ANCHORS AWAY!
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BALLYKEEFE MEET
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GRAVITY CLIMBING CENTRE
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Gravity Climbing Centre opened in November 2011 and since then many IMC members have visited.

MOURE MEET
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CHECK YOUR HARNESS KNOT
A coroner has ruled that David Rothman died because he did not tie into his harness properly.

NOEL WALSH
Noel Walsh sadly passed away earlier this year.

Jim Sheehan pays tribute to his memory.
The UIAA Safety commission has issued an “extreme caution update” of its corrosion notice for anchors in marine locations having discovered that bolts can fail in less than one year.

The initial study found that up to 20 percent of anchors in more extreme locations such as a tropical and marine environments are at risk. Of course, fixed anchors in other locations can also be subject to corrosive degradation. The problem of environmental degradation of anchors caused both by general corrosion as well as chloride stress corrosion cracking (SCC) remains the subject of ongoing study by the UIAA.

There has always been some risk of anchor failure due to improper installation, corrosion, or stress corrosion cracking (SCC). What is new is that we have a better understanding of the underlying science and mechanisms behind some of these failures.

It has been found that in cases where certain ranges of humidity exist, salt deposits on some types of stainless steel can cause chloride stress corrosion cracking much faster than expected, in some cases within a year of exposure. The affected anchors do not always show any visible signs before their often sudden and potentially disastrous, failure. These factors were not always appreciated before.

Additionally, there are the usual corrosion problems caused by improper installation (such as using two dissimilar metals next to each other thereby causing galvanic corrosion) that can result in crevice corrosion and general/bulk corrosion.

Improved standards

Improved standards for anchors must take into account the possibility of stress corrosion cracking on top of rock type, anchor placement and other factors.

The UIAA Safety Commission has a Working Group looking at ways to address these issues but it is not an easy problem to solve. It is difficult to determine which locations are at risk due to chloride stress corrosion cracking.

Many factors affect this, such as distance from the sea (or other source of salt), rainfall, humidity, temperature, wind conditions etc. It should be noted that corrosion issues can be just as serious as stress corrosion cracking.

Both factors must be considered when selecting a suitable anchor. It could be argued that the issue of corrosion, particularly crevice corrosion, is more prevalent than stress corrosion cracking and should be considered a higher priority. However the aim of the UIAA Safety Commission is to work towards an overall solution to the entire issue of environmental degradation (i.e. corrosion as well as stress corrosion cracking).

Recommendations

The UIAA Safety Commission’s warning from October 2009 is still in effect. Climbers may manage the risk of corrosion degradation by:
• Talking to local climbers and the people who equipped the routes to determine the quality of the anchors in place.

• Finding out if a climbing area is regularly re-equipped. If anchors are less than three years old, they are less likely to be weakened by corrosion.

• Looking for traces of rust on anchors. If you see such marks, do not load the anchor, and stop the climb, as it is just these sorts of anchors that have been found to be dangerous in the study. Alert locals so they can deal with the situation. If appropriate, you can also replace the weakened anchor if you have the expertise and competence to do so.

• Opting to not climb on routes in tropical, marine environments that show rust, or for which you don’t know who maintains the routes or when the equipment was put in place.

This warning are based on the fundamental assumption that the climber must evaluate the quality of anchors in place and accept the risk of anchor failure due to corrosion. Climbing anchors are not generally installed for any specified lifetime. There is usually no managed system of inspection and replacement throughout their lifetime. It is important to note that all equipment eventually wears and anchors are no exception.

[This article is an edited version of one from the UIAA Safety Commission Working Group and available on the MI website. See also theuiaa.org/index.php]
On a cold and drizzly morning, in the last days of spring, a small party from the Irish Mountaineering Club headed south to the ancient kingdom of Ossory. An Amphitheatre, located beneath Ballykeefe Wood and Nature Reserve, would set the scene, not for a Rock concert, but for a day of adrenaline-fuelled rock climbing.

Our group, of about ten hardy souls, consisted of experienced volunteers alongside enthusiastic newcomers. For the newcomers, myself included, it was an opportunity to sample a new location, a new rock and a new type of climbing than had already been experienced.

The Ballykeefe Amphitheatre is located near the small village of Ballycallan, which is about 12 km from Kilkenny on the Ballycallan/Kilmanagh road. The small car park next to the main entrance of the Amphitheatre is intended for access to the wood, but is also a suitable place to park for climbing.

On that morning, we congregated in a small desolate car park, while we awaited the appointed hour, fearful of what was before us. At around half past ten on that spring morning, we found an opening through the bushes, and with a decisive short trek we were standing in front of what was to be our days challenge.

The Ballykeefe quarry is south facing and sheltered, giving it a very localized micro-climate that is warmer than it's...
surrounding environment, especially from autumn to spring, attributable to the low declination of the sun around this time of the year. This south facing perspective allows the rock to dry very quickly after rain. On this particular day, a cold, icy wind blew through the quarry that dampened its normal sunny disposition, but the rain stayed well away and the rock was dry.

The rock in Ballykeefe is an organic sedimentary rock called wackestone. This is a type of carboniferous limestone that was gradually formed by layers of sediment containing ancient living creatures, now long dead, that under compression, formed solid rock over millions of years. Carboniferous limestone was formed around 300 million years ago, on a planet without man. This was the era of the reptile, whose brain, after many millions of years, we have inherited to control our vital functions. Those vital functions, such as heart rate, breathing and balance, will be severely tested as the day goes on.

When local adventurers tried to extend their climbing at the quarry, they suddenly came up against a large metaphorical brick wall, which could have seriously curtail the range of climbing that this great amenity had the potentiality to offer.

The obstacle that they faced was a scarcity of secure places to insert temporary protection. Temporary protection is used in traditional rock climbing to provide a certain level of safety and is normally used as part of a buddy system, where one climber leads the climb, placing temporary protection in the rock, while a second climber follows removing that protection.
Today’s climbers, unlike their reptilian ancestors, have evolved a brain capable of abstract thought and imagination. That imagination gives us the ability to see things not currently possible, such as climbing unconquerable routes through improvisation.

An example of such improvisation occurred when the same local climbers, using a combination of imagination and reasoning, hit on the idea of adding permanent bolts to the rock. It is due to the ingenuity of these few pioneers that we have the closest thing to sport climbing in Ireland.

It should be noted though, that the bolts were placed there for the climber’s own use, as a workaround to the scarcity of places to secure temporary protection. In other words, use these bolts at your own risk.

Our first warm-up climb of the day was to be in a section of the quarry with the rather un-grandiose title ‘Left Pigs Wall’, on a route named the ‘Bishop’s Nose’. This is a seven-metre climb, graded as ‘Severe’, where the most technical move is rated as a ‘4a’. This route is a good introduction to the flavour of sport climbing, in that it has no place for gear protection, but it does have three of those permanent bolts that was mentioned earlier. Again, remember what I said about using the bolts at your own risk!

Now, as a newcomer to the adventure of rock climbing you notice things that a seasoned climber might take for granted. You have a type of beginners mind – one that is open, receptive and curious. When I’m climbing, I am curious about the forces that would be working for or against me.
Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that there is a fierce battle going on between the climber and a relentless force called gravity. Losing this engagement can put your very existence at stake.

Back in the seventeenth century there was a bright young chap who idled away his time by sitting under trees, with a particular fondness for apples. While pondering life, the universe, and everything, he discovered the notion of gravity – a force that pulls objects towards each other. With careful observation, he discovered that as things fell to the earth, their speed increased at a constant rate of about ten metres per second, every second. Remarkably, this constant of acceleration remained the same whether it was a pair of climbing boots or a large boulder that was falling, which basically meant that cutting back on chocolates and cheesecake to lose weight, was going to be of no benefit to you at all, as you would still fall at the same speed.

The first route that we climbed was only seven metres high, which is quite short as rock-climbing routes go. However, were you to fall from the top of this seven-metre route, it would take just a little over one second to reach the ground where you would be travelling at a speed of around 42 km/h on impact. This is a rather sobering thought, though being attached to a rope, with a competent and alert belayer on the other end, does minimize the chances of hitting the deck in such a dramatic fashion.

At the top of the Bishop’s Nose, an abseil point was established to facilitate the efficient, but luckily not too efficient, descent to the ground. The culmination of my climb had to be a ‘Very Severe’ graded route called “Oggy and the Cockroches”, which might be best described as a V-shaped recess, where, indeed, cockroaches, along with spiders and other shy little creatures might happily reside in abundance.
The saunter up this rock consisted of some interesting contorted, and nerve-racking gymnastics that pushed me beyond the boundaries of my comfort zone.

When pushing through physical and mental limits, with an accompanying high degree of risk, something happens. You enter a hyper-attentive state where the self and ego fall away, and the present is all there is. This is a state where you and the climb become one. It is best described as a Zen-like presence of being in the moment – no past, no future, just the present.

Towards the evening, a party of non-climbers were arriving for a barbeque. The aroma of burgers and sausages was a very enticing smell to a group of climbers who were now very tired and cold. We briefly considered gate crashing the event, but by this time were too tired to even manage doing that and so we decided to head for home.

A day filled with exciting climbing in a new location with like-minded souls made this a very enjoyable and unforgettable experience.
Gravity Climbing Centre

Gravity Climbing Centre opened in November 2011 and since then many IMC members have visited.

When we first announced that our centre would only provide bouldering people thought we were mad! Most climbers in Dublin have only experienced indoor bouldering at a centre that is primarily intended for roped climbing with the bouldering section tacked on as a bit of an afterthought. In the limited space left over most bouldering areas were designed to provide what the roped climbing area did not - a really overhanging and difficult wall good for strenuous training. This is far too demanding for most climbers to enjoy and nearly impossible for beginners. We believed that a bouldering wall which offered a good range of angles and plenty of easy problems would have a much broader appeal. That is why half of our centre’s climbing surface is on vertical or slab walls and why we always have at least two circuits with 25 problems under Font 6a. We try to set problems which are technically demanding, rather than just physically hard, to help our climbers hone their balance, footwork and route-reading; this is better preparation for outdoor climbing than just trying to pull up a steep overhang.

We love the simplicity of bouldering, how little equipment is needed, how time is not wasted setting up and how you do not need to organise a climbing partner in advance. We found that a bouldering centre works really well for people who are new to the sport because they can experience climbing with a minimal investment of time and money. If they enjoy climbing they can learn technique now and invest in a harness, rope and rack later. While the progression from plastic to rock can still be a difficult one, the movement skills learned on a bouldering wall are helpful in any climbing situation.

Many climbers tell us that they use an indoor climbing wall only to build fitness and stamina for climbing outdoors and they do not see how bouldering is of any help. As someone whose trad grade has really improved after a winter in Gravity let me explain how bouldering can benefit your trad climbing. Let us say that you are going to a wall because you would like to climb at Fair Head. You have heard that the climbing there is steep and sustained and the pitches are quite long and you are worried about having the stamina to complete them. How on earth is training in a bouldering wall going to help? Would you not be better doing lots of routes to improve stamina?

Think about how much time you spend between routes, tying in and belaying (and chatting to your climbing partner!) This gives you a lot of time to rest; you probably climb for 8 to 10 metres and then rest for 5 to 10 minutes. Over a 3 hour session you probably spend well under an hour actually climbing. By completing all the problems back-to-back on one of the easier circuits you can get a better stamina workout. For even better results climb back down and traverse between problems using all the holds available so that you stay on the wall and do not get any chance to recover!

Climbing a high volume of relatively easy routes to develop stamina leaves you unaccustomed to climbing close to your limit. If you have spent a bit of time on the wall climbing harder routes you will build up more power, as well as stamina, so the moves should feel a bit easier by comparison and you will not get pumped so quickly. You will gain confidence from knowing that you have made similar moves on the wall, used equally bad smears for your feet,
bridged up similarly awkward corners or pulled through a couple of metres of steep climbing. We cannot prepare you for jamming cracks but we can help with the rest.

Bouldering is very sociable. Many people come on their own to our centre and they tell us that they love the friendly atmosphere and that they receive so much encouragement and advice from their fellow climbers.

Gravity offers drop-in coaching for adults on Monday evenings from 7.30pm to 9.30pm (suitable for beginners up to French 6a) and we can arrange coaching for IMC groups of 6 or more on most evenings. Both are free of charge; just pay your normal entry fee. For more personal coaching we offer 1:1’s and small group sessions looking at specific aspects of climbing technique. Contact the centre at gravityclimbingcentre@gmail.com or call (01)7078585 for more information.

Angela Carlin is a FUNdamentals climbing coaching certified trainer and has worked previously for both Tollymore Mountain Centre and Mountaineering Ireland. She established the Irish National Lead Climbing and Bouldering Competitions. She has also been instrumental in many youth and women’s climbing events and various other rock climbing meets.
Eighteen climbers made the two-hour journey north, from Dublin, to County Down, for the IMC Summer Mourne Mountains weekend meet.

Starting at Meelmore lodge car park, at about half past ten in the morning, we trekked for about an hour until we eventually arrived at the Beenagh slabs. The walk in to the slabs is through an area of such natural beauty that it was designated, quite obviously, as an area of outstanding natural beauty.

The first notable feature near the climbing slabs is a 35 kilometres dry-stone wall that crosses fifteen summits, and resembles a scaled down version of the Great Wall of China. The wall was started in 1904 and completed in 1922. It’s purpose being to define the boundaries of a 36 square kilometre area of land used by the Belfast water commission to quench the thirst of Northern Ireland’s capital. Today, it also serves as a remarkable recreational hiking feature.

The Beenagh slabs are made from the same granite that forms the Mourne Mountains. This granite was formed around 60 million years ago, at about the same time that the Dinosaurs had overstayd their welcome. It was also about 58 million years before the first Homo erectus had decided to come out of the closet and produce descendants that pursued pointless activities, such as rock climbing. Though some non-climbing Ape-descendants would question whether that was really such a good move and maybe we would be better off still in the trees swinging from the branches. But here we are, just the same, climbing rocks instead of trees and doing the occasional mid-air swing like our hairy ancestors.
The Mourne granite has a different feel to that in Dalkey, having much more friction, making it ideal for footwork, like smearing. Though, I must confess that my favourite rock is still the much older limestone of the Burren, but that’s another story. That preference may change, as my climbing experience evolves.

One of the other benefits of Rock climbing is that you start to take notice of what is around you. I mean, really take notice of everything within your vicinity. You begin to start noticing the texture of the rock; how solid it is; it's composition; and even it's colour. You begin to notice the weather, the type of clouds, and their direction.

Pick up a book on geology or meteorology, and you can learn about all this stuff. But to be holding on to the side of a cliff face, with your life or well being in the balance, adds a new sense of reality and personal relationship with the environment.

The local people that we met, both climbing in the mountains and in the town of Newcastle, were very friendly and welcoming - great ambassadors for their region.

Some local climbers had set up a 60-metre abseil static rope, which they kindly allowed us to use. Though, I could swear that it had a bowline knot earlier in the day, which then became a figure-of-eight. Hmm.

The bowline, often referred to as the ‘King of Knots’, is an ancient and simple knot used to stop ropes running out of retaining devices. It’s virtue being that it’s easy to tie and untie. But it does have a tendency to work loose when not under load. Variations and additions on the bowline can address this deficiency. However, rock climbers tend to favour the figure-of-eight as it doesn’t undo itself as easily, but this extra safety makes it more awkward to untie at the end of the day.

Another pair of local climbers had a lovely black shiny Labrador dog with them. Now, around the same time that the Mourne Mountains were being formed, a dog was a human, or more precisely, along with other mammals, it shared the same common
We all enjoyed his keen to take on the first pitch. Truly, I tell you, the black dog was standing on the first pitch looking up at its masters ascending to the heavens. Either the dog didn’t have the climbing skills to continue on further or it had more sense. I fear the latter may be true.

From what I could see, the dog had soloed the first pitch. Truly, I tell you, the black dog was standing on the first pitch looking up at its masters ascending to the heavens. Either the dog didn’t have the climbing skills to continue on further or it had more sense. I fear the latter may be true.

The routes were so popular that we had to form orderly queues to gain access to them. In fairness, this was mainly caused by our large presence. Speaking with local climbers, it became clear that these crags normally see very little climbing activity. From what I gathered, the locals enjoyed this unusually large crowd of enthusiastic climbers.

The first route that we climbed was a variation on a popular route called ‘Grand Central’. It started out about four metres to the right of the route as a VDif and finished about four metres to the left on a route called ‘Crooked Chimney’ as a HS. I believe there might even have been a HVS traverse somewhere in the middle. This traverse really tested my faith in my new climbing shoes. I am glad to report that I am quickly becoming a convert to this new shoe.

We then climbed the real ‘Grand Central’ route in about three pitches; though the guidebook mentions five. It’s no wonder that this route is so popular. It is a lovely route to climb, with a total vertical ascent of 70 m, and graded as a VDif. To give it some perspective, it is like climbing a different variation of ‘Paradise Lost’ in Dalkey four times over. Though, I would think that it might be rated a bit low, and rather should really be as an ‘S’ grade.

Other routes that were climbed included: Directissima (S), Zen (E1), Crooked Chimney (HS), and Hypothesis (S). For a description of these routes and other climbs in the Mourne Mountains, I would direct you to a very fine guidebook called ‘Rocks Climbs in the Mourne Mountains’.
The days climbing finished in the evening around seven o’clock, when the group split to return home; camp at Meelmore; or stay in a fine hostel in Newcastle, called the Newcastle hostel. Five others and myself shared a six-bed dorm in the hostel. The hostel itself is in an ideal location, overlooking the promenade. It was very clean and tidy with a very well equipped kitchen and dining area. The seaside town of Newcastle was bustling with tourists on Saturday night and had a friendly and vibrant feel about the place.

On Sunday, it was Pigeon Rock for us, but unfortunately, the weather had become very windy and the rock damp. That was a pity, for what better way to spend a Sunday than out having fun and appreciating a masterpiece of geological evolution. Not to mention the rapture of an almighty adrenaline rush.

Some braved it, but the rest of us headed home and some even went on to Dalkey.

Overall, this was a very enjoyable weekend with some great climbing in an area of outstanding natural beauty. Being less than two hours drive from Dublin, it is a feasible alternative to Glendalough, as a daytrip. For staying overnight, the Meelmore camping site and café is well located with friendly staff. If travelling on a Sunday, bring what you need, as most shops in the area seem to close for the Sabbath. A slight inconvenience, but it adds a dimension of quaintness and charm to the area.

There are lots more things to do here, than just climbing. I would love to come back here for a hiking and camping expedition.
Noel Walsh was born in Dublin in 1948, but he moved to Mitchelstown at an early age. He would claim to be a Cork man, and on occasion a Limerick or Tipperary man, given his upbringing near the boundary of the three counties.

His grandparents farmed at the foot of the Galtees in Anglesborough and it was here that he got his first taste of hill climbing and, indeed, the Galtees and the Mountain Lodge Hostel held a special place in his heart for the rest of his life.

He joined the Air Corps as an apprentice aircraft mechanic at Baldonnel and it was there that he developed an interest in gymnastics and an appreciation of precision engineering and technical manuals.

While working in Arklow, he joined the local rugby team and continued in that sport for many years as a hooker. He was also a keen sailor. But when he really wanted to unwind he would go off into the hills and camp in some remote spot, with just his radio and a ration of whisky and whatever convenient food he could rustle up.

Camping was to be his real passion. He loved the idea of being in the wilderness, whether alone or with like-minded friends, who were endlessly entertained by his jovial nature and infectious enthusiasm. He acquired a selection of tents and camping equipment, always chosen for their technical advantages, and never for style.
When Noel joined Club Cualann in 1999, he enthusiastically took to rock climbing, bringing both his gymnastic style and his technical approach to equipment and protection. He quickly progressed to leading and soon joined the IMC so that he could avail of the activities of both Clubs, in particular the trips to Norway for ice-climbing in Rjukan, a trip that he particularly enjoyed.

Noel's first trip to the Alps was with Tollymore, and climbed in the Chamonix area.

He also visited the Valais area of Switzerland in 2005 and climbed the Allalin Horn and Alphubel and explored the Grenzgletcher and did some rock climbing in the area too.
Another visit in 2008 saw him return to Chamonix for some rock climbing at Lac Galliand and Vallorcine and an ascent of the Index, before heading back to Zermatt to climb the Breithorn. His last trip was to the Brenta Dolomites where he did a number of via ferrata routes before moving to the Val di Fassa to climb the Marmolada.

It was after his 2009 trip to the Dolomites that he experienced difficulties with his limbs that were subsequently diagnosed as Motor Neuron Disease, but throughout he remained cheerful and optimistic and determined to be as involved as much as he could be in his outdoor pursuits and life in general.

He died peacefully in Galway University Hospital, surrounded by his wife and family.

Noel will be sadly missed and fondly remembered by all who knew him, whether in the IMC or Club Cualann or from chance meetings on hill or crag.

Noel is survived by his wife, Jess, his daughters, Amber and Heidi, and his grandson Eske and son-in-law Poul, to whom we extend our sympathy at their great loss.

_Ar dheis De go raibh a anam uasal._

_Jim Sheehan,
Club Cualann_

Noel travelled to Norway on the IMC Ice Climbing Meet for the past several years. We all enjoyed his company very much, both during the day on routes but most especially during the evenings when he shared a dram, the ice always being provided from his route of the day. Keen to take on whatever winter challenge Rjukan could provide Noel also took to skiing, even if his descent of a black run on one of our early trips was unintentional and gymnastic.

Despite being on crutches and unable to climb, Noel still joined us in Norway last year. His boundless good humour and interest greeting us each evening on our return from the ice. All of us who had the privilege of being a pal of Noel’s will miss him greatly whenever our axe touches Norwegian ice.

_RIP Noel_
_Declan Craig_
Part 1
“*It is all in the hips*”

Why is it that some climbers float with ease up a difficult climb, while others wobble on an easy route with no more co-ordination than an errant flip-flop? Jerry Moffatt said that everything he had achieved in climbing was not through natural talent but through hard work and dedication. We all have a genetic predisposition that determines many of our physical characteristics. However, sporting ability cannot be explained by genetics alone; it is ultimately a balance between what nature has given us and what nurture enhances or represses.

There is no magic formula for success. The best talents in the climbing world are not always the best athletes. Everyone, young or old, male or female, can overcome any handicap that they may have inherited, but only if they have the motivation, self-belief and the drive to succeed.

Before you can start improving as a climber it is useful to understand what the most talented climbers have in common:

- They are highly motivated.
- They have a wide repertoire of movements.
- They automatically select the correct movements and therefore make the fewest movement errors.
- They are able to focus and climb to the best of their abilities even in demanding situations.
• They find marginal rests that enable them to recover physically and mentally.

• Safety techniques are second nature.

• They are not recklessly bold. They are simply confident in their abilities to do the climb.

• They are very fit.

This is the first in a series of articles about the most powerful way you can influence your climbing performance - by improving your movement skills. **Improving your movement skills** Physically stronger novices may appear to have an advantage when they start climbing because they can power through difficult sections when technique fails them. The opposite is actually true. Novices lacking in physical strength have to develop good movement technique early on in order to climb steep routes; physical strength will come from frequent climbing.

Acquiring correct movement skills at the start of your climbing career will lay down a foundation enabling you to climb strenuous routes with efficiency. Every climber has a personal style; some are quick, some are more dynamic and others more static. A climber may have a different approach to indoor, sport, trad or bouldering.

There is no right or wrong way to climb; so be creative. The best way to discover movement is by self-discovery. Do not strive for perfection immediately. Instead develop your own style. Use good climbers as examples rather than limit your learning by trying to imitate them exactly.

There is no magic wand. It takes much time and practice to learn the range of movements required to be a good climber and to perform them automatically. It is a lifelong journey and the closer you get to your genetic potential the harder it is to improve. Your practice must also be relevant. Months spent bouldering may develop great movement technique but unless you practice the skills on real climbs where the movements must compete with the brains capacity to place gear, control fear and assess the route you will not improve your ability to climb real routes. Quality feedback is an essential element of learning which these articles cannot provide. As an aid to learning try to work with a partner and use a video camera

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### THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING GOOD MOVEMENT

- Your foot and body movements become more accurate
- Correct movements become more consistent
- Less energy is used
- You will be able to anticipate movements ahead
- Your confidence will grow
- You will climb harder routes with ease and in style
so that you can see where you are going wrong. It is even better to have the assistance of a talented instructor.

**Preparation for climbing**

I have just had an operation for a shoulder injury caused by using poor training techniques when I was younger and by failing to train the antagonistic muscles. Even today I see very few climbers either warming up or balancing the muscle groups when they train - this is a big mistake. Warming up is important. If you do not warm up your performance will be poorer and you may even suffer an injury.

Especially at risk are younger climbers because the tendons have not fully developed and also older climbers because the tendons and ligaments become more brittle with age. A warm up means literally that - the body should feel warm but not tired. A short spell of 5-10 minutes running on the spot, skipping, circling arms, star jumps or any other continuous, but gentle, movement will do. Of course, if you have just spent half an hour walking in to the crag you will have completed some of your warm up.

The next thing to do is move your joints. Joints produce a lubricant called ‘synovial fluid’ but only when they are moved and the joints dry out when stationary, so take them through their full range of movements (ROM), rotating slowly and in control. Start at the toes and move upwards increasing the range slowly. Then do some easy climbing to wake up the brain muscle links and concentrate on the movement techniques described later.

Stretching is not important at this stage because you can’t spend enough time to improve flexibility. Stretching should be kept for the end of a climbing session or a dedicated flexibility session.

**Post climbing**

At the end of a climbing session it is just as important to warm down by repeating the process outlined for warming up. Warming down removes toxins from the body that have built up during exercise and will help to reduce any aches and pains caused by stressing the muscles. Flexibility training can also be introduced at this point.

**Where to learn movement**

Climbing is an open skill; that is to say there is no one perfect way of climbing, unlike making a golf swing or tennis serve. When learning climbing movement you are trying to acquire rules for movement that the brain can select even under stress. Learning movement is best done in an environment where you feel safe and your subconscious can focus on what is being learned. It is slow and ineffective to try to learn movement while leading routes because the mind is too busy placing protection or coping with being scared. The best climbers practice on a variety of rock types, however climbing walls can be used effectively as long as you understand their disadvantages:

- The predictable style of climbing will improve your movement on climbing walls but not necessarily outdoors.
- Modern climbing walls rarely have the features found on outside climbs, such as jamming cracks, flakes, arêtes and corners.
- Moderately angled rock is effective for learning good technique for steep rock, but unfortunately learning to climb steep rock on steep walls is too tiring.
• Poor route setters often design routes so that the ‘ape index’ (the relationship between arm span and body height) is the limiting factor to success and reaching the top often depends more on your levels of strength and endurance than movement skills.

Spotting
Spotting is an essential skill for anyone learning movement. Spotters do not catch falling climbers; they steer them to the best landing, slow them down, and minimise the number of body parts hitting the ground.

Big people are the best spotters, but they are the hardest to spot; consider using two spotters if the climber is large.

When positioned correctly bouldering mats can help prevent injury but they may tempt you to climb higher.

On steep problems, grab the climber’s hips and steer them to a feet first landing, but do not grab them too low causing them to topple backwards.

When the boulder problem is overhanging it is more effective to grab the sides of the climber’s back just below the armpits and swing them back to a feet first landing. The falling climber must try to keep their limbs relaxed and land feet first.
Advice for Spotting

- Stop finger injuries
  Do not wear a climbing harness when bouldering
- Remove jewellery
- Stand in a karate or boxing stance, braced, reading to support a falling climber
- Keep your arms at the ready, not by your side
- Keep your arms close to the climber
- Keep your fingers together so

It’s all in the hips!
To become a good rock climber you must first learn to dance. Ask most climbers what is the most important part of the body for climbing and most will answer legs or feet. In reality you have four limbs equally capable of pushing and pulling, but it is your hips that allow you to position all the other parts so that you can use them effectively.

If you only have the time to improve flexibility in one part of your body then make it your hips.

The main function of your arms and fingers is to hold your body in position while your hips place your centre of gravity (COG) in the best position for your legs and feet to push you up the cliff.

To free a limb to move easily you must first put your centre of gravity (COG) in a balanced position that you can hold (1,2), lift the now free leg (3) and then transfer your COG over the new foot placement (4).

On easier angled climbs keep your hips out from the rock and do not stretch for hand holds - use your feet to gain height!
**Centre of Gravity (COG)**
The exact position of your centre of gravity depends on your build. The COG is about one inch above the navel in adult males and slightly lower in women. Differences in the position of your COG and the length of your limbs mean that everyone has a unique way of climbing. This is why it is difficult to teach someone to climb by forcing them to use particular holds that may not suit their body shape. Climbing is about allowing the rock to dictate the movements you make and not the other way round.

Photo 87 When it is difficult to move your hips you can use your hand to act like a third leg and push downwards. This will free the leg to move. Climber Stefan Doerr.

**General hip exercises**
Follow these exercises to help you become aware of your body. Get a partner or use a video camera; it is the only way to tell if you have mastered something.

- **Move your hips** - Get on the wall and try to take each limb off while adjusting your hips to stay in balance. Then try two limbs.

- **Use a balance beam**
  Try it 0.5m off the ground - bend, twist, turn sideways, dip your upper body and move your hips around. Experiment by using your leg like an outrigger, forwards, backwards and sideways. Close your eyes and feel the pressure in your legs and feet.

- **Climb smoothly**
  If you are snatching for footholds or handholds have you successfully transferred your COG and found the most stable position for your body? Compare climbing slowly and gracefully like a ballerina with climbing like a gorilla.

- **Study the rock** - Design your own boulder problems. Mark the holds with a stick of chalk and let your partner try it.
• Overextending/overstretching
  Novices stretch to reach the largest handholds with the result that they become overextended, cannot see their feet and cannot move without hanging on. Imagine there is a line drawn at head height. Climb without taking your hands above the line. This will force you to use your feet and avoid overstretching. Or try moving your feet twice before your hands. Notice how moving the feet higher enables you to reach further. Your body may end up in the ‘frog’ position or you will discover turning sideways.

In the next issue I will focus on using your feet and hands imaginatively.

**Alun Richardson is the Training Officer for Mountaineering Ireland and an IFMGA Mountain Guide. He is author of “Rock Climbing for Instructors” and “Mountaineering” both available from the MI web site.**

Squat and use your legs to push rather than pull with your arms.

1 Shift your COG.

2 Squat and straighten your arms.

3 Place the foot onto a new foot hold.

4 Drive upwards with the lower leg.
Scrambling Guide
by
Sé O’Hanlon

A list of the separate mountains of Ireland over 2000 feet was first compiled by Rev. C.P. Vandeleur who died in 1963. The late Joss Lynam created a revised list which was included in Claud Wall’s “Mountaineering in Ireland” (2nd edition) 1976. The mountains in the revised list are known as the Vandeleur-Lynams.

Mountaineering Ireland has decided to publish a hillwalking guide to the Vandeleur-Lynams in a similar style to the Scottish guidebooks to the Munros and Corbetts. The MI publication is intended as a tribute to Joss.

One of our members, John Forsythe (a non-follower of the herd and long may he remain so!) has come up with another idea for the IMC to carry out as a continuation of Joss’ work.

John has noticed that there are scrambling guides for Wales and Scotland but none for Ireland. He suggests that if a whole-hearted programme were mounted by club members over two winters (fallow for rock-climbing) plus intervening summers an Irish scrambling guide could be a reality by 2013/14.

A scrambling guidebook may be a most apt memorial to Joss who was noted for his route-finding ability on mixed ground. John is a retired rock-climber who has walked the hills in every part of Ireland and would be only too happy to advise on the contents.

This sounds like a very good idea and could be the inspiration for very interesting meets in every mountain area in the country. The IMC might have the funds to publish a guide ourselves or we could discuss publication and distribution with Cicerone or Mountaineering Ireland.

This article will be published on the Forum on the IMC website and you are invited to comment there and indicate if you believe that this is a worthwhile project and or if you feel you can contribute in some way to an Irish scrambling guide.

First All Disabled Ascent of El Capitan

Craig DeMartino, Pete Davis, and Jarem Frye made the first all disabled ascent of Yosemite Valley’s El Capitan on 9th June 2012. They spent five days and four nights on Zodiac a 16-pitch route.

DeMartino had part of his right leg amputated after surviving a 100-foot fall in 2002. Since then, he has climbed El Capitan three times. He was the first amputee to make a one-day ascent of El Cap on Lurking Fear in 2006 and last year became the first amputee to climb the Nose in a day.

DeMartino and Frye made an attempt it last June but had to stop when Frye broke his prosthetic leg. Frye lost his leg to cancer at a young age. They both climb with prosthetic limbs specially designed for rock climbing. Davis was born with a congenital amputation and climbs with only one arm.

For the rest see http://www.climbing.com/news/hotflashes/el_capitan_sees_first_
Joss Lynam Bequest

The IMC has received a bequest of €7,500 from the estate of the late Joss Lynam “for the philanthropic purposes of that organisation in Ireland”.

The IMC committee and membership are very touched by Joss’s generosity. Stephen Peel, IMC Secretary, has written to Ruth Lynam, administrator of the will, in appreciation of this gift. The committee invites members to submit suggestions as to a suitable and appropriate use of these funds consistent with the objectives of the IMC in the promotion and development of mountaineering as a sport.

Please contact the Secretary with your proposals.
The IMC Committee has sought advice and drawn up a formal procedure for members who wish to apply for the grant of funding for expeditions to the greater ranges.

This procedure replaces the informal procedure that has been used in the past. The new expedition grant application procedure is an interim decision by the IMC Committee, valid for this year. It will require ratification at the AGM and members are invited to propose improvements.

The IMC has given grants to members of expeditions for at least the last 12 years and probably much longer. The IMC grant aided club expeditions to India in 2000 and 2008 and private expeditions with IMC members to India in 2008 and Greenland in 2010.

Over the last year an attempt has been made to create a more open and transparent procedure for the granting of club funds. This new grant application process means decision making will become more independent of the IMC committee.

Development of the Policy
The current phase of policy development began with a meeting of the IMC committee in September 2011 when Gerry Galligan, Chairperson, raised the issue. Stephen Peel, Secretary, was asked to contact Paddy O’Leary and Kieran Kelly and invite them to form a subcommittee to create a club policy for the funding of expeditions.

The IMC committee meeting of 17th November 2011 was told that Paddy O’Leary and Kieran Kelly had agreed to act as a policy development subcommittee. They were asked to develop a policy governing the provision of grants to expeditions involving Club members by 31st March 2012.

At the AGM of the IMC on 17th November 2011 Terry O’Neill asked about grant applications. Edwige Ducher, Training Officer, explained that Mountaineering Ireland training grants could be applied for through the IMC and that further details about MI grants are on the MI website. Expedition and training grants could also be obtained directly from the IMC.

Terry O’Neill pointed out that there was no information freely available to members about the possibility of the Club giving grant aid to IMC members of expeditions and he asked that this deficiency be corrected.

It was stated that the club is currently in the process of setting up a subcommittee to establish criteria by which the club should assess applications and allocate grants.

Tony Barry, Library Officer, then said that in the meantime the IMC committee would
consider all applications for funding made to it. Paddy O’Leary and Kieran Kelly submitted their draft policy recommendations on 26th March 2012. The draft policy was then circulated to all IMC committee members.

The draft policy was discussed at the IMC committee meeting on 2nd May 2012 and accepted without amendment. It was agreed that each grant application would be considered by a panel of five persons. It was accepted that the amount of any grant would depend on the disposable funds available to the Club at the time.

It was decided to ask Lloyd Moore, Treasurer, to recommend a budget for the totality all applications. Kieran Kelly and Paddy O’Leary were asked to suggest a maximum percentage of the costs of an expedition as a limit for each grant.

Membership of the Expedition Grant Panel was discussed at the IMC committee meeting on 11th June 2012. Sé O’Hanlon, Hut Warden, circulated a list of IMC members who might be suitable and available to act on the panel.

The committee selected the membership of the panel. The committee agreed that the panel should select one of its members to act a convener. The committee also agreed to pay the necessary travel expenses of panel members.

Criteria
1 As general principles guiding the Club’s approach to requests for financial or moral support, applications for mountaineering ventures in high or remote ranges will be considered only if those involved in these ventures propose to:

(a) Make first ascent (of peaks or of unclimbed routes) in high ranges outside Europe and lower 48 states of the U.S.A., or of lower remote ranges such as those in Greenland, Baffin Land, Patagonia, OR, explore little-known mountain areas, particularly those which are glaciated or partially so, OR, carry out necessary reconnaissance connected with a definite intention to make a first ascent of a worthwhile peak.

(b) Carry out their project in accordance with generally accepted mountaineering ethics and those of the Club. (For instance, once on the mountain progress should be made mainly by means of the team’s own efforts). See also Club Constitution Par.2, Objects of the Club.

(c) Carry out the organisation and operation of the project themselves and not as part of ‘commercial’ expeditions to which they have to pay a fee. This does not exclude the payment of a fee to a trekking agency for the arrangement of porterage and travel to the mountain area.

2 Applicants for assistance must undertake in writing to give, free of charge, a lecture to the club and to write an article for the newsletter/journal on their experiences within a reasonable time and, at any rate, before such lectures/articles are presented to any other entity. (The decision in regard to what is a reasonable time to be negotiated during consideration of each application).

3 It must be understood by applicants that it is expected that a proportion of any surplus funds as indicated on
submitted accounts should be returned to the IMC. This is not a mandatory requirement.

4 Grant applications will be accepted only from IMC club members of at least two years standing. It is not necessary that all team members are members of the club.

5 Grant applications will not be accepted for research purposes into proposed expeditions.

6 Where an expedition does not proceed for whatever reason it is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that the grant is returned in full to the IMC. However, in exceptional circumstances as, for instance, if the venture cannot proceed after arrival in the destination country for unavoidable reasons such as earthquakes, floods, political circumstances etc. this requirements may be waived on application to the club.

7 When an application is approved an initial proportion of the grant will be given to applicant, the remainder being handed over shortly before departure when it is certain that the venture is definitely under way.

**Procedure**

Applications will be considered by experienced IMC members drawn from a panel. Current members of the panel are Paddy O’Leary, Conor O’Connor, Donal O Murchú, Dermot Shiel, Michael Scott and Darach Ó Murchú.

Please note that a member of the applicant team may be invited to an interview. It is advisable that applications are sent to club secretary in sufficient time to allow for their consideration. Last minute applications face the possibility of not being processed in time.

If you wish to apply for an expedition grant please contact:
Stephen Peel, Secretary of the IMC.

The conditions for grant aid and an application form are available as a download through the “Info for members” section of the IMC website or directly from http://www.irishmountaineeringclub.org
The Achilli Ratti Hut on Dunmail Rise just outside Grasmere once again played host to a large group of IMC climbers over the June Bank Holiday weekend.

Once again Mr. Moss had interceded directly with the weather Gods and we enjoyed good climbing conditions and some glorious sunshine at times.

Many crags were visited by parties and several classic routes ascended. Included were routes on Scafell from Wasdale, Troutdale Pinnacle and Shepherds Crag in Borrowdale, Castle Crag in Thirlmere, Raven Crag in Langdale and Wallowbarrow near Seathwaite.

Routes of all grades were tackled, ranging from long and easy mountain diffs like Corvus to hard extremes such as The Bludger on Shepherd's. The last day of the long weekend and everybody assembled in Langdale in fantastic sunshine.

Both Raven Crag and Middlefell Buttress were fully occupied by the IMC and after a great days climbing and a fine lunch in the Dungeon Gyll the road back to Holyhead and the ferry was reluctantly taken.
A coroner has ruled that David Rothman died because he did not tie into his harness properly. David Rothman, 73, a retired engineer from Gloucestershire, UK was a regular at his local climbing wall. He suffered multiple fractures after falling about 30ft, and died in hospital two days later.

The inquest focused on how Rothman might have become detached from the rope. His belay partner gave evidence that he felt resistance as Rothman’s weight came onto the rope before the highly experienced climber fell. This suggests that Rothman had attempted to tie his usual bowline but the knot had failed. Either he forgot to tie his bowline after pulling the rope through his harness, or did so only partly or incorrectly. A figure-of-eight knot has been excluded because there was no bight left in the rope. The deputy coroner said: “Had a stopper knot been used, the rope probably would not have failed.”

If using a bowline to tie into a harness it is imperative to tie a stopper knot in case the bowline is incorrectly tied or loosens and inverts. A bowline can slip if loaded incorrectly, and if a stopper knot is not added it can come undone completely. For this reason, a bowline is generally not recommended at climbing walls.

For more see http://www.thebmc.co.uk/climbing-wall-death-due-to-knot-failure
Mourne Meet