

1. Special News

Johannesburg Section Member, Sean Disney , phoned to report that they reached the South Pole yesterday, Sunday 24th! Sean led the group comprising three other South Africans, Jason Grové, Donald O'Connor and Vaughan de la Harpe and two mountaineers from Azerbaijan - Tarlan Ramazanov and Gusseyn Baghirov. They were airlifted from Patriot Hills and dropped off at the 89th Degree, and from there ski-ed to the South Pole. The group had earlier successfully summited Mt Vinson with several other South Africans. Vaughan, who successfully climbed Everest with Sean in 2006 (when they both completed their Eight Summits (the Seven Summits + Kosciusko, accepted as an alternative to Carstenz Pyramid), did not go to Vinson again but instead flew to Antarctica after the main group, and waited for them at Patriot Hills.

This makes Sean, Jason and Donald the first South Africans to achieve the double Mt Vinson/South Pole ski trip.

The last part of the expedition was done in what has been appalling weather on the sub-continent! The temperature at the South Pole was -31°C (with the windchill, a mere -40°C !). The group that headed out on Boxing Day from South Africa via Punta Arenas (where Tarlan and Gusseyn met up with them) were stuck at Patriot Hills for 8 days before they were able to fly out to Mt Vinson base camp because of the bad weather.

This morning they were checked out by a doctor at the South Pole and all were declared fit and well! Now the long flight back home - except that the weather at the Pole was closing in again and he didn't know if they would be picked up today or not! Sincere congratulations, Sean!

2. CLUBHOUSE CONVENOR: the section is desperately looking for a member to fill this position. It entails being at the clubhouse on a Wednesday (you can get members to help so you don't have to be there every week!) , setting up the projector and other equipment, taking care of purchasing the drinks and controlling the cash box and generally looking after the clubroom. Please contact Chris 082 373 5605 if you are able to help.

3. Events:

Wednesday 28 January: Club evening and DVD 'Touching the Void' . In the mid - 80's two young climbers attempted to reach the Siula Grande in Peru, a feat that had previously been attempted but never achieved. This is the true story of Joe Simpson's survival after he fell and his partner Simon has to make the decision to cut the rope. As this is a long film of 120mins, we wish to start promptly at 20h00.

Wednesday 4 February: club evening and prospective members talk.

4.. Meets:

31 Jan/1 Feb Sport climbing Eagle Mountain, Harrismith. Contact Andrew Porter 082 853 1679 (note correct tel. no)