Eagles Ski Club: Skiing & Navigation Skills Course, 28 & 31 Jan 2023
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Five Eagles took part in 2 days of Skiing & Navigation Skills Training as part of 3 x 2 days training courses taught by Andy Perkins IFMGA, based at Argentiere, and run in parallel with the Eagles Ski Club Argentiere Meet.

Starting from La Tour, both days involved a mix of navigation skills theory – usually over a coffee in a local café - and practical application of the skills on the mountain, together with some additional – and very high quality – off-piste ski technique development.

This was the first time that Andy had run the course for ESC since Covid, and his approach marked a significant departure from previous courses, as he now believes that 'phone navigation' has come of age and should form a major part of the syllabus.

Skills taught included:
- using a paper map for basic route planning, and for interpreting the topography to determine position
- Using 'Fatmap' & 'Outdoor Active' in combination to provide an integrated approach to route planning
- Using gradient overlays in 'Outdoor Active' to assist in route planning for ski touring
- Using a mobile phone with 'Outdoor Active' to check position whilst on the hill and to compare with the planned route
- Using a compass and back-bearings to ensure a zig-zag route up a mountain side remains true to the planned route
- Using prominent features as 'handrails' to assist tactical navigation
- Using a light line attached to the end of a ski pole to use as a 'whip', in order to determine the nature of the ground immediately in front during poor visibility conditions

Weather conditions throughout the course were fine, enabling good cross referencing between 'what the map says' and what it looks like on the ground.

Overall, an excellent couple of days. Great fun, great value, and much learnt to put into practice on future Eagles tours.

Participants
Andy Perkins IFMGA – Guide and leader

Tom Davis-Merry
John Hayward
Lindsay Palmer
Richard Bissell
Richard Stokes