

Another year has been and gone – Fiona Young - CEO

Once again the year has flown by and we have seen many changes. Dom Jonas, our instructor based at Chillfactore, James Cufflin, Development officer for the Central Belt and Kirsty Crompton the Events co-ordinator left us to pursue other ventures. We were also very sorry to see our administrator Wendy Dell left us to move closer to her new fiancé who lives in Wendy's home town of Arbroath. We wish them all well.

We welcomed Rachel Easton into Chillfactor taking over Dom's responsibilities. Rachel is a highly experienced adaptive instructor. She was based in Andorra and was introduced to DSUK by working on our activity weeks in Soldeu. Rachel is also a BASI adaptive trainer and race coach. We are using her race coach skills to oversee the coaching program with the Development Squad of BDST.

We welcomed Ed Brown into the position of Development officer for the Central Belt that James held previously. Ed had been involved with Disability Snowsport Scotland for many years.

My team of dedicated staff have all pulled together in an increasingly difficult climate. Sophie Wood, our local group's co-ordinator, has increased her hours to assist Amy King, our fundraising officer, to organise events. This is something we have to concentrate on for the future as our income from Trusts and Foundations are becoming increasingly more difficult to secure due to the low base rate. (Foundations and Trusts give away their interest not their capital)

We had a very successful Santa Run for the third year running. The participant numbers are increasing each year, however the fundraising element of this event hasn't increased. This seems to be the trend with fundraising and shows that we have to put as much effort as possible into the fundraising side of any event we run. Sophie's support has proved vital for Amy and fundraising. The team are working on plans for some exciting events to be held in the coming year and your support will be vital to the success of each and every one of these events.

Sophie has also aided a very positive forward step for the local groups by implementing a Focus Group. Within this group there are representatives from a large proportion of the local groups with the remit to direct the thoughts and wishes of the local groups throughout the UK. This is an extremely important tool for the management of DSUK to gain insight to the requirements of the members situated throughout the country. Sophie has worked tirelessly and has over the past year, visited all the local groups and has gained an immense amount of knowledge and understanding.

The activity weeks were, once again, booked quickly and enjoyed by staff, volunteers, families and members. We were extremely lucky this year as the snow conditions throughout Europe were spectacular, possibly the best conditions we have seen for many years. We took 66 skiers away this year which included 10 new skiers. We were assisted by 47 volunteer helpers of which 8 were new to DSUK. We organised 2 all inclusive activity weeks for special needs schools and assisted 2 independent trips by sending one of our instructors and equipment out with them.

I am very pleased to report that the European snow conditions were not confined to Continental Europe but crossed the channel to give Scotland the best snow for 20years. Our instructional staff, many of you would have met throughout the season, albeit in Scotland or in Europe, did a great job. It proved to be a difficult season due to the fact that Cath Sibbald, our Chief Instructor, injured herself early on in the season leaving the existing team to pick up the reigns. Hammy, Elena, James and Sean did a sterling job delivering a very professional programme. One of our previous instructors, Ross Dunn, was able to step in at short notice which the team were all very grateful for. We managed to deliver 90 lessons over a period of 8weeks with a further 44 cancelled due to the adverse weather conditions.

Being the penultimate season before the Paralympics in Vancouver March 2010, the British Disabled Ski Team had an extremely busy schedule. To qualify for the Paralympics each athlete has to acquire a certain amount of qualifying race points, so this past season has seen them travel the world attending World and Europa cup races. The major event for the A squad was the World Cup Championships held in Korea. This was followed by a World Cup race in Whistler. As you can imagine, not only do they have to worry about their fitness they also have to deal with jet lag. Several of the squad achieved podium positions throughout the season. Sean Rose was rarely out of the Top 10. We look forward to the exciting year ahead.

A very BIG THANK YOU from me to every skier, buddy, instructor, staff member, trustee and anyone else involved. Here's to another exciting and challenging year.