

Alumnus Ian Murray's sporting memories

Exeter alum Ian Murray recalls his sporting life spent growing up between the mountains of Switzerland and playing fields of England and his sporting years at Exeter between 1968 and 1972.

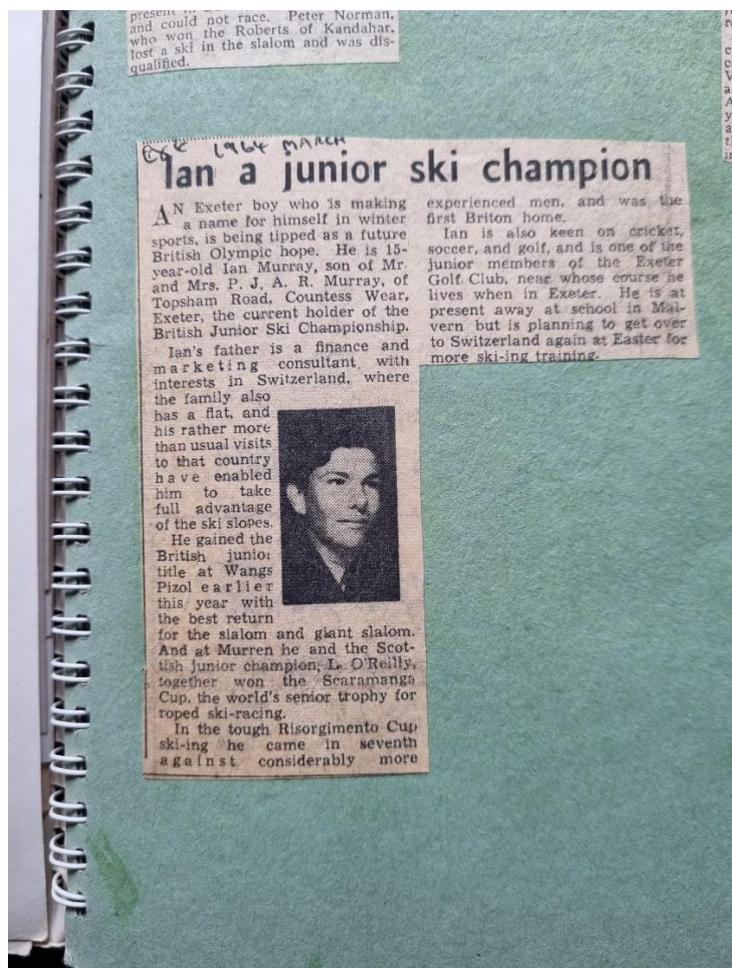
"I was born in Zürich in 1949 where my parents lived and worked and we had a flat in an Austrian ski resort, St. Anton, where I started skiing at the age of three. As with all sports, the younger the better!

I was sent with my sister to the local school, up to the age of eight, when I was shipped off to prep school in the UK!

This was a mega shock to the system, as I spoke very rudimentary English but I was soon integrated in the sporting life with cricket and soccer and was happy as could be!

Obviously skiing did not feature highly in my school life, at that point, although I skied during Christmas and Easter hols with my old school mates, a couple of whom went on to win Olympic medals!

At age 13 I was sent off to Mürren in Switzerland for Ski Race training with Kandahar Ski Club, founded by Sir Arnold Lunn, one of the top breeding grounds for up and coming British Ski Racers. I became British Junior (under 18) Ski Champion at 15.



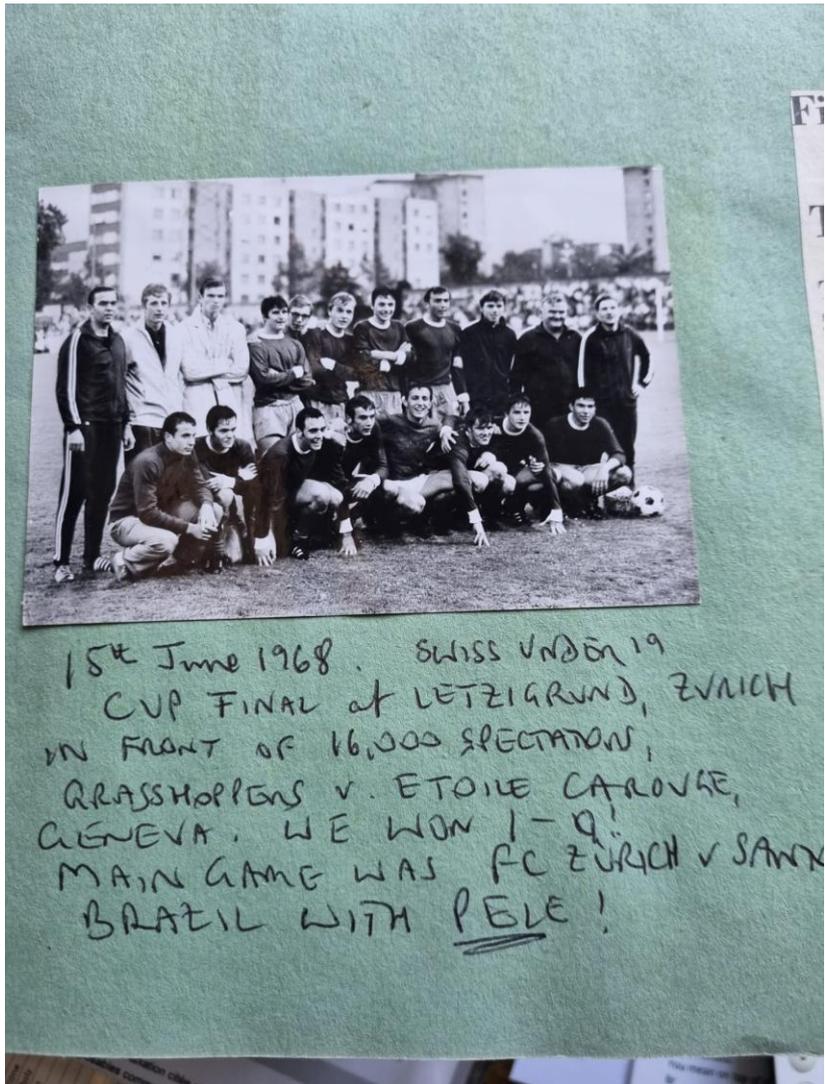
I was in the British National Ski Training squad from 1966 to 1968 and was shortlisted for the Olympics in Grenoble in 1968, where Jean Claude Killy won 3 gold medals!!



However I was not ready for selection and was sent off to do some Europa Cup (FIS B) races throughout Europe in the winter of 1968, usually starting at the back of the field, inevitably with deep ruts! !

My results were pretty mediocre and my father told me to forget ski racing and made sure that I took up my unconditional place at Exeter Uni, with no further discussions about ski racing!

In the interim I headed back to Zürich for a few months , had a job as a Baggage handler at Zürich airport, to earn some money and got selected by Grasshopper F.C. of Zürich to play in their Under 18 team, with whom I played in the Swiss Juniors Final in the main Zürich Stadium, in front of 16,000 spectators! (photo 3) An unbelievable experience!



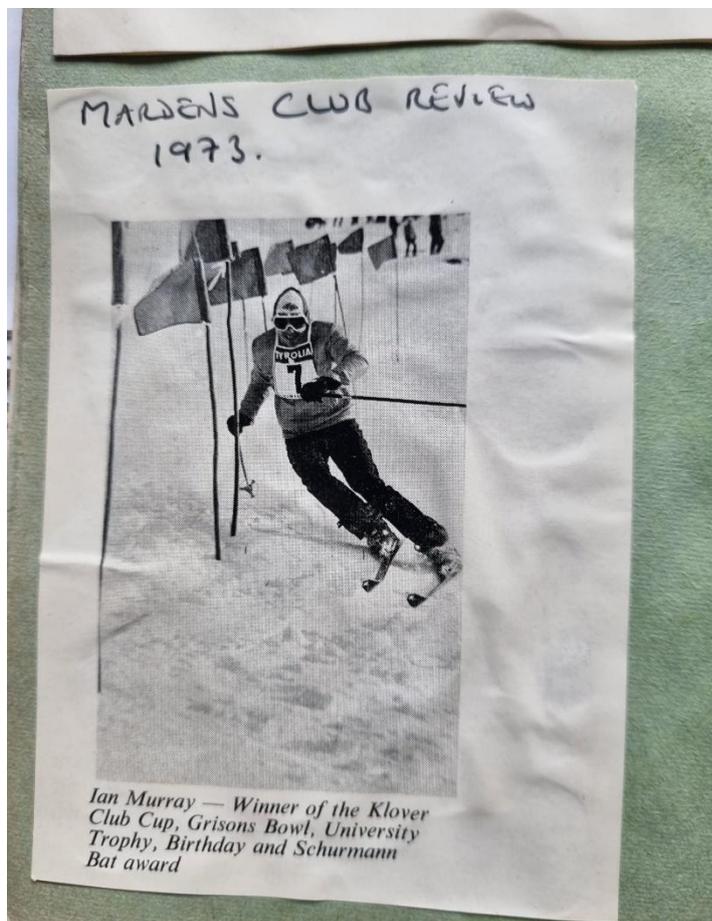
The truth is that we were the opening game before the main spectacle, which was between FC Zürich, Swiss Champions and FC Santos with the great Pele, who was at his peak and still playing for Brazil !



We won our game 1-0 and did a lap of honour. What a thrill and probably my footballing career highlight!

Then on to Exeter Uni early October 1968 where I played Football and cricket for the Uni 1st teams and also for Devon in the Minor Counties in 70 and 71. I topped the batting averages in 1970. Golf has also played a large part in my life, reaching handicap 6 at my best and I have very happy memories of a hole in one, apparently the only one in 18 years at Dawlish Warren GC in the Match between the students and Alumni in 2012.

In 1969 I got the call up from the British Universities Ski Club to race in St.Moritz for the Anglo-Swiss cup, which is the oldest team ski race in the world, (since 1924 and founded by Sir Arnold Lunn, the founder of the modern day slalom!!). against the best Uni skiers in Switzerland. In fact I was the first non Oxbridge skier to be selected and came first of the Brits!



The following year, I was elected Captain of the team and competed 10 times, still a record!

Thereafter I was Secretary, trainer and manager for a further 15 years!

In 1970 I was elected Captain of the British Team for the World Student Winter Games (UNIVERSIADE) in Finland and again two years later in Lake Placid.

Results were not spectacular but we did not have the best training possibilities with snow!

In fact I trained down the hills of Ide on my grass skis and was interviewed by Ross Salmon of Spotlight South West who was very impressed as I whistled past! I received £50!



Otherwise just running and weight lifting but as we discovered soon enough, the East Coast ski pistes tend to be sheet ice and require strong thighs!

But nevertheless a wonderful experience and I have great memories of the Opening Ceremony and carrying the British flag



In 1971 I captained Exeter at the British Universities ski championships in the Cairngorms – the first time the University had sent a representative team.

I continued ski racing after leaving Exeter and my best result was in 1973 when I came 2nd in the Giant Slalom in the British ski championships in Davos.

My last race was two years ago in the over 70's category in the Amateur International Club Championships for the Kandahar Club, where my racing career began! I have a worn out knee from skiing and football, so am taking it pretty easy from now on!"