

MEDIA PACK



DISABILITY
NOWSPORT UK
The Skiers and Boarders Charity

2008

CONTENTS

PAGE	CONTENT
3	What we do
4	History, Vision and Mission Statements
5 - 6	The people behind the charity
7	The Chief Executive Officer
8 – 9	British Disabled Ski Team
10	Current Campaigns
11	New Initiatives
12 – 13	Case Studies
14	Contact Information

WHAT WE DO

Disability Snowsport UK is a people-centred organisation with a unique sense of purpose: that anyone regardless of their disability can take part in and enjoy the thrill of snowsport. For nearly 30 years we have applied exceptional know-how and adaptability to enable those with a disability to experience the joy of skiing alongside the able-bodied. We provide therapeutic, life-enhancing and, most importantly, exciting activities for individuals and groups of all ages who require adaptive equipment, specialist instruction and support.

We believe that anyone with some degree of mobility can participate in snowsport, and as such, we support and encourage each individual to reach their full potential on the slopes. In some cases, a person can ski better than they can walk, providing a freedom previously unknown to them.

The experience of snowsports often proves to be life-changing, with numerous physical, mental and emotional benefits. These can include:

- Improved self-esteem and confidence
- Greater independence
- Access to social opportunities
- Therapeutic and physiotherapy benefits
- Increased level of fitness
- Development of new skills and achieving personal goals

Our work takes many forms, catering for children and adults all over the UK with all disabilities and capabilities: from the recreational skier to those of a racing standard who can become part of the **British Disabled Ski Team** and compete in races all over the World.

Our programmes include:

- ❖ Dedicated adaptive snowsport schools
- ❖ Schools and youth programmes
- ❖ A network of thirteen local groups
- ❖ Overseas activity weeks
- ❖ Support for the **British Disabled Ski Team**
- ❖ Support for the Youth Development Squad – bringing talent from grassroots to racing standard
- ❖ Support for the development of adaptive facilities in continental Europe
- ❖ Training for instructors, volunteers and snowsport centre staff
- ❖ Advice, information and encouragement for members and the wider community.

One of the key elements that make our charity so successful is the fact that so many of the people involved are volunteers. We have almost 400 volunteers who give up their time and money to assist our work on our overseas activity weeks, at our adaptive snowsport schools and perhaps most importantly, at our local groups, which are entirely volunteer run.

HISTORY

The 1970's

David Morris FRCP MRCS DCH, a consultant paediatrician, adviser to the Spastic Society (now Scope) and a very keen skier, was convinced that the movement available through skiing could have valuable benefits in enhancing co-ordination, balance and self awareness in young people with cerebral palsy. These highly controversial ideas met with resistance for a number of years. However, perseverance paid off and the Spastic Society undertook a pilot scheme involving six children. The early years concentrated on the younger members of the society and various residential activities proved that the theory translated into practice - with highly beneficial results. These preliminary steps were expanded to cover a much wider age range and again the benefits were easy to see and the participants confirmed the earlier findings with a genuine desire for the project to continue and expand.

The 1980's & 90's

It had now become obvious that many other people with similar motor disabilities could also benefit from these activities. The **Uphill Ski Club** formed as an independent charity and the lessons learnt during the earlier years became available to a much wider range of users. Over the years, the charity's activities widened to the extent that those with a disability, whether physical, sensory or learning could join in fully with the programme.

The New Millennium

In 2005 two other charities that had provided activities for adaptive skiers (the National Handicapped Skiers Association and Scotland's Alternative Skiers) came together with the organisation of the Uphill Ski Club. To reflect this new body, it was then decided that the organisation should change its name to **Disability Snowsport UK**. In 2007, The British Ski Club for the Disabled (BSCD) disbanded their members then decided to join Disability Snowsport UK. This enabled them to continue their work delivering adaptive lessons to the disabled.

VISION STATEMENT

Skiers and snowboarders with a disability should be able to ski alongside the able bodied as equals at all ski facilities and resorts.

MISSION STATEMENT

To promote equality and the opportunity for people with disabilities to take part in snowsports and to help improve their enjoyment and standard of performance at the level of their choice.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE CHARITY

TRUSTEES

Chairman Professor Elizabeth (Lisa) Hall

The Chairman has been involved with the Charity since 1979 and a Trustee since 1985. She has 'grown up with disability' and has special interest in communication with people with learning difficulties. Her sister is a skiing member of DSUK and participated in the Special Olympics in 1993. Lisa is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry and Queens' College, Cambridge and brings an expertise in innovation, entrepreneurship and project management to the Board of Trustees. She serves on several professional bodies, grant giving bodies and Trust Funds and is on the advisory board of a number of high tech international companies.

Vice Chairman Robbie Young

Robbie has been involved since the second year of the Uphill Ski Club 30 years ago. He has continued to be actively involved following the development of DSUK. He sits on the race management group as technical director. Robbie has worked for the sports company Salomon for the past 25 years.

Treasurer Paul Masters

Paul has been involved with DSUK since 2001 and is a Chartered Accountant. He is also a Trustee of two other charities – Mango (Management Accounting for NGOs), of which he is Chair, and Link Community Development, of which he is Treasurer.

Secretary John Currie

John has been volunteering for DSUK on overseas activity weeks since 2000 and has been a Trustee since 2006. A Member of the Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland, he has been with Bank of Scotland Corporate for almost 20 years. His main professional experience is in Operational management and Corporate Finance.

Performance Director for British Disabled Ski Team Jeremy Wood

Jeremy is a Bi-lateral Amputee, active supporter of DSUK since 1998 and Trustee since 2003 is an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Bankers and a career Banker of some 30 years. He became Performance Director of the British Disabled Ski Team, following its integration with DSUK in 2004, is Treasurer for his local swimming club and maintains close links with the charity's sporting partners UK Sport and the British Paralympic Association.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE CHARITY

Lieutenant Colonel Fred Hargreaves

Lt Col Hargreaves has been in the British Army since the age of 16. He is a keen skier and mountaineer and has recently introduced Adaptive Skiing to the military, providing opportunity for wounded Service personnel to participate in outdoor activities to regain an element of their active lives. Additionally, he has driven the creation of “Battle Back” – a Defence initiative to improve the aftercare of their wounded through provision and co-ordination of numerous adaptive sports and adventurous pursuits. He has developed close links with many of the Service charities, and became a Trustee of DSUK in 2008. He is a BASI Adaptive Instructor, and helps out at Aldershot and Milton Keynes monthly adaptive ski sessions.

Joe Broussard

Joe joined the Trustees as the Chairman of Scotland’s Alternatives Skiers to help smooth the process by which that group joined Disability Snowsport UK. He is a disabled skier (bi-ski) and enjoys skiing with his family. He is a retired Head Teacher of a special residential school. He continues to be involved as Chairman of the newly established Disability Snowsport UK local club – Disability Snowsport Scotland.

Don Brind

Don is a retired journalist who worked for 20 years at the BBC and was also a Labour Party press officer in the run up to the 2001 General Election. He first became involved with the then Uphill Ski Club in the early 1980s. He has been a helper on holidays in Niederau, Villars, Soldeu and Breckenridge and recently began helping at the Bromley ski slope local group. His role at DSUK involves writing publicity material and helping with the production of videos.

Steven West

Steven is an engineer by trade and co-runs his own engineering firm. He has been skiing since the age of six and started skiing with the BSCD at Tamworth in 2002. A friend encouraged him to go along and help out - and he was never allowed to leave! His involvement grew during the next few years, looking after the paperwork from 2006 and taking over as slope organiser during 2007. He has skied as a helper on DSUK and BSCD activity weeks since 2005 and attended his first activity week as a BASI Adaptive Instructor in March 2008. Currently Steven attends Tamworth, Castleford and Milton Keynes sessions each month as a volunteer adaptive instructor. Skiing with DSUK has and continues to be his most rewarding and enjoyable way to spend time on snow.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Fiona Young

Fiona has been involved with the charity for some 25 years.

In 1983 she took part in her first activity week as a ski instructor for the disabled. Fiona's dedication and enthusiasm for the charity grew which then led her to become responsible for the recruitment of ski instructors for all of the activity weeks the charity ran.

She travelled to America to qualify as an adaptive instructor, as at that time there was no qualification available here in the UK. On her return in 1993, and with the backing of the Board of Trustees, she set up the first ever dedicated adaptive ski school based on Cairngorm Mountain, Scotland.

She then lobbied the British Association of Snowsport Instructors (BASI) to setup a British adaptive qualification. Fiona co-produced this with the help of adaptive trainers from USA. Continuing through the system, she then became one of the first BASI adaptive trainers. She also took on the position of Technical Director for the Charity at that time, a position she still holds today.

Fiona continues to work extremely closely with BASI to ensure the high standards for adaptive instruction are maintained and that all of our instructors are kept up to date with the latest advances made within adaptive snowsports.

With the many changes and rapid growth of the charity Fiona took on the role of Chief Executive Officer in 2000. She has since seen the charity grow to become a leader in adaptive snowsports throughout the UK. In her own words...

"Looking towards the future there are some very exciting developments and times ahead: the network of local groups are expanding giving greater access to the disabled community. In turn this will provide better pathways so that choices are available to people with disabilities to develop their skills be it in the recreation field of snowsport or into the competition side and reaching elite athlete status.

It's my hope that every snowsport facility in the UK and Europe will eventually be able to offer the same service to people with disabilities as they do to an able-bodied person."

Fiona is of the same opinion as the charity's founder David Morris, when he made his infamous comment back in 1974, which she now wants you to consider.....

"Why shouldn't you have a wheelchair at the top of a mountain?"

Please help us get it there!

THE BRITISH DISABLED SKI TEAM

The **British Disabled Ski Team** (BDST) is made up of an expanding group of dedicated athletes with a range of disabilities who represent Great Britain in international disabled skiing events throughout the world.

The pinnacle for these skiers being to represent their country at the Winter Paralympic Games (Vancouver 2010), which are held every four years and interim World Disabled Ski Championships held every two years (commencing 2009).

Athletes continue to follow an annual snowsports calendar of IPC Disabled Alpine Skiing World Cup races across Europe, North America and East Asia supplemented by European, North American and National Cup races.

The management and funding of the team is the responsibility of **Disability Snowsport UK** having transferred to them as part of a wider integration of snowsport charities in 2004. DSUK is committed to moving the team forward so that individuals can challenge for medals at the Paralympics and major championship events.

The team has made significant advances this season (2007-2008), moving to 10th position in the European rankings, which is a 14 place improvement within three years. The challenge now is to provide the infrastructure and financial support to move it on to the next level.

We have to ensure that those athletes who have the potential to podium at World Championships in 2009 and the 2010 Paralympics receive the necessary support and coaching and that those skiers with potential to gain selection for the games develop and improve over the next three years.

At the same time a programme of identifying, developing and progressing new athletes is required to ensure a sustainable future for disabled alpine racing from Great Britain on the world stage.

Overall responsibility for the strategic management of BDST is held by the Performance Director, & Trustee of DSUK, Jeremy Wood, who has a comprehensive background in business and project/change management.

Jeremy is part of a three man management committee which is made up of fellow DSUK Trustee and Technical Director, Robbie Young and Ex Racer and Development Officer, Dave Chugg. All have particular interest and expert knowledge of adaptive ski racing.

Day to day athlete performance and coaching is the responsibility of Performance Manager Nigel Kendrick and Team Manager Stuart Dickson.

All of the above members of the team are volunteers with a commitment to ensure BDST reach their full potential.

THE BRITISH DISABLED SKI TEAM

The team's only current paid member of staff is Head Coach Jane Stevens. Jane brings with her a wealth of experience having taken part in Paralympic games as a guide for blind skiers, former coach of the New Zealand Adaptive Ski Team and is an outstanding adaptive ski instructor and coach in her own right.

The **British Disabled Ski Team** needs vital assistance through sponsorship and donations to ensure they can continue their pathway to the Winter Paralympics Vancouver 2010.

For further information regarding, our current athletes and race results, please visit our dedicated website: -

www.britishdisabledskiteam.co.uk

For general, enquiries, sponsorship or media/photo opportunities, please email Jeremy Wood: -

performancedirector@britishdisabledskiteam.co.uk



British Disabled Ski Team Riders from left – Jane Sowerby, Sean Rose & Tim Farr

CURRENT CAMPAIGNS

Disability Snowsport UK run many exciting programmes across the UK, as well as taking groups of disabled skiers to Europe and North America. We have some established programmes such as the Schools and Youth Programme, and also some exciting new initiatives which we are hoping to develop over the next few years. Listed below are just a few examples of our current and future programmes.

Schools and Youth Programme

Our Schools and Youth Programme currently takes place in Scotland and the North of England. The popular project offers subsidised lessons and support to children and young people with disabilities at various ski slopes, allowing them to take part in sport alongside their able-bodied peers. The programme has been funded by the Big Lottery Fund and Children in Need, as well as many other Trusts and Foundations. Due to the popularity of the project, we hope to expand it to include the South of England within the next two years, for which we are currently seeking funding.

Overseas Activity Weeks

The original purpose of Disability Snowsport was to provide overseas activity weeks for those with disabilities, to allow them to ski at resorts around Europe alongside the able-bodied. This is still at the heart of what we do, with 10 to 15 trips taking place per ski season. Unfortunately though, it is costing more and more each year to take our disabled skiers on activity weeks for a number of reasons. For example, the hotels with disabled facilities tend to be more high end, and therefore more expensive, and of course many of our disabled skiers need one to one tuition and support. It is a focus of the charity that the cost to the skier should be reduced as much as possible by raising funds to provide subsidies, and in 2008 we are committed to a fundraising campaign to this end.

Volunteer Support

The main reason we can help as many people with disabilities as we do is because of the support of our 400 volunteers. Without their time, efforts and dedication we would not be able to function.

Our network of local groups which allow people with disabilities to ski on a regular basis are entirely volunteer-run, and the overseas activity trips that we organise could not happen without the support of volunteer helpers, who assist disabled skiers 24 hours a day on and off the slope.

We ensure that all our volunteers are fully trained to enable them to help disabled skiers effectively. For example, they must be trained in the needs of people with a wide range of disabilities from spinal injury to visual impairment to autism, as well as being trained to deal with the different pieces of equipment required and other tasks required, such as helping up a skier who has fallen down.

We run a volunteer support programme which offers training for all these issues and more, as well as subsidies for volunteers to attend overseas trips.

NEW AND DEVELOPING INITIATIVES

Below are a few examples of our new and developing initiatives. Each programme is unique and has the ability to transform snowsport for all people with disabilities. It is our intention to encourage further participation across the UK at all levels and to promote all the benefits Snowsport has to offer which enrich the lives of all who take part.

Battle Back

2008 has seen DSUK linked with the Ministry of Defence's "Battle Back" programme for wounded soldiers. The wider programme encourages wounded personnel to participate in adventurous training activities and sport.

As part of this, DSUK has been working with the Military on "Exercise SNOW WARRIOR", the army's annual winter training exercise in Southern Germany, to develop an adaptive skiing module. This allows injured personnel to train alongside their able-bodied colleagues, aiding rehabilitation and showing how much can be achieved following traumatic injury as well as having a direct impact on their physical and cognitive rehabilitation,

In addition to the training in Southern Germany, activities have taken place at the Chill Factor[®] ski slope in Manchester this year. The programme has been very successful, and as such we will be developing our links and support of the initiative over the coming months in readiness for the 2008/09 ski season.

Ski Spectacular

This is just one of the new and exciting initiatives DSUK are planning for the year 2011. We can't say much as it is still in the early planning stages but it will be the most exciting event in Europe for disabled skiers ever to have taken place. In association with other organisations we intend to create a week of fantastic adaptive ski instruction courses, events, races and much much more. Watch this space for the official launch of the DSUK Ski Spectacular in early 2009.

Snowsport Taster Lessons & Sessions

It is our intention, subject to funding, to provide a UK wide programme whereby each disabled person can receive a free taster ski lesson to determine whether they would like to make snowsport a permanent fixture in their life

This programme will initially run as a pilot scheme at our Manchester base. We will then be able to assess practicalities of carrying out the "Taster lessons" across ski centres within the UK.

Subject to funding, we are hoping to launch our pilot programme around early 2010.

CASE STUDIES

Ben Sneesby – *British Disabled Youth Team*



Ben was born 26.06.94. At three months old he was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma, a childhood cancer. It is one of the most vicious cancers a child can get.

Ben's tumour was in his spine and abdomen. Hence the damage that he has been left with is as follows: no sensation in his left leg, partial sensation right leg, bowel and bladder management.

Ben underwent chemotherapy and numerous operations. The most recent one has been to put his left hip into the correct position, to cut through the tibia to correct alignment of leg and foot and tendons have been transferred. Ben has had numerous operations in his short but full life.

Ben loves sport and competition. Skiing gives Ben the chance to be part of a team but also to compete at a high level and continue to improve in a sport that he feels passionately about. He is a natural sportsman and whoever meets and watches Ben is in awe of his ability and tenacity. Skiing is not just a sport that can be enjoyed with the family members, but one at which Ben can excel at.

Ben is our first Youth Squad member – he is the first of many we will be recruiting for 2008/2009



CASE STUDIES

Lewis Fisher – Recreational Skier



Lewis is 13-year-old boy who has severe cerebral palsy. He is affected in all four limbs and his spine. Consequently, he is unable to sit, walk or talk, although he does not have learning difficulties.

He first came to ski with Disability Snowsport in February 2008, and took to it almost immediately. Working with the experienced instructors at Cairngorm Mountain, Lewis was put at ease straight away, allowing him to adapt quickly to the equipment and behave confidently on the slope.

His father told us that he believes that his sons' experiences in skiing have given him enormous amounts of confidence in what he can achieve, given perseverance and the correct assistance. He says: "Lewis thoroughly enjoyed himself and it has brought tremendous joy to us, as parents, seeing him so happy and participating in a sport which we thought would never be possible for him to do. Everybody understood his needs and problems and this helped enormously in Lewis enjoying himself and relaxing. The team all do a fantastic job in giving children with disabilities these chances and making the impossible possible."

“...it has brought tremendous joy to us, as parents, seeing him participate in a sport we thought would never be possible...”

CONTACT INFORMATION

For all media enquiries, please contact:

Email: media@disabilitysnowsport.org.uk

Phone: 0161 749 2290

Mobile: 07792 320583

Post: Disability Snowsport UK
Chill Factor^e
Trafford Way
Trafford Quays
Manchester
M41 7JA



British Disabled Ski Team Rider – Talan Skeels-Piggins

LIFE ONLY STOPS IF YOU LET IT!

Disability Snowsport UK
Registered Charity Number: - 287106
www.disabilitysnowsport.org.uk