

A monthly newsletter for Castle Customers to keep you informed about what's going on at the Castle. Submissions should be emailed to [newsletter@castle-climbing.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@castle-climbing.co.uk) by the 16th of each month.

## Climbing Cottages

By K. Simmons

WHEN I bought raffle tickets to support the Free Tibet Campaign, I didn't really think I would win anything. Truthfully, it was a guilt purchase as I had agreed to help try to sell them to Castle customers who were clearly not feeling the Tibetans plight. So I bought them, joking that now they had to let me win, then promptly forgot about them. Two months later a woman called, I had won first prize: a £200 voucher to go on a Climb Catalunya holiday. I had only ever won a dustpan and brush set at bingo before, so this was quite exciting...

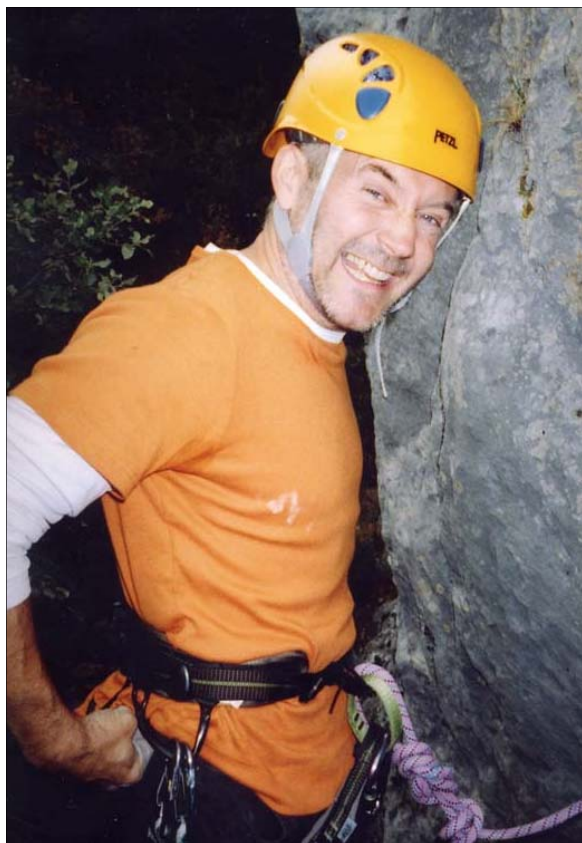
I CHOSE to go on the Three Gorges trip in May because it seemed the easiest. Not being a fan of walking, I wanted to go on the one with walk-in's of fifteen minutes or less! Yes I know what you're thinking... but I have weak ankles.

ORIGINALLY, my climbing partner was supposed to come along and we split the prize, but he got the pox and was quarantined for a month so I had to go alone. I must admit the idea of being trapped in various isolated places with a bunch of complete strangers for a week was not top on my list of ways to spend my 33<sup>rd</sup> birth-

day. I've never been one for inane smiles or mindless chitchat but figured after a couple of beers I could get quite good at it.

I MET one of the group Tim on the flight, he recognised me from The Castle and despite my reservations about the 'chat' we managed to talk for the whole flight, mindlessly or not, I quite enjoyed it. The first night was a getting to know each other night, nice food and a few beers with beautiful surrounding and *actually* really nice company. We discovered that we all had the same fears and that we

all put to rest. I think the next day was probably one of the best birthdays I can remember. I didn't tell anyone at first and just enjoyed being out of London. I was worried that my climbing grade would hold the group up but there were so many routes to choose from and everyone shared belay duties and the lead climbers put up top ropes for those who didn't yet lead. Ollie, Gee, (it took me ages to remember which was which), Eva and Perrico the Dog, (our hosts) were fantastic. They knew all the routes, offered advice, teased me when I was lazy and knew important things like where the shaded areas were in the midday sun.



Tim didn't even have time to change out of his Easy-jet uniform before being whisked up a crag...

THAT day I sat down and looked out at the scenery and couldn't believe my luck, I sang happy birthday to myself and climbed some more. We didn't get back to the hostel till about 8pm, I decided to announce my age, got a free birthday drink and crashed out at 10.30 completely knackered.

THE week just got better and better, my climbing improved and my confidence and I decided to pay for a day's lead climbing instruction from Ollie. Tim and I were already good friends by then and did the course together. It was a good job that we were friends because the amount of times that I shouted at him when he belayed me I am surprised he didn't tie the rope to the nearest rock and walk off. In my defence, I was scared. It is a whole new world of fear when you learn to lead, things you would do with one arm behind your back on a top rope seem like major death defying feats when you don't have that protection.

I WENT on this 'holiday' mainly with the intention of enjoying myself and with the hope of improving my technique, experiencing outdoor climbing (which I might add is completely different from indoor training) and to unclog my mind from all the crap day to day life fills it with. Everybody had their own agendas; some really pushed themselves to the limits and came out smiling. I didn't want to

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## Building work update

### The Castle New Development—Phase Two

After months of anticipation, we've finally opened one of the new bouldering areas on the new mezzanine floor. Was it worth it? We've been busy over the last week 'testing' all the problems – someone's got to do it! – and we think you'll love it. See [page 2](#) for a selection of problems on the new featured bouldering wall.

In the next few weeks we will be opening the larger, improved new men's changing area on the mezzanine level. Don't worry, ladies, our turn will come with new changing rooms downstairs in a few months' time! Finally, towards the end of September we hope to be receiving new lockers which we will be using on the mezzanine floor.

On the climbing side of things, our building schedule in September is very busy. Living Stone Climbing Walls will be finishing the new bouldering slab area (above the changing rooms), the Catacomb and the training rooms. We won't be able to open the entire mezzanine floor beyond the changing rooms until the fire exit and the link to the main staircase is complete which we anticipate will be sometime in early October. In October we will be moving the tanks behind the traverse wall to make way for Stage 2 of the development.

More on that in the next month's edition!

Audrey.

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scare myself to death, so I did what felt good and the best thing was that there was no pressure to 'perform', only advice and encouragement.

SIX days of climbing, I thought that I would be dead on my feet, but I felt good. The last day at Montserrat was a test. I didn't like the conglomerate rock. I felt like I was trying to climb a cottage. I climbed my first chimney, which was very long and very challenging. I hated it. I talked to myself all the way up asking myself why? But I didn't stop, the pressure is all your own here, and when I got to the top I didn't even look out at the view, mainly because I was facing inwards and was to scared turn around, I just shouted "please lower me down"! By the time I got to the bottom I had decided that it was not that bad but still thought that the others were slightly insane for leading it.

I AM going back for that one.

## New Featured Boulder!



**This is it! Our New featured boulder! We've marked a few problems for you to try out. Let us know what you think.**

For all of these problems, the hands are on the marked holds only with feet on any of the features. Finish by top-ping-out!

**Blue (5b):** Standing start. Pocket-astic! Hint: When you're at the top look for a high foothold for your right foot.

**Green (5c):** Sitting start. More pocket-pulling fun!

**Red (6a):** Standing start. That pocket's not as good as it looks from below!

**Yellow (6b/c?):** Standing start. Sloper-ific! I wish I could I give you a hint, but I'm not even close to getting this one!

With many thanks to the Mike, Sophie & Jez who did all the hard work testing!

**Audrey Seguy-**  
audrey@  
castle-climbing.co.uk



**Leah**  
An interview in brief.

**1. Considering your height, why are the routes you set so reachy?**

Those of you who know me will know that I'm a little vertically challenged - and am happy to admit it! I do however have an ape index of +3 which I suppose for my height is quite large! But come on people. If you're short don't use it as an excuse just use a little technique!

**2. How long have you been coming to the castle?** 10 Years! I started in

the original Castle kids club C3 (and still fit into my t-shirt...) and then went into Geckos where I made a name for myself by abusing the instructors...!

**3. What's the best thing about Vegas?** The Bellagio Fountains! They play well-known songs while the fountains "dance". Corny I know, but I sat on a wall in the freezing cold for over an hour to hear Frank Sinatra.

**4. Have you ever lost a fight?** Never had one!

**5. How many different whiskeys have you tried in your Billy Brownswood education?** Three overall. Ah, that was a good time in my life... I have much respect for Billy having to put up with a bunch of drunken, smelly climbers every night. He's da man!

**6. What jobs do you have at The Castle?** I started just on Reception, but now I route-set, and work in the office, and do the Newsletter with Sieta.

**7. Routes or bouldering?** Routes.

**8. Limestone or Granite?** Limestone

**9. Peaks or Portland?** Portland everytime!

**10. Buffy or Angel?** Er, that's hard! I think Buffy's a better show, but I'm not sure. I'm currently watching both in sequence! It's very exciting. Ok. Now I even think I'm sad.

## Training Advice— Part Two: Starting to Cycle

by Dylan Fletcher

*Last month's article discussed several components that contribute towards improving climbing performance. This month will discuss how these elements can be combined through training cycles to further improve climbing performance.*

**Training cycles** are a method of varying the timing and intensity of separate workouts, building upon the last in order to achieve the greatest gains. Otherwise known as 'periodisation', they can be used to achieve increased performance, progress from a plateau, or stave off injury.

### So why does this work and why should I change my climbing routine?

Tendons and muscles do not grow and improve on their own - the body prefers to maintain the same level of fitness and strength unless forced to do otherwise. Gains are made by a combination of training overload, good nutrition and rest.

The basic principle behind periodisation is called S.A.I.D. - Specific Adaptation to Imposed Demand. The bottom line is that your body will adapt itself to handle the demands you put on it. This is what you experienced when you started climbing - neuromuscular pathways get more efficient as your muscles grow, simply because you're shocking your muscles every week.

The bad news is, if you stick to one particular training plan, your rate of improvement will slowly reduce and you will end up inhibiting your progress. This is why periodisation is effective, as it focuses on a series of individual and progressive training cycles that work with your body to achieve results.

In the next few articles I will be discussing the **five cycles of periodisation**:

**Cycle 1 –**  
General Fitness/  
Preparation

**Cycle 2 –**  
Activity Specific Strength

**Cycle 3 –**  
Power/ Recruitment

**Cycle 4 –**  
Stamina > Resistance

**Cycle 5 –**  
Stamina > Continuity

The length and sequencing of these cycles is dependent on a number of variables such as style of climbing (trad, sport, bouldering etc.). For the purposes of this general explanation we will look at a training cycle for sport or trad climbers.

### Cycle 1: General Fitness and Preparation.

*As a beginner without experience, after time off or at the end of a climbing season, your muscles and tendons will not be prepared for the immense stress of your hardest route to date. Jumping straight into a heavy training plan will not only harm your climbing but could also injure you. For this reason, during the first part of your training cycle you will be improving general fitness and preparing the body for future work.*

*These guidelines are for all abilities and should be adapted to your specific needs.*

#### Training methods

Improve your cardiovascu-

lar fitness with either running, cycling, or swimming for a minimum of 30 minutes continuously.

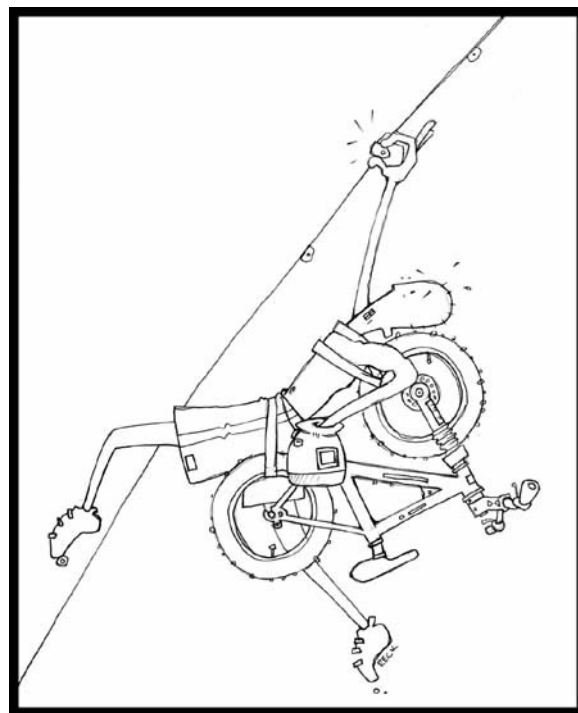
Work on increasing your high-stepping ability for rock-overs, splits for bridging and general upper body flexibility.

**Strength Training.** This does not need to be climbing-specific, but if weight training is done, make sure that you work the muscles used during climbing (upper arms, shoulders, forearm flexors, upper back muscles, core/stabilizer muscles).

Low intensity climbing – eight minutes or more continuously. Try to get a high volume of easy routes done at the wall or on the crag. Climb in as many styles as possible to get a balanced base of technical abilities, e.g. slabs, overhangs, walls etc.

The body also needs to adapt to the high demands of aerobic energy to increase capillarisation in forearms, facilitate more efficient oxygen and nutrient supply to muscles, and more efficiently remove waste materials. This process is known as Aerobic Energy Restoration and Capillarity (ARC), where you teach the muscles to adapt to high demands for aerobic energy restoration by loading them at a low intensity and long duration that is continuous.

To train for ARC, climb on a vertical to gently overhanging wall for 30 to 45 minutes at a time, trying to keep a mild pump in your arms. It is important that you do not stress your body to more than 20 to 30 per cent of your maximum. This means that whilst climbing you should feel relaxed enough



Picture By Ray Eckermann– Smallmountains

to hold a conversation. If you do get a burning pump in your forearms stop climbing for a minute or two before continuing at a milder pace.

Climb random sequences, instead of marked routes, to increase or decrease the intensity of your workout. The added benefit of this is that you will also be improving your on-sighting technique and ability to flow on-rock at the same time. If you are roped in, it is preferable to down-climb rather than lowering off, so as to keep the climbing continuous.

If you are bouldering, do this on a quiet section of wall so as not to get in people's way and include down-climbing and traversing. You can repeat this exercise up to 3 or 4 times in a session as required, but make sure you rest for at least the same time you have been climbing.

The down-side of this training is that it can be tedious. Try to find a climbing partner that you can share the belaying with and gives you motivation to train. You can do up to 3 days of ARC training in a row as your muscles won't get too fatigued, but remember - always listen to your body.

**After completion of this first cycle, you should have developed a solid and balanced overall level of baseline strength, preparing tendons, ligaments and joints for the more intense, sport specific strength training that will be discussed in the next article.**

Dylan has been coaching climbers for the past 10 years and is currently researching climbing training for a PhD. He is available for private coaching sessions and can be contacted at:

[dylanfletcher@gmail.com](mailto:dylanfletcher@gmail.com)

Advertisements

**This Month at The Castle**

**The Session and Women with Altitude**

The Session runs *Wednesday (7-10pm)* and *Friday (7.30-10pm)* evenings and *Saturday (3-6pm)* afternoons, and is a way to climb with other Castle members, with a member of staff on hand to give tips and advise.

**Women With Altitude** runs on a *Monday* night (7-10pm) as a women-only alternative to the Session. These free sessions are a great way to consolidate your skills, and get to know other climbers as well as the centre itself!

**Climb Catalunya**

Climb Catalunya run hassle free climbing trips and courses in Spain. These excellent holidays are ideal for relative novices and hardened enthusiasts alike. Ollie, Gee and Eva take care of pretty much everything. Their ethos of support and individually focused services means that you will always feel looked after, regardless of your level of experience. As for value? We don't think you could do it independently any cheaper. You can book as an individual, as a climbing team or as a group, with wide levels of experience being simultaneously catered for.

**Dates and Venues for upcoming trips:**

October 1 - 8  
Classic Gorges/Montserrat £325  
Liaison: Sophie Charles

November 5 — 12  
Classic Gorges/Montserrat £325  
Liaison: Sophie Thurston

For more information visit our website at: [www.castle-climbing.co.uk](http://www.castle-climbing.co.uk).

**Dragon Safety Systems- Industrial Rope Access**

Dragon Safety Systems are a member of the Industrial Rope Access Trade Association (IRATA) and provide nationally recognised qualifications. Instructors train and assess clients levels 1, 2 and 3, and are themselves qualified to a minimum of IRATA level 3, with extensive industrial rope access experience. Dragon are based in Snowdonia, North Wales, and run monthly courses at The Castle. For a registration pack, dates and booking visit: [www.rope-access.co.uk](http://www.rope-access.co.uk) or e-mail [info@rope-access.co.uk](mailto:info@rope-access.co.uk).

**Mountaineering Clubs**

There are a number of mountaineering clubs who meet regularly at The Castle as well as running trips away and social events. For specific info, get in touch with the contacts listed below.

**Hertfordshire Mountaineering Club** – Contact Geoff Dean on 01727 810032 or e-mail:

[GeoffD@themc.co.uk](mailto:GeoffD@themc.co.uk)  
**London Mountaineering Club** – Contact: Chris Bailey on 01223 562 106 (Home) or 020 7242 9866 (Work) or e-mail:

[Membership@londonmountaineeringclub.co.uk](mailto:Membership@londonmountaineeringclub.co.uk)  
**Marylebone Mountaineering Club**– Contact Tara on 07930446612 or e-mail: [member-ship@themmc.org.uk](mailto:member-ship@themmc.org.uk).

**North London Mountaineering club**– E-mail: [membership@nlmc.co.uk](mailto:membership@nlmc.co.uk).

To advertise your club

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**Alternative Therapies**

**Climb Clinic**- Book some time to get rid of those grem-lins that stop you climbing your best. Jake is a registered therapist and uses deep tissue, myofascial and traditional Swedish massage. To book contact **Jake** on: 07977 958 798.

"A deeply relaxing and rhythmic massage to release physical and emotional tensions." Hilary McPherson is ITEC and MTI qualified in holistic massage, and is a member of the Massage Training Institute. She is based in Hackney, East London or alternatively can travel to you. Full body massage £30, 35 min upper body £17. To arrange a treatment contact **Hilary** on: 020 8986 2365 or 07790 634 669.

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**New Prices 2005**

As most of you are aware, the Castle price increase takes effect from today. This is an annual increase— this year of 5.5%-. The increase is a result of many things including our ongoing commitment to development, and an increase in costs and building maintenance. As a private business we receive no charity money, or outside funding and also pay VAT, unlike many other climbing walls. When compared with other climbing walls, our prices are competitive, especially in the case of our wide range of payment plans. We hope you find one that suits you. If you have any questions please ask reception, or e-mail the management team: [admin@castle-climbing.co.uk](mailto:admin@castle-climbing.co.uk).

**MAKE THIS SPACE WORK FOR YOU**

If you have anything to advertise, be it shoes for sale, rooms for rent, if you're looking for someone to go away climbing with or have any special talents (within reason) let us know

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