

Spiders Crawling all over Glen Nevis

The MCofS Club REALrock sessions continue with a supported trip to Glen Nevis near Fort William by the Stirling-based Spiders Climbing Club. Nine young club climbers had five parents along and instructors (and club members) Pete Nellist reports:

The Spiders club have been developing over a few years now and we have built up a group of really keen young climbers. Most of them have had a try at climbing outdoors on real rock but it has always been our intention to teach our members how to climb on rock themselves and do it safely.

With this in mind and thinking about how we should go about achieving it we felt a trip away was needed. We arranged to use The Alex MacIntyre hut as a base and head to Glen Nevis for the weekend as this is an ideal venue for introducing climbers to lead climbing outdoors. We also felt that we needed a bit of support for all the kids interested so enlisted the help of Al Halewood a local Mountain Instructor with a great deal of experience at working with young people.

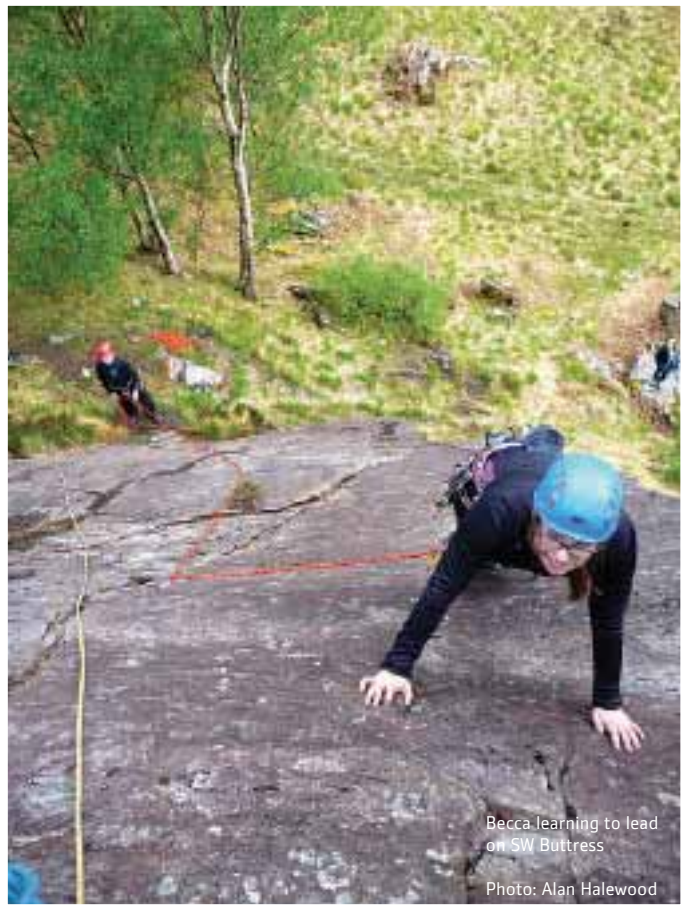
After the first hiccup of forgetting the door code we got ourselves settled in the hut as more of the kids made it up the road. That night we discussed what would happen the next day and with a mixed forecast on the cards we went to bed with fingers crossed for a dry day.

Everyone was up bright and early and huge quantities of breakfast and sandwiches for lunch were made. With everyone fed we headed round to Glen Nevis, meeting Al on the way. Lucky for us the sun was shining on Glen Nevis. For the first day we set up some top ropes above Pinnacle Ridge while Al took Eilidh and Becca for their first multi pitch trad' leads and I took Jacob and Rhea. Before long the crags were busy with Spiders.



Becca & Eilidh topping out on SW Buttress

Photo: Alan Halewood



Becca learning to lead on SW Buttress
Photo: Alan Halewood



Al took his team off to Pinnacle Ridge and SW Buttress. He said after, "I was working with Becca Hay and Eilidh Hinds helping them gain further experience of climbing outdoors. The forecast wasn't great so we jumped straight onto *Pinnacle Ridge (Severe)* checking the guys' rope work and gear placements. We then headed up to The Alp for them to lead some routes on Styx Buttress. As we abseiled back down the rain came on hard but that didn't stop us climbing *Tear (Hard Severe)* on SW Buttress. Then to finish our day we went round to Repton Buttress to recover one of Pete's stuck nuts from the first pitch of *Three Pines (Mild Severe)*. It's great to see such a keen young team lapping up the real rock."



Eilidh on Styx Buttress

Photo: Alan Halewood

I opted for *Three Pines (Mild Severe)* and then on to *The Gutter (D)* where we finished off the day with a big abseil down from the large tree. The rest of the group had plenty of practice working on the shorter routes and also tried their hand at a bit of abseiling.

After the first day everyone was feeling pretty tired as we drove back round to the hut. The kids had a great day and were really enthused to get out and do more. We all tucked in to a well-deserved meal that Lynn had prepared and rested for the evening ready for the next day's activities.

Sunday dawned with the weather still looking like it was going to be wet but as we got back to Glen Nevis it was still dry. We headed up to the Alp where we set up a few harder top ropes on SW buttress. Al had the twins Emma and Sophie today so started them off on Pinnacle Ridge then went over to The Gutter. I had Rhea and Jacob again and started with right end wall. This time Jacob was going to try the sharp end. As we got higher up the routes the weather finally turned and the heavens opened. While we retreated back down via a slippery path Al and his team stuck in and finished the final pitch of their route before abseiling back down.



Learning to place gear
Photo: Alan Halewood



Getting ready to abseil off

Main Photo: On The Gutter on Pine Wall Crag

Photos: Alan Halewood



Emma learning to place gear
Photo: Alan Halewood



We finished off with some top ropes and abseils. Everyone had a great introduction to climbing outside and some of the older ones have taken their first steps into lead climbing. Everyone enjoyed a great and really successful trip that could not have happened without the help and support of all the parents and volunteers who came along. The kids had a great time and made it a pleasure to do. Well done to Alexander, Seona, Paul, Becca, Eilidh, Sophie, Emma, Rhea and Jacob.

Finally thanks to Clubsport Stirling who helped us with funding for a lot of the outdoor climbing equipment we needed to make this happen.