

# MIDLAND SKI CLUB NEWS

MARCH 2016

## MALCOLM GRATTON

It is with very great sadness that we have to announce the death of Malcolm Gratton.

Malcolm was the heart and soul of the Club virtually from its beginning. His most notable contribution was to act as Treasurer for many years where he was the most conscientious guardian of the Club's money. We had a considerable sum which could easily have been misspent under less careful stewardship. If anyone proposed to spend any of it, a look of pain would cross Malcolm's face. The committee and members always knew that the finances of the many events we ran would be in order.

But, Malcolm was very much more than this. He was the man who, when no-one would volunteer to do a job, he would put up his hand and do it. He and Maureen were always at everything we did, from holidays to Scottish trips to local skiing, for which he built one of the ski-tows we used to take onto local hills before Health & Safety had been invented. He ran socials including hilarious barn dances and dancing became a passion for him and Maureen in later life. He chaired the committee which produced the 40<sup>th</sup>. Anniversary book. Without being asked he set up an agency to provide ski insurance for members at very low premiums and

every penny he made was passed onto the Club.

Malcolm was self-deprecating about his skiing abilities, and he had no illusions about the technical quality of his skiing style, yet he and Maureen could get around the mountains safely and steadily. They went where they wanted, and caused no problems to anyone else on the slopes. They had developed their own way of skiing which suited them perfectly for any coach to have attempted to change the way they skied would have been counter-productive. Malcolm enjoyed his skiing and being in the mountains; he was not interested in impressing anyone but, as in every other aspect of his life, you could rely upon him. At the end of the day's skiing, Malcolm and Maureen would be there, and always willing to assist anyone who needed any sort of help.

There is an old photograph of Malcolm, wearing his familiar orange-yellow anorak, ready to ski in a field in Derbyshire. The snow cover is sketchy and the ski experience on offer there would be laughed at today, yet we all loved it. Malcolm was part of that, and with Maureen and son Mark at his side, he could not have been happier this is how we wish to remember him.



MSC was a large part of Malcolm's life and he took a great deal from his membership but he repaid it a thousand-fold. Those of us who were privileged to ski with Malcolm will always be grateful for the experience and more recent members should be equally grateful to him for everything he did to create the Club they are now enjoying.

We send our deep and sincere condolences to Maureen and Mark

## Spring Socials

**March 23rd - Ski Mojo:** Martin Hannaford of Ski Mojo will provide us with information, and a demonstration of their device to support knees and enhance skiing performance

**April 13th - Outdoor Jackets:** What is what in waterproofing and breathability? Snow & Rock

**May 18th Beer - it's simple:** An expert's view on Brewing and Craft Beers. Our very own Steve Price, Industrial Fellow at The International Centre for Brewing Sciences at Nottingham University will talk us through the art (and science) of brewing, plus details of the creation of Craft Beers.

All evenings will be at Hollyfields Sports & Conference Centre, Woodacre Road, Erdington, Birmingham B24 0JT.

Please come from about 7.15 to socialise, there will be sandwiches provided with the presentations from 8pm.

**And don't forget the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING on 8th June**

# CLUB HOLIDAY COURCHEVEL-IN-THE-MIST

You will have read in the press that the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and their children were skiing in Courchevel 1850 recently. For security reasons we cannot say whether or not they were MSC members of the MSC Club Holiday. Personally I did not see them, mainly because I didn't see much at all. It was the most frustrating week: we always pray for deep powder snow and we got it. But the visibility was so bad much of the time that we couldn't



do it justice because the light was so flat. We had one sunny day when we enjoyed exploring the largest linked ski area in the world, but most days we spent a lot of time peering into the near white-out.



It is in circumstances like this that MSC comes into its own. We always ensure that everyone has a group to ski with and there are people who know the area, even if they can't really see it, and will lead a group. Many thanks to them. They made certain that we made the most of what was available and most of us made it to Meribel/Mottaret but only a few went further.



because our Hotel des Anemones was in an ideal position virtually ski-out, ski-in. It is right in the heart of 1850 near Les Croisette, the richest ski area in France, dominated by designer shops such as Louis Vitton and Bulgari provided to serve Russians who like to see plenty of noughts on the price tag. The street was lined with large 4x4s guarded by equally large men dressed in black. They were helpful because they remembered the hotel door code better than we did. We turned it from an oligarchy to an Aligarchy.

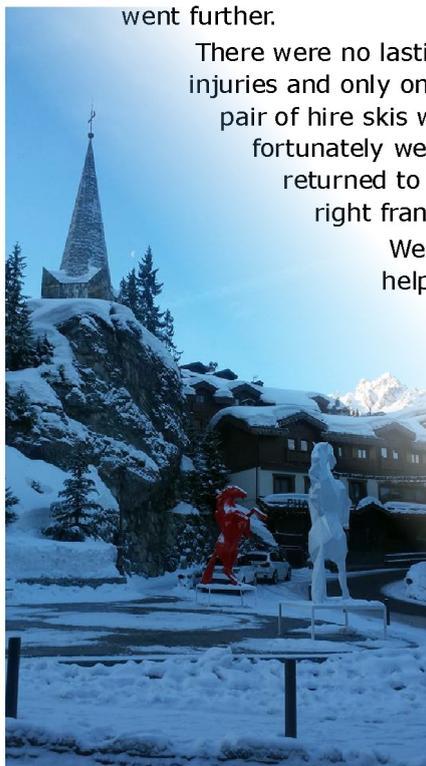
There were 41 in the party and we welcomed several new faces who fitted in well with the regulars: we hope Elaine H, Fiona H, Paul J, Brian R, Doug, Ann and Sylvie enjoyed the week and that we see them again on a club trip.

The hotel was a little 'bijou' with not a lot of space, but it was perfectly adequate, helped by the excellent Ingham's staff. The limited size of the dining room meant that dinner was served at two sittings, 6.30 or 8.30. For some people eating at the latter was not acceptable, but for most eating at the earlier was not possible because it would have interfered with the traditional room G&T parties. For reasons that escape me these eventually started at 6pm. It cannot be said that the extended licensing hours improved the quality of the conversation at dinner. But many thanks to our generous hosts.

Despite the poor visibility I think we all enjoyed another successful MSC holiday. For this we have to

again thank Diana Horth for her excellent hard work. The party may or may not have been royal but the organisation certainly was.

**John Arnold**



There were no lasting injuries and only one lost pair of hire skis which fortunately were returned to the right franchise.

We were helped

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Tamworth B77 2AX  
5 MINUTES FROM SNOWDOME

# Autumn Welsh Weekend

We have booked a Mid Wales weekend for 30 September - 2 October at the George Borrow Hotel, Ponterwyd, just 12 miles east of Aberystwyth. As well as hill walking in the Cambrian Mountains, it is a great location for exploring the Vale of Rheidol and the village of Devil's Bridge, famous for its 3 stacked bridges and the waterfalls, the narrow gauge steam railway between Devils Bridge and Aberystwyth, bird watching, the nearby red kite centre, and much more.

Mountain walks will be arranged on both days, and possibly a biking route.

The £87.00 price for the weekend includes bed and breakfast for two nights and a three course meal on the Saturday night. Rooms are all en suite. See [www.thegeorgeborrowhotel.co.uk](http://www.thegeorgeborrowhotel.co.uk)

The hotel bar and restaurant will be open on Friday night.

We have booked the whole hotel and places will be on a first come, first served basis - room types permitting.

Please email me [Diana.horth@ntlworld.com](mailto:Diana.horth@ntlworld.com) for any other information.

DEPOSIT FOR THE WEEKEND £27 PER PERSON

By direct transfer: You can make a direct transfer of £27 per person to the Midland Ski Club account at sort code 08-92-99 a/c 65362479; please reference it *Wales2016* and advise me that you have made the transfer at [Diana.horth@ntlworld.com](mailto:Diana.horth@ntlworld.com).

By cheque: Send a £27 deposit per person (cheques payable to *Midland Ski Club*, please write "*MSC Wales Weekend*" and your contact details - phone & email - on the back of the cheque) to Diana Horth 23 Lockside View, Rugeley WS15 1NJ

The balance of £60 will be due mid September.

# Summer Race Leagues

This summer we plan on supporting the Summer Race Leagues at both Gloucester and Stoke. Gloucester is a team event, whilst Stoke is individuals. If you are interested in either, please let Gerry Elgy know: [gerry@elgy.org.uk](mailto:gerry@elgy.org.uk) or 01527 544858.

Dates as per the diary to the right.

YE OLDE  
**SARACEN'S  
HEAD**

PUB & DINING

**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!

# Situations Vacant

There are a number of roles in the club that need to be filled to help with the promotion or operation of the club. If you can help, please get in touch with anyone on the committee, or email [contactus@midlandski.org.uk](mailto:contactus@midlandski.org.uk)

**Social Media Contributors:** A number of roles to publicise the club's activities on social media, e.g. Facebook, Twitter. Ideally someone familiar with the technology and putting a positive view on happenings. Multiple contributors would be good, one from each of Racing, Nordic, Holiday and Social.

**Instructions and Coaches:** We want to beef up our coaching team! If you are an existing instructor or coach, or want help in becoming one, get in touch. See last month's newsletter for more details

**Deputy Chairman:** We need a new deputy chair for the committee with the aim of taking over from the existing chairman in about a year's time.

# Ski USA 2017

I am planning a trip to the states - probably 4 Feb for 2 weeks or 10/11 days - whichever suits. Resort is yet to be decided. Accommodation is usually self catering condos. And car hire may be necessary depending on resort.

Please let me know if you are interested and I can start making enquiries.

Diana Horth -  
[diana.horth@ntlworld.com](mailto:diana.horth@ntlworld.com)  
01889 800706 - 07806 777409



# Diary

**Tuesdays @ 6.00pm:** Young Racer Development Coaching

**Tuesdays @ 6.00pm:** Recreational 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

*Coaching contacts:*

Roger Crombleholme 07736 821147    Guy Hornsby 07768 253515

**23rd Mar: Ski Mojo**, Hollyfields,  
Catherine Frankenburg 07739 460950

**13th April: Outdoor Jackets**, Hollyfields,  
Catherine Frankenburg 07739 460950

**16th Apr: Summer Race League**, Stoke (also 14th May, 18th Jun, 16th Jul)

**14th May Summer Race League**, Gloucester (also 18th Jun, 16th Jul, 20th Aug, 17th Sep, 8th Oct)  
Gerry Elgy, 01527 544858

**18th May: Beer - it's simple**, Hollyfields,  
Catherine Frankenburg 07739 460950

**8th June: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**, Hollyfields  
Diana Horth, 01889 800706

# Training Week 2017: Pila, Italy

For the 2017 Training Week we are returning to Pila in the Aosta Valley from 8th to 15th January. We will be travelling with Crystal Ski, flying from Birmingham and staying once again in the Hotel Chalet des Alpes

<http://www.crystalski.co.uk/ski resort/italy-ski-holidays/pila/hotel-chalet-des-alpes/>

Flying times are departing Birmingham 0720 by Thomson Airways to Turin arriving 1020.

Return departs at 1130 arriving Birmingham 1240.

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 8 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 is £860 (less that last year). It includes flights from Birmingham, transfers, half-board in the hotel, coaching, tourist tax and your lift-pass. You will need to buy your own lunches each day.

The only other cost is either: ski carriage at £35 if you bring your own; or ski hire which is £50 for basic, £70 for intermediate or £80 for advanced skis.

Also insurance is NOT included and you **must arrange your own insurance** and supply details before you travel.

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](mailto:bryanarnott@gmail.com)

You can also book online at [midlandski.uk/ebooking](http://midlandski.uk/ebooking)

## TRAINING WEEK - PILA - 8th-15th January 2017

**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 8<sup>th</sup> **October 2016**.

I understand that the cost includes £140 for the coaching and this may not be 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?: 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 \_\_\_\_\_