**A Newbie’s Guide to Roller Skiing, by Les Cavill**

The problem of how to maintain your skills from one year to the next after a XC skiing holiday is one that I have had for many years. All the skills, drills and technique learnt from one year take 2-3 days to get back into the next (if you remember them at all). People mentioned the benefits of roller skiing to me. Until recently, I had been reluctant to even entertain the idea - it just looked like an accident waiting to happen. I could not see how it could even come close to the experience of skiing on snow.

However, after some lessons from Alasdair on roller ski skating technique, I had to reassess my previous attitude. It has taken me a while to get used to skating on roller skis but I now feel it will stand me in good stead in maintaining my skills, together with the fact it is good fun and a sport in its own right. I have been using Start Combi roller skis courtesy of the Tyneside Loipers. I have not done any Classic technique on roller skis as yet.

It does not feel like being on snow (I don’t wear knee & elbow pads and a helmet on snow!) but it does come quite close and you can scoot along at quite a pace. There is 4-5 miles of very good surfaced cycleway nearby which has been great to practise on. So now I am a convert and whole-heartedly recommend it. Just be prepared for some very strange looks and occasional remarks from people you may encounter.

Les Cavill

*Yes – we have experienced the strange looks from passers by! Skiing on Town Moor frequently causes a few heads to turn. People are often quite curious (and sometimes envious) and often we are stopped because they are keen to find out more about it. Do please get in touch with Alan or Alasdair if you have not yet tried it and would like to have a go at roller skiing. Alan Mitcham*