

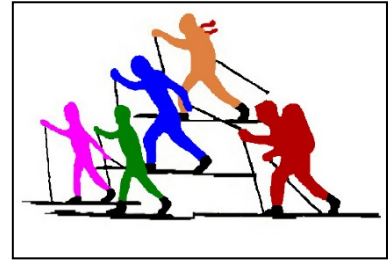
# HUNTLY NORDIC SKI CLUB

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## NEWSLETTER No. 57

April 2020

**END of SEASON ISSUE**



**Clash snow days 2019/20 = 29 (12 good, 17 marginal)**

### Editorial

*This newsletter comes out at a time when the country and the whole world is undergoing the most serious crisis seen since the Second World War. The effect on club activities is of trivial concern compared to the impact on families from all parts of our planet. It will end sometime, history shows us that and in the meantime we will all play our part. All club activities are suspended, I don't know how long for but I suspect there will be few, if any, rollerski events this summer. A vaccine is a long way off and we all catch or pass on the virus. One thing I have noticed whilst out for my runs/cycles is the number of people taking exercise on our usually empty country roads, at least empty of exercisers. It will be interesting to see if this trend continues after things return to normal.*



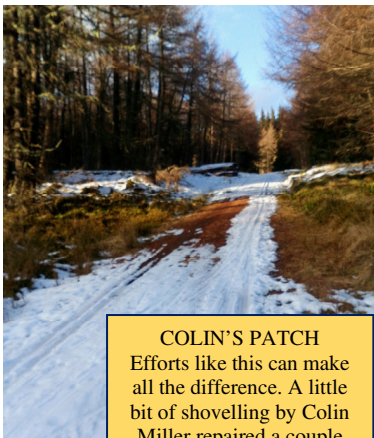
Proof – there was some great snow

*It wasn't a particularly good ski season, there have been no on-snow club races, so this news letter is a bit light on content. We do have an article from Eileen & Roy revisiting the venue of the Vancouver Olympics ten years on. And Jonathon gives us his perspective on the challenges of coronavirus. I know next time I'm over at Glenmore I'm going to track down the Norwegian Stone.*

*The planned club trip to Norway has obviously been cancelled. It was proving popular as lots had signed up for it. Elizabeth put a lot of time in organising this trip and I hope the response she received will encourage a club ski trip to be organised for 2021. Peter*

### THE CLASH SEASON – 2019/20

It will come of no surprise that we had a below average season with 29 skiing days this winter. A long way from the worst. That dubious honour falls to the dismal 19 days of the 2016/17 winter. The first skiing came on the 8<sup>th</sup> November and we had odd marginal days up until the 11<sup>th</sup> February when we got the first proper snow for a few days but the best skiing didn't come until the 24<sup>th</sup> February when we had a couple of good weeks of skiing in some excellent conditions and the trails were very busy with skiers. Unfortunately, conditions weren't suitable on



**COLIN'S PATCH**  
Efforts like this can make all the difference. A little bit of shovelling by Colin Miller repaired a couple of bare patches to give uninterrupted skiing

our race dates, either not enough snow or too icy for safe racing – oh! the frustrations of Scottish skiing.

Andy & Fiona Cox plus unsuspecting friend & novice skier claim the Golden Boot  
14<sup>th</sup> Nov 2019



Seasons when we don't get skiing over the festive period always seem worse but the February/March period is typically our best skiing time in the forest. Looking at my snow records since 2003/04 one thing that does stand out is the percentage of good days each season has markedly worsened since 2012/13. Up until that date we typically saw 75% good days each season but since then it is more like 45%. What I think this is showing is that although we still average around 50 ski days each winter we are getting less snow when it does fall. It has been a while since I've had to dig the snowmobile out of deep snow drifts.

## **Evening Ski in the Clash, Thu 28<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

A few Club Thursday sessions were moved to the Clash and all were well attended with members realising you need to be very opportunistic during a poor ski season like we've just had. The best attended was on the 28<sup>th</sup> Feb when over 30 club members & guests gathered up in the forest. The plan was to meet at the Hytti then, well that was it the plan didn't extend any further than that. The coaches took the juniors to do some training. As I started to ski away into the dark I heard Elizabeth shout to the milling skiers awaiting the plan "follow Pete, he will take you on a ski somewhere". I don't know what she was thinking, me in charge? What on earth possessed her to think I was a responsible adult? Anyway, a large group did indeed follow me, down The Lair. Not the easiest trail in the dark, but I thought it was a good idea. We wended our way through the lower trails for a bit and think people started to enjoy being on the rougher, unpisted trails for a change. Eventually we ended up by the mobile mast for a descent down Leids Leap, Wildcat was too dark and forbidding. A few in the party weren't looking forward to the downhill, tricky in daylight but as I tried to explain, in the dark it must be easier as you can't see where you are going to crash. The snow was perfect, in fact too perfect as I had concocted a plan to ski on ahead to one of the tricky bends then take incriminating photos of the crashes. All sailed past in style with whoops of delight (or was it fear). I saw no crashes.



## **Ten Years After Vancouver**

*by Eileen Young*

We had a holiday booked to Whistler with the intention of doing lots of Telemark skiing, but due to a knee injury that was still healing when we set off that wasn't an option for one of us.

As the knee improved and I gradually increased the distance of my daily walk with fantastic views up the mountain towards the slopes where the other were skiing and telemarking, I thought I could venture out on the cross-country trails. The first trip was following the meanders of the River of Golden Dreams (yes that is really its name) for a few kilometres. All felt good so the next day we ventured around the easy Lost Lake 5 km trail and it was so good that after a soup and cake we did it again. We ventured out once more another afternoon on the easy Lost Lake trails, which are a network of trails on the edge of Whistler ranging from easy undulating trails around the lake and over golf courses to some pretty steep climbs and descents. As we were heading home the local ski club came out to train with the equivalent of our SMT group\*, zippy youngsters shooting off up the steep climbs and whizzing back down



*\*Sunday Morning Training Group (ed).*



The Olympic venue, Olympic Park, in Callaghan valley is about 25km from Whistler Village, so a little difficult to get to without a car, so I've only been back there once since the Olympics. We realised from the local paper that it was 10 years since the start of the Olympics in Whistler and Cross-Country was one of the early events. The Olympic Park was having a weekend of come, celebrate and try events and there was a shuttle bus, so we booked ourselves a seat.

The bus wasn't very busy just another 3 folk. The day lodge was the athlete area at the time of the Olympics, so out of bounds to the ordinary public. It has a cafeteria and seating area around a log fire, a small shop with a good range of clothing and waxes. Downstairs is the ski hire and changing rooms.

There were various activities to celebrate 10 years since the Olympics, opportunities to try out sit skiing and para biathlon shooting, tubing and also laser shooting in the biathlon range. Whilst there were folk having a go, there was no try Nordic skiing or snow shoeing sessions. We thought HNOCC could have taught them a thing or two on how to organize an open day!

We decided to try the easy green route, which involved dropping down to the river and skiing a loop up the valley and back following the Madely Creek and after lunch skiing to the Top of the World, a look out point over the Callaghan Valley, except the clouds were rather low so we didn't get to appreciate the view. We then returned to the Day Lodge before catching the bus back to Whistler. It was such fun we booked a place on the bus the next day. Sunday was busier, with another local ski club running the equivalent of JDS, so groups of children of various ages, abilities and layers of snow suits, along with club coaches and parent helpers toddling off on an adventure.



The knee was holding up so we decided to explore the blue trails which were part of the Olympic Biathlon and Nordic combined race trails. We set off up out of the cross-country stadium up above the green Olympic Rings, the stadium looking very different without all the stands, crowds, banners, athletes, giant screens from 10 years ago when we had been cheering on Andrew, Andrew, PJ and Fiona. We carried on following the blue Nordic Combined trail over to the Biathlon Stadium, leaving behind the black cross-country course as it shot off up a steep hill. As we passed through the biathlon stadium where there was the pop pop as people were having a go at shooting at the targets, and out onto the Biathlon course again, a more undulating twisty turny course, but even for a damaged old wife surprisingly doable. Possibly with a rifle on your back and skating would be a different matter.

It was lovely to see the Olympic Venue being used and enjoyed by so many, the trails have been developed beyond just the race tracks and are varied. Here was a "legacy" venue that is giving great value to the community and helping to develop the sport.

Whilst skiing the trails at Olympic Park we saw mileage signs for the Payak Ski Loppet, the 4th Saturday in February. Now that would be something to aim for <http://www.payak.ca/course>

## **Skis Against the Virus**

by Jonathon Osbaldiston

About 20 years ago I first became aware of the WW2 Norwegian resistance raid at The Norsk Hydro Plant at Vemork, Nr Rjukan in Norway. The plant was being used by the Germans to create Heavy Water, a precursor to making an Atomic bomb. The story has been told on TV several times - The Heroes of Telemark, The Real Heroes of Telemark (Ray Mears) and most recently Saboteurs (2015).

Perhaps the best written account however is by Knut Haukelid, "Skis Against the Atom".

All these accounts stress the amazing, bravery, determination, and sacrifice of all those involved. Also Knut Haukelid explains in his book that one of the principal advantages the Norwegians had over their German opponents was their hunting backgrounds, local knowledge and Cross-Country Ski Skills. Some of these skills were honed locally at Glenmore and Forrest Lodge, Nethy Bridge.



The Norwegian Stone at Glenmore.

So why am I telling you all this, what's the point?

Well in these current uncertain times there are I believe parallels we can draw against our own current battle.

Firstly we need to stay positive and have hope. A positive mental attitude is very important in any survival situation.

Secondly determination, we have to keep fighting (the virus) through what we are being asked to do. Staying socially distant from others, helping those in need where we can, and not panic buying.

After all the Norwegian Resistance soldiers trying to stop a nuclear bomb had to live on boiled Reindeer moss and berries, hiding in a hut on the Hardangervidda, one of Europe's most unforgiving climates, for three months. All the time being hunted by an armed enemy. All we are being asked to do is be sensible, stay at home, be considerate of others!

Thirdly in this battle, Physical fitness - and this is where Cross-Country Skiing comes in for us in this club.

Staying fit by skiing, roller skiing, running, walking or cycling (etc) will also help us fight this invisible enemy. If possible walk, run and ski where you can, and where it's safe for all - out of hours (a head torch is a useful ally in this), and in remote areas. Luckily generally not too difficult for us in this region.

If we all stay positive, determined, considerate and as fit as we sensibly can then we will be victorious.

Stay Safe, and let's use our Skis (roller or otherwise), against the Virus!

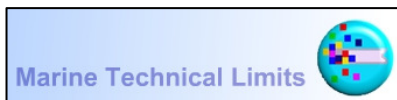


The next newsletter is due out on the end of the summer rollerski season. This year we will be probably fairly barren of rollerski stories so your editor is even more desperate for articles. So you have a story from the winter just gone, and I know some of you did go on exciting ski trips. Or do you have some other skiing anecdotes or things that might interest the rest of us. Just send them to me.

The British Cross-Country  
Ski Team at the Vancouver  
Olympics 2010



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