



# Yorkshire Dale Cross Country Ski Club Winter 2015 Newsletter

It has been another busy year for the club as you will see over the next few pages! First we have a few huge 'Thank yous'...

**Firstly to Alan Green for his time and expertise on our website for many years.** When Alan began his role as website manager, adding any new piece of information took time and patience and a great deal of knowledge on computer programming. Luckily new website frameworks now exist to make the job much easier.

The new website has been set up by club member Richard Gumbrell and makes use of modern computer savvy, for example by linking the Facebook Page onto the website's home page. Amy Gumbrell and Deb Johnston are going to try and keep the website as up to date as possible.

**Next a huge thank you to Wendy** for her many years as newsletter editor. Her publications have provided many reports and pieces of useful information to read again and again. Amy, Anna and Deb are going to try and publish 2 newsletters a year, this being our first. I'm not sure that future newsletters will be as detailed as Wendy's but we will do our best to make them interesting. If you would like anything else included, please email one of us with the details.

**And another thank you to Dave Coulthard** for running the club Facebook page which is new this year. It provides a whole host of up to date information and event photographs. (No need to be a Facebook user – just log on to the website to access Dave's updates.)

---

## Contents

- A year of Roller Ski at York by Martin Roscoe
- And so to Norway.....a newbie's experience by Anna Moody
- Club member profile: Steph Cook
- Club holiday 2015 report: Saariselka, Finland
- Yorkshire Ski Federation Nordic Report June 2015

## Key contacts

Martin Appleby [m.appleby451@btinternet.com](mailto:m.appleby451@btinternet.com)  
Helen Bell [helenbell115@btinternet.com](mailto:helenbell115@btinternet.com)  
David Parkin [david.parkin.1974@btinternet.com](mailto:david.parkin.1974@btinternet.com)  
Martin Roscoe [martinr@snowsportengland.org.uk](mailto:martinr@snowsportengland.org.uk)

[WWW.YDCCSC.ORG.UK](http://WWW.YDCCSC.ORG.UK) for further contact details.

## Winter 2015/16

Saturday 5th December, Walk at Alkborough Flats, North Lincolnshire. Further details coming soon.

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December Club Christmas Dinner Cleckheaton Golf Club Contact David Parkin.

Roller ski training will continue at York Sports Village under the Go Roller Ski programme Friday evenings and Sunday mornings. Contact Martin Roscoe.

Friday - Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> January Gearstones Lodge

Our annual weekend in the spectacular surroundings of upper Ribblesdale. Always good fun and excellent value at this bleak time of year. Contact Helen Bell

Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January to Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February Annual Club Holiday St Johann in Tirol Austria, though the venue and date may change if satisfactory arrangements cannot be made. Get in touch as soon as possible if interested. Contact Martin Appleby.

A number of members will be going to Norway at Easter. Get in contact if interested in joining.

Cambridge roller ski tour. Will be arranged by the Cambridge club. Further details TBC

As usual we are hoping for snow, therefore we tend to leave the New Year period relatively free. Any activities, snow or non-snow will probably be planned at short notice and emailed to the membership.

## Rollerskiing at the York Sports Village Cycle Track by Martin Roscoe

### Looking Back

Over the Summer we had two notable events at the cycle track at York. First was the filming of the Go Ski Go Board video, which I hope all of you have had chance to see. I would like to offer a big thank you to all who attended on the day to make it such a success. It was a shame that it was too windy to get the drone flying, the overhead shots with more of you showing off your skills and enthusiasm would have made the video even better. The video also reflected the broad range of ages and abilities of rollerskiers as well as the activities that YDCCSC get up to.

The second event that occurred was slightly less glamorous than the filming of a video but in its own way equally important. Members of YDCCSC were asked to attend a pilot leader's award course. Five members of the club gave up their time to help myself and Snowsport England run this session. Leaders will become an important part of rollerskiing by allowing rollerskiers to 'just' rollerski on their own but in a supervised and safe way.

## And so to Norway.....a newbie's experience by Anna Moody

Back in November 2014 Martin Roscoe suggested to a few of us 'newbies' that if we fancied having a go at on-snow skiing sooner rather than later (i.e. rather than waiting until 2016) then why not go to Nordseter or Sjusjøen in Norway at Easter 2015? Why not indeed?! We ended up going for a week and what a week it was! Those taking part in this adventure were: Martin, Ruth and Keir, Deborah Johnston, Richard Smith, Helen Bell, Martin Appleby, Wendy McCrae, John Anderson and myself.

We flew from Manchester to Oslo and then hopped on a train at the airport to Lillehammer where we stayed the night in a really lovely youth hostel. The next day, after stocking up on perishables, (Deb, Richard and I were sharing a cabin and self-catering. Our luggage was full of pasta /porridge /chocolate/ nuts /beans and pulses /rice etc. – we had no intention of going hungry!) we had a short bus ride up to Nordseter. Martin, Ruth and Keir were already in Nordseter and met us off the bus.

We have had a couple of race days, which I hope are encouraging everyone to have a go at pushing their limits a little bit more. As a coach/instructor it is always a good idea to add a bit of competition as it forces everyone to push their techniques a little bit out of the comfort zone which is a very good way to make progress on improving technique.

### Looking Forward

We had a video analysis day in October which participants found very useful. And I hope we can have a couple more before Christmas. Anyone wanting to be videoed and to keep their own videos, need only bring along their own devices. One thing that I will try to introduce and develop from week to week will be an agility course at the track. Just something to get everyone light on their feet (and skis). As the colder and wetter weather arrives, we will need to make sure that when we are on the track we do as much skiing as possible and save the chat for post ski coffee and holiday planning sessions.

.....

For Deb and I it was our first time cross country skiing and yes, we felt like newbies. Most people had said to us that classic is easier on snow than it is on roller skis...err, well..., actually, it wasn't. This may have partly been due to the ski hire shop giving Deb and I exactly the same skis which we couldn't understand as a) we knew well enough that the correct skis need to be based on your height and weight (Deb and I are neither the same height nor the same weight) and b) the ski hire shop had asked us to email them our heights and weights so they could have the right skis ready for us. All very odd and not very helpful when it is your first time on snow and you have no idea how the skis should feel.

Fortunately the seasoned experts (i.e. Martin R and Martin A, Helen, John and Wendy) were on hand to give us tips and advice on our techniques which helped us a lot – many thanks to all of you for your help, support and encouragement throughout the week. I even had an impromptu lesson from some 'locals' when I was doing drills on the Birkebeinerloyppa (stride and glide had gone to pot and I was trying to get the timing right). This could possibly have been embarrassing if I could have understood

what they were saying while they were watching but fortunately I don't speak Norwegian and when they spoke to me in English they were very nice and friendly!

We'd been told by a reliable source (Martin R.) that the terrain was 'undulating'... It wasn't. At least not in the way that the Cambridge dictionary defines undulating: '*having small hills and slopes that look like waves; moving gently up and down*'. The hills were definitely hills! This was a bit of a surprise but it gave us an excellent opportunity to learn several new skills, namely: how to get up the hills and how to get down them! By the end of the week we'd got used to the hills (our hill negotiation skills had improved tremendously) and we were thoroughly enjoying ourselves exploring some of the 350km of trails that are accessible from the Nordseter/ Sjusjøen area. We swore that if we came back again we'd make sure that we were a lot fitter (Deb had also sworn that she

would never ever go to Pellestova again – it was the killer hill of the week!). Anyone care to come up with a Club definition of 'undulating'?

Easter was a lovely time to go skiing as the trails were really busy with families out for the day carrying their backpacks full of wood so that they could light a camp fire and have a picnic. There were also many skiers out with their dogs – I've never seen such fit, healthy dogs with shiny coats. It was also interesting to see how Easter is celebrated in this part of Norway – making snow chickens and snow roosters looks far more fun than painting hardboiled eggs!!

To sum up: the weather was gorgeous, the scenery stunning, the air crystal clear, the trails fabulous and seemingly endless, the company lovely, the cabin cosy and the food filling. In fact it was such a fantastic holiday (thank you Martin R for suggesting it) that we're doing it all again at Easter 2016 but this time we're staying at Sjusjøen.





## CLUB MEMBER PROFILE – STEPH COOK

### Background

Over the past decade my love of cross country skiing, and the summer version rollerskiing, has shaped my life and taken me to some amazing places. I started skiing in New Zealand at the Snow Farm in 2005 and once I returned from there I joined the Yorkshire Dales club and started rollerskiing. Following this I spoke to the GB head coach Roy Young and he recommended a specialist Nordic Sports College in Vuokatti, Finland. So in 2007 I moved to Finland to take part in full time training at the same time as studying with the Finnish Junior coach Jussi Pirainen and a group of athletes that include some Olympians such as Iivo and Kerttu Niskanen and Krista Parmakoski.

This was a life changing experience as I was able to live and train in one of the best environments in the world for my sport. Over the 3 years I lived there I attended over 45 races including a large number of FIS standard races and even Scandinavian Cup level events. My best FIS points to date are 291 which I got in my final season 2009/10 in Finland. That year I also attended the British Cross country ski championships and gained 3rd in the sprint and relay.

### Life after Finland

Since leaving, I have continued my passion for sport and trained to be a personal trainer and set up my own successful business. I kept up my training as best as I could and have been on a few holidays to go skiing in Seefeld, Austria and Levi, Finland over the past few years. However I really got back into skiing again when I returned to Finland in March 2014 and decided I would like to get back into competitive ski racing again. My goal was to return to the British Cross Country and Biathlon Championships and so I trained harder than I had for years and completed lots of events such as marathons, swimathons and various shorter running races.

In January 2015, I went back to cross country ski racing and it was such a great moment for me to be racing again at a national level. I didn't do as well as 2010 but I was happy to get into the racing mindset again. I met lots of other enthusiastic British skiers that mentioned rollerski racing to me as a good way to improve and get fitter in the summer months. Once I returned I started attending training sessions in York every Sunday.

### New beginnings: rollerskiing

With help and technique pointers from the instructors at the club I slowly worked on tweaking my rollerskiing so I looked like less of a snow skier and more of a rollerskier. I completed my first ever rollerski race on training wheels and came 2nd in March in York. This gave me the inspiration to improve and also get some race rollerskis. In May I attended my first national rollerski race in the Olympic park, London and gained 4th place but I was fastest on training rollers. It was a huge change going from training to race rollerskis as they are much faster and harder to balance on. I then raced again in York in the 3km sprint where I came second again just 6 seconds off the pace. I was pleased with this as it was my first ever race on race rollers.

In between rollerski races I also completed some long distance fell running events in Swaledale near where I live. I travelled over to Salt Ayre Cycle track in July for the Lakeland Ski Clubs one hour time trial event. It was great to try out a new track and on such a warm day it was a fantastic experience, I came 1st, my first win on rollerskis.

After this I went to Oberhof, Germany for a week of on snow training in the ski tunnel which was great for me to practise my snow technique and also complete over 20 hours of training without work pressure etc. I then attended a biathlon training camp in Bisley, London with some of the GB development squad and the army. I got the chance to try out shooting a rifle which was fun but I'm just going to stick to cross country skiing I think!



## Autumn 2015 racing to the top

In September we had a 5km rollerski race in York which was good but tough as I hadn't been on my race rollers in 6 weeks. Following a shaky start I came 1st. My next event was the British Rollerski national championships in Hillingdon, London. There was a tough field of competitors including fellow YDSC member Fiona Hughes. I felt like everything came together and my technique had definitely improved from all the practise. I came 5th overall, a result I'm very pleased with as I was about 2 mins behind the winner, Olympian Fiona.

My next goal of the year was the 4 hour time trial in Hillingdon, mid-October. On a cool day a large field of us set off round the circuit. I knew I had to do my own race pacing as it was tempting to go off too fast. It was more of a mental race then physical but the last hour was very brutal with my left ankle becoming very painful. I carried on but couldn't do my planned increase in speed. However I am happy to have come 2nd just one lap behind Holly Rees Lay with 56 laps. The previous best for the past 5 years was 44 laps for the women so I'm happy to have beaten that!

My final rollerski race of the season was a 1 hour time trial event in York where I set a new female track record at the beginning of November. I completed 23kms (23 laps of the track) in 1 hour and 46 seconds.

**What's next for Steph?** I now plan to return to international FIS racing in Finland during the Winter season.



Steph at the biathlon training camp in Bisley

On the podium in York



## Report on the 2015 Club Holiday to Saariselka, Finland by John Anderson



This year's club holiday found us in Saariselka, Lapland from 22nd February to 1<sup>st</sup> March. Organised by Martin Appleby we took advantage of an Inghams package to get us to our destination on one flight from Manchester to Kittila, with a 3 hour transfer by bus to the resort. Club members taking part were Helen Bell, Wendy McCrae, Jane Cromack, Nigel Harper, Martin Appleby, Stephen Kennedy, Andy Cassels- Brown, Chris Greene, and John Anderson with Alistair Brown from the Manchester club joining us in the resort, pictured above.

Saariselka is located 200km north of the Arctic Circle in Lapland and just 50km from the Russian border. There are about 200km of prepared ski trails, including 35km of illuminated track, and with some 70km of the trails located in the nearby Urho Kekkonen National Park. Some of the trails are also designated as nature trails and are not as well prepared as the main tracks.

We stayed in the Kelotahti apartments in 4 bed and 6 bed rooms. The apartments were modern and comfortable. We opted to take our breakfast and evening meals in the Holiday Club Saariselka which involved a 5 minute walk up the main street for the well provisioned buffet style meals.

Saariselka is mainly a purpose built holiday resort along with the smaller centres of Laanila, Kakslauttanen and Kilopa which form the central part of the ski trails in this former gold mining area. The ski trails have shelters (kota) cabins (paivatupa) and fireplaces (tulipaikka) at convenient intervals as well as cafes and hotels at the main centres (which were well patronised by the club members).

The skiing is varied between forested trails and open fells with wide tracks suited to both classic and skating styles and the layout of the tracks lends itself to both shorter and longer trip options. The weather was generally good and temperatures perhaps milder than you would expect at that time of year in Lapland but did not cause any problems for waxing or choice of clothing.

We had some really good days skiing with people able to vary their days outing to suit their fitness and abilities. We weren't able to cover all the trails in the time available, particularly some of the longer nature trails, so maybe next time! Thanks go to Martin for co-ordinating the arrangements with Inghams.

*Andy and Alastair try their hand at the traditional Finnish pastime of incinerating camping sausages at the Moitakuru cabin.*



## Yorkshire Ski Federation Nordic Report June 2015: Wendy McRae, Nordic representative

### Go Ski Initiative

The Go Ski Go Board initiative at York Sports Village continues to develop apace. YDCCSC member Martin Roscoe is holding Sunday morning and Friday evening roller ski sessions at this venue. The track has a lovely smooth surface and is ideal for learning, with exclusive access for the sessions, making it possible to concentrate entirely on technique.

The Sunday sessions see up to 20 rollerskiers using the track. Martin Appleby and Helen Bell of YDCCSC have given considerable support to this initiative by providing coaching help and advice to the growing band of competent rollerskiers on Sunday mornings.

There is a distinct group of Friday night rollerskiers many of whom are younger and university based. It is hoped that it will be possible to create a satellite club for this group, which would be able to put in a bid for equipment. Martin Roscoe is working with the Regional Development Officer to progress this.

Please contact Martin Roscoe if you are interested in further information about the pilot "leaders" award scheme which will allow people to roller ski without the need for a qualified instructor to be present.

YDCCSC have held a series of four races at the York Cycle Track which has given participants a target and a challenge to race locally. We hope to have further races in the future and attract competitors from further afield.

### Roller ski training events

Helen Bell of Yorkshire Dales Cross Country Ski Club once again organised a weekend training event at Hetton Lyons in August. This is always a popular and well attended event. Helen will be organising this event again this year but in future hopes to pass this on to another club such as Tyneside or Manchester. Two other training events are held during the year: one in July at Hayes, London, organised by London Region Nordic Ski Club and the other in October organised by the Lakeland Cross Country Ski Club.

### Roller ski tours

There has been a full series of roller ski tours throughout the summer and autumn (including Chester, North Wales, the Lake District and the Yorkshire Wolds), linking up with neighbouring clubs, Manchester and Lakeland. Yorkshire Dales XCSC organised a weekend visit to Cambridge in May. On the first day a cycle tour around one of the nearby reservoirs is organised and on the second day a roller ski along the cycle track in Cambridge adjacent to the bus route. This is a smooth flat surface, ideal for roller skiing. This proved to be a popular event drawing together clubs from across the country. Pictures of the event can be viewed on the Yorkshire Dales Cross Country Ski Club Facebook page.

### On Snow

YDCCS members managed a few on snow sessions during the winter season, in Queensbury (Bradford), Dalby Forest and Snake Pass.

### Club holiday

The club holiday was in Saariselka Finland, with excellent snow conditions. Two recent recruits to the Go-ski initiative were welcome additions to the group and acquitted themselves well, this being their first experience of cross country skiing on snow.

### Norway 2015

Martin Roscoe also organised an event in Nordseter Norway, over the Easter period at which three recent recruits attended and made excellent progress, this also being their first experience of on snow cross country skiing, demonstrating that experience on roller skis can translate to skiing on snow.

### Snowsport England Nordic Key Committee

Yorkshire Dales Club member Helen Bell has continued in her role as a member of the Nordic Coaching Panel, organising a series of instructor training events during the year and assisting SSE with keeping the list of qualified instructors up-to-date.

## Publicity

Key developments this year have been our new Facebook page, our website revamp as well as the promotional video about rollerskiing.