

MCofS Bursary 2010 Report

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For me 2010 has been a very successful year in my climbing career. I have made some big steps forward in both my indoor and outdoor achievements. This year I have competed in two international competitions and gone on two sport climbing trips abroad.

I spent the first half of 2010 training hard for the upcoming competitions and the trips I had planned for later in the year.

Outdoor Sport Climbing (July):

In July I headed off to Ceuse for two weeks sport climbing. I had first visited in 2008 and ever since I had been itching to get back! It was an amazing trip and I gained loads of experience in outdoor sport climbing as well as pushing both my onsight and redpoint grades further than ever before. Prior to the trip the hardest grade I had climbed outside was 7c. While I was out there, I onsighted my first 7c+ as well as climbing two other climbs of the grade. I also redpointed my first 8a which was a huge stepping-stone in my climbing career.



My notable ascents of the trip were:

Bourinator, 8a (Redpoint)

Mirage, 7c+ (onsight)

Le Privilege du Serpent, 7c+ (flash)

Correspondance Imaginaire, 7c+ (redpoint)

Vagabond D'occident, 7c (onsight)

Bourinator 8a

Competitions:

In August, I travelled to Vienna with the British Climbing Team to compete in my first European Youth Competition of the year. The morning of the comp came and I was excited and ready to climb my best that day. I feel I climbed well especially on the first route where I ranked 20th. An overall place of 26th saw a great improvement from last year's placings.

A month later, in September, I competed in my first World Youth Championships, which was held at EICA: Ratho. It was amazing to be climbing and competing alongside the best climbers in the world. It was a great experience. I feel I could have climbed slightly better on my first route but making up for it on the second route I feel that I achieved a very respectable position overall of 36th. Even though I don't feel like I performed as I should have on the first qualifier, I have definitely learnt from my mistakes so I can greatly improve on my results in the coming year.

My next comp of the year was the BLCCs (British Lead Climbing Championships) which also took place in EICA: Ratho. The Saturday saw the junior categories competing. It was an exciting competition and I came 3rd in the final. After a hard day's competing, on the Sunday I also entered the senior competition. It was the first time I had ever competed with the seniors so I did not really have any expectations for how I would do and I was excited to see how I fared up against the competition. After topping out on my first route of the day I realised I could be in for a chance of doing well that day. The second route was a very technical climb on the slab of the old comp wall, and being one of only 6 to top out I was through to the final. Since everyone who qualified for the final had topped both the routes it was tough competition!

After viewing the route and returning to isolation I started warming up and getting fired up to compete in the final. I feel I climbed really well and came in 4th place.

Outdoor Sport Climbing (Kalymnos):

My success in the BLCCs showed me how well I was currently climbing and got me psyched to climb some hard routes a couple of weeks later when I headed out to the Greek island of Kalymnos for a week of sport climbing. It was an incredible trip and the most amazing climbing I have ever done. On the first day of the trip, after travelling all night on the plane I arrived in the early afternoon at the apartment to meet everyone else who was already out there. Within only about half an hour we headed up to the crag, the crew welcoming me with the longest walk in of the trip. Despite the long hours spent travelling the night before it turned out to be a very successful day as I managed to flash my first 7c+ in the setting sun! But that was only the start of a great trip. It was my aim of the trip to push my onsight grade as far as possible in the short time I had. A few days into the trip I started eying up a 40m long 8a, which went right through the almost horizontal roof of the famous Grande Grotte. I got myself psyched up and jumped on it before the afternoon sun hit it. It was the most incredible climbing I've ever done, boulder problems between huge no-hands rests and swinging between massive stalactites on the steep roof! After an hour and 40



Fun de Chichunne 8a
(Photo courtesy of Catherine Speakman)

minute battle I found myself topping out on the sketchy finish and clipping the chains on my first 8a onsight!

Here is a complete list of my ascents in Kalymnos:

Fun de Chichunne 8a (onsight)

Daniboy 8a (redpoint)

Raptor 7c+ (flash)

Sparticus Maximus 7c (onsight)

Nicola la Tigre 7c (redpoint)

The money from the MCofS bursary has helped fund my training and travel to international competitions as well as my outdoor sport climbing abroad. Overall I feel that 2010 was a very successful year's climbing. Unfortunately in the last month of the year, and into 2011, I had to take a rest from climbing due to problems with my fingers. I am currently recovering and I look forward to competing again at a high level in the second half of 2011.



Photo by Will Carrol