

HUNTLY NORDIC SKI CLUB

www.nordicski.co.uk

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SUMMER ISSUE



Editorial

As a club we are quite good at getting youngsters involved in our local rollerski races but maybe not quite so good at getting adults to take part. Part of the problem is with our home races a lot of us are too busy organising to be able to take part. I can sort of understand why many of you are reluctant to race – not much fun being thrashed by 10-year olds & sprinting is maybe not the kind of event us older skiers enjoy. However the Clash & Cairngorm Hill Climbs are surely a worthy challenge for any older skier. So I would encourage all of you to seriously think about taking part, now is the time to start preparing for next year's race.

Congratulations are in order for Alex Standen who was appointed the new Pathway Coach for the British Junior Squad. His duties include guiding youth & junior skiers towards the World Junior Championships & their progression into the senior ranks. Alex has also recently passed his Level 3 Nordic Performance Coaching & this combined with his years of race experience at the highest levels, makes him a great choice for the job.

Before reports on the early season rollerski races we have an interesting piece from Jack Nicholls describing his experiences of racing in Norway towards the end of last season. It contains some good tips.

A JUNIOR SKIER'S FIRST OVERSEAS RACE by Jack Nicholls

I have been on 3 winter camps all together to Norway, but I had never done an international race before, but judging by training, I felt I was in good condition to race. The camp was to Bruksvallarna in Sweden, and there were four races to enter, I was involved in the 6km mass start skate race and the downhill race (on cross country skate skis). The camp was enjoyable and exciting to me (but I have to admit my nerves were getting on me the day of the races!) There was lots of snow as well!

The 6km mass start skate race began with a 30m double pole start, after the double pole start there were lots of hills to get up, so you wanted a good start to get to the front. The reason you wanted a good start were because it was hard to overtake people when only around two people could fit side by side on the track. I did not have the greatest of starts, but I was starting to gain on people on the uphills, which is a strong for me. I was strong on the uphills because wherever I train at home I will always run into an uphill. So I always try my best to use good, strong technique so I can be more efficient with my energy and have a lower heart rate.

By the first downhill I was ahead of all my teammates and the competitors started to spread out. I was on my own by around the 1 km mark and chasing a 2 people 35m ahead of me. I was catching them and by 3 km I had caught them. I was fairly tired but the 2 people I had caught were going at a good pace which I could keep with. We were chasing people in front of us that had dropped off from the lead pack. I felt the 2 people I was skiing alongside weren't going quick enough in order to have a good finishing position. I decided I had to go ahead faster so I took the 2 people on a bend followed by a steep uphill. I was in around 13th place by the 5km mark and I could see spectators and an uphill, so I went harder. I could see 3 people ahead evenly spread out from each other. I had caught one on a straight and was not that far behind the person in front of me.

500m from the finish there were lots of people in the crowd but I didn't notice them until after the race because I was so fixed on catching the person ahead of me. I was then in the stadium and there was one more steep uphill followed by a steep downhill I began to sprint up the hill. I had caught the person ahead of me and I was catching the person in front of that. I was in the last 150m I went for it and I was catching the person ahead, the crowd was incredible and loud. I had almost got him but he won it on the lunge and I fell straight to the ground after the line in the finishing pen because I was so out of breath and my muscles were so sore. I was pleased with my result in the 6km mass start skate race, I had come 11th in the end, with 6.9% behind the winners time, which if I was older and competing for a place in the European youth Olympics, I would have got in! My time was 14minutes and 49.5 seconds and I was 56.8 seconds behind the winner.



ROLLERSKI RACING

The British Rollerski Series began on the 11th May with the Hayes 15km FT. Gregor Young was Huntly's only representative coming a good second in a large field of 24 senior men. Racing then moved north for the Scottish race weekends at Huntly & Cairngorm. The Club hosted races 3 & 4 of the British Rollerski Series over the weekend 31st May/1st June.

Huntly Sprints, Sat 31st May

Numbers at the Huntly Sprints were boosted by a large contingent of Army Biathlon Development Squad skiers who were training at Kinloss over the summer. We especially welcome Amanda Richardson & Glennis Dore from London Hyde Park who were making their first journey north to rollerski enthusiastically entered into the spirit of the day & I think they enjoyed themselves – well they gave Sandy a box of chocolates as a thank you for her help over the weekend.

The time trial sprints were raced over the usual Flat 655m and 1135m Hill courses. The novices only do the Flat course and the fastest novice girl was Lily Sierakowski (U12) and fastest boy Liam Troup of Cairngorm Biathlon & Nordic Ski Club (U14). The fastest U8's were Elspeth Cruickshank and Rasmus Ipsen.



Start of the Novice Girls Final



Harry Nicholls just holds off a late challenge by Brodie Murray.

For the elite skiers their time from both time trials are added together. Fastest time of the day was set by Duncan Gibb (U18) who held off Gregor Young (senior) & in third place & first U16 was Brodie Murray. Gregor gave us an interesting display of Highland Dancing when he planted his pole between his skis at the start – he recovered quickly (this & all the action from the sprints can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLFvDt4598E&feature=youtu.be>). First U14 boy was Angus Duncan who beat several older & more experienced skiers. The ladies competition was won by Posy Musgrave who on the way set a new ladies Hill course record of 3:05. In second place was Lydia Hilson (Army) while Lynne Gray (U16) just pipped Huntly teammate Beth Maclean by one second. First U14 girl and 6th overall was Flossie Roberts.



Lynne Gray flies up the cut through



Angus Duncan attempts to squeeze past Brian Adams of Western Track

In the afternoon we moved to the knock-out stage of the competition where skiers were seeded into heats, semi-finals & finals in head-to-head races. After a long day of racing the elite finals were won by Posy Musgrave & Duncan Gibb. The Men's Plate competition won by Matt Chambers (Army). Both Lily Sierakowski & Liam Troup won their second trophies of the day in the novice finals.

Clashindarroch Hill Climb, British Rollerski Championships, Sun 1st June

A smaller field of skiers moved on the Sunday to Rhynie for the Clashindarroch Hill Climb. Callum Smith won the 8.05km Men's race but he probably had to work a bit harder than expected to hold off a strong challenge by Duncan Gibb in second place & first U18. Jack Nicholls had a fantastic race to be equal third overall and first U16. Brian Adams (Western Track, Glasgow) in 8th place was first vet home thereby winning the Bob Lacy Memorial Trophy. Posy Musgrave added to her trophy haul over the weekend by winning the ladies race was closely followed by Beth Maclean (1st U16). Fiona Crossly (CBNSC) won the ladies veteran category. The 4.85km U14 Hill Climb was won by brother and sister Felix & Flossie Roberts.

Cairngorm Race Weekend

Glenmore Time Trials, Sat 14th June: A new extension to the rollerski track at Glenmore enabled the race organisers to change the format of the races this year. The usual 10-lap 3.3km race was replaced by a 20-lap 8.5km race for adults with the U18's racing a shorter distance of 6.4km & the U14's 4.3km. The track extension eliminates the sneaky sharp bend by the CBNSC equipment hut but this is replaced by another sneaky bend that cause skiers on fast rockets all sorts of problems. The big advantage of the new track is you have more time to see & prepare for the bend which maybe is its disadvantage as skiers pushed themselves too fast into the bend. Anyway it was good fun watching some very good skiers overshooting onto the grass. In fact this gave me the opportunity, probably the only one I'll ever have, to pass former Olympian Mike Dixon. I stayed ahead of him for at least 3 seconds before he passed me again then regularly lapped me for rest of the race. Maybe I shouldn't have laughed at him when he overshot the bend.

Gregor Young kept his British Series title challenge on track with a second place in the senior men's race. Jack Nicholls won the U18 boys race but spare a thought for Fergus Newman who broke his boot in a crash but got racing again, & was even making up ground, before the boot caused further crashes – but he gamely finished. Lynne Gray won the U18 ladies race while Flossie Roberts completed a successful day winning the U14 girls race. Felix Roberts missed out by just one second to race winner Jake Bell (CBNSC) in a very competitive U14 boy's race. The day was rounded off with 1km sprints & next year CBNSC are thinking of holding 1km hill climbs from the lowest point on the Glenmore tracks to the highest – sounds interesting.



Beth Maclean negotiates the "tricky" bend with style



Flossie Roberts



Gregor Young modelling the Glenmore fake tan or the results of rollerskiing on a wet day.

Cairngorm Hill Climb, Sun 15th June: Once again Gregor Young had to settle for 2nd place behind Robert Sircus (CBNSC) in the men's climb. Jack Nicholls & Lynne Gray both continued their recent very good form winning their respective U18 climbs. Possibly surprise of the day was Andrew Dare's (age 8, CBNSC) win in the U14 boy's race – he was certainly flying when he went past me. However normal service was resumed with Flossie Roberts winning the girl's U14 climb. Highlight of the day for me was watching 7-year old Elspeth Cruickshank in her first away from Huntly race. As the course got steeper her form got better as she completed the novices girls climb. I draw a veil over my woeful performance at the weekend.



Elspeth Cruickshank followed by Felix Roberts on the Cairngorm Hill Climb

Overseas Racing News



Andrew Musgrave recently podiumed in a Norwegian rollerski race in the spiritual home of Nordic skiing, Telemark. The 25km classic race started off with a couple of cruising laps in the town following a control vehicle before the flag was dropped & the race started in earnest. They then followed an undulating course for the next 23km. Simen Østensen tried to go alone but Andrew along with & Sjur Røthe managed to hang on & the three skied as a group until the last uphill with 3km to go when Simen attempted to break away. Sjur was dropped & the race was decided by a sprint finish won by Simon from Andrew.

Both Andrew Musgrave & Andrew train full-time in Norway & now both a members of Norwegian Ski teams. AM continues to race with Team LeasePlan Go (www.teamleaseplango.no) while AY has just been invited to join Team Synnfjell (www.teamsynnfjell.no). Thank you to both Andrew's for a bit of info on their teams.

Muzzy: Team LeasePlan Go is owned by Thomas Alsgaard, one of Norway's most successful skiers of all time. He is also an athlete on the team, as well as the owner. The team is divided into 2 groups: the long distance team, who focus on the Swix Ski Classic races (Marcialonga, Vasaloppet etc.) and the all-round team (*to which Andrew belongs*) & focuses on Norwegian Cup, Scandinavian Cup and World Cup type racing. There are 6 guys on each of the teams. New into the all-round team this year is Lars Berger, the Biathlete, who is looking to do a bit of serious cross-country next season along with his biathlon.

Youngy: My team is Team Synnfjell. The coach is Frang Heggebø who came over and did the coaching course earlier in the year. The team has 9 athletes from different clubs and regions, most of the team live in Lillehammer and few live in Trondheim. Andrew Y is also a member of the Oslo-based Bækkelagets Sports Klubb.



Alex Standen with his mum Liz carrying the Queen's Commonwealth Baton in Huntly

The club has a another tenuous connection to the Commonwealth Games. We can sort of claim Chris Symonds, Ghanaian triathlete & cyclist as one of ours. Well he did do some on-snow training in the Clash a couple of seasons ago (see Newsletter 42).



New Members

Welcome to Ebony Martin & Tom McGowan who are both fast improving their rollerskiing at our Thursday Club Sessions.

Huntly Summer Events.

- Sat 6th Sept – Huntly Rollerski Championships FT
- Sun 7th Sept – Huntly 3-Lap Challenge & Team Sprints FT
- Sun 2nd Nov – Huntly Nordic & Outdoor Centre Open Day – a chance for us to promote Nordic skiing to the wider public.

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