

Tour Report – Fontainebleau, France

Imperial College Mountaineering Club

19th – 23rd December 2008

Attendance

Full members of the Imperial College Mountaineering Club:

- Andrew Parsons
- Edward Yoxall
- Kunal Masania
- Joe Prinold
- Ariadne Whitby
- Alwyn Eliot
- Adam Billing
- Tolu Ogunseye
- Jonathon Hazell

Financial Status

The club received £175 from the Clubs and Societies Board in funding. This was spent on travel – minibus hire, ferry tickets and toll roads. Members paid a £50 deposit and were responsible for any extra food and accommodation costs thereafter.

Aims and Objectives

The tour aimed to provide keen boulderers an opportunity to test their skills in Fontainebleau during the winter months when the cold air provides a greater level of friction. It also aimed to introduce the area to those who had never been by covering a wide scope of zones.

Member's Impression

After an all night minibus trip from London, the first stop was Bas Cuvier. Unfortunately the weather had not been kind to us and the rock was covered with water. Then it actually started raining. This was frustrating given that we had been assured by the BBC (who else?!) that December was often clear, cold and crisp and that it very rarely rained. Andy, Kunal and Ned took cover under a large overhang, where Andy found a move requiring a single finger jam. Each took turns trying to leave their finger inside the rock.

Accommodation was provided by a Formule 1 Hotel. It managed to feel remarkable like a boat, despite being on solid ground and several hundred miles from the coast. Food was cooked up outside one of our bedroom windows on our trusty stoves.

The second day (Sunday) was spent in L'Eléphant Area, where the sun finally came out to dry the rock. A productive day was had, despite the group being split for a few hours while each tired to find the other! Not much can be done to change the quality of French mobile reception! The evening saw a trip to a small restaurant in Nemours near our hotel. All they could provide was steak, and it was superb!

The third and final full day of climbing was spent in the infamous Cul de Chien zone. Skin was grated and fingers were bruised. Unfortunately, the friction wasn't as good as it could have been, meaning that people were climbing some way off our limit. Our tame geologist assured us that this was due to the porous nature of the rock. Or something like that.

The final day saw us stop off for a final morning on the way home. Unfortunately, it had rained overnight, so all the boulders were soaking aside from a single overhang where many strenuous efforts were focused. They may yet become the subject of a bafta winning short film!

Improvements for the Future

In terms of the organisation of the trip, nothing could have been smoother. As with all climbing, the weather is the defining factor, and perhaps it is worth weighing up the merits of organising a bouldering trip months in advance with no guarantee of clear skies. On the other hand, everyone enjoyed themselves come rain or shine, and that is the most important objective!

Photos



Picture 1 - Kunal poking Snoopy



Picture 2 - Tolu crimping hard



Picture 3 - Andy shows off his massive hands



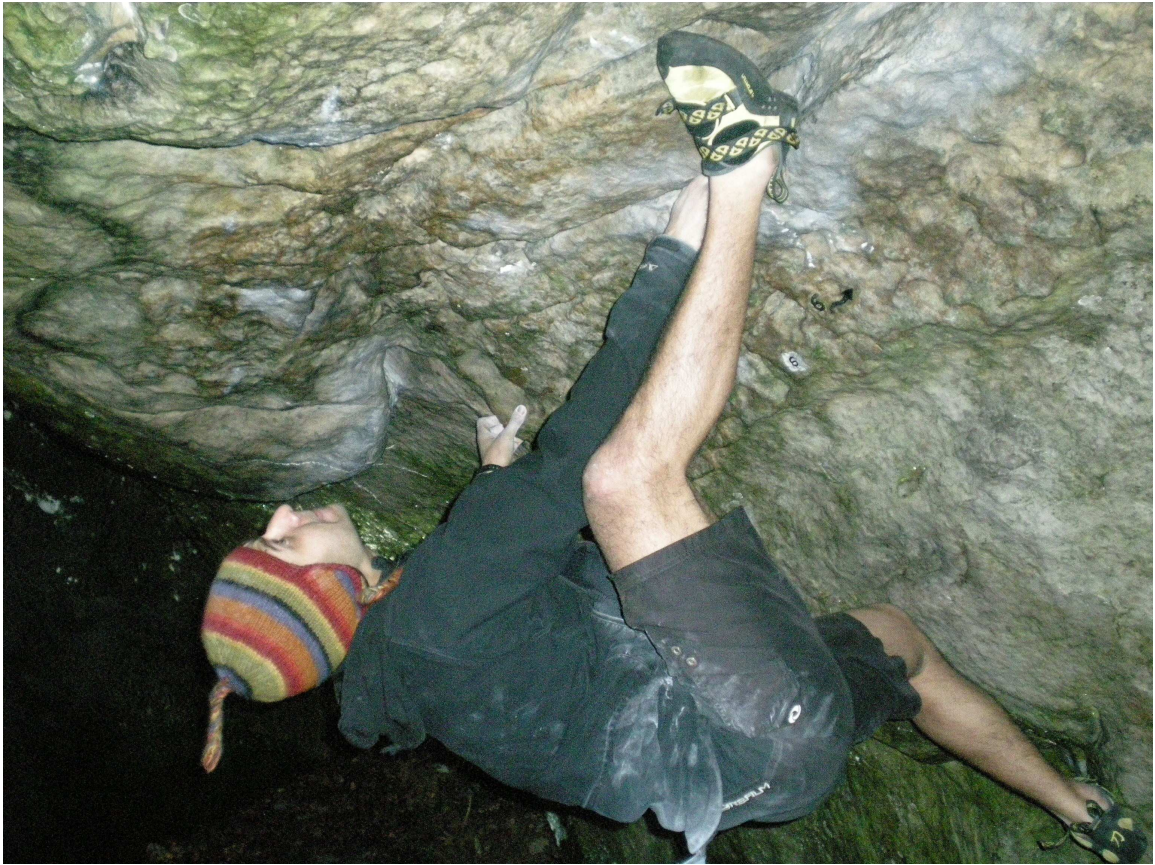
Picture 4 - Filming the action



Picture 5 - Andy getting excited



Picture 6 - Ned trying to hang on



Picture 7 - The aforementioned finger lock!



Picture 8 - Queen of the Castle



Picture 9 - The Team!

