

Yad Moss 2017/18: A Beast of a Piste

Last winter will be remembered for the long fetch easterly which brought heavy snow across Britain. It arrived late in the winter after there had already been quite a few days skiing at Yad Moss.

The first day of the season was back on the 16th December 2017. Fifty skiers and snowboarders enjoyed a good day on dry, thin snow. The run of choice was 'Powder Gulley' and the last hour was simply sublime as the cloud disappeared and a deep orange glow spread across the South Tyne Valley.



More skiing soon followed. On the 8th of January over 100 people were on the hill. The air was sparklingly clear and the temperature registered minus 9.5C in the car park.

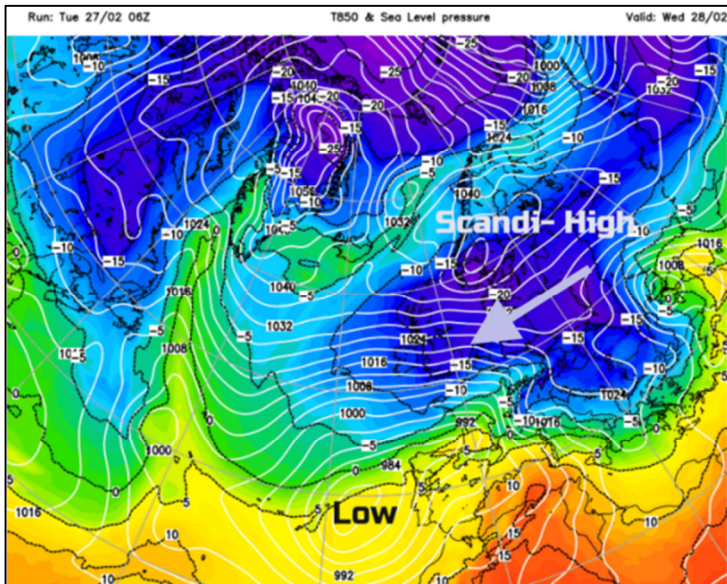


Unfortunately later that month a wayward poma became tangled in the Bull wheel catcher causing some damage and closing the tow. We lost some skiing days while we made repairs but were back running again by early February. By the 25th the main run was in perfect condition above Pylon 3 but below it the poma track was broken. A digging team was rallied and soon moved enough snow to reopen the tow.



And then, right at the end of February, the 'Beast from the East' struck the Pennines with full force.

During the 1970s and throughout the 1980s long fetch easterlies had been a frequent visitor to the British Isles. Pressure would build over Scandinavia opening the door to supercooled Siberian air to flood out westwards. Picking up moisture as it crossed the North Sea it would deposit snow in spectacular fashion over the hills exposed to the east. The classic winters of 1979, 1984, 1986, 1987 and 1991 all had a strong easterly component to them.



Pressure chart 28th February showing the easterly flow

Yad Moss was chosen because of its exposure to long fetch easterlies. The strong easterly wind blowing off the North sea would merge showers into 'streamers', that would easily reach the high ground of the Pennines as fierce blizzards. More snow would then be stripped off the summit plateau and accumulate on the west facing slopes. It is a quirk of geography that at our latitude there is no ground higher than Yad Moss, until you reach the Ural Mountains, 3,580km to the east. That is a very long fetch indeed!



North sea 'streamers' 28th February 2018

The last notable 'Beast from the East' was back in 1991. It was perhaps not surprising then in March when no one under the age of 30 could remember such ferocious conditions. For 24 hours the wind on Great Dun Fell barely dipped below 160kph (100mph). The infamous 'Helm' was whipping snow

down into the Eden Valley where large drifts would persist into April.



While the national media was focused on the disruption further south, up on Alston Moor and at Nenthead conditions were fearsome with people trapped in their homes and local supplies running low.

Eventually the wind moderated sufficiently for the Council to dig out the B6277. We were able to reach Yad Moss again from the Alston side. The webcam revealed huge drifting in the bowl with some fences completely buried.

The skiing that followed was superb although the strength of the blizzard had stripped some of the



Yad the Impaler

outlying runs bare. The bowl and the main runs were loaded however and were pisted in the evening to preserve the snow and deliver some great skiing surfaces.



Members were clocking up daily totals of 15 km and over 2,550 m of decent. Subsequent 'mini beasts' dumped even more snow. Hengill gulley, which leads down to the road, became a natural half pipe and a great last run of the day.

We lost a number of weekends to bad weather and struggled to run the tow during the week because of a lack of available operators. There was no let up in the cold weather however and the skiable conditions continued throughout March.

The last day operating the tow was at the end of the month. Further north in Scotland conditions continued to be excellent into May. What a season it turned out to be.



Glencoe 21st April 2018

During the summer we have been working on maintenance jobs and a few small projects. This is the first year in the last 10 that we haven't had the tow in pieces. Our long term programme of refurbishment is almost complete and we can report that the tow has run perfectly during August !

An important job still to do is to fit a new Poma catcher to the bull wheel. Fortunately this doesn't require us to dismantle anything and this modification should avoid the type of damage we sustained in January.



The big job this autumn is replacing the fencing that was damaged during the winter or which has otherwise reached the end of its life. A long section between P4 and P6 is being replaced with chestnut paling and oversize posts to combat 'wind throw' and 'sinking'.



We are in touch with the owner of these keys found on the slopes during the Spring clean !



...but we don't know the owner of these boots?

We are always keen to welcome new volunteers to help out. We are particularly short of people with specialist knowledge of electrical control. If you are interested please contact us through the volunteer webpage.

We hope you caught some of the great days last season and thank you for all your support and assistance. We look forward to skiing and riding with you again soon.

www.yadmoss.co.uk



Did you know

The deepest snowfall ever recorded in the United Kingdom fell at Forest-in-Teesdale, 8 km south east of Yad Moss. A uniform depth of 210cm, was measured on the 14th March 1947.