

BRITISH MASTERS CROSS COUNTRY SKI ASSOCIATION

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2023 'Phew, what a scorcher' edition

"If a picture paints a thousand words, why didn't Jeffrey Archer take up photography" – AAP, 2023

Masters World Championships, Seefeld 2023; best MWC ever? *No! Ed*



Our two best performers from MWC Seefeld 2023; two silver medals for Nerys Jones, and 'best British male performance when not winning a medal' for Martin Watkins. But of course everyone in Seefeld did extremely well (he says, falling backwards into the arms of his buxom nurse) and you can read all about their exploits inside

Editorial

Sétif, Algeria, April, early morning; temperature +14 °C. That feels familiar and ... oh yes, now I remember – here I am, not far from the Sahara Desert and the temperature is identical to what it was in Seefeld for the Masters World Championships just one month earlier. I'm tempted to say that there's almost as much snow here in North Africa as there was in western central Austria, but that would be a little unfair. It was pretty grotty in Seefeld early in the event but, if you've never experienced it, salt is the solution!

What a strange season from a snow point of view; almost no natural snow in the Alps early in the season, and un-seasonally high temperatures melting what little snow that did fall. According to a report on the internet, snow cover in the Alps is now more than a month shorter than the long-term average over the last 600 years (according to a recent study which looked at ring-width records of juniper shrubs). This does not only affect skiing; it is likely to impact farmers, manufacturers and citizens, because as much as 90 % of the water used in lowland Europe is melt-water from the Alps (a fact cited by the report but I'm not sure that I entirely believe it).

Nordic countries are not faring a great deal better. Norway now has half as many snowy days as it did in 1900 and, by 2050, it is estimated that there will be only 50 days with snow deeper than 30 cm. Many World Cup races are now run entirely on man-made snow and sales of klister must be booming. I have been lucky enough to have been on snow three times this last season: Seefeld (actually mainly Leutasch) early in December, Ramsau early in January and Seefeld mid-March and on all three occasions we were seeing ribbons of snow across mainly brown fields, not the widespread deep snow cover we expect.

All of this is a prelude to a Newsletter which devotes, as usual, quite a lot of space to the Masters World Championships held not so long ago in Seefeld, Austria. GBR had a reasonably-sized team of 11 and, once again, we came away with two medals. This means that Britain has won medals in each of the last three MWCs and, much as I admire and respect the achievements of Britain's World Cup elite skiers, it is only Masters cross-country which can boast such an elevated level of success. Seefeld, though, struggled with its snow conditions and warm weather, at least until the salt was applied, which made a huge and dramatic difference. You can read all about the highs and lows of the team's performance here.

In other news, we look forward to the start of the British roller ski season and, in particular, to the start of the British Roller Ski Series races which, this year, are being hosted on the BMCCSA website. Race organisers are always trying to encourage more people to enter roller ski races, and this is true for Masters, too. So if you've ever strapped on a pair of roller skis in the past, then why not do so again and test yourself mainly against yourself at a race or two this season? We have four Masters age/gender categories and, who knows, you might walk away with one of the brand new, shiny, perpetual trophies which *you*, BMCCSA members, have very generously (or, to be more precise, I have very generously, on your behalf) agreed to provide. You can see the programme for all roller ski races this year here and, even if you do not fancy testing yourselves over the full race distance, many race organisers now offer half or even quarter distance categories, so you really have no valid excuse!

In this edition you can also read about the effects climate change is having and might have on the future of snowsports, there's information on some little training exercises which you might find useful (I don't know whether you find these exercises and articles about them interesting – I keep meaning to do the exercises but continually forget) and, finally, we look back at British and BMCCSA results in Masters World Championships over the years.

To finish this small introduction, I am extremely pleased to see that with their new Norwegian sponsors and the money raised through the crowd-funding appeal, our four Elite British skiers have been able to continue to perform at World Cups. Yaa boo sucks to British Funding Bodies who abandoned them. Finally, if you are looking for inspiration for the coming and future seasons, there will be Masters racing in Italy and Finland in January and February 2024 (see article in this Newsletter), then the MWC returns to Klosters for 2025 and then goes (probably) to Sappada, Italy, for 2026. So if you've just tried Masters racing this year, are a seasoned veteran, or want to try it for the first time, there's plenty to look forward to.

New members

We have quite a few new members to introduce this time, with various different degrees of detail. I apologise if I've forgotten anyone, although I don't apologise to those who don't hand over their membership money! Now come on, £20 for life (of 6 cups of coffee) is all we ask!

Simon Bate: Simon is vice-chair of the Huntly Nordic Ski Club and, this year, took part in his first Masters World Championships (read his story later in this Newsletter), at what we hope was just the start of a long and successful Masters career. He turned up with two friends, one of which could easily have been his brother but isn't; it's just that the two of them are almost identical in everything except size. He's also a roller ski racer and, last year (Simon, back right), brought the Huntly junior team down to Leeds for a successful British Roller Ski Championship.



When not skiing or leading groups to Leeds, Simon is an Advanced Practitioner in Small Animal Medicine. In 2016 he launched his own business, Oncology Referrals Limited, providing an internal medicine and oncology service to referral practices in the north of Scotland.

Christopher 'Goldie' Gouldsmith: Goldie used to be in the Army, serving with the Royal Engineers. He and his identical twin Jonathon were both excellent cross-country runners and then took up cross-country skiing. Jonathon and Christopher met in competition in 2009 with Jonathan taking the honours for REME. Jonathon joined the Great Britain Development Team and was tipped to make the Olympic Biathlon squad but, sadly, he was killed after being hit by a taxi in the early hours of the 3rd of April 2011.

Christopher was injured on operations in Afghanistan and was on rehabilitation when he had the idea of raising money for charity in Jonathan's name by running. He set off from Kinloss in the North of Scotland and ran a marathon a day for 10 days, covering 524 miles to Haverfordwest, the boys' home town. The epic journey was called Run-Goldie-Run, the final total raised by Christopher was a fantastic £10 033.58 and it was divided equally between the REME Benevolent Fund and Combat Stress. Christopher has now left the Army on a medical discharge and has (as far as I know) headed to Dubai as a professional ski instructor. He had originally planned to race at the MWC in Seefeld this year but, in the end, was unable to go.



Chris Jones and Louise Makin: It's relatively easy to find details of Louise, on account of her very successful and accomplished business career. Dr. Dame Louise Makin, MA, PhD (Cantab), MBA, DBE, BMCCSA, LRNSC, SKI, has an MA in Natural Sciences and Materials Science and a PhD in Metallurgy and Materials Science from the University of Cambridge, and an MBA. She was Chief Executive Officer of British Technology Group PLC from 2004 until 2019 and, before that, she served as president for Biopharmaceuticals Europe of Baxter Healthcare, where she was responsible for sales revenues in excess of a billion dollars. But we're not really interested in that (although BMCCSA might be interested in, say, 0.00001 % of these revenues, if that could be arranged, thank you very much). We are, though, interested in her and Chris' sporting careers, which has including yachting and cross-country skiing.

Louise writes: "Chris and I have been cross country skiing for about 6 years, transitioning from downhill skiing and running mountain marathons to our new love of cross-country skiing. Regular competitors in the races of the Engadin ski week, we look forward to exploring the world of Masters skiing and meeting other like-minded people."



One can't help think that this photo is a bit old, when Chris had "yacht hair" and wore glasses!



It's not the best photo (it's the best I have), but this is Chris and Louise extreme L. and R.

Kirstie Macleod: Kirstie is most definitely a Huntly Nordic Ski Club committee member; that can easily be confirmed. We might also reasonably assume that she is a very occasional roller skier which, if it is true, resulted in her finishing 29th in the British Roller Ski Series senior female category, on the basis of being sixth in the Fife race of that year, and when mysteriously she appears to have been racing for the Fife club. Beyond that, things become a little less clear, and "Kirstie Macleod" is by no means an uncommon name. She could be a violin player in the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland; she might have BA (Hons) in Fashion Management and an MSc in Digital Marketing; she could be a lecturer at the University of Aberdeen in the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture teaching Gaelic for Beginners; she might be the Sales Director for Duncan Taylor Scotch Whisky Ltd.; she might work for Aberdeenshire Council or, who knows, she might be all of these (but probably not at the same time).

Let us just hope that now that she's a paid-up member of the BMCCSA, we might get to learn a little more about her as, inspired by the ethos of Masters racing, she starts a new career in roller or on-snow racing!

All new members are warmly welcomed to the British Masters Cross Country Ski Association, the only association in Britain dedicated to cross-country ski racing for people of a certain age, and others!

GB Roller Ski Race Calendar 2023

DATE	EVENT	Series	VENUE	ORGANISER	NOTES
Sun 16 April	12 km – FT	GB 1/So 1	Hayes	LRNSC	Starts at 11:00. Any rollers except urethane (fast) wheels (6/3 km junior/novice races).
Sat 27 May	Huntly Sprints – FT	GB 2/Sc 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 28 May	Clashindarroch Hill Climb – CT	GB 3/Sc 2	Rhynie A941	Huntly	Minimum age 11. Any type of classic roller, must have ratchet. 8.05/4.85 km climbs.
Sun 4 June	Yorkshire Dales 1 hour – FT	Nor 1	York Sports Village	YDCCSC	Any rollers. Furthest distance in one hour wins. Start time TBC.
Sun 18 June	15 km mass start – FT. British Championship	GB 4	Leeds	Snowsport England	Starts at 09:30. Marwe 610/620 roller skis with US6 wheels, or slower (3.0 and 7.5 km junior/novice race). Starts at 15:00. 2 lap, 2 x C, 2 x F, club relay (not British Series), Alutech No.2 wheels/Marwe 610/620.
Sun 25 June	12 km mass start – CT	GB 5/So 2	Hayes	LRNSC	Starts at 11:00. Any classic rollers with rubber wheels and ratchet (shorter junior/novice race).
Sun 23 July	24 km (16 lap) mass start – FT	GB 6/So 3	Hayes	LRNSC	Starts at 10:00. Any rollers except urethane (fast) wheels (shorter junior/novice race)
Sat 5 Aug.	Fife races, 1.6 / 3.2 / 6.4 / 9.6km mass start – FT	GB 7/Sc 3	Fife Cycle Park	Fife RS Club	Start time TBC. Marwe roller skis provided by organisers.
Sun 6 Aug	Fife junior races		Fife Cycle Park	Fife RS Club	Start time TBC. Marwe roller skis provided by organisers.
Sun 6 Aug	Lancaster 1 hour race - FT	Nor 2	Lancaster	Lakeland	Starts at 14:00. Any rollers, furthest distance in one hour wins.
Sun 3 Sept	Hetton Lyons	Nor 3	Hetton Lyons	Tyneside	Details TBC, but may be classic one-hour race a.m. and sprints p.m..
Sat 9 Sept.	3.5/5.4/7.1 km – FT	GB 8/Sc 4	Huntly	Huntly	Registration from 9 a.m., races start at 10:00. Relays follow main races. Marwe roller skis provided by organisers.
Sun 10 Sept.	Cairngorm Hill Climb – FT	GB 9/Sc 5	Glenmore Lodge	CBNSC	Start TBC. Distance/roller type TBC.
Sun 17 Sept.	London 2 x 3 km relays – CT		Hayes	LRNSC	Starts at 15:30. Teams of two, ability handicap. Any classic rollers with rubber wheels and ratchet.
Sun 8 Oct.	24 km (16 lap) time trial – CT	GB 10/So 4	Hayes	LRNSC	Starts at 11:00. Any classic rollers with rubber wheels and ratchet (shorter junior/novice race).
VENUES				CONTACTS AND WEBSITES	
<p>HAYES: Minet Cycle Circuit, Hayes, Middlesex HUNTLY: Huntly Nordic and Outdoor Centre, Aberdeenshire GLENMORE LODGE: Glenmore Roller Ski Track, Aviemore CAIRNGORM: Ski Road, Aviemore FIFE: Fife Cycle Park, Lochgelly, KY5 8AA LEEDS: Brownlee Centre, Bodington Avenue, Leeds, LS16 8NA YORK: York Sport Village Cycle Circuit, Lakeside Way, Heslington, York YO10 5FG</p>				<p>LRNSC, Adam Pinney, aapinney@ntlworld.com: http://londonnordic.org.uk/roller-ski-racing/ Huntly, Peter Thorn, huntlynordicsc@yahoo.co.uk: https://www.nordicski.co.uk/ Snowsport England, Adam Pinney, aapinney@ntlworld.com: https://www.snowsportengland.org.uk/ Fife Roller Ski Club, Alex Standen, alex@snosportscotland.org: https://www.facebook.com/FifeRollerSki/ Lakeland, Mike Smith, pillarsmlnthorpe@gmail.com: https://www.lakelandxcski.com/ CBNSC, Naomi Dargie, cairngormbiathlonnordicskiclub@outlook.com YDCCSC, Angela Clarke, info@ydcsc.org.uk / Martin Appleby m.appleby451@btinternet.com</p>	

I am pleased to say that, this year, the British, Scottish, Northern (England) and Southern (England) Roller Ski Series (plural) will be hosted on the BMCCSA website, www.bmccsa.org.uk/brss-home. The British and Scottish Series have been running for many years very successfully; the Northern Series started for the first time last year, and the Southern Series is new for this year and comprises the four races at Hayes. Follow the web site for up-to-date race results, Series standings and details of upcoming races. I plan/hope to have full details of the next two races coming up, normally about one month in advance. Sorry if you receive this Newsletter after the first race of this season has already happened; I couldn't get home in time to send it out, désolé (comme on dit en français ici à Algérie)!

High electricity prices threaten the ski season

Extremely high electricity prices may force ski resorts to close this coming winter: 70 % of the facilities fear they will have to close.

Running snowmaking facilities requires a lot of electricity, and with today's electricity prices, many ski resorts fear they will have to close this winter. High electricity prices threaten the skiing industry: lifts, snowmaking, and lighting require large amounts of electricity. In Norway, the industry is concerned. While households receive electricity-price support, ski resorts must pay the market price for electricity, and several have said that they fear closure.

In August 2022, Norwegian ski resorts sounded the alarm. Then the Norwegian Alpine Resorts and Mountain Destinations industry organization sent a letter to the state calling for measures and support schemes for ski resorts. "In our area, with the predicted prices now, we are looking at a tenfold increase in power costs, perhaps more for the coming winter," says Odd Stensrud. Stensrud is the industry organization's deputy chairman and general manager of Alpinco, which owns and operates the alpine resorts at Hafjell and Kvitfjell. For Alpinco, electricity costs are the third largest expense item, and the margins for operating ski resorts are already small. "If the electricity prices signalled for the coming winter become a reality, then it is certain that it will mean the knock on the door for several facilities," says Stensrud.

End of ski holidays in Europe?

Sky-high electricity prices are not only a concern for Norwegian destinations. In central Europe, the situation is even more difficult. In France, high prices mean that more than half of the ski resorts might have to cancel the winter season. 70 % of ski resorts in France have three-year contracts with the state electricity supplier EDF, which will be renegotiated during the autumn.

Electricity 20 times more expensive

The offer the ski resorts have received from EDF is causing despair in the industry. The price they are looking at is almost 20 times higher than last year. Then, the ski resorts paid €55 for electricity per megawatt/hour. This year, EDF has estimated a price of between €800 and €1 000 per MW/h. These are electricity prices that the ski resorts are unable to pay. "We cannot accept the contract proposal that EDF has presented," says manager Sébastien Giraud from the popular destination of Villard-de-Lans in the Alps east of Grenoble. "The electricity bill normally accounts for around 5 % of our budget. With these prices, electricity will account for a quarter of the budget. If this is the final offer, we will not be able to stay open this winter because we will not be able to meet the electricity bill," says Giraud.

Enormous effects

If a ski resort has to close, there will be enormous ripple effects. In Villard-de-Lans, ski tourism accounts for 80 % of the economic base of the entire local community. Giraud suggests that if the ski resort closes, it will mean 1 000 to 1 500 people unemployed and further effects on restaurants, shops, service industries, schools, and other public services. Giraud feels that the authorities continue to defend increased prices and do not realize how serious the consequences are. "We have come to the point where the sanctions we imposed on Russia now affect the whole of Europe, through huge bills on top of galloping inflation."

"What is certain is that this crisis will force us to look honestly at how we use energy. Although French ski resorts had already committed to reducing electricity consumption by 10-20 % in 2021, we are ready to contribute further next season. We are already considering measures such as reducing opening hours and suspending evening skiing," concludes Giraud.

This article is related primarily to downhill resorts. But we found very little snow in Seefeld and Ramsau this winter season and they weren't making it, either. So maybe the above isn't just a scare story! Ed.

Masters World Championships, Seefeld, March 2023

I think that I can say, without fear of contraception, that I have never encountered such skiing conditions! Seefeld, on our arrival on Sunday 14th March, was green and, on Monday 15th March, temperatures peaked at +16 °C. You can imagine what this was doing to the tracks, but you don't need to use your imagination, because I'll tell you! The tracks were very soft, in many places the classic tracks were full of water and, most worryingly, there were brown patches of earth beginning to appear through the snow. On the plus side, the downhills were slow so, provided one was happy to step in soft, deep snow, they were all do-able. That evening we received an E-mail from the organisers saying that some changes were being made to the event schedule, bringing all short-distance races forward to Sunday and cutting them from 10 to 7 km, while putting the middle-distance races back to Monday and Tuesday. Was this, we wondered, a last, desperate, effort to put on at least *some* racing, before the whole event was cancelled?

The following day, though, Caramba, even worse! We woke to heavy rain and tracks which hadn't frozen overnight, either. We decided not to ski at all that day, Tuesday, because, as the photos below show, there were 'grey snow' patches which seemed to indicate that the track had thawed right through to its base, and we didn't want to damage it by skiing on it. We noted, from the webcam footage, that no one else seemed to be out skiing, either. The whole place had the air of a ski resort whose season had finished, not one which could be 'rescued' by the small amount of snow predicted for the following day.



We awoke to 3-5 cm of snow, which at least made the place look nice and slightly improved the tracks for the morning. In the afternoon we went on a shopping spree to Leutasch, where the tracks were very unpleasant; half soft and half icy, but the frozen bits made the one downhill treacherous. The shopping was successful, but the skiing was not to be repeated. We found, though, a *huge* mountain of man-made snow; we wondered (incorrectly) whether this was the backup plan to keep the Masters tracks in good condition.

Thursday. We found the tracks in rather good condition in the morning and maybe one more centimetre of new snow. We met up with Kelley, and later Nerys and Jon, on the tracks. Kelley reported having skied over to the far side of the valley, where the corduroy of the track-setting machine had frozen solid and was making the downhills and corners tricky, and I found a similar thing on the race tracks, at least until the snow softened and became rather nice. Thursday, though, was the last day of frost; on Friday, at 8 am, it was either +3 °C, +4 °C or +8 °C, depending upon which weather forecast we wanted to put our trust in!

Not much to report for Friday or Saturday; it was only really worth skiing in the morning, before the snow 'collapsed', but I did do a little time-trial around the 7 km track, which prompted me to decide to race on Sunday, a day which brought mixed fortunes for the British Team! First off for us, in the M03 category, was Simon from Huntly, making his debut. He was, sadly, in the same category as the fastest classic skier on the day, but maybe it was the three DNSs which he might otherwise have beaten. Simon was followed by Peter, also making his debut, and posting the fastest British classic time of the day. In the following, speeds are based on the 7 km track being only 6.5 km long although it might, in fact, have been only 5.9 km).

We had two ladies in the classic event, too: Jacquie Barlow, masquerading as Janet Alexander and therefore likely to get disqualified, and Allie Wilson; this being Jacquie's Masters debut. Both were happy to have safely completed their races. Jacquie raced in the F07 category but, because of her real age, I will show her in the F04 category where she belongs.

Last came me, my first race for three years and my first serious effort after two bouts of Long Covid. My goal, therefore, was to pace things properly so that I could get to the end without either exploding or having to stop. It was disappointing to see the rivals I would normally beat disappear into the distance, but there was nothing to be done about that. The universal klister worked extremely well, though, and it was pleasing to pass one person from Switzerland on the way up the steepest hill, but disappointing to get passed by someone from USA on the way down the steepest hill!

Short distance classic technique, Sunday 19th March

Men's M01-M09 7 km

Fastest	Giovanni Gerbotto	ITA	M03	14:08.7	27.1 km/h		
11)	Simon Bate	GBR	M03	27:00.7	14.4 km/h	90.8 %	(11 starters)
1)	Gian Jörger	CH	M06	16:46.8	23.2 km/h		
29)	Peter Drew	GBR	M06	23:42.7	16.4 km/h	41.3 %	(33 starters)
1)	Bernhard Schneider	GER	M07	18:24.4	21.2 km/h		
35)	Adam Pinney	GBR	M07	28:30.1	13.7 km/h	54.9 %	(37 starters)

Ladies F01-F09 7 km

Fastest	Catrin Ingvarsson	SWE	F04	20:28.4	19.1 km/h		
9)	Jacquie Barlow	GBR	F04	35:01.3	11.1 km/h	71.0 %	(9 starters)
1)	Patricia Pearce	CAN	F08	22:43.5	17.2 km/h		
17)	Allie Wilson	GBR	F08	30:05.3	13.0 km/h	32.5 %	(21 starters)



Martin Watkins descends the last main hill in a promising start to his Masters career

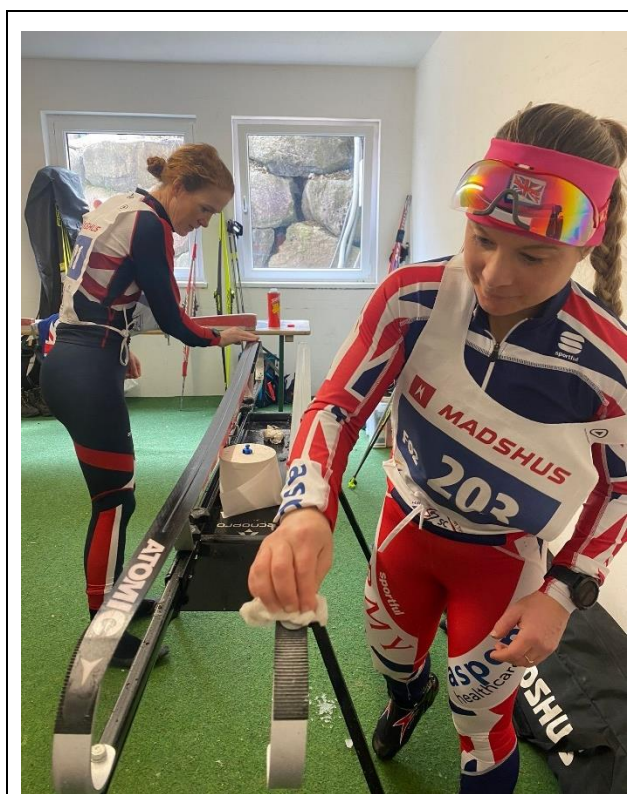


Looking quite dynamic (*shurely shum mishtake, Ed*), yours truly powers to the finish in a disappointing finish to his Masters 2023 career

The classic races took care of roughly half the British Team, with the other half competing in the free technique race in the afternoon. Conditions were much worse than for the classic race in the morning, with a temperature of about +11 °C and wet, soft, snow. As I stood watching, I could see people's skis getting sucked almost to a stop by the conditions! First to start was Jon Bowskill, another of our Masters first-timers. Poor Jon got off to rather an unfortunate start, taking a tumble towards the bottom of the first descent after the start, which put him at the back of his field. This was one of the few occasions at the World Masters where the fastest skier overall was an M01 but, to show the difficulty of the conditions, he was almost two minutes slower than the fastest classic skier over the same course in the morning.

Our ladies were off next, but not quite to the perfect start. Going down the hill just after the start, someone fell right in front of Nerys, who clattered into her and got up with a broken pole. This was not a track for legs-only, nor was it a track for just one pole so, luckily, the Swedish national director handed her a replacement pole which, sadly, was probably nine inches longer than it should have been. It's difficult to know exactly where Nerys might have finished without this incident, but she certainly produced by far the best percentage of the winner's time on the day, moving her immediately into 5th place on the Best British Ladies of All Time masters list.

A little later, our three-time medallist (who holds three of the four places on the All Time list ahead of Nerys), Kelley, and more regular Masters competitor from Munich, Bronwen, set off in the F04 class, up against the fastest lady on the day. Kelley found the conditions rather tough, while Bronwen had had her preparations for the Masters rather hampered by a difficult year, and having glitter in her hair (don't ask).



Kelley and Nerys clean their skis in our comfortable wax cabin



Bronwen prepares for the off, or recovers after the finish, not quite sure which!

Last off were two more British Masters newcomers, Martin and Lauro. Neither reported any problems as such, and Martin certainly beat the greatest number of people in his age category. There were suspicions, though, based on the speed with which Martin was passed by someone going down one of the hills, that the person concerned must have been using the now-banned high fluoro waxes, but we will never know about that. Lauro finished just one place behind Australian Zac Zacharias, who is well-known to some of us because of battles we have had with him in the past. Finally, we should not forget our North American BMCSSA member, Steve Smigiel in the M10 class. I didn't have the chance to talk to him before his race, but his 49 % of the winner's time was some way off his performances in recent years and also a way off his best (which was 19.1 % in the 15 km Free in Pillerseetal back in 2014).

In summary, rather a tough day but, with it raining on Sunday evening and with the temperatures not dropping below zero overnight, we were not expecting the conditions to be much better for the classic races the following day. I will just finish this description of Day 1 by pointing out that the oldest gold medal man, Charles French (5 km classic) and the oldest gold medal lady, Saeki Katsumi (5 km classic and 5 km free) were born in 1924 (98) and 1935 (87) respectively; those of us planning to out-live our rivals to guarantee a medal in the future may need to reconsider our plans!

Short distance free technique, Sunday 19th March

Men's M01-M09 7 km

Fastest	Toni Escher	GER	M01	16:04.7	24.2 km/h		
1)	Markus Meister	GER	M04	16:39.6	23.4 km/h		
21)	Jon Bowskill	GBR	M04	26:23.3	14.8 km/h	58.3 %	(21 starters)
1)	Francesco Benetti	ITA	M07	18:36.6	21.0 km/h		
20)	Martin Watkins	GBR	M07	20:56.4	18.6 km/h	12.5 %	(59 starters)
1)	Luzi Corsini	CH	M08	20:18.5	19.2 km/h		
49)	Lauro Franzese	GBR	M08	29:00.8	13.4 km/h	42.9 %	(52 starters)

Ladies F01-F09 7 km

1)	Hanna Riedl	GER	F02	22:06.7	17.6 km/h		
4)	Nerys Jones	GBR	F02	23:06.4	16.9 km/h	4.5 %	(5 starters)
Fastest	Sigrid Mutscheller	GER	F04	19:23.3	20.1 km/h		
7)	Kelley Haniver	GBR	F04	24:25.6	16.0 km/h	26.0 %	
15)	Bronwen Steiner	GBR	F04	30:15.8	12.9 km/h	56.0 %	(15 starters)

Men's M10-M13 5 km

Fastest	Giuliano Secco	ITA	M10	15:04.4	19.9 km/h		
16)	Steve Smigiel	USA	M10	22:27.3	13.4 km/h	49.0 %	(19 starters)

Monday; I have been doing Masters for the best part of 30 years, on and off and, in all that time, I can say that I have never encountered worst conditions than faced us this morning. When we went to bed on Sunday evening, it was raining heavily, it did not freeze at all over night, and we found the tracks extremely soft, wet and deep. It was about +5 °C when we started and the highest temperature during the day was only a fairly modest +8 °C, but this was on top of many days of thaw.



You know you're in trouble when they start pumping water off the track!



Winter Olympics, Seefeld, 1964, the last time of very little snow. Notice the large pixie (left)

This was the rescheduled medium distance classic race, which meant that our younger men were doing 20 km over three laps of the previous day's 7 (6.5) km track, while the rest of us were doing three laps of the somewhat easier 5 km red track. I say easier but, in fact, it was almost the same in terms of difficulty, but without the 1.5 km or so of relatively flat track at the highest point. First off were our young men: Simon, Jon and Peter. For Simon, it was a substantially slower race than the day before, but a much-improved percentage of the winner's time (the real judge of performance) and, this time, there was one person behind him! Jon, too, was slower in his race and was up against the fastest person on the day, which didn't help his percentage. Peter, though, improved both on percentage and, by one, on the number of people he beat; all three of them must have been getting used to the Masters by now!

Medium distance classic technique, Monday 20th March

Men's M01-M06 20 km

1)	Peter Reidl	GER	M03	59:02.3	19.8 km/h		
10)	Simon Bate	GBR	M03	1.32:14.8	12.7 km/h	56.2 %	(11 starters)
Fastest Markus Meister							
17)	Jon Bowskill	GBR	M04	1.33:32.3	12.5 km/h	70.2 %	(17 starters)
1) Gian Jörger							
28)	Peter Drew	GBR	M06	1.20:10.9	14.6 km/h	37.7 %	(34 starters)

On to M07 and M08, and Martin, Lauro and me, doing three laps of the slightly easier 5 km course. Just to give you an idea of the conditions, two people fell on the flat before we even got to the hill down from the start! One person's skis just seemed to hit a wet patch and down he went, and the second person piled into him! I thought that this gave me the chance to have a few people behind me, but they came shooting past down the hill and, after less than a few hundred metres, I was plum last! The organisers had promised to cut four classic tracks and, to their credit, this was more or less what they'd done. But it made little difference; people were hunting all over the piste for the fastest line, which was often out of the tracks on the side.



Simon Bate and his posse



Allie in action in her longest race

What made conditions worst for me were the downhill. There were soft, deep ruts all over the place, so if one tried to run straight down the hills, there was always the chance of a ski getting stuck in a rut and heading off in its own direction, while if one tried to snowplough to control speed, this didn't really work because the snow was so soft and deep. After falling at the bottom of the third steep hill, and struggling to keep control on other steep downhill, for the first time in my skiing career I had the thought that I might hurt myself! Not falling as such but, say, twisting a knee. I was thinking of stopping as I came to the end of the first lap and, when I failed to see the huge puddle and went through it up to my ankles, that decided it! It had taken me just over 24 minutes to complete 5 km; one fall, one submission but thankfully no knockout! I believe that, apart from when I dislocated and broke my shoulder in Russia, this was the only time I have ever abandoned a Masters race.

Further up, though, Martin was going great guns. A little slower than he had been in the skate race the previous day, but much, much higher up the field (ninth) and, at just 4.8 % of the winner's time, this shot him up to 11th on the BMCCSA All Time Best Men's table, making him the best Brit not to win a medal, and also by far the best ever British classic result; an excellent performance! A little behind, Lauro was the only Brit to both increase his speed compared to his skate time (something he had claimed to be able to do), and improve his percentage!

We had one lady racer, Bronwen, on this tough day. This was maybe not Bronwen's finest hour (and 22 minutes, 27.4 seconds proved it) because she only rarely classic skis, but she did slightly improve her percentage compared to the previous day's skate race. She had it all to do again, though, in the following day's skate race.

Men's M07-M09 15 km

Fastest	Bernhard Schneider	GER	M07	48:20.9	18.6 km/h		
9)	Martin Watkins	GBR	M07	50:41.0	17.8 km/h	4.8 %	(59 starters)
	Adam Pinney	GBR	M07	DNF			
1)	Daniele Vuerich	ITA	M08	48:24.9	18.6 km/h		
31)	Lauro Franzese	GBR	M08	1.06:49.2	13.5 km/h	38.0 %	(40 starters)

Ladies F01-F09 15 km

Fastest	Catrin Ingvarsson	SWE	F04	54:13.1	16.6 km/h		
8)	Bronwen Steiner	GBR	F04	1.22:27.4	10.9 km/h	52.1 %	(8 starters)

Tuesday – Ladies Day. If the previous day, middle-distance classic, had been (mainly) for the male members of the British Team, today was one for the ladies, because they were all racing. Steve, too, was out playing in his preferred skate discipline. Conditions did, indeed, look somewhat better at the start than they had been the previous day (at least the puddles seemed to have largely disappeared from the track), but there were some fairly stark figures:

Men				Ladies			
Category	Raced	DNF	DNS	Category	Raced	DNF	DNS
M01	15	1	0	F01	1	0	1
M02	10	0	3	F02	5	1	0
M03	18	2	1	F03	9	0	0
M04	22	1	0	F04	13	0	0
M05	42	2	6	F05	9	0	0
M06	36	2	6	F06	16	2	6
M07	51	0	9	F07	14	1	1
M08	45	3	12	F08	17	3	5
M09	36	2	4	F09	9	0	4
M10	21	2	7	F10	4	1	2
M11	9	1	2	F11	4		
M12	3	0	0				
Totals	292	16	58		94	8	23

If we look at these, we can see that 20 % of men and 24 % of ladies decided not to even start, 5 % and 9 % respectively did not finish. We might expect these figures for the long races in tricky conditions, but not a medium-distance race which, in addition, had been shortened from 30 km to 20 km for younger men!



Kelley climbs to a popular cheering point – note the condition of the snow



Jacquie shows the importance of wide arms for stability when cornering, especially when pole (left) is broken

First off was a large group of ladies, F01, F02 and F03 all being combined. Nerys seemed to be worryingly not near the front. This might have been down to her not having raced on snow for several years. She was, though, passing people in her group as she came round the first loops at the bottom of the initial hill. She was also going faster by about 1 km/h compared to her first race. Next off were Kelley and Bronwen. Kelley was feeling a lot better about this race than her first one, but was actually skiing a little slower for a worse percentage, and just missed out by 0.3 seconds in the race for 7th place. Bronwen admitted to not having re waxed her skis and this probably accounted for her slightly slower speed.

Jacquie was racing in the F07 category, where she beat two of her rivals. Unfortunately, she snapped a pole early in the race and had to ski without a basket for quite a long way before Peter, I believe it was, came to her rescue. As before, though, I've put Jacquie into the F04 category where she belongs.

Allie and Steve were still circulating at this point. I shouted encouragement to Steve as he started his second lap and he had the energy for a friendly smile; we got no such response as we encouraged him up to the top of the last descent before the final climb up to the finish; conditions (which peaked at about +16 °C) had led to the tracks deteriorating badly as the race went on, and this looked like hard work for Steve. We were cheering for Allie at the same point, but she'd been struggling with a bad shoulder. After stopping for a rest of several minutes at the end of the first lap, she made a shortcut to avoid the hills on the second lap and pulled out as she passed us.

Up front, though, there were no problems for Nerys, who recorded an extremely strong performance to take silver medal. She was beaten by Eva Lehotska from Slovakia, who Martin recognised from the European Police Ski Championships in 2009. This prompted me to do a little research, whereupon I found that she'd once competed in a FIS cross-country race in Slovakia in 2002, coming home in 27th place behind the likes of Justyna Kowal-chick and Katerina Smutna, who both went on to fame at the highest level. No disgrace, then, in coming second to someone of her calibre. Almost the whole British Team went to cheer Nerys as she stepped up to collect her medal that evening, followed by a nice meal together in the centre of Seefeld.

Medium distance free technique, Tuesday 21st March

Ladies F01-F09 15 km

1)	Eva Lehotska	SLO	F02	50:03.4	18.0 km/h		
2)	Nerys Jones	GBR	F02	50:58.4	17.6 km/h	1.9 %	(6 starters)

Fastest	Sigrid Mutscheller	GER	F04	44:13.5	20.4 km/h		
8)	Kelley Haniver	GBR	F04	56:12.3	16.0 km/h	27.1 %	
13)	Bronwen Steiner	GBR	F04	1.13:36.6	12.2 km/h	66.5 %	
14)	Jacquie Barlow	GBR	F04	1.25:12.6	10.6 km/h	92.6 %	(14 starters)
1)	Patricia Pearce	CAN	F08	58:01.5	17.2 km/h		
	Allie Wilson	GBR	F08	DNF			(17 starters)

Men's M10-M13 10 km

Fastest	Andre Grob	FRA	M10	29:44.4	20.2 km/h		
16)	Steve Smigiel	USA	M10	44:53.5	13.4 km/h	50.1 %	(21 starters)

As I stood watching the races, though, the difficulty of the conditions was evident from the number of people I saw falling (in addition to the 20 % who had decided not to start). There were numerous tumbles on the first downhill after the start, at the bottom of the last long steep hill, and on the final downhill. There were also people walking around with more serious injuries; a few with wrists in slings and one with a bandaged face – not a very good advertisement for Masters racing. I think that it was Peter who commented that, when watching older skiers pause or stop before heading down the hills, it was like you could see them thinking “6 weeks in hospital, 6 months off work, ...”.



Nerys in full flow towards second medal



Peter in action in the long classic race

Wednesday was relay day but, for various reasons, we were not able to put any teams forward. The OC had told us that they would salt the whole track the previous night, prior to grooming (they had only salted the start area before that). What a miraculous difference that made! It might have slightly frozen overnight before the relays, but Jon, Bronwen and I, who went to watch the end of the relays, found a track totally transformed. The salt had made a miraculous transformation of 6-9 inches of slush into tracks which were firm and fast, with just a millimetre or so of soft snow on top, and this was despite a maximum temperature of 13 °C during the day. Things were finally looking positive for the two long-distance races!

Thursday dawned really rather warm, +8 to +10 °C depending on which weather forecast you looked at, with highs of +16 °C being predicted. The tracks, though, we still in fairly good, firm, condition; the salt applied prior to the relays still doing its work. I could not help noticing, though, that almost all snow except on the tracks and downhill slopes had now disappeared, including the large pile, maybe 2-3 feet deep when we first arrived, outside our apartment.

I won't give you the statistics in quite as much detail as before, but suffice it to say that there were 521 racers entered for this race but 156, i.e. 30 %, didn't start! In some of the larger age categories: M08, M09, M10 and F08, almost 50 % of entrants did not race. This is worrying for Masters racing in general, because people who do not feel able or willing to race may well give up the long and quite expensive commitment to the MWC and opt, instead, for other races such as loppets. Steve, our US member, joined the list of non-starters. I thought, initially, that it was because he did not fancy the conditions, but it turns out that he was ill, which led to him missing the long race and the banquet, too. Just as well that I did not circulate the story about him not fancying the conditions, because that would have been embarrassing, wouldn't it! But to come all the way from America for just two relatively short races does not seem very good value to me! I looked through 2 163 photos on the internet to find a photo of Steve but, I am afraid, with no success.

Anyway, moving rapidly on to the racing. The start of the youngest men had been brought forward by 30 minutes to try to provide the best conditions, so first off was Jon in the M04 class at 08:45, over four laps of the 7 km (probably more accurately 6 km) loop. He reported much better conditions than earlier in the week but, like many Brits before him, he found the fourth lap hardest of them all, especially as the surface started to break up. To show how much better the conditions had become, Jon's speed went up from 12.5 km/h in the medium distance race to 15.2 km/h but, sadly, the winner's speed went up even more, so his percentage was actually a little worse.

Battle was re-joined a little later in the F02 category between Eva and Nerys and, this time, things looked a lot more promising! As they started the second lap, Eva slowed for a drink and Nerys was maybe only 5 metres behind her. If only she could latch on, surely this was her Big Chance! But Nerys reported that Eva's skis seemed to be better than hers and, by the start of the final lap, the gap between them was more like 200 metres. No matter, two silver medals is no disgrace whatsoever, and there were hugs at the end between Nerys and Eva, which was a bit worrying, 'cos Eva's a well-built lass who could easily have squashed poor Nerys to death!

Some ladies were complaining of being short-changed in terms of distance and this is almost certainly true especially with the change in snow conditions. The total race time for the winners in the F02 and F04 categories (Nerys' and Kelley's groups) over a notional 20 km was only about 8 minutes longer than their times over a notional 15 km!

Long distance free technique, Thursday 23rd March

Mens M01-M06 30 km

Fastest	Toni Escher	GER	M01	54:01.8	28.9 km/h		
1)	Jan Holiga	SLO	M04	57:47.3	27.0 km/h		
24)	Jon Bowskill	GBR	M04	1.42:34.9	15.2 km/h	77.5 %	(24 starters)

Ladies F01-F06 20 km

1)	Eva Lehotska	SLO	F02	57:55.7	20.2 km/h		
2)	Nerys Jones	GBR	F02	58:53.4	19.8 km/h	1.6 %	(6 starters)
Fastest	Sigrid Mutscheller	GER	F04	52:45.7	22.2 km/h		
10)	Kelley Haniver	GBR	F04	1.06:49.1	17.5 km/h	26.7 %	(13 starters)

Ladies F07-F08 15 km

Fastest	Jan Guenter	USA	F09	37:02.4	24.3 km/h		
1)	Sirpa Paakkonen	FIN	F08	38:03.8	23.6 km/h		
9)	Allie Wilson	GBR	F08	55:19.7	16.3 km/h	45.4 %	(12 starters)

Friday, yippee, we arrived at the final day, and the last race, long distance classic. We woke to +6 °C with a peak temperature of +13 °C and rain predicted. The OC had promised to salt the tracks again prior to this race, and this is what they had done. But they had also suggested that the snow was so thin in some places that it might not be possible to cut classic tracks in all places.



A dangerous moment for Nerys, as Eva moves in to try to pop her!



Jon at full speed at the start of his long race. Luckily there were no flies for him to catch!

So when I arrived and looked at the tracks near the start, they looked eminently suitable for roller ski racing; hard, flat and icy, with people needing to double-pole because of the lack of cut tracks. I raised the issue of the iciness with our athletes, though and, while they accepted that conditions had been a little tricky on the first lap, they were not difficult and became easier as the race wore on.

Nonetheless, again a large number of participants decided that they didn't fancy the conditions: 41 % of men decided not to start (although there was at least one mistake; our friend Arne Stornor from Denmark, but who lives right by the race tracks in Lillehammer, most definitely started, because I saw him and cheered him on, but he was recorded as DNS), and 42 % of ladies didn't start, either. In fact, all three entrants in the F11 (80-85 years old) did not start, when they were all guaranteed medals!

Simon was off first and was going well, 2 km/h faster than his previous speed and on this way to his second-best percentage of the event. He had passed that key moment in the career of some of us British MWC skiers of having one person behind him, in his previous race and, this time, he overtook someone shortly after the start to repeat the feat. Peter was also going much faster and seemed to have a lot of people behind him at the start. He was hampered at first, though, as a German cut right across him down the first hill. Martin maintained his same finishing position, overtaking several people to again record 9th, although with a slightly worst percentage than his best. And then finally Lauro, putting up his best performance of the whole event, his best percentage and plenty of people behind him; he was less than 3 minutes slower than his time over 15 km, showing how much the salt has done. And that was it, racing over for MWC 2023!

Long distance classic technique, Friday 24th March

Men's M01-M06 30 km

Fastest	Bruno Debertolis	ITA	M03	1.01:44.3	25.3 km/h		
13)	Simon Bate	GBR	M03	1.49:20.6	14.3 km/h	77.1 %	(14 starters)
1)	Gian Jörger	CH	M06	1.05:28.1	23.8 km/h		
21)	Peter Drew	GBR	M06	1.32:10.3	16.9 km/h	40.7 %	(24 starters)

Men's M07-M09 20 km

Fastest	Yann Engek	CH	M07	51:27.3	22.7 km/h		
9)	Martin Watkins	GBR	M07	55:11.0	21.2 km/h	7.2 %	(28 starters)

1)	Gianpaolo Englaro	ITA	M08	52:18.9	22.3 km/h		
22)	Lauro Franzese	GBR	M08	1.09:34.4	16.8 km/h	33.0 %	(29 starters)



Lauro powers his way to his best performance in his longest race



The whole British team (except Simon) poses after Nerys' first medal

That evening it *chucked* it down as we made our way to the banquet, which was good except for the fact that we had to wait more than an hour for the first food to be delivered. Surely this rain was the end of skiing in Seefeld for 2023? No, apparently it snowed quite heavily the week after we left!

So, in summary, I believe that the whole BMCCSA team (with the possible exception of Steve, on his sickbed) enjoyed themselves, and the first-timers no doubt learnt a lot. There are messages for the WMA, though. Even accepting that 2022-2023 was an exceptionally bad year in the Alps, we have to consider statistics only from recent years and not long-term averages. When we do that, we see that 'bad years' are more common than we realise: very little snow in Rovaniemi in 2007, tracks very nearly wiped out at the end of Autrans 2008, Pillerseetal almost cancelled in 2014, very warm conditions in Klosters in 2017 (where we will return for the Masters in 2025), a general lack of snow in Minneapolis in 2018 and Seefeld in 2023.

We should never have been in Seefeld this late in the year (conditions were much better in February), and the number of people not starting their races was a worrying sign for the WMA. Salting the tracks made a huge difference, which raises the question of why the tracks were not salted sooner. There are some concerns over the environmental effects of chloride, sodium and magnesium in salt, and I have no idea of what the cost implications are of having to use 50-100 kg of salt per kilometre of track. In the end, the Seefeld organisers probably did their best in the circumstances, but they should not really have been put in such a situation in the first place. Anyway, let us finish with some general photos of the event.



Oldest lady competitor, and gold medallist, Saeki Katsumi of Japan, 87 years young!



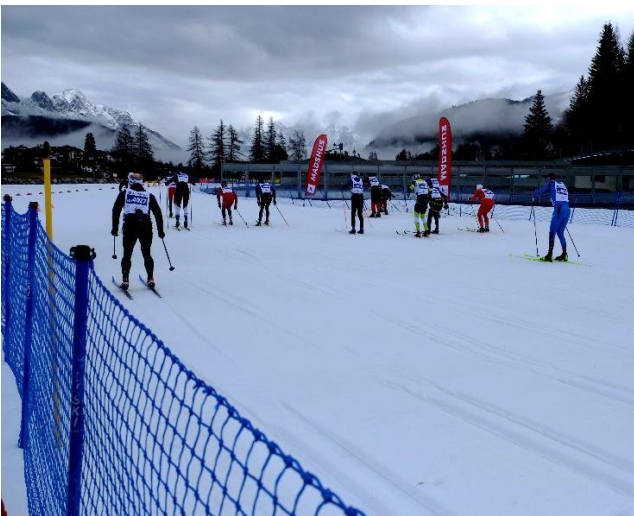
The rather ropery, dirty snow conditions up towards the high point of the course



Should we maybe move the start forward by 50 metres?



How many Austrians does it take to change a light bulb or host an MWC? About 60



That's Jon, 4017, left and Simon, 3014, right starting their races. Now come on, boys, this is just double poling, that's the *easy* bit 😊!



Snow's a little sparse, isn't it?



Martin pointing to where he'd stood, World Champs, in 1985

Now here's a thing ...

Talking to people in Seefeld, it seems that some were a little disappointed with their performances in the MWC, and I know that other people have similarly been 'unprepared' for the speeds of the best skiers and, consequently, their percentage of the winner's time, which is the measure we use to judge race performances. Race speed is not a good judge, because this depends on conditions, and 'number of people behind you' can be a very satisfying measure, but it is dependent on who else decides to turn up, which is outside your control. We might (as we have done in the past) also discuss that percentage of the winner's time depends upon the winner; but your overall objective is surely to compare yourself against the winner, so these discussions need to be put to one side!

What I have tried to do in this article, though, is to reassure everyone that whatever performance they have had, it is only a measure of where they are at that event, it has very little relationship to what they might have done in the past or what they are capable of doing in the future. Is it reasonable to expect that people come to their very first MWC and win, when they have no or little experience of Masters racing and recognising that it is very different from loppets? (yes it, because people have done so in the past and have won medals at their first event: Laura, Kelley and Nerys, but let's move on!). The main point of this analysis is to highlight that many British Masters skiers have found their first MWCs 'challenging' (I had a long string of last places before I got older and discovered fluoro waxes) but some have gone on to much better things. The other point to notice is that some of us have had extremely different performances even in the same event; look at Norman Clark, our most winningest member ever with golds, silvers and bronze medals. In Sovereign Lake, Canada, back in 2011, he recorded 84.5 % in his first race (judged rather poor by British standards) but, two days later, 0.0 %, gold medal!

In this little article I have brought together *all* race finishes for BMCCSA members over the years, combining men and women, and I have given each person's best and worst performances. "Position" relates to each person's overall position in the 716 total BMCSSA race finishes we have had, but they are ranked in the table below according to percentage of the winner's time (POWT).

This is not to make fun of people with less-good results, far from it, but simply to show that performance can be a very fickle thing! Some people are limited in the variation of their results because they have only competed at one MWC (a few have done only one race). But some of us who have done the Masters quite a few times have had our ups and downs, have had performances to remember and some to forget; I remember my worst performance, Pillerseetal 2014, 64.5 %, because I was chained to the post by shiftly Dick Dastardly (or, rather, I was stuck to the ground with inappropriate grip wax!). The overall message, though, is that it does not actually matter what your results are right now. As long as you enjoy Masters racing, you should continue to do it, recognise and work on your weak points (note to self – must learn to go downhill with eyes open) and return and do better at next year's events!

Pos	Name	Race	Event	POWT	Pos	Race	Event	POWT
1=	Jack White	10 Free	Canmore 2022	0.0 %	312	10 Free	Asiago 2013	36.2 %
1=	Kelley Haniver	30 Free	Beito. 2019	0.0 %	154	15 Free	Seefeld 2023	27.1 %
1=	Norman Clark	10 Free	Sov. Lake 2011	0.0 %	703	15 Free	Sov. Lake 2011	84.5 %
1=	Hilary Field	5 Free	Autrans 2009	0.0 %	111	10 Classic	Folgaria 1997	24.7 %
1=	Nerys Jones	20 Free	Seefeld 2023	1.6 %	16	7 Free	Seefeld 2023	4.5 %
18	Martin Watkins	15 Classic	Seefeld 2023	4.8 %	37	7 Free	Seefeld 2023	12.5 %
28	Doris Trueman	15 Free	L'hammer 2004	8.4 %	32	30 Free	L'hammer 2004	10.0 %
30	Ed Nicoll	30 Free	Autrans 2009	9.5 %	55	45 Free	Autrans 2009	16.8 %
39	Peter Moysey	15 Classic	Pillersee. 2014	13.3 %	100	45 Classic	Pillersee. 2014	23.5 %
47	Brian Adams	45 Free	Quebec 2002	15.6 %	378	36 Classic	Klosters 2017	40.2 %
51	Mark Llinares	10 Free	Sov. Lake 2011	16.1 %	430	45 Free	Falun 2010	43.4 %
54	Sian Mooney	10 Free	McCall 2008	16.7 %	309	15 Classic	McCall 2008	36.1 %
61	Matti Virtanen	45 Free	K'gorsk 2005	17.7 %	218	30 Free	Seefeld 2003	31.2 %
65	Roger Homyer	7.5 Free	Minne'lis 2018	18.3 %	211	25 Classic	Minne'lis 2018	30.5 %
69	Steve Smigiel	15 Free	Pillersee. 2014	19.1 %	522	10 Free	Seefeld 2023	50.1 %
73	S.-J. Cox-Conklin	30 Classic	Falun 2010	20.7 %	159	15 Classic	Falun 2010	27.3 %
74	Barbara Baker	10 Classic	Autrans 2009	20.8 %	532	30 Free	Autrans 2009	50.9 %
77	Bert Scholten	30 Free	Quebec 2002	20.9 %	378	45 Free	M'zell 2001	40.1 %
83	Chris Maund	10 Classic	Beito. 2019	21.7 %	188	30 Classic	Beito. 2019	29.1 %

88	Chris Richards	10 Free	Sov. Lake 2011	22.3 %		567	45 Classic	L'hammer 2004	53.6 %
98	Chris Donnelly	45 Free	McCall 2008	23.4 %		506	15 Free	Klostern 2017	49.0 %
104	Christian Lund	10 Classic	Autrans 2009	24.1 %		465	30 Free	Autrans 2009	45.6 %
106	Wendy McRae	15 Classic	Sov. Lake 2011	24.4 %		670	10 Free	Klostern 2017	68.2 %
127	Janet Alexander	15 Classic	Beito. 2019	25.6 %		236	10 Classic	Beito. 2019	32.0 %
132	Alasdair Wilson	10 Classic	Sov. Lake 2011	25.9 %		698	30 Free	M'zell 2001	81.5 %
135	Paddy Field	10 Classic	Kiruna 2000	26.0 %		506	10 Classic	Autrans 2009	49.0 %
144=	Laura Harrison	10 Classic	Canmore 2022	26.6 %		-	-	-	-
144=	Nicola Walker	10 Free	Seefeld 2003	26.6 %		199	15 Classic	Seefeld 2003	29.5 %
150	D. Junghanns	10 Classic	Oberwies'l 2012	26.8 %		486	15 Free	Oberwies'l 2012	47.2 %
153	Phillip Hoyland	15 Classic	Hirshau 1985	26.9 %		377	30 Classic	Hirshau 1985	40.0 %
156	Adam Pinney	15 Classic	Kuopio 1996	27.2 %		658	10 Classic	Pillersee. 2014	64.5 %
161	Fiona Crossley	10 Classic	Sov. Lake 2011	27.7 %		359	15 Free	Sov. Lake 2011	38.8 %
164	Paul Moonen	10 Free	Sov. Lake 2011	27.9 %		481	45 Free	Sov. Lake 2011	46.9 %
175	Gail Donald	15 Free	Vuokatti 2016	28.3 %		365	10 Classic	Klostern 2017	39.2 %
183	Peter McManners	10 Free	Rovaniemi 2007	28.7 %		400	45 Free	Rovaniemi 2007	41.4 %
188	Bronwen Steiner	10 Free	Pillersee. 2014	29.1 %		665	15 Free	Seefeld 2023	66.5 %
196	Chris Chrystal	15 Classic	Canmore 1995	29.3 %		650	30 Classic	Brusson 2006	63.0 %
212	Jim Davidson	15 Classic	Gr'wald 1999	30.9 %		320	30 Classic	Gr'wald 1999	36.7 %
216	Jennifer Munro	10 Free	Pillersee. 2014	31.1 %		699	30 Classic	Asiago 2013	81.9 %
218	Gerard Evans	45 Classic	Gr'wald 1999	31.2 %		669	30 Free	Folgaria 1997	67.4 %
221	Chris Barton	50 Classic	Ostersund 1990	31.3 %		514	30 Free	Ostersund 1990	49.6 %
228	Patrick o'Connor	45 Classic	L. Placid 1998	31.6 %		713	15 Classic	Beito. 2019	99.6 %
231	Irene Chawko	10 Free	Seefeld 2003	31.8 %		679	15 Classic	Seefeld 2003	71.3 %
235	Kevin Hesketh	30 Free	Canmore 1995	31.9 %		422	50 Free	Canmore 1995	42.6 %
241	Stan McDonald	10 Free	M'zell 2001	32.2 %		430	10 Free	Seefeld 2003	43.4 %
248	Allie Wilson	7 Classic	Seefeld 2023	32.5 %		462	15 Free	Seefeld 2023	45.4 %
253	Lauro Franzese	20 Classic	Seefeld 2023	33.0 %		424	7 Free	Seefeld 2023	42.9 %
258	Helen Murray	10 Free	Pillersee. 2014	33.3 %		653	15 Free	Klostern 2017	63.3 %
270	Peter Fairhurst	45 Free	Pillersee. 2014	33.8 %		330	15 Free	Pillersee. 2014	37.3 %
276	Hans Nilsson	10 Classic	Vuokatti 2016	34.5 %		584	45 Classic	Pillersee. 2014	54.5 %
287	Tim Banks	15 Classic	Folgaria 1997	35.1 %		521	30 Free	Folgaria 1997	50.0 %
307	Martin Arnold	30 Free	Sov. Lake 2011	36.0 %		692	10 Classic	Pillersee. 2014	78.5 %
316	Bob Frampton	50 Classic	Ostersund 1990	36.6 %		704	15 Free	Kuopio 1996	84.9 %
339	Peter Drew	20 Classic	Seefeld 2023	37.7 %		397	7 Classic	Seefeld 2023	41.3 %
365	George Gabriel	15 Classic	Ostersund 1990	39.2 %		638	45 Classic	Brusson 2006	60.5 %
388	Mike Bangle	10 Classic	Rovaniemi 2007	40.9 %		660	30 Classic	Brusson 2006	64.9 %
402=	Steve Hesketh	10 Free	Oberwies'l 2012	41.6 %		601	45 Classic	Oberwies'l 2012	56.1 %
402=	David Cantrill	15 Free	Canmore 1995	41.6 %		512	30 Free	Canmore 1995	49.3 %
413	Godfrey Rhimes	30 Free	Pillersee. 2014	42.1 %		667	15 Free	Klostern 2017	66.9 %
422	Marian Hesketh	15 Free	Canmore 1995	42.6 %		445	10 Free	Canmore 1995	44.3 %
427	Alan Shepard	15 Free	Autrans 2009	43.2 %		485	30 Free	Autrans 2009	47.1 %
438	Spencer Lane	15 Free	Kuusamo 1986	44.0 %		695	30 Free	Ostersund 1990	80.8 %
446	Alistair Brown	10 Free	Klostern 2017	44.4 %		682	10 Free	Falun 2010	71.9 %
473	Gareth Buffett	30 Classic	Gr'wald 1999	46.3 %		684	45 Free	Gr'wald 1999	74.2 %
483	Tim East	45 Classic	Kiruna 2000	47.0 %		693	30 Free	Folgaria 1997	77.9 %
496	Mark Conklin	10 Classic	Falun 2010	47.9 %		-	-	-	-
528	Nick Senechal	15 Free	Folgaria 1997	50.4 %		681	30 Classic	Folgaria 1997	71.8 %
559	Anne Ford	15 Free	Oberwies'l 2012	53.3 %		687	15 Free	Klostern 2017	81.3 %
587	John Trueman	10 Classic	L'hammer 2004	54.9 %		-	-	-	-
591	Alan Jones	10 Free	Kiruna 2000	55.3 %		674	15 Free	Kiruna 2000	69.7 %
602	Simon Bate	20 Classic	Seefeld 2023	56.2 %		709	7 Classic	Seefeld 2023	90.8 %
610	E.-A. MacKenzie	10 Classic	Autrans 2009	57.2 %		616	30 Classic	Autrans 2009	58.1 %
616	Ian Murray	10 Free	Klostern 2017	58.1 %		683	15 Free	Klostern 2017	73.4 %
619	Jon Bowskill	7 Free	Seefeld 2023	58.3 %		690	30 Free	Seefeld 2023	77.5 %
647	Peter Gurney	30 Classic	Seefeld 2003	62.1 %		-	-	-	-
654	Bruce Baker	10 Free	Autrans 2009	63.5 %		672	30 Free	Autrans 2009	68.6 %
659	Ann Bath	10 Classic	K'gorsk 2005	64.7 %		683	15 Classic	K'gorsk 2005	66.2 %
664	John Murray	10 Free	M'zell 2001	66.4 %		716	15 Free	Seefeld 2003	115.1 %
676	John Helliwell	10 Free	Autrans 2009	70.0 %		685	15 Classic	Autrans 2009	74.5 %
678	Jacque Barlow	7 Classic	Seefeld 2023	71.0 %		710	15 Free	Seefeld 2023	92.6 %
687	Chris Virgo	10 Classic	Seefeld 2003	76.2 %		-	-	-	-
706	John Peatfield	15 Classic	Vuokatti 2016	89.4 %		711	30 Classic	Vuokatti 2016	92.7 %
715	Des Goff	15 Classic	Klostern 2017	113.0 %		-	-	-	-

And talking about next year's events ...

We have a bumper year in 2024, with not one but *two* major international Masters events. First off, in January, there is the World Winter Masters Games (WWMG) and then, in February, we have the Masters World Championships (MWC). Full details of both events will be given in the Autumn Newsletter but this short article is just to allow you to fix the dates in your diaries and start planning and training to do both!

Some people within the World Masters Association (WMA, the body which manages the MWC) believe that we should consider the International Masters Games Association (IMGA, which manages the WWMG) as our enemies and bitter rivals. This might be because they fear the effects of falling numbers at MWCs as a threat to their economics. But I find this position daft; it's like saying to Keely Hodgkinson or Jake Wightman that because they've raced in the Olympics, they can't compete in the World Championships! No, no, I believe that we should see both events as complementary, which means that in years when they happen, we should plan to compete in both, as will be the case in 2024.

WWMG, Lombardia, Italy

Cross-country events will take place in *Vermiglio*, situated at the northern end of the Val di Sole in Trentino, amongst imposing mountains and meadows.

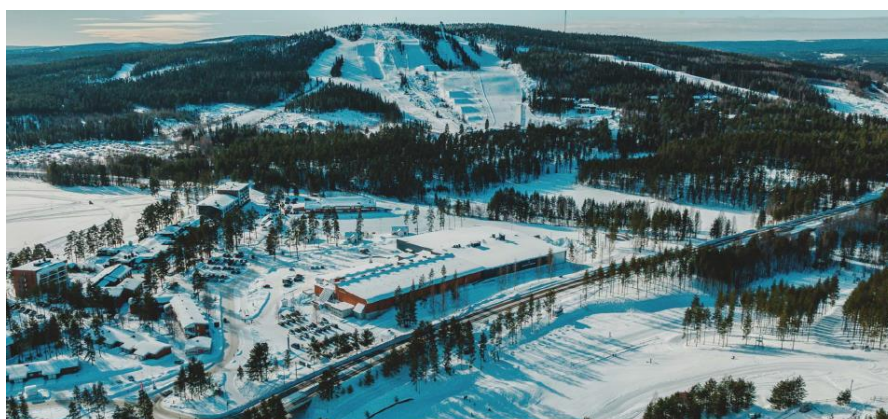


The outline programme is the following. If, between now and January, you want to learn ski jumping, you can also enter jumping and Nordic combined events!

	January 2024								
	Sat. 13 th	Sun. 14 th	Mon. 15 th	Tues. 16 th	Wed. 17 th	Thur. 18 th	Fri. 19 th	Sat. 20 th	Sun. 21 st
Cross country	30 km C		7.5 km C	7.5 km F	15 km C	15 km F	Relay	30 km F	
Biathlon		10 km					6 km		Relays
Ski-O	Middle			Sprint			Long		

MWC, Vuokatti, Finland

We are back in Vuokatti for 2024 and the tracks are new – we start at the bottom centre of the picture:



The programme is the following:

February 2024					
Sun. 11 th	Mon. 12 th	Tues. 13 th	Wed. 14 th	Thur. 15 th	Fri. 16 th
Middle C+F	Short C+F	Rest day	Relays	Long C	Long F

I've already booked two apartments for 5 people each from Wednesday 7th to Saturday 17th February so, if you're interested, let me know and book your place!

Top award for BMCCSA member

Last year, at the Snowshow at the NEC, Birmingham on the final Sunday (sadly too late for the last BMCCSA Newsletter), the results of the Snowsport England Recreation Coach Award 2022 were announced and the winner was long-time BMCCSA and Yorkshire Dales Cross Country Ski Club member:

Martin Appleby of Yorkshire Dales Cross Country Ski Club

The following is from the report on the awards by YDCCSC: "We are delighted that Martin's years of dedicated work for the club have been recognised and we would like to say a huge 'Congratulations' and 'Well done' to Martin as well as our thanks for all he has done and continues to do for the club, both as a coach and in so many other ways.

Although Martin had been invited to the Ski show, he was busy coaching at York on Sunday morning (we had 21 skiers on the track). Fortunately, committee member Angela Clarke was at the show and received the award on Martin's behalf. There was evidently some hilarity when they announced that he could not be there because he was busy coaching.

Martin has been coaching for YDCCSC for over thirty years, yet continues to move forward with his own ski skills and coaching skills and is a regular attendee at Snowsport England courses and coaching workshops. He will be known to most members for his regular coaching at Leeds on Wednesday evenings and at York on Sunday mornings and over the years he has introduced so many newcomers to cross country skiing and roller skiing. Less known will be Martin's on snow coaching both locally and on club holidays. Many members have benefitted from his instruction at Queensbury and Temple Newsam and have joined him for ski tours in the Dales, on the North York Moors and in Dalby Forest.

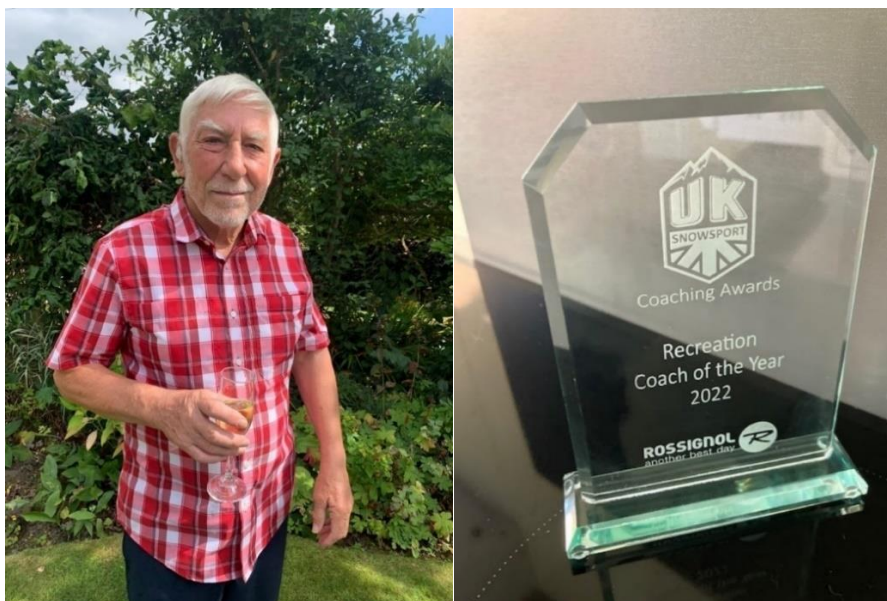
Since joining Yorkshire Dales Cross Country Ski Club in the 1980s, Martin has been the driving force behind so many of our activities. He introduced inter-club roller ski touring in various locations in the north of England which laid a great foundation for building the Nordic community spirit that exists across SE Nordic clubs today. Martin has led countless walks and is good at encouraging other club members to lead activities such as visits to nature reserves and cycle rides. He has organised club holidays abroad, weekends away and even organised a club trip to a brewery once. His garage was the club ski store for many years and he has dedicated much time to maintaining our roller ski stock.

Yorkshire Dales CCSC recognises that our club depends on our qualified instructors and Martin's contribution to skills development has meant that we now have a very strong and enthusiastic coaching team with two new instructors qualifying in the past month.

Our thanks go to the club member who made the nominations. It is a huge boost to the whole coaching team to know that their efforts are appreciated and it is an achievement for the club as a whole. This award should also raise the profile of Nordic skiing generally and showcase the work that goes on in the Snowsport England Nordic clubs."

And a response from Martin:

“I am delighted to accept this award on behalf of the Yorkshire Dales coaching team, the Yorkshire Dales Cross Country Ski Club and the sport of cross-country skiing (*he said, outrageously failing to mention BMCCSA! Ed*). I would like to thank the kind club member who made the nomination. It has meant a lot to the coaching team.”



In other news, the oldest competitor at the MWC in Seefeld was born in 1924. So, Yorkshire Dales CCSC, your challenge for 2023 is to convince Martin to put that glass of wine down and finally try his hand at a Masters World Championships! Ed.

Recognition for former Masters National Directors

While we were in Seefeld, two long-serving National Directors were recognised for their efforts: Karl Kamphenkel of Germany and Bruce LeGrow of Canada, who took over the role from our own Jack White some years ago. Below is what Karl's successor, Andreas Dillemath, wrote:

“I am happy to announce to you that Federal President Walter Steinmeier (Germany), at the suggestion of the Prime Minister of Lower Saxony (Mr. Jorg Mielke), has awarded my predecessor and our very well-known “Braunlager original” Karl “Kalli” Kamphenkel the Cross of Merit, also called the Federal Cross of Merit, on the 09 September 2022. I am very happy that Kalli has now received this special award in Braunlage at the age of 83 for his special services in the social, charitable and humanitarian fields.

Listing all his activities, which covered especially sports over more than 60 years of his life as a trainer, technician, supervisor and in addition many years as a teacher and promoter of competition “Youth trainer for the Olympics” in his Braunlager school, would take a very long time. His 32 years in the honorary office as national director and team leader for German masters at the WMA as well as the 25 years as the representative of Masters sport in the DSV (German Ski Federation) and his two years as chair of the FIS subcommittee for roller skiing are, however, to be emphasized. He was also a member of the city council for 20 years and 5 years in the church council of Braunlage.

Visibly moved and in the context of his family, his wife Heide and his three children, he accepted the award, carried out by the district administrator of the district of Goslar and the mayor of the city of Braunlage. This award makes me particularly happy, because Kalli really deserves it. According to DSV Vice President Tobias Angerer, the award is an important recognition for all his work.”

Strong hips, fast times

DATASPORT WEBSITE, FEBRUARY 2023

To exploit the potential power of your legs, you need strong and stable hips. For once, the deep muscles count more here than your large gluteal muscles. If you want a powerful push-off when jogging, you need to train the deep external hip rotators. Here's how:

The deep external hip rotators are fan-shaped and the deepest structure in the buttocks. The group is made up of six different muscles. The fan shape helps provide the body with stability and strength at any hip flexion or extension angle. As in the shoulder, the rotators centre the head in the (hip) socket. The better this centring works, the more flexible and stable the hips. Six muscles rotate the thigh outwards, which aligns the leg axis. They can also pull the leg inwards or outwards, depending on the angle of the hip.

Sitting for long periods of time changes the tension in the muscles around the pelvis, resulting in a hollow back. This forces the deep external hip rotators to lengthen when standing and walking. As their length increases, the muscles can no longer perform their function well. This causes poor stability and pain, and a drop in performance. The only thing that helps then is to straighten your pelvis and train the deep external hip rotators. But if you want to prevent it happening, the following exercises will help strengthen and stabilise your hips:

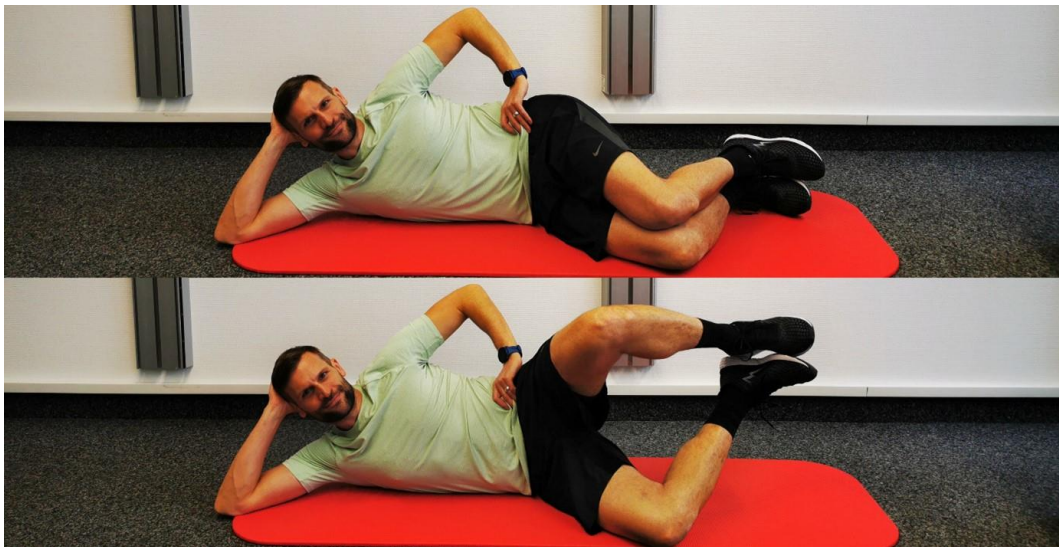
HIGH ROTATION FROM THE HIP

Start: Lie on one side. Your legs are bent and lie on top of each other. Straighten your pelvis. Now lift both feet up while keeping your knee on the floor. Then open your knees so your top knee is raised in the air. Close your knees again and lower your feet back to the floor. Now start from the beginning again.

Quantity: 2 sets of 15 repetitions per side.

Take note: Keep your pelvis in the same position. The movement comes from your hip joints.

Variation: Keep the foot of your lower leg constantly raised throughout the exercise.



OUTWARD ROTATION FROM THE HIP

Start: Stand with your feet hip-width apart and tie an elastic band around your knees. It should be tight enough to rotate your knees inwards. Keep your pelvis upright and lengthen your lower back. Rotate your knees outwards. It helps to do the same movement with your arms. Then slowly rotate your knees inwards again. Move your arms inwards again too. Now rotate outwards again.

Quantity: 2 sets of 30 repetitions.

Take note: Always keep your knees slightly bent. Keep your pelvis upright.

Variation: In the same position, raise one leg in the air and now rotate the supporting leg outwards and inwards again.



STEP UP FROM THE HIP OVER THE BAND

Start: Take an elastic band and tie it around your knee so that it pulls the knee inwards. Put that leg on a raised surface or step. The tension should pull your knee inwards so firmly that you can feel the resistance yet keep the knee axis straight. Keep your pelvis upright here too. Now slowly climb onto the step and pull your free leg forwards and over the band. Your supporting leg should be facing forwards throughout the movement. Now step over the band and back down again.

Quantity: 2 sets of 15 repetitions per side.

Take note: Pay attention to your leg axis. Your knee should not rotate inwards. In the upper position your knee should not be hyperextended.

Variation: Use a wobbly surface on the step to make your foot and leg axis work harder.



And finally, ...can this be true?

Today, in London, in a shocking and stunning development which has shocked and stunned the United Kingdom, the European Union, the colonies and further afield, a spokesman for the UK Department of Energy made the following shocking and stunning announcement:

“My Lords, ladies and gentle caresses, as part of a new government initiative I am here to talk to you about wind turbines. You see, for a long while, we have been telling you that we are building wind turbines to generate a large amount of energy, thereby combating global climate change. This is not actually the case. In fact we’ve been building them as giant fans, powered by gas-fired power stations, to keep us all cool during the increasingly hot weather. This is why the war in Ukraine is so serious – we can no longer get enough gas to fire our power stations to drive our wind turbines to keep us cool, so we may have to invest in even more wind turbines to power the ones we already have. We have even been building wind turbines offshore because we know how much the British like nice, cooling, sea breezes. I am telling you this as a part of a radical new government policy which I will take pains to explain to you because it might be difficult to understand initially but which will henceforth be known as ‘Telling the truth’ ” (sound of 35 senior and junior ministers fainting in the background).

Our man Prof. G.C.S.E. Fail, of the University of Lunn, was there to hear this shocking and stunning pronouncement. Prof. Fail, now a leading primate scientist, told us: “Really, human beings are so difficult to comprehend. One minute they’re telling us one thing and the next they’re expecting us to accept things such as telling the truth. Many of us leading scientists simply won’t believe it. But, in cases like this, we must look at the evidence. We have been progressively building large numbers of wind turbines and our climate has been getting progressively warmer, and snow conditions worse. This is a very positive negative correlation and cannot easily be ignored.”

Mr Sunak, a prime minister, added, “When I was little, I was infatuated with Marilyn Monroe and “Some like it hot”, which I have taken ever since to be a mandate commitment, much like “Get Brexit? Dumb” (Mr Sunak and his wife are £730 million today).

At this point, a spokesman for the Department for Health said “Next slide, please”.

If this shocking and stunning statement is true, though, how do we explain China investing billions in wind turbines and becoming the country with the greatest installed wind turbine capacity in the world? We sent Prof. G.C.S.E. Fail to talk to Mr. Hans Upp (formerly from Sweden), now spokesman for the Department for Business, Enterprise and Business Reform.

Prof. Fail, “How do we explain China investing billions in wind turbines and becoming the country with the greatest installed wind turbine capacity in the world?” Mr. Upp (formerly of Sweden), “We believe that the Chinese have developed a new policy whereby they are selling things to themselves. This is making them extremely rich, but without all that trouble of exchange rates, and saving a fortune on shipping costs. We are learning from this and are shortly going to implement a similar internal trading system in the United Kingdom of Great Britain as a way to finally capitalise on Brexit. We will start by sending coal to Newcastle, where they will need it to warm their houses to combat all this cooling caused by the offshore wind turbines providing cooling sea breezes and ... oh, look, ... there are two nice men in white coats waiting for me to stop talking.”

Prof. Fail added, in a final comment on this subject, “We know that the Earth being heated by trapped solar radiation caused by the development of a gaseous atmosphere started 3.75 billion and 50 years ago. I can be certain of this because we started talking about Global Warming in the 1970s when the notion was 3.75 billion years old, and that was 50 years ago.”