

# MISCELLANY

HIKING CLUB | ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE

2014 - 2016

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“And especially those people, without the merciless pestering of whom, we wouldn't have been very sceptical about the “ *meeting deadlines* ” we mentioned in the Editors' Message. So it's safe to say you got this magazine quite late.

Our apologies. We are human after all.”

- one of the more harried Editors-in-Chief

# FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

Miscellany over the years, has been an indelible part of the Hiking Club. It has been an element that showcases the artistic and imaginative side of many Stephanians.

Being a part of the Editorial Board has been an enriching experience for us . We learnt how to work as a team , meeting deadlines( *grudgingly. Make no mistake though, we actually loved bringing this magazine out*), collecting articles , editing them and typing them despite facing technical computer glitches .

We hope you will appreciate our hard work and enjoy flipping through the pages that take you on a journey from the mighty mountains to the splendid rivers . With this, we submit this **MISCELLANY** to you.

*"As you start to walk on the way, the way appears"* - Rumi

The Editorial Board,  
Hiking Club , St . Stephen's College,  
2016



**The Editorial Board, Hiking Club, 2016-2017**

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# THE FIRST ASCENT

- Rishabh Raturi, B.Sc. Program

More than 30 feet above the ground, sweat trickling down my face, lungs bellowing, heart throbbing, there was flat wall as far as my hands could reach. Right above me was the final carabiner and I took my leap, reaching nowhere near the horn – My heart skipped a beat (I knew the rope could support more than 1800 kilos, but you don't trust anything the very first time, that's human nature). I came down, a dead weight hanging languorously from the rope and walked ponderously to take my seat. I felt smug, I went pretty far.

Thinking about it now, a thousand things could have gone wrong but at that moment before the leap, it was just the adrenaline rush.

An amiable senior kept us from turning back before our very first climb. Then came the team, the President and the Vice President. Quick as lightning the ropes were hung and the harnesses were out (time seems to be against us every single time). Well it's the moment of truth, our first climb, I went first, I swear I could have peed my shorts before my foot went on that wall. A combination of passion and exhilaration is what kept me going!



# WHERE METTLE MEETS ROCK - NATIONAL CLIMBING COMPETITION,

The 10<sup>th</sup> Rohan Kanhai Datta and Sunil Chandra Memorial Open Sport Climbing Competition ( 13th to 15th February, 2015)

The Hiking Club successfully organized the 10th Open Sport Climbing Competition in the memory of Rohan Kanhai Datta and Sunil Chandra. The task of organizing the event was distributed among the club members under the guidance of staff advisor Dr. Sanjay Kumar. Everyone, with Vikas Bhati as the President, made sure that no loose ends were left and the competition became a grand success.



We had around 60 participants from places such as Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore and Haryana. From our college around 40 climbers participated. For the competition, we had three categories- Women (Open), Boys (Under 16), Men (Open). Each category had lead climbing and speed climbing events.

On 13th, afternoon, we commenced the competition with the first round of women's lead climbing, followed by the boy's lead climbing. On the second day we witnessed the first round of men's lead climbing followed by an enthusiastic neck to neck competition in the women's lead finals. Laxmi Singh went on to grab the first place, with Anjali Beifuss not far behind. Following this was the men's lead final which was unanimously won by Adarsh.

The next day, after the men's lead climbing, the exciting speed climbing competition took place. The women performed first, followed by boys and then men. Anjali Beifuss, Manish Kumar and Madhu C.R. were winners in their respective categories.



After refreshing tea and snacks, and an interactive session with a few of The Hiking Club alumni namely Mandip Singh Soni, Mohit Oberoi, Apoorva Prasad and others, the prize distribution was held. The alumni were more than happy to embrace this occasion and give away the prizes. Vikas Bhati won The Eshwaran Bharatan medal for being the best hiking club member. With this the 10th St. Stephen's Rohan Kanhai Datta and Sunil Chandra Open Sport Climbing Competition came to an end. We believe The Hiking Club will have a thrilling year ahead. Till then. Ciao.

## Winners' List

### Men's Lead

Adarsh Singh	Rs. 5000
Abhishek Mehta	Rs. 3000
Madhu C.R.	Rs. 2000

### Women's Lead

Laxmi Singh	Rs. 5000
Anjali Beifuss	Rs. 3000
Shivangi Nigam	Rs. 2000

### Men's Speed

Madhu C.R.	Rs. 2000
Bharat	Rs. 1500
Manish Kumar	Rs. 1000

### Women's Speed

Anjali Beifuss	Rs. 2000
Laxmi Singh	Rs. 1500
Shivangi Nigam	Rs. 1000

### Boy's Lead

Manish Kumar	Rs. 2000
Ajay Kumar	Rs. 1500
Sarvan Chauhan	Rs. 1000

### Boy's Speed

Manish Kumar	Rs. 1500
Ajay Kumar	Rs. 1000
Narendra Singh	Rs. 700

### Special Medal Winners:

Rohan Kanhai Datta Medal for the best Lead Climbing (Male)	- Adarsh Singh
Sunil Chandra Medal for the best Speed Climbing (Male)	- Madhu C.R.
Dr. P.M. Das Medal for the best Lead Climbing (Female)	- Laxmi Singh
Ashok Bazmai Medal for the best Speed Climbing (Female)	- Anjali Beifuss
Basan K Dube Medal for the best climber in Junior Category	- Manish Kumar
Eshwaran Bharatan Medal for the best climber from Hiking Club	- Vikas Bhati

## The 11<sup>th</sup> Rohan Kanhai Dutta and Sunil Chandra Memorial Open Sport Climbing Competition ( 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2016)

- Ambika Malik, B.A. Philosophy



From the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of February the Hiking Club of St. Stephen's College held the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of its annual open sport climbing competition. The competition was organised at the 10 metre high artificial climbing wall located within the college campus. The official name of the competition was almost a tongue twister that ran throughout the competition: 'The 11<sup>th</sup> St. Stephen's College Rohan Kanhai Dutta and Sunil Chandra Memorial Open Sport Climbing Competition'.

For the organisers (club members) the competition meant waking up and reaching the wall early in the morning in order to take out the carpet and chairs for the audience, keep out the flexes, judges table, and registration table, and set up the sound system. Also, buying food for the judges and route setters.



The event began with a speech by Enosh Sinha, the president of the Hiking Club. He thanked all those who had helped with the competition in any way, as well as all those who were present. This was followed by the address by Reverend Valson Thampu, the college principal. His speech dealt with how he might not be the right person to open the event since he himself doesn't know anything about climbing, but how he has always admired the dedication and persistence of climbers.

After these two speeches, the competition officially began. There were two kinds of climbing included in the competition: lead climbing and speed climbing. And there were two age categories: junior (<16) and open (any age). Additionally, men and women participated separately. This meant that there were to be a total of 8 events: Junior boy's lead climbing, Junior boy's speed climbing, Junior girl's lead climbing, Junior girl's speed climbing, Women's open lead climbing, Women's open speed climbing, Men's open lead climbing, and Men's open speed climbing.



Day 1 and Day 2 had the lead climbing events. In these, climbers get 4 minutes to climb the route while clipping the rope in the quickdraws which come on the way. In order to decide the winner, the number of quickdraws clipped is the most important factor, followed by other considerations such as who reaches the highest point on the wall. Participants had to stay in the 'isolation area' while the route was being set and until their turn came, so that they didn't see the route and have an unfair advantage. They could only have a look at the route and start planning their climb in the 5 minute 'observation time', once the route was ready. After that they returned to the 'isolation zone' and waited for their turn.

The route in lead climbing was always an extremely challenging one, and the way in which participants were able to climb despite the many obstacles on the route was really unbelievable. It was especially great to watch the climbers in the junior category, since they were very skilled climbers at a very young age.

Speed climbing took place on Day 3. The route which was set for this was always a very simple one, so that it is very easy for anyone to reach the top. What matters here is obviously who takes the least time to reach the finishing point. After all the events on Day 3 were over, there was the prize distribution ceremony. The effort put in by all of the participants was rewarded and finally paid off. The following were the winners:-

### **SPEED CLIMBING EVENT**

#### *Under 16(boys)*

Gold - Amit Kumar  
Silver - Talim Ansari  
Bronze – Narender

#### *Open (Men)*

Gold - Abhishek Mehta  
Silver - Narender  
Bronze – Ganesh

#### *Open (Women)*

Gold - Shivpreet shannu  
Silver - Shivani Charak  
Bronze – Khushboo

### **LEAD CLIMBING EVENT**

#### *Under 16(boys)*

Gold - Talim Ansari  
Silver - Narender  
Bronze - Aman Dogra

#### *Under 16 (Girls)*

Gold - Shivpreet Shannu  
Silver - Shilpa Charak  
Bronze - Shivani Charak

#### *Open (Men)*

Gold - Ajij Shaikh  
Silver - Abhishek Mehta  
Bronze - Nikhil Margonwar

#### *Open (Women)*

Gold - Shivpreet shannu  
Silver - Shivani Charak  
Bronze - Shilpa Charak

Enosh Sinha, the President of the Hiking Club, received the Eshwaran Bharatnam medal for being the best climber from St. Stephen's College. Apart from this, all climbers received participation certificates.

The whole experience of organising the competition was a great one, and once it was over even the organisers rewarded themselves with a well-deserved "after-party". The lack of sleep and the stress of the last few weeks – they were the least of our problems. The night now echoed with the victorious chants of our exuberance.

# "HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS" - TREKS

- Riya Taneja, B.A. English

No matter how tired you are, no matter how badly you want to give up in the middle and just stop walking, what keeps you going, is but the thrill to reach the top. The view is always breathtaking - you almost forget your swollen feet, bruises and blood clots. And when you turn back, you realize you had the most beautiful journey.

*You felt the Beautiful pain of adventure - Trekking.*



From a traveler to a wanderer, from roads to trails  
One might spot a golden eagle flying above his head  
Or worms making their way  
Venture out to discover, the creation and the 'I'  
Mountains tell a better story than the bricked city life.

## Khanpari Pass Trek ( October 2015 )

- Vanessa Beddoe , B.Sc. Mathematics

In Delhi, it's a chilly Tuesday evening and there stand 15 excited faces that have chosen 'to dare'. Awaiting a 14-15 hour journey to Manali, this bunch of students look forward to the 5 days in front of them, barely knowing the reality of the journey they're undertaking.

"You have 15 minutes, just 15 minutes guys", shouts Enosh. And that's the time that we had to freshen up after that back aching bus ride. It's 9:45 am/ 22.5 degrees C/1788m/Manali . Rations were bought, things were arranged and at 1:04 pm/26.9 degrees C/1806m, all of us are at the back of a pick-up, on our way to the starting point of this endeavour.

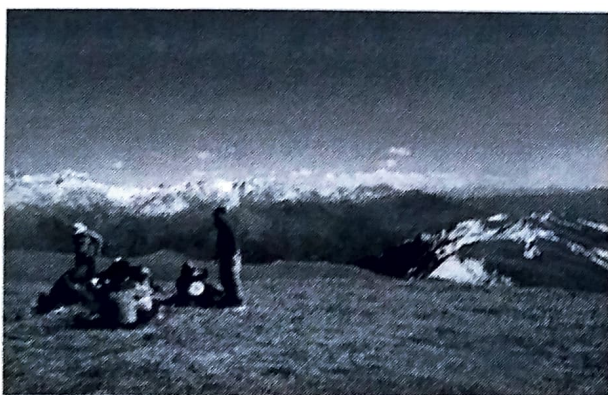


15 kgs backpacks. *Check*. Jackets. *Check*. Water. *Check*. Excitement. *Check*. Energized. *Check*. Ready to dare. *Check*.

The first ascent moves along Manali Sanctuary within the dense and beautiful forest with overwhelming large pine trees. The man-made trail sometimes faded, but we continued walking. It's been only one hour, already breathless and we simply can't fathom what the next four days are going to be like. Nevertheless, our spirits still high and fresh, we walk on. Two and a half hours into the uphill march (2260m/18.6 degrees C), we see a clear view of Patalsu Peak and Rohtang Pass. The view was breath taking and you have a head spinning view of the Manali valley which was left far below. The bird's eye view of the broad valley with its surrounding tree covered mountains compensated for the hardships on the way. At the last stretch of the walk, Nishu Bhaiya, our guide had just initiated his quota of lies for the trek. "Aur pandara minute", said he. Well, it was only after over an hour (6 pm/10'C/2893m) that we reached Lama Dugh, a

large bowl shaped clearing with an abandoned hut in the middle. As tired and exhausted as you are after that long walk, there is a new found energy that makes you run and complete it fast so that you can sit back and relax. "Where are the pegs?","I need a torch." That was the part when we were setting up tents - My first time. A hot cup of soup, dinner by the fire, and off we went to sleep. The night was chilly and sleepless. Not even half way to our destination and I was already freezing at that altitude. I had put on my entire quota of warm clothes for the trek. I didn't know how I was going to bear the cold the coming days as the temperature was clearly going to decrease.

Day 2: 22nd October

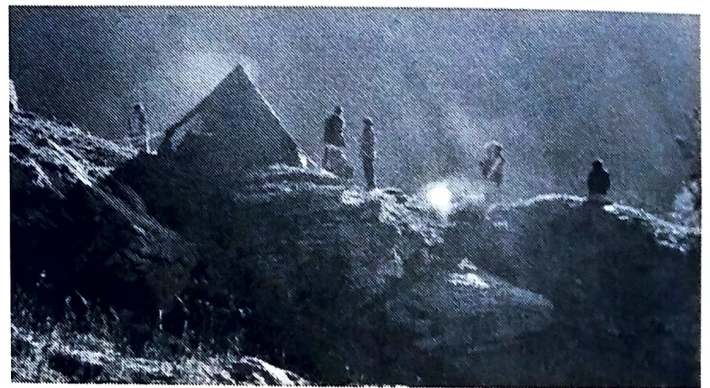


We woke up to find the little pond near our tents frozen (7.1°C/2897m) and the nearby hill white with frost. After a quick breakfast of eggs, jam, bread and porridge, we folded the tents and started off at 9:03 am. The initial climb was gradual through the receding tree-line. The foliage became sparse and the few trees left were the Bhojpatar trees. A little way ahead I saw my first clump of snow. My excitement knew no bounds. To my delight, I was shortly

standing at the base of a snow covered mountain. The climb up the snowy mountain was excruciating. Despite the beauty of these snow covered Himalayan Mountains, the climb up this snowy mountain tested our patience and willpower. There came a point when all of us had run out of water and were really thirsty. We started eating clumps of snow but couldn't quench our thirst. So we filled a bottle with snow and tried warming it under our jackets but to no avail. At 1:30 pm, we finally reached Khanpari Pass (6.0 degrees C/3785m). After a quick well-deserved lunch, we started our journey downhill towards Riyali Thatch. In order to cross over to the other mountain, we had to descend and then ascend again through golden meadows. In the distance we could see our camp where the horses were grazing. It is only true to say mountains are indeed deceiving. They seemed very close but it was only by 4:15 pm that we reached our camp at Riyali Thatch (14.0 degrees C/ 3325m). We set up the tents and collected firewood as a team and then, sat around the bonfire.

A trek isn't complete without horror stories, and with that Sanjay Sir starting telling us stories. Ask one of us about 'the hooves'.

We then returned to the tents for a well-earned rest. Tomorrow was going to be D-day. Waking up to the sunrise across and the range of mountains was magnificent (6:30 am/6.5 degrees C/3331m). Post breakfast, we packed goodies-apples, dry fruits and cheese and started the day traversing through the slopes (8:30 am). There come points where one has to literally use all four limbs to hold on to dear life. You then reach a frozen river, cross it and look ahead to see steep slopes. The beauty and aura of the first part of the trek did not allow us to even remotely guess what lay ahead. After climbing many ridges, one looks up to find another steep mountain with a zig-zag path to be conquered. Nishu Bhaiya started off with his "aur pandara minute" chant. My energy had run out after that arduous climb. But Enosh, being the motivator that he is, told me to keep going. With baby steps and continuous sips of water, we eventually reached the Base camp (12:00 pm/ 8.3 degrees C/ 3855m). An achievement. It was really cold and windy at the Base camp. While some of the guys continued to climb past the Base camp, we relaxed for about an hour or so till they got back.



"It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves." - Edmund Hillary



What Edmund Hillary said comes alive when you really are at that position. You would have pushed yourself to limits you would have never have imagined you would. And you would have conquered hardships you could only dream of. And trust me when I write this, there's no exaggeration. One comes to realise why the Himalayas are called mighty. The view is breath taking. Across the base camp, we can clearly see the peaks of Indrasan, Indra

Tilak, and the Deo Tibba. The silence is perfect. The true meaning of perfect silence seeps in. There's a sense of tranquillity in the air. I wouldn't be wrong to say that you can actually see peace and purity in these ranges.



**Victor of Heights**

With a sense of achievement, we make our way back to the camp. It is also worth mentioning that I saw my first snow fall on our way back. It was beautiful. After a day spent trekking, there's no better way to relax than around a campfire with companions. We shared good memories of the day, laughed at certain happenings and knew that the only thing missing in this beautiful picture of joy was roasted marshmallows. That night we went through another round of horror stories, this time first-hand experiences of our teammates that made it even scarier.

Day 4: After a scrumptious breakfast, we started our descent through another trail at 9:40 am. It was a relaxed walk through gently downhill slopes and meadows. All of us were really enjoying the walk, singing and continuously munching on our trail food. We passed many herds of sheep and after walking a considerable amount for the day, Nishu Bhaiya decides to tell us "aur bees minute". "Pandara" had become "bees". I knew what this meant. We eventually reached the camp at 3:30 pm (3000m).



We had by now become a family, having motivated and supported each other throughout the trek. Sitting in the tent with everyone, I could not be happier to have extended my family. We played games, shared stories, talked about what food we would gauge on once we returned, and bonded over tea and biscuits. As night fell, we all rushed into our tents again as it started snowing. Covering ourselves in our sleeping bags, we all cooped up together and started playing games till midnight. The moment couldn't have been any better.

The following day was going to be our last day. As we packed our tents and had breakfast 3000m above sea level for the last time, we all seemed a little nostalgic that the trek was coming to an end. We hurdled up as a team and cheered for the Hiking Club of St. Stephen's College for having given us this opportunity. We then started our descent. We hadn't lost much altitude the previous day and today the descent was going to be steep. Two hours into the descent, it was spectacular to spot 12 golden eagles soaring majestically in the sky. As you walk downhill, you will come to a steep slope which would tempt you to slide down it. And yes, we fell prey to this, only to have some of us tearing our pants. We soon reached the tree line distinctly marking the edges of the meadows. The trail turns narrow and sparse and different varieties of pine cones adorn the slope. After an hour of descent, one can suddenly see a fantastic view of a vast stretch of Kullu valley, with the meandering Beas in the middle, an unforgettable bird's eye view. As we continued to walk down that treacherous slope, we tried to lighten our spirits by singing songs, playing games, and being cheerful. Nishu Bhaiya says, "Aur thora". By now, only a part of me trusts him. The first sight of civilisation brings a sense of relief and joy to all of us. We've made it.



This trek proved to be worth every single moment. I cannot put into words the warmth and homeliness I now feel to my trek family. The motivation, will power and persistence in the environment everyone helped to create proved to be the best support system. One could see real team work in everything we did, may it be setting up tents, helping someone cross a hurdle, or plainly giving someone company. Also, something worth mentioning is that Nishu Bhaiya did prove to be motivating in his own small way by not telling us the truth to avoid bringing down our vigour.

Despite the severe hardships and hiccups we faced, the first hand purity of nature we experienced and the bonds we made over these five days we absolutely worth it. This trek pushed me to my limits. It made me believe that life was about so much more than what we really do in our individual lives.





## Chanderkhani Pass Trek ( October 2015 )

- Vanlalhriati Tlau , B.Sc. Mathematics

I thought I knew what it would feel like to carry a 10-15 kg rucksack while climbing a mountain. I didn't. The reality was 10 times worse.

The initial excitement of going on a trek wore off half an hour into the trek, as we got a dose of what the next four days were going to be like. However, as we reached our base camp, we all felt a small sense of achievement. We pitched our tents and gathered firewood in the freezing cold and I wondered how I would be able to survive the next four days. As we sat down to eat dinner near the bonfire, I could see new friendships budding everywhere around me and I couldn't help but smile. The night, however, was ruthless as ever and sleep was something we could only hope for as we froze into the morning.



Everyone was up by 6 the next morning and we quickly packed our tents, ate breakfast and started on our second day of the trek. Though I was feeling a bit unwell, the trek wasn't as difficult, mostly because I was walking with the ever motivational and enthusiastic Ambika, who always had an endless supply of anecdotes for everyone throughout the entire trek.

We reached our base camp quite early and had plenty of time to pitch our tents and gather firewood. The large amount of firewood led to a bonfire that lasted for about an hour or so, and, as always, people started off with the usual ghost stories.

The third day came and we prepared ourselves to reach our final destination. The trek up was enjoyable to say the least. The breathtaking view that awaited us at the top made all the sleepless nights worth it.

We reached our base camp with a lot of time to spare. Turns out playing 'zip-zap-boing' and 'bang-bang' with a wonderful group of people can make the hours fly by. Before we knew it, we



were eating our last dinner near the last bonfire of the trek. 10 of us decided to sleep in a 6-man tent that night, playing 'Mafia' into the early hours of the morning. It was supposedly below zero degrees outside, but inside the tent there was such warmth. A warmth unlike that of the 45 degree Celsius Delhi summers, but a warmth born out of friends turning into family. It was at that moment that I realized the true meaning of the words, "It is not the destination, but the journey that matters."

The trek down a mountain is said to be more difficult than the trek up. Yes, the trek down WAS difficult. However, the trek down was more enjoyable, because I was surrounded by my new found TREKKING FAMILY.



# LIFE LESSONS FROM THE DEO-TIBBA BASE CAMP TREK

- Vaishnavi Rathore, B.A. Program

This mid-sem break, I lost myself, and found myself again. Usually, when people talk about travelling, they talk about how they found and discovered themselves, but for me, travelling is when one loses themselves, unlearns, unravels. That is exactly what I did this mid-semester break, when I decided to trek the Himalayas with the Hiking Club of College, to Manali. I wanted to do this trek because it included a number of things which have topped my bucket list (and now have been successfully struck off!)- sleeping in a tent, looking at a clear, starry night, and witnessing snowfall. And while I was on my week long trek, I realized how seven days of slipping, walking, climbing rocks and stepping over streams had a series of life lessons hidden within them. Here are a few of them:

### ***The journey is more important than the destination:***

Plain and simple, enjoy your life. Since we are always in a hurry to reach our set goals and aims, most of the time we forget to stop and look around, and enjoy what we have at that particular point of time. While trekking, the green pastures, the different shades of crimson, red, brown, yellow and orange autumn leaves, the deep valleys with the gushing river flowing, the chirping of the birds; all of it was definitely more beautiful than the camp areas where we spent the nights.

### ***You find inspiration from the least expected people:***

The fact that not everyone has the same stamina and walking pace is something you discover in the trekking process. While there is a group walking shoulder to shoulder with the guide, there is always a group of falling, tripping, huffing and puffing people, trying to catch up

with the first group which is at least half a kilometer ahead. But what's surprising is that not the first group, but the last group will inspire you. The process of getting up after tripping, the will to complete the trek, the breaking of the mental block that the last group practices will inspire you more than the stamina of the first group. In life, likewise, when you feel you have lost all inspiration, stop looking for it, and you will be surprised from where it comes to you.

***There is more than one solution to a problem:***

Life can be challenging when it throws at you a series of boulders, so is trekking. But when you find a boulder in front, you must know that there is more than one way to go past it. When going around it does not work, you can always climb over it. The secret is not to give up.



***Sometimes you need to take a wrong path to get to the right one.***

I almost slipped from a cliff on the trek, something was a result of my decision of taking one of the two paths in front. On the face of it, this path looked easier but little did I know that a couple of steps ahead, all that will be left of the path will be slush and slippery mud. But after slipping, I decided to step back and return to take the second path. Life too, gives you the opportunities to make mistakes and learn, and select the correct path.

***The best things in life are free:***

When you have no phone connection, no television, no internet for a week, it is only then you

realize how superficial all these things are. Trust me, one day into the trek, I had quite forgotten how my mobile phone looked. And the best part is, over the days you realize that all the best things in this world are completely free: a warm hug on a cold morning, the warm sunshine, the starry night, the pure, chilled water from the stream, the soft snowfall that sticks to your hair and the snowcapped mountains.



### ***Travel light:***

Since this was my first trekking experience, my back had to bear the load of over 10 kgs, something that hindered my pace on the trek. The secret is to travel light, with no extra baggage. Life is pretty much the same, get rid of the extra emotional baggage, let go of grudges and hatred, and life will seem easier, lighter and blissful.

### ***Your biggest fears can be the most irrational:***

While sleeping one night in the tent, we heard a strange, grumbling, roaring sound, and the first thought that went through my friend's mind was that it belonged to a bear. A few breathless minutes later, we found out that it was only Nanda Sir snoring in the next tent. Fears indeed are irrational, we need to look through them, laugh at it a little and get over it to move along.

***Flock together:***

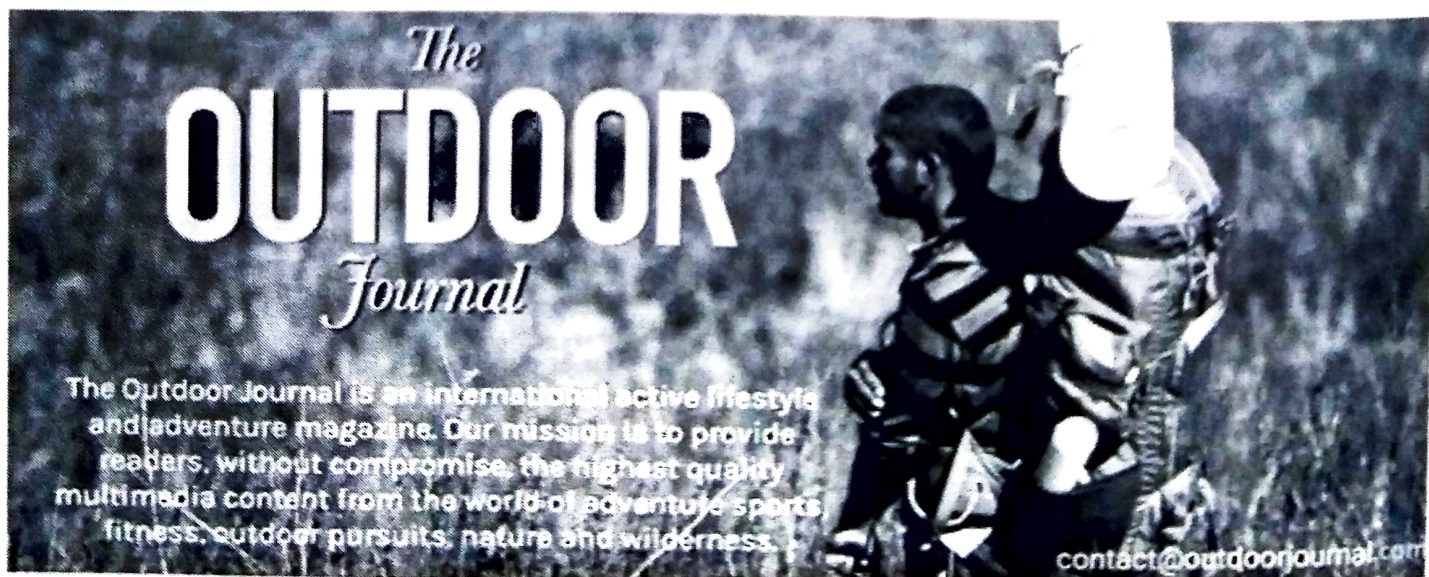
Sheep are strange animals. You will never see a single sheep, they are always followed by at least a gazillion. It will be wrong if I say we must be like sheep, always together and following the other, but during the worst times, it's good to flock together with your friends and family when they need you to have their back.

***Push yourself:***

If someone came up and told me that I have to walk for seven hours, uphill, my first reaction would be "not in a million years." but I pushed myself, and discovered that I could, indeed, do it. Just a little pushing yourself, you will be amazed what all you can achieve. Life, after all, begins at the end of your comfort zone.

***Missing something is fine:***

The end of the trek and coming back to Delhi was accompanied by deep sadness and a sense of grief, and a huge dose of missing. But it is only when you miss something you realize how important and valuable it was in the first place. It is okay to miss, to cry, to let go once a while.



# AN ODE TO KHANPARI PASS TREK

- Sameer Sagar , B.A. English

We look ahead...

That bus ride after the trek,

Those moments I fondly recollect,

That fun, that laughter, that sunset ,

Making new friends whom we had never met,

That cramped bus ride, which in excitement looked like a jumbo jet,

The beautiful Monastery where we stopped for some rest,

The tea we sipped when the bus halted for rest,

Looking at the stars at 3 when the entire city had slept ,

The rush of adrenaline in our bodies can't be expressed,

That fox which suddenly came and left,

It is the attitude not the altitude as someone said,

The bonfire where some memorable tales were told,

Crossing the turbulent river and sliding on the hilly slopes,

Those cold nights in tents we had spent,

The secrets so dear to us we shared,

The ghost stories which scared a few and made others laugh ,

The grandeur of the mountains that kept us alive,

The sense of accomplishment when you complete the trek,

The smile on everyone's faces when we for the after party met,

It is not the wealth or the possessions you take ahead but the memories you'll recollect,

A group of people so different, yet so close, took to dare.

# THE AQUATERRA CHALLENGE

- Amandeep Kapoor, B.Sc. Mathematics

It was the start of winter holidays when wanderlust kicked in. It is rightly said that when you least expect it, the great adventure finds you. Well, it sure did find us. Hardly did we know what fate had in store for us: A sudden call out of the blue was all it took for us to answer adventure's beckon. It was the Aquaterra Challenge, 2015.

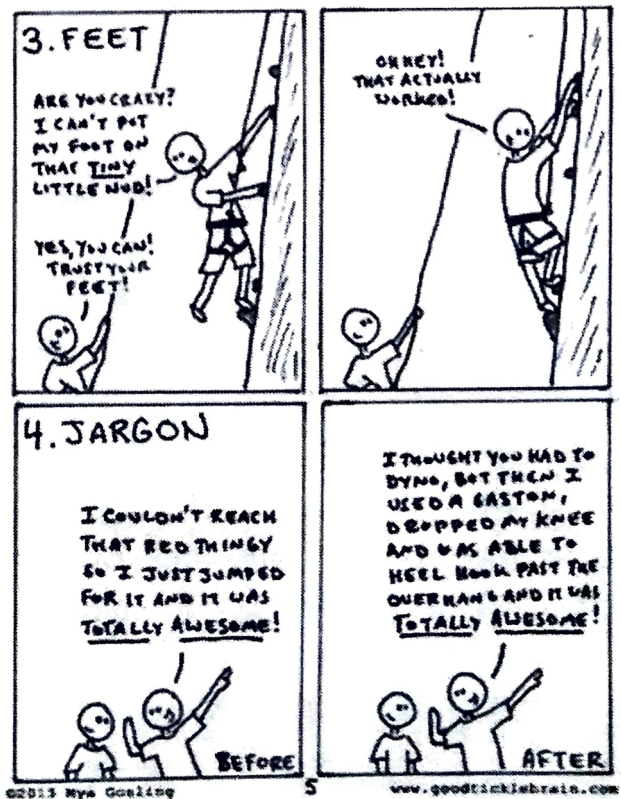
A four man team was selected to represent the Hiking Club. We met up at Delhi coming from various corners of the country and reached Rishikesh early morning with much time to spare. This time was spent exploring Rishikesh: covering places such as the LakshmanJhula and Rajaji National Park and feasting on delicious food. The team then decided to hitchhike the remaining 30 kms till the Race HQ. First at the back of a loaded pickup truck and then in the car of fellow participants – we made it to the Race HQ and were shown our tent post which we were introduced to our competitors over dinner.

Day One started early for us college lads who find attending the 8:40 class impossible; surprisingly we packed and loaded at 6 a.m. The first day included a trek route of 25 kms passing through villages, jungles and rivulets. The trek route was extremely deceptive - each time one went downhill and felt the trek easy we would turn to meet a merciless uphill gradient. But as our president rightly remarked "It's not about the altitude but about the attitude", we pushed on. We completed the trek route with one of our team mates making it to the top 5 and holding the club banner high. After much needed energy drinks and Maggie we finally rested.

Day 2 of the challenge threw at us 25 kms of Mountain Biking through roughs road followed by 26 kms more of River Rafting in the mighty Ganga. Words like thrill, adrenaline rush, fear, adventure were in our minds when we realised that a small error in our balance will lead to a plunge into the crashing waters of the Ganga. After the cycling leg, rafting was ahead of us. Pushing paddles 2 days ago seemed so easy but after cycling it became demanding for our nerves. We braved the rapids that the river plunged us into. The motivation that each member gave to the other was what held the fabric of the team together. When the finish line came in sight we scoured what energy we were left with and made it till the "You Did It" board bringing it all to an end.



Back at the Race HQ we all went and did two things of utmost priority. First, take a long hot shower and second, a nice sound sleep. A big party with a music band along with a DJ system was organized to light up the evening. This party was an eye opener when it came to our dancing skills. The prize distribution ceremony was held with Hiking Club finishing 3rd overall, missing the second spot by just 10 points. But above all, the bond of friendship formed over these two days will be the memories that we carry forward and will feel proud each time we recall these days that it was us who Chose To Dare.



# NORTH ZONE SPORT CLIMBING COMPETITION 2015

- Supriti David , B.A. English

*"Every mountain top is within reach if you just keep climbing."* - Barry Finlay

The 21st North Zone Sport Climbing Championships was held at the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, New Delhi between the 26th and the 28th of September 2015. A team comprising of first, second and third years represented St. Stephen's college in the three events which included Bouldering, Lead Climbing and Speed Climbing. The event started off with lead climbing for the visually impaired for the Sub-Junior category. This was the first time this event was introduced in the Competition and watching the children conquer the wall so effortlessly left each one of not only us but everyone present in awe.

The first event that the members of the hiking club participated in was the Speed Climbing event. Since most of us had never even seen a speed climbing wall, we were grateful that a demonstration was provided to us. Though none of us other than our President could complete the wall, watching him complete it and cheering each other on was enough to leave us feeling accomplished. The first event that we participated in next day was the Women's Bouldering event. There were four walls, each one having a different problem which the participants had to solve and touch the finishing hold. This was an event that challenged us not only physically but also forced us to think logically and solve the problem. The next event was the Men's Lead Climbing event which proved to be a little more challenging than we had anticipated. Despite the fact that the wall had lesser holds than we'd ever imagined, we tried our best and knowing that we were, in fact doing our best kept us from being discouraged. The last event that we participated in was the Men's Bouldering event. It was a favourite amongst us Hiking Club members and just watching other participants attempt the problem was exhilarating. With that the Championship came to a close which was followed by the distribution of prizes the next day.

This Championship was the first sport climbing competition that a lot of us had ever been to and, thus, was a huge eye opener to the standard and level of competition that's actually out

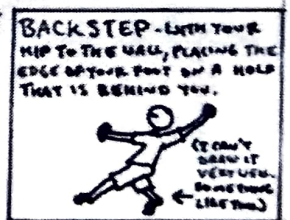
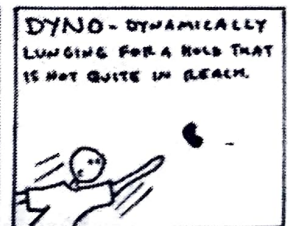
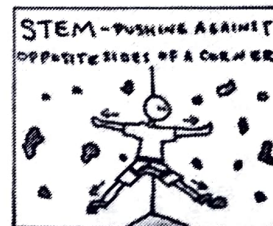
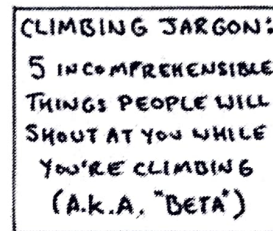
there. It motivated us to get better and practice harder and brought us all closer together as a club. Though none of us won anything we, nonetheless, felt like we had taken back something of great value from the competition which will remain with us for a really long time. As our President, Enosh, keeps saying, "It's not about the Altitude, but the Attitude." This competition really changed a lot of our attitudes towards climbing and that's what's most important at the end of the day.



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# MISCELLANEOUS TRIPS

- Kashika Bindrani, B.A. English

One might think that trekking is the only adventure hiking club partakes in. But for us, exploring and challenging ourselves starts not just in the mountains but also in river rapids and in our own city as well. Every year our club organises cycling trips around Delhi and rafting trips where adventure enthusiasts from all the courses come together to experience the thrill and joy, to challenge themselves and each other and to tick another checkbox off their "**BikeIt**" list.

## Rafting Trip – Rishikesh ( 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2016 )

- Supriti David, B.A. English



The fifth, sixth and seventh of March, 2016 witnessed a journey unlike any other. The Hiking Club organized its annual Rafting trip to Rishikesh and to say that it was absolutely breathtaking would be a severe understatement. 53 students spanning all three years underwent this beautiful experience and developed friendships that will definitely stand the test of time. Led by

our extremely able President and Vice President, Enosh Sinha and Paritosh Gupta respectively, the trip was a huge success.

We left for Rishikesh on the night of the fourth of March and reached the Aqua Terra camp by breakfast time the next day. We took rest for a while after which we went on our first leg of the journey straight away. Excitement took over every single mind and before we knew what was happening we found ourselves in lifejackets and helmets with a paddle each in our hands being instructed about what to do in case we found ourselves in the midst of the rapids.

After about half an hour of getting to know the basics of paddling a raft we set forth for the 24 km journey with rapids unlike anything we had ever seen before. The rapids had grades associated with them in accordance to their intensity - the lowest being one and the highest

being six. The guides informed us that the river that we were on had rapids all below the grade of three. For us, however, these Rapids were enough to have an adrenaline rush unlike anything we've ever experienced before.

After the rafting for the day ended we were welcomed back to the camp with the amazing cooking of the officials there. The 'hot lunch' was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone followed by a much anticipated hot bath. The evening of the fifth was filled with songs, dance and stories. Since we were all pretty exhausted we jumped into bed pretty early, with eagerly anticipating the next day.

The sixth of March was the day we all took on the most intense rapid that the river had to offer which was called The Wall. It was named so because when one would go through it the water would come up like a huge wave or 'wall' in front of the raft. And this is exactly what happened. This was by far the most exhilarating experience that any of us had undergone. A few even saw their lives flash before their eyes however at the end of it all none of us would have had it any other way.

We started back for college on the evening of the sixth of March and reached college in the early hours of the morning. This experience, just like the treks and all the other events organized by the club, was an experience I will never forget. Adventures like these allows us not only to venture out of our comfort zones but more importantly it allows us to make memories which is what the Hiking Club is all about. It was here that I found myself when I was a shivering unsure first year and I owe everything to this wonderful family that I'm a part of.

## Cycling Trip to Qutub Minar ( 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015 )

*- Devika Shekhawat, B.A. Program*

The Hiking Club always looks forward to do something new and adventurous every year and this year started off with a thrilling cycling trip through the streets of Delhi starting from the college to Qutub Minar.

At around 6:30 the team of 10 assembled outside the Rudra Gate. After the team was debriefed by Dr. C. Guite, the team left the college geared up in their cycles, excited and bubbling with energy. Although we had a more than 50 kms journey ahead of us, none of us looked apprehensive. The trip started off with loads of excitement and enthusiasm.

The route we took went through Kashmeri Gate, Karol Bagh, the outer Ring Road, Chanakyapuri and through Sanjay Vanh. We cycled on Vandematram Marg, Simon Bolivor Marg and Africa Avenue which are excellent roads and peddling by the Budh Jayanti Park, Australian High Commission and The Embassy of USA was sensational. With the gentle breeze flickering over our faces, the light traffic and the scenic beauty, we forget that there was still a long journey lying ahead of us and pushed harder. On reaching Chattarpur area we decided to go through Sanjay Vanh which is a dense and beautiful forest with many plants, animals, snakes, peacocks and archaeological ruins. Once we got back on the highway, Qutub Minar wasn't far. We kept our cycles in the parking lot and went to visit the monument. As we entered the Qutub Minar complex everyone was mesmerized looking at the beautiful architecture that surrounded us.



Feeling relaxed and rejuvenated we went back to our cycles and rode towards Saket for lunch. Even though we had to cycle back, everyone still ate a heart full meal. By the time we finished our meal, the weather had become quite pleasant and it started drizzling. So the experience of cycling back was a lot more fun.

While going back we took Sri Aurobindo Marg which went through AIIMS, Hauz Khas and India Gate. It was a wonderful experience to cycle down to India Gate in the rain on Independence Day. By the time we reach CP everyone was exhausted so we stopped at McDonalds for some hot tea and coffee. After CP we decided to take the Purani Delhi route back to north campus. It was a beautiful experience to cycle in Purani Delhi and the Red Fort area and look at the kites flying above us on Independence Day.

After crossing Red Fort we picked up our pace and quickly cycled back to north campus. At around 7:30 in the evening we reached St. Stephen's College and the trip was finally over. This experience of cycling around Delhi in the rains was remarkable. Despite the exhaustion everyone went back with a very positive and happy attitude and looking forward to the next.



# AQUATERRA ADVENTURES

*Aquaterra Adventures, Only Indian Co. Selected by National Geographic Society on the "Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth." survey - 2008 & 2009 Treks and High Altitude Expeditions and Climbs in Ladakh, Kinnaur, Spiti, Himachal, Garhwal and Kumaon Himalaya, Rafting on the Brahmaputra, Subansari, Kameng, Zaskar, Indus, Spiti, Suttej, Tons, Ganga, Alaknanda, Bhagirathi, Kali rivers. Go With The Globally Recognized Specialists !*

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