

Chairmans report 2008

Doesn't time fly when you are having fun? The past year has simply whizzed by in a flash of paddles.

As a club we have continued to maintain a healthy membership of 168 membership units. This works out at 316 people (not including our Affiliated groups) of whom 1/3 rd are women and 143 are BCU members in their own right. I would like to encourage all the adult members who are not BCU members to join because of the benefits it gives you, notably the insurance and the licences to paddle on the canal and other waterways.

However we only have 26 qualified coaches, who are all volunteers to support all these paddlers. I would like to say a big THANK YOU to everyone who has given up time this year to help with the running of the club, we couldn't do it without you. Not all our jobs require coaching skills but if you are interested in becoming a coach then both the club and the Southern region are prepared to help you financially, just ask the Treasurer or Chairman for details. We do ask all our coaches and helpers to fill out a CRB form. Brian Biffin is our Welfare Officer and he can help you with any questions you may have.

With regard to the facilities the Club has to offer, we are continually trying to upgrade and improve our fleet of boats. As you may have noticed the Barn is now full and currently old boats have to be sold to make way for newer ones. Discussions have been held with the BCA over the past year to try and obtain further storage facilities in the form of a container, although this has been agreed in principle it is yet to materialise. Communications is a buzz word that appears in many CEOs reports. Mine is no different! We have trailed paper issues of our quarterly newsletter Waterfront and a survey in the last issue asked you what you thought of it. The results are available at the back of the room. It turns out that most of you want to carry on receiving Waterfront in the form it was issued to you before our paper only trial. We will also try and ensure that events are advertised in the barn in addition to email and website advertising. Thanks must go to Brian G for taking on the role of Waterfront Editor, Alan, Merry, Brian B and Richard for supporting Dave with the website and to James F who has become our new Membership Secretary.

Now onto the important bit, paddling.

I'm going to start with the racing squad because there has been an most encouraging increase in the number of people training and racing over the past year.

Last winter saw us enter 3 teams in the Waterside series of races. The Blue team ended up in 4th place. Isobel and Naomi picked up the Junior Ladies K2 trophy and also beat myself and Tracy into 2nd place for the Ladies K2 trophy. James F came 4th in the Mens K1 event. Easter saw 4 boats carrying BCCC members leave Devizes in awful weather conditions. However, sub zero temperatures, snow, wind and rain meant that only 2 crews made it to Westminster.

With the warmer weather we returned to Hasler racing in May. Work on the canal at Ash Vale meant that we had to run a new course up to Deepcut . Thanks must go to Howard and his team for another well organised event. During the 2007/8 Hasler season we have had 47 people turn up and race for us and also 8 u12 and U10s in Lightnings. We fielded large teams throughout the 9 race series and qualified for the Hasler Race Final at Burton

on Trent. We achieved 8th place overall with podium finishes for James F winner of Div 4. Freddy and Jamie winner and 3rd in div 6. Our Club also contributed to the Southern Region winning the Region cup. There have been a large number of promotions this year, James F is now in Div 3; Jamie, Jason, Robin and Freddy have joined Richard, Isobel and Naomi in Div 5. James B, James T, Gez and Mike have moved up to Div 6. This is a welcome reward for all the training they have put in, (which included the Circuit training which we ran for the first time last winter). Thanks must go to Richard, Brian G and their team of racing coaches and helpers.

The summer also saw the Club venture to the National Championships where we finished 11th out of 42 Clubs. Highlights were Naomi and Isobel U14 National Champion and runner up respectively in K1 and together National Champions in U14 Girls K2. James F with a friend from WOK won Div 456K2 and Charles Hicks was 3rd in Mens K1 Over 64 class.

Sprinting is also taking off with increasing numbers trekking to the Nottingham Sprint Regattas

Other competitive disciplines have been a bit quieter. We organised a slalom and polo event for the Southern Region Paddlesport Challenge but neither of these resulted in members taking the next step up to National Ranking competition. In the 2007/8 Paddlesport Challenge we fielded 2 teams, the Dippers finished 6th / 11 and the Dunkers 8th ..

The Club continued with its ever popular Tuesday evening Paddlepower sessions. A big thank you must go to all the coaches and helpers who enabled 62 children to take part in structured paddling activity over 15 weeks. For many a highlight was the trips to Shepperton weir. It is also pleasing to see some of the paddlers who have been through the Paddlepower scheme come back to help as Cadet leaders. The BCU introduced new Star test Awards last season and we have had a number of adults complete the 1 and 2 star awards over the summer.

On the social side we have seen some new events on the calendar. At Easter there was a Youth orientated Whitewater trip to the Barle using equipment provided by the Hants YOF grant. There was a pub crawl along the canal on a warm summers day and a cold night saw our first Halloween spooky paddle. The traditional events like Cardington and the Boxing Day paddle have gone ahead. We have still had time to paddle favourite rivers and visit new ones. Thanks to everybody for your support over the past year, I look forward to seeing you on the water soon.

Liz Murnaghan
Chairman BCCC
31 Oct 2008