

# IN THE WORLD OF SNOW

These are the Britons you need to know!

From playful Victorians and glamorous Royals to Eddie "the Eagle" Edwards and Olympic medallist Jenny Jones, Britons have loved sliding on snow for over 150 years. This winter, continue our long-running passion for skiing and head out to the Alps, assisted by the crème de la crème of British ski travel experts

Words | GABRIELLA LE BRETON



Great Britain has enjoyed a love affair with skiing since the sport's very beginning. In fact, we're largely to thank for skiing having blossomed into the global sport it is today. Back in 1864, an enterprising Swiss hotelier, Johannes Badrutt, wagered his British summer guests they'd enjoy a winter visit to his town of St Moritz equally; if not, he'd cover the cost of their holiday. He won the bet: within two years St Moritz was packed with British winter guests, who developed skiing, bob sledding and curling for their snowy entertainment.

Fast forward a few decades to 1922 and Sir Arnold Lunn organised the world's first ski slalom competition in Mürren, Austria (his father, Henry, is largely attributed with the construction of the resort's first ski railway). Lunn went on to found the legendary Kandahar Ski Club two years later and organised countless ski races across the world, playing a pivotal role in introducing skiing to the Olympic Games Alpine. The discipline debuted at the 1936 Winter Olympics in Garmish-Partenkirchen, Germany, where his son, Peter, captained the British ski team.

Numerous contemporary British skiers, mountaineers and adventurers have followed in the enterprising ski tracks laid by our forebears. Like those playful Victorians in St Moritz and the pioneering Lunn, these quintessentially British spirits are drawn to the Alps, thriving on the fun, thrills and beauty they exude. And, happily for us, some of them also significantly improve our ski holidays. So, here's our Little Black Book of Britons to know in the ski world.



**BELLA SEEL**  
❖ ALS PRIVATE SKI

British freerider Bella Seel is one of the world's youngest female ski instructors to have achieved full certification in the French, Swiss and British instructor systems.

After a decade working in the Alps as a sought-after off-piste ski instructor, Seel launched the UK-based bespoke concierge and ski company, ALS Private Ski, in 2013 and tailors extraordinary ski trips for discerning travellers.

Fancy jetting from London to Switzerland for a day's heliskiing with British ski champion Chemmy Alcott, complete with lunch on a glacier cooked by a Michelin-starred chef? Just ask Bella.

❖ [alsprivate.com](http://alsprivate.com)



**JAMES PALMER-TOMKINSON**  
❖ PT SKI

It's hard to beat James Palmer-Tomkinson's ski heritage: his grandfather, father and uncles claim a whopping four British Ski Champion titles between them and competed in four different Winter Olympics. Rather than follow in those footsteps and dedicate himself to competitive skiing, James PT has nurtured his love for Klosters, where he's skied since the age of four. PT Ski is dedicated to creating winter holidays to the charming Swiss resort, guaranteeing seamless organisation, excellent ski hosting and popular children's ski courses for kids aged four up to teenagers.

❖ [ptski.com](http://ptski.com)



**HOLLY FISHER & PHILIPPA HARTLEY**  
❖ FISH & PIPS

Holly Fisher and Philippa Hartley grew up enjoying family ski holidays together. Still in their twenties, both with Cordon Bleu cooking diplomas and impressive catering pedigree under their belts, the enterprising pair struck upon the idea of launching a 'gastro' chalet company. The name of their venture, Fish & Pips, not only reflects their names and unbridled passion for food but also their fun-loving approach. And, nine winters later, it's come to represent exceptional food, fabulous service, plush yet unpretentious chalets in Méribel and Val d'Isère, and refreshingly affordable prices.

❖ [fishandpips.co.uk](http://fishandpips.co.uk)



## TEN BEST BIGGER BRITISH SKI PLAYERS

### POWDER BYRNE

Powder Byrne started life in 1985, when founder Rory Byrne began tailoring winter holidays to match the specific needs of passionate skiers. Subsequently embracing fatherhood, Byrne spotted a niche for an upmarket ski company that catered equally well for parents and children. Thus Powder Byrne evolved into a luxury holiday operator that cares for every member of the family, with guided skiing and tuition for adults and ten different age-appropriate options for ski childcare. ❖ [powderbyrne.com](http://powderbyrne.com)

### ELEGANT RESORTS

Since launching in 1988, Elegant Resorts has focussed on luxury travel, from First Class flights to five-star hotels. A crack squad of eight luxury ski



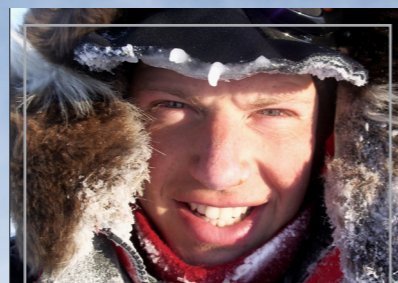
**ANDY BUTTERWORTH**  
❖ KALUMA SKI

Andy Butterworth started his career in the snow aged just 21, working in the Alps as a ski guide and rep. Seven years later, he made the Austrian town of St Anton his home and, together with fellow ski specialist Richard Lumb (based in Courchevel) and investors, launched Kaluma Travel in 2004. Ever since, Butterworth and Lumb have stayed true to their original aim: to stand out from the competition by focussing on their specific areas of expertise, thereby delivering hard-to-beat insider knowledge and truly personal, 24-hour concierge service.  
❖ [kalumatravel.co.uk](http://kalumatravel.co.uk)



**RUPERT LONGSDON**  
❖ OXFORD SKI

Back in 1998, one of Rupert Longsdon's pals asked him to recommend a five-star chalet with an excellent chef. The enterprising, ski-mad Longsdon spotted a niche, found himself a chalet - Domaine de la Baronne in Crans-Montana - and ran it that winter. That first foray into chalet management proved to be the launch pad for Oxford Ski, a ski operator that now works with over 500 chalets and hotels spanning 28 European and North American resorts. And yes, that does still include Longdon's favourite, Domaine de la Baronne.  
❖ [oxfordski.com](http://oxfordski.com)



**TOM AVERY**  
❖ SKI VERBIER EXCLUSIVE

In what spare moments he finds in between exploring, mountaineering, penning books and making motivational speeches, Tom Avery runs Ski Verbier Exclusive together with David Pearson. The dynamic duo operate 17 chalets in the popular Swiss resort, including the swanky No.14 and Chalet Chouqui, which come complete with swimming pools, spas, home cinemas and chauffeurs. Best of all, guests can invite Avery to host them during their stay, guiding them around Verbier's slopes and sharing some of his inspirational travel tales with them.  
❖ [skiverbierexclusive.com](http://skiverbierexclusive.com)



**JULIA SUMMERS**  
❖ SUMMERS & WINTERS

With over 13 years' experience working with the owners of the world's most luxurious chalets, Julia Summers knows winters inside out. With one of the industry's most enviable speed-dial lists, she knows precisely who to call to find your dream chalet, be it to rent for a week or a winter, or even to buy. As a mother of two, Summers also knows the highs & lows of travelling and skiing en famille, and tailors every element of your holiday, from airport transfers to favourite dinners, with the tiniest guests in mind.  
❖ [summersandwinters.co.uk](http://summersandwinters.co.uk)



**TIM & LISA DAVIS**  
❖ AMAZON CREEK

Growing up a water and ski baby, Tim Davis abandoned a "sensible" career in finance to focus on his outdoorsy passions. Together with his wife, Lisa, he established Amazon Creek in 2007, which now oversees a trio of chalets in Chamonix, three villas in France and Corsica, and two yachts in the Med. The couple's unbridled passion for travel, together with Lisa's expertise as a trained yoga and fitness instructor, make Amazon Creek the go-to company for tailor-made active holidays with a healthy dollop of luxury.  
❖ [amazoncreek.co.uk](http://amazoncreek.co.uk)



**WILL HERRINGTON**  
❖ FROZEN ACTION

A former bigwig at luxury ski specialist Powder Byrne, Will Herrington first visited the sleepy Swiss village of Grimentz ten years ago. It took just one more visit, the following year, to persuade him to return for good with his family. He now heads up Frozen Action, managing a handful of chalets in the picture-perfect old village and assisting with local property purchases. Thanks to his boundless enthusiasm and intimate local knowledge of the valley, Herrington makes an exemplary holiday organiser, host, guide and concierge.  
❖ [frozenaction.ch](http://frozenaction.ch)

consultants cherry pick the world's finest resorts, hotels and winter sports experiences, such as heliskiing in Canada or spa & ski breaks in France. With your dedicated travel consultant arranging everything from private transfers to pre-booking lift passes, all you have to do is ski. ❖ [elegantresorts.co.uk](http://elegantresorts.co.uk)

#### MOMENTUM SKI

Founded in 1996 by Loredana Barindelli and Amin Momen, Momentum Ski is a small yet mighty ski operator. While both Barindelli and Momen confess to having a soft spot for Italy, they know Europe's finest resorts intimately, and have carved a niche for themselves organising ski weekends and short breaks and corporate ski trips.

They also host the annual Mountain Gourmet Ski Experience (Courmayeur), which combines skiing with cuisine by Heston Blumenthal, Marcus Wareing, Sat Bains and Clare Smyth. ❖ [momentumski.com](http://momentumski.com)



#### SCOTT DUNN

Little did Andrew Dunn know, back in the winter of 1986 as he gathered together some friends to run two chalets in Switzerland, that he was starting one of the UK's most successful travel companies. Now incorporating 27 luxury catered ski chalets and a portfolio of handpicked hotels across the globe, Scott Dunn retains its expertise in tailoring ski holidays while also offering everything from African safaris to Mediterranean villa holidays. ❖ [scottdunn.com](http://scottdunn.com)

#### JC JOURNEYS

First launched in 2001 to provide escorted trips covering historical excursions, battlefield tours, art trips and nature walks, JC Journeys has slowly but surely expanded to incorporate ski holidays as well. Working with over 50 chalets and ski hotels across Europe, you can count on the JC team to match you with your dream winter property. ❖ [jcjourneys.com](http://jcjourneys.com)

**ABERCROMBIE AND KENT**

Abercrombie and Kent boasts over 50 years' experience in organising adventures, dating back to 1962 when its founder, Geoffrey Kent, drove into the Kenyan bush equipped with a fridge and silver ice bucket. Today, over 2,500 A&K staff work across 26 countries to offer guests a flawless and thoroughly indulgent holiday experience, be it on safari in Africa or on a carefully tailored ski trip in the Alps. ❖ [abercrombiekent.co.uk](http://abercrombiekent.co.uk)

**OLIVER'S TRAVELS**

Founded in 2003 by friends Oliver and Ravi after a memorable stay in a French chateau, Oliver's Travels represents the duo's desire to help travellers replicate the joy of discovering the perfect holiday. The outfit works with unique, off-the-beaten-track yet refreshingly affordable properties across the globe and, thanks to "Oliver's Extras", you can add treats like an in-resort chauffeur service or chef if you wish. ❖ [oliverstravels.com](http://oliverstravels.com)

**INGHAMS**

Now a household name, Inghams was founded in 1934 by the intrepid traveller and skier Walter Ingham, who advertised in national newspapers for people to join him skiing for Christmas: a 14-day 'Private Party to Ski the Tyrol' for 12 guineas. Travel, prices and methods have changed in the intervening 81 years (Inghams was the first British ski operator to take bookings online in 1999) but Inghams still takes Britain skiing to chalets and hotels across the world. Together with its sister companies, Esprit Ski and Ski Total, Inghams offers unparalleled choice and value for money. ❖ [ingham.co.uk](http://ingham.co.uk)



**OLLIE & EMMA LAMBOURNE**  
❖ **MOUNTAIN MAVERICKS**

Just one hour from Geneva, the family-friendly resort of Morzine offers direct access to the Portes du Soleil ski area; 650km of pistes straddling France and Switzerland. Having lived here for over ten years, Ollie and Emma SMITH know Morzine better than most and have built up a portfolio of six chalets and a hotel in the heart of town. With children of their own, the SMITHS recognise the importance of providing reliable childcare, kids' suppers, cots with bedding and even a baby hamper stuffed with nappies, wipes, creams and toys. ❖ [mountainmavericks.com](http://mountainmavericks.com)



**WILL GREENWOOD MBE**  
❖ **SUPERSKILLS**

Will is a former rugby union player and World Cup Winner. In 2010, while enjoying a family holiday at the Forte Village Resort in Sardinia, and taking some time out to coach some of the lucky children on holiday there, (together with Austin Healey), one of the dads, Ed Rusling, couldn't believe he was watching his sporting heroes teaching their skills to his son, and realised what a unique opportunity this was. A few beers and some paperwork later Super-Skills Experiences was born, offering luxury ski experiences in Sainte Foy, with one of the best ski coaches you could ever imagine, former international racer, Konrad Bartelski. ❖ [superskillsexperiences.co.uk](http://superskillsexperiences.co.uk)

**SKI IN LUXURY**

With over a decade's experience in matching even the most demanding of guests with the perfect chalet, Andy Castle knows his skiing and luxury travel. Castle's appropriately named company, Ski in Luxury, has blossomed over the past ten years, attracting loyal guests along the way, expanding to include a luxury villa arm and a dedicated Ultimate Luxury Chalets website. The latter features Castle's 100 top ski chalets, updated each season to reflect the speed with which ever more luxurious chalets are launched. ❖ [skiinluxury.com](http://skiinluxury.com)

**CRYSTAL SKI**

Encompassing over 130 resorts in 14 countries within its portfolio, from Austria and Japan to Italy and Lapland, Crystal Ski offers something for even the pickiest traveller. With nearly 30 years' experience, Crystal Ski is the UK's biggest ski operator. ❖ [crystalski.co.uk](http://crystalski.co.uk)