

Twenty Ninth Annual Report of the BCU Board 2008

This report is presented for the information of all members of the incorporated British Canoe Union and refers to proceedings and activities from 1 November 2007 until 31 October 2008.

BCU Annual Review 2007/2008

Tim Brabants capped a hugely successful year for the organisation by becoming our first Olympic Champion, winning the K1 1000m event in Beijing. Tim followed this up with a Bronze medal in the K1 500m competition. Tim's achievements were recently recognised when he was awarded the MBE on the New Year's Honors' List. Further congratulations are also due to David Florence who took the Silver medal in the C1 Slalom competition. In Tim and David, we have two outstanding athletes. In winning 3 Olympic medals, we surpassed our targets for the Games, and made history.

At World Championships both our Women's Canoe Polo team and our under 21 men captured Gold medals, John Robson won the Asymmetric Class at the Canoe Sailing Worlds, whilst in the junior competition at the Marathon World Championships, Edward Rutherford won both the K1 & K2 titles, paddling with Thomas Hide in the K2 class.

At European Championships we achieved 8 individual Senior champions and 3 Junior Gold medals.

In addition to our increased medal tally and record membership figures, the profile of our sport continues to improve in the media.

The staffing restructure of last year has paid dividends, resulting in us managing the organisation more effectively, and allowing us to respond quickly to the fast changing environment in which we operate. Indeed, in Sport England's review of all National Governing Bodies, the BCU again secured a 'Green' rating, which means that we are operating to very high standards.

Our main office continues to flourish in Bingham, housing our UK Coaching, English Development, Operations and Customer Service sections. Additionally, our World Class Podium and Development Programmes continue to thrive at Holme Pierrepont and Bisham Abbey, and continue to support our successful Academies at these venues.

The tendering process for construction of the 2012 Olympic White Water Course is now well underway and we predict that the detailed design will reveal a facility that will provide an incredible legacy for the whole of our sport. This new course will be complemented by further developments at Holme Pierrepont and Teesside together with a fantastic new facility in Cardiff.

Coaching

Another busy year for Coaching which saw both the formal national recognition and endorsement of the BCU Awarding body by the office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator, (Ofqual) together with our Paddlesport Coaching Awards being recognised and approved by United Kingdom Coaching Certificate. (UKCC)

We are therefore pleased to announce Ofqual accreditation to the National Qualifications Framework and full United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) endorsement of the BCU (UKCC) Level 1 Certificate in Coaching Paddlesport and the BCU (UKCC) Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Paddlesport.

Training and assessment opportunities for these new awards are now officially offered by BCU Awarding Body Approved Delivery Centres. Currently the recognised BCU AB Approved Delivery Centres are:

Canoe England, Scottish Canoe Association, Welsh Canoeing Association, and Canoe Association of Northern Ireland.

Courses are currently offered by the BCU AB Approved Delivery Centres via Approved Training Directors and Tutors. Candidates wishing to access courses should contact their home nation delivery centre to register for training and for details of training directors.

Currently 1700 individuals have taken BCU (UKCC) Level 1 Training and Assessment and early Level 2 courses are now under way.

We have also seen the;

- Introduction of Foundation Safety and Rescue Course.
- Introduction of White Water Safety and Rescue Course.
- Introduction of Coastal Tidal Planning and Navigation Course.
- Introduction of Foundation Support Modules.
- Introduction of Racing and Slalom Discipline Modules.

Work continues on;

- Phase 2 tutor training.
- Level 1 and Level 2 'old' to 'new' transfer options.
- Discipline specific modules.
- Level 3 endorsement.

English Development

The Paddlesport Participation Programme continues to work locally to support clubs and organisations, giving people from across the community the best possible start, and providing suitable pathways for progression to develop and succeed at their chosen level. Nationally, we have continued our work to develop new initiatives to support our aims whilst endeavouring to embed older initiatives into existing structures. We are now delighted to have a Paddlesport Development Officer in every region with two full time officers now covering the South West and Eastern regions. This support, focussed at grass roots level, has helped us to support 58 clubs to achieve Clubmark and Top Club accreditation with a further 62 clubs working towards accreditation.

The revised Paddlepower Scheme has grown into a huge success with over 53,000 Paddlepower Start certificates sent out in the last year and over 15,000 Paddlepower Passport sent.

Our school club links scheme (PESSCL) continues to grow with 161 official links to School Sport Partnerships and over 4,400 11-15 year olds paddling at our accredited clubs. This is down to the excellent club programmes, and in some cases, our Community Sports Coach scheme. Some clubs have seen an increase in membership of 75% and over as a result of combined programmes of the Community Sports Coach scheme and improved facilities with the Community Club Development Programme.

Equity, Safe-guarding and Volunteers

2008 saw the launch of the first Canoe England Volunteer Awards. A successful awards afternoon was held at the National Watersports Centre where we celebrated the tireless work of our many volunteers. In June, we achieved the Preliminary Equity Standard and we are currently working to submit the Advanced Standard for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport.

Access and Environment

Throughout 2008 the Access and Environment Team has responded to several major pieces of government related consultation. These included the draft Marine Bill, including proposed Coastal Access legislation, "A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in South West England," and "A Draft Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in the East of England."

During this period the Access and Environment Team also responded to Natural England's draft "Recreation Policy in the Natural Environment" and discussions seeking views on the possible impact of Water Framework Directive on water recreation.

The Canoe England position on Voluntary Access Agreements (VAA's) has been further developed during 2008; our current position being that we will only support those agreements which follow the Environment Agency exemplars of the Waveney, the Mersey, the Greta and the Mole. We continue to constantly evaluate our access policies, and our overarching position is also under close scrutiny.

This year we have stepped up our engagement with Access volunteers leading to the development of a Forum for Regional Access Advisers; the first of these was held at Bingham in October. In 2009 we are planning to run regional forums for both Local Coastal and River Advisers. To assist our supporters, we have developed a set of role descriptions and volunteer agreements.

Rivers Access Campaign

Campaigning for Access to our inland waters is not just about lobbying MPs, or even standing up holding placards. During 2008 it has mainly been concerned with subtly (and sometimes not so subtly!) getting the message across

that canoeists, along with all members of the public, need clarity and certainty of access to inland waters. This has been carried out by correspondence, being in the right place at the right time and attending a variety of meetings. This vital activity was assisted by John Grogan MP who put up:

EDM 1331
RIVER ACCESS FOR NON-POWERED CRAFT

That this House urges the Government to extend legislation on access to the countryside in England and Wales to allow canoeists and users of non-powered craft similar access rights to water as walkers have to the land; notes that in Scotland such access, accompanied by a code of rights and responsibilities for all concerned, has been successfully implemented; and believes that increased access to waterways would lead to greater participation in canoeing, resulting both in obvious health benefits to the nation and in increased chances of future Olympic success.

This received 98 supporters but the amendment Martin Salter set up received 36, but we know that some had signed his amendment in error. However, Martin Salter keeps linking the access to inland waters as a canoeing v fishing issue when it is far from that.

The campaign has been very involved in cross party working groups, stakeholder meetings and Government initiatives including the rewriting of the policy document 'Waterways for Tomorrow' due out in spring 2009, and Natural England's new Access Policy.

It also involved attending both the Labour and Conservative Party Conferences as part of the Boating Alliance.

Support from MPs and other organisations continues to grow and now many organisations contact us with concerns and issues they have regarding access.

The year saw Canoe England link up with Peter Bottomley, MP, through the Sport England Parliamentary Fellowship Scheme. Peter canoes himself and visited Holme Pierrepont to meet the slalom athletes, coaches and the academy members and ended up going down the white water course. He visited Leaside Canoe Club, Hackney, London, to see what benefits canoeing can bring to communities and to meet some of the youngsters whose lives had been turned around through getting involved in canoeing.

We also took Peter, who supports our ideals about access, to paddle on the River Tay and see how successful access to inland waters is the Scottish way. Access in Scotland to the waterways (as well as land) is fantastic. It is a really modern and fair approach for access to natural resources. Access for all is available, be you land owner or user, but all the access comes with rights and responsibilities, which is what we are asking for in England. As a result of his trip, Peter spoke in Parliament as part of the debate about the Queen's Speech:

"My final point relates to the marine and coastal access Bill. We established a basic right to roam through recent legislation but, because of a court decision perhaps a hundred years ago, we do not have a right to use rivers. We have a right to use inland waterways and canals, but I cannot take my canoe on some rivers without getting the agreement of every person with an interest in the land on either side of the bank from the beginning to the end of my journey. It is not an issue of how I gain access to the water, but of passing down the river. It is as if I could take my horse on to a bridleway only with the permission of the people who owned the land on either side of it. We would regard that as ludicrous, although my horse might disturb birds. We accept people using bridleways and footpaths, and we are likely to accept coastal access rights. We should therefore introduce the same rights to the use of rivers in England as exist in Scotland.

I went to Scotland with the British Canoe Union and the Scottish Canoe Association and spoke about negotiating with landowners to obtain access to the water. Most canoeists are careful about spawning grounds in rivers and about anglers' interests. We could incorporate access rights in the Bill, and if there are anglers who think that that would lead to serious problems they should talk to Scottish anglers about their experiences. We need to get rid of that prohibition, which is relatively recent, and give people the rights that they should have."

It is important to keep the profile of the campaign in Parliament as it helps MP's to realise that the access to inland waters is a real issue. The lack of access prevents so many people getting active on the waterways which is part of the Government's health targets to make us a healthier and more active nation.

Membership

Membership has continued to grow to 27,500 individual members, 410 affiliated clubs and their 26,000 members.

This year we have overhauled both the BCU and Canoe England web sites and introduced e-newsletters as an additional method of communication which has been particularly useful in obtaining members' views in our surveys.

We have added to the number of outlets offering discounts to our members and are pleased to add Halfords to our panel.

The Canoe Foundation has been fully incorporated, resulting in a charity with the widest terms of reference available in order to generate more funds for canoeing in general. In addition, we have been very lucky to secure Lord Colin Moynihan as our President. The charity will be formally launched at a House of Commons reception in the New Year.

Finance

Due to the prudent management of the finances, by the Board and Senior Management Team, it is considered that we are well placed to meet the challenges which we will face in the future; both in the elite sport arena (e.g. London 2012) and in the wider recreational aspects of the sport.

Our finances are in a robust condition and will enable us to remain attractive to potential funders, both from the public and private sectors. We will continue to develop both the provision and quality of the services and facilities which we can offer to participants.

BCU Structure

The British Canoe Union is broken down into two distinct operating divisions:

GB Canoeing (including UK Coaching)

- The selection, training and administration of GB Teams (Olympic and Non Olympic)
- International liaison with the ICF, ECA and their member federations
- Development of UK Coaching Framework

Canoe England (membership body in England)

Canoe England is the membership body for paddlers, clubs, centres and associates in England. It also provides contracted-in services to GB Canoeing to avoid duplication in areas such as Finance and Human Resources.

Governance

Both divisions of the BCU are responsible to the 10 person BCU Board comprising directors from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, together with 5 directors appointed by the English council.

The English Council is accountable for the activities of Canoe England.

The BCU board appoints a Chief Executive who chairs the Senior Management Team comprising of key members of staff from the organisation's operational areas.

The sport of canoeing provides recreational opportunities across a diverse range of activities from leisure paddling on rivers, lakes and sea, to competitive opportunities in eight sporting disciplines ranging from structured participation to elite competition. The Directors delegate certain functions to Management Committees:

The UK Coaching Management Committee (UKCMC) deals with all matters associated with the co-ordination of coaching across the UK.

The World Class Management Group (WCMG) manages and administers all aspects of the World Class Programme.

The English Council oversees the operation of the BCU's activities within its English Division (Canoe England).

Officers of the Union:

President:	Albert Woods
Vice President:	David Gent
Vice President:	Alan Laws
Chairman:	Brian Chapman
Chief Executive:	Paul Owen
Treasurer:	David Belbin
Chairman of BCU Awarding:	Graham Lyon

Chairs of Management Committees:

Board of Directors:	Brian Chapman
English Council:	David Gent
World Class Management:	Albert Woods
UK Coaching:	David Rossetter

Board of Directors

David Belbin	Canoe England
Graham Lyon	Canoe England
Greg Smale	Canoe England
Mike Twiggs	Canoe England
Albert Woods	Canoe England
Brian Chapman	Scottish Canoe Association
David Rossiter	Scottish Canoe Association
Phil Blain	Canoe Wales
Alan Barker	Canoe Wales
Keith Fitzsimmons	Canoe Association of Northern Ireland

Competition Committee Chairs

Canoe Polo	Curly Barker
Canoe Sailing	Gareth Caldwell
Canoe Slalom	Anne Hounslow
Freestyle	Tim Ward
Marathon	Brian Gandy
Sprint Racing	Peter Moule
Surf	Steve Bowens
Wild Water Racing	Peter Schofield

Nominees of Specialist and Regional Committees accountable to English Council:

Access	Vic Brown
English Coaching	Steve Scorer

Chairs of English Regional Committees:

Cumbria	Roger Ward
East Midlands	Craig Keegan
Eastern	Vacant
London and South East	David Waine
North East	Vacant
North West	Helen Sharples
Southern	Kevin Dennis
South West	Geoff Goulden
West Midlands	John Heath
Yorkshire	Dick Constable

BCU OFFICE STAFF

The BCU Board wishes to express its sincere thanks to the staff for their continued support and loyalty.

Our supporters

The achievements in this report would have been quite impossible without all the unpaid volunteers working to ensure that all can enjoy the sport and recreation of canoeing. The thanks of the BCU are extended to all of you for your hard and unstinting efforts. Equally, the BCU records its thanks to the many outside bodies who have contributed to provide financial and advisory support.

Medals

National Canoeing Development Plan – 2005-2009 – Key Performance Indicator – Medal Delivery at Olympic, World and European Championships

Olympic Medals										
			Gold		Silver		Bronze			
Target			1		1		1			
Achievement			1		1		1			
World Championship Medals – 2008			European Championship Medals – 2008				Medal Delivery Target – 2008		Actual Medal Delivery – 2008	
Total	Senior	Junior	Total	Senior	U 23	Junior	Total	24	Total	36
8	5	3	25	13	1	11	Senior	14	Senior	21
							U 23	10	U 23	1
							Junior		Junior	14

Major Championship Winners

		Olympic Champion			
	Tim Brabants	Sprint Racing	K1Men – 1,000m		
		Olympic Medallists			
Silver Medal	David Florence	Canoe Slalom	C1 Men		
Bronze Medal	Tim Brabants	Sprint Racing	K1 Men – 500m		
		World Champions			
		Women Team	Canoe Polo		
		John Robson	Canoe Sailing	Asymmetric Class	
Under 21	Men's Team	Canoe Polo			
Junior	Edward Rutherford	Marathon Racing	K1 Men		
Junior	Thomas Hide and Edward Rutherford	Marathon Racing	K2 Men		
		European Champions			
		Tim Brabants	Sprint Racing	K1 Men – 1,000m	
		David Bainbridge	Freestyle	C1 Men	
		Tamsin Green	Surf	Ladies	
		Corin King	Surf	Junior	
		Fiona Jarvie	Freestyle	K1 Women	
		James Reeves	Freestyle	K1 Squirt – Unisex	
		Lucy Wainwright	Sprint Racing	K1 Women – 200m	
		Campbell Walsh	Canoe Slalom	K1 Men	
Junior	Sandra Hyslop	Wild Water Racing	K1 Women – Sprint		
Junior	Sandra Hyslop	Wild Water Racing	K1 Women – Classic		
Junior	Jessica Walker	Sprint Racing	K1 Women – 1,000m		