



ALPBACH VISITORS  
SKI CLUB

**NEWSLETTER**  
WINTER SEASON 2021/2022

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ALPBACH VISITORS SKI CLUB

Founded in 1968

**Newsletter winter 2021/2022**

## AVSC Committee

**Chairman** Mike Brennan

**Hon Treasurer** Paul Nichols

## Committee Members

Henry Anstey Club Weekend

Lucy Clarke Junior Training Committee

Stewart Edginton Junior Training Committee

Johnny Ferguson AICC Committee

Alicia Good Newsletter

Keith Howells Honorary Member

Maggie Howells UK Secretariat

Luggi Schwarzenauer

Vee Thursby Events

Joey Pearson Club Secretary

[www.avsc.org.uk](https://www.avsc.org.uk)

AVSC

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Edited by Alicia Good and Vee Thursby

Information or news for future editions should be sent to: [newsletter@avsc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@avsc.org.uk)

Cover photograph: Alicia Good

[GDPR: Data Protection Policy Statement](#)

We collect and hold a minimum amount of personal information in order to process Membership Applications, organize events such as Junior Training, Club Weekends, Newsletter distribution and event notifications. We do not publicise this information nor do we pass this information to third parties other than Snowsport England who may, from time to time, require some information for insurance purposes. We do not hold bank information. All bank details are deleted as soon as Standing Orders are initiated.

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## Chairman's Report for the Newsletter and AGM

When we left Alpbach after the Club Weekend on 16 March 2020, as the Tyrolean Provincial Government forced all "accommodation providers" to close, we never thought we would lose not only our Easter week but all of the 2021 ski season. Many of us have been inconvenienced, sometimes greatly, by Covid-19, others have suffered financially, and a few have been severely affected and our thoughts are with them and their families.

As is reported in the Village News, Alpbach had tough times too with the loss of both the ski season and all the congress business. The Alpbacherhof even posted a Facebook message with early Ski School photos saying how much they were missing the AVSC. However, there were also Alpbach winners, the skiers! With hotels closed and the lifts working for the locals, they described their ski season as "fantastic"; good snow, well pisted, empty slopes and no queues. Indeed, the webcam bore this out on many days with sunshine and hardly any skiers. Alpbach has now come to life again and is ready and looking forward to welcoming us back in 2022.

The Club remains financially healthy, as shown by our accounts, and we are determined to run a full 2021-2022 season, both skiing and socially, starting with our Autumn Drinks on Thursday 18 November when we return to the Tattershall Castle on Victoria Embankment.

It has been a very difficult time for us all but for some much more than others. Both our sponsors, Konny and Sepp, had torrid times with Sepp saying "we desperately want to work, but aren't allowed to". Our friends at 2K Performance who joined us at Half Term 2020, to get their "snow legs", faced a huge challenge. One of our early trainees, Simon Harwood, recalls how, while family cycling, discovered that the Rossendale dry ski slope they use had become weed infested and was facing irreversible damage unless urgent action was taken. He reports how, with an army of dry slope user volunteers, they have got the slope back into action which in turn has persuaded the Council the value of such community facilities. Simon's report is inspirational, highlighting the role of volunteers who really do make a difference. Our sport would be lost without them. For 2K it has paid off handsomely with some cracking results in the All England Dry Slope Championships. This, with news of how some of our other children have kept up their skills, is in the JTC Report.

In September some of our members, led by his widow Miranda, took part in the Martin Gillott Memorial Ride cycling over 1,000 miles in 14 days from Lands' End to John O'Groats raising money for pancreatic cancer research. It is not too late to donate to this worthy cause with details in the report.

Our plans for 2022 are in place with our training, our AICC teams, the Club Weekend and the Carol Service in Alpbach and the Open Race early in the New Year.

We thank, as always, our loyal sponsors Sepp and the Alpbach Ski School and Konny of Conny's Sport, who has kindly agreed to continue with the AVSC discount for the coming season. I also take the opportunity to thank your Committee for their work on your behalf throughout the year and of course Joey, our Club Secretary. They all make a huge contribution to the Club.

As we go to press, the latest information from the Tyrolean Provincial Government is that the season will go ahead, with very few restrictions, so we look forward to seeing you in Alpbach soon.

With best wishes

Mike

## Accounts for the year ended 31st July 2021

### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	2020	2021
	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions	5,000	4,218
Training	549	–
Racing	649	–
Club Weekend	117	–
Christmas Tombola	202	–
Donations	29	–
Bank Interest	–	1
<b>Total income</b>	<b>6,546</b>	<b>4,219</b>
<b>LESS EXPENDITURE</b>		
Secretarial	2,598	1,080
Administration	318	–
Newsletter (net of advertising)	(895)	2,077
Memberships	1,136	934
Promotional	–	–
Sponsorship	–	–
AICC Team Expenses	204	–
Bank Charges	529	35
Autumn Social	375	–
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>4,265</b>	<b>4,126</b>
<b>Income less Expenditure</b>	<b>2,281</b>	<b>93</b>
Transferred to Junior Training Reserve	(2,449)	–
Exchange Gain/(Loss)	168	(275)
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for year transferred to Members Reserve</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(182)</b>

### BALANCE SHEET

	2020	2021
	£	£
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and Bank		
UK	15,892	16,373
Austria	5,541	4,944
Debtors	541	725
<b>LESS LIABILITIES</b>		
Creditors and Accruals	(500)	(750)
<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>21,474</b>	<b>21,292</b>
<b>REPRESENTED BY</b>		
Members Reserve Brought Forward	13,218	13,218
From Income and Expenditure Account	–	(182)
	13,218	13,036
Junior Training Reserve	8,256	8,256
<b>Total reserves</b>	<b>21,474</b>	<b>21,292</b>

### Notes

1 These Accounts are based on an exchange rate of £1 : €1.17 (2020 £1 : €1.11).

2 All figures are in Sterling.

Mike Brennan Chairman  
Paul Nichols Hon. Treasurer

1st October 2021

### NOTICE OF AVSC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

To be held on Thursday 18th November at 6.45pm on the PS Tattershall Castle, Embankment

#### AGENDA

- To approve the Minutes of the 21st November 2019 AGM
- To receive the Chairman's Report
- To approve the accounts for the year ended 31st July 2021
- To approve amendments to the Constitution

Club Secretary October 2021

## Diary dates

### 2021

18 November	Autumn Drinks and AGM, Tattershall Castle 1830-2230
25 December	Christmas Day AVSC Carol Service, St Oswald's Church 1800
29 December	AVSC Open Race Inneralpbach AVSC Christmas Party, Boglerhof 1800
31 December	New Year's Eve

### 2022

12-19 February	Half Term Junior Training Week, Alpbach
18 February	AVSC Open Race
10-13 March	AICC 14th Amateur Inter-Club Championship, DHO Wengen
10-13 March	AVSC Club Weekend, Alpbach
2-9 April	Easter Junior Training Week, Alpbach
8 April	AVSC Open Race
17 April	Easter Sunday
18 April	Lifts close
November	AVSC Autumn Drinks and AGM. Date & details TBC



## Hatches : matches : despatches

### Births

**Denaro.** To Kristina (nee Kuhnke) and George a boy, Arthur Karl Ludwig on 3rd December 2020.

**Pearson.** To Joey and Christoph Margreiter a boy, Joseph Ferdinand Clyde on 17th June 2021. A Grandson for Conny.

### Marriages

**Denaro.** George to Kristina Kuhnke on 19th November 2019.

**Bravery.** Hugo to Phoebe Phillips on 2nd July 2020.

**McQuoid.** Neil to Anna Chitty on 11th September 2021.

### Deaths

**Parker.** John peacefully following a short illness on 9th November 2020. Father to Rebecca, Merilees and Hannah. Founder Member and one of the Snow Summoners 'Gang of Four'.

**Bailey.** Capt. Robin on 5th January 2021. Ex QRIH/Parachute Regiment. AVSC's first Team Manager, who brought organization to our early days, and British Alpine Ski Team Manager.

**Ingram.** Tim on 18th July 2021. Husband of Olwen, father to Ben and Grand-father to Archie, Rufus, Harry and Ruby.



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Your hosts, Maria & Lois Margreiter

[www.alpbacherhof.at](http://www.alpbacherhof.at)



## AVSC news

**15% discount at Conny's Sport** Conny's have generously continued their 15% Ski Hire discount to AVSC members in Alpbach and Inneralpbach. Email [secretary@avsc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@avsc.org.uk) and you will be sent an individual one-time link, which will take you directly to Conny's Booking Platform. Different individual links will be given to members or families for each trip.

There is a 10% discount for members wishing to shop or hire in person. Apply by email to [secretary@avsc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@avsc.org.uk) at least 7 days before your arrival in Alpbach so that you are registered with Conny's Sport in Alpbach and Inneralpbach.

**Autumn Drinks & AGM** The Autumn Drinks and AGM will be held on Thursday 18th November on the PS Tattershall Castle, Victoria Embankment from 6.30 pm. The AGM will be held at 6.45 pm. RSVP [vivienthursby@mac.com](mailto:vivienthursby@mac.com)

**Junior Training** 2022 Training Week Dates:

Half Term 12th-19th February  
Easter 2nd-9th April

**Amateur Inter-Club Championships** The 2022 AICC will be held in Wengen, hosted by the Downhill Only Club, 10th-13th March. Anyone wanting to take part or help should contact John Ferguson at [john@fergshome.co.uk](mailto:john@fergshome.co.uk) or Stewart Edginton at [stewartedginton@hotmail.com](mailto:stewartedginton@hotmail.com)

**Club Weekend** The Club Weekend will be held on 10th-13th March with on and off piste skiing, racing and parties. Dates and details will be posted on the Web. For more information contact Peter at [peter@theharperhills.com](mailto:peter@theharperhills.com) Mobile 07973 327238 or Mark Clinch at [mark.clinch1@virginmedia.com](mailto:mark.clinch1@virginmedia.com)

**Keep in touch** Please help us to keep providing up to date information on our website. James Ferguson does a fabulous job on both the web site and Facebook, but would be helped by input from members. We would also like to remind our members that to keep you up to date we need to be advised of changes of address and/or email. Please send amendments to [mikebrenn@gmail.com](mailto:mikebrenn@gmail.com).

## Information

### Banks

Raiffeisenkasse	Mon-Fri	08:00-12:15	14:00-17:00
Sparkasse	Mon/Wed/Fri	08:00-12:00	14:00-16:30
	Tue	08:00-12:00	
	Thu	14:00-18:00	

There are ATMs at both banks in the Alpbach village centre.

### Useful numbers

Medical Emergency	144	Doctor	+43 (0) 5336 20044
Police	133	Taxi Moser	+43(0) 5336 5616
General Emergency	112	Taxi Tom	+43 (0) 5336 5281
Fire	122	Tourist Office	+43 (0) 5337 21200
Mountain Rescue	140		<a href="mailto:info@alpbachtal.at">info@alpbachtal.at</a>

Anyone requiring information on accommodation in the Village, please contact the Tourist Office



# Joe's Salettl

During or after an unforgettable day skiing Joe's Salettl welcomes you for a glass of wine or beer and good food. It is also an ideal venue for celebrations of any kind.

[www.joes-salettl.at](http://www.joes-salettl.at)



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## Village News

Alpbach is alive again after a very tough year and looking forward to welcoming us back. Their lockdown began in mid-March 2020 when "all accommodation providers" were closed and remained shut apart from a brief relaxation last Summer before, again, being shut down, thus missing both the Winter and Summer seasons. The good news is that many outlets are reporting strong bookings from now through the Winter Season.

In contrast to the close down of the hospitality outlets, skiing for Alpbachers was described as "fabulous". Not all the runs were open but, those that were, offered good snow, well maintained empty pistes and no queues, with the webcams sometimes showing not a single skier! Although the Hornboden, Dauerstoa Alm and the Ast remained closed, open air refreshments were available at Joe's and amazingly at the Wildshonau Middle Station as, according to the rules, it had access by road even though all outlets in the Village itself were closed. Did they pick up daft regulations from us here?

The larger hotels with spas have reportedly done better than smaller businesses with some, including the taxi operators, seeing their business disappear overnight. On a positive note, beginning with the European Forum in August this year, the Congress Centre is operating again bringing much needed non-winter business to the Village.

Ski and ski clothes makers are believed to be carrying their 2020 models through to the new season following their very lean last year.

Sadly, we report the death of Herman Lederer in June. Many of our early trainees will remember him well as one of the original training team, a lovely guy with a dry humour who then became Alpbach's timer, helping us with our races over many years. In July, the very approachable MD of the Congress Centre, Georg Hechenblaiker, was tragically killed in a mountain fall and Andreas Moser the charismatic head barman in the Halle in the Böglerhof passed away. Kiwi Nitz, also known to many of us, died in June. Finally Willi Kostenzer, a real Alpbach character and AVSC supporter, passed away on 14 October Our thoughts are with their families.

The following message was put on Facebook:

*Good morning, good afternoon, good evening to all our AVSC members. What a very different winter season we have experienced. We have missed you all! As you can see, the AVSC has been with us for a very long time. So long that you are a rich part of Alpbach's history and your race seasons a wonderful part of our winter traditions.*

*We have missed your fun and antics, award ceremonies and social gatherings, the huge amount of enjoyment and competition you bring to our slopes, but most of all the camaraderie. We very much look forward to welcoming you back and building upon the accomplishments of the Alpbach Visitors Ski Club.*

*Wishing you all health and happiness!*

**Maria Margreiter & her 4\*\*\*\*s Team**

**Lift Closure** Please note the lifts will be closing on the 18th April 2022.



**++++ STOP PRESS +++++**

This year's Newsletter was delayed as we waited for the Tyrol Government's regulations for Lift Company operations in the new season. As expected these are 'light touch' and the current rules can be found at:  
[www.austria.info/en/service-and-facts/coronavirus-information](http://www.austria.info/en/service-and-facts/coronavirus-information)

Ski Juwel will publish an online newsletter to cover any changes that may occur throughout the season.  
<https://www.skijuwel.com/en/service/newsletter>

Lift passes can be bought online at: [www.skijuwel.com/ticket-shop](http://www.skijuwel.com/ticket-shop), and the link to their online shop, including vouchers, is:  
[www.skijuwel.com/en/online-shop](http://www.skijuwel.com/en/online-shop)

## Junior Training

Despite not being able to ski in our wonderful Alpbach since March 2020, some of our youngsters have kept their skills sharp, notching up excellent results on England's dry slope events.

These include notable results from 2K Performance at Rossendale in the All England Championships at the end of the dry slope season; 17 year old **Aimee Johnson** bagged a 3rd in the U21 category, **Adam Griffin** a 4th place in the U18s, missing a podium finish by just 0.13s, and **Harrison Harwood** another 3rd in the U12s despite just entering the age category and being a year younger than the other top 5 skiers, while brother, **Oliver Harwood** (right) became Skier of the Week earlier in the season.

Meanwhile **Darcy Davies**, seen below skiing in the AVSC Half Term races in 2020, has been awarded a ski scholarship to Surbiton High School and a place at the Apex 2100 Ski Academy in Tignes



this coming winter. Sister **Giselle Davies** has been accepted by Aldershot Ski Race Club and, with **Talula Edgington**, was part of the Surbiton High School U12 team; winners of the National Finals of the English Schools' Ski Association (ESSKIA) Championships in Norwich on 9th October – a notable achievement by 9 year old Giselle – while Darcy was a member of their winning U14 team.

**Jessica Currie, Harry Davidson, Millie Easton Thomas, Aggie Eede, and Harry and Jackson Pound** are all representing their schools in the Independent Schools Ski Championships in Les Deux Alpes from 15th to 21st December. This five day meeting includes race training with Giant Slalom, Slalom and Parallel Slalom races.

**George Haines** (below) managed to find some snow earlier in the year, getting in a few runs at Col de Norwood Park by Gypsy Hill. We hope they were hired skis!



For those who have raced already, "well done", some great results; and for those about to compete, "race well". We look forward to welcoming you back to Alpbach in March and April 2022

*Giselle (top left) and Talula (top right) with their ESSKIA trophy*



## Club Weekend Report

I had hoped to be writing a report along the lines of previous years:

'The AVSC had another enjoyable Club Weekend packed full of great events, parallel racing, a slalom race, lunches at the chicken hut, the Six Nations final weekend of rugby, dinners at the Zirmalm, Post & Messner with a grand finale at the Jakober.' Sadly of course this wasn't to be last season, as we all know, and we got to hear words such as 'unprecedented' on an unprecedented level.

We are very much looking forward to organizing a bumper Club Weekend in 2022 with the familiar races and fun skiing, possibly even some new enterprises. The dates for 2022 are registration on Thursday 10th March followed by the Welcome Dinners; Parallel Slalom Races on Friday and a chance to watch Wales v France\*; Saturday race and prize giving, with lunch, an afternoon of fun skiing and the needle match of the weekend – England v Ireland\* – ending with the Farewell Dinner.



Initial interest is building amongst the 50 or so regulars and, although there is no guarantee in these strange times, it has all the makings of a bumper weekend, or longer for those who choose to make it a week or more.

We look forward to seeing you on the slopes, so get the rust off your skis.



Please contact  
Peter at [peter@theharperhills.com](mailto:peter@theharperhills.com) or  
Mark at [mark.clinch1@virginmedia.com](mailto:mark.clinch1@virginmedia.com)  
if you are not on the regular email list as  
updates will follow.

**Clinch and Peter**

[\* dates and times TBC]



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## Alpbach in lockdown

### And then it was March 2020...

On March 12th the Austrian government declared a complete lockdown, starting with all ski resorts closing on Sunday 15th and everything else on Monday 16th. All guests had to leave the village, and foreign guests the country.

What a crazy weekend. Bookings had to be cancelled, money paid back, and guests rushed to pack their bags and change their flights. In the Ski School office we looked at each other, and said: This is weird! Suddenly the season had ended – 4 weeks earlier than planned - and the village was empty.

We all had to go into quarantine. We were not allowed to leave our homes, other than for the necessary things, such as the supermarket (on your own!) or other essential shops as the pharmacists, the bakery, the butcher and animal food stores, for medical reasons, or to go for a short walk with the dog. All this while wearing a mask and keeping a distance of 1m. At the doctors you had to make an appointment first (that still is the case, by the way). Quite essential, but not allowed, was going to the hairdressers. Lots of people had a 'coup Corona'.

We weren't even allowed to visit friends or family in hospital which was, for some people, the most difficult part of the lockdown. Church life in Alpbach, which is very prominent and important, changed completely: Weddings, funerals or baptisms couldn't be attended, no masses, nothing.

As the Tyrolian people are very obedient, we all did what we had to without any complaints. Alpbach people took to the situation – as they usually do – with calmness. It is what it is.

It was quiet on the roads and in the village.

At Easter we were allowed to do a bit more and, as from May 1st 2020, the lockdown was ended. In the summer some guests came to Alpbach again and we prepared ourselves for a normal winter season. That was a mistake because mid-September COVID struck again, and new measurements were taken. As from September 14th we had to wear masks in all public inner areas and a week later there were restrictions at events and restaurants, a so-called "lockdown light". Tests started and, in lots of places, you could have yourself tested for free. Sadly, it didn't help to avoid a new outbreak and we went into a second severe lockdown November 17th for 3 weeks. Again, we had to stay at home.

At the beginning of December, we still had hopes for a winter season though with COVID restrictions. A lot of preparations were carried out in the Ski School office, ordering screens for the desks, disinfection dispensers (for which Thomas made beautiful wooden holders) and masks. We changed the website, made posters with rules and so on.

Christmas came, but guests were not allowed and Ski School lessons were out of the question. Okay, maybe beginning of January then? No, sorry. Fasching? No. Then we started to give up hope of meeting any of our regular guests this season. The only good thing was that the ski lifts were open for locals, and the snow was prepared, so they had the time of their lives. The whole mountain to themselves! As a lot of people couldn't work, this was a big relief although you had to bring your own food and drinks of course, but still...



In Austria vaccination started at the beginning of 2021 and, within half a year everybody who wanted was vaccinated.

The summer of 2021 was a normal season. Slowly we were allowed more and more. Now, we only need to wear a mask at medical institutions, the pharmacy, and supermarket. Events are possible again (the European Forum in our Congress Centre took place in a slightly different form). The "3 G rule" made its entrance. You still are obliged to wear a FFP2 mask if you are not

vaccinated (Geimpft), cured from COVID (Genesen) or tested negative (Getestet).

Again, we have high hopes of a good winter season (and it looks like it is going to happen) with many happy guests and loads of snow and sunshine, because we have missed our guests and, of course, especially our friends of the AVSC.

We are looking forward to seeing you all again in our lovely village!

Jacky

# Alpbach

## Top 10 in Tyrol

Wildschönau

Alpbachtal



www.skijuvel.com



## 2K Performance and the AVSC

---

I first visited Alpbach as a teenager on a Christmas/New Year training camp back in the 1980's, staying at Eddy Leitner's place in Inneralpbach. I remember having very mixed emotions at the time as it was the first Christmas I had spent abroad on my own away from family whilst they went on the usual annual ski trip to France. I was very much looking forward to my first snow camp in Alpbach until the holiday company my family had booked with went bust and cancelled their holiday, prompting them to have a complete re-think and book a trip to Vail instead. I was less than impressed that they were going to Colorado without me, but it was too late to cancel the Alpbach trip.

My dad's van broke down on the way to Gatwick airport so I barely made the flight and I couldn't help feeling this trip was doomed and that perhaps I had made the wrong decision. On arrival in Alpbach everyone else already seemed to know each other and I felt a little out of my depth to say the least. However, I was put in a room with Dan Walker who made a real effort to make me feel welcome and to cut a long story short I had a great time and never looked back. I continued with the ski racing, not quite as successfully as Dan and Roger I might add, and went on to do a season in Alpbach staying with Helga and Georg in their farmhouse with Dan Couzens, Stefan Elton and Nick Wells. I can remember the all-pervading smell of manure to this day but with the help of Rob Rainer, and of course Dinny Patterson, Sepp Margreiter and the rest of the AVSC team we had a great season and really fell in love with the village and the Tirolean way of life.

Turn the clock forwards 30 years and my own kids are now skiing and racing and it feels like history is starting to repeat itself

so, naturally, I started to wonder about a trip to Alpbach and maybe getting the kids involved with the AVSC. Following a trip to Serfaus and Fiss during Easter 2019 I decided to make contact with my old friends Dan Couzens and Juliette, who I knew were now living in Alpbach and, after a very brief catch up with them, we made the decision to book with the AVSC for the following year.

At home in Rossendale, Lancashire, the kids train on our local dry ski slope with the 2K Performance Ski Club, competing in the dry ski slope race series' and in February 2020 we visited Alpbach with some of the other kids and parents from 2K. I was hoping everyone would enjoy the trip, having sold Alpbach and the AVSC to them all, and unbelievably the first person we bumped into on arrival in Alpbach was Dan Walker who was having lunch with his parents and Graham Bell. The kids are avid Ski Sunday viewers so were thrilled to meet Graham and this first afternoon back in Alpbach set the tone for a great holiday with kids and parents alike having a fantastic time. For me it was just like old times and seeing so many familiar faces, now with children of their own, I could not believe I had left it so long before returning to Alpbach.

Following the success of this 2020 trip we intended to return in 2021 but for obvious reasons it was not to be, as Covid-19 swept through Europe and escalated into a pandemic, all but shut-ting down the entire global economy. Our local dry ski slope in Rossendale was inevitably hit by the same problems as other businesses and was closed to the public in March 2020.

To give you a little history, Rossendale Ski Slope, which first opened in 1973, had been badly managed for years by the local council, who creamed off all the profits

when the slope was booming to support other less financially viable facilities, and then failed to invest in the slope when it was sorely needed. When the council finally pulled the plug on Ski Rossendale in 2011, blaming government spending cuts rather than poor management, it was only thanks to a handful of dedicated individuals that it re-opened again just a few months later. Dave Fuller, who had worked at Ski Rossendale for many years, managed to get a small team of people together and, in addition to putting their own money into the venture, they secured some private investment and took over the running of the facility from the council, re-branding it as "The Hill." In 2014 the new management team managed to secure some national lottery funding from Sport England's Improvement Fund to completely re-build the ski hire and office buildings and add a new café and spectator area to give the facility a well overdue face-lift. Despite their best efforts and facing increasing competition from the indoor snow dome facilities in Manchester and Leeds, The Hill was still struggling to make ends meet and, when it closed in March 2020 due to the Covid pandemic, we feared this may be the final nail in the coffin for the ski slope.

During one of our many mountain bike rides with the kids in the first national lockdown we noticed how many weeds were growing on the ski slope and we quickly realised that if we didn't take action soon it was inevitable that the ski slope, on which 3 generations of my family have learnt to ski, would never open again. The members of 2K Performance got together with some of the other clubs who ski and snowboard at The Hill and hatched a plan with Dave Fuller to start weeding the main slope. Under normal circumstances the Dendex surface of the slope would have been peeled back to get to the underlay in order to weed it and this would have been

a much easier process. However, with Covid-restrictions in place, it was decided that this would involve too many people in too close proximity to each other for this to be allowed and the only way we could weed the slope was by hand at "a safe social distance" from each other.

If any readers are not familiar with the Dendex surface on a dry ski slope it loosely resembles a giant toothbrush made up of a number of mats that each consist of a pattern of bristles arranged in diamonds. Now I don't want to be too meticulous about the details but the mats are about 16 diamonds wide by 25 diamonds long so there are 400 diamonds per mat and one mat is about 1.5m wide x 2m long. The ski slope is 200m long and about 12 mats wide so this amounts to 1300 mats and a total of over half a million individual diamonds, all to be weeded by hand. I must confess that, had we worked these figures out before we started the task, it may never have begun but, with little else to keep us occupied during lockdown, we threw caution to the wind and began the task with no small measure of enthusiasm.

As the work progressed over the following weeks and months there were the usual pessimistic naysayers who dubbed 2K Performance the "Gardening Club" but, despite this disappointing negativity from a small minority, the project really gathered momentum. The Ladies Ski Club contributed a huge amount of time, as did the special ski club for disabled skiers and, once they were able to bring staff back to work, the team at The Hill were also able to help. Slowly but surely and with volunteers giving up an estimated total of well over 1000 hours of their time we managed to weed the entire slope and get it ready for re-opening.

Although it involved a lot of hard work, even blood sweat and tears, (the pain of a Dendex bristle being shoved firmly down the back of a fingernail is firmly etched in all our minds) the weeding parties at The



AVSCer Harrison Harwood (left) on the podium.  
Note the dreaded Dendex 'diamonds'.

Hill gave everybody involved some much needed social interaction at a time when there was very little other social contact. With the benefit of hindsight having a common goal to aim for probably helped us all to retain at least some sanity during what was a very difficult period for many people.

The community spirit shown by the various clubs and groups working together to ensure the slope was in a fit state to re-open was finally enough to help Dave Fuller and his team persuade the local council that this was a facility worth saving. A deal was agreed and the Rossendale Leisure Trust once again took over the running of The Hill, perhaps realising the error of their ways in letting the slope close in the first place back in 2011. The ski slope re-opened on October the 24th 2020 in better condition than it had been for years, if not decades, and with the backing of the Leisure Trust it is improving all the time and is now going from strength to strength.

As Covid restrictions were slowly eased more and more people started using The Hill again and the various clubs and groups started moving back towards business as usual. On the 22nd August this year the first Club National race for over a decade was held at The Hill and was a resounding success, our own Adam Griffin, Ameer Johnson and Harrison Harwood doing very well as reported in the JTC Report. In addition to this, not one but two members of the Rossendale Special Ski Club, Cameron De Vial and Matthew Evans, have been selected to represent Britain in the Special Olympics World Winter Games in January next year. This is a fantastic achievement given the challenges faced by everyone over the past 18 months and the fact that only a year ago we didn't even know whether they would have a slope to ski on or not.

If the events of the past 18 months have taught us anything it is the physical

and psychological health benefits of exercising and generally spending time in the great outdoors. Whether that is walking, running, cycling, or skiing on a dry ski slope, the importance of keeping this facility open for the local and wider skiing community cannot be overestimated. Many people simply cannot afford to ski or snowboard at an indoor snow dome due to the prohibitive costs. Furthermore, we live in a time when there are huge global problems with energy supply and climate change; when we are all striving to live cleaner, greener lives can indoor snow domes really be justified? There is surely a certain irony that the energy demands of a snow dome must be contributing to climate change which is in turn leading to the shrinkage of glaciers in the Alps. Dry ski slopes are most definitely not the Alps but perhaps they are the solution we need in order to ensure that the sport we all love remains accessible to British children from all walks of life.

There are grand plans for The Hill and Dave Fuller is aiming to work with the leisure trust and Snowsport England towards holding a major competition in Rossendale, such as the English or British dry ski slope championships, within the next few years. Most importantly, the ski slope did not close and will hopefully be there for many years to come, offering people of all ages and from all backgrounds the chance to learn to ski or snowboard and, who knows, possibly become AVSC members in the future.

As for 2K Performance, we are proud of our contribution towards keeping the ski slope open and the kids are now back to doing what they do best: skiing and racing and having fun on their local ski slope. We have also booked to return to Alpbach in February 2022 and we very much look forward to seeing you all there, hopefully unscathed by the events of the past 18 months!

*Simon Harwood*

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## Lands' End to John O'Groats: in memory

Miranda Gillott put together a team of recreational cyclists from close friends and work colleagues to take on the challenge of cycling from Lands' End to John O'Groats in memory of her husband, Martin, who sadly died of Pancreatic Cancer in October 2021, before he could take on this incredible challenge himself. Martin had always been a runner so would have wanted to do it on foot – however the team decided that two wheels were a better option.

The LEJOGforMartin team, comprised of Miranda, Guy Henshaw, David Bill, Roger Owens, Charles Cartledge, Tom Welch, Al Denholm, Justin Robinson and Steph Ashton-Munro (an AICC racing regular for Kandahar), set off from sunny Lands' End on Sunday 12th September, cycling over a gruelling 1,017 miles, finishing on Sunday 26th an hour before the storms came in across bonnie Scotland. The sun shone nearly every day, the banter was superb, plenty of laughter and much cream applied to keep the chafing at bay. Cream teas, local ciders and ales in every county and, of course, cheddar – all were required through many pit stops (cycling the Cheddar Gorge was hard).

To mark the midpoint of the ride and have a well-earned day off, a memorial lunch was held in Kirkby Lonsdale and many riders, including John and Jane Ferguson, joined for a 'one legger' event on Monday



20th – cycling into Cumbria with some challenging hill climbs and super-fast downhills into the valleys. A hugely fun day was had by all.

Martin's favourite charity was the Gurkha Welfare Trust as he served with the Queen's Gurkha Engineers in Nepal, Brunei and Hong Kong in the 90's. He ran many marathons to raise funds for them. The team have also received an incredibly kind offer from a close friend of Martin's to match any sponsorship funding up to £40,000 so every £10 donated will mean £20 in total to the charity.

Funds from the ride are being raised to help rebuild the Shree Bhagwati Higher Secondary School in Nepal, which was destroyed by the terrible earthquake in 2015, as a legacy in Martin's name.

*If anyone would like to add their support, please go to  
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## Full circle

Those who can, do. And those who can do really well, teach others. Two of AVSC's younger members describe their journeys from trainee to instructor.

**My parents introduced me to Alpbach when I was about 5** – I remember leaving the village at the end of our annual trip, where I took part in AVSC Junior Training, in tears saying I wanted to live there for the rest of my life!

I was encouraged to take German GCSE at school (and I was rubbish at languages!) for the sole purpose of one day going to work out there for a season.

So, when the day came, I was of course nervous but also excited. As a family we had had over the years so many fun nights out in the village with friends and walking 'home' and discovering you actually had to pay for drinks there!

Little did I know what hard work it was going to be – but also the best time EVER!

I was staying with Sepp and Monika and, one day, I was late for work so Monika kindly gave me an egg to put in my ski instructors jacket pocket so I could eat my breakfast on the way up in the gondola. Unfortunately, I bent down to help a child with her skis before getting on the lift and the (soft boiled!) egg popped in my pocket ... I skied all day with scrambled egg in there and handed the jacket back to Monika who didn't bat an eyelid!

Sepp's speciality was always to speak Alpbacherish in a vital part of the weekly meetings (not Hoch Deutsch which we had learned at school!) so I had no idea of the

*Olivia: in full Alpbach finery and on the slopes*



*Bug with Julia, essential mountain kit, and on Fasching parade.*



## Full circle cont

plans for the rest of the week until I met him at breakfast the following morning and he kindly filled me in with the plans in fluent English!

Every Friday there are races at the end of the week to see how the children have progressed - one of the newbie instructors wears the Bobo outfit at the prize giving. The trick is not to sneeze inside the head of the outfit!

Fasching (Shrove Tuesday) is a huge event in the village with all the instructors in Fancy Dress – any excuse for a party in fact!

Manfred's Speck was most welcome in his hut. We became friends with all the Lifties and many other locals. If we were seen in our instructors uniform any day after 7pm we were fined – standards had to be upheld.

One of the highlights was the weekly floodlit ski shows in front of the entire village.

The best thing of the entire season was Schulfahren, early on a Tuesday morning, which was teaching the instructors how to perfect their technique before the lifts opened – absolutely amazing to have the mountain to ourselves at high speed!

At Easter I was chosen to be an AVSC instructor during the Junior Training Week, so I had come full circle from AVSC trainee to AVSC instructor!

I'm proud to say we still come back every year (pandemics allowing) and have introduced lots of friends to the joys of our special happy place and hope to do the same for generations to come ... see you on the slopes this season.

Bug Good

**In December 2012**, as I drove up past the snowcapped Wiedersbergerhorn, I couldn't imagine what was in store for me over the next 5 winters and coaching the Junior AVSC was an exceptional highlight of my time as a ski instructor in Alpbach.

If you have ever been in ski school, then you'll remember that first day feeling. Excitement, anticipation and, of course, some nerves. As a child, the AVSC made me feel at ease during this time and I think this has continued over the years. I believe this is due to the core values that are at the heart of the club; people want to be there, they want to learn and have fun whilst doing so.

I have some extremely fond memories of teaching the AVSC over the years, teaching children, in my first season, snowploughing their way to the Ast Hutte and working their way up towards the top groups has to be one

of my favourites. Seeing their confidence grow and the friends they made along the way has made me immensely proud.

A close second was commentating the AICC races in 2017. I still having a sneaking suspicion that Henry Anstey was trying to sabotage my commentary with all of the schnapps that kept appearing at the door of the ski club hut.

The AICC races in 2017 were a classic example of the camaraderie that is within the AVSC, everyone joined together and created the most spectacular weekend for the visiting clubs and showed them the special place that is Alpbach.

I cannot begin to describe how life changing my time in Alpbach was, having made lifelong friends, the best memories and a place I can call home.

Olivia Chipperfield

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