

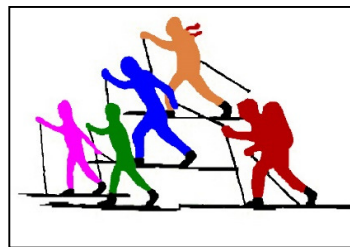
HUNTLY NORDIC SKI CLUB

www.nordicski.co.uk
www.facebook.com/HuntlyNordic

NEWSLETTER No. 56

November 2019

PRE-SEASON ISSUE



Clash snow days 2019/20 = 1

Editorial

Elizabeth stood down at our last AGM having completed her three-year term as Chair. And it has been a highly successful term where Elizabeth has introduced a whole host of new ideas and activities such as the increasingly successful Ski Sale, the inaugural Rollerski Tour as well as a huge variety of kids' activities at the Ski Centre. She probably never thought when she joined the club that she would end up attending an International Ski Seminar in Romania such as she describes in this newsletter. As well as all this exciting stuff she has been a driving force in all the behind the scenes administrative changes that have improved how the club works. She may have thought she would now have a quiet time but no such luck, as she was appointed Head Coach.

Another member who probably was hoping for some quiet time is Roy Young who has handed over the reins of running the British Cross Country Ski Team. Not a chance! He is our new Chair. Roy never abandoned the club and regularly supported or led activities in between jetting off to Vancouver, Sochi or PyeongChang. He has already used the extra time his "retirement" has given him by introducing Skiletics, Classic Skills and Mountain Skills Club sessions which make us all fitter, more skilful & proficient mountain explorers; although Eileen's story below suggests we need to brush up on our map-reading skills.

The club was 21 years old in October so I suppose that makes us grown up but hopefully not boring. And with Roy in charge we won't be.

Peter



Roy's in charge!

Club XC Ski Trip to Norway Spring 2020

A group of adults are looking to share a cabin together in Sjusjøen 4th-11th April. Would you be interested in joining them? Contact huntlynordicsclubcoach@gmail.com for further information. 27 club members are currently booked on the trip so there are plenty of ski trippers to join for tours and adventures across the fjells whether you are a family or single skier. There's still time to join in.

THE 2019 ROLLERSKI SEASON

Huntly Sprints, Sat 25th May.



Overcast with sunny spells, no wind, dry underfoot – the going was good for the traditional Scottish rollerski. A quality field of skiers from all around the UK had turned up for the fast n' furious sprints.

Demonstrating the benefits of a winter season in Norway, Oliver Newman proved the fastest on the day, taking the men's race in a combined time of 3:39 for the 600m Flat & 1135m Hill courses.

But not too far behind in second place, and first U18, was

Cameron Cruickshank who will be joining Oliver in Norway this winter. Carl Carrier, Head Coach to the British Juniors, can't resist popping on his racing boots and came home 3rd and 1st Male Vet. Kieren Forth in a time of 4:34 had to settle for 2nd place behind Tristan Marshall of Hyde Park (4:28) in the U16 male category. A good performance from Murdo Reid (4:57) gave him victory in the U14's, while Rasmus Ipsen was 1st U12 boy (5:37).



Oliver Newman blasts out of the blocks

In a time of 5:00, Beth Ireland (U18) from LRNSC led home the ladies with Amanda Richardson (Hyde Park) first Female Vet and Sen. As usual there was close racing in the U12 girls race with Elspeth Cruickshank (5:33) managing to keep ahead of Sophie Forth (5:43).



The knock-out sprints didn't disappoint the spectators as the athletes delivered the usual close-run races. Callum Roberts of CBNSC took the novice boys' just one second ahead of Huntly's Hugh Gilliland with Freya Uth of Hyde Park 1st novice girl. The Shield was claimed by Logan Duncan (U12) who pipped Carsten Uth (Sen) of Hyde Park. Jasmine Uth (U14) did one better than her father by beating the ladies' winner of the morning time trials, Beth Ireland, in the Elite Ladies Final. Cameron Cruickshank performed the same trick in the Elite Men's Final when he exacted revenge on Oliver Newman.

Novice Sprint Final

Clash Hill Climb, Sun 26th May



Twenty-four hours later conditions had changed and the going was heavy – torrential rain, but fortunately no wind. Comments to photos on our Facebook page drew praise for the athletes for competing in such conditions. I would say – what about the marshals who had just to stand in it. As Lynne Duncan said in reply at the time *“it was awful but in a funny way I think they (the skiers) enjoyed it more”*. A funny bunch these cross-country skiers. There is a video on

our Facebook page showing the junior start & the seniors passing by and of course there are the usual fantastic Alan

Telford photos that capture every drop of rain!!!!



Junior Hill Climb Champs
Logan Duncan & Elspeth Cruickshank

Oliver Newman was first man up the 8.05km climb ahead of Cameron Cruickshank. There was a bit of competition in the men's Vet category but GB Snowsports Nordic Director, Christian Ewald (Highland) managed to stay ahead of the RAF's Steve Perry. Western Track's Beata Nowak made the journey up from the Central Belt to take the ladies' title ahead of Ida Ewald (U16).



Logan Duncan was determined to make up for the previous day's sprints and had a convincing win in the U14 boys 4.85km climb, while Elspeth Cruickshank did very well to come in ahead of Jasmine Uth (Hyde Park) in the U14/U12 girls' race.

Well done to the swimmers skiers who completed the Hill Climbs – it was a hard day in the office, and a special thanks to all the soggy marshals.

Andrew Musgrave must have thought the Clash Hill Climb too tough this summer, so he double-poled up this little 7.5km, 1 in 10 climb at Lysebotn, Norway. I mean, he just double-poled when the rest of us make it harder by using our legs as well!!!! He won the race, by the way, and if you haven't seen the video it is worth tracking down on our Facebook page – be impressed.

Scottish Rollerski Championships, Fife, Sat 10th August

Part of Snowsport Scotland's strategic plan is to set up three new centres delivering cross country skiing programmes. One such site is the Fife Cycle Park by Lochgelly in, you guessed it, Fife; where Alex Standen & Sarah Young in their roles at SSS have been busy setting up one such programme. After a trial last year, Fife hosted this year's Scottish Rollerski Championships – the only mass start race in the Scots Series. The event was well supported by Huntly skiers & helpers and we loaned our Marwe 610's. The seniors raced a 9.6km course and the men's race was won by Hamish

Wolfe (Huntly). It was great to see Roy Young back racing and making the podium as 2nd SuperVet. Also competing was 22-year-old Callum Deboys from the GB Para Nordic Team. Callum lost his left leg in a motorbike accident and has set himself the target of competing in the 2022 Winter Paralympics in Beijing (<https://deboys.co.uk>).

Huntly had further success in the 3.6km event where we saw the “finish of the season” when Jakob Ipsen just pipped Logan Duncan to take the U14 Boys title while Sophie Forth won the U14 Girls race. Video footage of the day’s racing is worth hunting down on our Facebook page.

Huntly Champs, Sat 14th September.



Cameron Cruickshank



Kieren Forth



Logan Duncan & Murdo Reid
in yet another close battle



Strong start from Harry Osbaldiston

The day started dampish but quickly became dryer: good to firm in horse racing terms. Some skiers did complain it was a bit breezy but in the sheltered race office I didn’t notice a breath of wind.

The senior men’s 7.1km was almost an inter-service competition won by Ryan Wallace of REWS/Army team ahead of the RAF’s Steve Perry who was 1st Male Vet. Huntly was represented by the ever-reliable Dave Horsley. Winner of the Ladies race was Beata Nowok (Western Track).

In a quality Men’s U18/U16 field Cameron

Cruickshank was 1st U18 & Kieren Forth 1st U16 over the 5.1km distance. Lily Sierakowski made a return to the racing scene, taking the U18 Ladies title. A competitive U14/U12 category had Murdo Reid (U14) set the fastest 3.7km time with Luke Nicholls, also making a return to racing, winning the U12 boys’ race

from Rasmus Ipsen who remarkably competed using just one pole because of an injured hand, and he wasn’t too far behind Luke. Elspeth Cruickshank (U12) was fastest girl over the same 3.7km course followed by Sophie Forth.

New this year was a 2km Intermediate Hill Course, 5 x 400m middle loops going up the cut thus avoiding a full descent of the big hill. This was done after a request from armed forces skiers for something a bit more challenging than the flat novice course but without the big hill. Alan Morrison (REWS) was fastest male in a time of 8:35, which I guess is now the new course record while Nic Rennett was fastest female in yet another course record 13:48. Another first tried out in this race was to have paired interval starts, which got through proceedings quicker but more importantly made things more fun for the skiers.

We had our biggest ever field of novices for the 1.8km Flat course, so big we had to split it into two heats, one for adults and one for juniors. The senior novice was won by Nathan Sayeg-Priestly (REWS) and special mention must be made for Jonathon Osbaldiston (Huntly) in his racing debut. In an all Huntly junior novice race fastest was Astrid Ipsen (U10) with Euan Bate (U10) fastest boy.



Rasmus “One-pole” Ipsen



Dave Horsley

Cairngorm Races, Sun 15th September

An early start, and over to Cairngorm for their Hill Climb & Glenmore Time Trials. This early start didn't put off Huntly juniors from taking part but after a busy day racing in Huntly, did they get enough sleep? Are they early risers? Two Huntly seniors not bothering to have a Sunday lie-in were race regular Dave Horsley and race first timer Simon Bates. Most people take on an easier task for their first race however Simon's attempt ended when he decided to retire gracefully at the Coire Ciste car park after he broke a pole early in the race – he did very well to get that far on one pole – there's always next year.

Cameron Cruickshank wasn't affected by the early start, winning the U18 climb, while Harry Osbaldiston took the U16 title. Logan Duncan must revel in rising at dawn* as he blasted up the hill to win the U14 boys race reversing the previous days placings with Murdo Reid. Sophie Forth made a great effort in the U12 girls climb but was unable to keep a big enough gap from Rebecca Dargie (CBNSC) who had followed her up the hill. Sophie had to settle for 2nd place. Special mention should be made of Hugh Gilliland (U12) & Astrid Ipsen (U10) making their debuts in the Novice Hill Climb. Congratulations to them & all who made it up the steepest Hill Climb on the Series.

After a short rest, skiers reconvened for the Glenmore Time Trials. And a rare one-two for Huntly Vets Dave Horsley & Jonathon Osbaldiston who took top places in the men's race, a first 50pts for Dave. After Jonathon's second rollerski race I told him his prize was entry in both next year's Series' Hill Climbs, obviously not free entry! A tight course and a tight race in the men's U18 competition but Cameron Cruickshank held off the challenge to win again. Murdo Reid managed to once again reverse the places from the earlier Hill Climb winning ahead of Logan Duncan – close competition like this is what we want to see. Elspeth Cruickshank made up for what was probably thought was a disappointing Hill Climb by winning the U12 girls' race.

**Ed: I know, early rising, a rare attribute for a teenager. Read more on Logan's early starts below.*

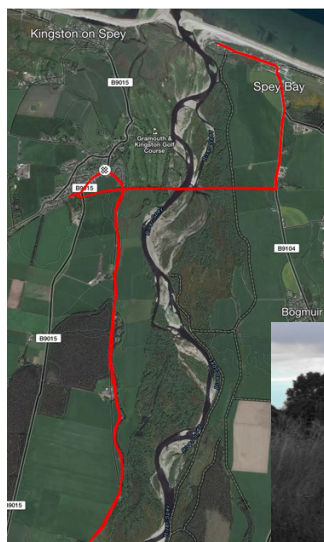
Scots Series

The Scots Series trophies were presented at the end of the Glenmore race, at least they should have been if we had had them – they had been delivered to the wrong address, but that is another story. So imaginary trophies were handed out* but the applause was real. Huntly winners were Oliver Newman – Senior Men; Cameron Cruickshank – U18 Men; Harry Osbaldiston – U16 Men; Murdo Reid – U14 Boys; Elspeth Cruickshank – U12 Girls.

**Ed: All trophies have now found their rightful homes.*

GB Series

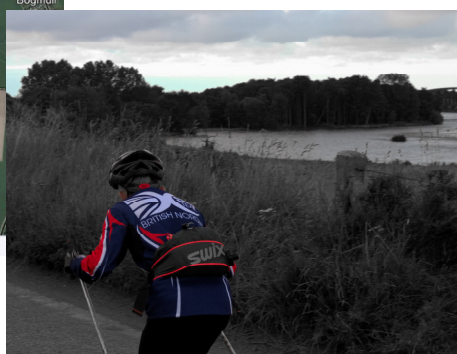
The British Rollerski Championships were held in September at Olympic Park in London and Logan Duncan & Sophie Forth became U14 Champions. The GB Series reached their conclusion at October's Wessex Sprints and Logan Duncan was Huntly's only Series Champion with the U14 Boys title.



The Route

Summer Rollerski Tour, Thu 8th August

Northeast Scotland has lots of quiet roads that get used for rollerskiing but often it is hard to find a route that doesn't have some sort of challenge that might make it unsuitable for rollerski beginners. Elizabeth rose to the challenge and discovered a route from Mosstoddloch to Garmouth, alongside the Spey, that was on a traffic-free road with no nasty hills, at least not that nasty. And to top it all ended in a pub. Ten skiers of all ages turned up for this inaugural tour and naturally split into groups enabling one or two extra route variables for those who wanted. We ended up in the Garmouth Hotel for refreshments and a natter, but young master Hugh was more than a little worried when I told him he was buying the first round!!!!



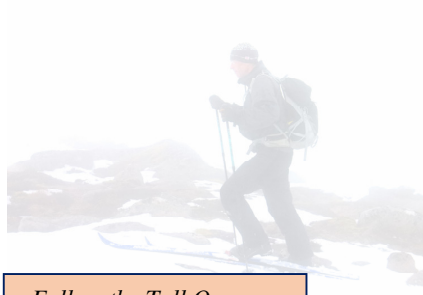
Elizabeth crosses the majestic Garmouth Railway Viaduct

How Many Pathfinders Do You Need on A Club Tour?

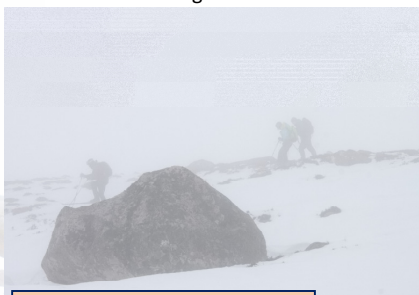
by Eileen Young

For the first time I joined one of the club mountain ski tours. We met in Cairngorm carpark and I was reassured when the conditions were discussed and we decided on a lower level tour into Lurcher's gulley because of the snow conditions and poor visibility.

We set off with our skis strapped to our packs, following the foot path in search of snow or at least a patch large enough to justify putting on our skis. Soon it appeared and we happily chased after the tall one as one patch of snow linked into another down a gentle slope. Finally, we thought we better get on with the tour and set off again in a westerly direction over a stream and up a slope. The clouds had come lower down and we really couldn't see all that far ahead, but knew we had to climb up. The five boy scouts then produced 1 GPS, an OS map, a Harvey's map, 2 altimeters and differing opinions on our exact location. We progressed gingerly in a more southerly direction up the slope, the GPS man saying "I know exactly where we are", the altimeter owners calling out heights which differed by 5-10 meters, the map readers saying we only crossed 1 stream so we must be here but..... Gradually as we ascended the snow gave way to more and more rocks, so we had to succumb to removing our skis. As we reached the ridge we came across features that confirmed our location on Lurcher's Crag. "I knew exactly where we were" repeated the GPS owner, the other boy scouts happy (relieved) that using all their map reading skills had got them to that point. Still in the clouds, with visibility reduced to 5-10 meters we followed the ridge up to an altitude where we had to start heading slightly more downhill to reach the top of Lurchers gulley. The boy scouts checked the bearings on their maps, and then compass man guided us from the back, "left a bit right a bit". It was surprisingly easy in the clouds to veer off course while picking our way through the boulders. Finally, we glimpsed snow again and eagerly put our skis back on. Totally disorientated in the mist we set off in a vaguely downhill direction utilising a variety of downhill techniques from gracious telemarks or parallel turns, to more cautious snow ploughs, to traverse and step turns and traverse and kick turns to the most tiring, and least efficient method of ski plopping. Traverse, fall over, wail around in the snow until skis are pointing in vaguely the right direction, struggle back up onto skis and repeat. No matter which or how many different downhill techniques we used it was awesome and made the uphill walk all worthwhile. However somewhere along the way Compass man lost his compass. As we got lower the clouds lifted a little and we came across our original tracks and could see how we became a little disorientated. In being so excited of skiing on the first patch of snow we had skied to below the confluence of the stream from Coire an Lochan and Lurcher's Gulley and so we had only crossed 1 stream and totally missed the ridge between the two.



Follow the Tall One.....



Is this stone on the map?



How many streams have we crossed?

I was a little nervous as to where I was being led in the mist, but in fact the other club members were well prepared and competent pathfinders leading me on a great wee tour of the Cairngorms. I would highly recommend other club members to consider joining a mountain tour in future. We were all on metal edge skis, which can either have fishscale bases, or you can use skins for the uphill's. I wore my old T2 plastic telemark boots which were surprisingly comfortable hiking through the bolder field and kept my feet dry. The club has a selection of plastic and leather boots and touring skis to borrow if you need kit.

Ed: *The five navigators all knew exactly where they were, it was just in different places.*

Snowsport Scotland Performance Camp by Logan Duncan (Age 13)*

2019 Talented Individual Grant £200 spent on attending a Snowsport Scotland Performance Camp.

This July, I attended a cross discipline performance camp for selected Home Nations Ski and Snowboard Athletes. It was a 3-day residential camp at the Sport Scotland Inverclyde facility, which I thought was a really great place to train. The Scottish Institute of Sport, Snowsport Scotland, and GB Snowsports delivered the activities. Sessions covered a broad range of topics and activities with practical workshops targeting performance factors such as, Strength and Conditioning, Movement, Balance fundamentals, Nutrition, Psychology and Performance Lifestyle within a fun and challenging environment.

We began the camp by learning how to prepare simple, protein rich snacks, to help us to look after our own health and to work towards being "24/7" athletes. Even at my age it is very important to sustain personal health and lifestyle goals to achieve the maximum gains in performance. Over the following 3 days we did various fitness activities including learning how to do gym exercises properly, such as squats and pull-ups, and trying to work on body awareness using trampolines and balance challenges. In the mornings we did a run before breakfast, which I am used to doing although some people think it's awful! I don't mind, it wakens me up and gets my arms and legs moving again. We were also involved in workshops about the psychological mind-set in

sport, to give us an understanding that the road to the top is never smooth and can have a lot of bumps and setbacks on the way to ultimate goals, and that I shouldn't let these upset my focus or determination to achieve.

We finished off the camp with a rollerski around the roads of Great Cumbrae Island. We caught the ferry over from Largs and other people on the ferry and island were very interested in what we were doing and were taking photographs of us!

I found the camp to be really interesting and I found that not all athletes have the same strengths or weaknesses, but for snowsports there has to be a high level of general fitness. Although the Park and Pipe athletes were far better than us at the body awareness workouts, I felt that the Nordic athletes endurance levels were higher, attributes that suit the difference in the skill requirements for the different sports. I also realised that I need to sleep more and eat a more balanced diet if I want to succeed.

For the Nordic skiing people on camp, it was great that the two main Scottish coaches for Snowsport Scotland (Alex Standen and Sarah Young) were both originally from the Huntly Nordic Ski Club, it makes it easier to visualise a future in the sport when I realise that a few years ago they were at the same stage as me and have both skied at a high level for Great Britain!

**First published in the Aberdeenshire Sports Council Newsletter, Issue 22, Sep 2019.*

International Coach Seminar by Elizabeth Massie

FIS Cross-Country Youth & Children's Committee and THE ROMANIAN SKI FEDERATION invited coaches in Romania and nearby nations to an International Coach Seminar in CHEILE GRADISTEI. The not so nearby nation of Scotland was represented by Fergus Newman and Elizabeth Massie thanks to Snowsport Scotland's invitation and initiative.

A curious email arrived. A few days later, a plethora of arrangements were made. A couple of weeks later, Romania became a remarkable reality. Rather strangely, Blue Air gets you there but includes delightfully decent, in-flight food. It's always slightly unnerving to arrive in a foreign country in darkness but Bucharest was alive with light in the middle of the night displaying tidy streets of established architecture and plants of Black Sea latitude. Surrounding Bucharest, the Wallachia Plain grows lush crops of cereals and pulses with a current agricultural machinery sector in support. The fabulous EU road to the mountains eventually began to twist, turn and then develop potholes as the intriguing hills beckoned. Decades, if not centuries of challenging history then appeared in stark reality.

Climbing to villages amidst vast grassy plains and even crops of potatoes at over 2000 feet, we were surrounded by snow-capped mountain ranges and an incredibly beautiful vista. Cheile Gradistei sits between the Piatra Craiului and Bucegi Mountains. It is a purpose built, family friendly sports resort established at over 4000 feet thanks to the enthusiasm of an ex-cross country ski racer, Ovidiu Gârbacea. Everything here was on a purposeful scale and to a high standard. Mountainous Malamutes, timber frames and benches of gigantic proportion overlooked a hidden and most surprising cross country/biathlon facility. Coupled with lovely accommodation and enjoyable local produce, the facility is an amazing resource. Broad expanses of tarmac for roller ski training with plentiful hills and distance permitted the facility to recently host the biathlon event of the EOWF in 2016 and make a bid for the World Youth Olympic Games in 2020.

Joined by a band of broadly grinning Romanian coaches and also a huge Hungarian, giddy Swedish, chilled Serbian, gregarious German and appropriately unique Norwegian coaches, the Scottish contingent quickly established a place in questions, drills, rather off the wall suggestions and a few of the possible ways to deliver the aforementioned, however it's always a good idea to have an EYO athlete with you for demonstration purposes. The over 35s appreciated the space and time away from dishes, taxi services etc, to absorb themselves without interruption, in technique drill ideas, new ways to breakdown skills and build up confidence in trainees. The raw enthusiasm of the Romanian coaches + giddy Swedes + hardy Scots made for productive learning. Only the Scots seemed to come home with skint bodies.

The Seven Steps theory which was incorporated into the weekend, is now being used across the progressive xc skiing world to develop key skills in roller and cross country skiing. These skills apply to all levels whether world cup racing or not. Much fun has been had in application in Scotland already, but the arrival of snow and the newly qualified Huntly club coaches provide a whole new platform of informed delivery. Fabulous.

Slowly, a shepherd accompanied his grazing sheep on the open verge as traffic sped past. In a sodden field, an entrenched horse-led cart, of substantial and statutory Romanian design, held a lone farmer forking out perhaps the 20th load of manure by hand. Fergus and I were left with a keen sense of the enormity of Romania's future path to support its population. Within this climate but inviting landscape, Romanian XC skiing continues to field a healthy sport and athletes thanks to tremendous ski coaches and visionaries. Our attendance at this event was enormously valuable, thanks to SSS. Whilst Romania isn't a neighbouring country, once you are there, the most favourable exchange rate makes this a very economical location to visit with notable jewels to be found.



NEWS FROM THE FOREST

The first skiing of the season took place on 8th November. In rather marginal conditions a few club members managed to pick their way past the stonier areas up on to the high trails. Roy even tried to claim the Golden Boot but the adjudicating committee were shocked by his outrageous claim – he hadn't skied a complete Haute Route loop!!! He even came back and asked if he could claim half-a-boot. Whatever next, a Golden Shoelace? We expect better of our illustrious Chair – or do we? 😊

We probably owe a debt of gratitude to this gang of forestry tree planters in the Clashindarroch in 1923. Their efforts have produced the best snow-holding forest in the UK.



SKIING TRIVIA

Did you realise there is a connection between cross country skiing and the Space Race? After completing the first spacewalk in March 1965 Alexei Leonov and his fellow cosmonaut Pavel Belyayev encountered a problem re-entering the Earth's atmosphere. They landed 240 miles off-course and the recovery team couldn't get to them until the following day. After a night in sub-zero temperatures the cosmonauts then had to ski 9km out of the forest to safety. You never know when you might need your skiing skills.

STOP PRESS

Andy & Fiona Cox successfully claimed the Golden Boot on Thur 14th November

A few reminders.

Membership subscriptions are now due. You all should have received a reminder. Please try to pay as soon as possible, preferably before the end of the year. If you don't plan to re-join please let me know so I don't keep bothering you with reminders.

Sun 22nd Dec: Winter Ming & Mince Pie Party – earn those mince pies with a swim, bike & run (or ski)
Sat 4th Jan: Ski Orienteering – work off those mince pies

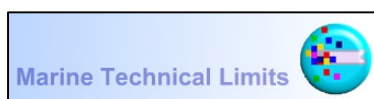


Nobody crosses the Race Director!



Lily Sierakowski hands over in the Relay

CLUB SPONSORS:



LOTTERY FUNDED

Correspondence to: Peter Thorn
West Craigton Cottage,
Kennethmont,
Huntly, Aberdeenshire
AB54 4QP
Email: huntlynordicsc@yahoo.co.uk