

Three Midland Skiers representing Kingsley School win British Schoolgirls under 16 team Championship



Emma Lawton, Hannah Dennison and Lucy Sainsbury representing Kingsley School won the under 16 team event at the British Schoolgirls Championship in Flaine on January 28th. Full story on page 2.

Editorial - John Elgy

This column is normally used for the what's on section, but under these trying times we have no idea when we will resume activities and indeed what form these will take.

I hope most of you got away for at least some skiing this winter. There were 3 formal Midland Ski Club trips and some more informal ones such as the Ski Mad trip to Tignes before Christmas. Gerry and I managed two trips to our apartment in Les Arcs giving about 25 days skiing. This included a great week with former Club Treasurer Phil Deller and his wife Ruth. We missed our third trip in Early April when Les Arcs closed for the season. The lift company were very good and returned 1/3 of the money we had paid for our season passes and Eurotunnel allowed us to postpone our crossings to a later date.

As mentioned in the last newsletter the training week was sadly devastated by the death of the Club President while skiing. The following club holiday was also hit by misfortune when the Covid-19 virus struck in Ischgl where they were staying. Though they got the full 6 days skiing they were abruptly told to leave the resort at the end of their last day. Page 3 contains a full report of the trip from Diana. I gather some of our members have reported Coronavirus symptoms on their return, but most are now, I believe, well.

For me it has been interesting listening to Gerry on the phone dealing with closing of training and racing. First of all, after a Race Steering Group meeting she was in contact with Ackers Adventure discussing stopping training. Then the next day Ackers phoned her to say they were closing. Ackers Adventure are not charging us while they are closed. There followed a long conference call with Snowsport England about the racing season and email discussions with Landgraaf about our summer training camp (We are still holding the reservation but are not very optimistic that it will go ahead). One innovation over the lockdown has been the strong WhatsApp group keeping everyone informed about what is happening and maintaining contacts. I hope the community formed by this group continues after the lockdown has eased.

Finally, Roger has been posting ski specific fitness routines for us all to follow so that when training resumes, we will all be in a fit state to ski.

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**BRITISH SCHOOLGIRLS
CHAMPIONSHIPS
FLAINE, HAUTE SAVOIE, FRANCE
JANUARY 2020 - Alan Edwards**

The Kingsley School U16 Ski Team of Hannah Dennison (from Daventry), Emma Lawton (from Leamington Spa) and Lucy Sainsbury (from Stratford upon Avon) travelled to The French Alps on Saturday 25th January to compete in The 61st running of The British Schoolgirls Ski Championships in the high level French ski resort of Flaine. 160 athletes from 54 schools from across Britain were competing. The event is organised by The Ladies Ski Club who are the oldest female ski club in the world.



Hannah Dennison Collects the under 16 team trophy

The 3 students together with Lorenza Chapman (from Warwick) were crowned British Schools' Champions on an artificial slope in Stoke on Trent in November 2019 and they travelled to The Alps in an attempt to repeat this achievement on snow.

On Monday 27th January the Kingsley Team competed in the Giant Slalom and finished 2nd beaten by only 7 points by Wimbledon High School. Hannah Dennison achieved an excellent 5th place in the individual placings.

On Tuesday 28th January, in a driving snowstorm the Kingsley Team achieved 1st place, in the U16 event, beating arch rivals, Surbiton High School for Girls into second place by a massive 155 points.

Hannah Dennison achieved an excellent 4th place in the individual rankings and was well supported by Emma in 12th place and Lucy in 25th. As a result of her excellent placings in both Giant Slalom and Slalom, Hannah made the podium in 2nd place in the combined event. Kingsley School are now the first school ski team from The Midland Region to hold both the British Schools' Championships in both artificial and snow events. This success would not be possible without the dedication of our Ski Race Coach, Roger Crombleholme who coaches the Kingsley skiers at The Ackers Adventure Centre in Birmingham.

Congratulations for team selection



Adam Lee and Ollie Weeks have both been selected for the Wales Elite Team 2020/21.

Pila 2020 Family Training Week

Becky Frall

The quality of the snow this year made gods of us all...! The technique from some might have left a little to be desired (no need for comment here, Roger or Joe) but it felt so good. As with all great training weeks, there are many moments of delight, fun and satisfaction to look back on. We had blue skies, decent temperatures, some gorgeous cloud inversions, extensive mountain panoramas and stunning lenticular cloud formations. As we all recognise, the privilege of being out there in the heart of the mountains, is as much a reason to keep doing this addictive sport as the company, the thrill of speed and control, and the satisfaction of progress. And as always, the skills of both coaches were at the centre of this enjoyment. Thanks Roger and Joe.



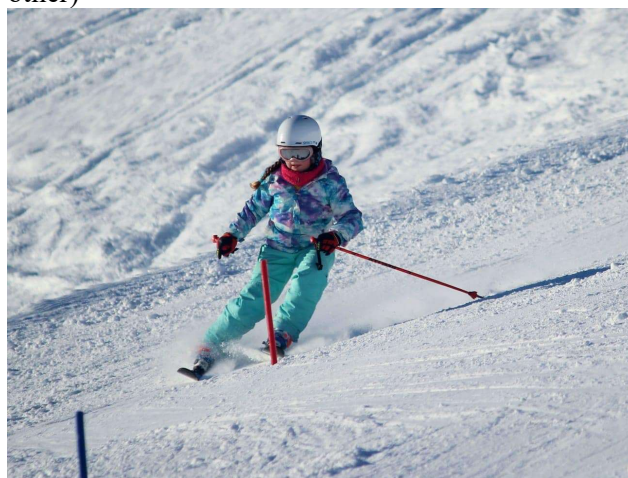
It was with great delight over the first couple of days, that we realised that Stuart was offering advice to Pila newbies about where to meet and how to find runs, from Birmingham! What price WhatsApp? The Browns had also - quite wonderfully - offered to host a New Year's eve gathering (on the day of their arrival!). While the Pila gang enjoyed multi-course hotel hospitality, the Aosta crew tucked into a fabulously rich chilli, in the best tradition of Winter League race days, accompanied by a stupendous array of desserts and drink, and some great chat, with friendships made and deepened.

And yes - there was coaching... Joe, with the support of Les and Neil (and Craig dropping in via snowboard) was looked after by the stubbie gang: Emily & Josh, Hattie & Marnie, Sacha, Bryoni, Bob & Tommy. Warm-ups were sometimes a bit

half-hearted (what's muscle / joint ache anyway?) and the end of courses may have involved some snowballing, horizontal sprawling, snow eating and pole fencing - but, y'know, a kid's gotta have fun SOMETIMES! Oh yes - and each and every one of them improved so much in their technique and they all adored Joe; and even on a grumpy day when it was like herding cats, Joe got a kick from their obvious development. By the end, nearly all of the juniors had elected to lead a very disciplined group down the slopes, while demonstrating a skill to practice. Fabulous! Oh, and did I mention Joe's attachment to his big electric drill...? Just catch him setting a course on snow. It won't be far away...



Roger was coaching the teenage elite athletes (and young Bob for a few days), the open category experienced racers and the older improvers. Roger and the Pila veterans knew where to find glorious open and quieter slopes for technical practice over different days on slalom, GS and super-G skis. (The other)



Joe enjoyed a new nickname for the first 3 days of training, evolving from 'snow-kisser' to 'snow-hugger' as he gave his all, and the slope won... sadly this wore off as he found his legs. Ned enjoyed an unscheduled skidoo ride at Crevacol, after a rather hard landing in the gates, but was back in the thick of it the following day. We shared an existential

experience as brothers Jonathan and Dominic skied in line behind a large off-piste snow mound but didn't pop out the other side... We won't divulge who was helping whom, but eventually they both appeared again, legs, skis and smiles intact! Roger cajoled, congratulated, commanded, despaired, took some fab videos, gave feedback and demonstrated the practices with his usual flair. Stuart's amazing camera work gave us some of the best stills of the week and Colin, Stuart, Joss, Eleanor, Becky, Chris and Alex took turns on the other radio... how is it that "roger, Roger" never loses its appeal?

A shout out has to go to the wonderful parents, ceaseless in their patience, noble feats of endurance to get sleepy kids out for a 9am training start, gathering for lunch, negotiating chair lifts, tricky runs and mountain walks to catch up with the groups at Pila and Crevacol. Their encouraging shouts and good humour kept us all going, and their beaming smiles were a joy to return to outside the Yeti Bar each afternoon - Gemma, Craig, Chris, Trina, Katy, Kristina, Julian, Alex, Julie... thank you! Pila 2020 really became one big, supportive team, with great dynamics and energy, and a lot of fun.



And for the racers, The Anglo-Scottish gave them a chance to put everything into practice. Once again, this wouldn't have happened without coach and parent support. Charlie and George, as alpine race veterans, supported the other teamies using their experience, and all of the racers were very impressive: learning from each run to celebrate a great time, or the disappointment of a DNF, managing these emotions, steadying themselves and making another run. Lessons for life, not just for skiing. Thanks MSC. See you for Pila 2021. Do come and join us...

High Altitude Training Weekend Mike Thomas

Hoping that we will be allowed to visit the mountains in the autumn, I have made a provisional booking for a weekend in the Lake District. What's been called the High Altitude Training Weekend has been run for many years as an opportunity to enjoy lead walks in the mountains, however there's no reason why members could not use this sociable event for mountain biking or enjoying being in the Lake District. I've made some provisional bookings for this year, returning to Low House, the Midland Association of Mountaineers' property in Coniston. This has bunk bed dorms of various sizes, but it's in the town conveniently placed for shops and pubs.



Low House and Cottage - Coniston

For those who want more comfort, there's a cottage attached with 2 bedrooms, and ideally suits 2 couples, and I have also provisionally reserved this. If anyone wants the luxury of en-suite etc there are lots of B&B's nearby. The beauty of Low House is that it has an excellent kitchen/dining area which would be great for the communal meals which are part of the success story of the HATW. Given that most of us are retired, it's been suggested we may as well make this a mid week event, so my provisional booking is for October 20, 21 and 22nd. The cost will be £42 for the 3 nights in the main house and the total cost of the cottage is £155. We have not been to the Lake District for many years, and the main excuse has been the M6. However going mid-week will help, and Coniston is easily reached by train and bus, which reminds me that there is plenty of superb walking locally, so there's no need for a car once you are there. When my MAM provisional booking is confirmed, and the Covid 19 restrictions are removed, I'll arrange for a booking form to be circulated. In the meantime, please give me a call just to register interest.

MIDLAND SKI CLUB'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

AKA Club holiday Ischgl 7 - 14 March 2020 Diana Horth

This year we stayed in the Chalet Hotel Abendrot, purpose built for Ski Total a few years ago. Everything still looked pretty new, the manager and staff were friendly and service excellent. The hotel is pretty much midway between 2 gondola stations but Fimba seemed to be much favoured because of a moving walkway for a considerable length of the journey and it attracted less queues.



Catherine and Tony somewhere in Austria

The sun shone well for us on the first day but we then had a mixed bag with a very snowy day, followed by a complete change because it had rained. There was plenty of snow and it was just a matter of following the breaks in the cloud to see where you were going. We had one more full fat sunny (HOT) day. There are three other nearby resorts all good for a day out, but I think only 3 people actually got on a bus and went to Kappl. It says a lot for the resort of Ischgl. The lift system is fantastic with lots of new, fast, heated and covered lifts all interconnecting well. It is easy to ski on the Swiss side in Samnaun with the last lift back at 4pm. As with several Austrian resorts it can be difficult to understand the route markers in places but there is a variety of terrain and in better circumstances would be just the place for off piste. There is even a new cable car servicing one red run but was actually put in place to access the back bowls.

A huge thank you to Derek Needham, a regular visitor to the resort, for generously acting as a personal tour guide and making navigation around the slopes much easier.



Derek's little gang



Mike Thomas

A few intrepid souls had already decided they wanted to hire a guide/instructor for some off piste. Their first day was cancelled as conditions had changed so much following rain. The next day the ski school decided to go for it. With clumpy heavy snow off piste it was never going to be ideal. There were two groups and I think after a very challenging start to their day most did enjoy the company of their allocated instructor. If you want to know how good/awful it was I'm sure they'll share!

With a few minute last minute changes in travellers we ended up with 35, even borrowing a Ski Mad member Malcolm Tilley to make up the numbers. We had one official injury where Bill Bell decided to use his hand to break a fall causing a spectacular swelling and rainbow hues. Luckily nothing broken and only one day off.



Gill goes off piste



Every which way

As with a lot of Austrian resorts, Ischgl is a party town. It is quite easy to avoid the après ski bars if a

quieter life is preferred. But it was those après bars that appeared to lead to coronavirus mayhem. We had been in the hotel a couple of days when we heard a Norwegian barman had been tested positive and that 14 people were in isolation. A day or so later all the après ski bars were shut, but other hotel and tavern bars and restaurants stayed open. Then we found restrictions on the Fimba gondola so that instead of 8 passengers they were only allowing 4 per car. This caused a bit of a queue in the morning but not too bad. On the Wednesday the mountain restaurants started to limit the number of people going inside to 100. On our last day, Friday, people got back to the top gondola station only to find none of them were running which meant everybody on the slopes having to negotiate Red 1 back to Ischgl. The conditions were grim, either hard pack or mega slush, there were people who wouldn't have dreamt of going down it given the choice and was a beginner's worst nightmare.

Despite all the warning signs it was something of a shock to the system of each of us that as we dribbled back to the hotel in our smaller groups on Friday afternoon expecting afternoon tea and a nice evening meal, we were 'asked' to get packed and get on the coach that was leaving within the hour. That was quite exciting. What wasn't was the normal 40 minutes or so of travel to get onto the motorway stretching into over 5 hours. Inghams/Ski Total did a very good job of getting us housed over Innsbruck in 3 different hotels and getting us to the airport to get home.

It was clear on that coach to Innsbruck that several people had developed coughs. There were people from all over UK on the bus and it is easy to see how something like this could spread. In normal circumstances you would put it down to the normal bug picked up on ski holidays. A number of the group have reported symptoms of headaches, woozy heads, extreme lethargy and that dry cough but with one exception no temperature. So we have to assume not Covid 19, but there is now a good amount of self isolating going on to be good citizens

Social Functions - Catherine Frankenburg

Mike Thomas entertained us with very scenic photos of 2 of his recent cycle tours to Bulgaria and Sardinia. In Bulgaria he was on an organised cycle touring trip, led by a Brit who knew the area well, so they had a great time and they were met with friendliness everywhere they went, and clearly food was a highlight judging by the numerous photos?



In Sardinia, Mike planned the route, which took them around most of the coast. It all looked beautiful, but the local map lead to some interesting riding on a dirt track at 1 stage, and the food was again clearly a highlight!



Success for the Orzel family - Andy Orzel

Adam:

- 1st u12 Ambition Champs Slalom
- 1st u12 GBR boy Ambition Champs Giant Slalom and 4th overall
- 4th u12 English Pro Slalom Champion
- 3rd u12 Scottish Children's Champs slalom champion
- 2nd u12 Scottish Children's Champs slalom champion

February - Peter and Jill Seamen started the evening with a live demonstration of the usefulness and ease of use of Folding bikes as a means of visiting interesting places, without the hassle of transporting full sized bikes. A Brompton bike was unfolded and ridden very nimbly around the meeting room in less time than it took to open a stubborn bag of nuts! They then proceeded to illustrate various sightseeing trips they had taken with the folding bikes as aids to get around.



First to Holland with the beautiful tulip fields, windmills, cities and Dutch constructions. They then showed us pictures of a successful sightseeing mini cycle trip around the north east USA - from New York's Central Park to the colours of the Fall, to Niagara Falls; and finally pictures of beautiful places they had visited whilst in Croatia.

Emilia:

- 4th u14 Evolution Speed Series Alpine Combined
- 1st Overall girl Scottish Children's Champs slalom champion
- 3rd u14 Scottish Children's Champs giant slalom champion



Winter Race League - John Elgy

It feels like an eternity since the last winter race league event and I can barely recall anything about it. Apart from the fact that I felt ill and so weak I twice couldn't stand up through turns and fell onto my bottom (thankfully there are no photographs of the bruises)

All that remains is to present the final results and thank everyone involved. This is a very enjoyable series and owes everything to those who run it: Di, Jenni, Dave and Brandon in particular have worked hard: before, during and after every race and Gill has done a great job catering. With over 100 entries in total we don't have the room to publish all the results here but the detailed results can be found on our website.

<http://midlandski.uk/results/WRL%20final%20points%202019-2020.pdf>

U8 Mixed		
Position	Name	Points
1st	Hattie TAYLOR	20
2nd	Bryoni PLATT	16
3rd	Jasmine PRICE	12

U10 Girls		
Position	Name	Points
1st	Sacha TOLLEY	20
2nd	Maelann RODGERS	15
3rd	Holly MARGREE	14

U10 Boys		
Position	Name	Points
1st	Tommy JONES	20
2nd	Joshua CURRIE	15
3rd	Nicholas EVANS	11

U12 Girls		
Position	Name	Points
1st	Emily CURRIE	20
2nd	Marnie TAYLOR	16
3rd	Alexandra MARGREE	12

U12 Boys		
Position	Name	Points
1st	David MICHAELA	19
2nd	Robert JONES	18
3rd	Arthur WILLSON & Shayne D. DYMOND	9

U14 Womens		
Position	Name	Points
1st	Bella HOBAN	20
2nd	Chloe GARDINER	14
3rd	Scarlet LITTELL	11

U14 Mens		
Position	Name	Points
1st	George BROWN	20
2nd	Ned KENDALL	17
3rd	Ludi PONIEWIERSKI	14

U16 Womens		
Position	Name	Points
1st	Lucy SAINSBURY	17
2nd	Emma LAWTON	13
3rd	Amelie HAMPSON	12

U16 Mens		
Position	Name	Points
1st	Charlie DEEM	20
2nd	Joe PEARCE	17
3rd	Jonathan SCHOFIELD	11

U20 Womens		
Position	Name	Points
1st	Lorenza CHAPMAN	19
2nd	Hannah PHILLIPS	16
3rd	Lily WILLIAMSON	12

U20 Mens		
Position	Name	Points
1st	Matt VICKERS	15
2nd	Gabriel SCHROETER	14
3rd	Fraser BLACKHURST & Dominic SCHOFIELD	4

Open Womens		
Position	Name	Points
1st	Abigail WARD	19
2nd	Ali SMILIE	18
3rd	Joss BROWN & Gerry ELGY	10

Open Mens		
Position	Name	Points
1st	Joe FREIVEN	19
2nd	Daniel MICHAELA	11
3rd	David BAIRD	10

From the Chair - Gerry Elgy

Well these are strange times indeed, and some of the reports in this newsletter seem to be from a different world, though they were only a few weeks or months ago.

We are very proud of the Kingsley girls' success, and indeed all our race results during the Winter. The Winter Race Series at The Ackers was the most popular yet and we are very happy with the number of new young skiers it attracted, including some of those who train at Swadlincote.

There was much good skiing to be had on our Alpine trips as reported elsewhere, although overshadowed by the sad death of John Arnold, some injuries and the Covid threat. The JA training week 2021 is already proving popular and we have fingers crossed it will go ahead safely without deferring it to 2022.

While many were in Ischgl a number of club members attended John Arnold's funeral in Sandwell and there was a good turnout with members of his other clubs there too. The order of service booklet had a skiing theme with snowy mountains on the cover, John's love of skiing was referred to in the address and he was seen off to the 'Ski Sunday' theme.

The club made a donation to his charities in lieu of flowers.

The AGM was due early May, but we will defer it to early Autumn. If social distancing is still in place then, which seems very possible, we will have another think about how to proceed. We had some socials planned too and hope to hold them later in the year.

As I write, we have been at home for 5 weeks, all training has stopped and the summer race season is on hold, maybe even till next year. When I hear more about this from Snowsport England, I will keep you informed.

Roger has kept many of us together in a Whatsapp group which has shared home schooling tips, cake recipes, training videos and quizzes. He has also made a series of short You Tube videos on getting fit for skiing. Contact Roger for more information.

Finally, please stay safe and well, and I look forward, as we all do, to coming out the other side of this pandemic and getting skiing again as soon as we can.

