

Chairmans's Report

We have had a successful year. Participation from Loiper members was at its highest ever. We had no less than 24 Loipers plus 3 friends participating in our week at Dalseter in March. There would have been more, but both Lewis and Jim were forced to drop out at short notice (commiserations to them – they missed a great week). Five new members (Peter and Alison, Howard, Ebony, and Fiona Harris) joined us, with most of them trying Nordic skis for the first time. Peter and Alison even joined us on our subsequent hut touring trip in the Jotunheim.

Thanks to John Mordue for organising the Dalseter season (GB Nordic). We had some excellent leaders. The off-track guiding from Stefan Janik was particularly appreciated and included an introduction to telemark skiing. Those who tried skate skiing had some very good coaching from Dagmar and our own expert Alasdair.

Following the Dalseter week, eight of us took the bus and headed north to the Jotunheim. We had 9 days of touring from hut to hut in very mixed weather and snow conditions. We spent one day hut-bound in blizzard conditions at Fondsbu but we also had some memorable days with fresh snow and one 9½ hour day navigating a challenging untracked route between Olavsbu and Spiterstulen. With the forecast for high winds and blizzard conditions we left Spiterstulen two days early and had one day skiing on the prepared tracks at Nordseter near Lillehammer.

Four Loipers (plus friends including Ros from the Manchester club) went to Val d'Isere in December for a week of coaching with Telemark Tracks (highly recommended telemark coaching – 'best I have ever had' says Alan). And four of us also had a week of guided touring (telemark and alpine) in The Queryas, in the southern French Alps. We started the week with patchy snow cover and finished with well over half a metre of fresh snowfall.

Skiing in the northeast was disappointing. Many of us did not get any outings at all. The limited snow cover meant that the local ski tows hardly operated all winter and it was hardly possible to do any ski touring in the Pennines. We did however have a Scotland weekend (based in Braemar) but the lack of snow meant that it was more Munro-bashing than skiing.

Gwenda and Les, and Mike and Alasdair were our only participants at the sharp end of track skiing and racing. Mike took part in his first ever ski marathon, whilst Alasdair skied in the Masters cross-country championships in Norway and Gwenda and Les and Alasdair all took part in the Snowsport England Nordic coaching week at Dalseter in Norway (more in the Racing Report from Alasdair/Alan).

Tyneside Loipers again hosted the SSE roller-skiing weekend at Hetton Country Park (in August). The weekend was very successful with 3 coaching groups and 20 participants. Alasdair organised a very successful Saturday afternoon race which was attended by some of our top roller-skiers and a number of top juniors from the Nordic Development squad. This is the last year that Alan is organising the Hetton weekend. If anyone else would be willing to undertake the organisation for next year, that would be much appreciated (Alan will be around to help and advise).

Summer outings were less well attended (or cancelled due to insufficient numbers). Thanks to Jane and Pat for a lovely evening walk and pub meal in Allendale. And thanks to Mark for leading two excellent off-road bike rides.

Neil Waters

Chair – Tyneside Loipers

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