

BRITISH MASTERS CROSS COUNTRY SKI ASSOCIATION

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2019 'Triumph' edition

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."

Janet Alexander

"If at first you don't succeed, skydiving's not for you." S. Johns



**This is what you can win if you go to the Masters
World Championships and know what you're
doing!**



**And this is the person what done it! Kelley
Haniver – see inside for a full report from
Beitostolen**

Editorial

British medals at the Masters World Championships are like buses; you wait ages for one and then suddenly, three come along all at once! The British Team for the MWC in Beitostolen was rather small at the best of times, but then became even smaller due to illness and injury, and this was a great shame. You can read about the event later in this Newsletter, and I say that it was a shame because it proved to be a very popular event (not the 1 480 of Seefeld in 1998, but still 1 035, which compares very favourably with Minneapolis last year of just 746). Okay, the accommodation might have been rather expensive, but reports are that the conditions were excellent.

For 2020, the Masters moves on to Cogne, in the popular Aosta Valley of Italy. Full details will, as usual, appear in the next Newsletter, but you should already be thinking about planning to attend. It's an easy venue to get to, accommodation should be very affordable and food excellent. I hope that, despite a couple of years of low British participation, we manage to put a good team forward this time. I still hear, from time to time, the belief that "The Masters is only for elite athletes" but this, in fact, is not true and never has been true. Of course, up at the front, the skiers are elite, but there is a wide variety of abilities down through the field, and anyone capable of completing a loppet in mid- to front two thirds of the field will not be out of place at the Masters.

Once every four years, the World Masters Winter Games (WMWG) come around and, in 2020, between the 10th and 19th January, they will take place in Austria, based in Innsbruck but with the cross-country events in Seefeld. Within the World Masters Association, we don't much care for the WMWG, fearing that they might take participants away from the Masters World Championships (MWC). But people from Britain have raced at the WMWG previously (you can find a report on the event in Slovenia some years ago on the www.bmccsa.org.uk website) and the level and format are very much the same as the MWC. For anyone serious about Masters racing, there should be no conflict between WMWG and MWC and, with the first in January and the second in March, why not consider doing both? For the WMWG, you can make your own entries and don't have to come through the BMCCSA but, if some of you do want to go, I'm happy to coordinate and put people in contact with each other.

This last season saw some outstanding performances from Elite British skiers at the World Championships, with both James Clugnet and Andrew Young qualifying well for the sprint (12th and 17th places) but not being lucky in the quarter finals, and then both being very unlucky to be knocked out (literally, by Austria!) in the Team Sprints, and with Andrew Musgrave taking 7th in the pursuit, 8th in the 15 km classic (Andrew Young 36th) and 8th again in the 50 km free (Andrew Y. 38th). We should not, of course forget British ladies, Anneka Taylor achieving 53rd in the sprint qualification and 58th in the 10 km classic, with Nicole Bathe getting 50th in the 10 km, and with Anneka and Nicole achieving 8th in the Team Sprint semi-finals. As an aside, there were some excellent results from Jessica Yeaton of Australia, her best being 22nd in the pursuit – it's a shame that she got no mention at all in the commentary.

It is an indication of how much British Elite skiing has progressed over the last few years that, some time ago, we would have called these results outstanding (and, of course, they are) whereas, this year, there was a feeling of slight disappointment that they weren't better. I was convinced that we had a serious chance in the Team Relay, and I also feel that if Andrew M. had gone with either Holund of Norway, when he broke away from the pack of the 50 km race a long way from home to take gold, or if he'd gone with Bolshunov when he broke away about 10 km from the end, we would now be celebrating a World Championships medal. But, of course, it's the easiest thing in the world to win races from the comfort of the armchair!

With the winter season over, it's time to concentrate on the forthcoming roller ski series which kicks off in May. You will find the full programme later in the Newsletter although, at the moment, the details of the races at Olympic Park and Hetton Lyons have still to be finalised. The intention is that both will be classic, matched roller, races, although it depends on getting enough roller skis to make this possible. The running of the British Series has now been taken over by Neil Salmons after many years of admirable management by BMCCSA's Fiona Crossley and, in later years, combined with Gerard Evans, and we wish the Series well this year. For me, I'm regretting the introduction of "No double pole" zones in classic races, just at the time when tendinitis of the ankle is meaning that I can't use my legs in skiing. So if you see someone double poling like an Olympic champion in roller ski races this year, it won't be me!

New members

Loads of new members to welcome this time; in fact an increase of about 5 % in BMCCSA membership. Three of them joined specifically to race at the MWC in Beitostolen, covered later in this Newsletter, while the other two have muttered the idea of racing at the Masters in the future (and we have one candidate member, but he/she only gets welcomed when he/she hands over some money – you know who you are, Jim Wood). As well as a shared love of skiing, all of our new members this time have another thing in common – they all refused my kind offer to introduce themselves with some carefully-chosen words of their own. Challenge!!! Should the BMCCSA Editorial Team stick by its general policy of welcoming new members properly, or should it mention them only by name and let their deeds speak for them in the future? A crisis meeting of the Editorial Team took place at BMCCSA HQ and, for now, we stick to previous practice. So hold on to your hats!

Kelley Haniver: Kelley might well be the only BMCCSA member who currently appears on Wikipedia (or, more precisely, on Wikidata but, if you know better, please keep quiet about it), although her entry does not give a huge amount away. It describes her as one human, female, from the UK and with first name Kelley (all of which we could probably have deduced, in Sherlock Holmes fashion, from her name alone). It also gives her date of birth (but we would never reveal the DOB of a lady) and place of birth (Huntingdon), and describes her occupation as “biathlete” and her sport as “biathlon” – looking more positive!

Kelley also appears on the RunBritain website, where her ranking varies from 19 275th overall to 1st in the ladies Over-40s in her postcode (BMCCSA advice – stick to running Ladies 40+ races near your house, Kelley!), and on the triathlon.org website, where she has some impressive results in Winter Triathlon (run, bike, ski): age-group World Champion 2019 Asiago, age-group World Champion 2013 Cogne (where the MWC takes place next year), age-group European champion 2012, etc. If you read further into the Newsletter, you will also see that she won the Ladies 40+ category at last year’s Wessex roller ski event, the first time (at least as far as I’m aware) that she’s entered a roller ski race, although I could be wrong about this (I’ve been wrong before; I think that it was a Tuesday).

So it was with this sporting background that Kelley approached BMCCSA with a view to racing at the Masters in Beitostolen in March and, well, unless you opened this Newsletter directly on this page, ignoring the front page altogether, you know the results already. But read on to find the full story. It was, by the way, friendship with Kelley that led Jim Wood to almost become a BMCCSA member!

Chris Maund and Janet Alexander: Chris is British and partner Janet is from New Zealand, and both of them live in California. Chris has a BSc in Physical Education and Sports Science from Loughborough University and now works for Pacific Fitness and Health in Encinitas, California, about half way between Los Angeles and San Diego on the Pacific coast. He started out running 800 m and 1500 m, and cross country, then moved on to Olympic distance triathlons in 1986. He was on the British National Triathlon Squad from 1989-1992 and was 5th at the British Olympic Distance Championships in 1990. Since then he has done many triathlons in the UK, New Zealand and the US. He has also done the long course Nice Triathlon (*That’s not the nice triathlon – it’s the triathlon in Nice. Ed*) twice and two Ironmans back in the days when nobody even knew what an Ironman was. He has completed the Marathon des Sables in Morocco twice and has recently been doing 6 day mountain bike stage races.

Janet also works for Pacific Fitness as a fitness and strength professional, including for women and golf (*Now hang on a minute here. We remember the scale of exertion required in sports which has appeared in previous BMCCSA Newsletters, and it goes: cross-country skiing = 1 500 calories per hour, running = 1 000 calories/hour, cycling = 800 calories/hour, football = £750/hour, being dead = 30 calories/hour, cricket = 10 calories/hour, golf = 0 calories/hour. This is shurely shum mistake. Ed*). She’s a successful competitive age group triathlete, runner, cyclist and cross-country skier, travels the world to race and compete and follows a simple motto which appears on the front page of this Newsletter.

Chris and Janet joined BMCCSA in order to race at this year's Masters in Norway, and you can read how they got on later. Their one disadvantage is that, to find snow to train on, they have to drive 600 miles. This, for us in the UK, is like living in London and travelling to Scotland with the plan to train on snow, except that there's snow involved.

Carsten Uth: Carsten is often to be found in Hyde Park on a Saturday morning and this, indeed, is where I first met him, several years ago, practicing with the Hyde Park roller ski club. He also takes part in most roller ski races; a consequence, perhaps, of having to take daughter Jasmine to them. Results have been variable: British Series 23rd overall in 2016 (his debut year), 3rd in 2017 and 8th last year, but individual race performances have been steadily improving.

He comes, originally, from Denmark, where he studied physiotherapy, and he's worked in Sweden and Spain, before embarking on a post graduate physiotherapy degree in the UK where he's now settled. 10 years ago he started Physiotherapy In Chelsea which, as its name implies, is a physiotherapy provider in Chelsea, just off the Kings Road, in fact, where all the groovy people hung out in the 1960s. His website mentions that he has always been interested in the body and what it is able to do and, since childhood, he's been fascinated by anatomy books and has been studying this topic ever since. He also had a go at studying music history, but wasn't hugely successful at this so we won't mention it.

Christian Ewald: Professor Christian comes to us from abroad (Germany, in fact), and is Chair in Financial Economics at the Adam Smith Business School of the University of Glasgow in Glasgow (*honestly, they come over here, beat us in roller ski races, steal our professorships, ... has the world gone mad? This has been a partly political broadcast on behalf of the Monster Raving Loony Brexit Party*). Prior to moving to Glasgow in 2011, he held positions at the University of Sydney, Nottingham University Business School (China), University College Cork, University of St. Andrews and the University of Leeds.

In addition to having become a much improved roller ski racer between the 2016 and 2017 seasons, no doubt on account of training, last year Christian became the most powerful man in British skiing. At least this is what people pretended to him when he was thinking of taking on the job of Chairman of the GB Snowsport Nordic Executive, but he will soon find that it's a constant struggle against insufficient funding, meetings with sports funders who wouldn't recognise a good sporting performance unless it came with a medal attached, and travel all over the world to attend FIS meetings.

By the way, Christian takes over this role from BMCCSA's George Gabriel, who did the job admirably for 15 years; a period which saw Britain rise from nowhere to a force in World Nordic skiing. I'm pleased to say that, in December, George was awarded the Robert Hovey Trophy for services to (English) skiing by Snowsport England, an award which has been held by many current or former BMCCSA members over the years: Paddy Field, Jane Robinson, Eric Woolley, Patrick Winterton, Helen Bell, Ralph White, Graham and Nicola Aspinall, Mike Dixon, Martin Appleby, Alan Eason and yours truly scrumptious.

All new members are very welcome to the British Masters!

MWC survey – your chance to be heard

For a while now, the World Masters Association (WMA) has been concerned with falling numbers at Masters World Championships, and Minneapolis 2018 was a crucial test which it failed to pass – turnout there was poor, especially from the US. The idea of “any three races” was one intended to attract people who could attend for only a few days (aimed specifically at US skiers), but this doesn't seem to have had much effect. With this in mind, the WMA has set up a survey on future event formats:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6NY66P2>

I find the survey to be a little biased, because you are asked only to comment on the couple of options which are presented. But if you want to make other suggestions, you can do so in the comments sections. For what it's worth (18 pence), I generally support the idea of shortening the MWC so that it runs from Saturday to the following Saturday, I don't much like the idea of us racing non-standard distances, such as 7.5 km, I don't think that we necessarily need shorter races (skiers need to pace themselves for whatever races they do), and I see the relays as being challenging, because they take up a full day but don't involve all that many skiers. Don't let yourself be swayed by my personal views, though, but if you do decide to fill in the survey, please feel free to send me your position so that I can represent it at future WMA meetings.

Since I wrote the above, the WMA met in Beitostolen and ruled out any shortening of the event and, also, any changes for the next couple of years. It is believed to be financially unattractive for organisers to have a shorter event overall, but I find this difficult to believe because, with most people arriving for the event on the Wednesday, surely it means that hotels are empty between Sunday and Wednesday.

Roller ski round-up 2018

We left you rather in suspenders at the end of the last Newsletter: would you die of boredom reading yet another set of roller skis results, or would yet another set of roller ski results bore you to death? More importantly, who would be crowned British Ladies Roller Ski Champion 2018: Beata Nowax or our very own Amanda Richardson? Well, you can finally stop holding your breath, because here are the answers. In fact, there is not only the British Roller Ski Series to wrap up, but a couple of other roller ski events merit mention. We should start with a race which was new for 2018, a 10.5 km, i.e. 7 lap, race at Hayes organised by the LRNSC.

The idea is a good one, because I believe that we should have more classic races in the season, and this was billed as being for any roller skis with ratchets. A week or so before the race, though, a message went out from another London-based club, suggesting that everyone should be on Swenor Alutechs, rollers which many people have as a result of the two races at Olympic Park but which I do not possess. Was this a right thing to do? I'm not so sure. I suppose that if one club wants to use a particular race as its own Club time trial, it is free to do so, but I'm not sure that it should try to influence other people. Anyway, I had no qualms about using rocket classics, and I simply turned a deaf ear to the accusations of 'cheating'!

This was another hot race, about 27 °C, but the wind was light. Despite many people being on Alutechs or other similar rubber wheeled rollers, the racing was not all that tight. Jorgen Andersson, also on rockets, led from the start for a comfortable victory, and the only major place change at the front was Patrick Winterton passing Steve Perry on the fourth lap, having been 15 second behind after Lap 1. I had to pass a couple of people who'd got better starts than me, including Martin Watkins handicapping himself on his Proskis and consequently finishing one place behind Peter Drew (Alutechs are, in fact, fairly quick rollers). We had only two other Masters skiers competing: Chris Richards, who circulated for some time with youngsters Jasmine Uth and Sam Bojarski, before losing out to both of them towards the end, and Amanda, unchallenged yet again in the 60+ ladies category and doing well to put a number of skiers behind her.

We were told that this race would appear on Trans World Sport, and indeed it did, some time later, although it turned out to be mainly about Fern Cates and her coaching.



Your editor, 'cheating' in some people's eyes but thinking that they can stick it up their *** in his!**



Chris R. in his battle with Jasmine and Sam, an exploit which was not to turn out well for him

LRNSC 10.5 km race 2018, Hayes, Sunday 24th June. Classic technique, any FIS rollers with ratchets

<i>Senior men</i>	<i>Club</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Position</i>
Jorgen Andersson	U/A	27:45.0	1st 40+
Jordan Andrews	Hyde Park	28:12.1	1st senior
Patrick Winterton	U/A	28:13.7	2nd 40+
Steve Perry	RAF	28:54.2	3rd 40+
Adam Pinney	York. Dales/BM	29:46.0	4th 40+
Szymon Orlowski	LRNSC	30:11.0	2nd senior
Peter Drew	LRNSC/BM	30:13.3	5th 40+
Martin Watkins	Wessex/BM	31:02.7	6th 40+
Ed Rodge	Hyde Park	31:10.0	3rd senior
Egil Giertsen	Hyde Park	31:27.2	7th 40+
Lars Wikstrom	LRNSC	31:28.2	8th 40+
Carsten Uth	Hyde Park	31:38.1	9th 40+
Richard Vail	RAF	32:08.1	10th 40+
Sam Bojarski	LRNSC	34:58.5	4th senior
Christopher Richards	LRNSC/BM	35:00.5	1st 60+
Julien Jarvis	LRNSC	37:04.8	11th 40+
Julian Dabbs	Hyde Park	38:34.4	5th senior
Titus Clark	Wessex	38:50.1	6th senior
Andrzej Bojarski	LRNSC	40:33.5	12th 40+
Greg Barnes	LRNSC	43:30.2	13th 40+
Ross Connell	LRNSC	53:01.7	14th 40+
Nigel Holt	LRNSC	17:27.1	15th 40+*

<i>Senior ladies</i>	<i>Club</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Position</i>
Fern Cates	Hyde Park	31:37.5	1st senior
Holly Rees-Lay	Hyde Park	31:39.6	2nd senior
Nicole Lunstead	Hyde Park	39:37.3	3rd senior
Carol James	Hyde Park	41:52.0	1st 40+
Amanda Richardson	Hyde Park/BM	42:32.3	1st 60+
Ewa Pogodowska	Hyde Park	43:33.7	4th senior
Alison McKinley	LRNSC	45:18.2	2nd 40+
Megan Campbell	LRNSC	53:19.2	3rd 40+
Alexandra Smith	Hyde Park	55:38.2	5th senior
Emma Brant	Hyde Park	1.00:36.5	4th 40+
Katalin Tischhauser	U/A	1.07:33.2	6th senior
Zona Cooke	Hyde Park	1.18:39.2	5th 40+
Alexandra Kirienko	Hyde Park	20:59.4	7th senior*
Mindy Hauman	Hyde Park	22:39.8	6th 40+*

* = 4.5 km.



Group shot involving Peter and Amanda



Gerard explaining to Trans World Sport just how easy organising roller ski races is

Back, now, to the British Roller Ski Series, and the denouement of the 2018 edition at the Wessex event. Only one question remained to be answered; would Amanda win it? In the end, she didn't even attend but it was probably academic. Only one point ahead of Beata Nowax prior to the race, all Beata had to do was turn up, and this she did. While the Wessex race remains relatively popular with people from the military, it is not, for some reason, very popular with ladies (only half as many ladies as the previous year), nor very popular with BMCCSA members. We had just Martin Watkins who, by this time, had wrapped up the Series overall, and Kelley Haniver, preparing for her MWC debut (Kelley wasn't, actually, a BMCCSA member in October but, if I don't tell you this, you won't know).

WBNSC roller ski Sprints 2018 – British Series Race 9							
Sunday 28th October, Castle Coombe Motor Racing Circuit, Chippenham				Free Technique – Pro-ski roller skis			
12 km mass start Senior Men				6 km mass start Senior Ladies			
Name	Club	Total time	Position	Name	Club	Total time	Position
Vinney Fountain	16 Regt RA	33:36	1st senior	Fern Cates	Hyde Park	18:22	1st senior
Szymon Orlowski	LRNSC	33:43	2nd senior	Beata Nowok	Western Track	19:58	2nd senior
Richard Vail	RAF	33:45	1st 40+	Kelley Haniver	Army/BM	23:20	1st 40+
Toby Rose	RAF	33:50	3rd senior	Mindy Hauman	Hyde Park	28:10	2nd 40+
Marc Walker	Nordic Life	33:51	2nd 40+	Jules McBean	RAF	30:12	3rd senior
Martin Watkins	Wessex/BM	33:53	3rd 40+	Megan Campbell	LRNSC	30:35	3rd 40+
Steven Perry	RAF	37:21	4th 40+	* = 3 km race.			
Georgi Nemov	Wessex	37:49	4th senior				
Paul Whibley	39 Engr Regt	37:55	5th 40+				
Chris Pfeiderer	27 Regt RLC	39:32	5th senior				
Julian Dabbs	Hyde Park	40:45	6th senior				
Brent Hushon	U/A	42:19	6th 40+				
Gavin Forrest	16 Regt RA	43:21	7th senior				
Andrew Ward	Wessex	43:47	8th senior				
Richard Bond	RAF	45:16	9th senior				
Stu Hanna	RAF	46:13	10th senior				
Grzegorz Stasik	LRNSC	50:36	7th 40+				
Justin Hunt	RAF	53:25	11th senior				
Peter Legg	Wessex	1:12:23	8th 40+				
Charlie Sear	16 Regt RA	15:43	12th senior*				

Series racing over, the following table shows the final, overall, positions. Martin Watkins won the Men's Overall and the Men's 40+ (easily!), Roger Homyer took the 60+ Men's category, Fiona Crossley was surprised to win the Ladies 40+ yet again and Amanda Richardson establishing a fine, unbroken record by winning the Ladies 60+. We had 16 BMCCSA members classified overall but, from a membership of about 90, I feel that we should be able to do better than this.

It is perhaps worth comparing the 2018 Series with that of 2017, partially to see whether we can glean any trend, and partially to fill up this page until the bottom. 91 men and 47 women were classified in 2017, whereas 85 men (a slight drop) but just 26 ladies were classified in 2018. What has happened to put ladies off races, particularly when one sees so many ladies training at club events? Are ladies put off racing on rocket rollers more than men and, if so, why were they not encouraged to re-join races when they changed, toward the end of last season, to slower, matched, Marwe rollers?

Looking at the Series, which comprised 9 races, only one man, Martin Watkins, took part in all 9. The next most prolific skier did 5 races, seven did 4 races, nine did 3 and the remaining 67 did either 2 or just 1. It was no better among ladies; no one entered all races, just two did 6, three did 4, four did 3, and 17 completed just 2 or 1 race. Has the Series as something to compete in over the whole season largely lost its appeal? Is it time to change, promote an English and a Scottish Series instead, and concentrate on just one big event per year, the British Championships, to bring skiers together? Also notable is the dominance, in races, of just a few British clubs: Hyde Park, London Region, Huntly and Cairngorm, together with the RAF. Why aren't other clubs, such as Yorkshire Dales, Manchester and Glasgow-based clubs more active? Any ideas? Pop them onto a postcard or put them into an E-mail to me!

Senior and masters men overall British Series positions 2018										
1	Martin Watkins	WBNSC/BM	40+	267		43=	Mike Dixon	CBNSC/BM	40+	50
2	Steve Perry	RAF	40+	180		45=	Matthew Perree	RAF	Senior	49
3	Richard Vail	RAF	Senior	153		45=	Jake Purcell	REWS	Senior	49
4	Paul Whibley	CBNSC	Senior	152		47	Ross Connell	LRNSC	40+	48
5	Kieren Jarrett	RAF	40+	143		48=	Ibby Qureshi	REWS	Senior	45
6	Jordan Andrews	Hyde Park	Senior	135		48=	Harry Higginsbottom	REWS	Senior	45
7	Szymon Orłowski	LRNSC	Senior	134		50=	Joseph Ecclefield	REWS	Senior	43
8	Carsten Uth	Hyde Park/BM	40+	133		50=	Martin New	REWS	Senior	43
9	Roger Homyer	Highland/BM	60+	123		52	Chris Greene	Yorks. Dales/BM	60+	42
10	Richard Bond	RAF	Senior	121		53=	Toby Rose	RAF	Senior	40
11	Christian Ewald	Highland/BM	40+	116		53=	Josh Rafferty	REWS	Senior	40
12	Dave Horsley	HNSC	40+	104		55=	Marc Walker	Nordic Life	40+	39
13	Justin Hunt	RAF	40+	101		55=	Martin Appleby	Yorks. Dales/BM	60+	39
14=	Callum Smith	HNSC	Senior	100		55=	Gregor Young	Hyde Park	Senior	39
14=	Julian Dabbs	Hyde Park	Senior	100		58=	Grzegorz Motyka	LRNSC	40+	38
14=	Mike Hudson	RAF	Senior	100		58=	John Anderson	Yorks. Dales/BM	60+	38
17	Peter Drew	LRNSC/BM	40+	99		60	Shaun Joughin	Tyneside	40+	37
18	Andrzej Bojarski	LRNSC	40+	97		61=	Steven Briggs	Unattached	40+	36
19	Iain Ballentine	Hyde Park/BM	Senior	90		61=	Simon Thijs	REWS	Senior	36
20	Joseph Rosenfeld	Hyde Park	Senior	89		63=	Georgi Nemov	WBNSC	Senior	35
21	Oliver Newman	HNSC	Senior	87		63=	Angus MacLean	HNSC	Senior	35
22	Adam Peacock	Unattached	Senior	85		65	Egil Giertsen	Hyde Park	40+	34
23	Hamish Wolfe	HNSC	Senior	82		66	Chris Pfeiderer	Army	Senior	33
24=	Peter Gurney	Unattached	60+	80		67	Remi Fradet	Hyde Park	Senior	32
24=	Patrick Rodwell	Hyde Park	Senior	80		68	Brent Hushon	Unattached	40+	31
26	Ed Rodge	Hyde Park	Senior	79		69=	Gavin Forrest	Army	Senior	30
27	Carl Carrier	Aising Pang	40+	78		69=	Lewis Moore	Unattached	Senior	30
28=	Christopher Richards	LRNSC/BM	60+	74		69=	Tony Jannetta	HNSC	40+	30
28=	Marek Pasterny	LRNSC	40+	74		72	Andrew Ward	WBNSC	Senior	29
30=	Jason James	RAF	Senior	71		73	Justin Hayward	Unattached	40+	28
30=	Luke Tyler	RAF	Senior	71		74=	Stu Hanna	RAF	Senior	27
32=	Joel Smith	REWS	Senior	67		74=	Joss Ridley	Unattached	40+	27
32=	Adam Pinney	Yorks. Dales/BM	40+	67		74=	Dale Woodman	RAF	40+	27
34	Andy Goodwin	RAF	40+	65		77=	Terry Hall	LRNSC	40+	26
35	Shaun Gowan	REWS	Senior	64		77=	Radek Berka	LRNSC	40+	26
36	Grzegorz Stasik	LRNSC	40+	63		79	Julian Jarvis	Unattached	40+	25
37	George Gibson	REWS	Sen	62		80=	Peter Legg	WBNSC	40+	24
38	David Palmer	LRNSC	40+	56		80=	Hugo Van Randwyck	Hyde Park	40+	24
39	Sergey Zakharov	Hyde Park	40+	55		82=	Charlie Sear	Army	Senior	23
40	Anders Soderback	LRNSC	40+	54		82=	Roy Young	HNSC/BM	40+	23
41	Ade Angell	RAF	40+	53		84	James Bellotti	REWS	Senior	19
42	Bjarne Toft	LRNSC	40+	52		85	Des Goff	LRNSC/BM	60+	17
43=	Vinney Fountain	Army	Senior	50						
Senior and masters ladies overall British Series positions 2018										
1	Beata Nowok	W. Track	Senior	285		14	Kelley Haniver	Army/BM	40+	42
2	Amanda Richardson	Hyde Park/BM	60+	241		15=	Liz Norton	RAF	Senior	40
3	Fern Cates	Hyde Park	Senior	200		15=	Rebecca Weaver	Unattached	Senior	40
4	Holly Rees-Lay	Hyde Park	Senior	190		15=	Clara Mitchell	Army	Senior	40
5	Fiona Crossley	HNSC/BM	40+	172		18	Alison McKinley	LRNSC	40+	39
6	Nicole Lunstead	Hyde Park	Senior	126		19	Jules McBean	RAF	Senior	38
7	Katlin Tischhauser	Unattached	40+	119		20	Irene Chawko	LRNSC	40+	36
8	Megan Campbell	LRNSC	40+	116		21	Mary Wray	LRNSC/BM	60+	35
9	Jennifer Watt	Hyde Park	40+	113		22	Alexandra Smith	Hyde Park	Senior	34
10	Rebecca Anderson	RAF	Senior	90		23	Yiota Michael	Hyde Park	40+	33
11	Kat Barington	RAF	Senior	78		24	Emma Brant	Hyde Park	40+	32
12=	Mindy Hauman	Hyde Park	40+	75		25	Violeta Pereira	Hyde Park	40+	31
12=	Alexandra Kirienko	Hyde Park	Senior	75		26	Fiona Russell	Hyde Park	Senior	30

There are two other roller races to tidy up, starting with the LRNSC 42 km free technique, on matched Marwe roller skis, combined with the 4 hour challenge on any roller skis, which took place in warm conditions on Sunday the 20th October at Hayes. Sadly, there are no photos from this event. There were just two BMCCSA racers in the 42 km race, but they both resulted in wins: Martin Watkins who skied away from rival Szymon Orłowski towards the end of the race to win overall, and Chris Richards who won the men's over 60s category while, also, finishing last in the same category!

Name	Club	Laps	Time	Distance	Position
Martin Watkins	Wessex/BM	28	1.59:59	42	1st male 40+
Szymon Orłowski	LRNSC	28	2.02:20	42	1st senior male
Julian Dabbs	Hyde Park	28	2.20:51	42	2nd senior male
Fern Cates	Hyde Park	28	2.23:49	42	1st senior female
Egil Giertsen	Hyde Park	28	2.35:01	42	2nd male 40+
Declan Doherty	LRNSC	28	2.38:20	42	3rd male 40+
Aleksander Johansen	Hyde Park	28	2.38:26	42	3rd senior male
Scott Thompson	Hyde Park	28	2.38:30	42	4th male 40+
Christopher Richards	LRNSC/BM	28	2.49:48	42	1st male 60+
Joss Ridley	Unaffiliated	28	2.53:47	42	5th male 40+
Nicole Lunstead	Hyde Park	28	2.53:49	42	2nd senior female
Andrzej Bojarski	LRNSC	28	2.58:35	42	6th male 40+
Jennifer Watt	Hyde Park	28	3.10:09	42	1st female 40+
Irene Chawko	LRNSC	28	3.44:39	42	2nd female 40+
Carol James	Hyde Park	28	3.48:37	42	3rd female 40+
Anders Soderback	LRNSC	28	3.53:23	42	7th male 40+
Emma Brant	Hyde Park	21	3.57:51	31.5	4th female 40+
Kay Betis	LRNSC	13	1.45:40	19.5	5th female 40+
Roger Fretwell	LRNSC	8	1.35:16	12	8th male 40+

This was the last edition of the LRNSC four-hour free technique race which has run for many years now – some might say thankfully, because there's never any way to make it easy. I made my life difficult by getting up at, effectively, 1 a.m. UK time on Sunday morning to fly home from Tbilisi, Georgia, to get there. I landed at Gatport Airwick at about 11:30, which should just have given me enough time to get to Hayes. But the traffic was a disaster and I arrived half an hour after the start and, talking of starts, those were the skis I opted for. Four hours of skating, though, did nothing for my tendinitis which had come on about three weeks previously and, that evening, I could barely walk. Just two other BMCCSA racers took on this final challenge, Des Goff and Pauline Styles who completed 42 and 30 km respectively, both good enough, if repeated on snow, to race at the MWC. Goodbye, 4 hour race!

Name	Club	Laps	Time	Distance	Position
Gregorz Motyka	LRNSC	62	3.59:44	93.0	1st male 40+
Marek Pasterny	LRNSC	57	4.07:40	85.5	2nd male 40+
Gregorz Stasik	LRNSC	50	4.01:39	75.0	3rd male 40+
David Williams	Unattached	43	4.03:03	64.5	1st senior male
Vincent Malachanne	LRNSC	40	3.59:59	60.0	4th male 40+
Fern Cates	Hyde Park	38	3.38:13	57.0	1st senior female
Peter Bush	Unattached	37	4.05:34	55.5	5th male 40+
Adam Pinney	York. Dales/BM	31	4.01:40	46.5	6th male 40+
Declan Doherty	LRNSC	28	2.38:20	42.0	7th male 40+
Desmond Goff	LRNSC/BM	28	3.17:42	42.0	1st male 60+
Peter Franklin	Unattached	28	4.05:22	42.0	8th male 40+
Nigel Holt	LRNSC	24	2.45:28	36.0	9th male 40+
Yiota Michael	Hyde Park	21	3.57:56	31.5	1st female 40+
Margaret Chalmers	LRNSC	20	3.45:24	30.0	2nd female 40+
Pauline Styles	LRNSC/BM	20	3.45:37	30.0	3rd female 40+
Jackie Haliday	Hyde Park	19	3.51:26	28.5	4th female 40+
Jane Leary	LRNSC	18	3.32:39	27.0	5th female 40+
Ben Montilla	LRNSC	15	2.07:56	22.5	10th male 40+
Andrea Elizabeth Aires	LRNSC	11	2.07:21	16.5	2nd senior female
Mary Michael	Hyde Park	4	1.22:59	6.0	6th female 40+

The final race of the year was the ever-popular one-hour free technique race at Olympic Park in London, this time, for the first time, being run on matched Marwe rollers provided by Iain Ballentine, on Saturday 3rd November. The photos show fine weather, and Olympic Park is quite possibly the best roller ski circuit in the country, so popular with all racers. This, by the way, was the first time that 14 laps, 21 km, have been achieved in the hour.

Name	Club	Laps/km	Time over 1 hr	Distance (km)	Position
Szymon Orłowski	LRNSC	14/21	01:53.4	21	1st senior male
Jordan Andrews	Hyde Park	14/21	01:54.4	21	2nd senior male
Martin Watkins	Wessex/BM	14/21	03:30.8	21	1st male 40+
Toby Rose	RAF	14/21	04:09.5	21	3rd senior male
Richard Vail	RAF	14/21	05:52.1	21	2nd male 40+
Fern Cates	Hyde Park	13/19.5	03:45.3	19.5	1st senior female
Julian Dabbs	Hyde Park	13/19.5	05:05.9	19.5	4th senior male
Steve Perry	RAF	13/19.5	06:30.3	19.5	3rd male 40+
Kieren Jarratt	RAF	13/19.5	06:56.5	19.5	5th senior male
Barbara Grogan	Hyde Park	12/18	02:34.2	18	1st female 40+
Remi Fradet	Hyde Park	12/18	03:02.6	18	6th senior male
Aleksander Johansen	Hyde Park	12/18	03:06.9	18	7th senior male
Luke Tyler	RAF	12/18	03:27.5	18	8th senior male
Chris Richards	LRNSC/BM	12/18	04:48.0	18	1st male 60+
Radek Berka	LRNSC	12/18	05:56.7	18	9th senior male
Mike Hudson	RAF	12/18	06:34.1	18	10th senior male
Richard Bond	RAF	12/18	07:23.9	18	11th senior male
Andrzej Bojarski	LRNSC	11	03:27.5	16.5	4th male 40+
Joss Ridley	Unaffiliated	11	04:35.6	16.5	3rd male 40+
Rebecca Weaver	Hyde Park	11	05:26.0	16.5	2nd senior female
David Young	Hyde Park	11	06:24.7	16.5	12th senior male
Andrew Goodwin	RAF	10	02:13.0	15	5th male 40+
Grzegorz Stasik	LRNSC	10	04:06.2	15	13th senior male
Bill Dunnet	Unattached	10	04:44.0	15.0	6th male 40+
Rebecca Anderson	RAF	10	07:07.5	15.0	3rd senior female
Justin Hunt	RAF	10	08:04.6	15.0	7th male 40+
Mick Thomsen	RAF	10	08:05.8	15.0	14th senior male
Abe Angell	RAF	9	02:33.6	13.5	8th male 40+
Mary Wray	LRNSC/BM	9	05:45.7	13.5	1st female 60+
Kay Bettis	LRNSC	9	05:48.3	13.5	2nd female 40+
Ross Connell	LRNSC	9	06:34.8	13.5	9th male 40+
James Cottrill	Hyde Park	8	01:50.1	12.0	15th senior male
Dale Woodman	RAF	8	03:19.6	12.0	10th male 40+
David Knapp	Manchester	8	03:59.2	12.0	16th senior male
Des Goff	LRNSC/BM	8	04:01.3	12.0	2nd male 60+
Matt Perree	RAF	8	04:29.8	12.0	17th senior male
Russell Macdonald	Unattached	8	06:35.0	12.0	18th senior male
Sergey Zakharov	Hyde Park	8	08:10.2	12.0	19th senior male
Emma Brant	Hyde Park	8	09:40.0	12.0	3rd female 40+
Lizzie Norton	RAF	7	11:29.6	10.5	4th female 40+
Roger Fretwell	LRNSC	2	15:40.8	3.0	10th male 40+



Mary Wray, looking a little tense but happy on the main downhill



Martin Watkins climbs at about half way round the 1.5 km lap

And now, appetite whetted from reading last year's results, here's the programme for this year.

GB Roller Ski Race Calendar 2019

DATE	EVENT	GB Series	SCOTS Series	London Series	VENUE	ORGANISER	NOTES
Sun 12 May	10 km Time Trial – FT	GB 1		LON 1	Hayes	LRNSC	Starts at 14:00. Marwe roller skis provided by organisers (5 km junior/novice race).
Sat 25 May	Huntly Sprints – FT	GB 2	SCOT 1		Huntly	HUNTLY	GB Series race will be combined time of two time trials. K.O. sprints in the afternoon. Races start 10:00. Organiser will supply Marwe roller skis.
Sun 26 May	Clashindarroch Hill Climb – CT	GB 3	SCOT 2		Huntly/Rhynie A941	HUNTLY	Minimum age 11. Any type of classic roller, must have ratchet. 8.05/4.85 km climbs.
Sun 23 June	15/7.5 km mass start – FT	GB 4		LON 2	Hayes	LRNSC	Starts at 14:00. Marwe roller skis provided by organisers.
Sat 6 July	1 Hour Race – FT				Hayes	LRNSC	Starts at 14:00. Distance travelled in 1 hour (30 minute junior/novice race). Any type of roller ski under F.I.S. rules.
Sat 10 Aug.	Fife races, 1.6 / 3.2 / 6.4 / 9.6k mass start – FT	GB 5	SCOT 3		Lochgelly Cycle Park	Fife RS Club	Start time TBC. Marwe roller skis provided by organisers.
Sat 24 Aug.	10 km – CT	GB 6 TBC			Hetton Lyons	TYNESIDE	Starts 16:00. Any type of classic roller, must have ratchet (shorter event for under 18s).
Sat 7 Sept	1 hr – CT (TBC). British Championship	GB 7		LON 3	Olympic Park	LRNSC	Swenor Alutech (TBC) roller skis (may be supplied by organisers). Race start 13:45.
Sat 14 Sept.	3.5/5.4/7.1 km – FT	GB 8	SCOT 4		Huntly	HUNTLY	Registration from 9 a.m., races start at 10:00. Relays follow main races. Marwe roller skis provided by organisers.
Sun 15 Sept.	Cairngorm Hill Climb (p.m.) – FT Glenmore Time Trial (a.m.) – FT	GB 9	SCOT 5 SCOT 6		Cairngorm Ski Road Glenmore Lodge	CBNSC	09:00, Any type of roller ski under FIS rules. 13:30, 3.2 km (10 laps) – Marwe roller skis provided by organisers.
Sun 22 Sept.	15/7.5 time trial – CT				Hayes	LRNSC	Starts at 13:30. Any barrel-wheeled rollers (no racing rollers).
Sun 19 Oct.	30 km / 15 km mass start – FT				Hayes	LRNSC	Starts at 13:30. Any type of roller ski under F.I.S. rules.
Sun 27 Oct.	9/6/3 km – FT	GB 10			Castle Coombe	WESSEX	Marwe roller skis provided by organisers. Plus 4 x 3 km men's and 3 x 3 km ladies relays.
Sun 3 Nov.	Barnaby Norman Memorial, distance TBC - FT			LON 4 (TBC)	Hayes	LRNSC	Marwe roller ski s provided by organisers.

CT = Classic technique. FT = Free technique.

VENUES

HAYES: Hillindon Cycle Circuit, Hayes, Middlesex
HUNTLY: Huntly Nordic and Outdoor Centre, Aberdeenshire
HETTON LYONS: Hetton Lyons Cycle Track, Durham
CASTLE COOMBE: Castle Coombe Motor Circuit, Wiltshire
GLENMORE LODGE: Glenmore Roller Ski Track, Aviemore
CAIRNGORM: Ski Road, Aviemore
FIFE: Fife Cycle Park, Lochgelly, KY5 8AA
Olympic Park: Queen Elizabeth Cycle Circuit, London

NOTES

All races organised by LRNSC have **NO ENTRY ON THE DAY**. To enter go to <http://www.londonnordic.org.uk/online-race-entry/>
Races covered by SSE or SNSC Public Liability Insurance. Skiers who are not members of affiliated clubs will be required to pay an additional insurance premium of £5 SSE or £3 SNSC per day.
Individuals are responsible for their own personal injury insurance.
Roller skiing, like most sports, has a risk of injury. Competitors enter all races at their own risk.
SSE = Snowsport England - www.snowsportengland.org.uk or www.escnordic.org.uk
SNSC = Snowsport Scotland - www.snowsportsotland.org

GB SERIES DIRECTOR: Neil Salmons, neil.salmons@traveleditions.co.uk

SCOTTISH SERIES COORDINATOR: TBC

RACE ORGANISERS:

HUNTLY: Huntly Nordic SC – Peter Thorn (Tel.: 01464 831 429; E-mail: huntlynordicsc@yahoo.co.uk), www.nordicski.co.uk
LRNSC: London Region Nordic SC – Gerard Evans (Tel.: 07732 038 587; E-mail: gerard_evans@hotmail.com), www.londonnordic.org.uk
WESSEX: Wessex Biathlon & Nordic SC – Bob Anderson (E-mail: bob@wessexbiathlon.org), www.wessexbiathlon.org
CBNSC: Cairngorm Biathlon & Nordic SC – (E-mail: cairngormbiathlonnordicskiclub@outlook.com), www.cbnsco.co.uk
TYNESIDE: Tyneside Loipers – Alasdair Wilson (E-mail: awilson.craw@blueyonder.co.uk), <http://tynesideloipers.org.uk>
FIFE :ROLLER SKI CLUB – Alex Standen (E-mail: alex@snowsportsotland.org)

Is this finally it?

Regular listeners will know that, for years, I've been looking for that "How to be a world champion skier in just 5 minutes a day" exercise plan. So, when the following article popped up, it attracted my attention. Okay, it requires 40 % more time than my 5 minutes, but still ...

The Scientific 7-Minute Workout

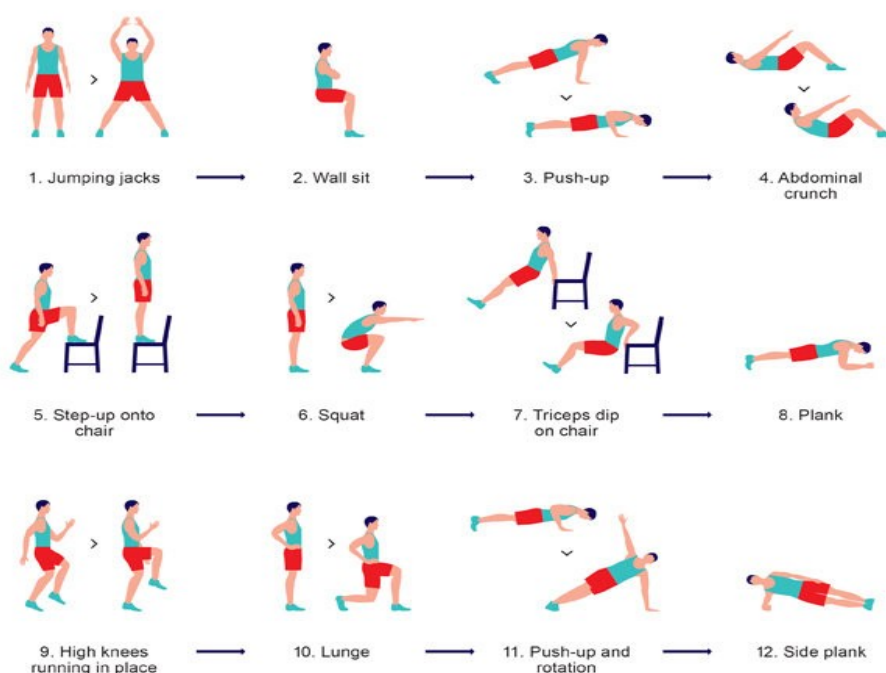
By Gretchen Reynold (this article first appeared in the New York Times magazine)

Think you're too busy to work out? We have the workout for you. Exercise science is a fine and intellectually fascinating thing. But sometimes you just want someone to lay out guidelines for how to put the newest fitness research into practice. In 12 exercises deploying only body weight, a chair and a wall, it fulfils the latest mandates for high-intensity effort, which essentially combines a long run and a visit to the weight room into about seven minutes of steady discomfort – all of it based on science.

"There's very good evidence" that high-intensity interval training provides "many of the fitness benefits of prolonged endurance training but in much less time," says Chris Jordan, the director of exercise physiology at the Human Performance Institute in Orlando, Florida., and co-author of the new article. Work by scientists at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario and other institutions shows, for instance, that even a few minutes of training at an intensity approaching your maximum capacity produces molecular changes within muscles comparable to those of several hours of running or bike riding.

Interval training, though, requires intervals; the extremely intense activity must be intermingled with brief periods of recovery. In the programme outlined by Mr. Jordan and his colleagues, this recovery is provided in part by a 10-second rest between exercises. But even more, he says, it's accomplished by alternating an exercise that emphasizes the large muscles in the upper body with those in the lower body. During the intermezzo, the unexercised muscles have a moment to, metaphorically, catch their breath, which makes the order of the exercises important.

"The exercises should be performed in rapid succession, allowing 30 seconds for each, while, throughout, the intensity hovers at about an 8 on a discomfort scale of 1 to 10," Mr. Jordan says. Those seven minutes should be, in a word, unpleasant. The upside is that, after seven minutes, you're done.



Racing lines – by Roger Homyer

Carrying speed around a corner and accelerating away, shaving seconds off your time by finding the fastest snow, and learning to corner at high speed in classic tracks, are all part of the art of choosing the best racing line. This tactical approach requires general practice in preparation, specific practice on the race course, and a racing attitude during the event.

One of the first practices I carry out when I begin to train on snow is to climb steep hills and gradually accustomise myself to the higher speeds of descent than are achieved on roller skis. At first my mind is full of shocking possible outcomes, but it settles and I begin to handle racing situations. My favourite track for this practice is at Natrudstilen in Sjusjoen (Norway) where a series of steep drops and climbs are made more difficult by sharp turns at the bottom. This then allows me to practice taking good lines into the corners.

When you arrive at the race venue, it is a good idea to “walk the course”. This term actually covers skiing at both high and low speeds together with repeating sections of the course to find ideal lines. Editor Adam and I “walked the course” last year in Minneapolis when a new section of track was included in the longer classic race the following day. One fast descent in tracks led to a tight bend in deeper slushy snow. I practiced this descent a few times and was glad the next day when I felt confident to remain in the tracks and corner on an inside line. I saw several other racers fall on this bend after catching skis in the soft snow on the outside.

When cornering, a general rule is to turn with a large radius whilst cutting off the corner close to the apex of the bend. This allows you to leave the corner with the maximum speed possible. Braking, if any, should be done at the ‘braking point’ just before beginning the turn, although it is often best to avoid braking at all in a race. The diagram shows the racing line around a bend.



It is usually easy to see the line when roller skiing. At Lochgelly cycle track (see photo above) I have just passed the apex and am accelerating away. At Glenmore Lodge roller ski track in the Highlands, there is a sharp blind bend at the range hut. Woe betide any racer who tries to cut the corner off. Stay wide and turn late otherwise you will end up on the grass (if you are lucky!) But, on snow, a rut may form on the inside of the bend. You then have to decide whether to go wide and risk slushy snow, or ski the rut line. At Klosters WMC in 2017, there was a very fast descent to a slushy, rutted corner. I approached at nearly 60 km/h and quickly weighed up my chances in the slush. Not good! So I clung to the rut which guided me around the corner in a tight arc and spat me out beyond at high speed. Phew!

Complications can arise from the presence of other skiers and classic tracks. If other racers block your path in a high speed corner, they are unlikely to give way to a call of 'track'. Discretion may be the best option.

If, in a classic race, tracks have been cut around the corner, then you should keep in them. Turning techniques (stepping off the inside ski and pushing off the outside ski) are only allowed in designated zones (see ICR <https://www.fis-ski.com/.../document-.../cross-country-documents>).

There is often a variation in snow degradation across the width of a race course. Nearly every racer tends to follow a central line on straights. This leads to scuffing and breaking up of the surface. So the fastest lines may be on the sides, where hardly anyone skis but where the snow may be firmer. There might be a higher risk of catching an edge in the deeper snow or hitting a Toblerone but go for it! Early last year I raced a 15 km skate race at Minneapolis and kept to the sides, especially on the ups. It was a faster line.



This variation may also exist for roller ski. The Cairngorm and Clashindarroch hill climbs are held on public roads and have worn and smooth lines where vehicles drive. Follow these unless they are wet and skiddy.

You need to check whether classic tracks are faster in or out during your pre-race inspection. This may apply to free technique races as well for descents. For those of you fed up of seeing pictures of old geezers racing, here's one of Jess Diggins (USA) (*For seemingly no reason. Ed*).



Masters World Championships, Beitostolen, Norway, 2019

At one point, the British Team looked reasonable, at seven, together with Steve Smigiel and Patrick o'Connor, both BMCCSA members but racing for the US, and Janet Alexander, also a BMCCSA member but racing for New Zealand. But quite some time before the event, I ruled myself out on account of the tendinitis and then, in the last few days before the event itself, both Hans Nilsson and Roger Homyer, both at the time already in Norway, ruled themselves out through illness. A great shame, because both, I know, had trained hard for this event. So this makes it a rather difficult article to write, since I'd delegated the writing to Roger. Instead, it will be made up of a report I received from Chris Richards, together with extracts from E-mails I received and other information from, e.g. Team Captains' meeting. There are very few photos from the event, either (the organisers posted photos of only one day, and quite a few of these seemed to be taken from "Fun with flags" with Sheldon Cooper), and I apologise for this.



"Fun with flags", Day 3. Well, at least it meant that the photographer didn't have to move out of the stadium to get any action shots.

Chris Maund and Janet were the first to arrive, on the 25th February for some pre-event training, and reported a lot of snow melt, sheet ice and one particularly tricky downhill not far after the start (which the organisers subsequently apologised for). Janet said that the organisers had put mattresses on trees, just in case, and I suggested that she should check whether they'd used memory foam, just in case she hit the same tree twice. She was going to look into this!

Chris Richards takes up the story "We arrived in Beitostolen with high expectations that the Norwegians would put on a good event, and we were not disappointed. Getting there is the only drawback. A 3.5 – 4 hour drive from Gardermoen makes it one of the less accessible destinations, but it was worth the effort. The tracks in and around the stadium were first class, mostly woodland tracks, some running around lakes. Plenty of up and down but not too technical on the descents. By contrast, there were also upland tracks across the fjells, with fine long distance views toward the Jotunheimen National Park. These suffered from wind-blown snow filling the tracks and making it hard going where the groomers had not had a chance to re-groom.

The town is compact, but a shuttle bus provided transport between the stadium and the main hotels (1-2 km). Facilities were more than adequate: a couple of supermarkets, good bakery, excellent ski shops of course and some quite decent restaurants which were surprisingly quiet given the number of visitors. And an excellent pub, which is not always to be found in this part of the world!

The race tracks followed the modern practice of quite short loops, with frequent passes through the stadium area. This works well in practice – supporters/spectators get to see and encourage their team members frequently. Much better than the old way when the skiers would disappear down the track and not reappear until the finish. There were three loops, each of about 5 km, and each with a respectable climb of about 50-60 metres. So a 30 km race meant that competitors skied all three loops twice, passing through the stadium area twelve times in all, as each pass doubled back on itself. The races could also be watched from the comfort of the café above the tracks."

This whole event had been moved forward by one day, to allow people to enter the Birkebiener at the end, which meant that the first race, middle distance classic, took place on Friday rather than the normal Saturday. Luckily for everyone, there was snow fall on the Thursday evening, which led to near-perfect conditions for this first race, -6 °C in the morning, rising to -4 °C at 14:00, partly sunny and with a light breeze (good for those upland parts of the course) – ideal for classic skiing! Also new for this year, and following FIS practice, there was one no-double-pole zone per lap, which meant that younger skiers had 6 zones to pass through. One small problem reported was that there was no transfer of clothes from start to finish.

We had most of the BMCCSA contingent racing on this first day, three of them, Chris M., Janet and Kelley making their debuts. Again, Chris R. takes up the story “First race for me was the 15 km classic. Conditions were pretty good for classic that day. The snow was new, firm and the temperature about -6 °C, so the Blue Extra worked nicely. Despite the hills, some skiers were clearly double poling the whole way round, apart from the short “technique control” stretches where they were obliged to diagonal stride or herringbone.”

For Janet, this was her best performance of the event, while everyone else was to produce better races later in the week. Top of the class on this first day, though, was Kelley; bronze medal (but, for those who remember the system, also a British bronze medal) and, ironically, her second best performance, in percentage terms, of the whole event.



Not the best close-up action shot of Janet (but the best I could find); that's her on the left, Number 625. Clothing seems to show the cool conditions.

Men's M01-M06 30 km classic technique, Friday 8th March

Fastest	Yuriy Surkov	RUS	M04	1.21:03.0	22.2 km/h		
1)	Truls Valmestad	NOR	M05	1.21:56.0	22.0 km/h		
22)	Chris Maund	GBR	M05	1.45:44.0	17.0 km/h	29.1 %	(36 starters)

Men's M07-M09 15 km classic technique, Friday 8th March

Fastest	Olivo Antoniacomi	ITA	M07	41:51.0	21.5 km/h		
1)	Silvana Berlanda	ITA	M08	45:06.0	20.0 km/h		
46)	Chris Richards	GBR	M08	1.01:03.0	14.7 km/h	35.4 %	(59 starters)

Ladies F01-F06 15 km classic technique, Friday 8th March

Fastest	Eli Anne Yeoksa	NOR	F01	48:41.0	18.5 km/h		
1)	Martina Gabcikova	SVK	F03	54:00.0	16.7 km/h		
3)	Kelley Haniver	GBR	F03	56:12.0	16.0 km/h	1.0 %	(5 starters)
1)	Elena Veselova	RUS	F06	51:26.0	17.5 km/h		
13)	Janet Alexander	NZL	F06	1.04:37.0	13.9 km/h	25.6 %	(16 starters)

Men's M10-M13 10 km classic technique, Friday 8th March

Fastest	Alpo Virtanen	FIN	M10	33:01.0	18.2 km/h		
32)	Patrick o'Connor	USA	M10	1.01:18.0	9.8 km/h	85.8 %	(35 starters)

Day 2, medium distance free technique day, dawned cool! The temperature had dipped to -12 °C overnight, rising slightly to -11 °C at race start and then warming to -6 °C by 14:00, with partial sun until midday and full sun after that. This day saw Alasdair Wilson and Steve Smigiel in their first races and, unusually, Chris M. and Janet taking advantage of the “Any three races” option to do their second race in two days. For Chris it made no difference – his percentage was better than the previous day but, for Janet, things went in the opposite direction! For Alasdair, who had complained of a lack of speed prior to the event, it was his least good finish and some way off previous Masters results while, for Steve, it was his best race.

Men's M01-M06 30 km free technique, Saturday 9th March

Fastest	Joachim Gustafsson	FIN	M02	1.10:46.0	25.4 km/h		
1)	Igor Kuznetsov	RUS	M05	1.12:52.0	24.7 km/h		
33)	Chris Maund	GBR	M05	1.32:28.0	19.5 km/h	26.5 %	(41 starters)

Men's M07-M09 15 km free technique, Saturday 9th March

Fastest	Ilmo Pulkkinen	FIN	M07	37:34.0	24.0 km/h		
62)	Alasdair Wilson	GBR	M07	57:36.0	15.6 km/h	53.3 %	(66 starters)
1)	Harri Makela	FIN	M09	43:33.0	20.7 km/h		
33)	Steve Smigiel	USA	M09	56:25.0	16.0 km/h	29.6 %	(38 starters)

Ladies F01-F06 15 km free technique, Saturday 9th March

Fastest	Nikki Kassel	CAN	F04	40:17.0	22.3 km/h		
1)	Elizabeth Youngman	USA	F06	43:05.0	20.9 km/h		
12)	Janet Alexander	NZL	F06	56:36.0	15.9 km/h	31.3 %	(15 starters)

Sunday, short-distance day, also remained cool. -13 °C overnight surely meant no problems for track preparation overnight, while -9 °C at race start was cool but good for grip waxing. There was full sun for the whole day, though, and those starting the free technique short race in the afternoon had the best of the conditions, -6 °C. The speed of the winning classic skier seems to show how good the conditions were; 25.5 km/h was even quicker than the winner of the free technique races of the day before.



Alasdair Wilson, in classic pose, and with a word for our sponsors

I'm not sure that classic is Steve's favourite technique. But, although this was his least good percentage of this event, as far as I can see it was his second-ever best Masters classic performance (we should maybe keep quiet about the fact that this was also his second-only Masters classic race). For Patrick, this was his best performance of the week, 3 minutes slower than his time in Minneapolis last year (but there were doubts about course lengths in Minneapolis), but much the same percentage.

For Chris M. and Janet, the third race in three day! Chris confounded the principle that so many races close together should make one tired – this was his best performance and puts him comfortably on the front page of the BMCCSA best-of-all-time list and, if we discount Peter Moysey of New Zealand, it was the best-ever British classic performance, just pipping the 21.9 % of Brian Adams 6 years ago in Asiago. Janet, sadly, upheld the general principle!

Men's M01-M06 10 km classic technique, Sunday 10th March

Fastest	Vlacheslav Kaydash	RUS	M02	23:34.0	25.5 km/h		
1)	Gian Jorger	SUI	M05	25:45.0	23.3 km/h		
24)	Chris Maund	GBR	M05	31:20.0	19.2 km/h	21.7 %	(34 starters)

Ladies F01-F06 10 km classic technique, Sunday 10th March

Fastest	G. Pedersen Hilde	NOR	M05	27:22.0	21.9 km/h		
1)	Elizabeth Youngman	USA	F06	31:04.0	19.3 km/h		
14=)	Janet Alexander	NZL	F06	41:00.0	14.6 km/h	32.0 %	(17 starters)

Men's M07-M09 10 km classic technique, Sunday 10th March

1)	Lars Nilsson	NOR	M09	29:33.0	20.3 km/h		
35)	Steve Smigiel	USA	M09	39:20.0	15.3 km/h	33.1 %	(47 starters)

Men's M10-M13 5 km classic technique, Sunday 10th March

Fastest	Alpo Virtanen	FIN	M10	16:47.0	17.9 km/h		
29)	Patrick o'Connor	USA	M10	30:50.0	9.7 km/h	83.7 %	(31 starters)

We return to Chris Richards' account at this point "The remainder of my racing was in free technique. The 10 km short race was the typical eyeballs-out thrash round two of the loops. I'm fairly convinced that you have to develop snow fitness, lots of high intensity work on snow, to perform well in this sort of short race. I found the longer (30 km) race rather easier, even though fresh snow had fallen, which had to be plodded through on the climbs".

There were differing fortunes, though; this was Alasdair's best performance but Chris's least good. Once again, though, pride of place went to Kelley, her third best performance in percentage time (fourth best British lady ever, only Hilary Field gets into the top bracket), but a silver medal was a move in entirely the right direction!

Ladies F01-F06 10 km free technique, Sunday 10th March

Fastest	Maarit Korpi	FIN	F01	25:44.0	23.3 km/h		
1)	Annie Chenard	FRA	F03	29:45.0	20.2 km/h		
2)	Kelley Haniver	GBR	F03	30:17.0	19.8 km/h	2.0 %	(6 starters)

Men's M07-M09 10 km free technique, Sunday 10th March

Fastest	Ilmo Pulkkinen	FIN	M07	24:27.0	24.5 km/h		
69)	Alasdair Wilson	GBR	M07	36:00.0	16.7 km/h	47.2 %	(74 starters)
1)	David Johnston	USA	M08	25:47.0	23.3 km/h		
46)	Chris Richards	GBR	M08	35:21.0	17.0 km/h	37.0 %	(48 starters)

The following day, Monday, was the rest day, and the organisers had put on events during this day (although I don't know whether anyone from the British team attended them). In the morning there was an exhibition of Norwegian ski sport brands: Swix, Madshus and Rottefella, and what was called the Bjørn Dæhlie–Theresa Johaug “show”, covering news for the season 2019/2020 (were the stars themselves there?). In the afternoon there were two Sports Clinics, the first an unfortunately-titled one by Ine Wigernæs (former World Cup skier and Norwegian cross-country champion and PhD in Sports Science) entitled “You have to eat to perform” (I think that perhaps what she meant was “You have to eat to live, whereas you have to eat properly to perform”, and the second by Anders Aukland (former Olympic and world champion) and who, at the age of 47, is still Top 5 (*That means 5th! Ed*) in the Visma Ski Classics, on “Double-Poling – the state of the art”, which might have been interesting, because double poling is, these days, a highly developed technique.

We have a changing relationship with Australia in Masters relays. Sometimes we trounce them, to much rejoicing in the British Team, sometime they narrowly beat us (which we put down to misfortune on our part) and sometimes we collaborate with them when we don't have enough people to form a team of our own. Kelley reported that she'd met our Australian friend Friedl on the coach coming to Beitostolen and that he had claimed to show her the Relay Ashes which it was our task to win back. I feel, though, that there might have been smoke coming from his trouser department at this point, because regular listeners will know that *we* hold the ashes, insofar as they exist at all (we're still waiting for the Aussies to offer us a pair of skis so that we can ritually barbecue them), having stomped them (and the Danes) in Klosters two years ago.

The task facing the $\frac{3}{4}$ British team this year was not a direct one. GB/AUS had an M05 team, whereas the Australian full teams were M06 and M07. Now, it seems to me that, when one is facing a battle, even an indirect one, of honour, one does not invite a doppelganger from one's opponents to join one's team! I'm not suggesting that there was anything dubious going on, and no doubt Peter is a nice guy, but he did, nonetheless, put up the slowest time of the combined team by almost 8 minutes, and this led to a loss to the Aussie M06 team of 6 minutes and the M07 team of 4 minutes. Never mind, we'll beat them again next year. There was, by the way, a mixed team involving Kelley, Janet and two others but, for one reason or another, this team never made it to the start line.

4 x 5 km relay, Tuesday 14th March

Fastest	M02	RUS	44:00.8					
1)	M05	RUS	45:50.9					
13)	M05	GBR/AUS	1.08:15.1	Chris Maund	14:58.6	Peter Lambert	23:07.4	
				Alasdair Wilson	15:24.9	Chris Richards	14:44.1	48.9 % (13 starters)



The slightly-less-than-victorious Combined Relay Team. L to R: Alasdair, Chris R., Peter (Aus) and Chris M.

It was warmer for the long classic race than in previous days, -5 °C and snow at 09:00, having snowed overnight, rising to -3 °C and partially sunny at 14:00. Surely, however, still well within the range of “easy waxing”. There were, though, warnings of high winds, likely to make the exposed, upland parts of the tracks more challenging. The conditions led to a lot of DNSs and DNFs: there were 18 DNSs and DNFs in the M05 category compared with just 17 finishers, for example. BMCCSA had only one racer this day, Patrick.

Men's M10-M13 15 km classic technique, Wednesday 13th March

Fastest	Alpo Virtanen	FIN	M10	57:02.6	15.8 km/h		
18)	Patrick o'Connor	USA	M10	1.53:52.0	7.9 km/h	99.6 %	(20 starters)

Final day! -8 °C at the start, rising to -3 °C throughout the day, sunny and generally triumphant! Only Alasdair had a disappointing day but, for Chris R., this was by far his best performance and, in fact, it was his third best-ever Masters performance. She'd started with bronze, progressed to silver – only one place left, really, and she didn't disappoint! Gold medal for Kelley, and there's only been one of those before, Hilary Field back in 2009 in Autrans. What a way to finish the event!

Men's M07-M09 30 km free technique, Thursday 14th March

Fastest	Ilmo Pulkkinen	FIN	M07	1.24:09.4	21.4 km/h		
	Alasdair Wilson	GBR	M07	DNF			
1)	Einer B. Vikingstad	NOR	M08	1.38:48.6	18.2 km/h		
28)	Chris Richards	GBR	M08	2.01:58.6	14.8 km/h	23.5 %	(39 starters)
1)	Andre Escoffier	FRA	M09	1.35:20.1	18.9 km/h		
25)	Steve Smigiel	USA	M09	2.04:50.0	14.4 km/h	30.9 %	(34 starters)

Ladies F01-F06 30 km free technique, Thursday 14th March

Fastest	Nikki Kassel	CAN	F04	1.29:15.7	20.2 km/h		
1)	Kelley Haniver	GBR	F03	1.43:32.4	17.4 km/h	0.0 %	(4 starters)



A British lady back on top of the podium for the first time in 10 years!

Let's leave the final words to Chris Richards: "I personally experienced Kelley's triumph. I was doing the 30 km with the older guys, who started off 10 minutes ahead of the younger women. After about 20 km, Kelley came past me, followed by her Finnish and Canadian competitors. It was clear to me then that they were not going to catch her, so that was a good moment. One of the high points of the week was a trip on the rest day up to Bigden, on the edge of the Jotunheimen National Park. This was a 35 km round trip which would have been a satisfying journey had the tracks not been wind-blown, and it was supposed to be a rest day, so we took the car and skied around the area a bit and had lunch in one of those charming Norwegian fjell lodges. That trip, followed by another of the mountain tops around Beitostolen, convinced me that it was a place to return to and enjoy the skiing, without worrying about racing."

And finally, the Greatest Story Never Told

As skiers, we are all familiar with the Birkebeiner story and, with most of us being Brits, we have been living the tragedy of what is Brexit for the last three seasons. But how would it be if we put these two things together, and retold the Birkebeiner story in the style of Brexit? Well, if you've read this far and are willing to read a bit further, I feel that, together, we are about to find out!

Once upon a time, in the land where we all live, was a ruler, a powerful lady known as The Razor. This lady possessed one superpower, and it was determination bordering on stubbornness, but our story starts well before this. This land was once a Great Land, ruling over one quarter of the world's population, and some inhabitants of Great Land suffered from history. They believed in Principale Churchillium, they recalled World Cupus Sixty Sixtus and they suffered from Syndromus Maggi. One inhabitant of Great Land, who believed that he might, one day, be king, Jasonus Reet Hog, even believed that if Great Land could return to the previous century, the century, in fact, in which he lived, happily in his castle with little knowledge of those living outside his castle walls, all would be well and Great Land would, indeed, be great again.

Some three years before our epic really begins, the predecessor of The Razor, as king, a Scotsman known as MacAroon, believed that, at some point, a prince might be born in Great Land. MacAroon would have loved this prince and wished to stay with him, but some of his closest friends were princeophobic and believed that the prince should be taken away from Great Land. MacAroon did not agree but, since his friends were not for turning and included Jasonus Reet Hog, their leader, MacAroon called for a general census among the inhabitants of Great Land.

These inhabitants knew not for what they voted, nor why, but they voted, nonetheless, that the prince should be removed from Great Land by a route yet to be decided. But there was much that was false in the preparations for this census led, in part, by an individual who had become exceedingly rich from living off the land and who was known as Nigel Forage. Thus it was that the people believed that they would become rich and enjoy a degree of health unprecedented hitherto. The prince was, indeed, born one year later and, in line with the wishes of the people, two great skiers, Torstein Davis and Skjervald Raab, were sent to a foreign land to decide how best to remove the prince from Great Land. After much thought and discussion, first Torstein and then Skjervald came to The Razor, now on the throne of Great Land, with their report.

"Ma-am", they both said at different times, "We have intensely studied the proposal to remove the prince from Great Land but the route is fraught with danger which we had not foreseen before. The climate is wrong and we know not into what disaster we might be taking ourselves. In line with democratic principles, we ask for a further census of our population. After all, our population is wont to change its mind regularly, even once every 5 years (or once every three months if we look to our southern neighbours Calabria) in a process known as General Election". "Aha", replied The Razer, "but thou speakest of two types of democracy. You are considering the form of democracy, founded in Ancient Greece, according to which an educated populace gives its opinion based on facts and previous experience and does, if 'tis merited, take an opposed position to that it took in previous times. I, though, am talking about the democracy, that blind, unthinking, uncaring form intended to protect my outermost portion and that of my friends who, despite their claims of being allies, wouldst stabbeth me in the posterior at the drop of a feathered cap. Why, were it not for my unfaltering belief in mine own infallibility, I and my friends might be cast into the wilderness, even unto forever and, Thor forbid, I mightst be transformed even into a blond-haired buffoon".

The two skiers discussed their options without pause for a full two years, often travelling even unto discussions with their enemy who was determined to punish them. Despite this, though, they could only agree that the prince had to be removed, without knowing the route nor the means of removal nor, even, what dangers lay ahead for them or, indeed, for their avowed enemy.

Although this is history, history does not recall what the outcome of the tale actually was. It is unknown whether the "Great" in Great Land remained "Great", became "Waste" or was changed to "Pound" for, in the end, most people lost the will to live and went on holiday, many unto foreign lands. And all was well, for people liked going to foreign lands, they just didn't like 'foreign lands' coming unto them.

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