



# *Piste Basher*

*Feb 2010*

National  
Snowsports Centre  
of Ireland



VANCOUVER 2010



### A word from our President

**Great Skiing to all in 2010** The year arrived with record low temperatures for Ireland but with perfect snow conditions on the slopes at Kilternan, which lasted for two weeks. What a great atmosphere this created, particularly on the weekend of 9<sup>th</sup> January when hundreds enjoyed themselves on our own snowy pistes. A big thank you to all who helped at this busy time.

The big news in February is the Winter Olympics at Whistler Mountain, Canada. Shane O'Connor, as you all know, is representing Ireland in the men's slalom event. Shane has made a huge contribution over many years to coaching our racers and his commitment and dedication to the Club, as well as to his own personal training, is evident to all. Club members, young and old racers, his family, as well as TV3, were at the Club on Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> February, to mark this special event with a small presentation and to wish him well. Shane, we all appreciate what you've done for the Ski Club and we'll all be behind you – and, hopefully, so will all the other racers! – at Whistler.

Paddy Roche and Chris Mangan recently retired after more than 30 years instructing at Kilternan, and Knockrabo before that. Many members expressed their appreciation to Paddy and Chris at a very enjoyable party just before Christmas.

The new uniforms have added great colour around the Club and I am very pleased with the quality and style. It has been admired by many, at home and abroad, and looks especially well on snow. After seventeen years it was time for an update. I hope all instructors will be fully kitted out by next September.

The major improvements to the two nursery slopes are scheduled to commence next month. Although six months were lost for reasons discussed in the last Newsletter, we have at least avoided the major disruptions to peak season skiing that would have happened had we dismantled the nursery slopes last September. The improvements will take about four months to complete.

The January snow cheered us all up after the heavy rainfalls in December, which, as you'll have seen, did quite a lot of damage to the approaches to the ski slopes. The melting snow made further erosions. This will be remedied as our development gets underway. Thank you for bearing up through these unique weather conditions – which did much more damage elsewhere in the country.

The snow in the Alps has been truly outstanding this year – long may it continue for all holiday makers. Put your Kilternan expertise to good use and enjoy the snow and blue skies.

*Rosemary Mayrhofer*







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### The Ski Club's Olympian - by Robert Norwood, Chairman SAI

As Shane O'Connor sets off down the slalom course in Whistler on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2010, a significant milestone for the Ski Club of Ireland will have been reached. He will be the first athlete to compete in the Winter Olympic games who developed through the Ski Club with limited access to snow. On behalf of the Ski Association of Ireland, the governing body for snowsports in this country, I congratulate Shane, our very own Olympian, and wish him every success at Whistler. It might be of interest to review the list of Ski Club members who competed at the highest levels for Ireland since the first appearance at the World Championships in 1993:

#### World Championships

1993	Moricka Shizukuishi	Conor Columb, Ronan Columb, Shane O'Connor
1995	Sierra Nevada	Conor Columb, Ronan Columb
1997	Sestriere	Conor Columb, Pauli Schwarzacher-Joyce
1999	Vail	Pauli Schwarzacher-Joyce, Conor Columb, Fiona Hicks, Tamsen McGarry
2001	St. Anton	Pauli Schwarzacher-Joyce, Thos Foley, Tamsen McGarry
2003	St. Moritz	Shane O'Connor, Thos Foley, Sara Farivarz
2005	Bormio	Shane O'Connor, Thos Foley, Kirsty McGarry
2007	Are, Sweden	Shane O'Connor, Thos Foley, Peter Byrne, Kirsty McGarry
2009	Val d'Isere	Shane O'Connor, Peter Byrne, Brian Byrne

#### Olympic Games

1998	Nagano	Pauli Schwarzacher-Joyce
2002	Salt Lake City	Pauli Schwarzacher-Joyce, Tamsen McGarry
2006	Turino	Thos Foley, Kirsty McGarry
2010	Vancouver	Shane O'Connor, Kirsty McGarry

It is fitting that Shane be our first home grown Olympian this year since he also competed for Ireland 17 years ago at our first World Championships in 1993. He has earned his place through hard work and determination, and on his own merit and skiing ability.

Parallel with his personal commitment, Shane has continued to give his undivided support as coach to the Ski Club's younger skiers, driving standards upwards to ever higher levels. At present, no less than five of our racers have attained the B standard of qualification permitting them to compete at the Winter Olympics, although rules restrict us to a single entry. This demonstrates his impact and the possibilities now open to our members to represent Ireland at one of the world's greatest sporting occasions. Ski Club racers are now participating regularly in international races at all levels and 24 of our young skiers have already competed in the European Youth Olympic Festivals.

Shane himself has paid tribute to those who developed ski racing in the earlier years of the Ski Club. We remember the pioneers of the 1970's when racers were driven to races often in the back of a Hiace van. The baton was taken up by generations of racers and coaches, through the 1980's and into the 1990's which was the start of Ski Club racers going to international competitions.

As we watch Shane negotiate the gates at Whistler we can look back with an enormous sense of satisfaction and pride, and forward with huge optimism, as we realise the opportunities for our young members at an international level. The role model Shane has provided is truly inspiring and an active example of "Yes, we can".



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## *Snow in Kilternan*



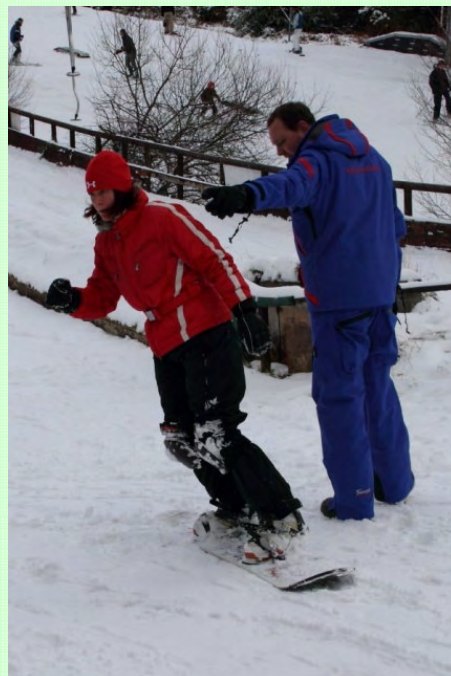
While the country bemoaned its fate, with a Winter unseen in its severity for decades, Kilternan was the place to be if you were a skier or a boarder and could make it there. We had record numbers on the slopes to take advantage of the wonderful snow conditions. We took in an additional €12,000 in practice revenue alone. A big thank you to all who helped deal with the pressure caused by the conditions and numbers. You would never guess that the pictures are not from the Alps.







## Snow in Kilternan







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## Our own Olympian- Shane O'Connor

The Ski Club are immensely proud of Shane's personal achievement in representing Ireland in the Slalom event in the Vancouver Winter Olympics on 27<sup>th</sup> February. They are also indebted to him for his contribution and enthusiasm in developing a thriving race training program for up to 60 racers, with increasing success being achieved in international races abroad. To honour his achievement, presentations were made to him by the President, Rosemary Mayrhuber, and by the racers and their parents, the evening before he headed off to Vancouver. There was a huge attendance to give Shane a great send-off. The warmth of feeling towards the Chief Racing Coach was palpable amongst not just the racers but also his Ski Club colleagues. We are in no doubt that he will be a wonderful athlete and ambassador for Ireland and the Ski Club in Vancouver.



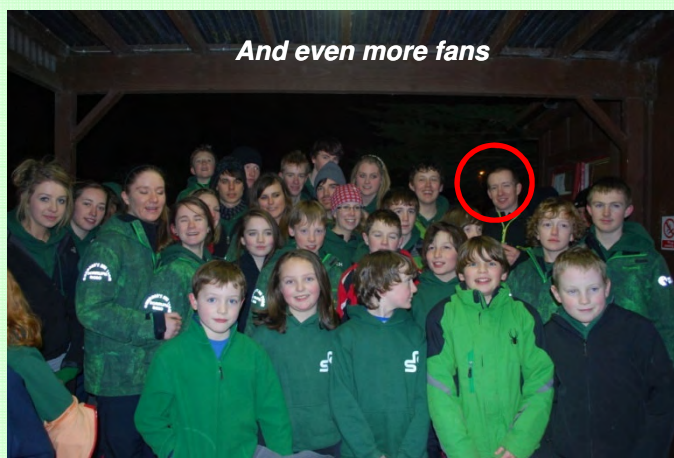
**Rosemary and Shane at presentation**



**Shane with proud Mum and Dad in background**



**The Pied Piper and his fans**



**And even more fans**



## Our own Olympian- Shane O'Connor

### *How did you get involved in skiing ?*

My parents went skiing on their honeymoon and they fell in love with it. When I was five, they took me on my first skiing holiday to Austria and I guess I was hooked. We then discovered Kilternan and I started skiing in the kindergarten classes before moving into the childrens classes and finally the racing squad.

### *Could you train in Ireland or did you always have to spend your money travelling abroad ?*

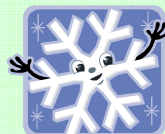
Training on the dry slope at Kilternan is reasonably effective - it's possible to practice much of the basic technique required for racing (and indeed skiing in general). What we miss out on is the speed and terrain changes that come with skiing on snow - this would be the biggest challenge for any Irish racer and why it's imperative to get out on snow as often as possible.

Racing as a Junior and in my early years as a Senior , the structure around Irish ski racing was small and the opportunities to train on snow were few and far between. You really had to make your own training - my parents were brilliant about getting me into race training with local French teams every time we went on holiday and this was of huge benefit to my skiing. I know at the time they had to make a lot of sacrifice to fund this training and over the past 10 years I know only too clearly how big these sacrifices are - particularly the past five years.

### *What are the highlights of your ski career to date?*

Obviously qualifying for the Olympics is the pinnacle for me but there have been a lot of other highlights. I've also been to five World Championships. Other highlights include coming second overall in last seasons indoor snow-dome Salomon Series in the UK and coming second in the European Indoor Snowdome champs in 2008 - this shows that on an even footing and equal surroundings (i.e. an environment in which we can train as an equal) we can compete with some of the bigger nations.

**Continued overleaf.....**



**Shane and Sally at the presentation**

## Our own Olympian- Shane O'Connor

### *What are the highlights of your ski career to date?*

Away from my own racing I'm particularly proud of what I've helped build at the Ski Club where we've developed a training program that includes up to 60 trainees between the ages of 10 and 22 and which has improved the standard of skiing for these racers well past when I was that age. I'm still actively involved in the coaching and I'm responsible for the direction of this program and integrating it into our national program. This season three of our trainees (all U19) have secured qualification for next seasons World Champs in Garmisch, which is a huge step forward for Irish ski racing.

### *What particular skills do you need for slalom? Did you try downhill ?*

I actually did all four disciplines (slalom, giant slalom, super-g and downhill) at one point in time - doing super-g and downhill (and to a lesser degree giant slalom) for us is a luxury - because of the very high speeds you really need to be training for them all the time so you can learn how the ski reacts at such speeds or how the line changes. Slalom is something we can practice much more effectively on a dry slope, so you have the chance to keep your eye in to a larger degree. Slalom is a very technical event, everything happens on instinct - split second reactions are required to correct mistakes or change direction to make the next turn. The downhill speeds are slower but the reaction time required is every bit as fast.



*Are these really my "professional" coaches ?*



### *What international skiers would you have looked to for inspiration ?*

There are many - in my early years, Marc Giardelli of Luxembourg was my idol. After that Permin Zubriggen of Switzerland and then Herman Maier of Austria (mostly because of his comeback from injury). Of course Bodie Miller was an inspiration in his early years as he effectively threw the rule book out the window and skied based on his instincts. This gave me the belief (as a racer and as a coach) that everyone had to find their own natural technique and hone this to a few key requirements.

### *A bit about yourself - age, job, what school you went to. Will any family/friends be flying over to Canada.*

I was 36 last November, I'm working for a financial services company called SIG who have been brilliant to allow me time off. I went to Belvedere College but never really played rugby because I was always a GAA man at heart (my Dad, Danny, is a fanatic) and I hope to go back playing in March once I get home from Vancouver. I'm lucky as I'll have my family, wife as well as my fitness coach, Colin and my masseuse, Sara Jane over in Vancouver.

My family have been a massive support (parents and two brothers). And of course my wife (Sally) has been incredible to have endured the last two years where I've been MIA due to gym training, massage, travel to training or competitions.



### Freestyle on Fridays

After the successful Grom Camp, the year started with a batch of 3 classes run by Dion Newport, a world freestyle tour judge and piper to a regular bunch of 8-12 hardcore Friday night skiers with a wide range of ages. There are not many resorts or slopes that has such a highly qualified instructor but it comes with a drawback that Dion's judging commitments are limiting the number of classes we can run.

Notwithstanding Dion's restricted availability, a whole range of features are set up every week on the top section of the intermediate slope from basic beginner to more advanced features, with 3 jumps of different heights. They are available to free skiers as long as they have a helmet and can ski in control. There is plenty of advice on hand from the more experienced regulars.

The standard has gone from basic grabs in the first week to big airs and a whole range of different tricks.. We have even had some first timers to plastic who are now setting the standard for everyone. We had our first boarders over the past few weeks, Some of the Friday night regulars even arranged a sneaky trip to a snow dome to apply their new found skills.

There are a lot of exciting things in the pipeline including the first end of year Freestyle competition. If you want any more information check out the Facebook page.

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/group.php?gid=155774648508&ref=ts>



### Work to Start on the Nursery Slopes

Our contractors, Lissadell Construction, are shortly about to re-commence work on the planned improvements to the nursery slopes. This will involve getting access for the construction machinery across the bottom of the intermediate slope so that the nursery slopes can be dismantled and entirely regraded. The snowflex matting, underlay, sprinkler systems and Travellator lifts will take a number of weeks to arrive but the preparatory site works will be undertaken before then. The entire project is quite extensive and will take four to five months to complete.

Meanwhile, the Receiver (and Liquidator) to the Hotel is engaging consulting engineers to advise on what should be done to repair the damage caused by the heavy rains in December and later by the melting snow, and to provide egress routes for ground water coming off the Killagar hill.

Discussions will also get underway with the Receiver on necessary improvements to the Club building, so that an application for planning permission can be jointly submitted.



*Shane O'Connor will have the support of two of the Ski Club's instructors who are spending the whole season in Whistler. Rory Quinn and Alan Rafferty, are pictured in their IASI uniforms in Vancouver, with an unidentified colleague.*

## Social Scene – we need your ideas!

Socialising, get togethers and making friends have always been important features of the Ski Club. The Ski Club was founded in the mid-60s by people who met on a ski holiday abroad and decided to meet up regularly when they arrived home. They started to organise Gluewein evenings and ski film shows and holidayed together again each year. They later established the ski slope at Knockrabo in Dublin in the early 1970s – and the rest is history. In those days the Ski Club became famous for its monthly discos at Knockrabo – a buffet hot plate plus as much wine or beer as you could manage.

This tradition continued apace when the Club moved to Kilternan. Mid-summer barbeques (steak, strawberries and cream and live jazz band) at the foot of the slopes; Austrian evenings at St Killian's; tea-dances in Nassau Street; filmshows in town; gluewein receptions at the Shelbourne; discos at Blackrock Rugby Club and in the Zambesi room at Kilternan; fashion shows in Kilternan of winter sports clothing, both on piste and apres ski, from the top Dublin fashion shops; summer camping weekends to the Comeraghs and the MacGillacuddy Reeks; group get-fit visits to the gym; lectures and slide shows on haute-route traversing, ski maintenance, choosing your holiday resort, map reading and mountain safety, etc.

And many après-ski sessions in the bar of the Kilternan Hotel, which was a great way to welcome in new members to the Club and chat happily about the ski world.

The closure of the Hotel had a significant impact on much of the above and we were looking forward enthusiastically to its re-opening so that we could re-establish our social programme. Unfortunately, as we all know, events have delayed the Hotel's completion. However, we are determined not to let this stop us from re-launching the Club's social scene.

There is one problem that we want your help on. We don't know what kind of social events you'd like us to organise, or the degree of interest within the Club for such social get-togethers. We realise much has changed since the 90s and that's why we want to consult you. Please give us your ideas on this topic – by email, by just telling any member of the Committee, or by dropping a note to the Club office. We'll happily take all suggestions on board, new or old.



### ***Australia beckons for Darragh Holmes.***

***Darragh is a great Sunday Team member and Adrienne and her team (as well as the customers) are going to miss him terribly but we all wish him well and look forward to his return. His pal and first cousin Stephen on the right of the picture says he will be missed but you'd never guess it from the picture taken at his send-off in Palmers***



## Club Holiday Courchevel 2010

The 2010 Courchevel holiday once again exceeded all expectations. The excellent snow conditions were matched by blue skies, excellent instruction and good company. Freddy Johnston had to drop out at the last moment and Donal Fennell availed of the bargain holiday offer. A humorous take on how the holiday went can be got from our web site at [http://www.skiclub.ie/Club\\_Holidays/Default.104.html](http://www.skiclub.ie/Club_Holidays/Default.104.html) Meanwhile the holiday to Bad Hofgastein looks like it will be a big success with 60 people heading there on Feb 20<sup>th</sup>.



**Front Row (L to R)** Eamonn McCormack, Brendan Whelan, Mairead Barnwell, Dr. Derek Freedman, Michele Cronin (*normally smiles*)  
**Middle Row (L to R)** John Harty, Tom Metcalfe, Paul Owens, Justin Neville, Helen O'Neill, Vivienne Nelson  
**On Stairs (L to R)** Dr. Terry McEvoy, Donal Fennell, Charlie Glass, P.J. Lawless (*rarely smiles*)



## Chris Mangan retires from Instructor Panel

Chris Mangan, one of the Club's most popular instructors, announced his retirement from the Instructor Panel just before Christmas. Chris has been a Ski Club instructor for over 30 years and many of the Club's leading skiers have benefited enormously from Chris's patient coaching as they learnt to ski. Chris's hallmark was his empathy with beginners and his ability to get his pupils to relax while he built up their confidence in their own abilities.

Chris was a leading light in the Ski Club's early years, and was particularly involved in the move from Knockrabo to Kilternan. He was one of the small group who lent the Club the money to acquire the ski slope at Kilternan in 1975. Chris later became Vice-President of the Club, and was very active in the Club's early marketing initiatives.

Many of our racers will remember Chris as Starter of our own League and International races for many years and greatly appreciated how he always ensured each racer was focused and calm in the gate before he counted them down.

As one of the Ski Club's real gentlemen, Chris always exudes life's courtesies. His helpful advice was always welcome. We are delighted that this will still be available to us and that Chris will be around to assist during peak periods as a DIN-setter.

Chris was deservedly elected an Honorary Member of the Ski Club in 2006.



***Chris on the slope for the last time as an instructor***



***Listening to the tributes being paid to them both by the President Rosemary Mayrhuber***



## Paddy Roche retires after 45 years teaching

December 2009 marked a milestone in the history of the Ski Club and ski tuition in Ireland. Paddy Roche retired from teaching skiing after 45 years due to ongoing problems with his ankles. Paddy started skiing in 1958 in the Dublin mountains with his good friend Sean Wright. They had one pair of skis between them belonging to Sean. Fast forward to 1965 to Phoenix Boxing Club in Parkgate Street to find our heroes teaching people to ski on Ireland's first indoor ski slope, 15 metres long, portable so as to be able to tidy away after boxing training. For safety, volunteers stood around the edge of the slope to catch any wayward skiers. This slope helped Ireland's ski pioneers "get a feel for the skis" before going on what was regarded then as an exotic adventure to the snow. In 1966 the slope was moved to Santry Stadium under the stand where weekly lessons were available and remained there for two seasons.

1968 saw the start of Paddy's involvement with the ski club when he started teaching on the club's first slope in Knockrabo and he remained a fixture in the club ever since. Paddy's enthusiasm for our sport is legendary. He has encouraged and cajoled many people down through the years and started many on their path to success in skiing. His Sunday morning class was attended by a dedicated group no matter how early the starts.

Paddy first got "snow qualified" in 1970 through BASI and when IASI started running courses on snow, he took to them with his usual dedication, updating and upgrading his skills. Some of the stories about Paddy are the stuff of legend and most of them are true. For example, he ate lunch on the chair-lift so as to have as much time on the hill as possible. After hurting his back running marathons in 1980, he taught his Sunday class from the side of the slope until pronounced fit for duty again.

His love, dedication, passion and joy for teaching will be sorely missed by all his colleagues pupils and friends at the club. However he has passed on these traits to all who have been lucky enough to have been taught by him and his legacy will continue for many years to come.

Paddy was deservedly elected an Honorary Member of the Ski Club in 2006. Thanks for the last 45 years Paddy.



***A typical Paddy pose - "come on will ye"***



***Paddy and Chris being recognised for their outstanding service to the club by the President Rosemary Mayrhuber***



*Santa duly arrived on December 6th*



A big thank you to Santa "Don" Claus, Mrs. Elaine Claus, Ciaran Columb and his "fairies", Michael Costello (photos), Tony Womble McGuinness (silent for once) and all those who helped make it such an enjoyable day for all, not just the kids.



## 2010 Club Quiz

The 2010 quiz on 30<sup>th</sup> January in the Merrion Inn was a great success. Thirteen teams took part and the contest was hard fought until the very end, when The Lovely Girls Team, a.k.a. The Columbs + Chandler, came through to win first prize. As the inaugural winners of the quiz in 2007, it was a great comeback, after they had been written off in advance by the Club Quiz pundits. It has to be said that there were rumbles afterwards amongst some of the losing tables, with comments such as "they had six on their team", "did you see the MC drinking with them afterwards". Sour grapes methinks. Big thanks to Andrew and Clodagh Semple, Sean Walsh and his lovely assistants and Eamonn McCormack for "the lend of the hall"



Place	Team	Place	Team
1.	The Lovely Girls <i>(incl. 3 guys ??)</i>	T7.	Jim's the odd one out <i>(what's new !!!)</i>
T2.	Stoopid <i>(clearly not the case..)</i>	9.	Tired of Winning <i>(clearly the case....)</i>
T2.	The drag lift virgin and friends <i>(Huh ??)</i>	10.	WDC <i>(<u>W</u>ay <u>D</u>own the <u>C</u>hart)</i>
4.	Fat Farm	T11.	Deadman's cave
5.	Incoming	T11.	The Leogangers
6.	The delugeionals	13.	Top Team <i>(Mmmmmmmmm !)</i>
T7.	Fresh from Davos <i>(not fresh enough !!)</i>		



## club quiz





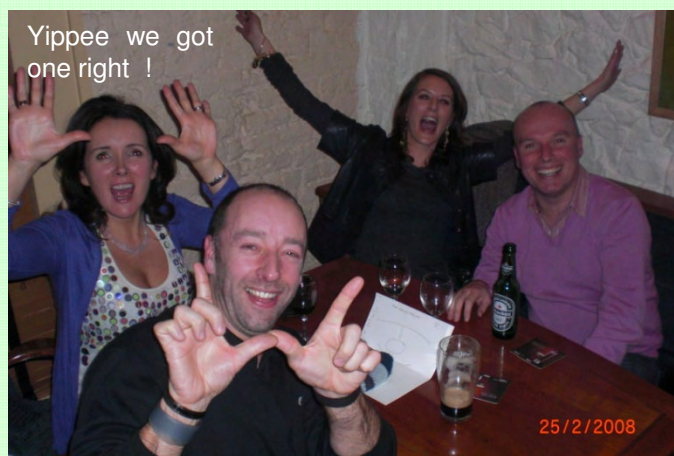


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## club quiz



## Ski Club Calendar

	FEBRUARY
Mon 15 <sup>th</sup> - Fri 19 <sup>th</sup>	Mid Term – Slope open 2-5 p.m. for practice and classes
Sat 20 <sup>th</sup>	Second Club Holiday to Bad Hofgastein
Sat 27 <sup>th</sup>	Shane O'Connor in Slalom in Vancouver
	MARCH
Sat 6 <sup>th</sup>	1 Day Beginner Snowboard Course
Sun 7 <sup>th</sup>	League Races 6
Sat 13 <sup>th</sup>	Final Sat Evening Opening
Wed 17 <sup>th</sup>	St. Patrick's Day - slope open p.m. to STHs
	APRIL
Thu 1 <sup>st</sup>	Final Classes of Season
Fri 2 <sup>nd</sup> - Sun 4 <sup>th</sup>	Good Fri, Easter Sat & Sun slope closed
Mon 5 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Mon - slope open p.m. to STHs
Sun 18 <sup>th</sup>	Club Championship Races

### Michael Sherwood-Smith, R.I.P.

Sadly, one of the Club's longest serving instructors passed away, quietly in his sleep, last July. Mike was a member of the Club for almost 40 years and a very popular instructor on the Wednesday night panel. He was distinguished by his ability to get the best out of his pupils, and by his own very effective and graceful Swiss skiing technique.

Mike was born in England in the late 1930's but the family moved to Switzerland during the war, where he learnt to become an outstanding skier, very competent both on and off the piste. He went to University in the UK and was on his college's racing team for a number of years, competing regularly in Alpine events.

Mike moved to Ireland in the 1960's and became Head of the Computer Science Department at UCD. A keen supporter of the Ski Club's move from Knockrabo to Kilternan, Mike lent the Club money to acquire the ski slope and skiing facilities when the Dublin Sports Hotel went into Receivership in 1975.

Always an originator, Mike set a project for his final year computer science students in the mid 80's to computerise the Ski Club's back office and scheduling system.

He is greatly missed by all his friends in the Ski Club.



## What the Ski Club Committee does

The Ski Club Committee meets about ten times each year, with the period from June to January generally being the busiest. Meetings last about four hours. The busy summer months are spent:

- ☐ Setting rates for classes for the various categories for the coming season
- ☐ Appointing the instructor panel and team leaders
- ☐ Deciding new equipment requirements
- ☐ Agreeing the summer maintenance programme
- ☐ Planning the Club's marketing programme
- ☐ Setting the calendar of events for the year ahead
- ☐ Scheduling the summer camp training course for the Racing squad
- ☐ Holding the Instructor/Volunteer Meeting and the Instructor Refresher weekend.



Between Committee meetings much work is undertaken by delegated project teams or sub-committees (e.g. Racing) that look after such matters as premises and facilities maintenance, ski and snowboard equipment, the ski school and instructors, office volunteers, racing, marketing and public relations, the development plan, schools, health and safety, finance and legal matters, and other shorter-term projects, such as the Octoberfest, social events, uniforms, club holidays, newsletters, computerisation, web-site development, etc.

The agenda of Committee Meetings generally includes all the above, and also reviews

- i. **The Income Report** - A report on income received in the month and year-to-date from all sources, e.g. memberships, season tickets, tuition, practice, snowboarding, schools, kindergarten, racing, groups, with a comparison against the previous month, and the same periods in the previous year.
- ii. **The Operations Report** - This report sets out the number of class sessions each week for each of the above categories, the number of pupils in each category, the average number of pupils per class and per instructor, with comparisons against other sessions during the week, and with previous weeks.
- iii. **Costs** - A schedule of costs and capital expenditure year-to-date with a forecast for the full year. In the current environment, there is a concentration on cost reduction in all areas.
- iv. **Business Development** - Proposals on the introduction of new class categories to meet market demand (e.g. intensive all-day weekend classes, adult clinics, mid-term and Christmas holiday classes, free-style classes, etc), and implementing appropriate marketing programmes.

### Can You Help?



The Committee, as always, welcomes interest from members willing to serve on the Committee, sub-committees, project teams, in the office or wherever you feel you could help. We'd love to hear from you

**Niall Carroll**



You look young  
enough to take part  
Ailbhe !!

Borrufa



On the 23<sup>rd</sup> January a team of nine children, two coaches and a house parent set out to Andorra in order to compete in Borrufa – an International Skiing competition for children aged between 11 and 14. Since their selection, the team consisting of Eoin Doyle, Kyle Mc Carthy, Gary Skinner (CH1), Maebh Byrne, Emer Pisarnik, Lauren O'Riordan, Sean Murray, Cormac Comerford and Stephen Power (CH2,) have been doing fitness assessments as well as their usual training in order to prepare for the event.

This year marked the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Borrufa. The competition was tough with over twenty nations partaking, some of which came from as far away as Australia and South Africa, and most of which train full time on snow.

We spent the first three days of our stay training, with the main focus being on free skiing with a lot of video analysis. Then came the competitions.

**Day 1 - Super G.** The competition began on the 27<sup>th</sup> with the Super G which consists of very big turns which are well spaced out, allowing the skiers to reach very high speeds. Only our CH1 athletes competed in this race. The three boys did very well in their first ever speed event. Some navigation issues messed up what was otherwise a very strong run from Kyle, and both Eoin and Gary posted great results with a 30<sup>th</sup> and a 34<sup>th</sup> respectively.

*Continued overleaf.....*



### Borrufa

continued .....

**Day 2 – GS.** The next day it was the G.S. and CH1 and CH2 were competing on different slopes. In CH1 all of the children finished and did well. Most notably Eoin Doyle managed to break into the top thirty posting a time of 1:06.05 which put him into 28<sup>th</sup> position. In CH2 both Emer and Sean unfortunately came out, despite skiing well in the top sections of the course. The first run went well for the rest of our CH2 athletes, with Cormac Comerford impressively placing 34<sup>th</sup> in a large field of around 60 competitors. The second run was less successful for the majority of our athletes with only Maebh Byrne and Stephen Power managing to finish, posting results of 28<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> respectively.



Al Qaeda - Irish  
Female cell !!

**Day 3 – Kombi and Slalom.** On the final day there was a Kombi race for CH1 (slalom and G.S. turns in one course) and a Slalom for CH2. In the Kombi the boys pulled out some impressive results with Eoin in 19<sup>th</sup>, Kyle in 20<sup>th</sup> and Gary in 24<sup>th</sup>. In the Slalom the first run proved difficult for some, with Cormac unfortunately blowing out of the course near the bottom after what looked to be a really fast run. In the second run, all the girls finished, with Maebh and Lauren coming 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, and Emer Pisarnik finishing 18<sup>th</sup> overall. In the boys section Sean Murray had to be pulled from the second run due to a hip injury, so Stephen Power was our only finisher coming in at 25<sup>th</sup> in a field of 58 skiers.



The Gaffers !!

All in all, the children performed really well, and as the results prove they were able to challenge many of the racers from snow countries. It was a great week and many thanks are owed to Ailbhe Doyle who was an excellent house mum, the race committee, Fiona Gallagher for organising all of the logistics and SAI for supporting our athletes. A special word for my fellow coach Tony McGuinness who put together the fitness programme for the children and for all of the enthusiasm and energy put into the coaching over the week itself, not to mention all the help he gave with the dreaded ski prep for the races ! And finally thanks are owed to all the children who worked really hard both in the build up to Borrufa and at the race itself. They were a credit to the Ski Club and hopefully they will be seen representing Ireland again in the future.

**Carolyn Dent Neville**

## Stuart Leads the Munich 6 to Safety

### Hazardous Trans-Alpine Traverse Completed

Six Club instructors had their route plans blown off piste last month by heavy snow at Dublin airport. Their morning flight to Geneva was cancelled but, in their enthusiasm to be on time for an IASI technical course in Chamonix, they managed to catch the last flight to Europe that day landing in Munich at 9pm. Benefiting from their mountain rescue training, they studied their Ordnance maps, took compass bearings and learnt they were 650km from where they should have been.

After an emotional team talk, the party of Niall Carroll, Lisa Gallagher, John Lambert, Don MacManus, Stuart Ryan and Marta Val Escudero checked their sparse provisions, took GPS bearings, notified their next of kin and their comrades in Argentierre of their route plans and ETA, and set off through the night to cross four countries to get to their rendezvous.

Snow was falling heavily and visibility was poor. Leadership was shared between Stuart and Don throughout the journey, taking turns at seeking out suitable terrain. Stops had to be made to repair equipment and search for water. Another Irish party was seen in trouble on two occasions on the route, but the Munich 6, now with just four skis between them, selflessly decided that, in the interest of Irish skiing, they should forge ahead. Sadly, no further sightings were made of the other party but there were unconfirmed reports of a dazed Irishman being resuscitated some days later in a hostelry near Chamonix.

After six hours of difficult travel, in an attempt to get to their IASI course on time, the intrepid instructors decided to ascend the riskier, but treacherous, Col de la Forclaz Pass rather than take a longer and safer route. Stuart stepped forward to take the lead while Don worked on the party's morale and made sure everybody was warm. Some of the group were showing visible signs of exhaustion.

With his vast experience of hazardous travel, Stuart kept up a brisk (though slower than his normal) pace over the icy peaks and, despite a number of frightening braquages and compressions turns, he succeeded in bringing the group across the border into the safety of the EU. The courageous skiers, tired and hungry but good spirited, arrived 30 minutes later at the White Chalet in Argentierre – after a journey of 8.5 hours. Those anxiously awaiting news had fallen asleep as the night advanced; the search for the missing instructors had by now been abandoned though the survivors discovered messages of goodwill scattered around the region. The exhausted Irish ski instructors bivouacked at 6.45am.

When their comrades awoke to the longed-for news of the safe arrival of the Munich 6, church bells began to ring joyously throughout the Chamonix Valley. The survivors, with their fellow instructors, trekked back to Vallorcine at the Swiss border some days later where a small celebratory lunch was held. Locals say that a siite for a commemorative plaque was being chosen.

*Continued on next page .....*





## Stuart Leads the Munich 6 to Safety

### The epilogue .....

"We made our plans carefully and each member of the group carried out their drills very effectively in increasingly variable terrain. It was a good assessment for us all" said Stuart, adding modestly "any of our instructors could have completed this traverse, and we're pleased that we've opened up this new route to IASI courses".

In commenting on how they managed to get over the Alps in dim light with just four skis between the party of six, he referred to the use of shadowing techniques. Two other survivors praised their exposure to single ski skills the previous year while on an RPM course. ("Repeated Participation in all Modules"-editor). "I'll never travel anywhere again without Stuart" said a younger member of the group.

Stuart was evasive on rumours that DVD rights were being discussed with Setanta, but conceded that Kathryn Mason had been seen in deep conversation with several of the party.

A week later, when they had fully recovered from their ordeal, Aer Lingus sent a plane to bring the party on a non-stop flight directly back to Ireland. Shortly afterwards, they were received by the President who praised their courage and endurance and thanked them for putting the interests of Irish skiing ahead of their own safety.

(copyright: Independent Agency for Skiing Intelligence, Chamonix, France, 2010).

## Snow in Kilternan and Chamonix not good enough for Don McManus



Bernard  
McNamara's  
old helicopter  
??



Bell2 lodge north BC on the Alaska border





# Piste Basher

Feb 2010

National  
Snowsports Centre  
of Ireland



*2009 - Au revoir aux uniformes rouge*



*2010 - Bienvenue aux uniformes bleus*

*"Allez les blues ...."*

