

MIDLAND SKI CLUB NEWS

FEBRUARY 2010

Visit of Sports Minister and Olympian

Over 100 members and guests were at the Ackers slope on Thursday 4th Feb 2010 to publicise the forthcoming Winter Olympics in Vancouver and to hear from Snowsport England their plans to support 10 "Priority Clubs" over the next four years, following the award of a major grant from Sport England.

Midland Ski Club has been selected as one of the 10 priority clubs in England to receive special support, both financial and in kind, and our success in obtaining Snowmark Accreditation has been a key factor in their decision.

This very special event at the Ackers venue was attended by Gerry Sutcliffe, Minister of Sport and Finlay Mickel, the British Alpine Skier, and BBC TV's Midlands Today broadcast live from the slope. In addition, a number of special guests were in attendance, to support the event and observe our thriving and very active club.

We organised a full programme of skiing activities which were supported by Loughborough and Warwick Universities, the Special Olympics Team, Gloucester Snowboard Club, and in the main event, the dual slalom Stoke and

Telford ski clubs competed with our own teams.

Both Sport England and Snowsport England will now review with us how best to move forward with our future aspirations which must include the Ackers Trust and slope development. We have the interest and support of Norman Davies, Chairman of Ackers Adventure, so we will now form a small and active sub-committee to draw up the priorities which will be reported on as soon as available.

For those who could not attend, it could be a landmark event for the club, it was a great success thanks to great team-work. We were congratulated all round and our standing in the sport has been further enhanced.

Bryan Thomas, Chairman



Sports Minister Gerry Sutcliffe addressing members, and with the Ackers staff



Finlay Mickel with MSC Head Coach and Vice-Chairman, and with some of MSC's young racers



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

6th-13th March

Club Holiday, Serre Chevalier -
Diana Horth 01889 800706

21st March

Birmingham & S.Mids Schools
Race - Sally Phelps 01676 530585

End March

End of Season Social - Venue and
Date tbc.

Jeff Elmore, 07958 967709

3rd-10th April

Family Training Week, Saalbach,
Austria

Kim Hancock 01788 337280

16th May

MSC Club National, Stoke
Paul Lawrence 01676 533076

18th June

Midsummer Walk - details to be
advised.

MSC GoogleGroup

The key way in which members can keep in touch with what is happening - especially when something happens at short notice - is to be members of the MSC Google Group emailing list.

We're still getting people saying they aren't on this - and the reason is that you haven't asked!

The policy on the group is therefore being changed from Opt-in, to Opt-out: anyone who we have an email address for will be signed up in the next week or so - then if you don't want to participate you can remove yourself or ask us to remove you.

Great Start to the Season

MSC members declared the new ski season open with an amazing week in Tignes in the first week of December.

For the third year in a row we enjoyed perfect snow conditions. The highlight was a superb day of deep powder skiing under the Aiguille Rouge lift in beautiful sunshine. The astonishing thing being that this lift is half-way down to Les Brevieres! In 20 years of skiing Tignes I've never known powder so low down at any time of the year, let alone early December - they even opened up the Fornet section of Val d'Isere and we were able to ski to the top of the glacier.

Socially it was just as much fun, particularly the night in Le Caveau bar with an hilariously incompetent singer who had us in tears when he seemed to think that Elvis was one of the Beach Boys. We weren't selfish either because before we left Tignes the next party from MSC had just arrived to enjoy what, fingers crossed, is looking like being a great season.

Coaching Away-Days

In addition to the regular MSC coaching program at the Ackers, we are now running periodic coaching days at other slopes. The next sessions will be held at Rossendale (14th March), and at Pontypool (provisionally 18th April).

Whilst mainly these are aimed at racers, we are planning a non-race group for the Pontypool session, which will be aimed at parents and other non-racing older skiers who want to improve their technique.

These sessions are full days, typically starting from 10am through to 4pm. Keep a look out for email from the MSC Google Group for more details nearer the times, or get in touch with MSC Head Coach Roger Crombleholme (coach@midlandski.org.uk or 01785 714073).

Christmas Party and Awards

This year's Christmas Party at the Land Rover Social Club in Solihull was very well attended by over 100 members. Everyone enjoyed themselves and found the new venue very good, and the buffet also went down well - literally! Thanks to those who organised the event and those who contributed towards the raffle prizes.

The annual Racing Awards were duly presented and the criteria used by the Race Committee to reach their verdict will be posted on our website so that all members can be fully aware of how the award is reached. This will allow racers to seek to aspire to the honour of being Skier of the Year or Skiers Skier in the years ahead.

Congratulations to the 2009 winners:

Sophia Phelps	Female Skier of the Year
Harry Hornsby	Male Skier of the Year
Adam Beardmore	Skiers' Skier.

It was a close run decision for each of the awards, so train hard, race competitively, support your fellow members and help out where you can, and maybe your name will appear on the trophy.

MSC Small Ads

There is a new page on the website for members to advertise ski-gear that they have for sale (wanted's are accepted too). The idea is, that instead of the kit languishing in the back of the cupboard for years, then you let you know what you have available - or want.

I'm sure that every member has something they no-longer use that someone else may be able to take advantage of.

Full details online, at www.midlandski.org.uk/ads

Double BUDS for Benn

The British University Dry Slope Championships 2009 took place on November 13/14 at Hillend, Edinburgh and MSC member Benn Hall took gold in both Slalom and Giant slalom events.

The weekend, known as BUDS, sees Universities from throughout the UK compete in ski & snowboarding racing and freestyle competitions. It is the biggest event on the university dry slope calendar, and the ultimate prize is to be crowned British University Dry Slope Champion. This year saw record levels of entrants with over 600 people taking part across the weekend, with almost double that coming to support the university clubs.

MSC member Benn Hall was competing as part of Team Newcastle with the first event being slalom. After a disappointing first run, England Alpine Team member Benn was lying in seventh overall. Hall, ex European Dry slope Champion said "Newcastle University has dominated snowsports recently, every time we compete people expect results, so it was tough going up for the second run.

With an impressive, top 30 second run start list comprising of current & ex national squad members, it was time for Hall, a Newcastle Elite Athlete, to dig deep. With an expectant crowd waiting at the bottom and darkness setting, Hall knew he had to risk everything to stand a chance of claiming victory. In what was to be a nerve wracking and exciting finish, he threw everything at it and held it together claiming gold and the BUDS Slalom title.



The second day of the championship is dominated by the traditional Giant Slalom event. The men's race proved to be even more entertaining than the previous days slalom with some dramatic crashes on this the longest and possibly most notorious of

British dry slopes! With fellow Newcastle team mates crashing out, it was left to hero of the weekend Benn to produce the goods. Of course, he did not disappoint, storming into first place and claiming an historic double title of British Universities Slalom and Giant Slalom Champion 2009/10.



Training Week 2010

Canazei, Italy

After two years in which we saw tons of snow but not a lot of the Dolomites, this year we saw them in their full glory. The sun shone out of a cloudless blue sky and the glorious cliffs and pillars towered above us.



Not that we were short of snow. The pistes were in perfect condition but the lack of fresh snow meant that the steeper slopes did become very polished. Even experienced skiers had difficulty holding an edge on them. This is where the Coaches came into their own. Bruce, Graham, Peter, Rob and Roger all worked very conscientiously to give us enough technique to handle everything the Sella Ronda could throw at us. They did a great job in teaching us on the move and we covered many miles. Everyone did the full circuit of the Sella Ronda and further into the corners of this wonderful ski area to Pozza, Marmolada, La Villa and beyond St Christina - two group even made it to the Hidden Valley.

Sadly, not all went well and we did suffer two bad injuries. I'm very sorry to report that Margaret Smith fell onto the handle of her ski stick and has seriously damaged her eye. And Judith Shaw fell on a rock-hard piste and cracked her pelvis. Thanks ladies for being so stoical in face of your adversity and we wish you well

in your recovery. Many thanks to Hilary and Val for your help in sorting things out. Equity's reps. Anthony and Jo also did a fine job in arranging the hospital and the transfers.

The Hotel Irma was its usual delightful self and Franca, Luciano, Vassily, Marianna and chef Manuel are now old friends. Dinner one night was enlivened by the start of a Ladin festival. Ladin is the local traditional culture which they're very proud of. A group of "Morris Dancers" in fabulous costumes burst into the room. They each wore a belt festooned with large bells and as they hopped around the dining room the bells resounded deafeningly in unison. I know it sounds like something out of Monty Python but you could tell how important it was to them. The Italians are delightful, not least Manuel's menu translations. "Pasta pens all gotten angry" turned out to be Penne in a Chilli Sauce and his speciality came out as Jealousy of the Chef.

Only in Italy could a piste called Tre (three) be number 11. I was standing at a bus stop when a bus came in the opposite direction, stopped, called me over, did a u-turn and took me back into town. You don't get that on the 33 to Kingstanding. Annie was fined 30 euros for invading Poland - she bumped into a Polish woman whose husband called the police, Bruce arrived to 'help' and had his lift-pass confiscated!

One of the pleasures of the Training Week is to meet new people and we welcomed Christine, Pauline, James and Philip together with Elspeth and Ed from the Midland Nordic group and Gillian who is a stalwart of the racing scene. It would be good to think that the Training Week could be the catalyst which brings together the various groups in MSC.

John Arnold



MISHAP ON THE MOUNTAIN

As John has said above, I had a rather nasty encounter with my ski-pole whilst "cruising" down a "blue" run. We had been up the Marmolada Glacier and were on the home run when I lost concentration and fell/sat on the sharp end of my pole and the other end came up and hit me in the eye, dislodging my goggles and doing some rather nasty damage to my eye socket.

After a very hair-raising journey by "blood-wagon" (to be avoided at all costs), taxi and ambulance I ended up in an Innsbruck clinic in the lap of luxury - twin bedded rooms with en-suite facilities, tea and coffee on tap day and night, complete with a selection of fresh fruit - it would make excellent holiday accommodation! The staff all spoke some English and shook hands and introduced themselves by name. All in all, if it hadn't been for the accident, a most enjoyable four days!

Since returning home I have seen consultants who have come to the conclusion that I have lost the sight in my left eye. I seem to be coping with this quite successfully, apart from falling over the dog and bumping into Bunny.

The real reason for writing this little epistle was to thank everyone for all their support and kindness in my hour of need. Sorry Bruce for messing up your good record of "no accidents" on your groups - you shouldn't have said it!! And thank you Liz for staying with Bunny and I until they took me away.

Hope to see you all on the slopes again soon folks.

Margaret Smith



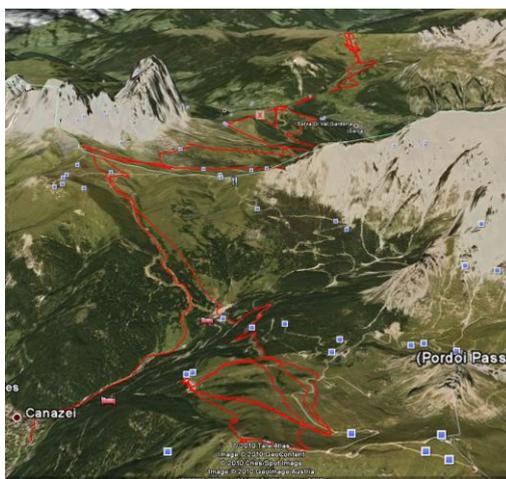
Ski Tracking - How far? How Fast?

For this year's Training Week, Midlands-based Gtrek Ltd loaned us some GPS Trackers. These matchbox-sized devices record how much skiing you've done in a day - how many miles you've skied, how much vertical you've done, your maximum speed and so on - and afterwards you can download the data to a PC and see your route on GoogleEarth!

Each of the groups had a Gtrek which each day recorded their progress around the many and varied mountains of the Dolomites. The figures and diagrams Gtrek came out with were studied avidly each evening, with quite a bit of a competition developing between who'd been furthest, who'd gone fastest, and stopped least, and so on...

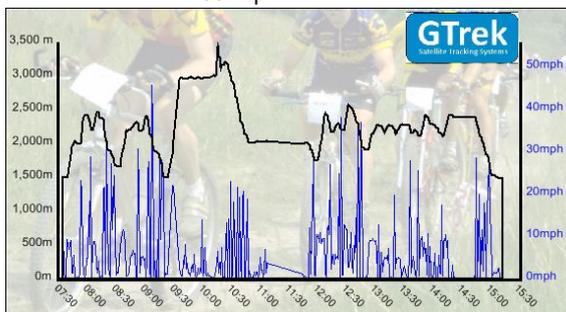
On the MSC website you can download from that trip some various information that Gtrek outputs: a "Profile" sheet (showing the altitude and skier speed), a Google Earth overlay for the routes taken, and even the raw GPS data files (openable by anyone with the gtrek software).

Gtrek GPS recorders normally retail at just under £100, but you can purchase a unit for only £90 - just go to



www.gtrek.co.uk, select Buy and use the Promo-Code "MSC".

So how much skiing did we the groups do over the week? The grand total was 130,000m of vertical, across 585 miles of skiing, some 427 lifts and a maximum speed of 69mph!



Neil Hardy

It is with great sadness that we have to announce that Neil Hardy has passed away. Apparently he was cycling when he suffered a stroke. He will be remembered as a very enthusiastic skier, particularly on the Training Week. We send our sincere condolences to his family, especially to Nicky who herself came on several club holidays.

Monterosa Holidays

With the latest newsletter and brochure you will have received details of this company who run holidays to the beautiful, unspoilt resort of Macugnaga. They have kindly paid the cost of posting this newsletter in order that they can be introduced to you. They have such good contacts in the resort that they can tailor-make your visit for you. Give Luca or Katherine a ring on 01430 434717 for more details.

Adventure Women XC

Anne Ford is leading a Cross Country ski holiday for Adventure Women in Norway next month. For full details see www.adventure-women.co.uk/adventure/



West Midlands Ski Association Birmingham and South Midlands Area Schools Ski Race Sunday 21st March 2010



At the Ackers Trust Ski Centre, Golden Hillock Road, Birmingham, B11 2PY

Teams must consist of 3 or 4 skiers from the same school. The minimum standard of skiing required is to be able to perform linked snowplough turns safely, to be able to control speed and to use the button lift. No previous racing experience is necessary. Helmets must be worn. Ski and boot hire is available and included in the school entry fee. The closing date for school entries is Wednesday 10th March 2010.

Full details and Entry Forms at www.midlandski.org.uk/schoolsrace



Retail Round-up

You can now find out the latest deals from **Ski Warehouse** by following them on Twitter: twitter.com/TAMWORTHSKIWEAR You know what they say about the early bird getting the worm!!

Two Seasons now have a new store in the Bull Ring in Birmingham. Their Lichfield store offers a ski service on site. Other local stores are in Solihull, Coventry, Leamington Spa, Leicester, Worcester, Derby, Nottingham and Northampton. And a new store has also just opened in Exeter. Ideal for when you are heading to Devon and Cornwall for the summer!

Lockwood's new web site now on-line with special web only offers. Don't forget you can now get your 10% MSC discount on-line by using code MIDSKI-09-10. This applies to all products in the online shop except gift tokens and special offers.

For anyone wanting off-piste safety equipment, remember that Lockwoods have a special 15% discount offer for MSC members both on-line and in store. For on-line quote MIDSKI-09-15

Of course, you won't be able to combine the 15% and 10% offers.

The **Decathlon** megastore at the Merry Hill centre, Dudley has a great

selection of excellent value ski clothing and hardware on offer. For example they have helmet liners from £3.95, fleeces from £5 and a wide range of childrens and adults boots and skis and great prices.

Snow + Rock have decided to hold their prices until further notice and not apply the 2.5% VAT increase that came into effect in January. They also have redesigned their website making it easier to navigate and buy what you want. You can also follow the latest info on Twitter <http://twitter.com/SnowAndRock>

White Mountain currently have a mid-season sale on and are offering free shipping on all items delivered to any UK mainland address. They have a great selection of mens and ladies jackets on offer as well as a great selection of skis at reduced prices. Check on-line or call in at Wolverhampton or Walsall for more information.

A new ski maintenance company **Edge and Grind** has set up in the Midlands, based in Berkswell. So if you need any servicing done, from a basic edge&wax to more serious repairs, call them on 01676 532320, or visit their website www.edgeandgrind.co.uk. They do offer a pick-up/drop-off service.

Mountain Paradise

MSC supporter Mountain Paradise now has a great holiday offer for MSC members to the Tatras Mountains in beautiful Slovakia.

The offer is £399 per person, which includes return flights London Luton, Manchester, or Dublin into Poprad, return transfers (20 mins); 7 nights B&B in a pension located 5 mins from the longest ski runs in Slovakia (8km), and a 6 day lift pass all included in the price!

This represents excellent value for money, so to find out more about the skiing and accommodation go to <http://www.mountainparadise.co.uk/>

You can read a fascinating article on skiing in Slovakia in the new 2010 MSC yearbook which is out now. The article was written by the winners of the MSC / Mountain Paradise holiday prize draw.

The London Luton, Manchester & Dublin flights to Slovakia are direct into Poprad and run 3 times per week. Contact Mountain Paradise for more details, and don't forget to mention you are an MSC member - you will be well looked after!

New Skis for Sale

Head Xenon 3.0 Xi skis 149cm with RF11 bindings

Skis are untouched and still in plastic wrapping. Bindings are boxed and unused

Anne Ford was lucky enough to win these skis at one of this year's Warren Miller file shows - but Anne does Cross-Country, so is looking to sell them.

The skis are a low-intermediate ski, great as a "first own ski".

Length 149cm Dimensions 116-70-101mm Turn Radius 11.6

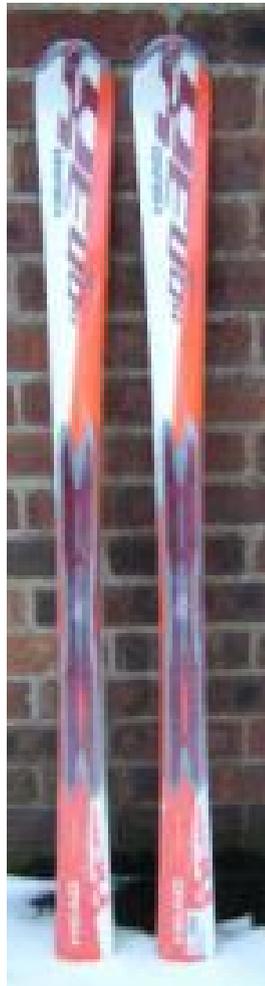
Head say:

"This is the ultimate knife for the bread and butter skier. The Xenon Xi 3.0 combines our new Xenon multi-conditions concept with some serious technology and unbeaten value."

"Intermediate all-mountain cruisers with super-light construction, ease of use and big geometry to help you carve and stay on your feet. As is the case with tennis and quash racquets, golf drivers and putters, the more surface area you have available and the bigger the "sweet spot" the easier they will be to use. Head use the principle with the Xenon range, a multi-function, easy to use ski for beginners and intermediates."

For sale for £90.00 (ono) and remember they are **brand new**.

Contact Jeff for more info. Tel 07958 967709 or email jeffski@blueyonder.co.uk



Winter Olympics

The 2010 Winter Olympics from Vancouver run from 12th to 28th February. There is full TV coverage 24/7 on British Eurosport and also on-line at <http://uk.eurosport.yahoo.com/winter-olympics>

The BBC will have 250 hours of coverage throughout the games on BBC 1 and BBC2 and 2,000 hours via interactive TV (the red button) and BBC iPlayer.

Info on all the Team GB competitors in the Alpine and Nordic disciplines is posted on the Ackers notice board along with the schedules for the Winter Olympic and Paralympic games.