

# MIDLAND SKI CLUB NEWS

FEBRUARY 2011

## FERN IS BRITISH CHAMPION!

XC racer Fern Cates won her category in both Classic and Skate categories at the British National Nordic Ski Championships in Ruholding, Germany in January.

15-year old Fern, who joined MSC last summer and trains on our weekly roller-ski sessions at Solihull Cycle Track, is now looking forward to going to Sweden in April to train with British Nordic Development squad as she aims to get to the European Youth Olympics in Romania in 2013.



## Diary

### **Mondays @ 7.30pm**

Adult Coaching  
Bryan Arnott 01827 893243

### **Tuesdays @ 6.00pm**

Race Novices - Roger  
Crombleholme 01785 714073

### **Tuesdays @ 7.30pm**

Race Coaching - Roger  
Crombleholme 01785 714073

### **Thursdays @ 7.30pm**

Advanced Race Training - Roger  
Crombleholme 01785 714073

### **Fridays @ 6/6.30/7pm**

Junior Coaching  
Jane Lee 01905 345416

### **12th March (to 19th)**

**Club Holiday**, Verbier

*Sold out*

### **27th March**

B'ham & S.Mids Schools Race,  
Ackers

### **15th May**

MSC Club National, Stoke

### **20th May (to 22nd)**

End of Season Weekend, Corris  
Wales

Diana Horth, 01889 800706

### **6th June**

**Annual General Meeting**, LRSC  
Solihull

Diana Horth, 01889 800706

## Central England Snowsports Association Birmingham and S.Midlands Area Schools Ski Race Sunday 27th March 2011

**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 Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

**For full details and an entry form, go to  
[www.midlandski.org.uk/schoolsrace](http://www.midlandski.org.uk/schoolsrace)**

## MSC Starter Sessions at Ackers

After a number of requests from club members MSC and Ackers together are now offering the chance to learn to ski with the club, offering starter lessons on Friday nights. These sessions are aimed at friends and family of club members, at parents and grandparents of junior skiers, at school friends of skiers who want to make a school ski team and at anyone who would like to learn to ski. Lessons are also open to non-members.

A package can be bought with a

considerable saving consisting of 6 lessons, starter I, II, III and IV and snowplough plus. Lessons can also be booked individually.

When snowplough plus has been completed skiers can progress to the normal MSC sessions on Monday and Friday nights.

The next Starter I lesson will be on Friday 11th March at 6:30pm. Phone Ackers to book on 0121 772 5111 or contact Jane Lee on 0774 923 5579 if you have any queries.

## Advance Notice

The **Annual General Meeting** of Midland Ski Club will be held on Monday 6th June at Land Rover Sports and Social Club, Solihull.

The **MSC Christmas Party 2011** will be held on Friday 9th December 2011, at the same location.



# English Schools Ski Association (ESSKIA) 2010

## Midland Ski Club members on the podium

What an exciting and successful year it's been for Midland Ski Club racers who skied for their schools in the English Schools Ski Association Races in 2010.

### Qualifying for the English Finals

Qualifying races were held at dry slopes across the country, our races were split between Stoke and Gloucester. Solihull School entered two teams to Stoke on the 18th September and did really well with their under 16 girls team winning their age group. Sophie Shakeshaft also skied well in their mixed team. Princethorpe College, Heart of England and Droitwich High raced at Gloucester the following day. Again all of the racers skied really well, notching up some great times. Regional results were evaluated to decide which schools were invited to attend the finals and Open competition.



**Princethorpe college Teams:** Jack Rigby, Ollie Eaton, Robyn Doherty, Ed Brotherton, Sam Doherty, Sophia Phelps, Nick Phelps, Izzy Snead & Freya Eaton. Winners of English U16 Boys and British Boys Schools ski Champions

### Success at the English finals in Rossendale

Almost all of the teams with Midland members were selected to compete in the finals and Open race in Rossendale on Saturday, 9th/10th October. The racers again skied well and even managed three podium positions, giving their schools even more silverware for their trophy cabinets. Solihull under 16 girls came 3rd, Heart of England came 1st in the under 16 mixed category and Princethorpe College came 1st in the under 16 boys.

The open competition was held the next day, this competition consisted of skiers from all age groups from junior to upper 6th senior schools so some fierce and exciting skiing was expected to be seen on the day. Our Midland skiers didn't disappoint and pulled out all the stops, skiing really well on this challenging slope in Lancashire. The results from the Open competition were again evaluated and the successful teams were invited to represent England in the British Schools Ski Championships race held in November.



**Solihull Girls U16 Team** Helena Newbould, Leticia Salmon, Libby Thomas & Amy Middleton



**Heart of England Teams:** Duncan Thorley, Sam Dewison, Beth McCormick, Alasdair Thorley, JJ Frost, Joey Frost and Liam Morris

### Winning the British Schools Finals in Stoke

Droitwich boys, Solihull girls, Princethorpe boys and girls were invited to represent England in the British Schools Ski Championships held in Stoke on Sunday, 7th November. A total of 46 teams took part in the British finals, including teams from Scotland and Wales, all fiercely fighting to be the British Schools Ski Champions. It was a bright, sunny but cold day in Stoke and Marc Telling set a tight technical course which was sure to offer some spectacular skiing for the spectators and skiers alike. He really knew how to set a challenging course, making the most of all the lumps, dips and bumps on the Stoke slope.



**Droitwich High U19 Team** Liam Hunt, Adam & Sam Lee

Some well known registered racers were in attendance so we knew it was going to be a really exciting day of racing. The setting at the top of the course was tight and demanded early turns by the racer otherwise gate 7 represented a real problem, catching out some of the best skiers. This course proved too challenging for some teams but our racers were up for the challenge and put in some excellent runs. Adam Lee skied like a demon, achieving a 3rd overall boys podium position. Princethorpe boys also skied exceptionally well, achieving good fast runs and fighting off all opposition to achieve pole position by coming 1st overall, winning the **Boys British Schools Ski Championships 2010**.

### Midland Members now selected for ESSkia Training in Norway

We would like to congratulate the following Midland Ski Club members who have been invited to train with the English Schools Ski Association Squads in Norway and Austria in 2011: Adam Lee, Alasdair Thorley, Duncan Thorley, Libby Thomas, Nick Phelps, Sam Doherty, Liam Hunt, Jack Rigby and Sophia Phelps.

If you would like to find out more about taking part in Esskia races or want to see the full results

<http://esskia.webs.com/>

# End of Season Weekend - Corris, Wales 20th-22nd May 2011

Once upon a time Midland Ski club members used to get together for weekends outside the ski season. There would be camping, lots of things to do and barbecues too. Following our members' questionnaire last year a number of you said it would be good to try something similar.

So, we have booked 16 places in the Braich Goch bunkhouse which has been thoroughly refurbished and modernized. For those with Internet go to <http://www.braichgoch.co.uk/> to get an idea of what to expect.

The bunkhouse has its own public bar and visitors can choose to self cater or eat at the local Slaters Arms or go further afield e.g. into Macynlleth. It has its own barbecue area in the garden too. Depending on preferences we may book a meal for the Saturday evening

## Booking form.....

To: Diana Horth 23 Lockside view, Rugeley, Staffs WS15 1NJ  
Tel 01889 800706 or 07806 777049 or [diana.horth@ntlworld.com](mailto:diana.horth@ntlworld.com)

Please book me \_\_\_\_\_ places for 2 nights on the End of Season Weekend in Braich Goch Bunkhouse, Corris from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2011. I enclose a cheque for £35 per person, made payable to Midland Ski Club.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



## Retail Roundup

Sales are on at many local ski shops!

Up to 50% off at **Two Seasons** with special offers on Salomon skis - free bag and poles (see website or in-store for details). Also a chance to win Crystal ski holiday.  
[www.twoseasons.co.uk](http://www.twoseasons.co.uk)

**Snow+Rock** - Save up to 20% on 2010-11 gear and up to 50% on all remaining 2009-10 lines. [www.snowandrock.com](http://www.snowandrock.com)

**Lockwoods** have a number of high quality skis and boots in their mid-season sales along with luggage and back packs from Da Kine and Camelbak. [www.lockwoods.com](http://www.lockwoods.com)

**Ski and Outdoor Warehouse** in Tamworth has a great range of very affordable clothing and hardware right now with some extra bargains from 7th February.  
[www.skiwear4less.com](http://www.skiwear4less.com)

Also check other local retailers that actively support MSC: [www.whitemountain ski.co.uk](http://www.whitemountain ski.co.uk) and [www.decathlon.co.uk](http://www.decathlon.co.uk)

Just getting ready to go on holiday? Make sure your skis are in top condition before you go - contact Edge and Grind for excellent service for your skis. Mention you're an MSC member to get your discount! [www.edgeandgrind.co.uk](http://www.edgeandgrind.co.uk)

If you are setting out on holiday soon do ensure that you have the right level of insurance cover. You can get your insurance through MSC [www.midlandski.org.uk/insurance](http://www.midlandski.org.uk/insurance) Specialist insurer Snowcard also offer a wide range of insurance that you can tailor to suit your specific needs. [www.snowcard.co.uk](http://www.snowcard.co.uk)

Members should also check that their EHIC card is still valid. They have expiry dates unlike the old E111 system! This gives you some basic health cover in most European countries and many insurers waive their excess if you use one.

## Ackers Update

Many will know that due to the loss of a major grant from Birmingham Council, Ackers management was seeking a large increase in their charges as from 1st Jan 2011. You'll have noticed this has not happened.

Instead we have detailed discussions have been going on between MSC and Ackers to completely review our relationship and how we as a club and you as individuals pay for the slope usage. We need to complete the review by 31st March 2011 and we are hopeful of an arrangement which will be beneficial to both parties.

It has also been agreed that the way forward must be to increase the throughput and site utilisation and to achieve this we must also improve the conditions not only for the participants, but also for parents and others who also come along.

As a first step we are looking at how to extend and enhance the ski building to give us a club facility and the possibility to "socialise" in an more conducive and pleasant environment. This will be followed by looking at the slope itself. Ideas and suggestions are invited and most welcome. Please forward them to me for consideration. Obviously, funding will be necessary, but working together, Ackers and MSC, have a chance of considerably enhancing our experience at the slope.

Bryan Thomas, [chair@midlandski.org.uk](mailto:chair@midlandski.org.uk), 07768 954544

## MSC on

Courtesy of those nice people at snowHeads, we now have our own online discussion forum. Please use it to discuss any aspect of the club, being aware that the debate is visible to all other members, so keep it civil!

To join in the discussion, you need to register with snowHeads using this link: [www.midlandski.org.uk/snowheads](http://www.midlandski.org.uk/snowheads), giving your real name so we can check it against membership records. If you are already a registered snowHead, send an email to [admin@midlandski.org.uk](mailto:admin@midlandski.org.uk) giving your snowHead username and we'll get you access to the forum.

Of course, once you are registered you are also free to join in with the open discussion areas as well - which cover just about every topic for those interested in winter sports.

See you on snowHeads!

# High altitude weekend? You bet it was!

Diana Horth

El Presidente, Mike Thomas starred again booking 16 MSC members into the 4\* Oread Club Hut in Rhyd Ddu, a small village conveniently situated about 3 miles out of Beddgelert. Not only that but it's also quite conveniently situated at the Rhyd Ddu railway station and the start of the Rhyd Ddu path up to Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon to you and me).

Driving across on Friday evening most people would have experienced some pretty foul weather so foul that only 2 ventured down to the pub! The forecast predicted that Saturday would clear in the morning with more wet stuff later on. The decision was to go up Snowdon as it was reckoned to be the better day. We set off in a slight shower with the top completely clogged in and we did enjoy some reasonable views for the first half of the trip up.



Things did begin to change after our first coffee stop with a few wintry showers. It was hard to tell if it was hail or frozen sleet but whatever, it acted well as an exfoliation treatment that would probably have cost a small fortune at the local beauty salon. Even the canine members of the group were trying to escape the vicious attacks.



The high top was all in cloud and on reaching the new cafe in a snowstorm we beat our way in through a mass of other intrepid idiots all hell bent on getting out of the weather. The set up in refurbished cafe was very customer friendly in that people could eat their own food or buy at the counter or vending machines.

Eventually we accepted we had to leave especially as the cafe was closing. We took the Snowdon Ranger path down, attracting some faithful followers until we turned off for Rhyd Ddu and they realised we weren't all going the same way.



Back at base it was time to gussy up for the evening's feast. Mike and Ann had done the shopping and a lot of hard work to create a 'choice of 3' menu for each course. To ensure fairness we weren't allowed to simply pile in each of us drew a number and went in order to make our choice. Surprisingly it worked!



Typically, Sunday was probably one of the nicest days you could imagine: all the tops were clear and we enjoyed



stunning views all the way on our circuitous walk to Beddgelert. The plan being to walk in and take the train back to Rhyd Ddu. The only downer of the day was not having enough time to get a cup of tea or drink in Beddgelert but we felt it was better to get the train rather than wait about 2 hours.



Having obtained some discounted rates at the ticket office we enjoyed a 20 minute scenic ride back to base. A quick tea break and clean up and most people were ready to set off home.

Another successful HATW in good accommodation and all in a fabulous location. A very big thanks to Mike for organising again.

## President's Ski-Carriage Warning

I went to Tignes with a group of Club Members before Christmas. The snow was deep and soft, and we ski'd in glorious sunshine in our new helmets on quiet pistes all week. Accommodation in the Hotel Diva was excellent; convenient for the slopes and good food. And the MSC company was wonderful as always.

The holiday just couldn't have been better until we checked in to fly back home from Geneva with KLM. Here we were presented with a charge of 85 Swiss Francs to carry our skis home. Some of us had paid 55 euros for ski carriage, but this was apparently for carriage of skis on the outbound flight only. No way would KLM issue our boarding passes until we had paid the 85 francs. The resulting charge on my credit card was £56.37, and some of the group had paid this amount twice.

The warning is to check very carefully on any extras when you book flights, and make sure you are 100% sure of what you are paying for. We all felt very cheated by KLM; their web site, which was far from clear from the onset, gave lots of problems with on-line booking in, and can only be described as deceitful.

# New Year Family Training Holiday

27<sup>th</sup> Dec 2010 to 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2011

Sheila Campbell

This holiday was a great return to the Ennstaler Hof in Altenmarkt, where we stayed 2 years ago. This is a lovely hotel in the Ski Amade, the largest ski area of Austria. The Ennstaler Hof was a welcome sight for the weary MSC travellers. The veterans among us will remember how we were charmed by its heated boot racks and fortifying slabs of meat for dinner back in 2008.



Everyone mingled into one big happy family (although maybe a dysfunctional one). Our tables at dinnertime reflected our various ages (ranging from 6 to 77) and interests, each person slotting onto a suitable table of either the Tinies, the Techies, the Trendies or the, um, T'others. After our meal, the kids disappeared to the table tennis room, the TV room or the climbing room while the adults chatted and drank (sensibly, of course). And so children hardly had to see their parents all week!

We were united in our happiness for the birthdays of Kim, Steve and Matthew, especially because it meant three lots of cake.



New Year's Eve fun and festivities began with a conga line around the Umbrella bar in Zauchensee, followed by a hearty four-course meal back at the hotel. We then adjourned to the basement for the traditional Austrian winter pastime of whacking nails into a giant log. The women surprised the men folk with their superior DIY skills, and beat them into submission with several victories. At midnight we assembled outside for a spectacularly ear-splitting fireworks display, along with glühwein and hotdogs.

Oh yes, and we did do some skiing. We usually caught the bus to Zauchensee, where we found wonderful snow and idyllic blue skies. Dave's group watched him ski down what were dubbed Lemming's Leap and Refusal Hill and flatly refused to be lemmings. However, by the end of the week, much confidence was gained, and the group was hot on Dave's heels. Roger's group wrote a poem about him being the world's greatest coach, Guy trained the youngest group and dealt manfully with them falling off bus seats and other accidents, whilst Rob's group did their best to avoid the pistes and took to the woods instead.



The last day saw the usual pranks and Steve found himself skiing down the mountain on one ski, his group having made off with the other.

Everyone made great progress, and congratulations to those who braquaged, star jumped and worked hard to link their short radius turns to get their Snow Life awards on the final evening - and a special mention for Phil who regained his mojo. Even Molly the dog joined the celebrations, enthusiastically barking along with the applause.

We look forward to returning to Ennstaler Hof next New Year.

**A huge thanks to our dedicated team of coaches and most of all to Kim, for making it happen.**



## Autumn Socials

Nearly 50 members turned out for the latest Warren Miller film Wintervention back in November featuring the latest extreme skiing exhibitions with magnificent scenery. Judging by the success of the evening this could well feature as an annual social event.

Then there was the Christmas Party on December 3rd which was probably the best for many years. Congratulations to the winners of the Bumper Hamper

## FRANCIS NEUMAYR

It is with great sadness that we have to announce the death of Francis, the wife of our former President, Franz. Franz and Francis were largely instrumental in setting up the original Junior Section and were enthusiastic participants in all our activities, including many Club Holidays. She will be fondly remembered as the generous hostess of lots of room parties and Committee Meetings. We send our sincere condolences to Franz. The funeral was held at Redditch Crematorium on Friday 21st January.

# Training Week Jan 2011, Bormio

John Arnold

When you go skiing in January is the temperature likely to be +16°C or -20°C? The answer, if you were on the Training Week in Bormio, was- both. On the first day the sun shone out of a cloudless blue sky and we sweltered



under too much clothing. The good news was that the pistes didn't suffer and they remained hard and fast. The sun and sky hardly altered throughout the week but by Friday but it had slumped to -20°C and we were shivering under too few layers.

Bormio was a pleasant surprise. On the piste map it looks fairly limited and we anticipated making full use of the satellite villages of Santa Caterina,



Le Motte and Isolaccia. But in fact Bormio is very deceptive. The mountain goes from 1250m to 3000m with a surprising amount of the terrain skiable, both on and off piste. Also the

pistes are well maintained and very wide with lots of different slopes and cambers, which meant that you could ski the same piste several times and have a totally different run each time.

Hotel Nazionale was another lovely surprise. Although much bigger than those we are used to, there were so few other guests that we virtually had the place to ourselves. Particularly the great pool, jacuzzi and sauna area. It was sublime to ease those aching muscles after a hard day on the hill. The staff were very welcoming and the food fine and plentiful.

Equity's rep. Nick also was a great help who excelled himself when he volunteered to take 20 pairs of shoes back to ski hire to save people a long walk on the last day.

Of course the week is all about the skiing and the coaching. It is always difficult for the Coaches to go to a new resort and find themselves around the mountain whilst keeping everyone moving and learning. Peter, Rob, Roger and Bruce certainly did this very well. As I say, the pistes were hard and very fast and skiing in control not easy. I believe that the improvement in our technique will prove to be latent. We may have struggled at Bormio but when we get onto softer snow we really will feel the difference. I must congratulate Miriam and Dan who were only on their second week skiing but who kept up with their groups amazingly well.

Socially the week went well. The live music provided by the hotel meant that we didn't have to bother with conversation no-one would have heard you. Mike's music quiz woke us up from our post-prandial



stupour and the walk up to the old town to sample the folk dancing and free vino caldo a nice diversion.

Thank you to everyone for joining into everything so enthusiastically. Next year will see the 30th. Training Week and I suspect we will be returning to Bormio. It proved a good choice and we haven't seen everything it can offer yet.

John Arnold



## Training day at Ackers with Roger and Guy

Libby Albutt



It was a cold morning with a clear blue sky, we started off the day with a bit of agility training. We ran round the Ackers slope. This was followed by a bit of hopping through hoops and jumping over hurdles. Then it was time for lunch - out came the cool boxes, drinks and sandwiches.

After lunch, Guy kept us occupied by doing a little competition. After our break it was time to buckle down and do some skiing, so we did slalom gates and some ramp starts. It was a very good day and we all enjoyed ourselves.

**TW30** Next January will see the **30th** Training Week, probably back to Bormio. We intend to make this a very special week and would love to think that lots of you will want to join us. I shall have to book this with Equity, our Tour Operator, very soon in order to reserve the places, and I would be grateful for your help in estimating how many of you are likely you want to come. If you think that you may be interested, without giving any commitment now, please e-mail me at [jlarnold@midski.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:jlarnold@midski.fsnet.co.uk) or phone me on 0121 357 1644. Thanks, this would be a great help.