

Commission en direct

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► Jon Lincoln climbing Bienvenue chez Damoclès (140m) on Cap Canaille, Cote d'Azur

From climbing furniture to mountains

The Commission climbing club - great for upward mobility!

by Ciprian Begu, CEND

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With a last name like Lincoln, Jon was bound to be president of something. A Policy Senior Assistant working in the Administration and Finance unit of DG RTD, he climbs mountains in his spare time and heads ClimbEUR, the Commission climbing club. Commission en direct talked to him about his passion and the opportunities the club offers to colleagues interested in a different kind of 'upward mobility'.

How did you start climbing?

I climbed just about anything (trees, climbing frames, shelves...) from a very early age, but I started rock climbing in 1976 at the age of 13. There was a climbing club at school and, very exceptionally for the time, it had a purpose-built climbing wall. The fact that the school headmaster ran the climbing club may have had something to do with this! We also climbed the local clock tower on brick edges: this highly amused a previous pupil who got punished for climbing the clock tower 5 years earlier, yet now we were climbing it with the headmaster! I also climbed outside with the school in Swanage, Cornwall and North Wales.

What is your motivation?

Climbing is a unique sport. It's a continuously interesting physical and mental challenge. The movement is never the same. It gets you outdoors to amazing places with stunning views: it always feels a privilege to be up above the clouds when you know the valley is overcast. It also keeps you fit. While climbing, it's impossible to think of other things so even an evening at an indoor wall will take your mind off your work or troubles.

What do you regard as your greatest climbing achievements?

As far as rock climbing goes, I would say doing the first ascent of a 440m new route on St John's Head in

Hoy (Orkney Islands) – the highest vertical cliff in the UK. Also, doing the first ascent of many sea-stacks in the UK and climbing the North face of the Piz Badile with the club treasurer. Finally, managing to lead a grade 7a rock climb in Belgium (Belgian grades are harder than the standard French grading system - this is normal as the Belgians are the bravest of them all!). In mountaineering, I would say the greatest achievement was doing a new route on the south-west ridge of Imja Tse in Nepal, and in ski-mountaineering, doing the Purist Haute Route with the club Vice-President in nine days of perfect weather.



► Club members travelled to the Petite Aiguille d'Ansabère, French Pyrenees, to tackle Spigolo S (225m)

How did climbing practice come to the Commission?

The Commission climbing club was formed in 1994 by three previous colleagues under the name EuroSpit ('spit' is the Italian name for an expansion bolt in the rock). The name was changed in 1999 to climbEUR,

a terrible mix of 'climber' and 'grimpeur' but which happens to contain EUR. The club is very active with minimum weekly training sessions and rock-climbing trips to many areas: Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Greece, Germany, Italy, Spain, Croatia, Turkey, etc. We are not only concerned with rock climbing but have many members interested in ice-climbing, mountaineering, ski-mountaineering, etc. and have also organised many trips for these activities. The club averages 60 members mostly from the Commission, but also from other institutions and outside. It has a website with many fine photos in the gallery (link below).

What advice would you give to colleagues who might be interested?

Come along and give it a try! Everyone is welcome and can have a go. No-one is too old or too heavy. Contact me via jonathan.lincoln@ec.europa.eu for a free try-out on a Tuesday evening at New Rock climbing wall in Auderghem. We regularly organise training courses and in fact there are some beginner and more advanced courses starting indoors in mid-January.

ClimbEUR (<http://climbeur.eu/>)

New Rock climbing wall in Auderghem (<http://newrockescalade.be/>)

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