

MIDLAND NEWS SKI CLUB

The Heart of England's Leading Snowsports Club

NOVEMBER 2008

CHRISTMAS PARTY

This year's famous MSC Christmas Party will be held on 10th December at the Old Silhillians Rugby Club from 7.30pm onwards. All MSC members of all ages are most welcome.

The emphasis of the party will be on the social side of skiing, although there will be a small number of key awards made - there are just too many to handle in a single evening and now awards for skier improvement, race success are presented throughout the year on coaching nights.

Come along for festive fun and a great time! We will have a new selection of food available for everyone, but those longing for an early taste of Turkey and mince

pies won't be disappointed either!

We will have a grand raffle with some great prizes, giveaways, ski films to enjoy and plenty of opportunity to meet friends and have a chat about forthcoming holidays or reminisce over the summer's races.

This is an ideal opportunity to meet up with members old and new in a relaxed and social environment. So give your MSC friends a call and make sure they have 10th December at the Old Sils in their diaries!

See you there!

The Old Sils is easy to get to. It can be found just off the M42, junction 5 on the A4141 heading towards Knowle and Warwick. It's just 100m on the left. For those with Sat Nav - B93 9LW

COACHING UPDATE

ALPINE

I think it's fair to say that last year's Monday night Adult Coaching Sessions had a few organisational issues. We've been addressing these over the summer months, and now for the winter have a dedicated team of instructors lined up to cover these sessions.

Our Monday night coaches Clem, Shaun and John are eager to improve your skiing. Having regular coaching will benefit your skiing greatly and repay itself many times during your trips abroad. These sessions with the coaches will improve your technique and add to the enjoyment of your holidays from the moment you hit the slope.

If you have any questions regarding the sessions please contact myself or any of the coaches. We look forward to seeing you on Monday night.

*Bryan Arnott, 01827 893243
bryan.arnott@sky.com*

NORDIC

Draycote Water near Dunchurch and the new cycle track in Solihull are now the locations for Nordic ski training using roller skis.

If you fancy having a go at roller skiing Draycote is best for beginners and Anne Ford there at the dates and times shown below -, meet in the car park by the path which runs up to the café. All you need to bring is a cycle helmet, gloves (cycling mitts are ideal not thick padded

Diary

Mondays @ 7.30pm

Adult Coaching
Bryan Arnott 01827 893243

Tuesdays @ 6.30pm

Instructor Training - Roger
Crombleholme 01785 714073

Tuesdays @ 7.30pm

Race Coaching - Roger
Crombleholme 01785 714073

Thursdays @ 6/7.30pm

Advanced Race Training - Roger
Crombleholme 01785 714073

Fridays @ 6/6.30/7pm

Junior Coaching
Nigel Dawes 0121 445 2594

Fridays @ 8.30 pm

Adult Coaching - Roger
Crombleholme 01785 714073

10 December

Christmas Party, Old Sils,
Solihull

27 December to 3 January

New Year Family Week,
Altenmarkt Ski-Welt - Austria
Kim Hancock 01788 337280

18-25th January

Training Week, Canazei, Italy
John Arnold 0121 357 1644

14-21 March

Club Holiday, Wengen,
Switzerland
Diana Horth 01889 800706

gloves) old trousers and a long sleeved top. The Car park costs £3 and we will socialise in the café afterwards.

Please let Anne know if you intend to come along and she'll look out for you. Anne's mobile number is 07958 721310 or email annetford@blueyonder.co.uk

The Solihull sessions are n Tudor Grange Park, off Monkspath Hall Road - these sessions are race oriented.

29th Nov 10am Draycote
6th Dec 9am Solihull
13th Dec 9am Solihull
20th Dec 10am Draycote

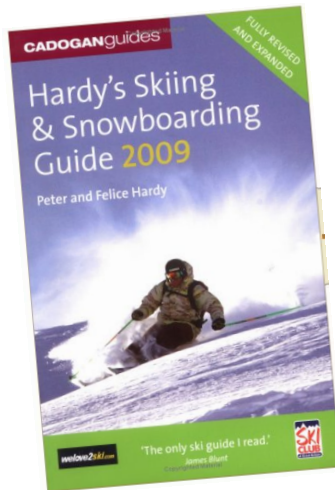
WIN A COPY OF "HARDY'S SKI GUIDE"

In conjunction with New Holland, the publishers of the famous Cadogan guides, we are delighted to be able to offer five copies of the latest 2009 edition of "Hardy's Ski & Snowboarding Guide" to MSC members in our free to enter competition.

Fully revised and updated for 2009, the guide is a detailed insider guide to 6000 ski resorts in 75 countries across the globe. The guide contains full colour piste maps, details descriptions of ski areas, recommendations for the best ski and snowboard schools, accommodation, mountain and resort restaurants, childcare and the all-important après-ski. The **2009 Hardy's Ski & Snowboarding Guide** gives all keen snow sports enthusiasts the best impartial advice for a fantastic holiday.

The authors, Peter and Felice Hardy are full time travel writers and are recognised as the leading British experts on the ski travel industry. Peter is Ski Correspondent for the Daily Telegraph and the Daily Mail. Felice writes regularly on skiing for the Guardian and the Evening Standard as well as for a wide range of lifestyle magazines.

To be in with a chance of winning one five copies of **Hardy's Ski & Snowboarding Guide**, simply tell us how many skis are in the roof box.



TRAINING WEEK

Many thanks to everyone for paying balances for the January Training Week to Canazei on time. The credit crunch can't be as bad as we are told. I will be writing to you soon with all the final details.

John Arnold

MSC Travel INSURANCE

MSC runs a very popular agency for Travel Insurance which is used by about 25% of members. You benefit because the recommended premiums are reduced by 17.5% for the benefit of members - and the club benefits from the commission that is paid. Have a look around see what Marks & Spencer, the Post Office, Churchill and the like are charging and then take a look at the club website on the Travel Insurance link for the premiums, summary of cover, health requirements and how to obtain a policy with us. Or just telephone the MSC Insurance line on 01676 523505.

Annual cover (which includes skiing on and off piste) is the best for value as one can travel at home and abroad as many times as one likes (up to a maximum of 31 days per trip) knowing you'll have the cover you'll need. For a one off holiday, the single trip with or without Winter Sports cover is ideal if you don't want the expense of an annual policy.

Hope to hear from you soon!

KEEPING IN TOUCH

We've now made it easier for MSC members to keep in touch with each other via email, courtesy of Google. We'll also be using this to send out details of anything going on which is too short notice to put into the newsletter (e.g. The 150-odd FREE tickets we were given for the recent Birmingham Ski+Board Show).

This is an **opt-in** system, i.e. If you want to communicate this way, you need to sign up for it.

To opt in, you need to send an email to news@midlandski.org.uk, saying "Please sign me up to the MSC Google Group" and we'll add you to the system.

Once opted in, you can email everyone else in the club who is also opted in, by sending the email to the single address: midlandskiclub@googlegroups.com. It's as easy as that!

So far, there are about 80 members signed up for this invaluable service.

NEWSLETTER NEWS

As newsletter editor, I feel I must apologise for the absence of a newsletter for the some months - the last one was August!

This is due to an increased amount of business traveling I am doing, which makes time for producing a newsletter even more difficult that before. It is hoped over the winter to simplify the means of producing the newsletter which should ease this in future.

Rob Weeks



Correct winning entries will be drawn on 5th January. The closing date for entries will be 31st December. You can e-mail your entry to the draw to competition@midlandski.org.uk or send your postal entry to 7 Saxon Meadows, Leamington Spa, Cv32 6BY. Only one entry per member will be allowed.

If you're not a winner, don't worry, the guide is available from all good booksellers now for £15.99. Published by New Holland publishers <http://www.newhollandpublishers.com> it would make an ideal Christmas present for someone!

Other travel guides by Cadogan can be found here:- <http://www.cadoganguides.com>

LOW ALTITUDE TRAINING WEEKEND

For this year's desperate attempt to get fit for the ski season we descended on the remote Bretton youth hostel in Derbyshire. Although Youth Hostels are no longer the Spartan experience they used to be they are still pretty basic, but this one did have that special feature that is essential to all good MSC events - it was next to a pub. Which as a bonus also served excellent food so we enjoyed a convivial evening before retiring.

The next morning we drew back the curtains to gaze on the glorious autumn colours; grey, dark grey and black. The wind was rattling the rain against the windows so Mike decided to abandon the usual High Level and led us down a narrow, muddy path that was slippier than some of the slopes we will ski this season. Fortunately the rain relented and though we got pretty muddy we didn't get wet. The scenery was worth the effort and we were soon to enjoy another Thomas innovation. Instead of the traditional lunch stop which consists of gripping a rock with the finger nails of one hand and a cheese roll with the other he took us for a pub lunch. Is MSC getting soft? I do hope so. Lunch was enlivened by Diana's dog escaping so often that the landlord had to abandon his 'No dogs allowed' rule. A pint of 'Red Mist' real ale didn't help progress across the high moorland and over an endless series of dry stone walls, but we had a mellow feeling of achievement back

at the hostel as we enjoyed a brew whilst we waited our turn in one of the two showers.

Then we were ready for the great feast. It would take a special supplement of MSC News to list the complete menu but there were three starters, four mains and four puddings all washed down with more red wine than the pub stocked. We then settled down in front of a roaring fire to relate our plans for the season which include Jane working the season in Meribel and Marlene going to Everest. Best of luck.

We obviously didn't overdo it because we made such good progress on Sunday over lovely hills and through pretty villages that Mike decided that we had time to add an extra diversion. This was going so well until the rain came back and we found that the last stretch was straight up a long climb back to the hostel. So we had been on a High Altitude Training Weekend after all. The usual stalwarts did a great job tidying up the hostel and we were ready for the journey home. Or so we thought, but we hadn't bargained for the deluge we would have to battle through. It was horrendous but we all made it and hopefully we will all feel the benefit of our efforts when we get those skis on again. Many thanks to Mike Thomas for all his work in making the weekend so enjoyable.

John Arnold

TELEMARK SKIING

Any member interested in getting a taster of Telemark skiing can contact Matt Higginson on 07813 268124 or go to <http://www.telemark-skiing.co.uk/> for more info.

Matt can run sessions at the Ackers for MSC members at a special discounted rate. Contact Matt for more info. Matt is an Snowsport England telemark Coach

Matt also has an extensive stock of telemark equipment for hire too if member wants to try it out

"CHILDREN OF WINTER"

The latest Warren Miller ski film tour promoted by Black Diamond films is criss-crossing the country now. If you were unlucky enough not to get a ticket for the sell-out show in Leamington Spa you can still catch the tour at these Midlands venues:

Nottingham Cineworld 24th
Nov 8.00pm

Sheffield Vue 8th Dec 8.00pm

Milton Keynes 7th Jan 8.00pm
(last show of the tour)

For other locations and to check out all the info on this great film go to <http://www.warrenmiller.co.uk/>

Not subscribing to Racer Ready?

Then you are missing out?

Did you know that subscribers to Racer Ready receive as part of their subscription the email newsletter after each and every World Cup race, World Championship & Olympic race as well as the British Championships! With exclusive reports on the racing as well as how the British racers have got on, this is the best way of catching up with the racing - all in the comfort of your home!

If you want to subscribe then either email subscriptions racer-ready.co.uk or go on the web and do it online at www.racer-ready.co.uk/magazine.htm.

For the small price of £20 for 6 issues or £35 for 12 issues can you afford not to if you are serious about following the best of British and International Ski Racing!



Special HALF PRICE deal for MSC Members: Get 6 issues for only £10. Add to your renewal fee, or send a £10 cheque with your details to MSC Membership Secretary, 85 Worlds End Road, Handworth Wood, Birmingham, B20 2NS

Small Ads

Ski apartment available to rent in Bansko, Bulgaria

Brand new 1x bed apartment sleeps up to 4 people, 7 min from main lift, spa, sauna, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, and restaurants. Fully equipped with kitchen, TV, DVD player, and balcony with views over the town. Cheap flights to Sofia with Easy Jet & Wizz air. Weekly rental from £220.00 per week, from Dec- April and from £100.00 per week after. Out of season walking, hiking, bike rides, golf, fishing our all very popular in Perin mountains.

For more details and availability contact Phil Slater on 07980 900032.

CHILE & ARGENTINA - ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY?

On the 15th August 2008, nine of us departed Heathrow for the second Midland Ski club adventure to the Southern Hemisphere, this time to Argentina as well as Chile. Would it live up to all our expectations after such a great trip in 2004? You bet it did!

The 7 of us who traveled by minibus met up with our Guide, David Roberts, who was our guide last time too, and Nigel Flook who many of you know from the Summer Race League at Gloucester.

You know how horrible long flights can be.... Well not this one... we got upgraded to Business Class. What a start to our trip! We got lots of sleep tucked up in our nice comfy beds after our wine and evening meal arriving quite refreshed in Santiago.

After checking in at our hotel, we had a ½ day bus and walking tour of the city, tried out the ancient gondola to the top of the hill where the statue of the Madonna stands overlooking the city and watched the sun set.



Day 2 and we were eager to get up the mountain to see our old friend Pao at Hotel Possada Farellones. Unfortunately, the road to Valle Navado was closed and it was a public holiday weekend, so everyone in Santiago was heading in the same direction. We didn't complain too much when we saw the amount of snow on the road we knew that would bode well in the end and we did manage ½ day skiing.

Our trip got off to a great start with had several fabulous days skiing El Colorado, La Parva & Valle Nevado, especially the off-piste bowls where we left our own tracks time after time after time ... yes that many. We couldn't have asked for anything more with Pao and his staff providing excellent meals and service once again (many of the rooms had been enlarged and refurbished since we were last there).

This time it was Roger's turn to sample the care provided by the local hospital (I got bitten by a dog last time). He had to have an infected root canal sorted out Pao arranged an English speaking driver to take us in a mini-bus. On arrival at the hospital, the driver was asked if he would like Valet parking! 1 ½ hours later we were back on our way up the mountain having experienced yet again another immaculate and efficient Santiago hospital. In celebration we had a cup of tea when we got back to Farellones and I sampled the hot tub. Luxury, until I slipped and fell down the steps. Showing off the changing colour of my bruises was a daily ritual, even when I got back to work.

We were sad to leave Farellones again, but we got our flight past by the local Condors as we got into the minibus back to go back to Santiago.

The next part of our adventure meant an internal flight to Temuco where we flew parallel to the Andes for over 1 hour with fantastic views of volcanoes too. We collected a minibus of our own, made friends with the local policeman without David knowing, and when he started to wave as we left, David slammed on the brakes thinking he was in trouble. The policeman thought it was funny and we were all glad the seat belts worked. So in beautiful sunshine we headed for Pucon, stopping for lunch by a deep blue lake with bright blue sky and the sun shining on the snow covered Vulcan Villarica, complete with steam coming out of the top.

Great, we thought, we'll have no problems getting to the top for our first attempt using ski touring gear (loose heel bindings & skins). Wrong! The following day the clouds were down and although we set off in good heart and with determination, it rapidly became clear that David would call a halt and we'd have to turn back for safety reasons - we couldn't

(cont.)

RENEWALS

Many thanks to those members who have already renewed your subscriptions for this year. A reminder to those that haven't: last year's membership expired on 30th September!

If you've lost your renewal form, contact Hilady Cox on 0121 554 9745, or renew online at www.midlandski.org.uk/renewals2009.php.

MSC RACERS SELECTED FOR ENGLISH SCHOOLS SQUAD

Five MSC skiers have been selected for the English Schools Race Squad.

Many congratulations to Alasdair Thorley, Adam Lee, Freya Eaton, Ollie Eaton, and Nick Phelps.

Freya Ollie and Nick will be training in Pitztal, Austria in March, and Alasdair and Adam in Geilo, Norway in February.

Congratulations also to the MSC coaches on such a great achievement. Good luck and enjoy yourselves!

see. The descent was mainly on hard packed icy snow and not very pleasant some of us had tumbles (didn't help my bruises much) and there were a few choice words from time to time (mainly from me I'm ashamed to admit), but we did all get back to the ski area safely.

The following day wasn't much better. Some of us skied, others took the day off in Pucon. We also went down the lava tunnels at the base of the volcano where the walls looked like melted chocolate which was rather strange. Brian must have felt very energetic as he hired a bike and cycled from the town to find us not an insignificant distance up horrid tracks and quite steep in places.

Our next journey was through beautiful scenery, including forests of Monkey Puzzle trees. This was when it started to rain and rain and rain. St Martin was a pretty lake-side ski town with a ski town atmosphere where we made great friends in the restaurant we visited for the two nights we were there, but boy was it wet!

I will say, I've never seen little wooden bridges for pedestrians to get over the water in the gutters before so you didn't get your feet too wet when crossing the road. Yes, Patagonia in winter is very wet.

But where there's rain, what is there higher up? Yes, you've guessed, lots of fresh snow. So much that the top lifts at Chapelco were closed, but nevertheless a good resort and we would have liked to stay longer to sample all the best bits off the top that weren't open on the day we were there.

Once again our travel day through the lakes and mountains to Bariloche was beautiful weather wise and for the scenery too. Spectacular. This was our base for 2 days skiing Catedral Alta Patagonia. This was the busiest of the resorts we visited as far as lift queues were concerned (I don't think there were any queues at the other resorts), but it was a great place to ski, the mountain views didn't disappoint us and neither did the huge chocolate shops if I tried to explain how huge these shops are, you'd think I was exaggerating. It tastes very good too and helped save Gerry's ever depleting chocky rations that he kindly shared with us, along with his Marmite.

All too soon it was time for us to start the journey home. Back in our faithful minibus, which turned out to be very comfortable and roomy, to head a different route back to Chile. It took us almost 1/2 a day to drive round the lake from Bariloche it is so huge.

Unfortunately things didn't go quite to plan in that David was taken ill. Fortunately some of us had our driving licenses with us and Rog was able to get us back through the mountains to Pucon and the following day, on to Temuco for our internal flight to Santiago.

Sadly, we didn't get upgraded for the long haul flight back to Madrid and it was here that Iberia told some of our group that there weren't seats for them on the flight back to Heathrow. It's a long story, but we all did get back to Heathrow albeit on separate flights, and very late, to find Heathrow gridlocked and some of our luggage missing.

Iberia Customer Service in Madrid didn't exist, but hey, our mini-bus company Airport Travel showed what customer service should be like and kept telling us not to worry that we

were 7 hours late, they would still be waiting for us. Not only that, but the driver also did more drop offs to make it easier for people to get home easier. We arrived home at 03:00 hrs Monday morning. Note made for any future trips - pay the extra to fly from a regional airport and try a different airline.

So what did we get from the trip?

Brilliant skiing, great scenery, we experienced Chilean & Argentinean hospitality at its best, had lots of laughs, good company, excellent food, superb wine and beer, Bariloche chocolate and Gerry's marmite who could want for more!

Will we be going back? - you bet we will. If only South America was closer!

I'd personally like to thank Gerry (my mate Marmite), Mark, John (who had a go at skiing well out of the limits he'd skied before and always with a big smile on his face), Richard, Nigel & Brian for their generosity in donations to help Rog & I raise over £200 towards the Birmingham Children's Hospital Kidney Kids appeal, which was topped up by some work friends to £290.

David Roberts, the Andes Rep was brilliant as usual, not only as our interpreter and guide, but as a fun friend too. Rog and I met up with him near his home in Wales the other weekend and he's still buzzing about the trip, as are most, if not all, the people who went on it.

If anyone else would like to donate or fund raise for the Birmingham Children's Hospital Kidney Kids appeal, log on to:


www.bbc.co.uk/birmingham/local_radio/bbcwm and go to the Kidney Kids Appeal.

Maureen Crombleholme

Receipt Number: A009736

06 October 2008

Mrs M A Crombleholme
7 St Modwena Way
Penkridge
Staffs
ST19 5ST

 Birmingham Children's Hospital

Dear Maureen

Donation to Birmingham Children's Hospital

On behalf of the hospital and our young renal patients, I want to say thank you for your very kind donation of £269.14 received on 25th September 2008 for our BBC WM Kidney Kids Appeal. I was really sorry to hear that your attempt to climb Volcan Villarrica in Chile had to be aborted due to bad weather. Please do pass on our heartfelt thanks to your team members, and of course you, for all your efforts in raising these funds for our hospital. We are extremely grateful to you all for your support.

The health and well being of children and their families is of huge importance to the Children's hospital and we understand that first class care is about more than clinical excellence; it is about the surroundings in which you receive it.

We are embarking on a massive programme of refurbishment and redevelopment to ensure our young patients have the best possible healing environment in the world.

The Kidney Kids Appeal, supported by BBC WM aims to deliver a brand new Renal Unit at Birmingham Children's Hospital by raising £1.5 towards the £2.74 million cost of the project. The Unit will provide a bright, modern, open space designed, in part, by the children themselves. It will provide the kind of environment the children richly deserve and in doing so will help relieve their anxiety, improve their treatment experience and ultimately aid quicker healing.

Kidney Kids is just one of the ways that Red Balloon is working to make Birmingham Children's Hospital a better, safer and more welcoming place for our young patients and their families.

Thank you once again for your support.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Chappell

Kathy Chappell
Office Administrator - Fundraising Team

Center for Children, Young People and their Families - Locally, Regionally and Nationally
BCH Charities, PO Box 12005, Birmingham B4 6WZ Tel: 0121 333 8598 Fax: 0121 333 8597 bch.charities@bch.nhs.uk www.thechildrens.org.uk
Birmingham Children's Hospital Charities, registered charity no. 152890
Trustees: Professor J. R. Mann - R. Beckett - D. Hall - S. Jay - J. Russell - K. Silvester