

What did the MCofS bursary do for me?

Eleanor Hopkins

First of all, thank you to MCofS for giving me a bursary this year, it was very much appreciated. I had two big objectives for 2010, to do my best for Great Britain in international sports climbing competitions and to get climbing outdoors more.

I was selected for the GB team, along with many other Scottish climbers. To be selected for international competitions I had to climb five 7B/7B+ routes and onsight at least 3 out of the 5. I managed that at Sheffield and was selected to go to Imst and Vienna for two rounds of the European Youth Series. We have to pay for these competitions ourselves – flights, hotels, food etc - so the bursary was really helpful. I was up against the best in Europe and some of them had been climbing since they were toddlers. I was pleased to put in some good climbs and there were some which I would have liked to have gone better – lots to learn.



The World Youth Climbing Championship at Ratho

This year the World Youth Climbing Championship was held here in Scotland at EICA Ratho. Again a lot of climbers from Scotland made the team and it was a great four days. Teams started arriving in the weeks leading up to the competition, and it was great to meet and climb with other teams like the Canadians and Australians. In the competition itself there were over 360 climbers from 39 different countries as far away as New Zealand and Ecuador. Apart from some really brilliant climbing it was amazing seeing and meeting young climbers from all over the world and I look forward to climbing with them in the future.

Weather is always a challenge here and my plans to get down to Northumbria at the beginning of the year didn't work out. My first outdoor trip was with the French junior team at Chateau Vert at Easter. The 'draws were a long way apart and I was pleased when I took a couple of big falls from a traverse and felt good about it.

Early summer included a couple of trips to Malham with the Quickdraw Club and BMC/MCofS coach Neil McGeachy. Steve McClure was also there for the Quickdraw weekend and Tom Bolger and Lynn Malcolm for the MCofS weekend.

Great weather and a tremendous opportunity to learn from some great climbers. I had a good few goes on *Raindogs (F8a)* and while I have not quite ticked it yet I have nearly made all the moves on lead, maybe next year though!

The really big trip was a summer holiday at Ceuse, one of the best sports crags in Europe, maybe the World. It

certainly lives up to its reputation. It is a limestone mushroom sitting on top of a mountain – which makes for a tough walk-in, a Munro before breakfast. It was the hottest place in France last summer and we had to get up to the crag early in the morning and follow the shade around.

We were quite a big group of Scottish juniors out there – Natalie Berry, Robbie Phillips, Jonathan Field, Eddie Barbour and Olivia and Gabriella Stewart. The Irish junior climbers were also over there and Neil Gresham was out for a week.

There was lots of awesome climbing at all grades ranging from very technical slabs to massive overhangs. My favourite project is *Lapinerie*, a steep F7b. It has a pocket for the last move before the chain which you have to dyno to but I can't quite make it yet, but it wasn't for the lack of encouragement from the Danish climbers who were also working it. I so want to go back next year!



At the end of summer there was some good weather in Scotland and at last I managed some days on Scottish rock; Dunkeld in warm sunshine. After two goes on top-rope I managed to get *Hamish Teddy's Excellent Adventure (F7b+)* on my first go on lead, thanks to Neil McGeachy and Neill Busby for their support. That was a great tick for 2010!



At end of the year sadly my shoulder is injured and for it to get better I need to rest but hopefully that will get better soon and I'm really psyched for comps and projects next year. 2010 has been a tremendous year with a lot of adventure and I've enjoyed meeting so many other climbers. That's what the MCofS bursary has helped to do for me. Thanks to MCofS for helping make it happen.