



Text 1

**Stillsborough Geographical Society**

Fact Sheet 47

How Mountains Affect Us

Few people would deny that mountains are inspiring for their beautiful scenery, relaxing environment, biodiversity* and recreational opportunities. However, they also have practical influences on the lives of local inhabitants and visitors.

Climate

Mountains affect climate by blocking wind. As the air is forced to rise, it cools and falls as rain or snow. This would have fallen over a wider area but for the mountain, so the land beyond the mountain tends to be dry and sometimes uninhabitable. Many rivers start in snow-capped mountains and reservoirs are established there to provide water for urban areas lower down. Renewable hydroelectric power can also be generated.

Communication

Mountains, being difficult to penetrate, act as a defence in times of war. However, for the same reason, travel to other settlements is difficult and trade may be restricted. Some act as a barrier to telecommunications. All this may cause communities to become isolated.

Health

High altitudes have a positive effect on health. Calories are consumed more quickly and obesity is reduced. Even a week in the mountains can cause weight loss. Hearts are healthier and the pollution-free air reduces respiratory problems (such as asthma) and allergies. Then again, avalanches, mudslides and forest fires can threaten health – and homes.

Tourism


Tourists visit mountains for their natural beauty and to find a peaceful escape from their hectic lives. Mountains inspire physical activities, such as hiking, climbing and skiing, which contribute to the local economy.

**Mountains - assets or hindrances?
It depends on your perspective**.**

*wide variety of plant and animal life

** point of view

Text 2



A Mountaineer's Musings

by Blogman Erik

April 11th, 6.45 pm

Why I Climb Mountains

Fellow Norwegian, Peter Wessel Zapffe once said: "Mountaineering is meaningless, like life itself. Therefore, the magic will never die". I'm often asked why I climb mountains. I don't share Peter's gloomy opinion of life, nor do I think that the gods live on top of mountains (as the Ancient Greeks believed). However, the magic is undeniable.

Climbing takes me from my mundane job to a place where my mind can relax and I can enjoy nature's beauty. Of course, I'm also deprived of the security and support that civilisation provides, but therein lies the challenge. Yes, I may face exhaustion, cold, avalanches and altitude sickness, but I have to face my fears. Patience and perseverance are required, as the summit always seems further away and the path towards it more arduous and convoluted than I expected. But the feeling of achievement when I arrive is overwhelming. I'm on top of the world, both literally and metaphorically.

Mountain climbing is a healthy activity. I need to be fit and spend months training before each climb. The climb itself is guaranteed to improve muscle tone and shed excess weight. It's also mentally stimulating since time is meaningless, the environment is stress-free and my mobile phone is left behind!

Is it dangerous?

Potentially, yes. There are steep drops and rugged terrain to catch out the unwary climber. When rock climbing you have to be extra careful. Only the careless are in danger. Besides, I always climb in a team, so we are dependent on and support each other.

Quite simply, climbing brings me joy.

Text 3

Stillsborough Mountain Rescue Team

Volunteers Needed

Stillsborough Mountain Rescue Team (SMRT) assists the emergency services in dealing with incidents in the mountains, other remote places and urban areas.

Responsibilities include

- rescuing stranded climbers
- finding lost climbers
- ensuring injured or sick climbers reach hospital
- searching for missing people and supporting their families
- helping in extreme weather conditions, such as flooding
- rescuing animals from perilous places.



Some volunteers at work

Skills required

You are a keen mountaineer, familiar with local mountains, with some knowledge of ropework and first aid. You are fit enough to withstand long call outs in adverse conditions and carry a stretcher over rough terrain.

Your commitment

You must be available day and night, willing to abandon personal plans when a call comes. A training period of at least a year, including some evenings and weekends, is needed to learn vital mountain rescue skills before going on a call out. Existing skills must be regularly practised and updated, and fitness levels maintained.

Other opportunities

If you do not meet the above requirements but wish to help, we welcome assistance organising promotional events, cleaning vehicles and maintaining equipment, even making tea and bacon sandwiches during a call out!

For further information or to apply, please visit the SMRT office at 15 High Street any day between 10 am and 5 pm, or email admin@smrt.coz.

We look forward to working with you!