

MIDLAND NEWS SKI CLUB

The Heart of England's Leading Snowsports Club

MARCH 2009

FIRST EVER MSC CLUB NATIONAL!

Saturday, 18th July 2009 will mark a very important occasion in the history of the Midland Ski Club as it proudly hosts its first ever Club National race!

With the MSC now firmly established as a major player on the national artificial surface race circuit, the club is delighted to have been selected by Snowsport England to run one of its nationally-



ranked competitions: a fitting reward for the outstanding performances of our athletes and the hard work of their coaches and support team (i.e. parents!).

Given the limitations of The Ackers slope and facilities, we have chosen to run this prestigious event at the Rossendale Ski Centre - a well-established race venue, just north of Manchester, that always offers exciting racing on a long and fast slope!

We're sure that many (if not all!) of our racers will want to compete and make the day one to remember. We're anticipating up to 180 racers from clubs up and down the country including most of the UK's top performers! So, racers and supporters alike, please get the date in your diaries and give the occasion your full backing.

An information sheet will be issued shortly explaining how to enter, the race format, where to stay, etc. Whilst we have around 40 racers currently

registered with their home nation to compete in national competitions, we're very much hoping that a number of our non-registered racers will also want to enter under the day registration scheme - which allows non-registered racers the opportunity to compete in one Club National per season.

And, for those MSC racers who are intending to compete, we've arranged a full-day training session at Rossendale on Sunday, 22nd March. This is a great opportunity to get to know the slope, the matting and practise going through possible gate patterns. If you want to come along then please get in contact ASAP with Roger Crombleholme (roger@wiredforideas.com)



In the meantime, if you have any questions then please don't hesitate to get in contact with either Guy Hornsby (01564 779927), Jane Lee (01905 345416) or Nigel Dawes (0121-445 2594).

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
Jane Lee 01905 345416

Fridays @ 8.30 pm

Adult Coaching - Roger
Crombleholme 01785 714073

22th March

Rossendale Training Day
Roger Crombleholme
01785 714073

26th March

DSUK, Tamworth
Hilary Cox, 0121 554 9745

28th March

Birmingham & S Midlands Schools
Race, Ackers
Jane Lee, 01905 345416

2nd May

Gloucester Summer Race League
Jane Lee, 01905 345416 (also 6th
June, 4th Jul)

7th May

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of Midland Ski Club will be held on Thursday 7th May 2009, starting promptly at 8pm, at the Old Silhillians Club, Warwick Road, Solihull. Nominations for the committee and items for discussion should be notified to the Secretary prior to the meeting.

Apart from the usual business of electing the committee, approving the accounts etc, this year's AGM will see an updated Club Constitution being proposed. The new constitution can be downloaded from the MSC website for examination in advance, and printed copies will be available on the night.

BIRMINGHAM AND SOUTH MIDLANDS SCHOOLS RACE

This year's Birmingham and South Midlands Schools Race, run by MSC and supported by The Ackers, West Midlands Ski Association, and the English Schools Ski Association is on Saturday 28th March, at the Ackers.

The format of the race has changed this year to enable many more teams to be entered. But even so, get your entries in as soon as you can so you are disappointed.

Entry forms are available from the Ackers, or may be downloaded from the MSC website.

BARSC CHAMPIONSHIPS

Twelve year old Elisabeth Thomas was the only Midland Ski Club representative at the BARSC championships held in Petzen, eastern Austria, over the New Year.

Petzen is close to the Slovenian border and its location may have discouraged other Midland's skiers from participating. This area of eastern Austria is very quiet, but, on seeing the slopes, they were ideal for the racers. However, for recreational skiers, the slopes are very limited in number and other facilities are minimal, though there are other slopes in the area and some sightseeing is also possible.



Having said this, the local Petzen club had prepared the slopes extremely well, conditions were ideal for the racers and the overall organisation was excellent.

All week the weather was overcast in the valley and villages, due to low mist, but about half-way up the mountain you broke through the mist and entered a wonderland of blue skies and the trees covered in thick frost, giving it a real fairy-tale appearance.

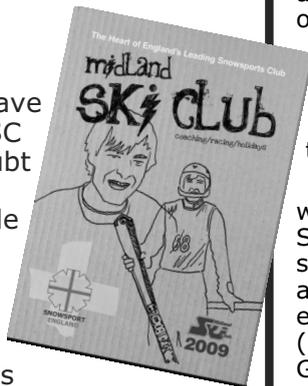
It was extremely cold on the slopes, -12°C to -15°C , but very pleasant in the sunshine. The cold kept the piste in excellent condition throughout our stay, but I was pleased not to have to be up there at 7am with the racers and trainers!

We had a great time, Elisabeth, who was with Kandahar, benefited greatly. This was her first championship and races on snow and she performed well, competing successfully in both the Slalom and the GS. Her times and the points earned meant that she qualified for the British Championships in Meribel. She came home looking forward to those races as well as the English Championships in Bormio.

MSC BROCHURE

All members should be now have or at least seen a copy of the MSC 2009 Brochure. There is no doubt that this year's edition has made quite an impact, and many people had said how good it is, but inevitably some disagree.

If you think there is something missing from the brochure, then the reason for this is that no-one has contributed anything on that part of the club - so get your camera out for some photos, and pen and paper/computer and send an article to the address at the bottom of the front page. We don't guarantee to use it next year - but we probably will.



OBITUARY

We are sorry to announce the death of Richard (Dick) Main on 10th February. Richard was a member of MSC for 34 years and was involved in organising some of the early Club Holidays. A popular and sociable personality, he made many friends within the club. Our condolences to his family.

ENGLISH ALPINE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Midland Ski Club members were once again out in force at this year's English Alpine Championships, which took place in Bormio, Italy, in February. Matthew Waller and Owen Johns (Minis), Olivia Waller, Elisabeth Thomas, Victoria Bell, Florence Bell, Jack Yates and Sam Allen (Children) and Emily Dawes, Harry Hornsby and Benn Hall (FIS) all put themselves to the test on the famous Stelvio world cup piste.

The challenging terrain and concrete-like surface all made for fast and furious racing! Not only was there a full Minis, Children and FIS programme but, for the first time, a skier-X event was also staged - thrills and spills aplenty here with Benn getting through to



the men's quarter-finals and Emily making the ladies' final-four!

In the Minis, Matthew and Owen provided each other with good competition and had a lot of fun along the way! The Children Slalom saw Florence just missing out on

an age group podium (5th) and mixed results for everyone else. In the Children Giant Slalom, Sam achieved an excellent 14th overall position (out of 93 racers), Victoria came 16th (out of 64) in Run 2, Elisabeth showed just how much she has developed in this discipline with a couple of strong runs and Olivia recorded a big improvement in her 2nd run. Sam also posted another really good 14th overall position (out of 65) in the Super G whilst Victoria, Florence and Elisabeth all made their debuts in this high-speed event.



Benn and Harry unfortunately had to abandon (along with 64 other racers!) in the challenging day/night FIS Slalom whilst Emily's dive across the finish line on the second run showed that there was still life in her legs after a gruelling 58 gates! With many countries using their full entry quota this meant that a large number of GBR racers (including Harry) had to be 'bumped' from the males FIS Giant Slalom. This left Benn and Emily competing in high-class international fields and each producing two solid runs. Benn's highlight was probably his performance in the Super G in which he managed to lower his FIS points.



All in all, an exciting week. Bormio is an outstanding venue for racing: it presents a real test and leaves you in awe of what the world cup racers have to face when taking on the Stelvio. Total respect!

EARLY SEASON TRAINING WEEK - CANAZEI

John Arnold

First of all the bad news. I'm sorry to report that Joyce Chambers, one of the great stalwarts of the Training Week, had a bad accident. Another skier, not one of us, crashed into her and cracked her pelvis. I'm glad to say that she is now out of hospital and seems to be recovering well. All our best wishes, Joyce. A very big thank you to Hilary Cox who volunteered to stay with Joyce and accompany her back home.

Apart from that everything went well. It's ironic that when Equity offered Canazei, I was dubious because of the poor snow record. But we've now been twice and the snow has been tremendous. A 2' dump onto a good base meant that the pistes were perfect. I was on new skis and at the end of a week of hard skiing there wasn't a scratch on them. Everyone entered into the spirit of the Training Week with the usual enthusiasm. We didn't get to bed until 2.30am when we arrived but everyone was up and ready to go skiing at 9.00 the same morning. In fact it got even more ridiculous. The hotel had a 7 seater bus and the competition amongst the groups to grab it first got keener and keener: there was even a queue to get into breakfast at 7.30!

Question: How do you get 10 skiers and a driver into a 7 seat bus?
Answer: Do it in Italy.

Our late arrival and the snow meant that we didn't get around the Sella Ronda area at first but that didn't matter because there is plenty of skiing in Canazei itself to keep us happy. Wednesday was lovely. It was

MSC ON THE RADIO

Radio WM's Joanne Malin went skiing in Breckenridge a few weeks ago, and she was so hooked that she wants to keep it up now she's back in Birmingham. So she invited Ackers and MSC to send along one of our coaches to talk about skiing in Birmingham.

So Jane Lee went along to the Mailbox in Birmingham last week for a brilliant *live* chat with Joanne on her mid-morning show. If you didn't manage to catch it, we are hoping to make a downloadable copy available on the MSC website.

Well done to Jane for the fantastic publicity for Ackers and MSC - you are a (radio) star.

still snowing a bit but the clouds and mist kept parting to reveal wonderful views of the dramatic peaks and cliffs of the Dolomites. From then on we spread ourselves far and wide. You can go on line and enter your lift pass number and it tells you how much skiing you did. Mine says that the

"Just to say many thanks to everyone on the Training Week in canazei who gave me so much help and support following my accident. Special thanks also to Yvonne, Hilary, and Ros, and out Equity ski rep, Anthony"
Joyce Chambers

total length of the pistes we did was 193km and we dropped 37km. In such a large area the various groups rarely came across each other so I can't report what they all got up to, but the buzz at dinner told me that there were plenty of tales to be told. One of the pleasures of organising the Training Week is

that we have created an atmosphere where newcomers seem to be able to slip easily into the group like old friends. I am grateful to the people who were there for the first time for the part they played and I hope to see them in future. The holiday was again helped by the great Hotel Irma. It has a beautiful lounge, but to get to it you have to pass through the bar. In two years no-one seems to have been able to achieve that feat.

I could go on and on about how good it was but I don't want to make you jealous. The main reason was that the coaches again came up trumps. Many thanks to Bruce, Graham, Peter, Rob and Roger for the superb way they balance the serious instruction, the miles of skiing and the pure fun that makes the Training Week the success it is.

CZECH MATES

Anne Ford

The Czech Republic is not the first place that springs to mind when planning a cross-country ski holiday. Whilst it's snow record may not be as good as the Alps proper, this year the snow throughout Europe was excellent and the Czech republic was no different with a covering sometimes 2m deep.

Prague airport was a 2hr transfer from our base at Kvilda in the Sumava National park. We were staying in a simple hotel which provided basic but nourishing food, clean comfortable rooms and unlimited tea and coffee throughout the day.

The skiing reminded me of parts of Norway with tracks cutting deep into dark forests, opening out into rolling farmland with views of distant peaks. The tracks or loipe were well prepared even considering the amount of snow falling. Sometimes just a signpost pointed the way into deep snow, where the track cutter has not been, for an off-piste experience.

The Sumava National park, founded in 1990 the year after communism was defeated by the



'Velvet' revolution, is part of the largest protected forested area in central Europe. The area was jealously guarded by communist tanks up until 1989 and high fences and sentry posts prevented any cross border travel. A modern day dividend of that military activity however is that the old tank roads are now ski trails in the winter and car-free bike

trails in the summer. It seems strange that within one lifetime the political situation has changed so much. The people are friendly and welcoming and keen to speak English which is rapidly becoming the second language replacing Russian.

There are buses which enable skiers to venture further afield and then ski back to home, and a 15km ride cost us only 80p. There are regular bars and cafes so hot drinks and food don't have to be carried.

The Sumava 45km ski marathon was held whilst I was there but unfortunately I was not able to take part as I had to be in Austria later the same day. It is an annual event which attracts an international field of almost 1000 skiers from club racers through to elite athletes.

It is certainly an interesting country and one which I look forward to visiting again soon. I may even ski the Sumava marathon next time. Anyone care to join me?

annetford@blueyonder.co.uk
07958 721310



SNOWMARK - What's it all About?



Some of you will have heard about Snowmark and may have read a little about it in the last newsletter. Well here is a bit more general background to try and explain what it is and hopefully to show why the MSC is working hard towards getting the Snowmark accreditation

Firstly, "Snowmark" is the Snowsport England equivalent of "Clubmark" which is a nationally recognised, cross-sport quality accreditation for clubs with junior sections.

National governing bodies (in our case Snowsport England) and county sport partnerships award Clubmark to proven high quality clubs. Clubs which attain Snowmark will also be awarded a Clubmark certificate as both awards are equal except for certain snow-specific aspects that have to be incorporated into the Snowmark award. Clubmark was introduced by Sport England in 2002 as a national scheme and there are now 4,800 accredited clubs across more than 35 sports.

Clubmark will be the stamp of approval to which all sports clubs aspire.

Within snowsports there currently only two clubs with the Snowmark accreditation - Norfolk and Kendal. These two clubs were pilot schemes, and there are now seven clubs, including MSC, working towards achieving Snowmark accreditation.

Snowmark/Clubmark accreditation is awarded to clubs that comply with minimum operating standards in four areas:

- The playing programme
- Duty of care and child protection
- Sports equity and ethics
- Club management

Clubs working towards accreditation can receive support and advice from Snowsport England and other partners such as county sports partnerships. We have been using the various discounted courses offered by CSPs in order to meet certain criteria for Snowmark. Circumstances will vary between clubs and sports but the process of accreditation is the same. There is only one set of paperwork to complete and in general most clubs are well on the way to achieving accreditation without realising it.

THE BENEFITS

As a single, national standard, Clubmark gives sports clubs of all types structure and direction. Clubs awarded Clubmark have seen many tangible benefits, such as:-

Club development - The foundation for any club is its youth structure. By encouraging and attracting young

members, it is building a strong future.

Increased membership - Addressing issues like equity and child protection gives parents confidence when choosing a club for their children. Clubmark stimulates real thought about how clubs cater for all members. Links with schools - Increasingly, schools are looking for guarantees of quality and the presence of child-friendly systems and procedures. Clubmark clubs are normally the first invited to work with local schools and schools are being encouraged to signpost pupils to Clubmark clubs.

Developing coaches and volunteers - As part of Clubmark, clubs are entitled to receive help to develop the skills of coaches. This, in turn leads to better quality provision and improved player performance. Parents can be confident that appropriately qualified coaches are deployed

Volunteers - Clubmark promotes a volunteer culture where hard work and dedication is recognised. Once accredited, clubs find more people are keen to get involved, especially parents. Raised profile - Clubmark is a highly valued accreditation. As well as raising the profile with local authorities, NGBs and other sporting and community bodies, all accredited clubs are listed on a national database and in other directories, to help them to publicise what they do, attract new members and grow.

Funding - Many funding bodies state that applicants must be Clubmark accredited or working towards

Continuous improvement - Accreditation encourages a club to adopt better, more organised systems and structures, thus helping them to run more effectively and efficiently. What the MSC has to do is meet a number of assessment criteria within the four areas - The playing programme, Duty of care and child protection, Sports equity and ethics, and Club management.

We have to provide evidence to the external assessors to demonstrate that the Club meets the criteria. There is a lot of work involved in this, but we are well on our way. We hope to gain accreditation in the early part of this year.

We hope this answers a few of the questions you might have, but if you want to find out more, or want to get involved and help the Club achieve Snowmark accreditation, then please contact Karen Conde karen.conde@tiscali.co.uk or 07734 734802, or Jeff Elmore jeffski@blueyonder.co.uk or 07958 967709

TOP MARKS FOR MSC SKIER

One of our regular Friday night skiers, Chloe Bonner has recently taken the "Best skier" award on her school trip.

Chloe was part of a 48 strong group from Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls who spent a week skiing in Attitash in New Hampshire, USA. Throughout the week the students were assessed by their coaches for skiing skills and ability, and by a timed slalom run. She also successfully skied a double diamond black run at the neighbouring resort of Bear Peak.

Chloe came top in the timed slalom run and the coaches judged her skiing skills and talent to be the best out of the 48 students on the trip. She was presented with a rosette, medal and certificate for her excellent achievements at an awards ceremony on the last night of the trip.

Chloe and her parents were delighted that she won the best skier accolade, and they put it down to the excellent coaching that she has received from MSC coaches on Friday nights at The Ackers.

On last year's ski trip Chloe hadn't had much coaching beforehand and was placed in the intermediate group. This year, following her Friday MSC sessions she was placed in the top group at the start of the trip and ended up best skier of the week!

This is a great demonstration of the excellent MSC coaching that the Club can offer you and the benefits that regular sessions with your MSC coaches on Mondays, Tuesday, Thursdays or Fridays can bring to your skiing.

So it's a big "well done" to Chloe and a big "thank you" to the MSC coaches!

FOR SALE

Avalanche Transceiver (Pieps analogue type) £40.
I also have 2 windsurfers for sale, along with 4 sails and other equipment.
Please contact Peter Seamen tel: 01676 534469
email: pj@seamen.plus.com

2009 TELEMARF FESTIVAL

For all those who ski Telemark style or want to find out what it's all about and try it for yourselves, then make a note in your diary for 4th July as this is the date of the 2009 Midlands Telemark festival at The Tamworth Snowdome. Organised by Matt Higginson of Lichfield based [Telemark-skiing.co.uk](http://www.telemark-skiing.co.uk) this is a great event where you can meet experts in the Telemark skiing style, take part in workshops, discuss equipment and find out more about this stylish skiing form. For more information nearer the time go to www.telemark-skiing.co.uk

SUMMER WALKS

With Spring barely upon us we are already planning our Summer events. Peter and Jill Seamen have kindly offered to lead a short walk of 4 miles leaving from The Bear, Berkswell on Wednesday July 15th at 7.00 pm. Meet in the pub car park for just before 7.00 and we should be back by 8.30. Food is available and, obviously, anyone who does not wish to walk would be welcome to join us at the pub for a drink. Please contact Peter and Jill on 01676 534469 to let them know if you are coming along.

ACKERS TOWER

For those of you with a head for heights you will be delighted to hear that The Ackers Tower will be officially opened on Monday 16th March by Birmingham's Lord Mayor, Councillor Chauhdry Rashid. The Ackers Adventure's Tower is unique ~ a 22m high, specially designed construction, clad for climbing, abseiling and adventurous events. It has the longest zip wire in the region and the Fan Descender, a nerve wracking free-fall parachute replica.



RACER READY

This is a fantastic opportunity to get a year's subscription to Racer Ready magazine at half the normal price! MSC members can get Racer Ready for only £10 delivered to your door.

Racer Ready covers all the racing news both in the UK and abroad, and it also has the latest news on resorts, clothing, gadgets, equipment, plus events and interviews with top skiers. See the latest edition on-line at www.racer-ready.co.uk

To take advantage of this offer simply tick the Racer Ready box on the membership renewal form (if you haven't yet renewed), or write to Hilary Cox, Membership Secretary stating that you'd like a Racer Ready subscription and include a cheque for £10 for each copy you want. Don't forget to include the address you'd like to Racer Ready to be sent to as this will be done by the publisher and not the MSC.

racer ready

GLOUCESTER SUMMER RACE LEAGUE

This year's Summer Race League at Gloucester takes place on the following dates: 2nd May, 6th June, 4th July, 22nd August, 19th September, and 17th October.

Whilst we have an increasing number of racers who are too good to compete at Gloucester (their seed points being too low), the continuing input of younger and less experienced racers mean we are still planning on entering three teams as in previous years.

If you want to race this summer and have not already let her know, please see Jane Lee on a Friday night, or email canal.cottage@btopenworld.com.

RETAIL ROUND-UP

With talk of recession and doom and gloom all around, we are glad to report that many of our supporters are reporting very good trade at the moment. Ski and Outdoor Warehouse have reported excellent business in recent months, so much so that they have had to buy in extra stocks to meet demand.

Decathlon in Merry Hill have also reported "buoyant" sales with stocks of certain items in short supply.

Other retailers have also reported good business, but at reduced margins as sales have been started early to boost business.

Winter Sales are now on at:

Two Seasons with up to 50% off ski clothing

White Mountain have some ski hardware on sale, for example 08/09 ATOMIC BLACK EYE Ti with NEOX 412 VIP is now £100 off

Also check out the ski and outdoor sale items at Lockwoods, Solihull Ski Centre and Snow+Rock.

There are plenty of good deals around for those hitting the slopes towards the latter part of the season, so support your local retailers as best you can!

STOKE SKI RACE CLUB

FUN RACES 2009

**AN INTRODUCTION TO SLALOM RACING
FOR ALL AGES AND ABILITIES**

OPEN TO EVERY ONE

Saturdays:

18th April 16th May

20th June 11th July

5th September

Age categories, as at 1st Jan 2009
under 8, under 10, under 12, under 14, under 16, under 19, over 19
1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards in all categories, male and female based on best four of five races

Entry Fee.....£12 per race

Or £50 for all 5 races

Full details on www.stokeskiraceclub.com

Racesecretary@stokeskiraceclub.com

07970 175959