlotte Augustyn: charlottea100@gmail.com



95th
July Camp
VERGELEGEN
5 - 19 July 2014

JULY CAMP 2014

Once again, we are privileged to have a new Base Camp Site this year, on a promontory at the junction of the Mkhomazi and the Mlahlangubo Rivers. The reserve itself is very seldom visited, partly because the Campsite has not yet been rebuilt after being gutted a few years ago. As a result, only the very occasional hiking party wanting to sub-camp at Rooibessiebos or visit Kaula or Bird's Nest Caves, tend to go there. So despite the fact that we are camping at a magnificent grassland site, albeit fairly close to the entry road, we still have the solitude we all so dearly love. Not only is there water a-plenty, there are excellent swimming pools on the Mkhomazi both above and below the Camp for all those wanting to indulge in the Berg waters in July!

For further information, queries and additional forms:

The Convenor,

July Camp Sub-Committee:

Rikki Abbott Wedderburn

Phone: (Home) 033 239 2374

(Cell) 082 538 5389

e-mail:

ronwedd@netactive.co.za



Your camp organisers hard at work! Mike Coke, Rikki Abbott and Margaret Brown

Photo by Gerhard Venter

Rescue News

by Gavin Raubenheimer

On the 27th of January 2014 the ranger-in-charge from Royal Natal National Park reported that a father and his 9 year old son had not returned from a walk in the Tugela Gorge. They were part of a larger group and had become separated somewhere above the chain-ladder at the head of the gorge. After a Hasty Search that night and again the next morning, it appeared that the pair were stuck between two cliff lines deep in the gorge. A SAPS Airwing helicopter with two MCSA members on board was sent to the area. On arrival, it was found that the pair had managed to get themselves out of their predicament and were walking back along the path.

On Saturday the 8th of February 2014 a 19 year old male climber was injured when dropped by his belayer when climbing at 'The Canyon' in Kloof Gorge. The MCSA was called by a member of the climbing group. A Club member (who is a doctor) and a technical team member were first on scene, followed by an Advanced Life Support paramedic from EMRS and a full technical rescue team. The patient was suspected of having back, chest and wrist injuries, but later whilst in hospital it was revealed that only his wrist was broken. A 5:1 stretcher hoist with a re-direct was set in place to haul the patient out, followed by a long uphill walk to an ambulance.

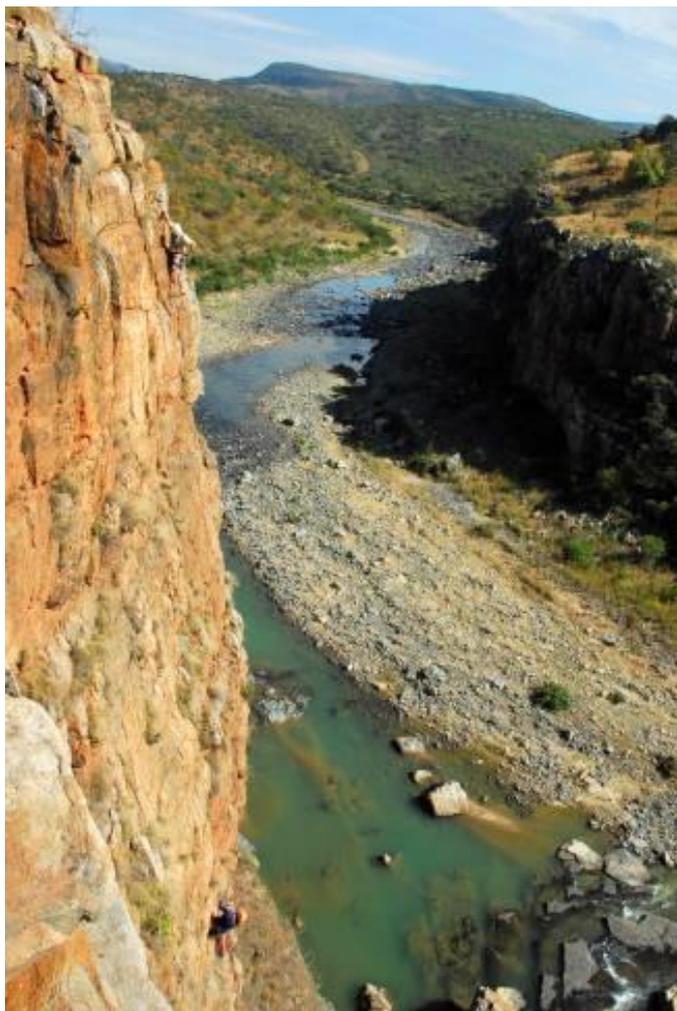
White Umfolozi News

by Gavin Peckham

As usual, the hot summer season has found fewer climbers heading up north to the "Canyon of Dreams" - as Tony Lourens describes this idyllic venue. However, Claire Taylor from Waterval Boven and Anna, a visiting German climber, spent several days gracing the crags and were enchanted with the venue - despite being almost stranded on the north bank by a flash flood that swept down the valley whilst they were climbing! They were lucky to make their escape to the south bank via the old low-level bridge, just before it was inundated by the flood waters.

Gavin P and Hansie van Rooyen have also been busy and opened a new route on the Primeval Wall (LUCA, 14, 10B & C) and another route on the Promised Land face, (Haasie, 17, 4B & C). A 5 page update for the route guide is available from Gavin P if you have not already received it by e-mail.

Dirk Talma (073 617 4034; dirk.talma@gmail.com) and Ian Slatem (082 566 2197 or 073 393 6604; ian@geomining.co.za) are both up in Zululand on contract for the next couple of months and are really keen to climb at the Umfolozi whenever possible. Please help out these visiting climbers if you possibly can. Dirk is based in Empangeni whilst Ian is on contract in St Lucia.



Climbers on Day Tripper (17)

Photo by Anthony van Tonder

There are a number of long weekend meets scheduled for the White Umfolozi in the not too distant future. Of these, Anthony van Tonder's traditional winter meet from **14 to 16 June** will be the "main event". We hope to see a good turnout !

Chamonix Mountain Festival: 29 June - 6 July 2014

If you are wondering where your climbing adventures will take you in 2014, then it's not too late to book your place at the Chamonix Mountain Festival!

The price is just €490 per person.

If you are interested, contact Françoise Call at email: françoisecall@yahoo.co.uk

Haggis, Slush, Disappointment and Adventure

by Colin McCoy

Every year for the past five years or so now, I have made at least one trip to Scotland to try and master the art of Scottish Winter Climbing. It's a long way to go to such small mountains, but I love the place. They may be small mountains, but provide a very high level of adventure. I've generally been very lucky with conditions and weather in Scotland; so have been very fortunate to tick off classics such as Point Five Gully, Tower Ridge and Smith's Route.

Having had such great experiences, I've been nagging my buddies for years to come out and share the experience with me. Admittedly, I may have created a slightly warped image of what to expect.....I mean no one ever shows photos of whiteouts, rain, wind, snow, sleet and general discomfort - obviously there are no photos of such things; you're just focused on getting the heck out of there. No, no, my photos show blue skies, solid ice and happy faces. For all those classic days I've had out in Scotland, there has been at least three times the number of days spent backing off routes, mini epics or just sat waiting out the weather in a pub in Fort William.

I put this trip on the club meet sheet and the two takers were Trevor Johnson and Cesar de Carvalho. So it all came together this past February and my buddies showed up in London with rather high expectations. The journey from London to Scotland is a story all in itself. One that shall remain for around the campfire, but in a brief summary let's just say that Trevor arrived well stocked from the Duty Free in Johannesburg and Cesar in his old age just can't keep up with us young uns like he used to. To our credit we did take good care of the old man, carried his bags through Glasgow and tucked him safely in to bed before heading out again to find the closest Scottish pub.

We arrived in Fort William to a beautiful day. The plan had been to get our food shopping done, get breakfast and walk in to camp next to the CIC hut at the base of the North Face of Ben Nevis, however after eating breakfast and a very long discussion, we decided it would be best to spend the night in town and walk in early the next morning. This was probably a good thing, as the walk-in took a lot longer than I thought it would.

I have only ever walked in to The Ben with a light daypack and in good conditions. This year the snow line was very low down and carrying heavy packs, with all our kit for a week, and wind and rain, by the time we got to the CIC hut we were exhausted.

The CIC Hut is owned by the Scottish Mountain Club and was very well kitted out; however it is usually booked up a year in advance, and very difficult to actually make contact with the hut custodian to make a booking. Hence we opted for camping next to the Hut. In hindsight I would rather do the long walk-in every day with a light daypack. Camping in winter in Scotland is just miserable; everything is permanently cold and wet.

Luckily, as the weather was so foul, quite a few people did not show up for their booking and the kind people who had booked out the hut allowed us to take refuge in the hut. I think if we had not been afforded this luxury, we may quite well have walked out earlier than we did. It made such a difference being able to get our clothes dry around the fire place.

Weather conditions in Scotland this season have been awful; there has been a huge amount of snow and no thaw/freeze cycles, which means that there are huge cornices over the top of routes, avalanche danger is very high and snow has not consolidated into hard neve to make for good climbing. Options you are left with are ridgelines and some mixed routes.

We opted for Tower Ridge, an absolute five star classic that goes at Scottish Grade IV/3. The route is 1000m long, very committing but individual moves are not particularly hard.

Last year I did Tower Ridge in perfect conditions, blue skies and we topped out by midday; at a guess it had taken about six hours hut to hut.

This year things proved to be very different. As I had done the route before I wanted to solo it, it was well within my comfort zone and I had the secure knowledge that I could always rope up with the others if I felt the need. Cesar and Trevor then pitched sections they felt necessary and simul climbed the rest. We started out as the fourth party on the route; earlier on two other teams went off route so we passed them. Pro's of a party is that they break trail for you making the going easier for you but con's are you have to wait for them. The snow was deep and slushy which made going painfully slow.



Colin McCoy soloing the Tower Ridge Route

Photo by Cesar de Carvalho

One of the great things about Scottish winter climbing is the number of different techniques you need to pull out the bag, both from a movement perspective i.e. climbing rock sections in crampons, torquing axes in cracks, plunging axes into deep snow etc. as well as from a technical skills perspective i.e. simul climbing, placing rock and ice gear, belaying off an ice axe or dead boy, abseiling off a snow bollard etc. High up on the route on a section called the Eastern Traverse the party in front were looking a bit uneasy, it's quite balancy and if you come off, it is a very, very long way down. This got me second guessing myself not being roped up so I made the decision to tie in and take the lead on this section. Once moving it was actually quite easy and I was kicking myself for not carrying on with the solo, but I am glad that I made that judgment call, sometimes you just have to listen to your gut.

After the eastern traverse you get on to a knife-edge ridge, on a good day you get the most spectacular photos, where you need to then cross Tower Gap. This usually involves down climbing about five meters, crossing the gap and heading up a

steep section of mixed climbing. With the build-up of snow we decided to abseil the five meters into the gap. The short mixed section was now a soft powder section and proved to be our crux of the route. Once through it was fairly easy, soft snow to the top. I think it was around 17:30 when we topped out, none of the normal descent gullies were safe to go down so we had to walk around via a path called The Red Burn. We stumbled into the CIC just after 21:00.



Trevor and Colin climbing below The Tower

Photo by Cesar de Carvalho

Some people skiing, a few parties on Tower Ridge. The majority of people were heading up Ledge Route and we joined the queue on The Curtain, 3 pitches, grade IV/5.

Finally our turn came at about 14:30. Cesar took the first pitch, moderate climbing but quite nervy, as there were only one, maybe two, pieces of gear in the 40m pitch. As it was getting late in the day, what little hard snow there was, was melting fast. I took the next pitch, a lot steeper than the first, I managed to place a few screws on the pitch but I doubt they would have held a fall. Comforting though, to see my rope below clipped into something. By the end of the pitch my nerves were finished and I was glad to clip into a solid belay.

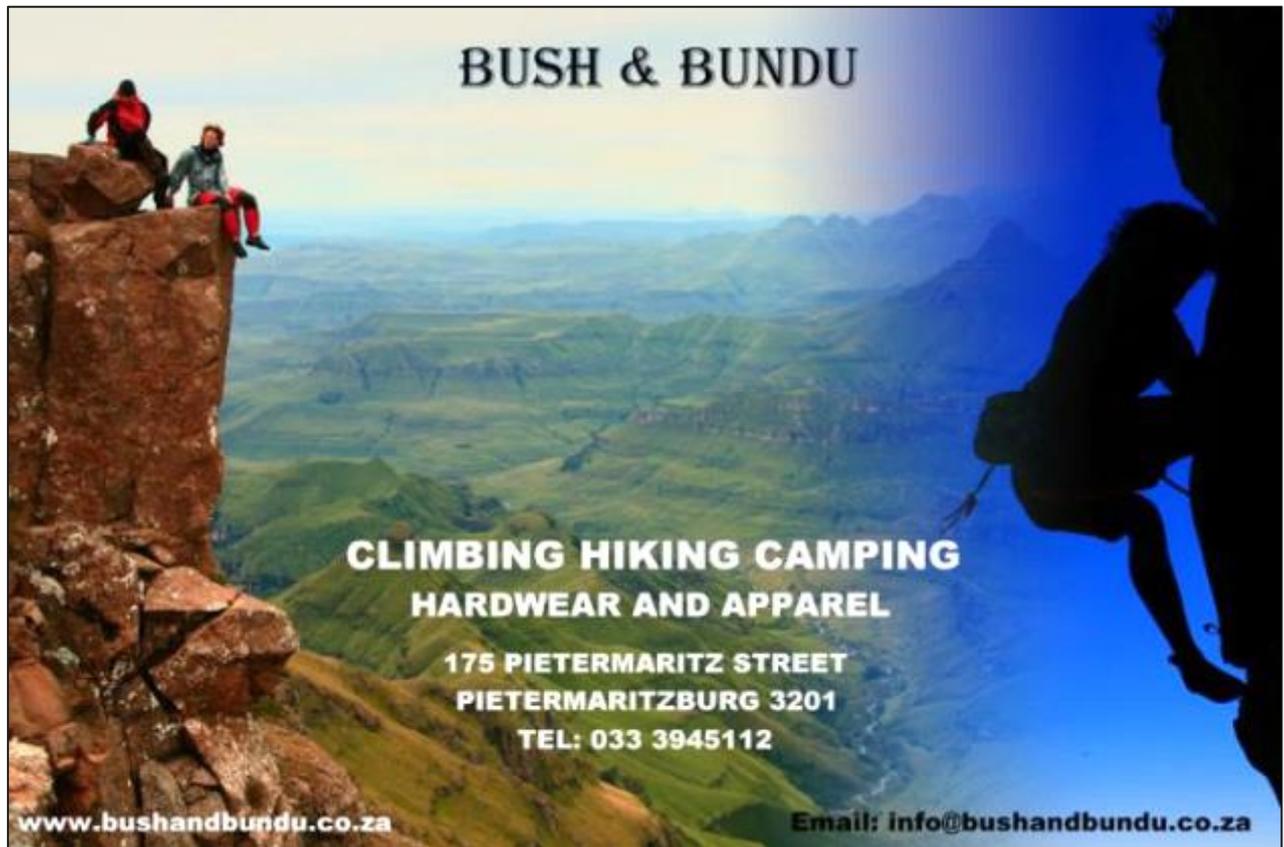
The wind was starting to pick up and it was getting late, I really was not looking forward to another walk down in the dark. As we were alternating leads I was glad that Cesar had the next one...but then he got to the belay with frozen hands due to a minor glove management error, and I needed to take the sharp end again. OK, need to move fast now, we quickly sorted the ropes and I set off, hesitantly, I climbed up and right very tentatively, not much to get any purchase on.... nerves finished, it's windy, it's getting late, this is a pile of frozen weetbix, I can still down climb back to Cesar at the solid belay...and so I did. We sorted the ropes again quickly and 60m of abseiling later, we were back safely on the ground and back at the CIC hut before dark...no epic, good call to back off.

The next day we woke to strong wind and rain, no point in hanging around in the cold and wet, the pub and a warm shower were calling. Three hours later we were back in Fort William, clean warm and dry. We had one more day to spare before heading back to London, so we caught the bus down to Glen Coe to have lunch at the Clachaig Inn, a very cool small pub with climbing memorabilia scattered all over the walls, a must visit if you're ever in the area and have time to spare. Trevor was able to sample some real Haggis and Cesar wandered the surrounding area for a couple of hours taking photos of who knows what....

The next day Trevor opted not to climb, so Cesar and I decided to do something else close by. It was a clear day, great climbing weather but just such poor snow conditions. Something that has always amazed me when climbing abroad is just how many people are out there in the mountains. Mid-week in winter on The Ben and a clear day, you can easily expect to see fifty people. There was probably nearly

that number on this day.

This trip had its ups and downs. It was disappointing that the conditions did not play game and we couldn't get much done, but we did tick one of Scotland's classic routes albeit a very out of condition classic route. And most importantly, I got to spend time out in the hills with my buddies, that's what it's all about after all, it doesn't matter what peaks you climb or what routes you tick, it's about having fun in the hills with your mates.



BUSH & BUNDU

**CLIMBING HIKING CAMPING
HARDWEAR AND APPAREL**

**175 PIETERMARITZ STREET
PIETERMARITZBURG 3201
TEL: 033 3945112**

www.bushandbundu.co.za **Email: info@bushandbundu.co.za**

THE GOLDEN JOURNEY TO SAMARKAND

by James Elroy Flecker

We are the Pilgrims, master; we shall go
Always a little further: it may be
Beyond that last blue mountain barred with snow,
Across that angry or that glimmering sea,

White on a throne or guarded in a cave
There lives a prophet who can understand
Why men were born: but surely we are brave,
Who take the Golden Road to Samarkand.

Sweet to ride forth at evening from the wells
When shadows pass gigantic on the sand,
And softly through the silence beat the bells
Along the Golden Road to Samarkand.

We travel not for trafficking alone;
By hotter winds our fiery hearts are fanned:
For lust of knowing what should not be known
We make the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

CONTACT LIST – MCSA KZN COMMITTEE 2014 - 2015

Name	Home No.	Work No.	Cell No.	Email
President James Voortman			082 466 1731	mcsakzn.president@gmail.com jamesv@icon.co.za
Hon. Secretary Dan Ryding	031 764 0685		076 819 2486	mcsakzn.secretary@gmail.com dan.ryding@virgin.net
Hon. Treasurer Beth McLeod	031 764 1991		082 820 1100	mcsakzn.treasurer@gmail.com mcbeth@iafrica.com
Rescue Convenor Gavin Raubenheimer	033 343 3168	033 343 3168	082 990 5876	mcsakzn.rescue@gmail.com gavin@peakhigh.co.za
Rock Climbing & Mountaineering Murray Sanders	033 701 1772		082 568 5178	mcsakzn.climb@gmail.com murraymsanders@yahoo.com
Sport Climbing Murray Sanders	033 701 1772		082 568 5178	mcsakzn.sport@gmail.com murraymsanders@yahoo.com
Hiking Iona Stewart	033 330 4942		082 990 3968	mcsakzn.hiking@gmail.com iona@sai.co.za
Meets Convenor James Voortman			082 466 1731	mcsakzn.meets@gmail.com jamesv@icon.co.za
Access Murray Sanders	033 701 1772		082 568 5178	mcsakzn.access@gmail.com murraymsanders@yahoo.com
Conservation Jan Phelan	033 330 2948		082 876 0003	mcsakzn.conservation@gmail.com mwplanit@mweb.co.za
Administrator Anne Rodwell	031 767 2038		073 174 8369	faraway@chillibyte.com
PR & Durban Socials				mcsakzn.pro@gmail.com
Assistant PR Eric Penman	031 708 3553		079 936 7666	ericpenman1940@gmail.com
July Camp Rikki Abbott Wedderburn	033 239 2374		082 538 5389	ronwedd@netactive.co.za
Cambalala Hut Clem Robins	031 783 4965		084 500 4666	clemrobins@ymail.com
Cambalala Bookings Alison Misselhorn	031 764 2692	031 260 8081	082 488 8391	misselhorna@gmail.com misselhorn@ukzn.ac.za
Webmaster Dan Ryding	031 764 0685		076 819 2486	mcsakzn.webmaster@gmail.com dan.ryding@virgin.net
Newsletter Editor				
Maritzburg Socials Ian Bailey	(h) 033 345 7501	Fax: 033 345 7501	083 269 6201	ianbailey@telkomsa.net
Mountain Rescue KwaZulu-Natal	082 990 5877 / 10177 (in KZN) / Toll Free: 0800 005 133			
Drakensberg – 5 day weather forecast	082 231 1602			
MCSA - KZN Section Website http://kzn.mcsa.org.za			MCSA (National) Website www.mcsa.org.za	