

Oxford's very own

Richard Plater of Science Park company Nominet busts some myths about mountaineering and mountaineers, and proves that anyone can go climbing – even in Oxfordshire!

'I was a hill walker from an early age, as a recently unearthed photo from my childhood made clear. I found my 10-year old self beaming out from a family portrait on the summit of an unknown Lake District peak, brown corduroy trousers tucked into red socks, a canvas and leather rucksack, and what looked like a cross between a beret and a flat cap. This was the 70s, after all.

On those early trips I occasionally crossed paths with shadowy figures that seemed to shun the gentle sunlit valleys and broad mountain ridges in favour of the dark, brooding, and often-slimy rock faces. These enigmatic and bearded individuals scurried swiftly into the shade with all kinds of fascinating ironmongery clinking and jangling from the straps of their backpacks. An explanation would always follow from my father: "Ah yes, mountaineers."

Fascination for these strange sorts led me to my local library, where I found pictures of an entirely different breed of mountaineer. Rather than craving the shade, these rock-climbers were lean, tanned, sun-loving figures sporting multi-coloured lycra shorts and ankle length white socks as they gracefully powered up vertical precipices.

For many years this apparent disparity between mountaineering types slipped to the back of my mind, but some five years ago my curiosity came back to haunt me. A quick web search revealed an intriguing opportunity to meet some mountaineers for myself – right here in Oxford.

I'm not sure whether I quite fit the No Fear bill myself, but having gone that once, I've been going every week for the past five years.

Okay, there are no mountains in Oxfordshire, but every Wednesday evening we scale the climbing wall at Oxford Brookes University, which is great fun, good exercise, and occasionally even hair-raising (in a totally safe way of course).

We also head off every fortnight for a weekend expedition, so sometimes we'll leave Oxfordshire

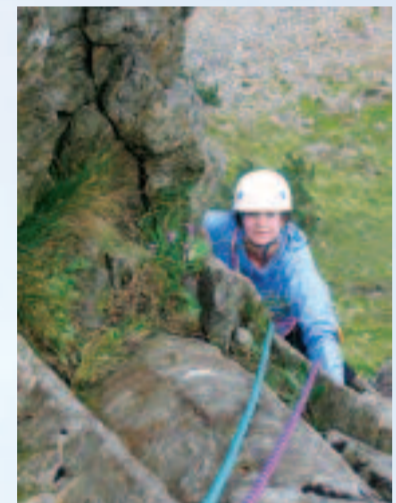
in the morning and be skiing in Scotland by the afternoon.

But if that sounds a bit much, then remember that there are many different ways to climb mountains. You can go bouldering, climb roadside rock crags or sun kissed sea cliffs, go for mountain scrambles in the Lakes or North Wales, or head to remote Scottish peaks in fierce winter conditions. There is something for everyone, in the most beautiful locations in the UK and elsewhere.

Five years ago I knew nothing about mountaineering (and some of my climbing partners are convinced I still know nothing), but it has been five years of fun-filled and inspirational adventures.

The Oxford Mountaineering Club has a membership of around 100 hill-walkers, rock-climbers, and mountaineers. Enthusiastic people of all ages and abilities welcome.

cliffhanger



To learn a bit more, take a look at our website: www.oxfordmc.org.uk

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Lake swimming

For many, the main hurdle was the swimming leg: doing front crawl in a wetsuit in a lake with 200 others close by is a far cry from a gentle breast stroke in the Ozone pool. Luckily our resident super-swimmer Patrick Tschorn was on hand to improve our technique in the early stages of training, and from the start of May we were able to practice open-water swimming in nearby Cassington Lake with the kind permission of the Oxford Triathlon Club.

A good start to the day

Contrary to the weather forecast, the day of the race dawned bright and sunny. After picking up our electronic race timing chips (triathlon is very high tech these days), and racking our bikes in transition (in preparation for the switch from swim to cycle), it was on with the wetsuits and down to the lakeside for the start.

Battle at Blenheim

Since I was the only woman competing on the team, the triathlon organisers gave me special dispensation to race in the same men's heat as all the other individual competitors from Sharp, so the swim leg was a little less lady-like than I was used to.

But after a bit of a battle in the water, we left the lake and ran a rather harsh 400m uphill stretch to the palace forecourt, where we picked up our bikes and completed three laps of the beautiful Blenheim grounds. Here the many lunch hours invested at the gym paid off as we all whizzed past the other athletes on the hills.

The finish line

Finally, we ran a further two (but thankfully shorter!) laps of the grounds before being home and (by now, literally) dry, and finishing was a moment of pure elation. There were lots of big smiles from everyone who completed the

triathlon, and much talk of repeating the experience next year.

Triumphant athletes!

Our fastest individual athlete was our year-in-industry student Michel Kluge (pictured), who finished in 1 hour 23 minutes and 29 seconds. Michel came 13th in his age category, and it seemed that his past triathlon experience really paid off here.

Our fastest newbie was Tom Ford who was not far behind Michel with a fantastic time of 1:26.17.



Our fastest relay team finished 12th overall in 1:20.57, and we are already working on a strategy to win next year!

The question now is... will any other company from the Science Park give us a race next year?



Services

ACCOUNTANTS Julie King on 07887 613309 – Julie@4-kings.co.uk and Anna Tipler on 07860 855836 part-time self-employed service to companies in the Magdalen Centre.

ADMIN FACILITIES fax, photocopiers, binding facilities, A4 laminator, conference & meeting rooms all available in the Magdalen Centre.

ATM is located in the restaurant of Magdalen Centre.

BAR & BRASSERIE IN THE SADLER BUILDING refreshments offered from 8.00-8.00pm Mon-Fri

BUSES the 105 will run three peak time buses daily (two in the morning and one at night). The 106 will continue to run every hour. This will not travel via Kassam Stadium but will go on to Bernsfield. A permanent second stop has been installed outside the Sadler Building.

CAFE MAGDALEN IN MCS offers breakfast & lunch, sandwiches & baguettes 8.00-3.00 Mon-Thurs, 2.00pm on Friday

CAR SHARING OSP have set up a car sharing scheme and full details can be found on the website www.oxfordsp.com

CAR VALETING Clean As New operate within the Science Park with services starting from £10.00. For further details call 07951701493.

CHRISTIAN GROUP meets alternate Thurs 12.30-1.15pm, in MCS. Contact: OSPChristians@gmail.com.

COUNTRY COBBLERS items requiring repair should be left at Magdalen Centre for collection/delivery on Mondays & Thursdays.

DOCTORS SURGERY (Blackbird Leys) 778244

DRY CLEANING items should be left at reception before 10.00am Mon-Fri and Purple Label will collect and return them two days later.

THE OXFORD NURSERY at Sanders Road on the Science Park provides high quality day-care and pre-school education for children from 0-5 years of age. They currently offer a discount for parents who work on the Park. Tel: 396792

OSTEOPATHY offered to Science Park companies by Monica Franke, call 07970 119721.

PLASMA SCREEN situated in Magdalen Centre reception. Occupiers can run presentations for part of the day.

PUBLIC TELEPHONE available in MCS reception in the east wing corridor.

RECYCLING available in MC – aluminium cans, cardboard & paper shredding.

SELF-SERVICING VENDING machines (located in an alcove off MC reception) Soft drinks, tea/coffee, chocolate & crisps and filtered water.

WIRELESS ACCESS available in MCS restaurant area and the ground floor of the Sadler Building.

SPORT & LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES:

FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL contact Karen.Konopka@sharp.co.uk

BRIDGE at lunchtime Magdalen Centre, contact Rytson@jakemp.com

TENNIS on Sharp's court, call 747711

NETBALL OSP Ladies Teams – contact Liz@santec.co.uk

RUNNING AT LUNCHTIMES copies of local maps/guided run of routes from the Park suitable for lunchtime runs contact ian.macpherson@oxfordsp.com or Tel: 781303.

1 MILE INFORMAL WALK set up around the Park – maps available from MCS reception.

BOWLPLEX (next to Kassam Stadium) offers discounts for OSP occupiers: Mon-Fri before 6.00pm £2.50 per person, Mon-Thurs 6.00-10.00pm £2.50 per person. Business card or compliment slip necessary to prove OSP member. You are allowed up to 5 family or friends.

VUE MULTIPLEX CINEMA offers adult tickets to OSP members for £4.50 (normally £6), ID. Weekly film updates are available on www.ozonemultiplex.com or call 0870 4443030 to book. Again identification required.

OZONE HEALTH & FITNESS CLUB 20m indoor pool, sauna/steam/spa, variety of classes. Special rates for OSP occupiers: contact 0870 443 1234

THE OXFORD SCIENCE PARK

www.oxfordsp.com

What's happening in and around Oxford Science Park AUTUMN 2008

SPARK

The Oxford Science Park goes football crazy

Despite there being no British teams competing at the Euro2008 football tournament in Austria and Switzerland this summer, companies based on the Science Park managed to bring some football fever to Oxford in June, thanks to the SP's 'Human Table Football' challenge

The competition, which took place next to the Sadler Building on Friday 6 June, involved a giant inflatable version of table football, the game which is popular in pubs the length and breadth of the land, and which the French famously know as babyfoot.

The game is played between two teams of eight people, all of whom are strapped to giant horizontal poles. Contestants then have to run sideways in unison to get to the ball in order to shoot or pass – a team-building exercise if ever there was one.

Strange though the game may sound, Human Table Football does, needless to say, bring out the competitive spirit in people. The tournament managed to attract thirteen teams from the Park (over 100 players!), who took part in knockout rounds before two teams reached the final.

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Tri, tri, tri again

Lesley Parry-Jones tells us about her experiences with the Sharp Triathlon Team at the 2008 Mazda Blenheim event and lays down a challenge for the 2009...

One rainy evening in May, those leaving the Science Park for home might have been startled to see a group of lycra-clad people running across the Sharp car park in bare feet and swimming hats, only to emerge from behind the nitrogen tanks on racing bikes and disappear at high speed up Grenoble Road.

If they were regulars at the nearby Ozone gym, however, they would have recognised the Sharp Triathlon team getting in some last minute transition practice before competing in the Blenheim Triathlon 2008 on 7 – 8 June.

A 750m open-water lake swim, and a 20km undulating bike route followed by a 5km run were the

daunting components of the Blenheim Triathlon, a challenge taken up by nine individuals and four relay teams from Sharp Laboratories of Europe. Most of the competitors had never competed in any swimming, cycling or running

before, let alone all three at the same time in a triathlon! Preparation is key for sporting events, and a triathlon is no exception. Our training started in February, with regular swim, bike

and run sessions. We made use of the excellent nearby Ozone gym facilities, in particular the swimming pool and spinning (indoor cycling) studio. The staff at the gym were very supportive of our training, especially our spinning instructor Nai Patrocínio, who even came to Blenheim to watch us compete on the day!

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Welcome

Welcome to the fourth edition of Spark, offering a light-hearted cross section of life on and around the Oxford Science Park.

Thanks to all those who took the time to contribute articles and please remember to send articles and photos (high resolution) to us for future publication.

We would also welcome your ideas and feedback for future issues. Please contact:

Shannon.Blaszko@oxfordsp.com
Robert.Horsfield@oxfordsp.com

In this issue

Football Crazy



Tri, Tri, Tri Again



Good Samaritans



Up, Up and Away



New Treatment Suite and Beauty Clinic



Oxford's very own Cliffhanger



Competition

THE OXFORD SCIENCE PARK

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where the business of science comes to life

where the business of science comes to life

Science Park companies go football crazy continued...

The final was between Amey and the 'Science Park All Stars.' The Amey team, which consisted of employees from both their Winchester House and Sherard Building offices, managed to see off the All Stars, in part thanks to the enthusiastic and vocal Amey supporters, who also turned out en masse.

Not just for football fans

As well as the Human Table Football competition, the lunchtime event also involved a barbecue and a variety of other games, including a penalty shoot out, Giant Jenga and giant chess and draughts.

The children at the Park's Nursery also gave the event a family feel, having fun and games in a marquee for the day.

A knockout day

With 300 participants, the overall event, held as an annual thank you on the part of the Science Park to SP tenants, was a huge success, with co-organiser and SP services manager Robert Horsfield commenting: "It's good to see so many people from the Park either actively participating or simply coming down to cheer on their colleagues. The weather has been fantastic, and everyone, competitors and supporters alike, has enjoyed the food and drink."

Meanwhile, Amey captain Darren Mullee commented on his side's victory in the Human Table Football competition: "Over the course of the games, the Amey team fought hard. The lads maintained their smiles throughout. We're thrilled to be crowned Park champions at Human Table Football. We'd like to thank the Science Park team for the trophy and for organising such a great day out, especially Robert and Shannon Blaszkowski. Hopefully more will follow!"

Whatever next?

After previous similar events involving human skittles, football dodgins and mini speedboating events on the Park's lake, more surely do look set to follow. Who knows? Underwater badminton (or some other similarly bizarre game) may reveal sporting talents you never knew you had...



Good Samaritans at OSP

Dawn Farrell tells us more about life with the OSP's little ones at Science Park Nursery.



We recently explored a theme of good citizenship at the nursery, and what a warm feeling pervaded the rooms.

It struck me that the more we delved into the 'niceness of being nice' the happier and more helpful and obliging everyone became - children and adults alike!

'Good Citizenship' was initially an ambitious topic since traditionally nurseries busy themselves with a variety of 'wholesome 'studies' ranging from 'Houses and Homes' to 'All About Me.'

However, the day gave us many stories of acts of kindness, supplemented with visits from parents who work as nurses and soldiers, as well as from a boy scout who used to attend the nursery and who was eager to tell his younger friends how to carry out good deeds and be a good person.

We were so impressed with the wonderful support the parents gave in showing the children what they do in their daily lives to help people. In fact, the children were enthralled fairytale-style and with jaws dropped as one mummy came into the nursery in her nurse's uniform. (Although the staff were pretty impressed by the uniformed fire and police officers, too!)

As if the sight of a 'real' policeman with his police car, someone who actually catches naughty people wasn't enough, one of our pilot daddies (we have a few!) did a fly by in his jet, which the children found most exciting and thrilling (and loud).

If there was any trepidation about how this theme would be received, it was quickly dispelled when we discovered the wonderful benefits that this curriculum experience can provide. First-hand experiences of caring people in our community,



gave the children such a realistic view of the way people can shape the way we live and make a difference in a positive way.

Happily the positivity remains at the nursery and, in the words of the fictional character, Pollyanna, 'I feel glad, glad, glad' that we were brave enough to undertake this topic. Dawn Farrell, Nursery Manager

How many pictures are on the walls of the Sadler Building?

To win a meal for two send your answers to Paul.McGuinness@oxfordsp.com
Closing date October 6th 2008

Up, up and away

Oxford BioMedica's William Shingler was the lucky winner of the raffle at the opening of the Sadler Building. Here, he and his wife Claire (formerly of PharmaVentures) prove that nobody can be uncheered with a balloon...



A bird's eye view!

The Virgin balloon finally down, the other balloons in our party also landed in various places, with one alighting most excitingly in the middle of a road.

As our balloon reached Grove, we flew low over the houses and were able to peer into people's gardens and compliment them on their suppers. We even spotted a colleague from Oxford BioMedica, much to our surprise and more so to his!

Back to earth with a bounce

We had to abort our first proper landing attempt, which was on an old airstrip, because the basket bounced straight into a large bramble bush, but thanks to John's skill we took off again without even a scratch.

We finally touched down the other side of Grove's 'Metal box,' an ungainly building next to the Grove Technology Park, where we were greeted by about a dozen very excited youths who helped make light work of packing away the balloon.

A toast to adventure

With the paraglider hitching a lift on our balloon recovery vehicle, we returned to the Doghouse Inn for post-flight champagne. It was a memorable and enjoyable adventure, and we would thoroughly recommend anyone to go up, up and away over Oxfordshire in a beautiful balloon.

When Sadler Building opened, it seemed appropriate that the event should have something to do with James Sadler himself. Sadler was the first Englishman to fly in a hot air balloon, and so, fittingly, first prize in the raffle was a balloon flight for two with the Oxford Balloon Company.

and an enthusiast respectively, and a powered paraglider.

In the sky with diamonds

After a short briefing, we were all given tasks to prepare the enormous and colourful balloon for flight. A bit of pitching in meant that it was all the more rewarding to find ourselves soon after settled in the basket with our sunhats on. After an enthusiastic burn, the Doghouse was soon a disappearing speck beneath us.

As we ascended to 1,500 feet the views were amazing, in particular spotting a barn owl flying across some fields. We drifted southwest towards Grove and there was suddenly a marriage proposal, the second in that basket in as many weeks. Everyone was then amused to see a big red Virgin balloon make about six aborted landings, each one being in some way inaccessible to their balloon recovery vehicle.

Escape from the rain

English weather normally means prospective balloon passengers can expect to take their flight after three or four postponed bookings. However, after a week of solid wind and rain and with no letup in the forecast, a cloudy but luckily dry Saturday greeted our first attempt.

The balloon was to be launched from the field next to the Doghouse Inn in Frilford, where, on arrival, we were greeted by our pilot John Rose and his support crew. Ours was not the only flight going up that evening: there were also two smaller balloons, taken by a trainee pilot



CHRISTMAS AT THE SADLER BUILDING

Throughout December the brasserie will be offering a festive 2 or 3 course lunch menu in addition to the usual daily choice.

For those looking to book their Christmas party, the entire ground floor (brasserie, bar and lounge area) can be reserved for sole use. On this occasion a 3 course dinner plus half a bottle of wine per person, disco, hats, crackers and novelties can be provided.

For menu, prices and bookings call Linda on:

01189 704665



Treatment Suite and Beauty Clinic

The Ozone's new Treatment Suite at the Health & Fitness Centre on Grenoble Road now offers more reasons to visit and/or join them.

The Treatment Suite offers a wide range of treatments and services, including personal fitness training, physiotherapy and beauty therapy, all carried out in very comfortable and private rooms at the Ozone.

Health and fitness first

For those interested in getting fit, losing weight, or recovering from illness, then the Treatment Suite's Sports & Remedial Therapy Clinic, run by Dan Buda, is for you. Dan is a qualified personal trainer, and a sports and remedial therapist with a wealth of experience dealing with a wide range of

injuries from minor sprains and strains to major muscle ruptures.

Tailored to your needs

As a personal trainer, Dan creates what he describes as

"the perfect, bespoke fitness workouts and weight loss programs for clients through core strength training, weight training and modern - day fat burning techniques."

Dan takes great pleasure in his work, treating every case on its individual merits, and aims to have each client back on top form as quickly as possible.

And relax...

Anita Desai, meanwhile, offers a slightly less fitness-intense service, running the Ozone's Beauty Clinic. Anita is a qualified beauty and holistic therapist, whose treatments include facials, pedicures, manicures, waxing, eye treatments and body treatments.

More specific holistic treatments that Anita offers include: full body massage, reflexology and Indian head massage. Anita says:

"Holistic treatments are important because they help reduce the day-to-day stresses of life by applying pressure and massage techniques to help relax mind and body."



Everyone's welcome

Dan and Anita are offering discounts to Science Park employees. To take advantage of these offers, please use the contact details below:

New autumn offers

Dan is offering free postural and muscle imbalance assessments (worth £15), while Anita is offering 10% off any treatment and, for September only, manicures and pedicures for £15 only.

Ozone Health & Fitness
Grenoble Road
Oxford, OX4 4XP
Tel: 01865 335 300

Dan (Sports & Remedial Therapy Clinic)
07824 807 080
www.sportstherapistoxford.com

Anita (Beauty Clinic):
07807 918 796
anita.desai@hotmail.co.uk