

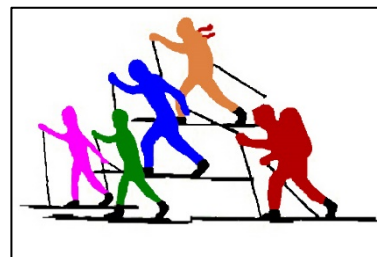
# HUNTLY NORDIC SKI CLUB

[www.nordicski.co.uk](http://www.nordicski.co.uk)

[www.facebook.com/HuntlyNordic](https://www.facebook.com/HuntlyNordic)

NEWSLETTER No. 54

October 2018



The nights are fair drawing in. It's dark now for club sessions, so it's the time we gravitate back to using the mat, much to the relief of some!

The club hosted 2 weekends of successful rollerski races. We have also facilitated the inaugural rollerski race in Fife and CBNSC races by lending equipment and volunteer support.

Some club members have even been on snow! As part of the BNDS summer camp they got to ski in the Telford snow dome and the 2 Andrew's participated in an on snow sprint race in Livigno, where they were training at altitude in September.

Although the current elite training in Ramsau isn't finding much new snow on the glacier, Cameron is finding plenty in an underground carpark in Slovenia!



This September I had the opportunity to see where the seniors have had altitude camps in recent years in Val Senales and also survived the 48 hairpin bends to the top of the Stelvio pass and views of the Ortler glacier. Stunning part of the world with beautiful views on a clear day!



In this edition we have a summary of the club survey conducted and one of the outcomes from that was to clarify what the club does, so as a starter for 10; Elizabeth Massie has drawn up a list.

*Editor Eileen Cosgrove*

## News flash!!!

**Ski sale 4th November.** After the success of our inaugural Ski sale last year, it will be happening again on Sunday 4th November. Buy & sell new or used cross country, touring, telemark or rollerskis, outdoor & personal training gear and clothing.

Equipment drop off 9.00-11.30am

Sale 12.30-2.30pm

Any unsold goods must be collected by 3.30pm

15% commission to HNSC and the British Nordic Development Squad

Register at <https://goo.gl/forms/zHrq0tXy3tDw94XJ3>



## Winter dates

**Skiletics.** Monday nights in the ski centre shed, 7.30-9.00pm. Ski specific circuit training. Anyone over 11 years old welcome. Please let Roy know if you are planning on coming [toutxc@gmail.com](mailto:toutxc@gmail.com), as if there are more than 9, he needs to plan some more exercise stations. Same rates as for club night, £2 for adults £1 children. (*not on Monday 5th Nov*)

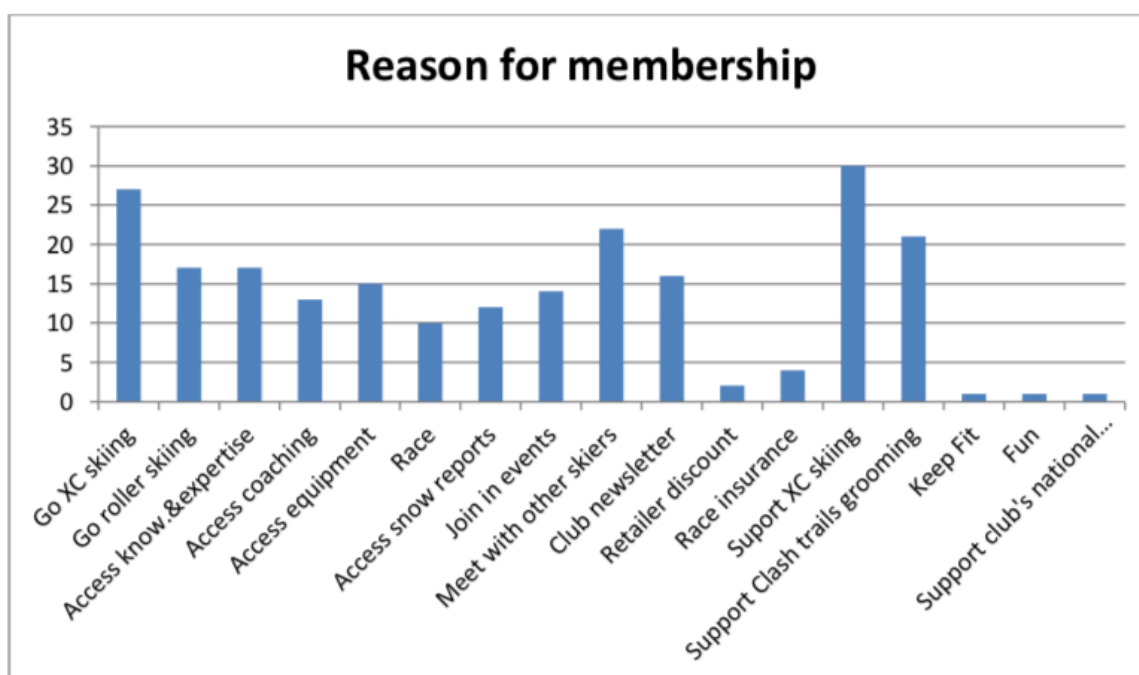
### 1st December the Lecht

Lecht and Glencoe have bought snow factories so we hope to arrange some trips to these locations in the coming season. The Lecht is planning a season opening day on 1st December

**JDS** will be starting January 6th 2019, **Sunday kids club** November 18th , Dec 9th. Contact the ski centre for further details. These 2 ventures are supported by club volunteer coaches and run by the Ski Centre.

## HNSC – the club survey said

A survey circulated to members last year received 31 invaluable responses. Some of the points have been put into action already and the new committee will discuss how to incorporate the other suggestions where permissible. If you would like to help with any aspect, please let the chairperson Elizabeth Massie [huntlynordicscchair@gmail.com](mailto:huntlynordicscchair@gmail.com) or secretary Pete Thorn [huntlynordicsc@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:huntlynordicsc@yahoo.co.uk) know. Thank you very much to all respondents, the information provided will shape the forward progression of the club. Respondents indicated that they were club members for the following reasons



Members specified additional club activities that they would like to see on offer.

There was strong support for a weekend away snow trip (70%), more social events and week long snow trips, (both 53%). The next most popular response was for parent and helper training, (50%).

33% of respondents would like to see training for a European Loppet type race and the same proportion, club clothing. 20% of respondents would like a weekend away roller ski trip and access to touring kit, with some support for a weekend race trip (10%).

Other aspects mentioned were supporting national international athletes, coaching on Tuesday nights at the same time as children and coaching to help adults improve their skiing to attract and retain more adult members.

Members were then asked if there were any barriers to joining in club activities and the responses were:

Family commitments

Other commitments or work

Lack of snow

Distance from Huntly

Wrong time and date

Lack of knowledge about the event and standard required. As new members maybe it needs a bit more explanation e.g. full moon stomp?

The next question was "If you attended a club activity and felt it wasn't right for you, why was this?".

Seven respondents said "not applicable", one indicated that all was good for them and another said "More fun".

What could the club do better?

Better and wider communication with general public - more information and be clearer about what we offer, how we work with the Centre and volunteer and raise the profile of the club leading up to the Olympics. Communication of events. It's not clear sometimes what is a centre event or a club event and sometimes the information given is confusing e.g. biathlon

Tidy up on governance and reach out to members to encourage more participation and volunteering, formalise relationship with Council to raise awareness of collaboration and volunteering.

#### Activities

- Encourage those who don't want to race!
- Coaching for adults.



- Need to re-think Mountain Tour events. In recent winters the scheduled dates have not coincided with suitable snow conditions, so no Mountain Tours have taken place. It is necessary, in today's world, to reserve dates in one's diary for Mountain Tours, but perhaps in addition there should be some kind of mini-network of those members who would like to get together and go spontaneously whenever conditions are right.
- Develop more participation-oriented activities for youngsters and adults rather than purely race-oriented.
- Increasing club membership including spread of age and ability. Encouraging non-skiing parents to give it a go. Youngsters at club night can be a bit intimidating but session is not just for them.
- Occasional more varied activities, HNOC and the Clashindarroch are great, but many people would feel more comfortable about stepping out to some back country touring or a downhill area along with people from the club they know.
- Much of people's effort doesn't go into skiing: people contribute huge amounts of time coaching, looking after equipment etc. We need to stand back and make sure we all do some skiing sometimes.
- There is little to encourage adult members to join at present. Making the Thursday evening a coaching session (as it has been in the past) would encourage more adults though I realise this would make even more demands on the qualified coaches who already do a huge amount.
- Organising overseas tours might also encourage more adult members.



The penultimate and final questions provided further insightful information. What do you like best about the club?

- There was a strong response about friendships made and an open, friendly and helpful club atmosphere. e.g. meeting up with a nice group of people & having 'ski buddies', community of other skiers, sharing knowledge and information.
- Further comment was made about great coaching and strong volunteer ethos enabling activities e.g. friendly dedicated eccentric bunch, great people who are very generous, great opportunities for younger skiers, organising rollerski and ski races, the Clash, and grooming of trail, races and skiing in the clash.
- There was appreciation of the further and combined resources: the Clash is really special. The ski centre is too. Local, amazing facility, safe area for the children, great form of exercise for the children and adults, great coaching staff who are positive and encouraging. It has been a steep learning curve over the last year and other members have been very helpful giving advice and helping us understand what goes on.
- JDS!
- The fact that it is far more than it says on the tin.

There was space at the end of the questionnaire to add any further comments:

Club needs to better communicate with the outer world about what the club does or how accessible it is. Clearly advertise key benefits of joining. Increase adult membership.

More open days, club organised events to general public - even nordic walking as an entry level group.

Improve club nights for newbies, but once you have a chum it's a great opportunity to have a news while on the move. Possibly advertising courses for club night might attract new members. Continue to work with the ski centre to promote skiing. Do what we want to do. It seems hard to grow membership that participates in events at the centre. Events are well organised and varied, unfortunately the snow dependent ones can't always happen. Ask council to improve maintenance of facility.

Impressed by the lifelong dedication of a few people who have kept this unique sport going, producing world class champions. Long may it continue. I don't go to club events but appreciate the work done and the access and grooming in Clashindarroch. Keep up the good work. More activity days. Feel a bit frustrated there is not better advertising for some of these great events that are happening in the club going forward, as well as positive promotion of the successes of previous events. Also, there are Olympic athletes who have started out at Huntly and this needs to be shouted about!



Keep up the great work! I like to participate in ski tours abroad and/or take part in loppets with club members. I don't think the club itself should or could organise travel or accommodation, but could initiate trips by suggesting events/tour areas for the coming season.

We value the commitment & achievements of the club and what it has given our kids in terms of health & wellbeing / life skills. Keep on growing your appeal to all age groups.

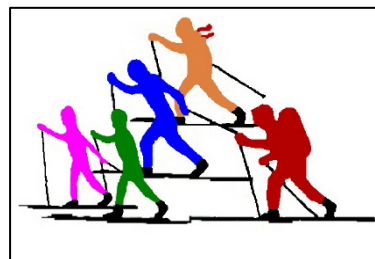
In summary, if our club is “far more than it says on the tin” then the above responses build a desire within our current ethos and aims to communicate and advertise better, to ensure that the club activities in the tin are relevant to members, especially new members, and the club continues to work to support our extraordinary local resources, not least our coaches and volunteers so that the club has lots of great skiing activity for all.

*Elizabeth Massie*



As highlighted above, there is some confusion about the difference between HNSC and HNOC. To try and help clarify who does what Elizabeth has drawn up the following list

## **Huntly Nordic Ski Club, HNSC, run by volunteers**



- Is active and the most successful cross country ski club in the UK.
- Has over 130 members
- Runs cross country ski and roller ski activities and races. Runs weekly club sessions on Thursday nights 7.30-9.00pm.
- Runs events throughout the year e.g. Ski Orienteering, Secret Clash as part of summer and winter calendars.
- Runs SMT (Summer Morning Training) for progressive youngsters 11 years and over, via the club's long term athlete development plan.
- Runs other sessions as advertised e.g. Fischer SKILETICS®, Coaching for coaches.
- Arranges and runs cross country (XC) ski and roller ski races as part of club, Scottish or British Series of competitions.
- Helps with some facility maintenance at the ski centre.
- Owns & maintains roller ski equipment, skate XC ski equipment ski touring equipment, training equipment, snowmobile and track cutter
- Liaises with Forestry Commission to permit use of trails in Clashindarroch Forest & undertakes some forest maintenance.
- Helped to build & maintains the Hytti in Clashindarroch Forreest.
- Funds and operates snowmobile and ski track cutting equipment to produce extensive winter XC ski tracks in Clash.
- Holds an annual ski sale.
- Produces snow reports from the Clash throughout the winter.
- Produces interesting and informative club newsletters.
- Is affiliated to Snowsport Scotland (SSS).







- Provides volunteer coaching and assistance to all club activities and many of ski centre's courses and events, e.g. JDS, After School, Nordic Kids Club and Open Day.

- Lends equipment to HNOC and other clubs to enable them to deliver events

- HNSC has an extensive pool of knowledge and experience from grass roots to elite international racing.

- Has athlete representation in all GB national XC ski squads and the most successful GB Olympic XC skiers, ever. Team HNSC was 12th in the Team Sprint at Pyeongchang Olympics 2018
- The club has representation on the British Nordic Development Squad Committee, Snowsport Scotland Nordic Committee, Nordic Coaching Panel, and has governance
- [www.facebook.com/HuntlyNordic/](https://www.facebook.com/HuntlyNordic/)
- <http://www.nordicski.co.uk/>



### **Huntly Nordic and Outdoor Centre, HNOC / ski centre, run by Aberdeenshire Council.**

- Runs the only cross country ski centre facility in the UK, is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the facility and its equipment.
- Runs ski, roller ski and other courses and events at the ski centre (often with ski club help or equipment).
- Arranges JDS, After School Club, Nordic Kids Club, Adult, Family and other courses (assisted by club coaches and equipment).
- <https://www.huntlynordicandoutdoorcentre.com/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/huntlynordicandoutdoorcentre/>

## Huntly Sprints & Clashindarroch Hill Climb, 26/27 May 2018.

### The Sprints.



As everyone knows it never rains in Huntly so once again the race officials were treated to gloriously hot and sunny conditions for our races in May. The skiers may not have appreciated the high temperatures for racing but the marshals certainly did.

The Huntly Sprints saw the usual wide range of ages and abilities. We had one novice in his first race after only one week on rollerskis – he survived. Then at the other end of the spectrum we had two double-Olympians: Marty Watkins from Wessex Biathlon & Nordic Ski Club in Wiltshire competed at the 1984 Sarajevo and 1988 Calgary Olympics and Huntly skier Callum Smith who competed at Pyeong Chang Olympics earlier this year and also Sochi in 2014.

The Huntly Sprints format was modified, the Flat course was shortened from 655m to a single 600m lap. This allowed more skiers to be set off in each heat thus speeding up proceedings. The Hill course remained the usual 1135m route. The senior men's time trial was won by Callum Smith with Oliver Newman just 4 seconds behind on the combined times. Hamish Wolfe completed the Huntly trio of medal winners while Cameron Cruickshank in 5<sup>th</sup> place was 1<sup>st</sup> U18. Logan Duncan had to settle for 2<sup>nd</sup> place U14 boy behind Hamish Henderson of CBNSC. Ben Kedward (Huntly) was 1<sup>st</sup> U12 boy.

British Team skier Holly Rees-Lay took the Ladies title ahead of Hyde Park team mate and 1<sup>st</sup> U14 Jasmine Uth. Fiona Crossley was 1<sup>st</sup> Vet and first Huntly lady home. Sophie Forth won the U12 girls race ahead of Elspeth Cruickshank, the start of a closely competitive season between these two girls.

The Knock-out Sprint races were run over a 700m, 2-lap course. In the men's final Oliver Newman led from the start but could not hold off Callum Smith who equalled the course record (1:34) but Oliver was very close. Holly Rees-Lay had an easier run against younger skiers to win the ladies title. But race of the day was in the Men's Plate final where Huntly U14 skiers Murdo Reid and Jakob Ipsen battled side by side for the entire two laps before Murdo just edged ahead in the last few metres. An

150m Agility Course final was won by Murdo ahead of Logan Duncan and Sophie Forth while the Club Secretary trailed behind them all in a distant 5<sup>th</sup> place – his excuse was they were all smaller than him, therefore more agile.

The Sunday Climb.

The early morning mist burnt off quickly for an even hotter day for the Clash Hill Climb making it really tough going for the skiers. Despite the high temperatures the second ever fastest times were set in all four races categories/distances which made it the fastest combined Clashindarroch Hill Climb on record.

Nobody could match Callum Smith's pace as he comfortably won the Men's 8.05km climb in an impressive 23:02, just 18 secs off the 2013 course record which was set with very fast rollerskis. In 2<sup>nd</sup> place and 1<sup>st</sup> U18 male, James Slimon (Highland) displaced Cameron Cruickshank to 2<sup>nd</sup> U18. Holly Rees-Lay held off Beata Nowok's (Western Track) challenge in the senior lady's. For the second day running Fiona Crossley was 1<sup>st</sup> Vet and 1<sup>st</sup> Huntly lady. Logan Duncan and Jasmine Uth won the 4.85km U14 climbs while Elspeth Cruickshank was first U12 girl home.



I can't end this race report without mentioning Pete Gurney. Well know to many of the Huntly juniors from his long-term coaching with the GB junior squads. Pete has finally stepped down from coaching and to celebrate 40 years of skiing he decided to undertake a **40for40** Challenge to raise funds for the GB Nordic Squad. These challenges take various forms from a Mulled Wine Nordic Walk dressed as Santa (bizarre but if you know Pete you won't be surprised) to long cycle events such as the Summer Ming. Two of his challenges included the May Huntly races. Pete has never raced on rollerskis before but he came through our weekend unscathed with a new-found respect for what he has

been putting all the athletes through over the years. If you feel compelled to donate I'm sure Pete would be grateful.

### **Ming Summer Endurance Challenge, 2nd June 2018.**

The Summer Ming was eventful this year. A torrential downpour during the bike stage resulted in the event being stopped. Although some managed to complete the 30km





cycle before the biblical deluge others weren't so lucky and bedraggled cyclists were recovered from various points on the course. But the emergency response flawlessly kicked in.

### **Fife Rollerski Race, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2018.**

Snowsport Scotland, with considerable support from Huntly, organised the inaugural rollerski race on the new Fife Cycle Track. Alex Standen was the main driving force behind this event which had rollerski training sessions for all abilities in the morning followed by races in the afternoon over distances from 9.6km down to 1,500m novice races. Our Marwe 610 rollerskis were used along with other club and Ski Centre equipment with club coaches there to assist with the ski teaching. A large number of



new skiers were introduced to the sport in what was a very successful event. So successful that another training session was organised there in September.

### **Huntly Rollerski Championships, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2018.**

A big turnout as usual from the Army and RAF teams but what was unusual was that a large number of them were novices, proper novices with only a few days of

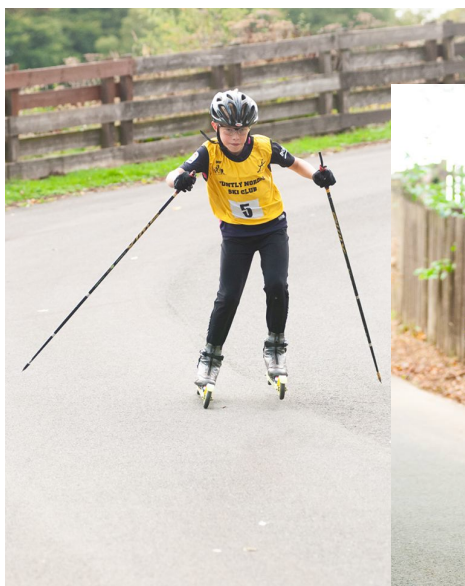


rollerskiing experience. The infamous Huntly Hill was not a sensible option for them so we



ended up with the largest field ever assembled for the Novice Flat course race (3 laps, 1,800m). So big was the field (16 adult & 3 junior novices) we had to split them into two heats.

The day started overcast but quickly became sunny – it never rains in Huntly. Olympian Marty Watkins (Wessex) returned to Huntly to win the men's 7.1km race ahead of Paul Whibley (REWS, Royal Engineers Winter Sports Assoc) by the merest 2 seconds. The Ladies race was also very competitive with GB Squad skier Beth Ireland (LRNSC) holding off Western Track's Beata Nowok. Unattached skier Katalin Tischhauser went outside her comfort zone to complete the Hill course and win the Vet Ladies trophy. There were no Huntly seniors racing – where were you all? Cameron Cruickshank used home advantage win the U18 men's 5.1km race ahead





of James Slimon (Highland). Titus Clark (Wessex) was 1<sup>st</sup> U16 with Harry Osbaldiston (Huntly, CBNSC) in 2<sup>nd</sup>.



Kieren Forth dominated the U14 boys 3.7km race ahead of Logan Duncan, Murdo Reid and Jakob Ipsen but these four Huntly skiers are all very competitive. Ramus Ipsen took a nasty fall but got up to complete the race and win the U12 boy's trophy – well done Rasmus. The nip and tuck rivalry between Elspeth Cruickshank and Sophie Forth continued as it has all season with this Elspeth winning the U12 girl's title just a few seconds ahead of Sophie.

Hugh Gilliland (U10) of Huntly won the boy's novice race ahead of novice lady Liz Norton (RAF). Laura Calder (U12) was first novice girl and Astrid Ipsen 1<sup>st</sup> U8 girl. A 14 strong field saw a crowded track and inter-service rivalry between the Army & RAF in the men's novice race which was won George Gibson (REWS) ahead of Richard Bond (RAF).



### **British Rollerski Championships – Cairngorm Hill Climb. Sun 9<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

The Scottish weekend of rollerskiing moved to Cairngorm for the tough Cairngorm Hill Climb (also British Championships) and the Glenmore Time Trials. The only Huntly skier in the senior Hill Climb was Tony Janetta in what was his first rollerski race – you don't pick an easy one do you Tony! Tony completed the climb in a creditable 33:33 coming right in the middle of the pack at 14<sup>th</sup> place.



Cameron Cruickshank took the U18 British Title and Kieren Forth the U14. Elspeth Cruickshank held off Sophie Forth to win the U12 British girl's title both behind Highland Nordic's Ida Ewald and 1<sup>st</sup> U14 girl.

In the afternoon Huntly juniors competed in the Glenmore Time Trial with Kieren Forth winning the boy's U14 race while his sister won the girl's race ahead of Ida Ewald.

### **Scottish Rollerski Series 2018: Huntly Champions.**

Cameron Cruickshank 1<sup>st</sup> U18 Male.

Madeleine Cruickshank 1<sup>st</sup> U16 Female.

Kieren Forth 1<sup>st</sup> U14 Male.

Elspeth Cruickshank 1<sup>st</sup> U12 Girl.

*Pete Thorn*



### **Delivering the Blueprint**

The Snowsport Scotland Nordic committee and in particular the tireless Frank Musgrave came up with "A Blueprint for cross country skiing in Scotland" last year. This is aimed at creating a way forward for cross country skiing in Scotland and sets out the key points as:

- Grow the base
- Build on and strengthen the existing development pathway, to U23 level
- Transition the elite programme to BSS, maintaining and improving opportunities for elite. Scottish skiers at world class levels while freeing up effort to reinforce the pathway

- Continuing to evolve the SSS Nordic Performance Coaching scheme to support the development of the sport.

As many may be aware the transition of the British Elite programme has already happened in May of this year with the help of UK sport funding. This is a historic first for the sport, being funded by UK sport and is testament to the tremendous work of Roy Young and BNDS, along with others.

Growing the base is a key part of the blueprint as without larger numbers in the sport we will always struggle to develop regardless of the success of Huntly Nordic ski club. With this in mind Snowsport Scotland has in its [strategic plan 2018 – 2022](#) to have “3 new locations with operational cross-country skiing programmes” by 2022.



The first step of growing the base was to run Fife roller ski day at [Fife Cycle Park](#). This was designed to be a combination of come and try sessions and the first ever mass start roller ski race in Scotland. I'm pretty confident in saying that it was a successful day! We had over 60 people try the sport for the first time (we ran out of skis) and 43 racers from novices to British squad athletes.

Although there have been participation events run by Snowsport Scotland in the past, such as Princess Street in 2011 there was never really a real follow up to it. Following on from Fife Roller ski day we've run two sessions in Fife during September and will have two at Crammond Sea Front in October.

So far so good.

With funding from Snowsport Scotland/Sport Scotland we've been able to purchase some additional equipment to run a pilot project with schools near the Fife Cycle Park. It's a positive step towards hopefully having an operational cross country programme based there by March 2019.

Huntly Nordic Ski club has been the key to the British Cross country pathway, never mind the Scottish pathway for the past 15 years. It's important that the governing bodies continue to support the club and help it to grow and develop.

Snowsport Scotland is looking to fund full time coaching roles (hopefully to be announced shortly) for cross country skiing alongside; coach education, athlete support and parent support. This should help ensure that the pathway for the sport is developed in Scotland and delivers the blueprint.

*Alex Standen*

### **SMT, Sunday Morning Training group**

We have renamed the youth training group, SMT. There is group of 11 youngsters who are regularly coming along on Thursday evenings and/or Sunday mornings. We



*The SMT group were coached by those attending the Snow Sport Scotland coaching conference weekend earlier in the year*

also have a group of coaches involved, and it has provided opportunity to the more newly qualified coaches to develop their skills. This year after consultation with Alex Standen we are following a different approach, looking at the different areas of technique, strength, endurance, agility and balance, downhill and making one of the topics the focus of a given session. We have also purchased membership to Sportlyser, so the calendar is accessible to everyone and group communications can be sent out and we are GDPR compliant. The group is open to anyone in P7 - S6 who also can ski at the equivalent of JDS blue award level. For further details please contact Eileen [tout.tele@gmail.com](mailto:tout.tele@gmail.com)

### **Visitor from Saskatchewan**

At the September races we had spectators from Saskatchewan , Jan Sedgewick and her husband. Jan is SkiAtSchool Coordinator, Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club Saskatoon. They enjoyed seeing our facilities and watching the youngsters ski. They also had a goodie bag of hats and mementos which they shared with the youngsters.

### **Sad News**

We were sad to learn of the death of Liz Keil, who worked at the ski centre. She and her dog Casper were always welcoming to anyone who came to the centre. She will be greatly missed by her colleagues and many others.

### **Final note**

At the AGM Roy Young and Frank Musgrave were given a FIS style podium presentation, (medal, trophy, flowers and local produce) in recognition of all their work over the last 3 Olympic cycles as Head Coach and Financial Manager to BNDS and latterly the National XC ski team. They have both stood down from these roles this year. There will be pictures in next newsletter.