

Rede von Willam Lunn anlässlich des Jubiläums «100 Jahre modern Slalom by Sir Arnold Lunn»

Good morning – for those of you who don't know me, my name is William Lunn and this is my eldest son Oscar Lunn – Arnold was my great grandfather and for those who might have known them, Peter was my grandfather and Stephen was my father.

It's really is a great honour to be here with you this morning to celebrate the centenary of the modern day slalom and to say a few words. I'll try not to keep you too long this morning – we have better places to be, out on the slopes, then listening to me speak – but I thought I might share a few thoughts of Arnold.

Of course, 1922 is the date we recognise as the creation of the modern day slalom but there were a great many sequence of events in the lead up to this point and some elements of chance. There was also some resistance that Arnold faced in the development of the sport - the most significant coming from the Scandinavian countries who told Arnold that the Brits were either "too weak" to cross country and "too cowardly" to jump – and they questioned was this slalom, really only a ploy to introduce a sport that the "lazy Brits" could put less effort in to!

Prior to the race in 1922 there already existed a slalom - one that was judged on time and style - but Arnolds recognised that it was difficult to fairly judge style and the race encouraged safe turning - he was well known for saying that that a "fast ugly turn was better than a slow pretty one" - hence the development away from style and on to time alone.

Now, it may surprise you that, by the time of the race in 1922 Arnold had only raced in one ski event – and that was as a schoolboy in a Nordic langlauf! And that's because Arnold was more a ski-mountaineer than a racer. He had made some 30 plus mountain expeditions by 1922 and he argued that, to be a real scholar of the snow, when it came to ski mountaineering, you needed to be able deal with the unexpected and make the necessary turn in difficult circumstances - say, if the skier were to come across hay huts, grass, rocks, trees and even wandering chamois. So one of the key objectives of the course set in 1922 was that the gates should be set in positions that weren't convenient or predictable to go around – he was trying to re-create the manoeuvres you might encounter in a mountain decent.

Prior to putting poles in the ground Arnold considered what obstacles could be used to slalom around – his early thoughts were to create a slalom race using the mountain trees. But this wasn't primarily discounted for safety reasons – Arnold was worried that a local may have the race advantage of knowing the tree positions better than others.

So, his race in 1922 addressed the problem he saw with judging 'style' in slalom, created a level playing field to the racers and challenged the racers to be more proficient ski mountaineers - I'm not sure it addressed the "Lazy Brits" argument but you can't win every battle.

I never met Arnold – he died 6 years before I was born – but he was obviously a very passionate, determined and successful man. And whilst we're not here to talk about the Kandahar ski club, my father used to tell me that Arnold was most worried that the efforts he had made might fizzle out after he has gone – quite obviously, he couldn't have been more wrong! But the main reason they haven't fizzled out is because of people – the Murren community have especially played a big part of that – many passionate, determined people in their own right who have both contributed to the development of the sport and kept the legacy alive.

And whilst Arnold had a great loyalty to England, Murren was really his home - the community, the friends, the beauty and, of course, the terrain and slopes that it offered for ski mountaineering and racing.

Actually, the only time he spoke negatively about the area was then there was, I quote "crusted filth" or "beastly thawed stuff".

Thank you very much for listening and thank more so for continuing with his legacy.