

Snowsport England On-Snow Nordic Week, Kvitavatn, Norway by Gwenda Cavill

The beginning of April found me at the annual on-snow Nordic coaching week run by Snowsport England (SSE) at Kvitavatn in Norway looking to improve my cross country skiing. Many other members of the Loipers have taken part over the years. For those who have yet to try it, this is a very good week covering both skate and classic techniques.

Folk are assigned to a coaching group on the first morning according to their skill level, speed and aspirations. Whilst most seemed happy to stay in the same group, there were also opportunities to move between groups when needed.

The quality of instruction across the board was excellent. Beginners and those who had done less skiing were instructed by Dagmar Junghanns, whom Loipers will know from roller skiing at Hetton and from Dalseter, where she is a regular member of the coaching team. Scott Dixon also helped with the less experienced skiers (he was, until recently, a top British biathlete) whilst Patrick Winterton and Alan Eason (both top SSE coaches and former Olympians) shared the more experienced skiers. Patrick now commentates on cross country skiing for Eurosport and Alan runs *Totally Nordic* based in Obertilliach, Austria. (I strongly recommend an instruction week with Alan in Austria for anyone wanting to improve their Nordic skiing).



Mornings were generally spent on drills and exercises (Scott had a very interesting line in games...!) and afternoons exploring the local area while being instructed along the way. On the last day there was the opportunity to be assessed for a SSE proficiency award which a few people took up and then on the last afternoon there were fancy dress races. I was surprised and impressed by the enthusiasm with which many folk approached the fancy dress in particular! Not everyone raced and not everyone dressed up (it is your week to do as you want).

The venue worked well (in recent years it has also taken place at Nordseter). The comfortable

Kvitavatn Fjellstoge will be familiar to some from Exodus holidays (previously Waymark). There is a handy practice area nearby and a good range of prepared tracks.

I found it a very sociable week. There was a wide range of ages and abilities. Everyone was there for the same reasons, to improve their skiing and also to have a holiday. The general tone of the week was very relaxed and although the instruction was structured, there was no compulsion to attend all the sessions. Some folk missed a session to rest and some to go off exploring on their own. Some people met up late afternoons for a stretching session. Then in the evenings, there was a variety of talks on subjects including waxing, ski orienteering, ski racing and the Worldloppet masters. One evening there was a quiz

Overall, the week delivered everything I was hoping for: significant improvement in my technical skiing and an enjoyable holiday.



Fancy dress races (final day)

Gwenda Cavill