

MIDLAND SKI CLUB NEWS

The Heart of England's Leading Snowsports Club

APRIL 2008



Someone here isn't a member!

Full report on the Family Holiday to Zermatt on page 2.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of Midland Ski Club will be held at Old Silhillians Club, Warwick Road, Knowle on Thursday 15th May starting at 8pm.

Any matters for consideration at the meeting should be notified in advance to the Secretary, Diana Horth, on 01889 800706. We need your thoughts and ideas on what you want from the MSC and how you see it developing in the future.

Members' input is vital so that you get the Club that you want. Draft accounts are included with this newsletter.

It is important for the operation of the club that the committee is representative of the membership, and that there are sufficient committee members to spread the work without relying on the same people all the time. If you'd like to see how the committee works in practice - without committing yourself in advance - then you would be welcome to come along to one of the committee meetings to see what happens. If you can help, then please speak to Jeff Elmore on 07958967709.

Diary

Mondays @ 7.30pm

Adult Coaching
Luis Lopes 0121 357 2307

Tuesdays @ 6.30pm

Instructor Training - Roger
Crombleholme 01785 714073

Tuesdays @ 7.30pm

Race Coaching - Roger
Crombleholme 01785 714073

Fridays @ 6/6.30/7pm

Junior Coaching
Nigel Dawes 0121 445 2594

Fridays @ 8.00 pm

Adult Coaching - Roger
Crombleholme 01785 714073

8-May-08

DSUK, Tamworth
Hilary Cox, 0121 554 9745

10-May-08

Summer Race League, Gloucester
Jane Lee, 01905 345416
(also 7-Jun, 5-Jul, 9-Aug, 20-Sep, & 11-Oct)

15-May-08

Annual General Meeting,
Old Silhillians Club, Solihull
Diana Horth, 01889 800706

10-Jul-08

DSUK, Tamworth
Hilary Cox, 0121 554 9745

15-Aug-08

Great S.American Adventure
Maureen Crombleholme, 01785
714073

Instructors Wanted

A major part of the MSC's activities is the coaching that we offer to members. This coaching relies on a small team of dedicated instructors who operate all year round - however there are times when none of the current team is available. We therefore need to increase the size of this team. It's not necessary to commit to coaching on the same nights all year round, but to become part of a small rota of instructors for a regular night and maybe to cover for the occasional other nights when the regulars are not available. Instructors are paid by Ackers for the sessions worked at standard Ackers rates for your qualification.

To coach at MSC level, then you need either Snowsports England ASSI or BASI Level 2 (old grade 3(!)) or equivalent, so if you have this then please get in touch.. If you don't have these qualifications, then we can also help you work towards them with instructor training sessions running on Tuesday evening from 6.30 to 7.30pm, and with shadowing the current coaching team to "get your hours in".

Club Holiday - Tignes 8th-15th March

For this year's holiday 43 of us took over 2 chalets in Tignes Le Lac. Although there was room for improvement in terms of the accommodation and, to some degree the catering, I think we generally enjoyed our week.

The first day saw Mike Thomas trying to lead the biggest group you have ever seen: his offer to lead the blues and reds attracting just about everyone except for those who know Tignes very well. Needless to say we lost someone in the first hour: Lynn Thomas decided 'that way' was better than 'this way'. However we were reunited after a while and remained a large group for much of the day.

A number of us did an 'interesting' route on the second day, involving a rather narrow run through a type of gorge with a bit of taking skis off and some minor down climbing. The run ended off beautifully with a mud run/walk.

The 3rd and 4th days brought some pretty fierce weather and it was understandable that folk were finishing early or taking the day off. Just about all the top chairs were closed resulting in queues for those lifts that were open. Visibility was next to zero at times, the winds were so strong it was a fight to get downhill and conditions were pretty uncomfortable. How on earth groups managed to stay together in the very

Family Holiday - Zermatt, Easter 2008

Where to Ski says this is in the top 10 places that you must ski. It didn't say anything about in all weather which was what we enjoyed for this years Easter training week, everything from -22C with 70kph winds to fog, snow, whiteout, and glorious blue sky sunshine powder skiing.

The start to the holiday had a few problems: Roger's sad loss meant he couldn't make it meaning finding another instructor at the last minute. Fortunately the latest addition to the club's instructor ranks was missing the snow having just come back from a 3 month BASI course. Did James know what he had let himself in for? Coach Drivers leaving passports in a car going opposite direction, channel weather forecast a little ominous and causing many cancellations so we enjoyed the night in Dover waiting for a ferry. Then the autoroute north of Reims was closed by an accident and we enjoyed watching the locals (and many Brits) start a new traffic jam going back along the hard shoulder - some reversing some turned round (including with trailer), animals let out to run loose, and the other carriageway was still running normally! We also enjoyed lightning in heavy snow, all of this resulting in us not arriving rather early on Sunday.

The first day skiing was sunny, and all four groups went out to make the

crowded conditions was quite amazing. However the storm left behind some of the best snow going for the rest of our holiday. Several inches had fallen and the off-piste conditions were absolutely fantastic. As John Arnold remarked after a run he did with Tony Costin "it just doesn't get any better".



A large number of us made our way to Le Fornet for the last day. Keeping to sensible group numbers we arranged and managed to meet up at a restaurant. The sun shone all day, which was lovely, and even better it affected only small areas in terms of sticky snow.

The good side

Taking over the chalets mostly worked well. They were very close together so it was possible to quickly walk from one to the other although it was sometimes tricky to be sure

best of it. We had made it to the snow unbelievably for most of the group following the journey the snow was terrific and well worth the effort to get there.

Pass that by and the skiing was superb, serious slopes, red runs, sunny weather we arrived back at the youth hostel tired and ready for our Easter dinner. A very mild fruit chicken curry, unusual but satisfying. Feedback was good about our youngest coach ever, James Hornsby who had just completed his training as a BASI 2. The kids loved their young fun loving leader, James was the man of the day. Roger's usual group was taken by Rob Weeks who took them into fields unknown: off piste, down yellow runs and occasionally the grinds in the fun park. Chris took the ladies' group plus Steve and it was becoming clear that they had significantly progressed from the ladies who lunch to the team who took their skiing seriously and hardly stopped at all now.

A new family has joined the holiday, making a small group of young ladies for Alan Shergold. Jessica and Rachael initially found the skiing with the club coach a massive effort but they rose to the challenge and their skiing improved phenomenally enabling them to achieve their level 3 Snowlife awards. Well done girls.

Skiing throughout the week each

everyone had someone to ski with. It made it very easy to host the room parties at no convenience to other guests.

We had Diane Harrold running a pilates session - almost oversubscribed it was so popular.

Bernard Roberts and Frank Taylor put us to shame with their amazing dance skills at an impromptu party and wonder of wonders John Arnold took to the floor.

The bad side

Disappointingly Neilson Ski let itself down on the promised guided tours. They said they would lead guided tours on 2 days of the week and the first went off OK. It was understandable that tours were cancelled because of bad weather but to not show up on the remaining sunny days was unforgivable.

We found that the chalet staff, whilst very pleasant and good natured, were very young and consequently not always attuned to needs and demands of the more mature guest. There was an obvious need for some strong management and the Tignes manager for Neilson should really have been visiting the accommodations to ensure everything was of a good standard.

It was encouraging to see a few new faces on the holiday and I hope they will return. *Diana Horth*



day brought a significant challenge with the weather but the snow was superb even though a few members managed to get a bit of frost bite.

Little asides, passing Dave H recovering from a stumble, I then noted a couple of people standing on a corner a few hundred metres away, looking at an unaccompanied ski, 20 mins later Dave came down having been searching for this ski, but I hadn't put the 2 together. There can be few ski groups who've taken people away on crutches and have them skiing by the end of the week, but we did achieve it with Dave Lee recovering from a knee op the week before.

Although I was the organiser, I really enjoyed the holiday. The club members who attend make the holiday a success, especially the evening session's food and laughter with a bit of drink. I would like to thank you all, without you the holiday would not happen. I am sure Kim Hancock will add a new aspect to the holiday and make it even better. *Nigel Dawes*

I Left My Heart In San Francisco or was it South Lake Tahoe??

In January, 10 club members departed Heathrow for San Francisco where we met up with the 11th member of our group. An enterprising car hire salesman convinced us that chunky 4 wheel drives were de rigeur so we coughed up the extra and a 200 mile drive saw us in South Lake Tahoe. One carload even managed a quick tour of downtown San Francisco



en route - think Bullitt and coming down those bumpy roads, trolley buses and you will get the picture. I wouldn't recommend the detour after such a long flight - direct is always best!

After some anxious moments relating to a lack of lift tickets we finally hit the Heavenly slopes at about 10am on the Sunday morning and managed to lose each other more or less on the first run down splitting into several mini groups. Bad weather meant all the top lifts were closed with mid and lower elevation lifts following suit. A few stalwarts hung on to the bitter end despite being trapped on the Nevada side but the shuttle bus services were fairly well organised to get folk back to where they wanted.

The weather during the first week was quite vicious with severe winter storms hitting USA so we only had a couple of sunny days but the snowfalls were fantastic with about 5' in all. The 'how to ski in low to no visibility' came in handy for those of us who had been on the training week. Continuing strong winds meant the top lifts were slow to open but the views from the top of the Sky Express were fantastic when finally seen. Heavenly offers a lot of varied skiing with plenty of trees, glades, open trails and some steeper stuff on the Nevada side and it doesn't take too long to pick up enough of the local lingo to get by: stuff like 'awesome', 'bad', 'dude', 'bro' and of course 'yo'.

Equity Ski were extremely slow to organise the out of resort tickets and some of us were nearing the end of the 10 out of 13 ticket at Heavenly before they came up with the goods and we could explore some of the other resorts in the area.

We found out the hard way that the road along the west of Lake Tahoe to Squaw Valley was closed so we visited Kirkwood first. There was variety here too in terms of trails and steep stuff. Unfortunately Blanche sustained an injured leg on the second run of the day, which stopped her skiing until the last day of the holiday. We now know that it was a clean break and that Blanche is on rest and recuperation, but not in plaster. We all hope she recovers fully and speedily.

We visited Sierra the next day and found it to be a small friendly resort but really only good for a day out. There was enough to keep all amused - even the green runs had their moments. By now the sun had been out for a couple of days and the snow was beginning to get a bit sticky at lower altitudes.

Not to be outdone by road closures 6 of us went the long way to Squaw Valley - only about 1½ hours driving with a good ole American breakfast along the way. There are very few trees at this resort making it more like a European experience. There are no marked trails - the lifts are colour coded so punters know that if they take a black lift that's all there is once they get to the top - and you make your way down whichever way you fancy. Which occurred in the Silverado area. Because, despite the patrol notices stating that the best way (easiest option) into this area was through Gate 7, some of the team knew better and so we skied ourselves through Gate 1 and on to some of the steepest terrain I have ever been on. It was commit or stay the night! On the long chair ride back up we did see a group of 3 skiers who were dithering about, having entered at



Gate 2. One had clearly had second and third thoughts about it and was climbing back up to get out!

We finished our holiday with a trip to Alpine Meadows including the breakfast stop again. The sun had really started to affect the snow here but it is a lovely resort with plenty of variety and a good place to finish the holiday.

The ski resort of South Lake Tahoe (or more correctly Stateline) is settled between California and Nevada. Low rise in the former and high rise complete with casinos in the latter. It is a residential town with plenty to offer in the way of restaurants,



shopping and entertainment. It's probably the best base for the area because Heavenly Mountain has enough skiing for a 2 week stay. The other resorts in the area are a bonus but wouldn't satisfy for more than 1 or 2 days, with maybe the exception of Squaw Valley. We stayed in the Forest Suites Resort in 2 room condos, which worked out pretty well. They were quite basic but comfortable enough and well serviced by a good supermarket about 5 minutes walk away. The gondola was about 5 minutes walk too although some of the group preferred to drive to either of the California or Nevada bases.

Group: Diana Horth, Gilly Peto, Mike Thomas, Bunny and Margaret Smith, Blanche Lye, Norman Wright, Brian Meads (boarder dude), Steve Price, Georgie Geraghty and Sam McClenaghan

Diana Horth

Ski Breckenridge USA 2009

I am thinking about arranging a 2 week trip to Breckenridge for early to mid Feb 2009. Likely to be self catering accommodation as the catered chalets are booking up extremely quickly, are very expensive and the rooming arrangements aren't really suitable for single adults.

At the moment I am just trying to gauge interest before making any serious enquiries.

You would need to be thinking around a £1500 budget to allow for accommodation, flights, transfer/vehicle hire, lift pass and food. The Breck lift pass covers Arapahoe Basin and Keystone as well as half days at Vail and Beaver Creek Can you let me know by 31 May whether you are interested.

*Diana Horth, 01889 800706
diana.horth@tesco.net*

Midland Ski Club Awards 2007

2007 was been an outstanding year for the Club in terms of skier performance results and improvements. These achievements have been as a result of much dedication and hard work by both the MSC coaches and the skiing members themselves. This, of course, is underpinned by the ever present and much welcomed support of numerous parents and other Club members who work hard in the background to make many of these events happen.

These efforts have taken the MSC

to new levels of skier performance and achievement that everyone in the Club is delighted with. To recognise the efforts and achievements of all our members we held an awards ceremony as part of the Christmas Party at The Old Sillhillians in December.

Certificates were presented to the following MSC members in recognition for their achievements over the past year.

The development awards recognise those individuals who, in the view of their coaches and fellow

skiers, have made the most significant improvements in their skiing skills over the past year.

The performance awards are based on a series of objective metrics and recognise the results that MSC members have achieved through their hard work, determination and skill.

The other award winners have been nominated by MSC members to recognise the efforts and support that many people give to the club.

Many congratulations and well done to all the award winners!

Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding and Dedicated service to the Midland Ski Club

These awards are presented to individuals who, in the eyes of fellow members, have made a significant contribution to the Club over many years.

Hilary Cox - Membership Secretary, who has regularly supported all Club activities right across the Club for many years.

Mike Thomas - Mike organises the High Altitude Training Weekend, and has also run numerous Club Holidays and has carried out most of the committee roles over his many years with the club.

Lois Lopes - Luis headed up Adult coaching on Monday nights for many years and has had significant achievements in developing skiers and new instructors. His skill and dedication has been exemplary.

Performance Awards

Snowsport England

Best Male Snowsport England Seed Points Harry Hornsby (70.02 points)
Best Female Snowsport England Seed Points Emily Dawes (91.85 points)

Lockwoods Cup

Fastest Male Time - Dan Yeomans
Fastest Female Time Nicky Millington

Gloucester Summer Race League

This year a total of 61 members took part in the GSRL. All the competitors are recognised for their contribution to this event and for helping the MSC achieve excellent results again. This competition provides excellent opportunities for skiers of all ages and abilities to improve and hone their skills and have great fun at the same time.

All awards are calculated from results. The only award where there is no mathematical calculation is skier of the year.

U10 (YoB 99-02) Younger Male - Oliver Weeks; Female - Martha Millington

U10 (97-98) Older Male - Dominic Plevnalis; Female - Maxine Hancock

U13 (96-97) Younger Male - Nick Phelps; Female - Lucy Deller

U13 (94-95) Older Male - Sam Allen; Female - Olivia Waller

U18 (93-94) Younger Male - Nick Miller; Female - Sophia Phelps

U18 (90-92) Older Male - Harry Hornsby; Female - Fiona Jones

Senior (78 - 87) Male - Mark Hawkins; Female - Sarah Dawes

Masters (77 - 00) Male - Roger Cromblehome; Female - Jane Lee

Overall Winner Male - Robbie Beak

Overall Winner Female - Emily Dawes

Best Improver - Jack Webb

Best Newcomer - Gerry Elgy

Best Newcomer Junior - Jonty Simson

Skier of the year - Nick Miller

Achievement Awards

Podium Finishes in National Ranking Events

Males Harry Hornsby, Robbie Beak, James Hornsby and Stuart Wickson

Females Jane Lee, Sarah Dawes, Maxine Hancock, Rachel Eaton and Freya Eaton

All England Championships (Sunderland)

Male Qualifiers Harry Hornsby, James Hornsby, Stuart Wickson, Dan Yeomans, Chris May, Nick Miller, Robbie Beak, Sam Allen, Freddie Meyer, Jake Chamberlain, Adam Lee and Jamie Conde

Female Qualifiers Emily Dawes, Sarah Dawes, Olivia Waller and Sophia Phelps

West Midlands Ski Association (WMSA)

Male Squad Members - Harry Hornsby, James Hornsby, Stuart Wickson, Dan Yeomans, Chris May, Nick Miller, Robbie Beak, Sam Allen, Freddie Meyer, Ollie Eaton, Jake Chamberlain, Adam Lee, Jamie Conde, Alasdair Thorley and Nick Phelps

Female Squad Members - Emily Dawes, Sarah Dawes, Olivia Waller and Sophia Phelps

WMSA Schools Race (Telford)

Harry Hornsby 1st Male

Birmingham and South Midlands Schools Race (The Ackers)

Chris May 1st Male

Emily Dawes 1st Female

WMSA Region Club Race (The Ackers)

Harry Hornsby 1st Male

English Schools Ski Association

Alasdair Thorley being selected to train with ESSKIA team

Racer of the Year: The MSC Cup "The Griffin & Westwood Travel Services Ltd Gold Star Winter Sports Trophy"

This was presented to Harry Hornsby for his outstanding skiing performance during 2007.

This cup was first presented in 1967 and has had a number of illustrious winners over the years. It was felt appropriate that this cup should be used to recognise the skills and achievement of one individual for their performance during the year.

Additional certificates of achievement were presented for:-

Most Improved male Nick Miller

Most Improved female Elisabeth Thomas

Other Awards: MSC members of DSUK team

MSC members who regularly give up their Thursdays to assist the Disabled Skiing UK team sessions at The Tamworth Snowdome. The dedication of these people to provide skiing opportunities to less able skiers is exemplary and an inspiration to us all.

Development Awards

Again this year we have utilised the nationally recognised "Snowlife" Award programme for improvements on snow, and have introduced the MSC Achievement Award scheme. This scheme has been adapted from the Snowlife scheme to better reflect the skills needed to ski on artificial surfaces as some of the elements in the snow based awards cannot be replicated on plastic (e.g. ski around trees). Snow life awards will be awarded whenever appropriate on Club holidays, and the MSC Achievement Awards will be awarded at suitable occasions throughout the year.

Level 2

Jessica Simson
Harriet Roadknight-Scott
Samuel Doherty
Lewis Smith
Joshua Hall
Jessica Mayhew
Isabelle Williams
Marcus Plevnalis
Martha Millington*
Jemima Simson*
Rachel Mayhew*
Nathan Smith*
Scott Johns*

Level 3

Samuel Doherty
Marcus Plevnalis
Lewis Smith

Level 4

Robyn Doherty*
Jack Webb*
Oliver Weeks*
'Well done' certificates
for skiers working towards level 2
Jemima Simson
Nathan Smith
Scott Hall
Adam Hall
Rachel Mayhew
Matthew Treuge*
Lauren Treuge*
Omar Douglas*

* Awarded 14th March.

GLOUCESTER SUMMER RACE LEAGUE

Summer is coming and with it the Gloucester Summer race league. After last years theme of 'Mud and Rain' we can hope for an improvement this year with sun cream high on the packing list.

There are 15 teams competing this year, with 10 skiers in each team. We will be entering 3 teams again

Midland Bears - the skiers with the highest points scores

Midland Cats - the skiers with good average points

Midland Hawks - the development team for new and improving skiers

Each month we need 30 skiers together with full supporting cast. We have the following jobs

Race day manager - Kim Hancock with support from Karen Conde and others, volunteers always welcome

Race marshalls - we will miss Nigel Dawes this year for many races, more volunteers are welcome to help Dave Lee

Race start and finish - Karen Conde will handle our duties this year (May and September)

Slope side organisation - this is where the experienced parents are invaluable to record results, organise litter bins and the end of race clean up, ensure the younger skiers get to the top on time, mop up tears, offer

encouragement and especially help new racers and parents

Top of slope - every parent needs to help their child at top of slope until they can cope. Experienced volunteers are needed to help out here

We would like help with ski and race preparation, with volunteers each month from the 'banned' skiers - those who are too fast and have national seed points below cut-off - remaining at 160 male and 140 female. Please let me know your availability each month when I call for racers. I will try to get forerunner places.

There's a big change to age groups this year, to even out the numbers. I have been given the chance to give input on behalf on the club, I feel that it's a welcome change. The new groups are below, all ages are as 10th May 2008.

Under 9 (1 - 8 yrs)

Under 12 (9 - 11 yrs)

Under 15 (12 - 14 yrs)

Under 20 (15 - 19 yrs)

Under 35 (20 - 34 yrs)

Under 50 (35 - 49 yrs)

Over 50 (50 yrs plus)

This is bad news for our 9 yr olds this year particularly Matthew Waller and Sam Doherty, who will be 9 before May, so move into the U12 group, also for the 12yr olds who

move into the U15s, but excellent news for our strong 11 and 14yr olds and the up-and-coming 6/7 yr old bunch.

We have less skiers this year, as we now have 9 banned skiers and more will be at the indoor snow series, so there are more races for everyone else, particularly the adults. There is an adult session from 8-9pm on Fridays to get practicing.

There are a number of rules, an important new rule is that the use of foul language will result in the individual's disqualification with all points deducted. If you feel that you will break this rule when swiped painfully by a pole then please remember that liberal application of duct tape around the mouth will leave your points intact. Another rule to be aware of is that skiing on the left hand slope (including use of lift) is chargeable, a day ticket is £7.

Just a reminder of dates, all Saturdays: 10 May, 7 June, 5 July, 9 August, 20 September, and 11 October

Finally, best wishes to two of our 6 yr olds, Isabelle Williams who is skiing well again after her broken thigh last year, and Ethan Hemming who will be out for a while with a badly broken arm.

Thanks to all who have given details of outline availability.

See you there

Jane Lee

(cont)