

ventio Crucis (3 May) that they might not be overcome by snow nor go astray and perish" and it was as late as 1884 before Henrik Angell became the first recorded skier to cross the Hardangervidda. In 1868 Den Norske Turistforening (DNT) was founded with the objective of attracting hikers to the Norwegian mountains. The huts that they built for this purpose in areas such as Telemark and the Hardangervidda served also to open up the mountains to skiers and the Easter trip to the mountains to ski has now become an established Norwegian institution.

The first record of skiing taking place south of the Scandinavian countries comes in a book "Die Ehre des Herzogtums Krain" (The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola) written by Johann Valvasor (or to give him his true name Janez Vajkard Valvasor) in 1689. "The peasants of Upper Carniola" he writes "know of a rare invention of a sort I had never seen anywhere else: in wintertime when the snow is plentiful, they descend into the valley with incredible speed. For that purpose they take two strips of wood, each a quarter of an inch thick, half a foot wide, and some five feet long. . . . . the peasants take a stout cudgel into their hands, push it under their armpit, bend backward and use it as if it were some sort of a rudder to slide off, or even fly down the steepest slopes". A 19th Century painting illustrates Valvasor's description of the people of Carniola, in modern day Slovenia, skiing in a very similar way to the methods then and later developed in Scandinavia. How skiing was brought to Carniola and why it neither survived there nor spread to the rest of the Alpine regions remains a mystery, for the Carniolans were almost two centuries ahead of their time.

**EMIGRATION TO THE NEW WORLD**

In the latter half of the 19th century a disastrous economic depression caused massive emigration from Scandinavia, and particularly from Norway, to North America and Australia, where the newcomers found work in the main as loggers and miners. It was a natural reaction for those whose new homes were in mountainous or snowy regions to fall back on their skis both for their sport and as an essential means of winter transport. Many Scandinavian lumberjacks found work in the logging industry in Northern Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, where their descendants still live and ski today. Ishpeming, in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, is widely regarded as having been the birthplace of North American skiing, but skiing was widely practised in the latter half of the 19th century throughout the Mid-West and Mountain States. In the Sierra Nevada of California, a Norwegian immigrant called John Thorsteinson (or Thoresen) became famous for carrying the mail through the mountains on skis and became immortalized as the first skier ever to be depicted on a postage stamp. He has passed into history by his popular name of "Snowshoe Thompson".

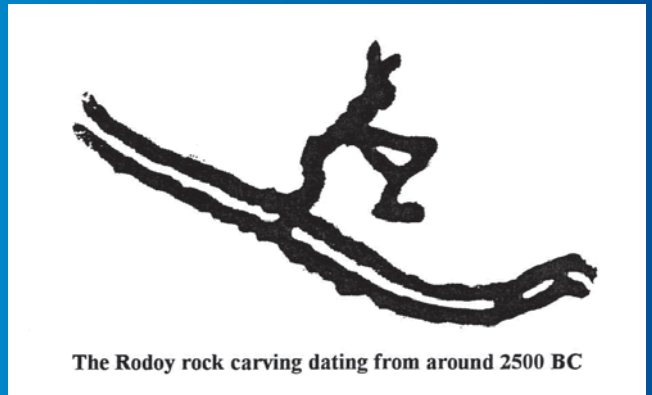
In 1861 the Kiandra Ski Club was formed in Australia, laying claim – in competition with the Trysil Shooting and Skiing Club in Norway – to being the oldest ski club in the world. The first skier in Central Europe is said to have been one Gut Muths who introduced the sport to the Thuringer Wald in 1795 but it was the 1850s before a Norwegian, H Moller, first began to promote the activity more widely in Germany. Skiing in the Alps was, of course, carried out on traditional Norwegian skis and bindings, with skiers using one long pole both as a brake and, placed to one side, to initiate clumsy turns.

**SONDRE NORHEIM**

In 1868 an event occurred which was to have a dramatic effect on the development of skiing. Sondre Norheim travelled to Oslo from his home in the Morgedal valley in the Telemark region of southern Norway and for the first time demonstrated true control of the ski, particularly through his use of the Telemark and Christiania turns, which he had invented and named after his home region and the capital town of his country. Norheim is often



Patrick Field



The Rodoy rock carving dating from around 2500 BC



The Birkebeinere rescuing Haakon Haakonson, painted by Knud Bergslien in 1869



A drawing from the Olaus Magnus book "The History of the Nordic Races"