

MIDLAND SKI CLUB NEWS

FEBRUARY 2012

THIRTIETH TRAINING WEEK

The local bank in Bormio is Banco Popolare di Sondrio 1871. I think this refers to the number of Euros they've got left in the vault. There were very few people about. So much so that we were upgraded to the 4* Hotel Miramonti so they could close the Nazionale. It was fine, especially the pool and fitness centre. So it was very disappointing when several people went down with a stomach bug. This wouldn't have been too bad except that I was one of them. I hope you have all recovered.

Apart from this everything went well. The lack of crowds meant that we had the pistes virtually to ourselves and there wasn't the hint of a lift queue. So we did a tremendous amount of skiing helped by our excellent coaches, Rob, Roger, Bruce and Clem. At the start of the week Clem asked his group what they hoped to gain from the week. Stan, our most experienced skier, replied that he "wanted to get worse more slowly!"



He failed. He didn't get worse. Like everyone else he benefitted from the coaches great enthusiasm and knowledge. The runs were hard and fast and it is greatly to the credit of MSC, the coaches and all of you that 40 skiers *d'un certain age* could ski hard for a week without there being a skiing injury. In addition to Bormio, groups went to Santa Caterina and duty-free Livigno where a litre of scotch cost £8. This helped the room parties.

Of course there is more to a holiday in Italy than just the skiing and our favourite lunchtime spot, the Larghetti with Violetta the ebullient hostess, gave us great fun and food. Particularly so when the waiter insisted on belting out *O Sole Mio* with MSC providing the descant of *Just One Cornetto*. Regretably, the best we could offer in reply was *You're a Pink Toothbrush*.

For me of course the highlight was the 30th year celebrations. Ros and Roger Brown drove over from their Italian home with lots of bubbly creating a good party. Many thanks. Then Friday evening was amazing. I was led into the lounge to be faced with 40 John Arnolds. Everyone was wearing a mask of my face. I was so stunned that for once I was speechless. Jackie, Equity's excellent rep, produced even more bubbly and a large chocolate cake with 30 candles. I was so overcome that I hadn't the breath to blow them out. There were some very kind speeches for which I am most grateful. Many thanks to the people who arranged all this. I won't list them all in case I miss someone out. I'll just call them "the usual suspects".

I hope I made the point that I just got you there. It only became a

success when you entered into the spirit of the week so wholeheartedly. You were keen, you were willing to try new things and you encouraged each other to get better. This is what the Training Week is all about. I am writing this whilst finishing the first of the fine clarets you gave me and it is this and your kindness which is giving me such a warm glow. Thank you.

John Arnold



Diary

Tuesdays @ 6.00pm

Race Novices - Roger Crombleholme 01785 714073

Tuesdays @ 7.30pm

Race Coaching - Roger Crombleholme 01785 714073

Thursdays @ 6.00pm

Race Coaching - Roger Crombleholme 01785 714073

Thursdays @ 7.30pm

Advanced Race Training
Guy Hornsby 01564 779927

Fridays @ 6/6.30/7.30pm

Junior & Family Coaching
Jane Lee 01905 345416

18th March

MSC Schools Race

Ackers,
Paul Lawrence, 07976 691389

18th-25th March

Club Holiday

Champoluc, Italy
Diana Horth, 01889 800706

27-29th April

End of Season Weekend

Corris, Wales
Diana Horth, 01889 800706

1st May

GSRL, Gloucester

Jane Lee 01905 345416
(see back page for other dates)

23rd May

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

LRSC, Solihull
Diana Horth, 01889 800706

25th May

College of Food meal

John Arnold, 0121 357 1644

1st July

MSC Club National Race Stoke

Jane Lee 01905 345416

Cross Country in Ramsau

Unprecedented snowfall in Austria has meant grid-locked roads and stranded tourists as reported on the BBC news. I sit typing my living room happy that our New Year trip passed off without incident, no ash cloud, no airport strikes, no motorway stau (jams), just a peaceful week of cross-country skiing in the company of Fern and David.

We nearly didn't make it; my 'online ticket' for the German train journey from Munich to Schladming didn't have the necessary bar code and was therefore not legal despite my protestation that I had paid by credit card. The guard insisted that I get off the train at Rossenheim to get the ticket validated. I was reluctant to do this and a stand off ensued, with the guard eventually carrying on down the train to check tickets hoping not to bump into any more stupid foreigners, no doubt. When the guard eventually returned and I was still there she quickly realised that wrestling me off the train in the company of two minors was not good for public relations. We were allowed to continue

our journey on the train but with a vague threat that the Austrian guard might not allow us to continue beyond the border.

However a cursory glance at my limp ticket elicited a Gallic shrug from the OEBB employee and we could relax for the rest of the journey.

Our destination, Ramsau, was blanketed in fresh layers of snow and whilst the ski tracks looked inviting there was only a little daylight left, so it was time for unpacking and settling in.

The purpose of this holiday was to practise cross-country downhill technique, get a little fitter (at an altitude of 1000m) and to enjoy skiing on snow rather than on tarmac. It takes a few days to get into the rhythm of skiing and it can sometimes be a little frustrating as heart, legs and arms can't keep up with expectations. However a 2hr session in the morning followed by a 2hr lunch and another session in the afternoon and we were well into the swing of it by Saturday.

We skated most days as the snow temperature was warm and not suitable for the stick wax necessary for classic technique. One day we cheated and caught the bus up to the lower glacier lift station and skied back down the snow road to Ramsau plateau, a descent of almost 600m over a distance of about 10km. We had a range of temperatures from -5 to +3 and ice, snow, and rain: a real mix of conditions. Just what we needed to give a full experience of snow skiing. We practised technique and discussed efficient movement on snow to carry speed through turns and into hills. Ramsau has a fantastic range of tracks with a 30km 'Dachstein' skating track and one is often in the company of top class international athletes who live here all year round and use it as

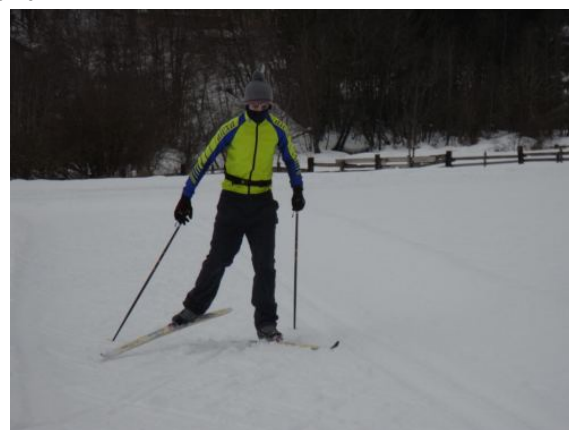


their training base. We often stopped by the side to watch team Bealorus skate past, or two Kazaks push past effortlessly in classic style. It is not until you try to match them that you realise just how fast they ski.

I am sure that training, dedication and application are what gives Fern her turn of speed, but nutrition plays it's part, as you tell from the photo above.

We had a great time and hope to make a return trip soon. But before that we went to the British Championships in Ruhpolding, Bavaria at the end of January. Both Fern and David raced in junior classic and skate races over a distance of 5km on successive days. Hopefully the miles they put in at New year will helped them in the champs: see the report later in this newsletter.

Anne Ford



Check your DIN setting!

Having the correct DIN setting is important: it needs to be high enough to keep your skis on in whatever you are skiing, but low enough so that in the event of a fall, the bindings release so as to reduce the likelihood of injury.

Most adult skiers typically ski with a setting of 4 to 7: lighter skiers commonly with a lower setting, and heavier, more powerful skiers with a higher setting. If you are a top racer weighing over 100kgs, then you'll have a higher DIN setting as you don't want to pre-release at the start or when in the ruts. But it's certainly not the case that using a higher setting means you are a better skier: it can be a serious mistake!

For younger skiers who are still growing, it is very

Do you know the DIN setting you have on your bindings? Is it correct for you??

important that when new (bigger) boots are needed, that the DIN setting is adjusted to stay appropriate for the skiers size and weight: the *bigger* the boot, the *lower* the DIN setting for a given weight of skier - be especially careful during teenage growth spurts. And if you are racing GS, then it is even more important that you get advise from more experienced coaches and racers.

So if you are in any doubt about your DIN setting, get a *trained* and *qualified* person to check your settings are appropriate to you: don't just trust your Dad - or someone else's Dad!



**West Midlands Ski Association
Birmingham and South Midlands Area
Schools Ski Race
Sunday 18th March 2012**

**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 5th March 2010.

**For full details and entry form go to
www.midlandski.org.uk/schoolsrace**

MSC Goes to Town

One of the best dining experiences in Birmingham is at the College of Food. Here the graduate students put their knowledge to the test under the watchful eye of their tutors by preparing and serving high class meals to a discerning public. By whom I mean- you. We have booked 12 places for Friday 25th. May at 7pm. The cost is £24 for a three-course meal. To join us please give John Arnold a ring on 0121 357 1644 or e-mail him at jlarnold@midski.fsnet.co.uk

Annual General Meeting

The Midland Ski Club Annual General Meeting will be held on 23rd May 2012, starting at 19.30, at the Landrover Social Club, Solihull. A buffet will be provided.

One of the key activities of the evening will be to elect the club officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) and committee members for 2012/13 - current committee members have been in place for quite some time and we need some new faces who are interested and concerned to help maintain the clubs management and excellent progress. Please talk to fellow members and put or come forward with names for both the Club Committee and Race Steering Group.

Nominations for all posts should be notified to the Secretary, Diana Horth, prior to the evening:
secretary@midlandski.org.uk

For Sale

1 pair Ladies Downhill Boots Salomon 660 Size 5/38. Would suit beginner. £25

1 pair Ladies Telemark Boots Scarpa T2 Size 6/39. 75mm toe fitting. £100

1 pair 7TM Telemark Bindings complete with all fittings to suit above Boots. £75

The Telemark kit has only been lightly used. Any sensible offer for these items will be considered. Contact Sylvia Parkin on 07919 128212.

Ladies Head Edge 9.7L HP Fit ski boots. 4 adjustable fastening plus velcro strap. Colour Grey Ice. Size 5. In very good condition as hardly worn. Looking for offers in the region of £50.

Contact Eileen on 02476 739012

..And the condors circled over us and bid us farewell.

Now that sounds like the ending to a perfect holiday article and you could be the author!

Who is interested in the ultimate summer ski trip August 2013 - South America #3?

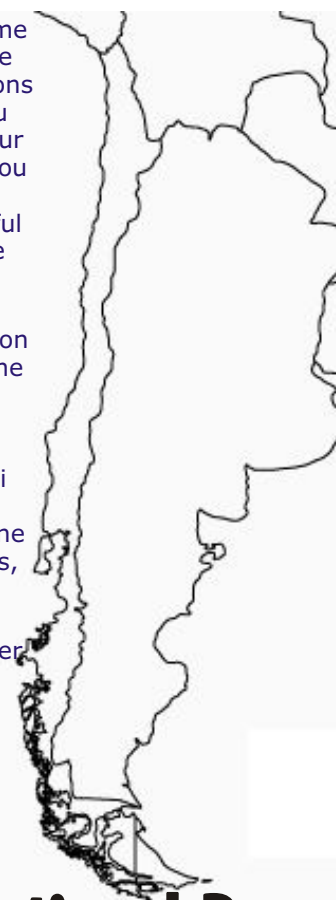
I don't have any costs yet, but we are talking over 18 months way, so it will give us time to save up. I'm guessing at a bit over £2000 per person, but I'll confirm a.s.a.p.

I've asked Andes Travel to put together a suggested itinerary which starts in Buenos Aires and finishes in Santiago, with time to have at least 1 or two days in each city to explore, but the rest of the time will be visiting probably 3 or 4 ski resorts as we make our way from Argentina to the Chilean Andes. I've asked them to include the cost of a Spanish speaking guide (in the past it has been David from Wales!) so we get the most out of the trip.

We hope to end the holiday at our favourite home from home, Hotel Posada de Farellones where the cushions are big and sumptuous, you can relax in the hot tub, your ski boots are delivered to you from the drying room, the service and food is wonderful and the Condors have twice come to bid us farewell!

Skiing on extinct volcanoes and seeing cacti on the hillsides as you go up the mountains provides a very different skiing experience. The scenery is fantastic so even travelling from one ski resort to another is no big deal. I think there will be one internal flight, but if there is, then it went smoothly last time too.

So, if you want to register your interest - there's no commitment - please email Maureen@ims-lifebalance.com



MSC Club National Race

MSC will be running their Club National race at Stoke-on-Trent on Sunday 1st July. Most of the experienced MSC racers will be competing. It's a good day out to come and watch and support our racers, and a great opportunity for new racers to try national racing for the first time if they feel confident enough. If you are interested in racing, sponsoring, watching, supporting or helping please talk to Carron Thorley or Jane Lee.

Helmet Camera Discount

Sport-Cam UK offer a range of helmet cameras that are great for both skiing and snowboarding. All MSC members can get a 10% discount on all products, just enter the code **10MIDSKI** when going through the checkout.

www.sport-cam.co.uk 01273 906806

Pre-Christmas in Tignes

The Midland Ski Club were well represented on a very sociable informal week skiing in Tignes in December. We eventually has some superb skiing, and the standard of room parties was up to the usual high standard with the gin flowing freely!

Tignes kept us in suspense as usual with very poor snow reports before we left home. Those who arrived on the morning of Saturday 3rd must have been very anxious about what they would spend the week doing as there was no snow in Val Claret & the Grande Motte cable car out of action. But by lunchtime however, lovely light snow descended from the heavens, and it snowed and snowed more or less for the first half of the week. This was somewhat contrary to the weather forecast, and the lift operators clearly hadn't made plans to open the whole resort, and were very reluctant to issue 6 day lift passes initially. So on Sunday morning we were limited to using the Bollin lift. By lunchtime Les Lanches lift, and the Funiculaire to the Grande Motte opened giving access to super snow at top but in poor visibility, and

we had to do a bit of rock-hopping! It was still snowing on Monday, but eventually the Tichot and Grattalu lifts opened, and if you could cope with the cold and poor visibiliity, the snow was absolutely fantastic. On Wednesday the Tufs lift opened and we could ski down towards Val d'Isere on Creux piste with wonderful deep powder but still poor visibility. We woke on Thursday to a deep blue sky at last, and we creamed down to La Daille in superb conditions on and off the pistes. Sadly we found we had only been issued with Tignes passes and not the full Espace Killy pass, so we had to taxi back to Tignes-le-Lac. All was not lost, as we had a great afternoon using the Palafour lift before returned home using the Aeroski lift and great conditions. On Friday more fresh snow arrived, but more lifts were opened and we had a great day skiing around Val Claret and Tignes-le-Lac with super pistes and some excellent off piste.

We never did find out exactly what had happened to the Grande Motte cable car, but the cars did'nt move all week from their positions roughly one

third up/down , and there were rumours about an emergency evacuation the previous week with the last occupants being brought down at 11.00pm. Not my idea of an evening apres-ski!!

There were various groups staying in Val Claret for the week, and it was a great co-incidence that we all chose the same week. Most members had made their own arrangements for flights & transfers etc, some staying in the conveniently located Hotel Diva, some in members apartments, and some staying in posh time-share apartments courtesy of Ski-Mad. The informal arrangement of meeting at the Bollin lift at 9.30 each morning plus a few text messages concerning lunch stops worked very well, and the Diva bar and its pool table were the highlights of the evenings.

Hopefully we will make the same week as Ski-Mad next December. If you want a pre-christmas trip to Tignes December watch this space.

Have a great ski

Mike Thomas

The "It's about over for the season" weekend

Corris: 27-29th April 2012

Given the success of last year's end of season weekend we thought we'd return to Corris. We will be staying again in the Braich Goch bunkhouse.

Close to Cader Idris the area around Corris offers a number of different activities without travelling too far. Walking, cycling/ mountain biking, tourist activities etc. If you fancy canoeing or horse riding can you make a note on the booking form as we will need to book in advance.

We have booked **16** places in the bunkhouse which has been thoroughly refurbished and modernized. For those with Internet access go to <http://www.braichgoch.co.uk/index.html> for more detail.

The costs is £35 per person (i.e.£17.50 per night).

The bunkhouse has its own public bar and visitors can choose to self cater or eat out. Depending on your preferences we could book a meal for the Saturday evening in the Slaters Arms in the village or drive to a restaurant a short way out of the village.

Please complete the booking form below to secure a place on this weekend.

Diana Horth

BOOKING FORM

To: Diana Horth 23 Lockside view, Rugeley, Staffs WS15 1NJ

Tel 01889 800706 or 07806 777049 or email diana.horth@ntlworld.com

Please book me ____ places on the End of Season Weekend in Braich Goch Bunkhouse, Corris for 2 nights 27 & 28 April 2012

I enclose a cheque for £35 per person, made payable to Midland Ski Club.

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email

Horse riding ?

Canoeing ?

British XC Championships - Ruhpolding

The British Championships held in Ruhpolding, in tricky conditions - half a metre of wet snow had fallen overnight and it continued to snow all day. This year several of the British senior team had managed to escape university commitments for a few days to take part and the BNDS development group was there in good numbers too.

The opening race was the classic time-trial, and with the prevailing snow conditions this was to prove a challenge for everyone. Every time the coaches thought they had found a wax that would work the conditions would change and they had to start again. In the end those who had them went out on "zeros" (also known as "hairies" - a type of no-wax ski with a hairy kick zone used only when the temperature is around zero) while for the younger skiers who didn't have any choice of skis the coaches sanded their kick zones to make them hairy. The race turned into a slow moving double pole and run up the hills but at least those with zero skis didn't have the snow balling up under the skis which was what many competitors experienced.

Simon Platt went out 13th (of 157 in the men and youth categories) and soon overtook the 12 skiers in front of him, which meant that for most of the first lap he was clearing the new snow off the tracks for everyone else. But he still had a great ski coming in 4th overall (and winning an impressive trophy as the first non-military skier). Alex Standen continued his return from serious injury with an excellent ski, coming in 5th. Michael May was 1st in the Youth category, despite having to take his skis off at one point to clear the snow from the kick zone (not having any zero skis the snow had stuck to the wax pockets). Also in the Youth group, Kris Kallaghan did very well in what was a gruelling event in those conditions - 15 km is a long race in any weather for those still in their mid-teens. PJ Barron won his own personal battle with his little brother, ex-BNDS member Ian, who is now in the Army and was representing his regiment.

David Ford of Midland ski club in his first race did well to complete the course only deciding to race earlier in January, after a training week in Austria. The circuit is host to a world cup Biathlon event later in January and is one of the most technically demanding courses in the Nordic calendar.

In the Ladies race Fiona Hughes was on fire and sealed an impressive victory ahead of Posy Musgrave. Sarah Young had a great ski in her first distance event for some time and finished 6th, while Katy Homyer had a super race and finished just behind Sarah.

The development group showed clear benefits from their training on snow at the pre-Christmas camp, demonstrating good technique all round. Harry Nicholls took star points, not just because he raced into 1st place but because he showed fantastic skill when avoiding an out-of-control skier on a fast downhill. Stuart Gray came in 2nd, a great effort for someone who has not been able to train properly for the whole of the autumn. Rory Heslop showed good climbing ability to take 4th place while Angus MacLean powered his way through the race. The Newman twins may have been the youngest skiers in the whole event but showed they are competitors to be taken seriously and pushed their elders very hard. In the Girls' race Fern Cates of Midland Ski club produced a powerful

display to Gold in her category while both Beth MacLean and Lynn Gray skied with their usual style and energy.

As the forecast rain fell, day 2 of the British Championships carried on regardless, with the freestyle mass start races.

First race out was the combined start of the Ladies and Boys and Girls 7.5 km. For most of the first lap Fiona Hughes, Posy Musgrave and Sarah Young formed the lead group until Fiona and Posy pulled away from Sarah. Behind them Stuart Gray, Harry Nicholls and others zig-zagged their way through the massed ranks of ladies. Stuart overtook Katy Homyer and Harry chased them both. Rory Heslop and Angus MacLean also worked their way past most of the ladies and the Newman twins were going like trains. Meanwhile Lynn Gray was skiing like a whirlwind, Fern Cates was working to keep with her and Beth MacLean was on her heels. At the front Posy and Fiona were still neck and neck climbing the final hill, but gradually Fiona pulled away and as they both sprinted into the finishing straight Fiona took the line for her second British Championship. Sarah skied well into 3rd place and the improving Katy took 4th Lady/1st Female Youth. In the Boy's, Stuart took 1st followed by Harry in 2nd and Rory 4th. Oliver Newman held off his brother, Fergus, and they both finished ahead of the tiring Angus. Lynne showed great spirit to lead home the girls' race, with Fern 2nd and Beth 3rd.

The next start was the Junior and Youth Men in which Michael May, straight from university, put on his skis for the second time in 10 months (the first time being yesterday) and Kris Kallaghan started his second on-snow race in several years. Both did well with Michael finishing 3rd Youth behind two Australians. David completed some time later but still skiing with style on the testing course.

As the rain began to soak the spectators the Men's 10 km race started.

From the start a small group of 6 got away, including both Alex Standen and Simon Platt. As they completed the first lap it was obvious that they were under no pressure but unfortunately Alex took a bad fall as they came past the start and even though he was back on his feet quickly he needed a moment to clear the wet snow from his face. He went on to ski the fastest last lap of the day and took back a huge number of places but the fall cost him his podium chance. PJ Barron was also brought down as he tried to avoid a slower skier on the steep downhill which put paid to his challenge for the day. Three of the lead pack were from the same regiment and Simon feared there might be some team manoeuvres but if there were any planned they failed to have an effect and at the bottom of the steepest climb Simon made a break. The group tried unsuccessfully to stay with him, one fell on the downhill back to the stadium and the others couldn't keep up the pace, so Simon sprinted up the finishing straight to take the race and become the first non-military winner of the freestyle title.

The development squad were a credit to their coaches in displaying a team attitude during warm-up sessions, in general preparation and after the race, with plenty of encouragement for the younger and less experienced skiers.

Anne Ford



Winter Snow Racing

There have been a number of races on snow so far this winter where MSC skiers have taken part.

These started with the disappointing news that the FIS races and some of the minis races planned as part of the BARSC program would not be able to take place, so Libby Thomas and Ollie Weeks did not take part. Congratulations though to Jack Rigby who finished 7th in a select field of JNR racers (5th in JN1) and to Seamus who is still learning the challenge of GS racing on real snow.

In the Anglo Scottish Cup in Les Houches in France, 7 yr old Tilley O'Brien excelled in the GS coming 9th in a large field of mini girls and in the boys Ollie Weeks was 4th. In the slalom Ollie again came 4th, a great final run but not enough for 3rd place and Seamus finished his holiday with a superb race, coming 15th of a field of more than 35 boy minis, almost all of those who beat him were older and bigger than him, so a very impressive result. Well done to all of you.

Four Solihull Schoolgirls, all members of Midland Ski Club, competed in the British Schoolgirls' Ski Championships in Flaine, France, and against stiff competition from over 150 competitors from the UK and other European countries performed extremely well. These were the first races on snow for most of the team, and it snowed more or less continuously the whole time, with bad visibility.

Unfortunately, Libby had a nasty accident having completed the two runs of the giant slalom and was unable to compete in the parallel slalom that afternoon, or in the slalom the following day. The reduced two-girl team of Amie and Helena skied well-above expectations in extremely challenging conditions in the slalom, placing the team in the top half.



Solihull School Girls Team

Gloucester Summer Race League

MSC take part in a development race league at Gloucester, entering two teams of 12 for the Saturday races and two teams of 5 for the Sunday races. The Saturday races are open to all racers except those who race nationally at a very high standard, the Sunday races are open to all. This is really good experience for those who have started to race over the winter and something to work towards for those who have started to ski at Ackers but have not yet tried racing. Please ask any coach if you want to know more.

Saturday League: 5th May, 16th June, 21st July, 11th August, 15th September, 6th October.

Sunday League: 27th May & 30th September

Nine MSC Racers in England Schools Squad

Following the regional qualifiers in September, the national championships in October and the British finals held at the notorious Hillend slope in Edinburgh in November, nine of Midland Ski Club racers have been selected for the English Schools Ski Squad 2012.

Each year ESSKIA selects promising children to join its National Squads, based primarily on their performances in these Championships and in the qualifiers. There are two senior squads and one junior squad and those selected are invited to the ESSKIA training camp. A national team is then chosen to represent England at the biennial ISF World Schools Ski Championships (to be held next in 2012). For many, this is the closest they will ever get to experiencing what it must be like to represent their country at the Olympics.

Junior Squad

Jessica Mayhew and Jordan Rigby (right) have been invited to train with the junior squad in Austria in March. This is the first time Jessica and Jordan have been selected, proving all their hard work and dedication to the sport has been worthwhile.



Senior Squad

Jack Rigby, Nick Phelps, Amie Middleton, Libby Thomas, Helena Newbolt, Hannah Shakeshaft and Sam Doherty (right) have been selected to train with the senior squad in Norway in February. This will be the first time Helena, Hannah and Amie have been selected again showing the growing strength of the Midland racers.



England Schools Squad

Jack, Nick and Libby have also been selected to represent England in the ISF World Schools Ski Championships in Gressoney, Italy. This is the first time that any skier from the Midland Ski Club have been offered this prestigious opportunity. Only ten boys and ten girls are selected so having three within one club is quite an achievement. They have been given an England Schools uniform to wear and are all extremely excited. While in Italy they will be expected to attend various receptions and take part in a parade with all the other competing countries.

Unfortunately due to the injuries Libby sustained in her recent accident in Flaine she will be unable to take up her place on the national squad. We know she will be very disappointed as she had trained extremely hard for this opportunity. We all wish her a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing her back on the race circuit later this year.

Very well done to all involved - and thanks to the coaches!