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NEWSLETTER No. 59

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RECOVERY

Editorial

As Covid restrictions were eased over the summer the club's activities gradually resumed. I think we owe a big thank you to all the coaches & others & in particular Roy Young who navigated the club through its start-up of activities. One result of Covid is that the club has gone more digital over the past 18 months. We have introduced online booking for Thursday club sessions & the various training groups. And maybe surprisingly there has been an increase in regular numbers at Thursdays compared to BC (before-Covid) days. Restrictions will continue in some form over the winter which will affect our indoor activities, such as the cuppa, biscuits & chat indoors at the end of a Thursday. But hopefully all our outdoor activities become more normal albeit with some admin involved.

While filling out the new forestry permissions form, something I do every year for our winter events, I noticed a couple of new boxes that needed filling out. One was asking about our "Increasing diversity & reducing inequalities" policies which I could honestly answer by pointing them at our new policies section on our website (see below). Another question, and particularly topical at the moment with COP26 an' all that, was what "Green initiatives/carbon reduction" plans do we have. Cross-country skiers like to think of themselves as "green", we don't use mechanical uplift. But how green are we? What is our carbon footprint with all our travel to overseas destinations? I don't have the answer but something to ponder on.

We haven't seen any snow so far this winter but if you remember last year the snow didn't really come until Christmas, and boy! did it snow. With no garage in the forest this winter the club is working on a plan on getting snowmobile into forest. And as I write the weather is forecast to be turning colder.....

Peter

CLUB GOES DIGITAL!!!!

After several years of procrastinating the club finally moved away from parchment and quill to an online membership system. Covid gave us the extra nudge to migrate online and Spond was chosen as our platform. Early work by Helen MacGregor and others meant we had some idea of what was available. Spond had been tested to manage the club's various training groups over the past year and proved itself as the best option. Simon Bate in particular is thanked for his hard work gaining an understanding of the inner workings of Spond, making the job of migration so much easier for secretary and treasurer.

Another huge task that has been going on behind the scenes for the past couple of years is the introduction of a club set of policies. This is a condition of our membership of Snowsport Scotland (SSS) and is intended to make us better people and I'm sure it does. This has been a mammoth task but, ably led by Roy Young, our policies team came up with a full set of policies, far more streamlined than the SSS versions, making us fully compliant with SSS. These can be found at: www.nordicski.co.uk/wordpress/about-huntly-nordic-ski-club/club-policies-and-consitution/ Our new membership system allows us to document that you have signed up to our Code of Conduct.

ROLLERSKI SEASON 2021.

Covid continued to impact on organised club events and for the second year we had to cancel our May Sprints and Clash Hill Climb. A new Clash Challenge was sent out to members. The usual Clash Hill Climb was extended by 1km to the Leids Leap forest gate giving an overall length of 9km with 326m of climb, an additional 124m. Unfortunately, enthusiasm for this kind of event was waning and only two times were recorded: Simon Bate in 57:30 & Logan Duncan in a very fast 33:43 which becomes a new, unofficial record. Logan's time was considerably faster than my best ever time for the shorter 8km course. These juniors are very annoying, he would have beaten me by over a kilometre when I was at my very fastest, and I tremble to calculate how kilometres I would be behind today!!!!

Scottish Rollerski Championships, Fife, 7th Aug 2021. As the summer wore on, Covid regulations eased to allow organised amateur competition for all ages and the Fife race in August saw the start of rollerski racing. It was designated this year's Scottish Rollerski Championships. Logan Duncan was second overall and first U16 in the 9.6km race, while Elspeth Cruickshank became the U14 girl's Scottish Champion in the 6.4km distance. Other club podium finishes were Fergus Newman (3rd Sen M), Murdo Reid (2nd U16 M), Luke Nicholls (3rd U14 M) & Sophie Forth (2nd U14 F).

Huntly Rollerski Championships, 11th Sep 2021. Another digital first for the club was the introduction of online registration for race entry. This went smoothly and made the job of organising the races far easier, no panicky manipulation of the start list minutes before the first race. It wasn't totally without problems and some "on the morning" last minute adjustments were necessary. After a year of having to book everything online, skiers were quite practised & content to pre-register for the races and it didn't affect numbers. In fact, even without any Army or RAF skiers present we still had as many participants (42) as we did the last time the race was held in 2018.

How long did the faces stay smiling???
A relaxed atmosphere for the Senior Men's 7.1km.



A determined start.



Alex Standen made a rare return to ski racing with a second place in the men's 7.1km and I am sure the junior athletes he coaches took pleasure at seeing him suffer for a change. It was good to see former club member Peter Thomson make a return to the Huntly track. Peter now races in the colours of the Fife club for which he is an active coach. Logan Duncan won the U18/16 5.1km race and there was a close battle for 2nd & 3rd places with Jakob Ipsen just managing to keep ahead of Murdo Reid. In another competitive race, the U14/12 boys 3.7km, Luke Nicholls pushed hard enough to claim first place from Rasmus Ipsen. The victory was probably more important but Luke would have been disappointed to learn he missed out on a new course record by just three seconds – "coach – where do I get those extra seconds from?" But race of the day was the girl's 3.7km U14/12 where Elspeth Cruickshank smashed the long-standing course record (Lynne Gray, 2012) by over one minute. Second placed Sophie Forth was herself 40sec inside the old record.

Apprehensive faces for the Open Intermediate.



An intermediate Open Race of five middle loops (2km) was staged for the second time and is now a permanent fixture at the Huntly Champs. The race is open to all ages and aimed at skiers not quite confident enough to race the big hill but needing more of a challenge than the flat novice course. Luke Gilliland (U12) won the boys race while Astrid Ipsen (U12) headed the girl's race. We hope to see them on the "big hill" next year.



Did I say “race of the day” above. Well, there were actually two races of the day. In a father versus daughter battle Andy Everett was cajoled into racing the novice race by daughter Mia. As a father of daughters, Andy, you have my sympathy. After two combative laps not even our highly experienced timekeepers could separate father and daughter as they crossed the line equal first. And Andy was trying.

After over a year of not organising races it was impressive how smoothly we got back into the swing of things. Thank you all who helped and made it go so well. The juniors were disappointed that there were no relays – they will return.....

Cairngorm Hill Climb, 12th Sep 2021. An abridged 3-race Scottish Series finished with the Cairngorm Hill the day after the Huntly Championships. Huntly’s Oliver Bohle took second place from the impressive James Slimon of Highland Nordic in the senior men’s race. Dave Horsley took third place in the vet men’s race, managing to stay ahead of Huntly’s Simon Bate. Logan Duncan maintained his winning streak ahead of Jakob Ipsen in the U16/18 climb. Another very impressive race from Elspeth Cruickshank saw her set the fastest time in the U14 climb ahead of first U14 boy, Luke Nicholls. Not that far behind came Sophie Forth.

Scottish Rollerski Series 2021. When the points got totalled up Huntly ended up with three Series champions for 2021: Logan Duncan (U18), Luke Nicholls (U14) and Elspeth Cruickshank (U14).

In August 2019 Elizabeth organised a memorable summer rollerski over the Garmouth Viaduct (Newsletter No.56). For obvious reasons we were unable to repeat this popular event in 2020 but as soon as outdoor group activities were allowed Simon Bate organised a new summer tour. The only part he fell short on was providing a hostelry for liquid refreshment. Ah, there’s always next year as Simon relates.....

The Rothiemay Summer Rollerski Tour, July 2021.

A warm, sunny, evening in early July gave perfect conditions for the 2021 summer rollerski tour.

The group was a good mix of ages and abilities. This meant an early split into a faster lead party of SMT athletes, who were bravely supported by the more capable adult rollerskiers and some energetic cyclists (thank you!) and a slightly more sedate contingent, enjoying conversation and musical accompaniment from the support car...

The tradition of a fine bridge crossing maintained.

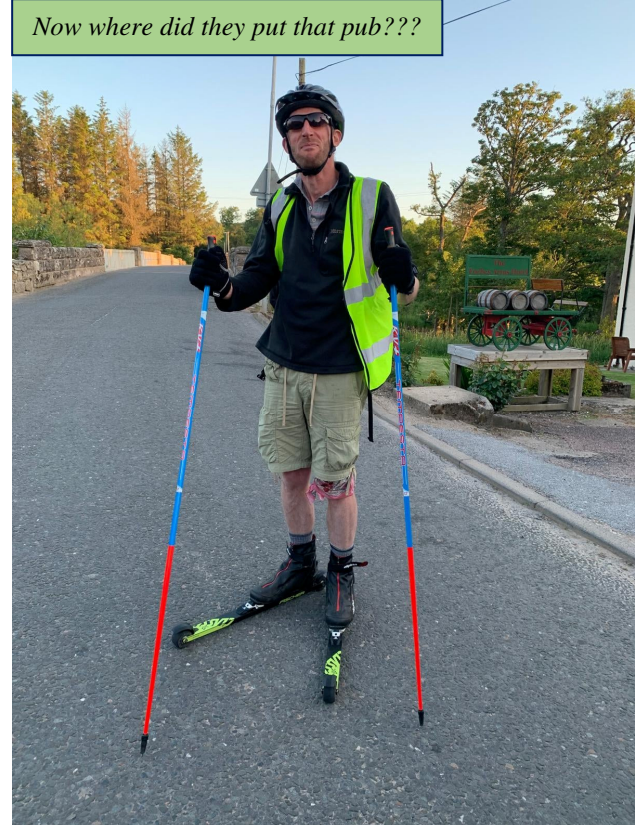


The rural route provided far-reaching views across the Aberdeenshire countryside, along with the opportunity to enjoy some impromptu natural history lessons about the dentition of snails (more teeth than you'd think) and how to identify a mayfly...or is it a stonefly?... or an alderfly?

Safety conscious organisers had positioned warning signs at strategic points along the way, and the tarmac was in good condition, so the 5 mile route to Rothiemay was completed with only one

minor injury. Unfortunately, the hope of a therapeutic pint from the Pub at the end, was cruelly dashed by the owner's last-minute decision to be closed.

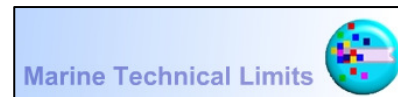
Overall, a successful trip during a summer with pretty limited opportunities for socialising. Looking forward to next year already...



CLUB SPONSORS:



LOTTERY FUNDED



After an impressive 2nd place Alex Standen asks "why did I put myself through all this again"



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