

April 2009

# Week 13 Ski Group

Organisers of ski weeks for spinally injured and semi-independent skiers

*Are we nearly there yet?*

## 'Another Great Week 13'

Well, another fantastic Week's skiing is over and, as always, it went far too quickly but perhaps that is a sign that it was, as always, a great week both on and off the pistes.

The pistes themselves were challenging this year with mixtures of hard, compacted snow, with some ice shining through, in some places and areas of deep powdery snow in others. These all make for exciting kart skiing, and probably as exciting for the buddies too as we could never be certain what was over the next crest. Add to this some days when the wind whipped up the snow so as to make it impossible to see the details of the surfaces and you have the perfect conditions for pumping adrenaline. Not to forget, of course the lobotomised snow boarders, who lurk and hide just over every crest and bump just to test our Kart driving skills!



### Mon 09 Rodkullen, Rod Orm, Ulladalen

As usual, part of the first morning was spent trying out the karts on the easy slopes at Rodkullen and making sure that those whose licences needed to be renewed went through the necessary tests. As soon as that was completed we all tested out "Red Snake" just to make sure that the resort was going to be up to its usual standard. Next stop was Ulladalen but the



journey over wasn't as easy as it could have been as the wind made visibility, at kart height, difficult.

### Tue 10 Standalen, "over the top" - not

Our attempt to get "over the top" of Areskutan was defeated as there was no suitable transport, or path-way, from the top of Standalen so we skied that piste for a while then returned to Rodkullen for lunch having explored Ulladalen on the way over.

### Wed 11 other side of valley

Bobo had suggested that we tried a resort on the opposite side of the valley to the hotel and had built it up by telling us of a route up to it where we would all be towed by a piste basher and that we could ski in a sort of natural "bowl" - wonderful if the sun shone and we would enjoy fantastic views. The tow with the piste basher and the fantastic views were right enough and the skiing was in a different area but we soon felt that we had exhausted its possibilities. The journey down also necessitated a tow as there wasn't quite enough downhill to generate the momentum to get all the way by ourselves.

### Thu 12 Bjornen + night skiing

On the Thursday morning some of us paid our annual visit to the chocolate factory while others ventured into Are to explore the shops. We all met up for lunch then headed for Bjornen where we skied for the afternoon before eating our evening meal in a local restaurant then enjoying the excitement of night skiing. For the first few runs this was hectic as it seemed that every family in the area had decided to join us but suddenly they seemed to disappear - were they scared off by the mad kart skiers or did they just stay long enough to enjoy a few runs until the pistes cut up and became "interesting"? Whatever the reasons we soon appeared to have the piste to ourselves and so we made the most of it getting in some fantastic runs in a very strange light that made it difficult

to know exactly what sort of surface to expect - I don't know how it appears from standing height but at kart height all the shadows of even the smallest lumps and bumps make for a weird landscape. We all survived and headed back to the hotel buzzing and ready for a drink - hot chocolate of course!

### Fri 13 Trilevallen + Karolinen

Friday morning took us across to Trillevallen again and, as last year, we were warmly welcomed and more or less had the place to ourselves. The skiing was brisk to say the least as all the pistes had been freshly bashed, partly as it was the opening of their season and partly in our honour - they kept asking if everything was OK for us and if they could do any more. The "track" with tight twists and turns and humps of varying heights was a challenge to kart skiers and buddies alike and unfortunately more than one kart had to be rescued having misjudged a corner or the height of a hump.



One of the slopes that had been red last year had been redesignated a black this year which we did not realise until we had skied it a few times so, unfortunately, we had to stop. All I can say is that the times I did ski it were the best runs of the week - I was breathing very heavily each time I reached the bottom!

### Sat 14 Tegefjallen



On Saturday, some of the group took advantage of the facilities at the hotel to recover from the excesses of the night before so we were a small group who ventured out onto the slopes. We headed for Tegefjall and up to some dizzy heights (Fjallvallsliften) where the wind was blowing and rearranging the snow into interesting skiing conditions. We managed a few runs either side of the lift and then took advantage of the sheltered path down through the trees back to the restaurant. In the afternoon Bobo joined us and, as his ankle hadn't fully recovered, he used a ski kart. He took us for some great long runs which involved pathways through the trees and then some exciting red runs over towards Duved. Basically we skied and skied and skied until it was obvious that we were all knackered so, reluctantly we headed back to Tegefjall to get out of the karts for the last time.

Off piste was good too and the food in the hotel was some of the best that we have had in all the years we

have been staying there. The bar, despite being a stupid height, was its usual relaxing place after a day's skiing and the staff were very helpful to those of us who couldn't reach the bar and carry our own drinks.



The visit to "After Ski" was a great success. Ronnie had managed to reserve a front table for us and the cabaret was interesting, the singers being dressed in thermals as if they had just come in off the pistes. There were 3 women singers and someone told me that there were also 3 blokes - did anyone else notice them?

Friday night saw our annual visit to The Karolinen or "hot stones" and as usual we had a great meal cooking our own chicken, elk and beef on the stones provided. At the end of the evening, some of us returned to the hotel while an intrepid group went to explore the night life of Are - the last we saw of them until Saturday evening.

A final word of thanks to all our buddies. Once again, they worked their socks off from the moment we met at Stansted to the time we said our goodbyes there a week later. All the organisation was so slick, the outward and return journeys passed without obvious hitches; we got into our allocated rooms easily and on the first morning, some of us were in our karts and skiing before 10.00am! Thank you all so much.



And a (second) final word of thanks to the organisers Stephen and Neil without whose unseen graft, the week would never happen and how many Swedish miles did Stephen drive on our behalf?

One more question - can we do it all again next year please? Are we nearly there yet? (OK that's 2 questions)

**STUART REES  
KART SKIER**

**See you very soon !  
Are we nearly there yet ?**

**The Week 13 Ski Group**  
**week13.co.uk**