



TYNESIDE LOIPERS

The NorthEast's Specialist
Cross Country Ski club

Newsletter

September 2013



www.tynesideloipers.org.uk

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Calendar of Events - see page 11

Thurs 24th Oct 7.00pm	AGM and social, 26 Victoria Street, NE4 7JU
Sat 5 th - Sun 6 th Oct	SSE - Roller-ski Course, Lancaster
30 th March - 6 th April	SSE Nordic Skills week, Kvitåvatn, Norway
	2014
Thurs 16 th - Mon 20 th Jan	Telemark skiing in the Alps
23 rd Jan - 1st Feb	Cross-country Masters World Cup, Pillerseetal, Austria
Fri 7 th to Sun 9 th Feb	Loipers' Scotland Weekend
Sun 2 nd - Sun 9 th March	Track skiing in Finland

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From the editor

A recent UN report says scientists are 95% certain that humans are the dominant cause of global warming since the 1950s. Transport is a major contributor to the carbon emissions that cause global warming. Global warming will result in glaciers retreating and decreased snow cover in the northern hemisphere. Are our ski trips destroying the thing we love?

Let's look at the carbon emissions of some popular Loipers' trips.

Return trip	Method of transport	Carbon emissions (tonnes) per person¹
Newcastle to Canadian Rockies	Flight	2.91
Newcastle to Finland	Train/Flight ²	0.98
Newcastle to Trondheim (via Amsterdam)	Flight	0.65
Newcastle to Geneva (direct)	Flight	0.45
Newcastle to Switzerland	Train ³	0.08
Newcastle to Braemar	2 people sharing car	0.05

For comparison, the average global carbon emission per person per year is 5.5 tonnes; in North America average carbon emissions per person per year are 24 tonnes; in Europe they are 10.5 tonnes⁴.

So local skiing or taking the train to French or Swiss ski areas are clearly the most climate-friendly options.

¹ Estimated emissions were obtained from <http://www.carbonbalanced.org/calculator/transport.asp>, <http://www.sbb.ch>, <http://www.seat61.com/CO2flights.htm#UkqYLhZYWFI>

² Train to Manchester

³ East coast to London, Eurostar to Paris, TGV to Lausanne, Swiss rail to Oberwald and 200km of splendid cross-country skiing

⁴ David JC Mackay, Sustainable energy without the hot air, 2009

From your committee

AGM – Thursday October 24th

This year's AGM and social takes place on Thursday October 24th near the centre of Newcastle - 26 Victoria Street, NE4 7JU. Parking in the street is limited but there's plenty more nearby. I no longer have a phone and mobiles don't work well in the basement, so it's best not to get lost. If you are thinking about public transport, it's a stroll from Central Station.

Business will start at 7.45pm prompt, but doors will be open a good hour or so beforehand to allow folk a chance to get some food and a drink and catch up on the chat - things should be well underway by 7pm. The meeting should be over by 8.45pm, and will be followed by some slides of recent trips.

Business will be the usual staples - election of officers, officers' reports, money matters (notably a possible increase in subs), and club activity, especially trips. Do please let me know well in advance about other items for the agenda.

Please let me know if you are coming, preferably by close of play on Sunday 20th, so I can co-ordinate food/drink and distribute papers electronically. It would also help to know if you can't come so I don't pester you again.

I look forward to hearing from you, and seeing many of you there.

Charlie Fisher (Loipers' Secretary)

Subscriptions

Annual subscriptions are now due (£14 for individuals and £22 for a couple) and should ideally be paid by standing order or else sent to the Membership Secretary — Alan Mitcham, 5 The Rise, Ponteland, NE20 9LJ. These rates have remained unchanged for eight years and compare favourably with those of other clubs.

Tyneside Loipers are affiliated to Snowsport England (SSE). As a small club, we believe we benefit by joining the wider cross-country skiing community; and we need SSE support e.g. coaching scheme, courses, insurance. For these benefits, we pay an annual levy for each of our members; which comes out of your annual subscription to Tyneside Loipers. Last year, SSE put up their levy from £6.50 to £10 per person. The committee did not pass on this increase to members. However, at the AGM we will be proposing to increase the subscriptions to £17 for full members, £28 for joint members, £10 country members (newsletter only), and £10 for juniors.

Use of Loipers' email list

The committee would like to remind all members that the Loipers' email list should only be used for messages about skiing and other outdoor activities.

Looking back – summer activities

Summer roller-skiing

The summer weather has generally been kind to the roller-skiers amongst us and club members have had several outings for a couple of hours to enjoy the feeling of gliding over smooth tarmac in the sunshine. Hetton Lyons and the Town Moor have been the favoured venues but in fact there are many places where the surface of cycle tracks and waggonways is good enough to enjoy safely and without too much use of the internal combustion engine to get there. If you find such a place with a kilometre or more of track, then please let me know as I am compiling a list of such places in the North East. (Saltwell Park, Herrington Park and Weetslade are already noted.)

Yorkshire Dales XCSC have a regular programme of day tours - it is about time the Loipers had at least one in our calendar, don't you think? Suggestions for routes are welcome.

As well as the group sessions, I have been instructing an increasing number of members either as beginners or improvers on a one-to-one basis.

Alasdair Wilson

Ravens try-it day, 19th August

Last year, I made a successful bid to the North East Snowsports Association on behalf of Tyneside Loipers for funding to extend our range of ski boot sizes. As part of the deal, I arranged a session with the teenage members of Ravens Ski Club which is based at Silksworth. With the help of Alan and Tommy, seven teenagers and several adults (who couldn't resist it after seeing how much fun the kids were having) were instructed in both classic and skating techniques on a fairly level cycle track near to the ski slope. Some took to it very well while others found it a little daunting. However it was agreed to have another session as soon as a date could be arranged, probably in October.

Alasdair Wilson

Hetton Lyons races, 24th August

Tyneside Loipers again hosted a race in the GB roller-ski series at Hetton Lyons as part of the SSE Coaching weekend. Despite the drizzle, we had 27 entries from all over the country, including an intrepid novice skier who raced over two laps. The five U14 and U16 juniors took part in a 2x2lap skiathlon changing their classic skis for faster skating ones after the first two laps. The other competitors skied four laps in classic style followed by four laps of skating. The U18 boys stole a march on the vets and seniors, taking the first three places. The race winner was Gregor Young from Scotland, who managed to keep going at an impressive pace and with great style doing around five minutes per lap for each of the classic laps and under four and a half minutes per lap for the skating. Some of the experienced old codgers were lapped more than once! In second place was Duncan Gibb from Huntly Nordic who is a

member of the GB Nordic Development Squad is only 15. (I am working on setting up come-and-try-it sessions which in the long term could well discover such talent in the north-east. If you would like to help with that in any way please contact me).

Thanks are due to Alan Mitcham and Alex Coulthard for doing the timing and to Frank Cauley for manning the water point; the staff at Springboard Leisure were very helpful as usual.

Alasdair Wilson

Hetton Lyons Snowsport England roller-ski weekend

The annual SSE roller-ski coaching event was held at Hetton Lyons Park over the Saturday and Sunday of August Bank Holiday weekend. John Peatfield and I were the only representatives from Tyneside Loipers. I had not received any formal roller-ski coaching over the last few years and I certainly needed some help with my technique. The coaching was very good and also included a video session, which I found particularly useful.

For those who haven't tried it, roller-skiing is excellent for improving one's cross country ski skills (both classic and skating). It is also good for improving balance and developing strength and fitness. A smooth stretch of tarmac is all you need to practise on. The only downside is that falling on tarmac is a less pleasant experience than falling on snow (Rule number 1 – don't fall down). Note also that roller-skis do not have brakes! (But there are ways of stopping under control)

Hetton Lyons Park is a 1.8km circuit with some significant hills and undulations. It was built as a cycle track and is used by the local cycle clubs. It is pleasantly landscaped — part of the track encompasses a good-sized lake — and much of it is planted with trees. It also has a pavilion with changing rooms and a small cafe, so it is a great venue for the course.

The weekend was organised around three coaching groups, two advanced groups and one group of intermediates (including John and me). The British Nordic Development Squad (up and coming junior racers based at the Huntly Nordic Ski Club) were also present. They spent the whole weekend in serious training – and very impressive they were too!

Many thanks to Helen Bell of the Yorkshire Dales Club for organising the weekend and to Alasdair Wilson for organising the race.

Alan Mitcham

Loipers' Alston cycle trip

Six Loipers (Alan Mitcham, Bill Haylock, Neil Waters, Ian Everard, Tim Triston and myself) enjoyed a day out in fine weather on quiet roads and tracks around Alston.



Pushing up the trail between Leadgate to Alston

We followed old packhorse routes which are now used as mountain bike trails. After a steep climb out of Alston the route followed minor roads and tracks to Nenthead where we stopped for a break and a chat with a member of the mine conservation group. The C2C route south of the mine is very steep and the party split into pushers and diehards. It did provide us with an excellent descent into Garrigill for lunch outside the George. In the afternoon we followed the C2C to Leadgate and then went off road back to Alston.



Over the top from Nenthead to Garrigill

Keith Walker

Loipers' Teesdale walk

Six hardy souls went on the walk organised by Pat Lynch in June. We met up at the newly opened Bowlees Visitor Centre, an excellent place for tea and cakes. The weather was threatening – dark clouds and very windy – but at least it wasn't raining.

Pat had organised a walk of "about 8 miles". I hoped we could stretch it out a bit longer because we were planning to have a meal on the way home and we didn't want to finish too early. I need not have worried – it turned out to be 12 miles! And we were looking out for wild flowers along the way.

We walked west from Bowlees along the north side of Upper Teesdale (lovely walking country) and then crossed the Tees near Cronkley Pasture. Lunch time... and by now it was raining! Two members of the party (unnamed) were complaining a little! But we went on (undaunted though a little bedraggled) for a few miles further upstream before climbing up onto Cronkley Fell and past the Upper Teesdale National Nature Reserve. Sadly we failed to find the spring gentian for which this area is famous.

As we headed back downhill, enjoying the company of golden plovers, curlews and lapwings, we were beginning to dry out. By the time we got to High Force, we even had sunshine. High Force itself was spectacular (the best I have ever seen) and there were lots more wild flowers along by the river as we went past Low Force and eventually back to Bowlees.

We enjoyed another cup of tea and fruit scones at the visitor centre and eventually we dragged ourselves away to Cart's Bog Inn for a meal and some good beer – an excellent way to finish.

Alan Mitcham

Nenthead mines visit

On Sunday 13th July an intrepid bunch of Loipers (Alan Mitcham, Keith Walker, Nuala Wright and myself) took part in an exciting underground adventure – a four hour walk to the "Ballroom" in the Smallcleugh Lead Mine.



In the ballroom

Lead mining began in the area around 1770 and ceased in the early 1900's. There are around 23km of tunnels in the area of this mine but we only explored a small number of them. One area of the mine is called the "Ballroom Flat" where a huge amount of lead ore was extracted and unusually not back filled with "deads" (rock taken out but not containing useful minerals). The "Ballroom Flat" was the scene of a dinner held by 28 members of a local Masonic lodge in September 1901. We continued the tradition by sharing some sandwiches and crisps!

During the trip we had to walk through a tunnel with water nearly lapping the tops of our wellies and, although I had forgotten to warn everyone to wear knee pads and gardening gloves, our group managed to navigate several sections of the mine crawling on hands and knees.

Our leader for the trip was a local mine enthusiast, Michael Hamer, who brought a wealth of knowledge about this mine's history and artefacts. He pointed out drill holes where explosives had been used, minerals such as galena and fluorspar and some interesting graffiti from around 1855. Without him we would certainly have been lost in the maze of tunnels underground. Everyone expressed thanks for his generous care and time.



*Alan traversing the rails
with a 2 metre drop!*

Interestingly, the mines may become used again as companies are beginning to see if they can extract minerals economically. The mine will probably not reopen to the general public but it was also interesting to note that, when a group of Loipers took part in a cycle ride that went past the Nenthead mine, we spoke to a group of people from the 'Nenthead Mines Conservation Society' who were taking part in restoring the mine buildings and infrastructure.



*Ian, Nuala, Keith and Neil
outside Smallcleugh mine.*

Neil Waters

Looking forward to this season

Tyneside Loipers' trips in 2014

Your committee are planning the following trips for 2014:-

Telemark skiing in the Alps (Thursday 16th – Monday 20th January)

We are planning to ski in the Porte du Soleil area, based at Les Gets. It looks like we can get an early evening flight from Newcastle to Geneva via Amsterdam, so we will have four full days of skiing, returning home on the Monday evening. Alpine skiers are also welcome (telemarking is not compulsory).

Contact Alan (alanmitcham@metronet.co.uk) or Tim Owen (tim.owen@66i.co.uk).

Scotland Weekend (Friday 7th – Sunday 9th February)

We are planning to stay at the Girl Guide cabin in Braemar for the weekend. Skiing options depend on the prevailing snow conditions - either on the ski hill (at Glenshee) or high touring (Munro-bagging) or, if conditions permit, skiing in the valley. The cabin is convenient for the centre of Braemar. It has a wood burning stove. It comfortably sleeps 12 people and has a well-equipped kitchen, plus showers and separate male/female washrooms and toilets.

Contact Alan Mitcham (alanmitcham@metronet.co.uk)

Track skiing in Finland (Sunday 2nd – Sunday 9th March)

This holiday will be based in the small town of Akaslompolo which is well above the Arctic Circle in Finnish Lapland. It has great skiing in attractive rolling forest terrain and also above the tree line, with lots of good snow and 300km of well-prepared tracks. There are cafes and warming huts along the trails where you can cook your own sausages by the fire. The town has a hotel, a supermarket and ski rental facilities. On various days of the week, buses go to outlying areas from where one can ski back to Akaslompolo. Eight of us have already booked to stay in the cabins. Others are staying in the hotel. The Yorkshire Dales XC Ski Club are going there the same week.

Contact Alan Mitcham (alanmitcham@metronet.co.uk).

Norway hut touring (Wednesday 9th – Saturday 19th April)

We are planning to ski in the Syllan area on the Norway/Sweden border where there are several staffed and unstaffed huts with marked routes between them and plenty of skiable high tops, including the main summit of Syllan (1728m).

We expect to fly to Trondheim (via Amsterdam) and get the train or bus. More information will be coming soon on the likely route, based on advice from Chris Ottley who skied the area a couple of years ago.

Contact Alan (alanmitcham@metronet.co.uk) or Keith jkeithwalker@hotmail.com.

Alan Mitcham

Appeals

Cross country skiing with visually impaired people

Pam Curwen is hoping to lead a holiday for visually impaired cross-country skiers in either Finland or Norway in late February or early March 2014. For details, see:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-3GHIHUDxBcyJUjSk-KpfBjw3JJZlYc0htHmVIBYzU/pub>

If you would be interested in acting as a guide, please contact Linda Gaitskell, Tel: 0208 422 1726, Mob: 077 247 26788, email: runningsun27@googlemail.com

British Nordic Ski Team Olympic Appeal

The British Nordic Ski Team is doing great work in bringing young skiers up to their potential. Some have already represented Great Britain at World Cup races and the Winter Olympics. For example, you may have heard of Muzzy (Andrew Musgrave) and his exploits in beating all the Norwegian juniors at their championships. The squad is run on a shoestring and, with the Sochi Winter Olympics coming up this winter, an appeal has been launched to finance the level of training that these young people need to be able to compete at the highest level, see:-

<http://www.teambss.org.uk/media/108157/20130809british%20nordic%20ski%20team%202013%20appeal.pdf>

If you would like to help the team achieve success, you can make a donation to the team through the Skiers Trust of Great Britain:- <http://www.justgiving.com/skierstrust>

You can follow the team on:

<http://www.facebook.com/britishnordic>

<http://twitter.com/britishnordic>

<http://youtube.com/user/britishnordic>

www.britishnordic.org

Alasdair Wilson

For sale

Skis - Alpina 2000 Tour, 200cm long, suitable for valley touring. Fish scale base but not metal-edged. Salomon SNS bindings. Offers (donated to club funds).

Contact Alan Mitcham (alanmitcham@metronet.co.uk)

International events

Cross-country Masters World Cup

Next year this will be held at Pillerseetal in Austria, from 23rd January - 1st February, 2014. This is one of the best Austrian Nordic ski areas, easy to get to, has fantastic cross-country ski trails, with guaranteed snow due to high altitude and low-season accomodation prices. See: <http://www.mwc2014.com/en/pillerseetal-masters-world-cup/home>.

Contact Alasdair Wilson (awilson.craw@blueyonder.co.uk)

Obertilliach Telemark Festival, Austria, 28/12/2013 to 5/1/2014

Wish to learn telemark skiing or improve? Then Obertilliach and Totally Nordic (<http://totallynordic.co.uk/Services/Telemark>) offer a perfect location for all levels with the ski slopes starting in the village centre and offering all grades of ski runs. Top Snowsport England Coaches Andy and Chris Stewart will be the two lead instructors for the week, with assistance from other BASI, SSE and local ski school instructors. The ski runs open early and close late, with night skiing once a week, this gives a great opportunity to ski all day. For those looking for a little more of a challenge, the area offers ski touring into the surrounding mountains to find the steep and deep snow.

Contact Alan Eason (alan@totallynordic.co.uk).

Snowsport England (SSE) events

- Saturday 5th - Sunday 6th October, 2013. Roller-ski Course, Salt Ayre Cycle Track, Lancaster
- 30th March - 6th April 2014. On-Snow Nordic Skills week
After a year away, this year's course is returning to its old home of Kvitåvatn in Norway, where the course has been run successfully for many years. The combination of excellent cross country ski tracks and the downhill pistes together with the excellent facilities of the Fjellstoge make it the ideal venue.
The week is designed for cross-country skiers who want to improve their skills whether their interests are in touring, racing or freeheel downhill. Participants should be able to ski at a minimum standard of improver/intermediate level.

For further details, see <http://www.snowsportengland.org.uk/cross-country-events>.

Club events

- Thursday, 24th October, 26 Victoria Street, NE4 7JU, AGM and social: doors open 7pm, business starts 7.45pm.