

MIDLANDS SKI CLUB NEWS

**TRAINING WEEK
2015 inside!**

APRIL 2014

Club Holiday - Sauze d'Oulx

This year's Club Holiday to Sauze d'Oulx was blessed with 6 days of continuous sunshine which illuminated the Milky Way in all its glory.

The heavy early season snowfalls provided us with excellent pistes and ski in ski out runs to the doorstep of the hotel.

We welcomed Sandy, Sharon and Elaine to their first club holiday and hope to see them again next year.

Ski groups were informally arranged each day with the intention of skiing the day together. Nevertheless certain male members were continuously getting lost or peeling off in absent minded moments. The male trait of confusion seemed quite pervasive with another member of note being uncertain of which foot went in which boot. Many thanks to Diana for organising and Bryan for running the trip.

The blue-sky weather gave us snow conditions to match, however we soon got to know where to go at any time of day and made the most of the snow conditions. I think it is fair to say we skied the entire Milky Way, or at least every area if not every run. The hotel was comfortable and genuinely piste-side, even if the hot water was organised by the Italians.

On the last day: Bruce Bennett, being of Scottish descent, decided it was time to ski in his shorts and was promptly stopped by the style police who considered it to be a very serious matter on so many fronts - only in Italy.

We had a token snowboarder, Brian aka Biggles and together we enjoyed many a run, sometimes together and sometimes just meeting at the lift. Brian had a variety of bits of good advice to pass on - such as avoiding their blind side, and where to stop (on a slope not the flat as that involves waddling) which we could share with all members, but mixed with these bits of advice were all sorts of other explanations of the problems boarders encounter - see Brian's report overleaf.

Everyone else behaved themselves by avoiding injury and contributing to an excellent holiday.

MSC Schools Race

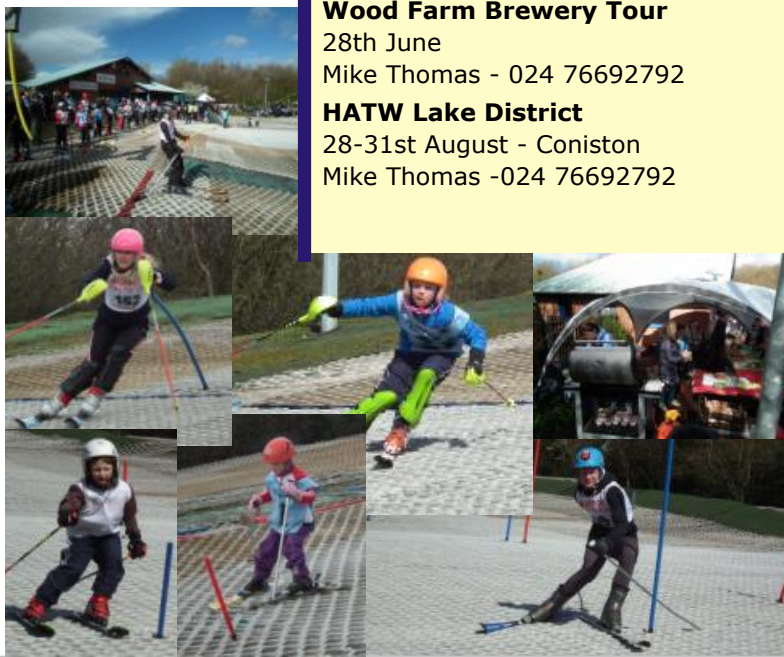
MSC held its biggest ever annual Birmingham and South Midlands School's Ski Race at Ackers Adventure Centre on the 23rd March.

The club received tremendous sponsorship and prizes from Ski Racing Supplies, Ski Bartlett, Vision Express Harbourne, Decathlon, Ye Old Saracen's Head of Balsall Common and Two Seasons.

This annual event involves many schools in our area and we are seeking to set up selectively satellite clubs for those schools committed to regular training and participation in snowsports.

The success of this event is because of the expertise of all our volunteers, who did sterling work.

From overall organisation to slope officials, from timing to BBQ, from commentating to race results, from course setting to bob collection to camera man, it goes on and on. And of course thanks to the schools and skiers without whom there would be no race!!



Diary

Tuesdays @ 6.00pm

Young Racer Development Coaching

Tuesdays @ 7.30pm

Race Development Coaching

Thursdays @ 6.00pm

Young Racer Performance Coaching

Thursdays @ 7.30pm

Race Performance Training

Fridays @ 6/6.30/7.30pm

Skier Improvement Coaching

Fridays @ 7.30pm

Adult Recreational Coaching

For all coaching contact:

Roger Crombleholme 07736 821147

Guy Hornsby 07768 253515

Gloucester Summer Races:

10th May; 14th June;

19th July; 16th August;

27th Sept; 18th October

College of Food Meal

7th May

John Arnold - 021 357 1644

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

4th June - Hollyfields, Woodacre Road, Erdington

Diana Horth - 01889 800706

Wood Farm Brewery Tour

28th June

Mike Thomas - 024 76692792

HATW Lake District

28-31st August - Coniston

Mike Thomas - 024 76692792

Those pesky snowboarders... **Brian Meade**

Although I have been a MSC member for quite a number of years, I am not a very visible one except to those who go on the club holiday. This is because I am a snowboarder. After giving many of you, I am sure, a short while to recover your composure, I'll explain a bit more about my background.

I was introduced to skiing in the late 1970's when working for Bass, the brewing company, in Burton on Trent. Every year a group of employees would organise a holiday, but I became pretty enthusiastic and was soon going off for 2 or 3 'extra weeks' on the slopes. I got quite reasonably good at it, and quite fast, and got a bit fed up with 'waiting around' on our Bass holidays for those who were 'less enthusiastic'.

By about 15 years ago snowboarders were becoming more and more visible on the slopes. Skiers were, as now, continually being urged to 'give it a try', and for two reasons I thought I'd do just that. Firstly because I'm a bit of a maverick and wanted to be different, and secondly because whilst I was learning it might 'slow me up' and make me more tolerant when with my Bass colleagues.

Being someone who likes to do things 'properly' I booked a week on my own in Tignes, threw away my skis, and took boarding lessons for the whole week. To anybody else thinking of giving boarding a try I recommend similar 'drastic' action. Half or even full day 'taster' sessions are utterly useless, even to experienced skiers. The balance and weight transfer on a board is completely different, and it takes at least three days (and an awful lot of falling over) to start to get the hang of it at all. However, once that initial stage is over, boarding is

actually much easier to make progress with than skiing, and particularly so in off-piste or so-called 'difficult' conditions.

And snowboarding off-piste is what got me hooked, and why I am still on my board and not back on my skis.

The sensation a board gives you in powder, or in slush, of riding over the top of the snow is just fantastic.

And the ability to vary your progress at will (and from the skiers point of view very unpredict-

ably) from wide expansive long loopy turns to close tight turns is exhilarating. By the way, the 'slowing up' part of the project lasted for only two holidays.

In 1989 I moved to Essex and continued to go each year to the slopes with the Bass group, but eventually it started to dwindle and finally fell away. At that point I was introduced to the MSC Club Holiday by Gilly Peto, who lived in the same village as one of my Bass colleagues, Steve Price. I found people on the club holiday to be friendly, enthusiastic, and welcoming and what is more, tolerant of my 'beyond the pale' method of progressing round the slopes. I've been coming ever since, and also joining in with 'extras', such as trips to the USA organised by Diana Horth.

So now just a few points that I hope might help you to understand and cope on the piste with that most irritating individual - the snowboarder. Most of these points really arise because the 'infrastructure' of ski resorts, ie the lift systems and pistes, were and are designed for skiers and not for boarders. If we were in charge things would be different!

Firstly lifts. Funiculars, cable cars and gondolas are just the same for boarders as for skiers, but chairs and drags give boarders a problem or two. A boarder has no poles, and in order to manouvre around on the flat he has to take his back foot out of its binding to push around with, and therefore to get into position for getting on to both of these types of lift. This means that when he gets off the lift he's not as fully in control as he'd like to be - so please be tolerant.

A boarder cannot slow down by snowploughing, he can only do it by turning. If there is a drop-off at the end of a chairlift where slowing down is necessary, then it really is best if a boarder is in one of the outside seats of the chair, otherwise he has to turn into the people beside him, with sometimes irritating consequences.

Boarders are really not that keen on taking draglifts at all, and prefer to avoid them if possible. This is because he is sideways on with all his weight on the front foot, and with his back foot out of the binding he is short on balance control as well. This makes things very strenuous and nerve-wracking, particularly on lifts that are long, steep, juddery, and have fallaways or deeply rutted surfaces. Actually t-bars are easier than buttons because being sideways on those pesky buttons keep trying to slide out from under your bum, whereas the arm of a t-bar stays in place a lot better. Your understanding is deeply appreciated.

Secondly pistes. As I have mentioned, boarders cannot manouvre around on the flat without taking their back foot out of its binding. Therefore we really, really hate those flat bits. We always want to stop on a slope so we can get started again easily, so if you have boarders in your group we very much appreciate intermediate stops being taken where there is at least some slope. Also we really do not like having to slow

(cont.)



Pesky 'boarders..

down on schusses if it means we won't get over the flat bit, so if you can help out by not blocking or slowing down in these places that would be great.

Decision making when getting off at the top of lifts is also an issue. Boarders need to know what the decision is first, when we can then go to top of the appropriate run and start to get ready. So please don't ski straight off after having reached that decision - give the boarder time to get his board on and be ready.

A boarder is sideways on going down the piste, and can't see behind him. If you are too close to a boarder on his blind side it is always quite possible that he will turn into you - he just doesn't know you're there. Also, as already mentioned, boarders just don't do regular turns. If the piste is safe in front of him a long sweeping turn, a couple of short ones, a swoop right over to the other side of the piste, a switch from left foot forward to right foot forward, or a 360 degree turn are all possible. So if you are near to a boarder try if you can to be prepared for the unexpected.

So I sign off hoping that I've given you some insight into coping with and understanding the irritating foibles of boarders. Why not give it a go yourself?

AGM Notice

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held at Hollyfields, Woodacre Road, Erdington on Wednesday 4th June starting at 8pm.

Nominations for the roles of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer as well as membership of the committee are welcome and should be made to the current secretary, Diana Horth (01889 800706, diana.horth@ntlworld.com).

Wood Farm Brewery Tour

Join us for a brewery tour and meal at Wood Farm Brewery on Saturday June 28th at 7.00pm.

The tour takes about 3/4 hr, and the £19.95 price includes; tokens for six half pints (which you can either enjoy on draft after the tour, or take home in bottles) a souvenir pint glass, and a meal with a choice of Fish and Chips, Steak and Ale Pie, Sausage and Mash or a Vegetarian Dish.

Wood Farm is in the wilds of Warwickshire, about 6 miles north of Rugby and has a delightfully relaxed restaurant where the food is excellent, and the choice of real ales is overwhelming. The brewery visit has been highly recommended. For full details and location of Wood Farm see <http://www.woodfarmbrewery.co.uk/>.

In order to develop a thirst for the trip, there will be an optional-gentle cycle ride departing from Wood Farm at 5.00pm. Please complete the form overleaf if you would like to join us, and note the closing date is June 19th.

Lake District HATW - 28th-31st August 2014

2014 is a special High Altitude Training Weekend - the 25th! - so we're off to Coniston in the Lake District. As the M6 on a Friday night is so grim, this year we're having a long HATW starting on Thursday 28th.

Low House is the new venue, but as it belongs to the Midland Association of Mountaineers, those who have been to Glan Dena will be familiar with the type of accommodation. i.e a modern practical self-catering kitchen, small dormitories, a comfortable lounge with a real fire, and a superb drying room.

Low House is perfectly located for rufty-tufty mountain walks, and delightful easier walking to admire the Lake District. Of course the walking isn't compulsory; come and join us and enjoy the Lake District from a super base. Accommodation cost for the 3 day weekend is £32.

If you would like to join us just complete the application form below.

Ye Olde Saracen's Head, Balsall Street, Balsall Common



MIDLAND SKI CLUB SPECIAL:
25% off all food on bill.
No limit to party size. Drinks excluded.
Offer redeemable upon proof of membership of MSC or show this newsletter!

Lake District HATW 28th-31st Aug 2014

To: Mike Thomas, 71 Cannon Hill Road, Coventry CV4 7BT

I enclose £32 per person for the 2014 HATW to the Lake District. Cheque made out to Midland Ski Club

Name _____ Phone _____

E.mail _____

Wood Farm Brewery Tour - 28th June

To: Mike Thomas, 71 Cannon Hill Road, Coventry, CV4 7BT

I enclose a cheque made out to 'Wood Farm Brewing Co Ltd' for £19.95 per person.

My choice of meal is: Fish and Chips [] Steak and Ale Pie [] Sausage and Mash [] Vegetarian Dish []

I/we would like to join the gentle cycle ride. []

Name(s) _____ Phone: _____

Address _____

Training Week 2015: Pila, Italy

For the 2015 Training Week we are returning to Pila in the Aosta Valley. We will be travelling with Crystal Ski, flying from Birmingham and staying once again **on slope** in Pila in the Hotel Chalet des Alpes <http://www.crystalski.co.uk/skiresorts/italy-ski-holidays/pila/hotel-chalet-des-alpes/>

This ski in/ski out family owned hotel offers simple accommodation, buffet breakfast and 3 course evening meals with ¼ litre of wine per person. All rooms have TV, telephone, safe and hairdryer.

There is plenty of skiing with a good variety of pistes. You will ski in a group of about 9 friends with similar experience and a BASI or SSE Coach. And this isn't just for a few hours like ski school but for 6 full days from 9am until the lifts close. The coaching is done 'on the move' with a minimum of exercises and you will do an amazing number of miles. But there will be ample time for your

coach to give you lots of personal help.

The cost for this holiday will be £895 . It includes flights from Birmingham, transfers, half-board in the hotel, all the coaching and your lift-pass. You will need to buy your own lunches each day. Outbound flight departs Birmingham 0600 with Thomson Airways to flying to Turin. Return departs at 1010am arriving Birmingham 1120.

The only other cost is either:

Ski carriage at £35 if you bring your own; or

Ski hire has not yet been confirmed but will be about which is £50 for basic, £70 for intermediate or £80 for advanced skis.

The cost does NOT include insurance and you **must arrange your own insurance**.

To join us please complete the booking form below and return it with a NON-REFUNDABLE deposit of £175. We are sorry to be strict about this



but the Club has invested a lot of money to reserve the holiday.

You must have a full passport and the name on the booking form must be the same as your passport.

You should hold a European Health Card. The week is not suitable for beginners

I hope I've given you all the information you need to persuade you to join us but if there is anything else you wish to know please ring me, Bryan Arnott on 07578 428864 or bryanarnott@gmail.com

TRAINING WEEK - PILA - 11th-18th January 2015

To: Bryan Arnott, 40 Woodland Way, Birchmoor, Tamworth, Staffs B78 1AY

Please reserve _____ places on the Training Week in Pila. I enclose a cheque payable to Midland Ski Club of £175 per person as a NON-REFUNDABLE deposit and I undertake to pay the balance of the cost by **9th October 2014**. (this is early but tour operators are now expecting final balances a good 3 months before the holiday starts)

I understand that the cost includes £140 for the coaching and this will not covered by insurance. I have a current (or will obtain) European Health Insurance Card - do check the expiry date. I have a full passport valid for the dates concerned.

Name(s) (as per passport) _____

Nationality _____

Passport number _____

Issuing office _____

Passport date of issue & date of expiry _____

Country of residence _____

Date of birth _____

Contact Address: _____

Phone & email: _____

Ski carriage? £35 yes/no number of ski bags _____

Do you wish to hire skis - costs have yet to be confirmed but are likely to be in the region of: Basic £50 Intermediate £70 Advanced £80

Skiing Experience: I have skied for ___ years and am happiest on blue/red/black runs (delete as appropriate).

Special Dietary needs _____

I would like to share with _____

Posh Nosh

Last year a few of us ate at the College of Food in Birmingham and we enjoyed it so much that we are repeating the pleasure, and we would welcome your company.

The students cook and serve the highest quality meals under the careful guidance of their Tutors. The Restaurant Critic of the Birmingham Mail recently described it as the best value fine dining experience in the Midlands.

We have 20 places available on Wednesday 7th May . The cost is £24 which the bon viveurs of the Club say is great value for food of this standard.

To book your place please e-mail John Arnold at jlarnold@midski.fsnet.co.uk and we are confident that you will be glad you took this opportunity to taste what the food writers in the Sunday papers are raving about.

Telford Club Champs and Schools Race

Telford Ski Club tell us that they will be holding their annual CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP RACE on Friday 23rd May, and their SCHOOLS RACE on the evening of Friday 13th June.

We don't have any more details at the moment, but as soon as we do they will be posted on the MSC website.

Gloucester Summer Race League

This year's Summer Race League at Gloucester is on the following dates: 10th May, 14th June, 19th July, 16th August, 27th Sept, and 18th October.

This will be following the usual format of two runs down a slalom course in the morning, the results of which will be used to form groups of four in the afternoon to give everyone three exciting head-to-head races against very similar skiers.

To encourage participation, the MSC subsidize this race quite substantially which makes it a bargain day out.

There will be a call for those who wish to ski in a few weeks, but put the dates in your diary now. If you have any questions, then please speak to your coach.