

Marina



How did you get into climbing?

I started climbing about 4 years ago, aged 21. I was then a medical student doing an elective in Germany, and my host was a keen climber. I practically begged him to take me climbing with him, and from that first climb onwards, I was well and truly hooked! The second I returned home to Malta I joined the local club and started climbing all over the island's sunny cliffs. I was never an active or sporty person, so I thought it would be intimidating to climb alongside strong, skilled climbers, but I really need not have been nervous. Every climber, no matter how good they are, has to start from somewhere, and I received nothing but encouragement and support from day one! As I went on to discover, climbing is so much more than a sport, it is truly a way of life, and through it I've met some inspiring people, forged unique friendships, and experienced so many awesome adventures!

What type/s of climbing do you do and what do you prefer?

I have mostly done outdoors single pitch sport climbing. In the summer, whilst the scorching Mediterranean sun sizzles on, I could be found doing DWS, with very regular dips in the sea to cool off. I have also done some easy trad routes, and sport and trad multi-pitch routes. This last winter I have been doing a lot of indoor bouldering at The Project in Poole. I don't think I have a preference as long as I'm outdoors, in good company, and the weather is favourable. I think if I have to choose, nothing quite beats the satisfaction of working on a scary overhanging sport route and finally sending it successfully!

How long have you been a member of WMC and what made you join?

I have been a member for a year. Last year my job took me to the Isle of Wight, where there is not much climbing to be had. So I just Googled local climbing clubs and joined the WMC. I simply became a member via the club website, joined the Facebook page, and met the club on an upcoming meet at Swanage. I was met with a really friendly and enthusiastic bunch, of different levels of experience, who helped me fit right in - having a pint with everyone at the legendary Square and Compass after a day of climbing helped seal the deal! It was certainly worth renting a car, taking an hour ferry + two hour drive to meet everyone! Of course, now I've moved to Dorchester it is a bit easier to meet up with the club :)

What's the best thing about being a WMC member?

For me it is mostly the social aspect - I was completely new to the area and although my partner also climbs, we wanted to meet like minded people to go to crags with and get to know better. The weekly meets in The Project in Poole and Calshot in Southampton are amazing ways to meet people and get talking, often also a great place to make weekend plans. Being a WMC member also means I get to meet people with vast amounts of experience that help me improve my skills and technique as a climber. On the other side of the coin, I really enjoy meeting less experienced members and helping them improve and get into the sport.

Where is the most exiting place climbing has taken you?

I have been lucky enough to climb in several weird and wonderful places - England and Wales, Spain, Malaysia, Turkey... But honestly nothing beats the excitement and beauty of the cliffs of Malta and Gozo in my opinion!

Do you have any exiting climbing or mountaineering plans in the next 12months?

A bouldering trip to Fontainebleau in France with the WMC is coming up, after that I have plans to climb in California as well as Jordan. In the meantime I intend to make the most of the splendid crags England's south coast has to offer this summer!

DAJ



How did you get into climbing?

I started climbing in my early 20s, now almost 30 years ago, although I had done a lot of hill walking prior to this with the Scouts. I'm pretty much self-taught as I didn't join a club till much later on in my climbing career. We used to go to Cattle Troughs down at Swanage and climb as many easy routes as we could in a day.

What type/s of climbing do you do and what do you prefer?

I am mainly a mountaineer, trad climber and winter climber, although I've also done a few big walls in my time. I think I prefer mountaineering although I like the variety of challenges that the different forms of climbing demand.

How long have you been a member of WMC and what made you join?

I joined the club about 15 years ago, when the Winchester climbing wall burnt down and we lost the weekly meet up where we hatched a climbing plan for the coming weekend. Joining the WMC meant there was a meet organised and all I needed to do was search through the guide books for some potential climbs before joining the meet and persuading someone to join me for the day.

What's the best thing about being a WMC member?

The sociability of a club meet is the best thing about the club for me. Clare and I join as many as we can in the year. The PYC club hut in North Wales is also a great facility especially for climbing trips to Wales in the winter.

Where is the most exiting place climbing has taken you?

Over the years I've climbed in many countries and many adventurous places. The north face of the Dru was very memorable as was topping out on El Capitain in a snow storm, but the sunset that greeted us as we pulled onto the summit of Beinn Bhan in Scotland was one of the most special moments.

Do you have any exiting climbing or mountaineering plans in the next 12months?

This year we're staying closer to home having driven to arctic Norway last summer, so it's La Berarde in the Erins for our summer Alpine trip.

Robert



How did you get into climbing?

I've been climbing over 50 years if you count a walk up Snowdon by the Pyg track with my father when I was about 12. Then in my last year at school a mate persuaded me to go on a trip to Scotland to try and climb all the 4000 ft mountains, starting with a rather ambitious 5-day backpacking trip across the Cairngorms from Aviemore to Blair Atholl. We didn't manage all of the 4000 ft tops because we got lost on the Cairngorm plateau in the clag and couldn't find the summit of Ben Macdui, but we had a great time and I was hooked on the Scottish mountains. That was in 1968. My first rock climbs were on a university club meet at Stanage later that year, though I didn't get my own climbing gear and start leading climbs until about 1972. I went on a course at Plas y Brenin to try and learn what to do.

What type/s of climbing do you do and what do you prefer?

I have always enjoyed trad climbing, preferably on long mountain routes or adventurous sea cliffs. I led my first VS within a year or so of starting, but never got much better. Modern gear compensates for old age so I can still climb at the same level in my 60s as I did in my 20s. When I first moved to Dorset I found Swanage climbing to be pretty terrifying, but I have gradually got used to it and always enjoy the special atmosphere of climbing in Boulder Ruckle. I sometimes play around on sport climbs and I have also done a lot of hill-walking, both in summer and winter, and eventually got round to completing the Munros a few years ago.

How long have you been a member of WMC and what made you join?

Almost 40 years! I moved to Dorset for work in 1975 and joining a club seemed the best way to meet local climbers. In those pre-internet days the contact details for local clubs were listed in the back of one of the climbing magazines, so that is how I found out about the WMC. The club was very active, with two weekend meets a month that were almost always well attended. We didn't have Pen y Clogwyn club hut then, but you got to stay in lots of different huts in Wales and the Lakes.

What's the best thing about being a WMC member?

Meeting my wife! And many other good friends. I still go climbing and walking with mates who I met through the WMC almost 40 years ago.

Where is the most exciting place climbing has taken you?

I haven't been climbing in any really exotic locations but have tried most of the usual stomping grounds for British climbers in Europe - the Alps, the Dolomites and bolt-clipping in the Costa Blanca, Sicily and Kalymnos. The most exciting place was probably a narrow snow ridge on an alpine peak with no belays and huge drops on either side, where the consequences of a slip would have been terminal. The Forbes Arete on the Aiguille du Chardonnet is a special memory, because it was my first time on this sort of thing, and because there was an inspirational photo of the route in Blackshaw's book, which was just about the only climbing instruction book at that time. But it is hard to beat the North West of Scotland in a rare period of good weather, and the three classic sea stacks of Hoy, Stoer and Am Buachaille have been superb days out in beautiful locations.

Do you have any exciting climbing or mountaineering plans in the next 12 months?

I have just been to Morocco where there is some great trad climbing and interesting culture. The style of climbing is much like North Wales or the Lakes, but with almost guaranteed good weather. There are lots of easy routes for oldies like me.

I still have a long wish list of classic trad routes in the UK. A bloke on UKC has set up a tick list of the 100 best VS routes in the country; it's the grade I usually climb, but I have over 40 left to do. Hopefully I can manage a few this summer.

Charlene



How many years have you been climbing and how did you get into climbing?

I started climbing about 19 years ago. My boyfriend at the time bought me a one day climbing course at Bowles Outdoor Centre in Kent for my birthday and I really enjoyed it, despite not being great with heights (I'm still not great!). We climbed there and at Harrisons Rocks for a number of years on the Kentish sandstone.

What type/s of climbing do you do and what do you prefer?

Since leaving Kent in 1998, I've mostly climbed indoors but it has been very sporadic over the years. I did my first trad route (seconding) only a year or so ago - my previous outdoors climbing was all top-roped. My real love though is mountaineering, which I sort of fell into from choosing increasingly harder trekking trips for my holidays over the years - it seemed the obvious way to go and I had run out of hard treks to do. I've only been mountaineering for a relatively short time though, so am still trying to hone my skills and gain much more experience.

How long have you been a member of WMC and what made you join?

I've been a member of WMC for about 2 years. Having discovered mountaineering, I wanted to find some like-minded folk that I could meet up with - I did a web search and WMC popped up. It seemed a very active club, with activities going on throughout the year and that was very appealing.

What's the best thing about being a WMC member?

There are a lot of very experienced climbers and mountaineers in WMC so the potential to learn from them is enormous. The hut at Pen-y-Clogwyn is also a fabulous resource that members can take advantage of. There are no end of meets and events available to attend.

Where is the most exciting place climbing has taken you?

I have been very lucky in that I've been able to travel a lot over the years, such as climbing Mount Ararat in Turkey, trekking on the South Inylchek Glacier in the shadow of Pobeda and Kan Tengri. However, I think the most exciting has got to be the expedition to climb Mera and Island Peaks of Nepal in 2013, with the highlight (apart from summiting Mera Peak) being crossing the Amphu Labsta pass. It was beyond anything I'd ever done before and I loved it. I loved the remoteness of it all and the scenery was absolutely spectacular, from the lush lowlands with its rhododendrons to the snowy peaks of Everest, Ama Dablam, Baruntse etc.

Do you have any exciting climbing or mountaineering plans in the next 12 months?

I'll be spending a month in the Swiss Alps to really boost my mountaineering skills by doing some alpine mountaineering courses with the International School of Mountaineering. This is as part of my preparation for the big expedition that I've signed up to next year - an attempt at the 8201m high Cho Oyu. I'll also be trying to get out on WMC meets as often as possible to gain as much experience as I can before then

Frodo



How did you get into climbing?

I started to get proper into climbing roughly in 2008. I had always been a keen hill walker and climbing seemed to form a natural progression.

What type/s of climbing do you do and what do you prefer?

It's somewhat weird to differentiate between types of climbing as having fun is probably the most important aspect. I probably like multi-day mountaineering and exotic climbs the most, followed by winter and trad and have a weird affection to aid-climbing, it's somewhat akin to playing puzzle games. I haven't really got the hang of sport climbing and bouldering, but they are great as training and for their social aspect.

How long have you been a member of WMC and what made you join?

I joined the Wessex in 2008 as I wanted to get into climbing but didn't have any one to climb with.

What's the best thing about being a WMC member?

I really appreciate the social aspect of the club, and that the focus tends to be on having fun rather than grades or climbing styles.

Where is the most exciting place climbing has taken you?

Climbing is great in that it gets you to some places you otherwise would probably not see or see from a different perspective, such as the needles on the Isle of Weight, Lower Sharpnose Point in Cornwall, Welsh mines. Contestant for the most exciting place: The Nose on El Cap, Point 5 Gully on Ben Nevis, Scharligrat on the Weisshorn or a roped solo of Benny at Swanage – can't quite decide.

Do you have any exiting climbing or mountaineering plans in the next 12 months?

"After having to focus over the last year on my university degree it will be great to get back out climbing, with the WMC expedition to Peru in 2016 providing ample scope for plans and ideas. Other things to look forward to are the OMM and the annual WMC Scottish Winter Meet."

Max



How did you get into climbing?

I must have started at least 25 years ago. A group of us from work went down to Croyde in N Devon surfing and when there was no surf we went climbing on the sea cliffs.

What type/s of climbing do you do and what do you prefer?

I largely started climbing trad on sea cliffs and have always preferred the more adventurous climbing. I like mountain, rock and ice climbing so it is hard to say what I prefer, but it would probably have to be mountains.

How long have you been a member of WMC and what made you join?

I joined the Wessex in 2007. I found my original group of climbing friends dwindling as people drifted away so joined to meet people to climb with one.

What's the best thing about being a WMC member?

The main things is getting together with like minded people to go away climbing with, particularly on weekend and longer meets. The hut is also great.

Where is the most exciting place climbing has taken you?

It is impossible to name one, getting to interesting places is one of the great things about climbing. Highlights must include expeditions to Greenland, a remote area of Kyrgyzstan, Wadi Rum desert in Jordan, and the Schaligrat on Weisshorn in Switzerland (11 hours of climbing up to 4500m with nobody else on the same ridge).

Do you have any exciting climbing or mountaineering plans this year?

After a months expedition to Kyrgyzstan last year that took over a year to plan I have not done much planning! However, I will be off to the Alps (linking Alpine Club and WMC meets), and Morroco later in the year.