

Grimentz – Eagles Ski Club – 5th – 12th March 2016-05-25

This was my first trip with the Eagles and my first time ski-touring. My brother had recommended this course to me, having done it himself the previous year. I was nervous but very excited leading up to it, especially with the weather reports suggesting a period of snowfall followed by settled conditions. The transfer bus wound it's way up steep-sided valleys that seemed particularly pretty even by usual alpine standards. The village of Grimentz itself and the Hôtel de Moiry didn't disappoint either – very charming and traditional.

On the first day we were split into groups according to experience/skill level. Our group lead by Tom Saxlund immediately discovered some fun fresh powder in between and off to the side of the pisted runs.



Dominic making some fresh powder turns

I found my rusty ski technique held up ok but I got by more through strength and my snowboarders' lack of fear of falling over rather than any great skill. All great fun though (perhaps excepting some of the heavy concrete-like snow we found lower down).



Tom Saxlund about to drop in to some 'challenging' snow

Our group headed over to Zinal for the second day, focussing on technique and carrying out a number of drills. I had my ski technique broken down and built back up again – it was quite an intense day with a lot to remember but I think it started to sink in properly over the next few days. The highlight of the day was a powder descent down to and across the Moiry dam.



The 'A' team checking out a line right next to the Moiry Dam

The next day was the group's first bit of 'proper' ski touring of the week, and my first ever. We went out with Graham Frost to the top T-bar then attached skins for a short climb up to teh Col de Louche. The descent down the other side was superb with pitches of wide open totally untracked powder. The rest of the day continued in a similar vein finishing with a nice cold beer in St Jean – my best day on skis so far!



Powder heaven just over the other side from the main ski area

I was transferred over to the 'A' team for the following day with Tom. This was a baptism of fire for me as this group were quite a bit quicker than I was used to. On the first descent I really struggled and fell several times - I considered demoting myself, but decided to persevere and by the end of the day it all clicked again during a glorious descent down into Marenda



Our last day was with Graham again and was a superb way to finish the week, this time heading up to the Becs de Bosson hut then heading over towards the Moiry dam from the other side. There was a long climb involved but the payoff was more perfect powder with spectacular views of the Moiry glacier behind.



Nearing the top of a long climb



Descent from the Col de Bosson with awesome views to the Moiry glacier



More fresh tracks

All in all it was a fantastic week with sublime conditions, and as a first-time member I was made to feel very welcome and supported.