

## BRITISH CANOE UNION

### **Flatwater Newsletter – December 2007**

Well here it is again although you have probably forgotten what a Flatwater Newsletter looks like, as it is June since the last issue. It is quite difficult to tell you why this is other than the simple fact that there have been little or nothing in the way of contributions sent to me. The intention of the newsletter is just that Christine and I act as editors. Unfortunately we have had nothing to edit.

There have been discussions at both committees as to the reason for this situation and ways of going forward.

Undoubtedly the new Marathon website has had a substantial impact. There is no doubt that Tamsin's efforts have increased the quality and quantity of information available. It is more up to date than any bi-monthly newsletter could be.

However both committees felt that there was a place for a newsletter to reach those who did not go onto a website. More a case of "as it has been sent to you, you read it" more than your having to be proactive and go and seek the information.

So please keep sending in the information to Tamsin for the MRC website but also keep me in mind for those items that you want to reach all the registered clubs.

At this point I would like to pay a tribute to Jim Rossiter. You may well be aware that he decided to retire from the post of Marathon Team Manager after 35 years. There have been several items setting out the work he has done but I think there is one point has not as yet been emphasised enough. That is the way he has transformed the way that GB teams going abroad are looked after. Jim became Team Manager in 1972 at a time when there were almost no international Marathon races and there was no funding from Government bodies and little from the BCU. If the team members got £25 towards their expenses they were doing well. In Spain at the Sella series there was literally a fight for the cash the organisers provided from their government support. As Team Manager for many Sella series of races at that time I can personally vouch for what was needed to get your share.

Jim set up a system that not only got the paddlers travel arrangements sorted as a group but also set about making sure that the team were a team and not just a bunch of individuals with a common purpose. Accommodation was checked out and booked. Transport of boats was arranged. It is at this point that you should remember that the team went in mini buses of variable quality with the boats on top. The team did not fly leaving the boats to be taken overland as now. Extra food was taken to get over the fact that event food was often at best dubious and at worst uneatable. One well known team member from times past has survived for days on Mars bars and soup and still won. The whole principle was that team members were treated as athletes and Jim as best as possible looked after their requirements.

I can quote one ex team member "You raced for Jim as well as yourself" Those following on I am sure will take note of the system he set up and this will be to the paddlers advantage.

With the coming of "International Grant Aid" as it was known from the then Sports Council, the job was made easier and the principle that all team members would be picked on merit and not money was established. This remains today.

However all the work of the arrangements were done in Jims own time as Jill his wife will confirm.

The end product is a legacy of high standards that will take some following. We owe him a great deal. Thanks Jim, you have done a great job.

Whilst I am in tribute mode I would also like to sing the praises of the Race Records Officer for the last 15 years. Yes, I know she's my wife but this has nothing to do with marital bliss or home harmony.

When Christine took the job it was purely a laborious slogging input arrangement with the added "benefit" of a large number of letters to type and send out. As time has gone by the job has become much easier due to the creation by Wikki Daniels of the HRM results programme. Thanks Wikki, this has been a godsend, only to be ruined from time to time by those race organisers who well intentioned though they are, have altered the perfect set up to "improve" the software. This causes Christine, and now Rosemary, hours of simple pleasure in manually inputting data because the original automatic operations are rendered redundant.

Please do not think that race organisers are unappreciated, they have a difficult job and not much in the way of thanks but please hear this plea.

Use the HRM as it was intended. If you are not sure as to how it should work then ask! Christine, Wikki or any member of the MRC will be only too delighted to show you the path of true joy.

After 15 years Christine has relinquished the job. Not without some considerable soul searching I would say as the desire to help make Marathon a sport that grows and to be enjoyed by many more is still strong. Despite the trials and tribulations I know that Christine has derived some satisfaction from a job done well. Thanks Christine.

As from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 Rosemary Illinesi will be taking over and can be contacted on [rosemary.illinesi@ntlworld.com](mailto:rosemary.illinesi@ntlworld.com). Please see the note Christine has put together giving more information on this later in this newsletter.

As part of the tribute to Christine's work was in whinge mode about race results perhaps I should continue in this vein and rabbit on about the small number of letters returned to Christine from team leaders to bring up to date their marathon paddlers information. As ever the requested return date might just as well be the number you first thought of divided by the size of your mortgage account number. Sincere apologies to those of you who did return it by the requested date but 35 out of 95 does not seem to me to be a good proportion. When the register is used as a basis for the results programme and the racing handbook is where all details remain for the year, getting the name, BCU number & division of paddlers right at the start seems quite important. Come on Chaps and Chappesses; help us to help you and your paddlers.

The recent MRC get together was the "All Day" committee meeting of the year where the planning for next years season is done. A number of items of interest came out which will affect your own clubs planning for the next year.

Ollie Harding was welcomed as a new member to the committee.

Please welcome the fact that under the new Sport England coaching funding Dyson Pendle has been appointed as a regional coach on a part time basis. This is good news for his area, as the quality of his work is well known.

The committee were allocated their tasks for the coming year as follows.

Peter Jones will continue to collate the scoring for the Geoff Sanders Lightning Trophy, even though he no longer serves on the committee

James Hinves will represent Lightnings on the committee.

James Smythe was appointed GB Team Manager for the World Championships in Tyn CZK in September but Team Managers for the other events remain to be settled

David Enoch will collate information prior to trips

Committee responsibilities are to be as follows:

Chairman	Brian Gandy
Secretary	Diane Bates
Treasurer, Nationals Coordinator, trophies	David Enoch
Rankings Officer	Mike Head
Lightning Development	James Hinves
Newsletter	Alan Laws
Hasler Finals Coordinator	Andy Rawson
Calendar Compiler, Athlete Development	James Smythe
Athlete Development	Steve Harris, Dyson Pendle
Coach	Roland Lawler
Website	Tamsin Phipps

The selection committee will be Brian Gandy, Alan Laws, David Enoch, Roland Lawler, Steve Harris and Alan Williams plus the Team manager(s) of forthcoming events.

#### **Calendar:**

By the time you read this calendar should be complete and I think that when you see it you will agree that it gets ever more crowded.

Do you have a view about the calendar?

Should it be full with as many races as we can cram in or should there be some way of restricting the number with a view to getting more people at fewer and better events?

Way back there were only 8 races countrywide counting towards the Hasler Trophy.

When the price of petrol rose in the 1970's there was a change to the regional basis we have now. This has seen the growth of the number of races to the point where there are over 80 races in the calendar.

Is this the best way of making sure we try and achieve the twin aims of providing Marathon competition for as many as possible whilst still trying to raise the standard so we have top flight international teams sent abroad?

You would have to say the system has served us well in the past but in the last few years we seem to have slid down from the top rung. The situation of younger paddlers being enticed into Sprint and having their Marathon activities restricted has been well aired and it serves no good purpose to dwell on it. Suffice to say we need to make sure that those with Marathon talent and desire receive the best possible facilities and coaching.

How about clubs sponsoring a paddler? It could be one of their own or joining with other clubs to support a particularly promising youngster. I would guess there would need to be one or two stipulations around the fact that this was for Marathon and there would be a need for a commitment to be made by the person concerned.

Are there any thoughts on this idea? Do you have another?

The following Assessment races were agreed.

April 13 – K1 at Norwich

April 27 – K2 at Bedford.

May 11 – K1 at Chester.

May 18 – K2 at Southampton.

In the past there has been a Liaison Meeting with the Sprint Coaches but this had met with limited success. As there are quite a few members who are already on both committees it was decided not to hold a separate meeting this year.

Every year a letter is sent to race organisers to help and advise them on running their race next year. This year it will draw their attention amongst other issues to;

- There are new arrangements for the payment of race levies. These should now be sent direct to the Treasurer, Dave Enoch.

- The need to check BCU membership. This is a continual problem especially for the Race Records Officer. The problem of checking BCU membership and the laissez faire attitude towards it has gone on for longer than I can remember but the need for it still remains one of the cornerstones of the BCU. It is a member's organisation and there are far too many instances of non-members taking advantage of the good nature and hard work of the members and not contributing. It does not matter HOW the membership is checked as long as it is done. It is the responsibility of the race organisers and just as important as all the other jobs that need to be done. There is a lot to do as a Race Organiser and all of your work is appreciated, but this task is not complicated. To those paddlers who try to buck the system by not joining or racing with only basic membership if you are found out then there will be no Hasler points for your club. I doubt this will bother you but it might bother those who have paid to join. Perhaps we should publish the names of those discovered?
- This brings on the subject of Day Tickets. These are intended for those paddlers who are just starting in Marathon. It gives them the chance to try our sport and is not intended for those too idle or careless to bring their membership cards or those too mean to join. The tickets ensure that there is Public Liability Insurance in place in case of accidents. The money collected then sent to BCU with the appropriate paperwork. In a recent race there were about 120 paddlers and 60 day tickets were issued. Were these all for new paddlers just trying out the sport? What's your guess?
- There will be advice as to the recommended use of the HRM and the ability to receive pre-entries via the HRM and also to the composition of crew boats.
- The Marathon Website is working very well, due entirely to Tamsin's efforts. There will be the addition of an athlete section to publish the lectures from the Training Days.
- David Enoch is writing a page setting out the details of the various trophies that are in existence.
- The Handbook and Calendar are ongoing, and will be published in January.
- After the experience of requiring Club Race vests to be worn at the Hasler this year it will become compulsory for all Hasler races from September 2008
- Last year Brian Gandy arranged a meeting with some of the race organisers to try and help with the problems they face. For those who attended it was felt to be a success and served a useful purpose. There is a desire to extend this but there seems to be a lack of interest. Is this something that race organisers want? We would respond to a request for meetings that could be held regionally to reduce travel costs.
- There will be a review by the racing sub committee of the changes to K2 divisions and also instant promotions and demotions.
- One change that received support was that in order to qualify for Hasler, a paddler has to complete a qualifying race.
- You may well be aware that special arrangements have been agreed with the Environment Agency for Portaging on the Thames. There has been no feedback from Race organisers on these that come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008. If any Thames race organiser needs more information then please contact Brian Gandy.

The main International events for 2008 are

- World Cup 1 at Brandenburg, Germany. 14/15<sup>th</sup> June 2008. I would encourage anyone who wants to spectate and encourage our paddlers then go to this event. It is on a lake about 50miles from Berlin and will give excellent viewing and facilities. There is a modern regatta course with all the facilities you could want. The portage will be right in front of the grandstand and from this you will be able to see 90% of the race.
- World Cup 2 at Crestuma Portugal. 12/13<sup>th</sup> July 2008. A race known by many and which course will host the World Championships in 2009. Good spectating and if you like seafood the place to be.
- World Championships at Tyn, CZK. 20/21<sup>st</sup> September 2008 River course with good spectating facilities but accommodation is not so hot. Very cheap living and there will be a very big entry in the Masters events. Bring your raincoat.

**Marathon Development Squad:** James Smythe reported that the training days this year are focussing on juniors due to a lack of senior paddlers attending. He felt that there is a need to hold a review of what is available at clubs and the importance of club coaches attending the training days so that follow up work can be achieved. This year the race fees for selected juniors will be paid for at the assessment races. Selection for the Gent Marathon would be made by Dyson Pendle and James Smythe based on performance at the training days and that the event was to be treated as a training exercise.

How did you rate the National Championships this year?  
The format for 2008 at Worcester will change;

- Points toward the Spanish House Trophy will only be awarded for National Championship events (not for divisional races).
- The Masters classes will be divided into 5-year age bands as at international races and will be increased to include over 60 and 65. There will not necessarily be separate starts for each age group but they will be separated for the purpose of prize giving.
- Lady Masters will not race over 12 miles. Over 35, 40, 45, will race 8 miles, over 50, 55, 60, 65 will race 4 miles.
- Juniors will only be permitted to race in National Championship events (not divisional races).
- The Hasler Final in 2008 will be at Burton. Further details follow in the Yearbook.

## Stop Press

Contrary to popular belief the Newsletters and the Marathon website are available for you to air your views. This facility is available for everyone who takes finger to keyboard. That is except for one regular contributor who has had his recent article censored by his agent. [not me.] What chance that it can be smuggled out in an attempt to further perestroika?

Alan and Christine Laws

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the Sprint & Marathon Committees

## ***BCU - Sprint Racing Committee:***

The Sprint Committee has also been hard at work and the team for the coming year is as follows

Peter Moule	Chairman & ICF Officials' Representative,
Alan Laws	Vice Chairman & Flatwater Newsletter,
Cathy Wynne	Secretary <a href="mailto:secretarysrc@yahoo.co.uk">secretarysrc@yahoo.co.uk</a>
Mo Moule	Treasurer
David Brown	Flatwater Information Pack
Stan Cox	
Ann Hoile	Publicity – Paddlers Post Editor
Chris Jones	
Roland Lawler	International Panel (Selection Committee)
Laurence Oliver	
Alan Williams	National Performance Manager
Gordon Wycherley	Regatta Committee Chairman & Regatta Liaison
Liz McGown (co-opted)	

### **Regatta Committee**

Chairman / SRC Liaison	Gordon Wycherley
Regatta Organiser	Peter Morley
Chief Official:	Designated ICF Official
Treasurer	Martin Brooks
Registration	Peter Morley

### **REGATTA CHANGES:**

Please note that there will be a change to the cost of entry in the Nottingham regattas in 2008.

The new charges will be

Junior	K1	£3.50	K2	£7.00	K4	£12.00
Senior	K1	£4.50	K2	£9.00	K4	£15.00

There was much discussion as to what to do with the entry fees to balance the fact that the regattas run at a substantial loss but are run to provide sprint racing under good conditions. As good as we can provide them anyway (allowing for the fact we are not in control of things from on high) for as many paddlers as possible. If entry fees were raised to the level of break even on costs the numbers that could afford to pay these fees would reduce dramatically and the law of diminishing returns would take over. This would spiral down to the eventual demise of the events altogether.

Charging for car parking was discussed but rejected even though it was a feature of the Eton regatta. The committee reserves are not bottomless and the drain on them for the cost of the regattas is quite serious. You may or may not know that at the end of March 2009 Sport England are due to remove their support for Holme Pierpont and the current franchise holders contract comes to an end. The cost of regattas there is therefore going to be reviewed and it is unlikely to go down. Any bright ideas [and/or cash] would be welcome.

Please note the following programme change. Saturday will be the 500m races and on Sunday the 1,000m.

There will be a restriction of parking: There will be no parking on the lakeside of the roadway from the 200m point to the Finish.

The Senior & Junior National Championships will be at the 5<sup>th</sup> /6<sup>th</sup> July regatta

The Sprint Racing Rules have been updated to reflect the ICF, January 2007 racing rule changes.

i.e. Competitors shall be on the water within 100 metres of the start two minutes prior to the race time.

There was a good deal of discussion over the current racing standards being applied. Following the increase in the International race times currently being achieved there was agreement that the standards should be moved upwards. However to give all paddlers the time to adjust this will not take place until the 2009 season.

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## National Performance Managers Review 2007

Alan Williams

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MANAGER

At the September Regatta the N.P.M is asked to produce a review of the World Class Programmes throughout the year. I normally start by telling everyone about the activities undertaken by World Class Programmes. Things Like!

Winter Training Camps

National Assessments

Talent I.D Programmes

And of course the international Competition Programme.

I could produce an amazingly long list of activities undertaken by the programme followed by an equally long list of results, but after 10 ten minutes or so you would all be asleep.

**Instead I want to focus on just how successful our GB teams have been on the international Circuit.**

There will of course be some people who don't think we have been successful this year because we haven't qualified many athletes for the 2008 Olympic Games. The Olympic Qualification system was designed to fulfil many things, and like all systems it has some flaws. Even the ICF officials who designed the system do not agree on how it works.

Global Qualification round One: what happened?

Worlds 2007	Number of Nations Qualifying one or more boats	Number of Nations not Qualifying any boats
Men's Kayaks (5 events)	19 countries	78% did not qualify
Women (3 events)	12 Countries	86% did not qualify
Canoes (4 events)	13 Countries	85% did not qualify

66 % of Nations at Duisburg did not qualify any boats at all.

GBR has substantial talent and we will qualify several more boats in the Continental round

When I started canoeing back in the dark ages it was a rare event for even one GBR boat to make a final at a major international competition. We had the occasional star but the reality was that we had only ever won one medal and that was before I was born.

Since the early 1980's we have produced a small but steady stream of talent with the best athletes going on to win medals at major events. In 2000 Tim Brabants won our first ever Olympic Medal which was followed in 2004 by Ian Wynne. The number of people making finals has also continued to grow year on year. This year has been the best in depth season for GB Canoeing in the history of the BCU.

#### 2007 Targets:

Each year we set ourselves targets which measure our success. Across the squads this year the targets were:

To get 11 or more boats in finals at major internationals: (World or European Championships)

And to win medals in at least three of those competitions.

#### 2007 Results:

At the [Junior World and European Championship](#) our teams made 10 finals.

Eight of these finals were at Olympic distance.

At the Junior European Championships three boats won medals.

Jess Walker	JLK1 500	Gold
Amoret King & Jess Walker	JLK2 500	Silver
Kristian Reeves	JMK1 500	Bronze

At the [U23 European Championships](#) our team made another 5 A finals

Four of these event were at Olympic Distance

One of the crews medalled and two more crews were 4<sup>th</sup> in the A finals

Ben Brown & Jon Schofield	MK2 500	Bronze
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At the [Senior World and European Championships](#) our teams made 15 finals.

Seven of these events were at Olympic Distance

The team won four major medals

The Men's Kayak team was 6<sup>th</sup> Overall and our Women's team were 4<sup>th</sup> overall

Tim Brabants	K1 1000 European Champs	Silver
Tim Brabants	K1 500 European Champs	Gold
Tim Brabants	K1 1000 World Champs	Gold
Tim Brabants	K1 500 World Champs	Gold

#### Results round up:

Our teams made 25 finals at major events. (World or European Championships)

Our teams won 8 major medals at these events half of them Gold.

Tim Brabants also won both the K1 events at the pre Olympic Regatta in Beijing.

#### Staffing:

The biggest change in the World Class programme in 2007 has been the implementation of a full coaching structure for the junior and U23 teams. This is our first year with full time coaches covering all sections of development.

#### Dedicated Staff:

The 2007 performances are the result of a lot of hard work by athletes and coaches. The Performance athletes and coaches spend around 6 months of each year at training camps. They are backed up by Physio support from Jehan who attends almost all the camps and a range of Sports Science service coordinated by Gordon. The commitment to this programme leaves very little time for their social or personal life.

For the junior's the problem is often to balance training and education needs. The juniors run shorter camps, many of which are UK based. This can place a greater strain on the coaching support as the coaches need to balance where and when they run sessions. Dave Coulson has done a great job managing the juniors this year. It is a colossal job keeping track of all the junior Boys and Girls as they develop. David has a very capable team of coaches working with his junior Elite paddlers which includes Peter Almasi and Miklos Simon. David also has another group of coaches working hard to bring on the next generation of athletes.

There are lots of other people helping to keep the programme moving forward.

Thanks to everyone for all the help big or small.

Alan Williams

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### A CHANGE FOR RACE RECORDS

It is 15 years since I was asked to take on the task of keeping the race records for the Marathon Racing Committee as a temporary appointment until some one else could be found.

After considerable thought I now believe it is time for me to hand over the post, with approaching retirement for myself and Alan I do not think I can give the job the attention that it needs when we take more frequent trips away from home.

Over the last few months Rosemary Illinesi from Elmbridge Canoe Club and I have been keeping the register up to date together with us both entering results as they come in. From the start of the 2008 Hasler Season Rosemary has been doing the confirming emails and letters for the promotions and demotions. I will finish by completing the annual updating of the register for the Racing Handbook and the HRM results programme for the New Year.

If your club has not returned your paddlers list please do so ASAP. I should like to leave an accurate register for Rosemary to take over in January.

Race levies are now to be sent directly to the Marathon Committee Treasurer, David Enoch and clubs if they wish may transfer the monies directly into the Marathon Committee Bank Account, details of which will be given with the Race organisers pack in the New Year.

The email address for Rosemary is ([rosemary.illinesi@ntlworld.com](mailto:rosemary.illinesi@ntlworld.com)), though of course I will pass on any that do come to me. Her postal address will appear in the new Racing Handbook.

Christine Laws

## **NEW MARATHON RULES FOR Hasler 2007/2008 SEASON**

We refer to changes to the rules for Hasler races announced recently by the Marathon Racing Committee and which are publicised on the MRC website [www.marathon-canoeing.org.uk](http://www.marathon-canoeing.org.uk)

From 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007 there are no automatic demotions to division 9, and from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007 changes to K2 divisions are to be made.

The following can be downloaded from the MRC's website:

1. Revised Rules for Competition effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007;
2. A new version of the HRM (version 4.0) which incorporates the above changes;
3. The detailed bases for calculating promotions and demotions.

All of the above documents can also be obtained by email or post from the Secretary to the MRC, Diane Bates whose address is on the website and in the Racing Handbook.

Clubs holding regional Hasler races in September and October are strongly advised to download HRM version 4.0 and acquaint themselves with it as soon as possible. It is an upgrade from the current version so it will be familiar but several new features have been introduced which we consider will make it easier to operate at events.

You will find it helpful to read through the "Help" section of the new programme.

If you have any difficulties in downloading or using the programme you should contact Wiki Daniels. Wiki's email address is [wiki.daniels@googlemail.com](mailto:wiki.daniels@googlemail.com)

A summary of the main changes is on the MRC website but please note also that Hasler points will be scored by paddlers who finish within:

- 110% of the fastest boat not promoted in all K1 races;
- 110% of the winner in divisions 7 and 8 K2 races, and
- 120% of the winner in division 1/2/3 and 4/5/6 K2 races.

Clubs points will be awarded to the 12 highest scoring paddlers from each club regardless as to whether they are in K1, K2, C1 or C2.

## **CHANGES TO NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Various changes have been made to the format of the Marathon National Championships and will operate at the 2008 Championships in Worcester on 23/24 August 2008. The detailed rules are spelled out in the 2008 Racing Handbook but in summary :-

1. Veteran classes now to be at 5 year intervals for singles from Over 34 up to Over 64.
2. Veteran classes to remain at 10 year intervals for doubles but new class for Over 64.
3. Veteran women kayak race distances reduced to 13km. for O34 and O39.
4. Under 18, Under 16 and Under 14 juniors will only have the National Championship race categories available to them – not the divisional categories.
5. The Spanish House team trophy winner will be determined from the total points won in the National Championship categories only.
6. In line with the new categories of divisional racing, there will be divisional races in  
Divs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 singles and in Divs. 1/2/3, 4/5/6, 7, 8 and 9 doubles.

David Enoch  
21 November 2007