

Madam Chairman's Report 2007

The past year has just flown by. It has been a pleasant task to sift through the section reports of the past twelve months to give you the highlights of 2007. None of this would have been possible without the support of the committee and all the other volunteers who have put time and effort into running this, your Club. A big "Thank you" to you all.

As a family orientated club the first review must go to the Youth Committee. They get to speak before me at the AGM, but for technophiles who have downloaded this beforehand, I get first say! I cannot let this moment pass without congratulating them again on being the Club's largest fund-raisers this year by securing a grant for £4500 from the Hants Youth opportunities Fund which has gone on 10 complete sets of white water boats for the young people to use on moving water trips. Our young paddlers have also done us proud with good results in the Southern Region Paddlesport competition and at other competitions elsewhere, which I will cover in more detail later. We have continued to run the ever popular "Paddlepower" Scheme this summer, the new Mini Course format has been well received by parents, paddlers and coaches. Coaches have been assisted this year by young people training to be Cadet leaders.

Our finances are in good health, in part due to the diligence of our Treasurer, Dave who has curbed the enthusiasm of some of the committee to spend more than their budgets. I would like to thank Dave for his hard work over the past three years.

Club membership numbers have increased again, we now have 167 "Membership Units" of which 72 are family members. I would like to thank Alan Small for all his hard work as membership secretary and welcome his replacement Alli Benton Jones. The job of Membership Secretary is one that grows with the membership and we will be looking at ways next year to improve communications with our members.

On the training side we have seen a number of our existing coaches move up the coaching ladder and two new coaches join the scheme, including our first Placid Water coach. The BCU have completely overhauled and re-launched the coaching progression this year and this will impact how the club delivers awards next year. There will be a shift in emphasis towards Paddlepower for young paddlers with star tests aimed at older teenagers and adults. We will continue to support Coaching development within the Club to enable our existing coaches to transfer into the new scheme and also to support new coaches. In September the club organised a First Aid Course to meet the requirements of the BCU Aquatic First Aid Course. Lisa has been running Canoe safety tests and a record number of paddlers achieved Star Tests Awards this year from 1 -4 star in Canoe, 1-5 star training in Kayak and 1-3 star Placid Water.

Progress continues to be made with the registering and updating of CRB Disclosures. The BCCC now has 21 coaches and helpers holding valid disclosure certificates, with another couple who need to renew and are being reminded. A gentle reminder here that disclosures are not just for coaches, we strongly encourage anyone who lends a hand to fill in a form. Further information can be obtained from Brian Biffin. Job titles, as

always, keep changing and for Child Protection Officer now read Welfare Officer! We will also need to identify and train two Event Welfare Officers, It will be their task to ensure, through forward planning, the structure of club events, for instance that anyone likely to have 1:1 contact has up to date CRB clearance. At the event itself, their task need not be particularly "hands on", they might even get on the water! This should cover us for our busier events and of course, Hare and Hounds, in the pool and Club nights.

Moving on now to competition, as a marathon paddler myself, I am pleased to see the increase in numbers of members taking part in training, time trials, Hare & Hounds and racing and the enthusiasm they are showing in doing so. Two years ago the H&H was averaging less than 12 paddlers a month. This calendar year so far that has more than doubled to 26 .The boost in numbers was a contributory factor in the club qualifying for the Hasler Finals for the first time in three years. Our future success lies in the organisation of our coaching and the encouragement we give to those taking part, Brian Gandy and his team of helpers must take the credit for all their hard work this year. As for performances, the improvement of Isobel and Naomi Smith stand out and their selection to race in the Loire International Marathon Race for the GB Junior Development team was deserved. Their bronze medal and, in particular, their GB sweatshirts, capped their trip to France. However, as the many new faces can testify, you don't need to be an aspiring international paddler to come and enjoy racing.

With the new Paddlepower format on Tuesday nights we have had enough time to build up some real skills in slalom. Unfortunately this has not yet led to any new faces taking part in national ranking events. The only ranked paddlers to have competed this year are in Mens Div3. We ran a small intra regional competition last January with some excellent paddlers from Winchester turning up. We hope to repeat the exercise this year, and will also be hosting the Paddlesport Challenge Slalom Event in November. For some time now we have been promised a brand new fleet of 8 composite slalom boats in the new, shorter style paid for by the Southern Region Development Team. We are hoping that these will arrive soon! We are also planning to invest in quality racing paddles and associated equipment to bring our slalom training right up to date.

The Club continues to run pool sessions at RAF Odiham. The popularity of these waxes and wanes with the seasons. The Paddlesport Challenge Polo event was run by the Club at Willink pool last January and our teams came First and Fourth. It has not been possible to maintain this interest in polo throughout the year.

There is more to paddling than competition. This year has again seen a broad range of trips, tours and social events. Favourite rivers have been revisited and we have explored some others for the first time. Canadian canoeing has been very popular and we have also had several trips onto salt water and our members have paddled in France and Belgium. All this takes energy and we have been fueled by burgers and cakes from the snack bar in the summer and by mulled wine on Boxing Day. It was a pleasure to host the first social gathering for all the helpers in September.

The web site continues to be very popular, now predicted to show around

30,000 unique visitors for the 12 month from mid December 2006. We generally receive at least 1 click-thru email from the site per week and a number of recent members have discovered the club through the website. The Waterfront archive is quite popular, but the most viewed pages are the picture galleries.

Finally I want to look forwards to future development. The Boat House, as many of you may have noticed is full to bursting with boats. This year in addition to the Youth boats and slalom boats we have received funding and grants for eight general purpose boats , two Hody K2s, an ergo and two touring boats, totaling some £17,000. This is all in addition to our budgeted spending on new boats. The increase in membership fees is to enable us to insure all the new equipment. We are working with the Canal Authority to try and secure a container for additional storage. Next season will see us reviewing and hopefully improving still further our fleet of boats and ancilliary equipment. Thank you for your help and support over the past year. I hope to see you all on the water soon.

Liz Murnaghan
Madam Chairman BCCC
12th Oct 2007