

Spring 2007 News | [www.icicleUK.com](http://www.icicleUK.com) | 0845 058 98 78 | [climb@icicleUK.com](mailto:climb@icicleUK.com) | Page 1 of 4

Welcome to the Spring 2007 newsletter! There is lots to inform you about, from the current conditions to the latest course availability. We also report on the trips to Iceland, as well as the ever favourite ascent of Mont Blanc.



**Spring 2007:** It is late May and yet there are still some people ski touring on the higher peaks, while in the Chamonix valley it is full on Summer conditions – that's Spring in the Alps for you! There was a great amount of snow at altitude in the later part of the Winter season, which bodes well for the classic ascents such as Aiguille du Tour, Mont Blanc & the Cosmiques

Arete. As you will see from the website latest availability pages pre-season bookings are strong, and many courses are already fully booked up. After some quite challenging conditions this winter season, it promises to be far better. All our Summer 2007 climbing and trekking course itineraries and pages have been revamped on the website, to make it easy to plan a trip.



**Mont Blanc 4810m:** If you have ever wanted to ascend the highest peak in the Alps, then you will appreciate our Mont Blanc focus website page. To find it just visit [www.icicleUK.com](http://www.icicleUK.com) and click on the 'Mont Blanc' option on the top frame in the middle of the screen. You will find lots of detail on the different classic routes, such as the huts, seasons, and climbing styles. This is essential reading for anyone booked on, or planning, an ascent.

**Flight Prices:** If you are at work just dreaming about your next expedition or course, then make your daydreams a reality before flight prices go up any more. If you are going to the Alps then easyJet tends to offer the best deal, but why not box clever and book your flights when it has a sale on! You can sign up to receive easyJet newsletters on their website. If you are planning to go on our expeditions, then book your flights well ahead for the best prices.



**Chamonix:** During the inter-season the town has been very quiet, with no major building works. None of our favourite haunts have changed hands, but the Elevation cafe is getting refitted and will be ready for the Summer.

## Latest News

We have just finished a refit of our Chamonix office, so all those of you visiting in during the Summer can now benefit from free WiFi internet access if you bring your laptop. This idea was provided in a course feedback form, and seemed useful for



all those who need to check e-mails or send photos whilst away. As well as this the floor is completely retiled, so it can cope with loads of dirty boots each day and wet kit dripping.

Our online booking is working exceptionally well with over 90% of people using it. This is a great way to speed up the process, and to make a minimal impact on the environment. We are moving to a paperless office, and this is a first step. We send e-confirmations for course bookings to further assist, unless anyone has asked for a paper copy to be printed and posted to them. Also the course itineraries have been put into PDF format so they can be saved and viewed electronically.



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**Conditions:** Amid the general doom and gloom about global warming there was some good news from a team of scientists about the ice and snow on Kilimanjaro. It now seems as if the icefields may remain for up to 50 years, which is a lot more than was previously expected. In the Alps the glaciers are receding further, though until the winter snows have melted, it will be hard to ascertain how last Summer and its heatwave impacted on them. As ever, snow climbs (apart from at very high altitudes) will be best attempted during the early summer.



**Kit Review:** Lowe Alpine have always excelled in designing great rucksacks, and their 40 litre Alpine Attack climbing sack is no exception. It has minimalist webbing and straps, yet there are twin ice axe loops & side compression / ski carrying straps. The bag is made out of tough fabrics, which make it a good choice for carrying heavy loads or on abrasive Alpine routes.

**Staffing:** There are a few changes on our team, with Jon and Raych returning to New Zealand after running one of the chalets this winter. On the guiding line up we look forward to Stuart (a Brit) joining us after his current attempt on Mount Everest, as well as two Canadian IFMGA guides; Eric and David. The Chamonix office and flats will be looked after by Dave and Rachel who are just sitting their final exams at university. Good luck to you all, and welcome to the icicle team.



**Tour du Mont Blanc:** If the thought of climbing up Mont Blanc leaves you feeling out of breath, what about trekking all the way around it on the world famous Tour du Mont Blanc? We run several of these treks during the summer, completing the circuit over six days. Each night you stay in mountain huts or hotels. Each day involves between five and seven hours trekking. You will be guided by a British International Mountain Leader, to assure you of the highest standards possible. During the week you will cover 160km and ascend over 9000m. For full details on this adventure, visit the trekking section of our website.

**Alpine Skills:** If you are looking for the key Alpine skills of glacier travel, crevasse rescue, and ropework, as well as to experience high altitude, then our Summer Alpine Intro 4000m 'Summits & Skills' course is the one for you. It culminates with an ascent of a 4000m such as Gran Paradiso. There're some spaces this Summer.



## Pic of the month

Each month we pick one of the photos entered into our annual photo prize draw and tell you about it.



The photo was taken on a Aconcagua expedition, on the trek into base camp at Plaza Argentina. It shows one of the many river crossings on the three day walk in. All of these rivers need to be crossed in the early morning when the meltwater is at its low point after a cold night.

## The Competition

We have three copies of an interactive CD Rom that lets you explore the Mont Blanc massif in 3D via a virtual flight. In order to win a copy, we invite you to send in a copy of your best course photos for possible use on the website or our brochure. You can send them on CD to our UK office, or by e-mail / Skype. The close date for entries is the end of July. The first three entries will win the CD's.



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**Acclimatisation weekends:** If you are tackling one of the high peaks in the Alps this Summer, then you need to really plan to maximise your acclimatisation, as all course itineraries are really flexible to take advantage of the best weather windows. We offer a two day guiding extension on the weekend before every course, where you ascend to a mountain hut to sleep at altitude, and the next day a peak around the 3000m mark to prepare you for your climbs the next week.



**Alpine Navigation Workshops:** A first visit to the Alps can be a bit of nightmare in terms of navigation due to the different maps / scales / symbols, whether you are trekking, climbing or skiing. We offer one and two day workshops to get you up and running, which are based in Chamonix. We supply maps, compasses, and GPS units for the duration of the training.

## Equipment 4 Sale

As we are sponsored by Grivel, we have a small range of their kit for sale in our Chamonix office.



On offer at the moment are Nepal SA ice axes at £50 including a leash, and Air Tech crampons at £75 a pair (fitted with anti-balling plates). Contact us for full details on this kit.



## Bank Hol Special

We are offering 25% OFF the prices for the Glacier Safety weekend over the August Bank Holiday. We list a sliding scale of prices depending on the group size, so the more of you that there are (up to a maximum of six), the less you pay per head. The weekend therefore costs from only £149 a person.

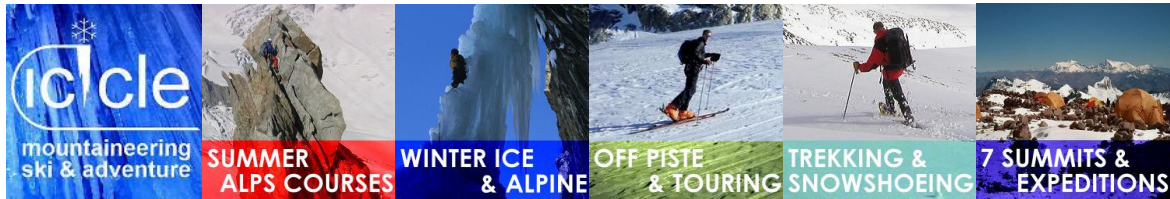
**Technical Ice & Classics course:** The photo above shows two Icicle clients on the Contamine Mazeaud route on the north face triangle of Mont Blanc du Tacul. This is one of the many route options on this course, which tackles some of the most famous classics in Chamonix. We adjust the course itinerary to cater for your preferences of route types each day. If you are really keen for snow or ice routes, then look for dates earlier in the Summer season, or consider one of the winter mountaineering or ice courses. The itinerary is on the website.

## Elbrus Expedition

**Boots Advice:** If you visit most kit shops you will find a quite bewildering range of boots for sale. For all Alpine climbing courses you will need one rated as B3, as this will accept all types of crampons. If you need any advice, look at the equipment section on the site and click on boots.



The UK Foreign Office is still advising against all travel to the Elbrus area. We aware that some less stringent operators have advertised that they are going this year, but they include the proviso is that there is no back up from the UK government, and your insurance is invalid.



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**The Eiger and Matterhorn:** These infamous Alpine giants are very popular course options this Summer, as the conditions are very good on both peaks. On the standard courses there are five days guiding as well as a half day of instruction. A acclimatisation weekend before would make them seven days guiding, which is ideal to maximise the summiting chances. On the Eiger we usually opt for the Mittleggi or the West flank, and on the Matterhorn most ascents are by the Hornli.

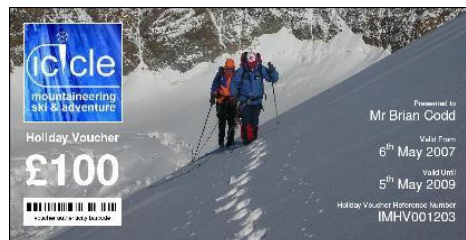


**BMC Associate Member:** Icicle is proud to announce that it is now an associate of the British Mountaineering Council. We made this step as there is so great a commonality of interests and standards, from supporting beginners, to ecological awareness and access issues. See our website for details of this link.



**Iceland 'Fire & Ice' Trek:** If you have never visited Iceland, prepare to be amazed. The interplay of volcanic and glacial activity has left a landscape that always astounds. Our 'Fire & Ice' trek is designed for adventurous trekkers, and an ascent of the volcano of Mount Hekla is a highlight, as well as the many waterfalls such as Gullfoss and the geysirs that spurt water high into the air. See our website for details.

**Holiday Vouchers:** If you are looking for a perfect gift for the climber or skier in your life, then please get in contact and we will issue a holiday voucher of any amount specified, though the standard amounts are £50, £100 and £250 pounds. We offer a choice of designs including mountaineering (shown), skiing and trekking. The vouchers are fully personalised, and are valid for two years from the date of their issue.



**Course Upgrades:** The courses and trips advertised on our website are designed and scheduled so that you can split the guiding costs with others, but we understand that you may want to personalise your holiday. We can provide anything from insurance (through our link to Snowcard on our website) to airport transfers (just e-mail us all the flight details). Now we offer accommodation extensions at either end of your course and the upgrade to full board on all our courses. When you book online, these upgrade options can easily be selected.

## Accommodation

We now offer two chalets and seven self catering flats for those looking for an accommodation only stay in Chamonix centre.



To view the chalets visit [www.chaleticicle.co.uk](http://www.chaleticicle.co.uk) or for the flats, just click on the 'Holiday' button on the side bar of the website. You can book online, to make it even easier to arrange your Alpine trip. The chalets are catered in Winter and self catering in Summer. The flats are all self catering year round.

## Late Availability

Summer availability on our courses is becoming quite limited now as most are reaching capacity. A list of some remaining spaces are listed below.

24-30 June '07 - 2 spaces  
Mont Blanc summit £1099

1-7 July '07 - 1 space  
Tech Ice & Classics £999

15-21 July '07 - 2 spaces  
Intro 4000m week £749

22-28 July '07 - 1 space  
Swiss 4000m peaks £1199

28 July - 4 Aug - 3 spaces  
Haute Route £699