MOUNTAINEERING CLUB 2016/2017

Whether it was on the Ben, at home in St Andrews or on the cliffs of Kalymnos, our members showed themselves to be as committed as ever to overcoming the challenges before them and continued the club’s legacy of mastering what Ernest Hemingway considers to be ‘one of the only three true sports’.

Despite the challenges faced as a result of the reduction of training facilities caused by this year’s reconstruction works at the University’s Sport Centre, and issues with transport in the opening-weeks of term, the enthusiasm and ingenuity of both the club’s committee and members is something I could only be in awe and impressed by and showed that the club-spirit, despite any challenges, is as strong as ever.

This year we continued our progress in helping more and more members improve their knowledge of navigation, avalanche awareness, winter skills, first aid and of technical indoor and outdoor rock climbing – and as members continued to impress, with both their talent and eagerness even in worst of weather conditions (in what seemed as the theme of the year), so did the number and variety of trips:

to Glen Clova, Glen Nevis, Kirriemuir, Crainlarich, Dunkeld, Glen Coe and the Isle of Skye, Aviemore, Ben Nevis, Glasgow (Climbing Academy), Laggan, Kirriemuir (again) and the Isle of Arran – as well as Kalymnos.

In competitions, our members continued to push themselves with greater turnouts at Avertical World bouldering competitions, and a well-deserved top-five finish for our very own Alex Chapman at Scottish Student Sport (SSS) annual Glasgow bouldering competition in the male category, and two solid top-ten finishes for Isobel Mitchell and Rabea Khan, coming eighth and ninth respectively in the female category.

Following the growing interest in competition, and the improved training facilities that the our new University climbing wall will have to offer, we have established a new committee position in ‘Head Wall Officer’ to oversee the training and competing of STAUMC and the representing of the
University of St Andrews in the years to come.

On top, through our continued affiliation with Mountaineering Scotland (formerly, Mountaineering Council of Scotland), the club arranged two weekend-meets with external Mountaineering Instructors (MICs), on Beinn a’Chaorainn (Laggan) and in Glen Coe, funded by St John Scotland and the Student Activities Fund. This ensured that the knowledge and skills within the club remains as strong as ever, and proved a great success, and with really positive feedback from the forty members that attended over the two weekends, and the two instructors themselves.

As we look forward to the new year, our club will now strive to not only maintain the adventure and ambitious nature of the sport, but to foster the sense of community and tradition that our alumni have valued since 1934.