

HUNTLY NORDIC SKI CLUB

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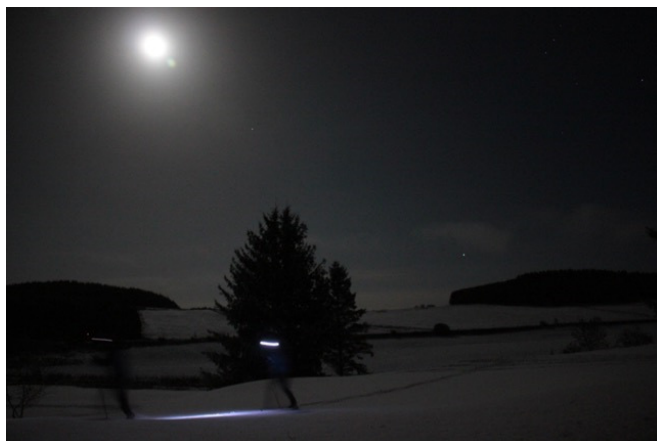
April 2017

END of SEASON ISSUE



Clash snow days 2016/17 = 19 (9 good, 10 marginal)

Welcome to the end of season newsletter, under new editorship, but Peter Thorn the previous editor has kindly supplied most of the articles and photos! A pretty dismal season locally, although I was lucky to enjoy both the Full Moon stomp and 2 very sociable skis through the Clash bumping into ski friends as well as getting very damp at the Clash Dash. I enjoyed skiing further afield in Beitostolen, Norway. Like Rod Campbell, we found an amazing network of groomed trails. There is a webpage that links you to live updates from the trails in most of Norway and you can see the pistie beasts moving along the trails https://skisporet.no/setView/63.8575883/12/5/norges_grunnkart. Being in Lahti to support the GB team at the World Championships was a special trip too, although I was home by the time of Andrew Musgrave's 4th in the 50K freestyle. However I wasn't the only club parent travelling afar to support their youngsters. Brodie Murray, Fergus and Oliver Newman and Jack Nicholls were cheered on loudly at the European Youth Olympics in Erzurum in Turkey. Other parents have been involved in supporting the younger club members who are part of the British Nordic Development Squad, cooking mountains of food or driving minibuses in snowy conditions. Yet again it has been a momentous season for our members who represent GB. The two Andrews and Callum Smith have reached the Olympic Qualification standards, (those who reach the standards are then eligible for selection in Jan 2018) and along the way they clocked up some impressive PBs, many firsts for GB. Similarly, those who went to the EYO also gained PBs and had some impressive performances en route to Turkey. *Eileen Cosgrove, Editor*



Full Moon Stomp 12th Jan 2017

Enough snow fell during the day to allow a dozen of us to have a wonderful Stomp around the golf course in Huntly. Clear, cold, plenty of snow & a great night for stargazing. This was one of the best skis of the season. It was the first good snow of the season but it wasn't to last & the snow was gone a few days later. One thing Scottish skiers learn – when you see snow just grab those skis. *Peter Thorn*

The Clash Season 2016/17 – Dismal.

As I write this report at the end of April, 2016/17 is going down as the worst snow season since I started keeping formal records in 2003/04 with only 19 skiing days (9 good, 10 marginal). 2013/14 had 23 days (7 good, 16 marginal) and 2006/07 had 27 days (21 good, 6 marginal) so you can take your pick which of those provided the worst skiing experience. A more positive record for the season is the three late season ski days 25-27th April, giving the latest “good” ski days ever. There was skiing on the 29th April 2016 but that was in marginal conditions. Will we ever ski in May?

A recent gathering of Scottish snow experts, guys like Cairngorm expert Adam Watson, concluded that this season saw the least snow since 1981. I came to Aberdeenshire about that time & my recollection was many of the 1980's winters were very snowy so hopefully things will get better.

It started well when the Forestry Commission got the trails into great shape after some significant tree felling work had left some of the roads in a pretty sorry state. The FC cut back a lot of overhanging branches and even thinned some trees at the top of Short Cut to allow more snow to get to ground. The new Wildcat trail offered a solution to the Leids Leap problems. All we needed was snow. The first skiable snow came on the 9th November but conditions weren't good enough for the Golden Boot until Jason & Clyde Williamson successfully completed a loop on Boxing Day on snow that just lasted a day. There were some good ski days and we were able to run the Clash Dash but both Ski O and Club Champs were cancelled. The day before the Clash Dash was fantastic, with sunshine and plenty of snow. On the Sunday the wet dreich weather nearly put paid to the Dash but a rapid change in plans allowed the event to go ahead on a couple of challenging courses. *Peter Thorn*

Wildcat.



A bit of background information won't go amiss here. When Orange erected the mobile mast in the early 2000's, it was supplied with a hydrogen fuel cell to provide power. This new technology, we were assured, would mean that Orange would only have to visit the mast at six monthly intervals and would never need to drive on snowy trails unless there was a real emergency. Unfortunately, the H-fuel cell never really worked and for

prolonged periods the mobile mast was not operational. In 2011 Orange started driving up to mast on a regular basis to service and refuel the now diesel generator every three weeks. And so the conflict started. The club on two or three occasions helped refuel the generator using jerry cans, our snowmobile & our labour. The contract engineer involved was great and went out of his way to avoid driving up to mast. When larger fuel tanks were installed and refuelling was unnecessary, he would walk up to mast to perform servicing. The mast passed from Orange to EE, who I believe are the current owners. They said the mast was now part of the emergency network and thus had to be 100% operational.

The Club Committee realised that we would have to come up with a solution ourselves and the Leids Leap by-pass project was born. We had just received £4,000 sponsorship from Vattenfall and it was agreed to put this towards constructing a by-pass trail that could be used should vehicles wreck the snow on Leids Leap. A route was prospected and agreed with the Forestry Commission who cleared trees along the route. In December 2016 work started on creating a 4m wide, 850m long level ski trail through the trees. Three days later it was finished. Colin Miller may have beaten Peter Thorn to claim both the first ascent and descent of it. The surface is currently mud but will quickly grass over. There is a challenging bend that should give entertainment to spectators – Colin carefully created a safe bailout for this bend but with practice most people will cope. We have called the trail Wildcat, just Wildcat, because an upper section was always known as Wildcat Alley, as a nod towards the Clash's wildcat population and the ferocious nature of the trail.

Thank you to the Forestry Commission for allowing the route and doing the early clearance work, Vattenfall for providing the funding (£2,856) and also Colin Miller who did most of the tidying of the surface to make it more skiable. *Peter Thorn*



NOTE ON THE WILDCAT PHOTO:
photo taken by Colin Miller in
Feb 2017 on road to Clash near
Lesmoir. The cat also spotted
by P. Thorn. The wildcat people
have assessed this cat as a high
quality hybrid/borderline
wildcat.

101 Laps a Charity Ski.

In March this year Jonathon Osbaldiston skied 101 laps (~30km) of the artificial track in Huntly and raised over £1,500 in aid of Scottish Autism. Jonathon is a novice skier and had originally planned to see how far he could ski in the Clash over a six hour period. Unfortunately, no snow meant Jonathon had to revert to his backup plan and ski those same six hours, but on the artificial track in Huntly. In wet and windy weather Jonathon completed 101 laps in the six hours. At one time there were three generations of Osbalistons on the track as Jonathon was joined by his father & and youngest son Harry (14) for part of the journey. The trio completed ~56km. His wife Jenny raised a further £105 on the day selling bakes.



Jonathon thought he may have set a new record for distance skied at the Ski Centre but he just missed out as a few years ago Lars Ojeskog skied 103 laps while training for the Vasaloppet. However, Jonathon shouldn't be too disappointed as Lars was probably born with skis on his feet and Lars was very impressed that a novice skier showed that much determination – *"That's really hard core. Trust me, I know!!!"*

Well done Jonathon.



Ian Fairweather

I have to report the sad news that former club member, Ian Fairweather, died from an asthma attack at the end of 2016 at the too young age of 33. Ian was a talented skier who was one of the forerunners of juniors who led the way to join the British Nordic Junior Squad. He represented Great Britain at the Lowlanders Championships in Italy in 1999 where he picked up a bronze medal.

Our condolences go to his partner Mhairi and baby Cameron, his parents Roger and Katie and sisters Fiona and Lauren.

Clash Dash 15 Jan 2017

The snow came just in time for the Clash Dash. Perfect sunny weather on the Saturday, probably the other best ski day of the season, but gave way to rather dreich conditions on Sunday race day.

Temperatures of +4° & soft snow gradually turning to porridge as the day went on. There wasn't a great depth to the snow & a last minute decision was made to run the skate sprints over a shortened 850m course rather than the usual 1.3km triangle. For the first time we also ran a 1km classic sprint making use of the challenging Fingers trail with its sharp bends.

The narrow track & sharp U-bends at the bottom of the downhill of The Fingers led to some entertaining skiing, at least for the spectators. It was impressive how the junior skiers aggressively attacked these bends while the more mature skiers took a more defensive approach or totally overshot the bends, dusted themselves down & re-joined the course.



where they left it. Jack Nicholls (U18) set the fastest time of 4min 19sec. William Newman made a welcome return to the Clash & demonstrated fine form coming 3rd overall & setting the fastest senior time of 4min 51sec. Peter Thorn & Rick Newman had a close tussle for the prestigious Vet Male title with Thorn pipping Newman by just 3 seconds in 6min 42sec. Cameron Cruickshank was fastest U16 in 5min 19sec & David Massie fastest U14 in 8min 29sec. Lily Sierakowski was fastest U16 and fastest lady in 6min 48sec.

Duncan Gibb & Jack Nicholls (both U18) tied for 1st place in the 850m free technique sprint in 2min 46sec. William Newman once again set the fastest senior time (5th overall, 3min 07sec) but this time his



younger brothers Oliver & Fergus came in just ahead in 3min 02sec. This time Peter Thorn finished with a tiny bit more space ahead of Rick Newman in the Vet race (4min 01sec compared to 4min 14sec). David Horsley (4:47) & Alan Telford (5:38) completed a large Vet field. Cameron Cruickshank (3:39) & David Massie (5:32) set the fastest U16 & U14 times respectively. Lily once again set the fastest ladies time of the day of 4min 54sec.

Congratulations to your new events team of Fiona Stewart, Steve Young & Graeme Gibb for successfully organising their first Clash event. *Peter Thorn*



DALSETER 2017

I had visited Dalseter Fjellhotel last year for one night prior to starting on the 5 day Peer Gynt Tour and I had met some people from GB Nordic (successor to XC – UK) who had suggested a further visit so I went for the 5 day deal offered by the hotel. Dalseter is fairly easy to get to from Gardemoen Airport– train to Vinstra then bus or hotel minibus.

The GB Nordic week had already begun when I arrived and there was a choice of activities. I opted for the “easy” day on track to start with but there was a harder day on offer and an off-track day. Dalseter is good for off-track as witnessed by the large number of people comprising the off-track group. At the end of the week, Tom, the off-track leader set off with two clients to do six day hut- to-hut tour starting at Dalseter and heading south-west.

My “easy” day on Monday started with a cracked rib (or torn intercostals) after a fall on the very icy initial descent. I should have taken note of the fact that all the others took their skis off! Trying not to grimace I followed the others to an “Elk Tower” where you can view the migrating Elk.

The next day I quickly gave up any attempt at skating due to extreme grimacing and just had a tootle around the local loipe followed by lunch in the hotel and a short tour in the afternoon on classics.

On the Wednesday, I hired some Back Country skis and did an 18 k loype up to the Bingsbo Hut (the piste man goes up there every day and lights the stove) and then round Sprengpiggen in blue skies and back to Dalseter. The idea was to have an introduction to off-track skiing and Dagmar, the instructor led us on small forays into the deep snow where we learnt some survival tricks. The BC waxed skis were lovely, especially for icy descents.

My last day was again on waxed BC skis but this time we went down and into the forest where conditions were different and the wax did not provide any kick and many stops were made to do the thicker, longer, warmer wax adjustment process which I eventually got right by the time we were due to descend. Herring- boning for many kilometres on heavy BC skis is not to be recommended. Most of the others had sensibly taken waxless skis which seemed to stick. Again, a nice pre-warmed hut (Tonebu) in which to have our lunch before the long descent to Espedalen and the bus back. (21k).

Dalseter is nice hotel run by xc enthusiasts with all the facilities including ski-hire and ski prep room. There is even a downhill piste with Poma uplift so good for practising your telemark skills if you have any. Food is excellent and plentiful and you can make your lunch pack from your breakfast in the normal Norwegian way. I had a single room which was not too expensive. GB Nordic meet up every evening to discuss the next day’s options and there was even a ceilidh.. These weeks are suitable for skiers with some experience on snow. I would recommend that you try them out. Book GB Nordic through the hotel: <http://www.dalseter.no/norsk-web/hotellet.html> *Rod Campbell*

European Youth Olympics

Brodie Murray, Fergus and Oliver Newman and Jack Nicholls were part of Team GB at the EYO in Turkey. They were accompanied by their coach Alex Standen. You

can read about their experiences via this link <http://www.britishnordic.org/erzurum-eyo-2017>



Club Activities

Sunday Morning Performance training

The Sunday morning training group is aimed at mainly our club members over 12 who are part of the BNDS and interested in racing, but it is open to any youngster who skis at or above the Blue Award level (JDS) and wants to be pushed. Parents are also welcome to join in to improve their fitness and skiing and help with crowd control! If interested in coming along contact Eileen Cosgrove tout.tele@gmail.com. There is also a training plan for the youngsters at Thursday Club night. Again any members attending on Thursday night are welcome to join in the session.

Club Night

For £2 on a Thursday night 7.30- 9.00pm(ish) at Huntly Nordic and Outdoor Centre, you can ski on the mat or rollerski track and enjoy a cup of tea, biscuit and a blether afterwards. You can join in the training session or do your own thing, there's usually a coach able to give some informal instruction or pointers. We are always ready to welcome new members so if you know someone who is interested please encourage them to come along. Remember the first week is free, thereafter we ask folk to join the club and pay.

Nordic Kids' Club Update

For several years now, the club has been running a series of Sunday morning sessions, on a monthly basis in collaboration with the Ski Centre under the banner of Nordic Kids Club. The aim was to let younger children access Nordic skiing and also to enable children who have enjoyed Junior Development Squad to keep up their ski skills through the year.

Between 20 and 30 children aged between 6 and 11 years attended the sessions last year. The children learnt to skate rollerski and classic ski on the matting, although the focus is mainly on skate rollerski especially for the older participants. The aim of the sessions is FUNDamental skills and it has been very rewarding seeing many young people developing their skills and confidence through Nordic Kids Club.

The club has provided volunteer coaches and some of the equipment for the sessions allowing the Ski Centre to keep the price down and maintain accessibility to the whole community around Huntly. The coaches are Level 1 or 2 Snowsport Scotland Nordic Performance Coaches.

The club also ran a 2-day summer rollerski camp for Nordic Kids Club members, which allowed the attendees to spend an extended time focussing on skiing.

We are very lucky in Huntly to have a dedicated facility for Nordic skiing but even so running the nordic kids club does present some challenges. A few years ago Risertec (a local business run by member John Shanks) and Snow Sport Scotland sponsored the purchase of a large amount of small rollerskis for children and these have been invaluable in rollerski teaching. However the availability of skate boots in appropriate sizes and numbers has been limiting. The Council has augmented the stock of skate boots but unfortunately, smaller sized skate boots are no longer available in the UK. The Centre does have some small rollerblades, which means those with small feet can still get on wheels. The Council also refurbished the striding lanes last year and the new matting is a big improvement.

We are looking at rescheduling the Nordic Kids Club so it does not clash with the Sunday morning performance training group enabling both groups get full access to the Centre.

Thanks to all the coaches who turned out last year to support Nordic Kids' Club, especially Elizabeth and Susan Massie, Stuart & Paul Gray, Poul Ipsen, Emma Cruickshank & Sarah Dunn. *Alan Telford Head Club Coach*

Coaching

The club follows a model similar to swimming where the Council /Ski Centre is responsible for the basic education of skiers and then the club develops more advanced talent. This is reliant on having a large pool of coaches to draw upon, which currently does not exist! There are opportunities for younger and older club members to get their NPC qualification and gain coaching experience with younger people though the Ski Centre. If you are interested in becoming qualified as a coach please contact Alan Telford.

Roy Young presenting Scots Series trophies to Lily, Jack & Logan.

