



Kivitski

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SASKATOON NORDIC SKI CLUB

www.saskatoonnordicski.ca

April 2019



Sheryl Riis at the Hut
Photo by Sheryl Riis



*The guy often
behind the ski
camera lens –
Cliff Speer on
Jorgen's trail at
Eb's Trails.*
Photo by Kate
Germin



Kate Germin and
Randy Chapman
Photo by Sheryl Riis



Merlin Toth and
Lynn
Photo by Kate Germin



Bruce Simms and company
Photo by Sheryl Riis



Prospective young skiers
at Kinsmen Park
Photo by Kate Germin



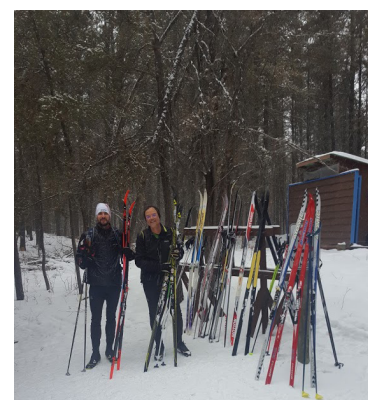
Resting on Birch Bower
bench at Eb's.
Photo by Kate Germin



Wood Cutting Crew resting from
their labours – at Eb's.
Photo by Kate Germin



Bunnies braving the cold
Photo by Kate Germin



Parking the Skies for another
year? Photo by Kate Germin

SASKATOON NORDIC SKI CLUB PERSONNEL

President
Gail Motsi

Past President
Dan Brisbin

Vice-President
Ivan English

Secretary
Kate Germin

Treasurer
Gail Motsi

Financial Secretary
Daryl Sexsmith

Membership
Jeff Thorpe

Youth Programs
Kirsten Ketilson and Eric Lamb

Eb's Trails
Randy Chapman

Touring & Hiking
Sheryl Riis

Instruction/Competition
Bruce Simms

Junior HiPer
Alison and Geoff Meinert

Ski-at-School
Jan Sedgewick

Equipment Manager
Brian Anderson

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Joanne Ferguson

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Gail Motsi

As another ski season draws to a close, I would like to thank all of the Executive, Program Managers, instructors, officials, groomers and other volunteers who have helped to make this year a success, despite challenges posed by the weather and equipment. There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes to make things run smoothly; issues and problems are dealt with promptly and new ideas and initiatives are constantly being introduced to improve our programming. All of this is done through countless hours of volunteer time from people who are dedicated to promoting recreational and competitive cross-country skiing in and near Saskatoon.

We have consistently maintained about 700 members in the Club with an online and paper-based registration system spearheaded by Jeff Thorpe. Our youth program continues to be popular with a seamless transition of leadership to Eric Lamb and Kirsten Ketilson. Bruce Simms handles adult instruction, assisted by Cliff Speers. Alison Meinert leads the youth high performance team who were able to attend a training camp in Lake Louise this year. Dan Brisbin organizes race events, although unfortunately the weather did not cooperate this year for the scheduled Sask Cup race. Jan Sedgewick has set up a very active Ski-At-School program and helped to extend our outreach to newcomers this year. Ivan English continues to take the lead on our new facility

at Gordie Howe Sports Complex, assisted by members of the Facilities Committee, and sits on the newly created board for the facility. Brian Anderson stepped in as Equipment Manager this year to manage the maintenance and operation of our grooming equipment and he and his team of groomers were kept busy with breakdowns of machines at Wildwood. Randy Chapman and his team keep Eb's Trails well-groomed and maintained, with skiing from November to late March. Sheryl Riis organizes the spring and fall hikes with hike leaders, as well as the regular meetups for skiing during the winter. Renate Bishopp regularly produces this newsletter as well as other promotional material.

Because of the extent and depth of our programs, we are able to get various grants from Cross Country Saskatchewan and the City of Saskatoon as well as donations from our members. We are also able to build partnerships with other organizations and have attracted a lot of media attention this season.

The Club continues to be in need of volunteers and instructors so I would encourage everyone to get involved in some way or another next season when we hope to move to our new facility and expand and improve our programming. There is nothing more rewarding than seeing the joy and enthusiasm that cross-country skiing brings to children, youth, adults, and newcomers.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT By Jeff Thorpe

In 2018-2019, there were 650 members in the Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club. This was a little lower than in other recent years:

YEAR	# OF PEOPLE
2015-2016	745
2016-2017	674
2017-2018	722
2018-2019	650

As in other years, most of the members joined as part of a family membership:

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP	# OF PEOPLE
Single adult membership	173
Single youth membership	30
Family membership	445
TOTAL	650



The membership database closed on April 1, 2019. The database for next year will open in September of 2019. We will put a notice on the club website when the new system is open for registration. A reminder to people hoping to register their children in youth instruction next year: classes fill up quickly, so get your registration in as soon as possible in September.

ADULT INSTRUCTION UPDATE By Bruce Simms, coordinator: brucesimms@sasktel.net

Adult Instruction 2018-19

Three learn-to-classic, one learn-to-skate ski and an intermediate classic technique courses were held this season. The normal class format is 8 students for three two-hour evening sessions. There was almost a complete sell-out, except for a few intermediate classic course spaces. The limiting factor in our ability to offer courses was as usual the weather. Lack of snow early on and a very cold February, led to continual class re-scheduling. Despite the challenges, it is rewarding for instructors to help more people get on skis, and improve the skiing of others. Gaining new ski skills and confidence brings smiles and satisfaction. Perhaps you can ski a new trail now, enter a Loppett for the first time or, simply keep up with a friend.

My skiing experience in Saskatoon has taught me to take the

opportunities when available. For instance, while February was mostly too cold for skating, there was a window for this at season end. The challenging Blue Mountain Loppett on March 16 featured excellent skating conditions. While, yes, it can be daunting to get out there in very chilly weather, you can dress in layers, cover exposed skin and at least be outside for a while. Canadians are known as a hardy bunch.

One possible idea for a new ski course next season is a down hill ski skills course, but on your Nordic skis! Nordic downhill technique is different than Alpine as you must coax the skis around the corner more. The goal of this course would be to help skiers feel confident and safe on the downhill sections of cross-country trails locally and elsewhere. Perhaps we could do this at the new Diefenbaker Hill Park. Stay tuned.

Core Engagement and Evolving Ski Technique

I always emphasize and teach athletic and balanced stance, core engagement and neutral spine in my classes. This is a foundation for safe, healthy skiing and stronger technique. These principles are common to many sports. We know that thinking in sports medicine and the fitness industry has changed about core training and back health. Sit-ups and crunches can be strenuous on the lower back and other core components. Moves that train core engagement and stability such as planks, bird dogs and hollow body holds are now recommended by many. The abdominals are smaller muscles that function better as stabilizers and connection for the larger body parts are more involved in power production. The XC Ski Nation website has a video of national team member Dahria

Beatty demonstrating her daily core engagement routine. She credits this with helping her overcome the back pain she experienced from classic skiing. If you want to know more about technique and training, the XC Ski Nation website is a great resource and a bargain at only \$33.00/year.

Newer ski technique incorporates more core engagement and neutral spine. As an example, older double pole technique often had the skier jackknifing at the waist during the

downward phase where the poles are planted. This could be hard on the back. I now teach the skier to initiate the downward phase to get the weight on the poles with more of a hip drop and associated bend at the knees, all the while maintaining a solid engaged core. Older ski technique had the arms coming forward with more extension. All modern technique has the hands and arms closer to the body when they're forward as it allows for better leverage and engagement.

Ski technique will continue to evolve. One key factor driving this evolution is more physically capable athletes searching for competitive advantage. Consult a physiotherapist or well qualified personal trainer for training advice specific to your situation.

See you next season.

Bruce

SKI-AT-SCHOOL by Jan Sedgewick

Ski At School 2019

Year four of the Ski At School program has come and gone. When we opened online registration in November all 88 sessions filled in 3 hours. We had a team of 10 instructors, some of which only taught once a week and others with more often as they had more time and desire to instruct. There are always two instructors per class so we will need more instructors for the 2020 season. Just an FYI, this is a paid position.

The season was a challenge due to the low temperatures and frequent wind. Our cancellation temps are -27°C, with or without wind chill.

This season 48 out of 88 sessions were cancelled, which was very disappointing for both the instructors and the classes of participants. Many days the decision to go ahead or cancel a session was made at 7am,

as we tried to stay optimistic about the winds calming or the temps rising. When all was said and done I can honestly say that we skied every possible day we could. We also skied with 1120 kids and their teachers, EA's and parent helpers.

We took responsibility for grooming our designated training area and established a new trail known as "The big bunny ears". This allowed the kids to get out onto the Golf course without causing damage to those expertly groomed trails (Thanks Richard and Ken).

Once again a huge THANK YOU to our program sponsors.

- Cross Country Saskatchewan provides funds for 1 instructor through their Field Staff worker program.
- Eb's Source for Adventure waxed

all 72 pairs of skis at no cost to us.

- The City of Saskatoon gave us access to the Wildwood Golf course clubhouse with a greatly reduced rental rate. The City of Saskatoon Grants Department also contributed funds through its Sports Participation Grant.
- The Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club covers all costs for the grooming equipment purchase, maintenance, storage, insurance and fuel. They also insure all the skis, poles and boots.

We look forward to a better season next year but I still am proud of the impact we did have. The euphoria that we see at the end of each session tells us that the next generation of skiers is being "ski-vangelised"

If you think you would like to join us next season as an instructor, give Jan a call at 306-931-3305 or email her at skiatschool@saskatoonnordicski.ca.



SUNDAY HIKING TOURS SPRING 2019 – Update

By Sheryl Riis, Touring Co-ordinator

Well, I am sad to say that I did not get to go cross-country skiing April 8th at Eb's Trails, like I did last year. My last day was March 10th. It was a gorgeous, blue-sky day, with excellent snow conditions, on perfectly well-groomed trails! THANK-YOU again to all of our hard-working groomers. They made sure that we had another great winter of skiing, despite the extra cold weather.

The good news is that our spring hikes start April 28th! Please bring water, a lunch, hat, layers, sunscreen, a sit-upon...and wear sturdy footwear. The terrain and weather can vary throughout the day! The hikes are usually about 12 km.

When carpooling, we pay the driver \$10.00 per person. Hikers should also be Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club members. Newcomers may attend one "free" hike, to check out the Club, before signing up.

See you on the trails,

Sheryl 306-382-9462

MEETING PLACES VARY!



Is it down-hill from here?

Photo courtesy of Cliff Speer
Ski Tour @ Eb's Mar 17, 2019

Sunday, April 28th – Borden Hike

Leader: Bob Katarynych 306-373-1438

Meet: 9:45 a.m. across from the Lawson Civic Centre, in the Lawson Heights Mall parking lot, by the park

–hiking about 12 km in mixed grassland and wooded areas, near the North Saskatchewan River, with lunch beside the river

Sunday, May 5th – Douglas Park Sand Dunes Hike

Leaders: Daniel Schott 306-374-1632 and Winfried Grassmann 306-373-0745

Meet: 9:45 a.m. at the Western Development Museum parking lot, 2610 Lorne Avenue

–Douglas Park nature trail and sand dunes, located south of the town of Elbow

Sunday, May 12th – Redberry Lake Hike with Wiener Roast (provided)

Leader: Jeff Thorpe 306-250-9266

Meet: 9:45 a.m. across from the Lawson Civic Centre, in the Lawson Heights Mall parking lot by the park

wieners/marshmallows/food/condiments/cooking supplies provided

Please feel free to bring additional food for our outdoor meal!

Sunday, May 19th – Eb's Trails Long Weekend Hike

Leader: Sheryl Riis 306-382-9462

Meet: 9:45 a.m. across from the Lawson Civic Centre, in the Lawson Heights Mall parking lot by the park

–hiking about 12 km of our gorgeous Eb's Trails

Sunday, May 26th – Buffalo Pasture Hike

Leader: Sheryl Riis 306-382-9462

Meet: 9:45 a.m. across from the Lawson Civic Centre, in the Lawson Heights Mall parking lot by the park

–following the South Saskatchewan River for about 12 km, through wooded and grassland areas, with lunch beside the river.

EB'S DAY 2019 by Jeff Thorpe

The Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club hosted the 17th edition of Eb's Day, on Feb. 17, 2019.

Eb's Day is a skiing and social event at Eb's Trails, our beautiful trail system an hour north of Saskatoon. Eb's Day brings together all kinds of club members: tourers, racers, blind skiers, and families with children. The program is simple: go for a ski, then come back to the South Hut to roast a hot dog and socialize around the campfire; go for another ski, and come back for another hot dog! All trails were freshly groomed the day before the event, thanks to dedicated volunteers Randy Chapman and Kate Germin.

The first Eb's Day was held in 2003, conceived by another dedicated volunteer, Heather Bernhard. Heather continued to organize this event for the next 15 years. This year, she decided to take a well-deserved break, and other club members (Val Young, Bob Katarynych, Jeff Thorpe) are attempting to fill her shoes.

The 2019 event was one of the colder Eb's Days we've had, with a temperature in the morning of -25° C. But 102 hardy Saskatchewan skiers showed up for the event, and everyone had a great time.

YOUTH PROGRAM by Kirsten Ketilson and Eric Lamb

Jackrabbits and Bunnyrabbits 2018-19

We had 125 children registered in our Jackrabbits and Bunnyrabbits programs this year. We are focused on teaching kids to have fun while on skis, and learn a few skills along the way.

Luckily, the early snow in November meant we had our best skiing before Christmas – not the best snow, but the best weather. There were many cold weather cancellations through January and February and even the first week of March, which was very unexpected and got to be a bit tiring. We even tried to run lessons when it “warmed” up to -35, however, -35 was still quite cold and hard to learn new skills. We finished off with wonderful weather for the time trials and first time mini-Birkebeiner in March, and by the following week the snow had all melted from Kinsmen Park for our last lesson.

This year in the program we introduced a reward program, and that appeared to be quite popular with the kids. We were always amazed to see the thrill of the kids at

picking a prize (box of pop tarts, ball, colouring book) for skiing outside of lessons 5 times, and we plan to continue this reward program next year. We had a small hiccup through CCS with the delivery of our jackrabbit toques being delayed until February, but we did receive them in time and hopefully everyone got theirs!

Our program would not exist without the effort put in by our volunteer coaches, our supply coordinator, our snack coordinator, and our trail groomer. This year, we had 20 coaches and assistant coaches that put in a lot of time teaching our young skiers and had fun along the way. Our coaches love to ski, and we hope some of this passion rubs off on our young bunny and jackrabbits each year. A big THANK YOU to coaches Sabine Wagner, Molly Kirk, Cara Drinkwater, Samantha Gunn, Brian Anderson, Jan Sedgewick, Erik PausJenssen, Eric Lamb, Jana Hambleton, Jason Griffith, David Larsen, Camille Sperling, Daniel Mireault, Adrien Blais, Neal Sedgewick, Ivan English, Sam Butler, Nancy Howse, Rob Howse, Kirsten Ketilson. We would especially like

to note the contributions of Cara and Sabine, recent graduates of the Jackrabbit program, who came back to help coach the Bunny Rabbits. Amanda Storey was very helpful as our liason with CCS for jackrabbit and bunnyrabbit supplies. Nancy Howse continued to put in many hours ensuring the snack supplies were available and hauling cups for washing after every lesson. Additionally, Brian Anderson put in countless hours preparing the trails for lessons, and was very important to ensuring we could take advantage of the days when we had both snow and warmer weather. Without all of these people and their volunteer efforts, we would be unable to run this program.

We are always seeking new coaches and assistants, and we are also seeking someone to help with communications in 2019-2020, as well as two coordinators to organize the volunteers for the snack program. If you are interested in helping coach, with communications, or to organize volunteers for the snack program, please contact us at youth@saskatoonnordicski.ca.

We will be opening registration for Bunnyrabbits and Jackrabbits for the 2019-2020 season on October 1, 2019, and will again plan to start ski lessons in mid November.

Hope you enjoyed the season, and please contact us with any questions or concerns.

Eric and Kirsten

BLIND AND VISION IMPAIRED SKIERS by Conrad Lange, Public Relations

In January and February 2019, the Saskatoon Blind and Low Vision Skiers and guides enjoyed some skiing at the Wildwood Golf Course, followed by coffee. A few scheduled events did have to be cancelled due to cold temperatures. On January 19th, Jeff Whiting of SNSC was to teach diagonal stride lessons to guides and visually impaired skiers of any ability level, but the temperature was too cold. However, we were still able to have our annual Family Pizza Day as planned later that morning. We had an excellent turnout. Everyone enjoyed the variety of pizza, along with donuts, fruit, tea and coffee.

February 9 was our second day scheduled for Jeff Whiting to teach. Again, this had to be cancelled due to cold temperature and wind chill.

Club members Joanne Ferguson, Ken and Pat Clarke, Paul and Laureen Millette went to Eb's Day on February 17, and reported good ski tracks amongst the trees.

From February 4 to 9, the annual Ski for Light was held at William Watson Lodge in Kannanaskis Park, Alberta. This event attracts blind and disabled skiers from other countries. Two legally blind skiers

from Saskatoon attended. Skier Harmon Van Bergen was guided by his wife Monique, and Ron Walsh was guided by Jan Fletcher from Vancouver. Harmon and Ron reported that on some days people were allowed to ski only short distances because of the cold temperatures. On the afternoon of Thursday, February 7, the temperature had warmed enough to allow the 10 K race to take place. Ron participated in that one. Unfortunately, the Saturday races of 2.5 K and 5 K had to be cancelled.

Saturday March 2nd, our president Joanne had arranged for guides from our club to help with ski lessons for school students with low vision. This was a joint effort with Jan Sedgewick of the SNSC Youth Program, the Separate and Public School Board, and our blind skiers group. Again, severely cold weather and wind chill, plus frozen water lines in the Wildwood clubhouse meant another cancellation.

In March, we were saddened by the death of long-term ski club member Eugene Schumacher. In 1980 he began serving many years as treasurer. He was also the registrar for the Ski for Light events until January 2011 when he resigned due to health

reasons. From the beginning, Eugene was a regular guide. He was kind, soft-spoken, and willing to help anybody.

Our club had another unexpected event this year. The Canadian National Institute for the Blind auditorium has been a valuable resource for decades for our annual catered supper and AGM. We were able to use the spacious auditorium at no cost. However the CNIB on McKercher Drive was sold; the new office on 8th Street has no auditorium. We moved the year-end supper and AGM to Mano's Restaurants & Lounge on 8th Street, to be held April 6.

The final social event of the season will be a noon lunch in June.

We thank the Saskatoon Co-op for continued financial support through the gift card program.



Our cross country ski club welcomes new blind and low vision people who would be interested in joining us for Saturday morning walks or skiing. A guide would be provided.

For further information, e-mail Joanne joanne.ferguson@sasktel.net, or Jola, jolat38@gmail.com

SASK SPORT AWARDS By Alison Meinert



Congratulations to long time Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club member Al Theede who was recently awarded the 2018 Saskatchewan Sport Awards Male Official of the Year Award.

Al is certified at level 1,2 and 3 and as a Divisional Technical Delegate by Cross Country Canada. He regularly times Saskatoon club races and serves as Chief of Competition or Chief of Timing and Results at Sask Cups (provincial race series) that Saskatoon hosts. He has also been a Technical Delegate at Sask Cup races and Provincial Ski Championships hosted by various clubs throughout Saskatchewan since 2010. Al has served as Technical Delegate for cross country skiing at

the Saskatchewan Winter Games in 2006 and 2010, as Chief of Timing and Results at the 2014 and 2018 Saskatchewan Winter Games, and as Assistant Technical Delegate for the Western Canadian Ski Championships in 2006.

Al Theede served on Cross Country Saskatchewan's Board of Directors as Officials and Coaching Development Director from 2003 to 2010. He is one of two officials in Saskatchewan who continue to deliver level 1 and 2 officials training – key to maintain volunteer capacity in clubs that host nationally sanctioned races in the Sask Cup provincial race series. In the last decade Al has led the introduction of electronic



race timing in Saskatchewan (cross country ski races had been timed with

stop watches prior to that) and he continues to manage the provincial race timing equipment and is the most experienced official we have for running the hardware and software.



Al Theede is highly respected throughout the Saskatchewan cross country ski race community for his knowledge of officiating and race timing, his impartiality when serving as a Technical Delegate and Jury member, the mentoring he provides to local volunteers and his quiet friendly personality and calmness under pressure.

Al and his wife, Moira, have been members of the Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club since 1980. They introduced their three children to the sport and all three have participated as either an athlete, coach, official or CCS Board member. Al and Moira have truly raised a "ski family". Congratulations Al!

FACILITIES COMMITTEE By Ivan English and Kate Germin

Report on Gordie Howe Sports Complex/Vision 2020 Project:

The plans for our new home continue to move forward at the Gordie Howe Bowl Sports Complex (GHSC). These same facilities will be available to club members for recreational skiing, for adult instruction and for competition

training and club races. We will be part of a spectacular, multi sport complex. We will share a 'clubhouse' with three other sporting groups. Baseball, track & field and speed skating. The building will be shared by the Saskatoon Lions Speed Skating Club and our club in the

winter. The Jackrabbit programs will have hills and lighting throughout the ball diamond areas close to our warm clubhouse with a concession and bathroom facilities. Dry land teaching can be planned indoors if weather does not allow outdoors. Snow

making in the training area is part of an ongoing plan so classes can be more regular throughout the season. The hills are already constructed around the speed skating oval and ball diamond areas. Lighting is already up in that area. It is the hope that the building will be constructed next year – 2019-20. The above training ski area will connect to the existing ski tracks on the Holiday Park Golf Course. We are also partnering with the City of Saskatoon to design increased ski trails on the golf course. The hope is to have more kilometers and varying terrain for all levels of skiers and ski events. Ongoing plans also include lighting on some of the golf course trails.

There is lots of planning and there will be ongoing management to be done. If you are interested in volunteering to help with this exciting project please contact the club at info@saskatoonnordicski.ca.

The footings have been poured for our building, but fundraising is at a slowdown right now. We ask that our SNSC members consider what they can donate to help bring this project along. Our Club has donated twenty-five thousand dollars which we have been accumulating in the past few years for this project.

If you are interested in a tour of the facility as it stands now with further

information on the project please contact info@saskatoonnordicski.ca.

The Friends of the Bowl Foundation is the non-profit group that we are partnered with to make this all happen. Tax deductible donations can be made through them at <https://gordiehowesportscomplex.ca/the-foundation/>. Please be sure to indicate that you are with the Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club when you make your donation.

Have a great summer!

Illustrating ski tour on Eb's trails on Mar 17 – Photos by Cliff Speer



YOUTH HIPER PROGRAM by Alison & Geoff Meinert

The Youth HiPer program had another successful season. We had over 20 kids training 2-3 times a week from September to March. We got off to a great start on roller skis in September and quickly transitioned to snow skiing at the end of November.

Most of the participants competed in the provincial Sask Cup Race Series with great success. Our team was consistently on the podium at the races held in La Ronge, Humboldt,



HiPer Team At Lake Louise, Alberta



Winning the Junior School Relay in La Ronge at the School Ski Championships. left to right: Natalie Meinert, Alistair English, Colm English, Heidi Wall

Regina and FlinFlon. Unfortunately, our Saskatoon race had to be cancelled due to the cold weather in February but overall there was lots of great racing around the province this winter. The racing calendar ended with Provincial Championships in FlinFlon. Our Saskatoon team came home with 5 – 1st place, 3 – 2nd place and 4 – 3rd place finishes.

A big highlight of the year was our on-snow training camp in Lake Louise in November. The athletes put in lots of kilometers and worked hard on improving their technique over the 5-day camp. We had a total of 11 athletes, 3 coaches, and 2 parents attend. Thank you to the Club for their financial support to rent a 15-passenger van for the event. We hope this will become a regular event in our training calendar.

We are already making plans for next year. For more details about the program please visit the ski club website. The Youth HiPer program is an introduction to racing program with a focus on developing ski skills, physical literacy (agility, balance and

coordination), speed and approaches to racing. It introduces eight to 14 year olds to the fun of competition, different types of races and exposure to training. Participants in the program need to have intermediate classic and skate skiing abilities equal to completion of at least one year of Jackrabbits Level 3 program.

If you are interested in finding out more about the program please contact us.

Alison & Geoff
alison.meinert@usask.ca

Photos supplied by Alison

