

# Week 13 Ski Group

March 2008

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

## Åre we nearly there yet?

### 'The Best Week 13 Ever'

I know we always say this but this year a number of skiers (both Kart and AB) commented that this years trip truly was the best week ever. The contributing factors were fantastic snow conditions, brilliant weather, sheer variety of slopes to ski on and one of the best buddy teams we have ever assembled (more on the buddies later).



Our journey out to Åre via Trondheim went without a hitch and despite poor weather conditions on the transfer we arrived in the Åre Continental Inn with plenty of time to unpack, have a sauna/jacuzzi before dinner. Bobbo met up with us after dinner and set the scene for the week reassuring us that snow conditions were perfect and the weather forecast good - he was right on both counts.

### Day One - Monday



Nobody needed an alarm call to ensure that we were all aboard the new Ski School bus (part owned by Week 13) at 8.30am. We were met at Rödskullen by a temperature of -15°C and low cloud. The well oiled machine that is a Week 13 buddies team sprang into action and all

Kart skiers were fitted into their Karts and were skiing by 10.00am. After a few tester runs up to pole 4, the Kart skiers were put through their paces on the slalom course in an endeavour to re-new their Kart Licences. The more intrepid (Stuart, Mike and Sue) ventured higher to a red slalom which proved particularly difficult in the fast snow conditions. The main advantage of going higher was that we broke through the low cloud into hazy sunshine.

In the afternoon we all moved up to Ulladalen and after a few warm up runs ventured off into the trees - brilliant fun for all even if it was a bit heavy going for the buddies digging the Karts out of the deep snow!

By the time we made our way back to Ski School it was virtually dark and all were tired but very happy with the first days skiing. Heavy use was made of the jacuzzi that night and more than a few cold beers enjoyed as stories were swapped.

### Day Two - Tuesday

Packing the Karts into the Ski School trailer the night before led to a quick getaway this morning as we headed for Tegefjäll. What a day lay in store for us! The sun shone and the snow was fantastic - champagne skiing!!! There are plenty of varied blue runs to play on in Tegefjäll and we certainly filled our boots. After lunch we crossed over to Duved and were not disappointed - blues and reds galore and again that ever present superb snow. As was said many times throughout the week - 'it does not get any better than this'.

In the evening Bobbo came to join us in the bar and presented all Kart skiers with updated licences af-

ter their endeavours on Monday morning. Richard, John and Jon had Blues renewed (although Richard is very close to a Red!) Stuart and Mike had their Reds renewed and Sue had her Blue upgraded to a Red after her overall improvement. You have not seen a smile so wide in all your life - congratulations Sue - well deserved!!!

### Day Three - Wednesday

Today we attempted a 'first' for both Week 13 and Ski Karts in general. To travel to another ski resort, Bydalen, to show the locals how Ski Karts should be skied!! Unfortunately the cold weather had other ideas when the new minibus presented us with a flat battery and a one hour delay while it was charged up. The break gave us a chance to eat the packed lunch breakfast the hotel had prepared for us and we were away by 8.45am. The one and a half hour journey was fascinating, travelling through areas of Sweden that none of us had seen before. On arrival we set about unpacking the Karts and within 30 minutes were ready to ski Bydalen. One thing we had not bargained for - we gathered quite a crowd of locals who had not seen Ski Karts before. Bobbo had checked out the slopes 2 weeks earlier and this proved invaluable as we were able to maximise our skiing time and keep in the sun as much as possible. A great days skiing was enjoyed by all and a return trip was promised in future years.



In view of the length of the journey back to Åre we had pre-booked a meal in the small restaurant owned and run by Bobbo's girlfriend Emma's mum. We dined on moose steak and cold beer - fantastic.

As promised a mention for this years buddie team. As the week progressed the team grew into what can only be described as a well oiled machine - never did anyone have to be asked to help - everyone just did what was needed. In the end we were getting six Kart skiers out of their Karts and into wheelchairs, the bus loaded, and the Karts broken down and loaded in the trailer in 15 minutes flat!!!!

### Day Four - Thursday

Another day and another first! Having skied in Bjornen in brilliant sunshine in the morning (and heavy snow in the afternoon) we ate in a small restaurant on the slopes to save time for the evening to follow. Now, full of the largest pizzas you have ever seen, we set off to enjoy 'night skiing', the first time Ski Karts had ever done this. On the 2007 Week 13 trip the buddies went night skiing in Duved and enjoyed it so much that they asked Bobbo if it was possible to take the karts. In Bobbo's usual way the answer was 'of course - why not'. We were joined by what seemed like half of Åre (it was very busy) and it was snowing very hard all night, but it was a brilliant evening and there is some good video to post on the Week 13 website soon.

### Day Five - Friday

And there we go again another first! Today we travelled the short distance (20 minutes in the minibus) to Trillevalen. This is a small resort close to Åre that can only be described as a forgotten jewel. When we arrived at 9.00am we were the first vehicles in the car park!!! - and virtually no others joined us all day. Although the resort was open it only appears to be busy during the high season which didn't start until the following day. We were virtually the only people skiing at all. We quickly re-named it the Week 13 Ski Resort and planted our flag. After lunch (yes we were the only people in the restaurant) we ventured higher and took on wide empty red runs (and a black!!!)



In the evening we took what has now become our traditional trip to the Karolinen Restaurant and the quality of food and hospitality did not let us down.

### Day Six - Saturday

Despite being his day off, Bobbo insisted on skiing with us as we returned to Rodkullen and Ski School. The weather was not brilliant, but nevertheless we set off to attempt to get to the top of the mountain. We succeeded, but the weather got worse and we could not see a hand in front of our face at the top. We therefore set off very gingerly under Bobbo's expert guidance, to make our way back to Ski School, a journey that took approx. 90 minutes

and should have taken 20! By now the time was 1.30pm and with the weather closing in even further all agreed that we did not want to spoil a fantastic weeks skiing by going back out in the dangerous conditions that we now faced. We therefore adjourned to the restaurant at the bottom of the Ulladalen slopes for a lovely, long, late lunch and a return to the hotel in time for the inevitable packing session and a fine 3 course dinner.

The journey home was thankfully uneventful (albeit very early in the morning) and after saying our goodbyes at Stansted we all went our separate ways.

What a week!!! A big thank you to all who took part.

### So what happens now.....



Well the first thing is that Stephen has been working with both the hotel and Ski School to finalise the invoices. You will recall that we cancelled a number of evening meals in the

hotel and ate out and also skied away from Åre for two days. We therefore have to make some adjustments for meals eaten out and the small amounts we had to pay for the extra lift passes, we will get final invoices out to you by the end of March, don't worry it won't break the bank but as you know Week 13 is run on a 'breakeven' basis and we have to clear all the bills at the end of the season.

We are delighted to advise that the Beginners Week that we ran this year was a success and we have been asked to repeat the exercise next year. We will have 10 skiing places available for disabilities of all types, but must restrict the number of wheelchair users to 6 to meet the requirements of the airline. We will need as many buddies as we can manage so if you are interested give us a call - check the website for more details - Ski School has been booked but we have not firmed up dates yet.

By popular demand the main Week 13 Ski Trip will take place again next year on Week 6 (Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> Feb to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2009). Ski School has been booked and we already know that our ski guide will be both Bobbo.

### And Finally - A date for the diary

Many of you will know that Sue Carleton spends a lot of time working with and raising money for the Spinal Unit at her local hospital in Cardiff - Rookwood. They are holding a Ball on 6<sup>th</sup> June to raise funds and Sue has invited us all to meet up for that weekend in Cardiff and support her. There is plenty of sensibly priced accommodation in Cardiff so it would not cost the earth. More details to follow soon.

If you cannot make that weekend then it would be really nice if we could get together for a long weekend over the summer this year. I think we have done the boating trip to the Norfolk Broads to death now (fun though) and so we are open to suggestions. How about a weekend on the coast in caravans? (large 8 berths converted for wheelchairs)



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

*Neil and Stephen*

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