

Yad Moss News

October 2023



Well, season 2022/2023 at Yad Moss was at least better than the previous one. We still only ran the tow on five days but some of those turned out to be very good indeed. A pre Christmas cold spell delivered a beautiful 'Premier Neige' with an atmospheric cloud inversion below the slope and a nearby spectacularly frozen Ashgill Falls. We skied a few runs but really the conditions were just the wrong side of marginal.



After the false start the first proper day of the season was Sunday 18th December. The ground was frozen solid and despite the thin snow cover the Pennine Faithful turned up so we ran the tow anyway and we'll count that day!

We didn't have any skiable conditions at all during February but fortunately March was about to deliver. Friday the 10th and Saturday 11th March would be the best days of last season. We had a decent fall of snow from the east followed by some excellent weather over the hills.



On the Friday 60 skiers and boarders enjoyed some great skiing with some good off piste conditions. Most of the main runs were complete and where the piste basher had compacted the snow the surface was excellent. The snow froze hard overnight and as expected Saturday was busier with perhaps 120 people on the hill throughout the day. In the light easterly wind the dry frozen snow was giving fast runs and responsive snow. We ran the tow from 10am right through to 5pm to ensure everyone got plenty of skiing time. The BBC regional news programme 'Look North' called in and Cumbria Reporter Mark McAlindon interviewed some very happy Members. The TV piece was titled 'Fun in the Snow' and so it was!



We ran the tow again on the Sunday but had to close early due to diminishing snow cover with the arrival of mild air. It turned out to be the last day of the season. We had been well within the capacity of the tow all weekend but the counter in the control hut still indicated an impressive 3,600 Poma departures between the Friday morning and close of Play on Saturday. Sufficient uplift for over 2,500kms of runs!

We hadn't planned any significant projects for the summer but in the end we still

managed to exhaust all our remaining fencing supplies. Next time you are up at Yad Moss you may notice that all the fencing on the lower slope has now been replaced with five foot chestnut paling or horizontal rails. We now have a decent fence from the summit right back down to the base station. The new fences are all higher and are able to trap more snow (in favourable conditions) by interrupting more of the wind and thereby releasing more air-borne snow into the slightly more sheltered zone on either side of the fence. Higher fences also create wider and deeper drifts and provide protection from subsequent milder winds or direct radiation from the sun. They also provide a useful amount of shelter to skiers and snowboarders and improve contrast in flat light. Most of our fences are sited to enable skiing on either side to increase the options, dependent on



wind direction. Other jobs this summer have included replacing the bearings in the bullwheel, piste basher maintenance and the construction of a wall outside the ticket office to facilitate storage and a sheltered seating area.



The remaining tasks this autumn include replacing the Poma access ramp, grass cutting and more electrical work.

The ramp behind the ticket office provides skier access to the tow. It was originally built from stone covered by timber pallets but 30 years later and the wood is now rotting. We are replacing the whole structure with something lighter and more robust using steel rails fixed to vertical posts.

Electrical work is also on going to improve the reliability of our batteries . You may have noticed how vulnerable the webcam is to losing its picture, usually just when the snow is arriving! At Yad Moss we are not connected to the national grid and a recurring problem is that our batteries can flatten after a period of calm weather. In the winter if our micro wind turbines are not generating then our solar panels cannot produce enough electricity alone to power the webcam and its heater. We have a few ideas that might help and are working to improve the situation.

The latest news from Yad Moss is that **ticket prices are remaining unchanged for the 10th year running!** Despite rising fuel, insurance and other costs an adult season ticket is still just £55. Returning adult season ticket holders enjoy a discount and pay only £40 whilst Junior skiers and boarders (under 18) pay merely £10 for a season pass. All our Membership and ticket details for 2023/24 are available at <https://yadmoss.co.uk/join-us/>

Yad Moss depends entirely on unpaid volunteers to run the Club, operate the tow and undertake all the maintenance and project work on the hill. We do it for the love of Pennine Snowsports... and because we secretly dream about managing Infrastructure!! It's all great fun but it is a lot of work and that's usually easier when there are more of us to share the tasks around. If you would like to get involved please contact: **secretary@yadmoss.co.uk** or talk to us on a ski day. We'd love to hear from you.

Did you know ?

- 'Yad' is an Anglo-Norse term meaning 'A **workhorse**; an old or worn-out mare' The ski tow may be an old *workhorse*, but it's well cared for and there is plenty of life left in it yet
- The source of the **River South Tyne** is just under 3km from Yad Moss, across the valley
- Also across the valley of the South Tyne is the route of a **proposed railway** that was planned to connect Middleton in Teesdale to Alston. At over 600m in elevation it would have been the highest railway in the UK. A road was built instead by the London Lead Company and to this day its shallow gradient and good width, designed to carry metal ore and heavy goods, helps make Yad Moss accessible, in all but the most severe weather. It would have been nice though to arrive at the ski slope by train!
- perhaps surprisingly, **True North** will pass through the Pennines in 2024 before leaving the English coast at Berwick-Upon-Tweed a year later in August 2025.



'Yad Moss 2000' rope tow circa 1983. Skiers used a car seatbelt and a metal hook to hold on to the heavy rope



Aerial photo circa 1987 showing the two rope tows and the top half of the ski area above the fell wall. Note how effective the fences are, even before we had a piste basher

It must have been a good day for our senior Engineer to put his skis on!

We wish you a safe autumn and hope for good conditions this winter.

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