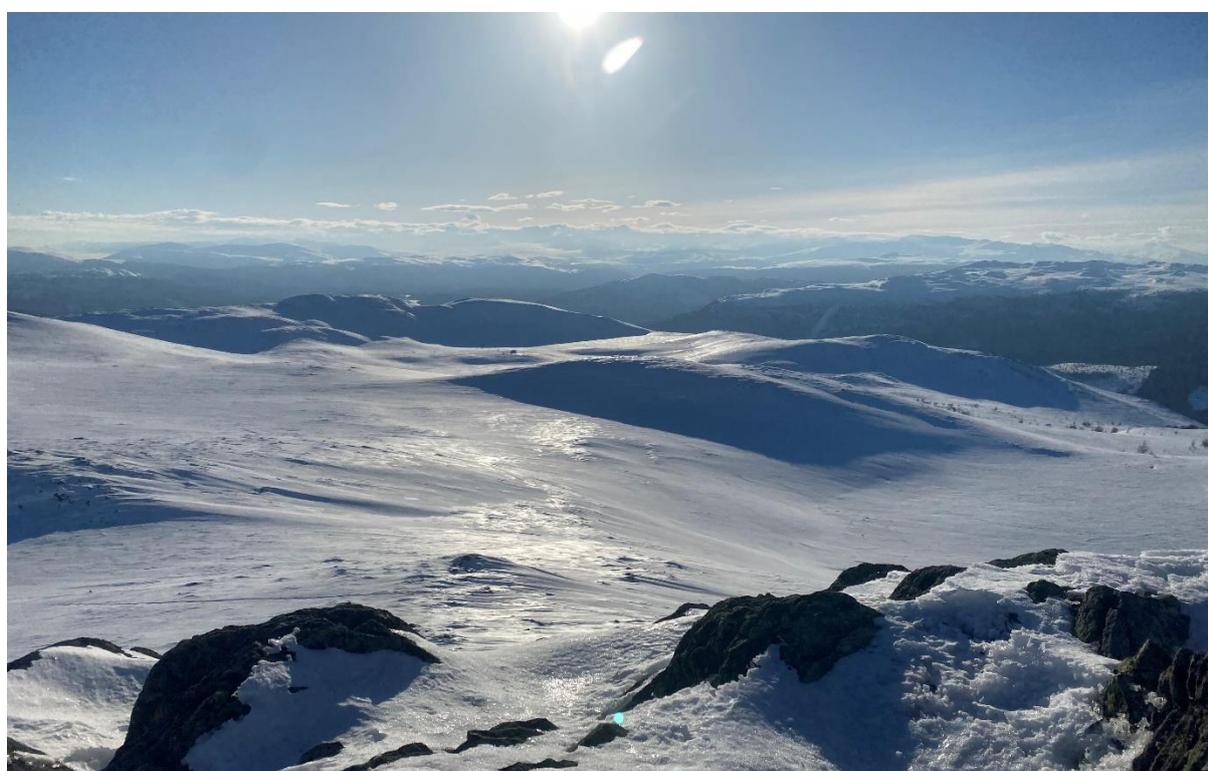


## **Cross Country skiing in Hovringen, Norway, March 2024**

**By Dave Legg**

Eleven Loipers (me, Vivienne, Harry, Paul, Paramjeet, Jane, Michelle, Nuala, Lynn, Pam, Carolyn and Graham) joined Dan Morgan's Classic Adventure trip to Hovringen for a week in March, following in the footsteps of several Loipers who went last year. This is the 3rd year that Dan and partner Sarah have run this trip and saw its biggest turnout with 20 signing up. While I am writing this report, the credit for organising the Loipers side of the trip lies with Viv Brown who helped to overcome a few issues - thanks Viv. A big thanks too to Dan and Sarah who were very friendly and relaxed, good at bringing everyone together as a group with evening activities. Some of us had ski instruction at the local school and John Mordue was always on hand to give coaching and advice and entertain us with his anecdotes.



The Hovringen Hoyfjelhotel was very good. The owner Monika was lovely and helped with lots of things. Unfortunately, she (and husband chef) have sold the hotel so she can spend more time with their grandchildren near Oslo. Food was excellent with 4pm soup a highlight to compensate for lack of buffet lunch. Rooms were big too and my brother Pete and his wife Linda even discovered a bath - though its location remained a secret! The outdoor sauna was also popular.

Hovringen is a great ski area with a good mixture of on and off track and a couple of cafe options. There are a number of tops that can be bagged too. It is on the edge of the Rondane mountains which formed a great backdrop to many views.

The weather was pretty good overall, 2 days glorious sun with no wind, 2 days windy and 2 mixed days. The only significant snowfall was on the Friday afternoon, but the wind helped to spread snow around and under ski conditions were mostly fine.

The choice of ski routes each day was very flexible with groups naturally forming as the week went on, and Loipers and non Loipers getting on well !

The most adventurous ski of the week turned out to be the one my brother and I did to a small fishing hut about 10K northeast of Hovringen. We planned it as a night away. Setting off in good time, we reached the hut at 5pm after battling up a corniced gulley in strong winds and poor visibility. Our relief on arrival turned to despair when the padlock key, extracted from a key locker, broke off in the lock! The key was already twisted by the previous visitors and the padlock was clearly very stiff. After a few minutes considering our options including sleeping in the toilet which wasn't locked (!) we decided to grab a bite to eat and ski back to the hotel. Fortunately, it was only 3K downhill to the Loipe and with some great compass navigation by Pete to avoid the valley, we made good progress and reached the Loipe in daylight. With our powerful head torches and the reflective tape on the bamboo canes to guide us, the rest of the ski wasn't too bad. Fatigue was the biggest problem but we made it back to the hotel for 7-30pm where Linda had kindly save us some tea. There were a few lessons learned from this particularly on accessing huts !

Unfortunately, many of us had more adventurous journeys home than we would have liked. The big dump of snow on Friday night combined with strong winds resulted in many flights from Oslo being cancelled on the Saturday and huge queues on the Sunday morning. Jane in particular was further jinxed by aircraft problems on both of her flights to Newcastle via Amsterdam. There were also missing bags, a car issue and train problems in the UK ! My enforced extra day in Oslo allowed me to catch up with fellow Loipers Howard and Raffia who had enjoyed a parallel week at Dalseter with GB Nordic 2.

My brother Pete and Linda stayed an extra day at Hovringen and saw Loipers Greg, Sue, Martin and Steve arrive at the hotel.

Overall, it was a great week's skiing to remember and some challenging travelling to forget!

Dave Legg. March 2024.