

## GUMC SUMMER

### PRESIDENT WELCOME:

Hello Gumclub!

Hearing that 35 old and new faces made it out to the Ecrins (and safely home again) certainly brightened up being on elective in a very drizzly part of the country, and in this newsletter you can read of the alpineering, sport climbing and chicken nugget related escapades that occurred. Looking ahead, freshers season is just on the horizon. If you're wanting to get involved (or just have a chat), come and find us at the Stevie sports fair or keep an eye on the announcements page for more details about Cheese and Wine, taster sessions and Fresher's Meet.

### GUMC ACTIVITIES:

#### CONVILLE COURSE – Victoria Slaymark

This summer I graduated with a Bsc in Earth Sciences. I have been a club member during my time at Glasgow in my 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years (I spent my 3<sup>rd</sup> year abroad in Fairbanks, Alaska).

Before leaving Glasgow, I wanted to further my mountaineering skills to be able to feel comfortable leading my own routes, and not have to rely on others to take me out. I applied for the John Conville 3-day alpine mountaineering course based in the Chamonix valley. The course is held throughout June and July and is designed for climbers/mountaineers with British experience who want to gain more alpine experience.

The course was a good deal – £120 for a ratio of 3 students to a 1 Plas y Brenin mountain guide. Day 1 we went up to the Mer de Glass – a famous glacier that spills down from the base of Mont Blanc, down to Chamonix valley. We covered simple glacial travel and how to read a glacier. Truthfully this first day was a little mundane as it began with teaching us how to walk in crampons, but it was pretty cool to be up on the iconic glacier! Day 2 we covered crevasse rescue, which entails 3 on a rope – one of you simulating falling, and the remaining to left with the job of setting up a Z-pully system to hall them out. It also covered how the fallen fool should prussik out (if they're not injured). This is preferred, as it would save a great deal of time on the glacier. Day 3 we further practiced the crevasse rescue and also went to the local crags in Chamonix to learn how to move together with 3 on a rope. We had really awful weather over the 3 days so it was not ideal. Usually, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day you would



do an alpine route with the guide so they could look at your rope work and give you tips how to be efficient and climb 'Alpine style'. But given the weather we had to stay in the valley. This wasn't so bad, and quite normal for this time of year. It gave us the chance to practice the skills over and over again to really hone them in. I feel I could set up a Z-pully with my eyes closed now!

The course is fairly basic but I would strongly advise it to anyone! Even if you feel you have good rope work and mountain skills. The special thing is that you have the opportunity to quiz the guides for 3 days... This is how I got the most out of it. All the guides are incredibly experienced. They have climbed in many mountain ranges around the world. Two of whom were famous climbers and one of their trips involved camping out in an igloo on a remote glacier in Alaska called the Ruth's gorge (look it up – this should be added to your bucket list!).

The course is also a great way to meet climbing buddies. We stayed at the Argentiere campsite which is a hub for cheapskate climbers in the valley. As the course runs for 2 months, there were plenty of people around who had just done the course, and if you stay for long enough, there are many others arriving for their course. Everyone was really keen to do as many routes as possible to put their skills into practice. I stayed for a further 2 weeks in the valley after the course specifically for this reason. I met some really great people who I went on to climb classic routes such as the Aiguille du Tour, Cosmiques Arete, Index, Tacul Triangle and le Petite Vert.

As of the end of July, I moved to Sogndal, Norway. After the climbing I did in Chamonix and Ecrins, I now feel comfortable with my mountaineering alpine skills. It's allowed me to already lead a couple of routes in my short time here. We've climbed the Austabotntind ridge and another (sorry I can't give you the name- it is completely unpronounceable!).

If you want to know more information about the routes I've done, or wish to come out here and visit me I will be living in Sogndal for the next 2 years ☺. Everybody is welcome! The town is max an hours drive from mountain routes, is world famous for backcountry skiing on the doorstep... and I live 1 km from one of the biggest sport crags in Norway. I'm pretty stoked for this coming year to say the least!!!

Mountaineering love from Norway!



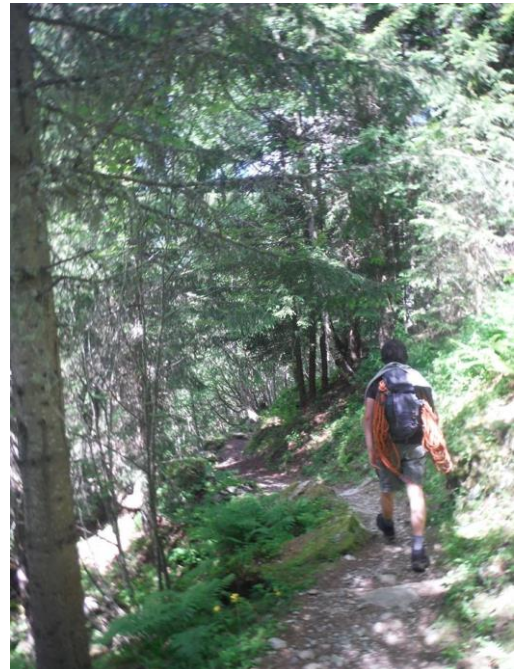
## SWITZERLAND – Euan McIntosh



## CHAMONIX – Liam Anderson

The dreams of scaling the large, imposing and classic routes of Chamonix had almost entirely faded. The sun is too hot and the snow too plentiful, the challenge of summiting now a mere game of chance rather than skill. The desire to dare with the avalanches and dance around cornices is simply not there like it is in Scottish Winter. But as Duncan's dad says to him, and him to me," the mountains aren't going anywhere", although in the case of the alps this might not be entirely true. Instead I am found cragging in the times of the day that are not held still by the afternoon sun and fill the rest of my time reading, rambling and relaxing.

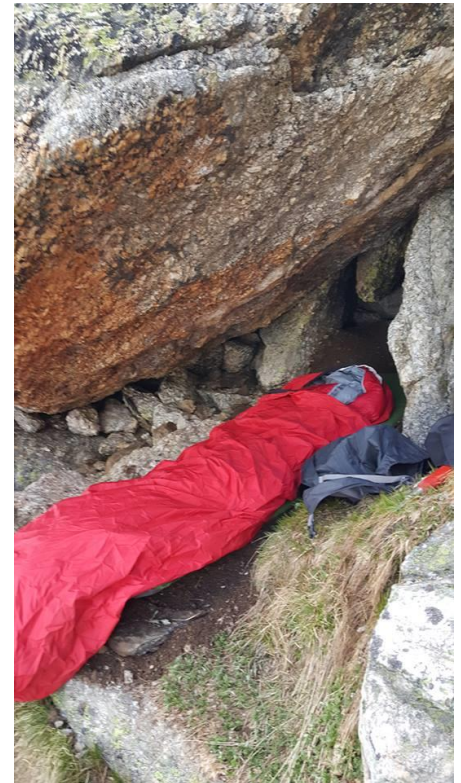
We started out as nomads at first, no place to call home, a weird time where we stumbled through expensive campsites and rickety shacks until we stumbled upon Orthaz. The perfect squat. It came complete with boulder problems, ambient sounds of the forest and real life Swiss love drama. The French didn't even seem to mind too much; just simply bemused by the group of smelly youths that seemed to have become insitu in their little piece of valley. Despite this we were keen not to stress international relations any





further, with Brexit still a fresh wound, so we reside the tent to a nocturnal life; being erected at dusk and dropped at dawn.

More of a lesson in homelessness than a feat of mountaineering but it's amazing how similar the two are. Pushing your body to its limits, eating grim food, a bond of trust forged by unmentionable events and the epic sigh of relief when it's finally all over.



### GUMS ALPS TRIP: ECRINS – Paul Thomas

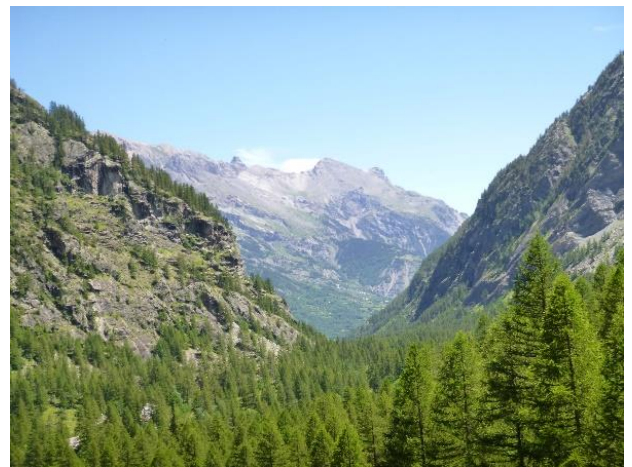






## EURO TRIP – Roxanna Barry

Day 1: Set off from Norwich last night at 11pm. For some reason past Roxy thought a 4am ferry would be a top idea. Arrive in Ailefroide – literally nothing has changed since 2 years ago.



Day 9: Laura and I have adopted two beautiful dogs called Vaca and Truco while their owners go up the Barre. The reward is a promised free pizza, but really the reward is having awesome crag dogs for 3 days!

Day 13: With promise of an awesome mantle-y climb, Victor and I head over to the beehive crag to find Greenpeace, 6a. This was one of my goals for the holiday as I'm keen to get on more and more 6as. Much chalk, sweating (the evenings are so warm!) and a rest, but I got to tick it off my list (but I'm aiming to come back and do it clean because I'm picky like that).

Day 15: Laura, Megan, Liam and I were up and out of the campsite by 7am to spend about 4 hours looking for spit-on-cup. Retired back to the campsite to work on my sick slacklining skills (managed to walk and turn!) and my hammock skills. It's quiet (GUMC has left ☺).

Day 16: Successfully found spit-on-cup today and had a top (but hot) day leading Josh and Laura up. Abseils are less fatty when Fearghas and Zoe leave a rope for the 2<sup>nd</sup> section, avoiding a 3-way-belay.



Day 28: Euro-Birthday! Lazy sunny via ferrata day today. Popular little via ferrata above a beautiful river near L'Argentière (so naturally got stuck behind some people - but got to enjoy an empty second section as it was advertised as overhanging!). After almost a month of living in my tent, tonight I'm living the highlife in a stunning, quiet little French b'n'b tonight (in Briançon), whose owner, it turns out, trained the French judo Olympian for the last Olympics! (?!) (oh and we have a Jacuzzi! and the owners have a beautiful dog! much excitement) Time for some vin rouge to wash down another year of successfully still being alive!



Day 29: Today we ascend Mont Chaberton. 6.30 start, 30° forecast (who needs sun cream!?). It's a lovely easy mountain at 3131m, giving Josh his first taste of Altitude and allowing us to actually summit something without any Alpine/Glacial know-how. Views of the Ecrins were stunning and the summit was home to an artillery battery the Italians built in the early 1900s, with snowy tunnels and creepy icy rooms with 'drip' 'drip' 'drip' coming from the darkness. By the time we got down to the flat part of the walk off my legs were tired, my face was neon red and my toe had turned into a blister. Success! (Could barely walk the next day).

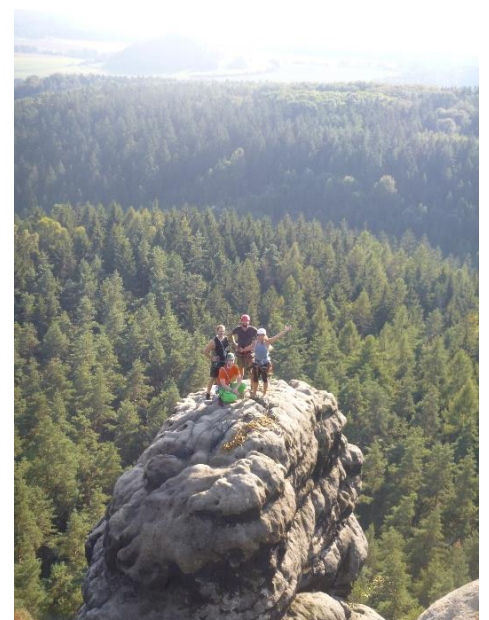
Day 38: Wir sind in Deutschland! A visit to Walhalla (Thor wasn't home) and an awesome outdoor climbing gym! The routes were amazing and the height and variety sort of put Ibrox to shame... Tomorrow we're off to a Bavarian beer fest in Straubing (lederhosenparty).



Day 45: Off to Sächsische Schweiz to sleep under the stars. Arrive in Schmilka (near the Czech border) to meet German Richard (GUMC Erasmus student) and his robot arm (he broke it). But does a broken arm stop Richard from climbing sandstone stacks? Nah. We head into Sächsische Schweiz for some climbing.

Climbing the stacks is awesome, nothing like the rock in the UK, though the sandstone here means no chalk, no metal gear, and doesn't really have bolts (a couple of rings...) and reaching the top is breathtaking. After a garlicky dinner (to keep the wolves at bay) and some exploring, we find a comfy bivvy spot next to some not-so-thrilled bivvyers underneath a slight overhang.

Day 49: 9am, post 15-hour journey, back in the UK, no point in sleeping when there's coffee.





**ALPS – Katie Bowen**



Alice on Mont Blanc



Rochefort Ridge



Megan and Alice on Crochers arete, PD



Knife edge ridge of Lyksamm (AD)



Gateau de Riz (trad route on Aig de Refuge)