

# **GB WILDWATER RACING ANNUAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING MINUTES**

Llangollen, Chain Bridge Hotel. Llangollen, Denbighshire LL20 8BS

3rd November 2012, 20:00

## **AGENDA**

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Attendees, apologies, club representation
- 3) No Minutes of Previous Meeting  
30th October 2011, Llangollen Chain Bridge Hotel
- 4) Committee Overview of 2012
- 5) Chairman's Report
- 6) Secretary's Report
- 7) Treasurer's Report
- 8) Senior & Junior Team Managers Report
- 9) Proposed Motions TBC
- 10) Election of Officers
- 11) AOB

### **1) Welcome**

Peter Schofield welcomed all attendees and noted those who had sent through their apologies.

### **2) Attendees, apologies, club representation**

#### *Attendees:*

Peter Schofield, Chairman  
Natalie Bishop  
Jon Finch  
Neal Underwood  
James Wingfield

#### *Apologies:*

Kevin Bowerbank  
Louise Brown  
Jamie Christie  
Nigel Jones  
Dave Kelly  
Vince Postill  
Neil Stamps  
Simon Wright

## **2) There were no minutes of the previous meeting**

## **3) WILD WATER COMMITTEE OVERVIEW OF 2012**

The WWR Committee would like to express their whole hearted thanks to the team of coaches, paddlers and supporters that have made the last few years so rewarding. Thank you, coaches, for your dedication and hours of voluntary support, helping our paddlers to achieve many triumphs and thank you, paddlers, for inspiring the next generation.

On the international stage, we have seen medals won in a variety of classes, from Team Bronze in the C2 Sprint, Europeans 2009 to the outstanding achievement of Jessica Oughton – World Champion WK1 in the 2010 Worlds. Hannah Brown won four medals at the 2010 Worlds for WWR and has a promising flat water career ahead of her too.

The summer of 2012 continued with success at the Worlds in Bourg where Radka Felingerova won a Bronze medal in WC1 (and a World Cup medal) and Ben Oakley won a Bronze medal in the MK1 sprint. Ben raced first in the final and after what can only be described as a very tense time, the GB supporters were rewarded with the sight of Alan Tordoff running along the river bank as the confirmation of Ben's medal. That silenced the French Horns!!

From France to the Olympics, where success continued with Jonnie Schofield achieving an amazing Bronze with Liam Heath in the K2. No one who was at Eton Dorney will forget the atmosphere before that race and the race of Ed McKeever who obtained the first ever Gold medal over the 200m distance. Add on the success in the C2 slalom event and the future of canoeing looks very bright.

It is the above successes that must be built upon to uphold the standard of British paddlers across the disciplines and the solid performance of the Junior team in Slovenia soon followed the Olympics. Hannah Brown must receive thanks for her role in inspiring and supporting junior paddlers ( and writing a very entertaining blog), despite her own busy schedule.

So, to all paddlers who put in the hours of training and dedication – getting up in the cold, dark mornings to run or go to the gym, breaking the ice to paddle – we thank you for your commitment and your enthusiasm for the sport.

#### **4) 2012 CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

It is good to welcome you back again to our Annual Consultative Meeting at Llangollen. In a change of format we have arranged supper before hand at the Chainbridge Hotel followed by our ACM. The aim is to ensure we can help fill the cold and dark gap after everyone has finished practicing! Please join us and take this opportunity to meet, get together and to celebrate our success at the Olympics, World Championships and Junior Europeans with our athletes.

The situation in terms of volunteers continues to be desperate. The workload continues to be borne by very few people. We have an urgent need for new volunteers to help on development, safety, transport, race organisation, regional committee representation and the calendar – we need to really focus on growing our sport so please get involved. If there is a gap please feel free to go ahead and seize the initiative.

##### **GENERAL**

2012 has been a good year. A personal triumph with Jonnie's Olympic Medal, The best ever Olympic results for GB Canoeing, brilliant results at the Senior World Championships in La Plagne and a very creditable performance by our Junior Team at the Europeans in Solkan.

In one sense it is also the end of an era – and by definition the start of another! I regret to report that after something like a decade as Senior Team Manager and Senior Team Coaches Phil Caunt, Jamie Christie, Carl Foody, Alan Tordoff and Neil Stamps have all decided at various times this year to stand down from their posts. They and the whole coaching and management team have delivered a step change in our international performance and the best results we have ever achieved.

It is with sadness that I accepted their resignations. We have been on a great journey over the last decade – it has been a lot of fun and we have all made many friends internationally along the way. I'd like to extend my thanks and best wishes to Jamie, Neil and Alan, wish them all the very best for the future and hope they remain part of the extended family of river racers.

The various different formats for regional and development racing appear to be capturing peoples imagination and Division B participation has stabilised. This is great news and a tribute to the dedication of the network of race organisers and clubs that have kept pushing forward. Participation at Division A level remains worryingly low although we'll see how the new streamlined calendar affects things. One thing I'd really like to get going now is focus on the next June Bala Festival/ Tryweryn race as the British Open and I'm looking for someone to take this on as a one-off event.

The WWR Calendar has stabilised in the new format with the help of Don Christie and we have rationalised into National & Regional events and moved the season back to September – August. We also have a new results spreadsheet in place to help race organisers. A huge thanks to Ross Pearton and Neal Underwood for their hard work in making it happen – and to those who

attended the monthly committee meetings over the year! Also to Jon Finch and Don Christie for checking and ensuring the calendars accuracy. I'd like to thank Don for all his help over the last two years and to thank him as I know he wishes to stand down.

We have continued to work on Wild Water development with Torsten Krebs, Mackon Khela, Martyn Steele, Kevin Bowerbank, John Sherwen and Nicky Cresser covering England very effectively. We have continued to support the development of C2 through the Andy Clough Memorial fund and through the Canoeing Centre of Excellence in Chester. With the focus on participation we will be continuing to work hard on development for athletes and coaches.

I'm pleased to say we had yet another brilliant year in competition. At the World Championships on the River Isere at La Plagne in the French Alps we had Ben Oakley's awesome Bronze Medal in the Sprint and Radka's well earned & hard fought Bronze in the Classic and Fourth place in the Sprint with Sandra's 5<sup>th</sup> place in the sprint. We had excellent results across the board and very many congratulations to Neil Stamps, Jamie Christie and the whole team. We had a strong junior team at the Junior Europeans in Solkan, Slovenia where they all put in strong individual and team performances. A big thanks to Louise Brown Team Manager, Jon Finch, Kevin Bowerbank Head Coach, Phil Brown (Driver) and Hannah Brown (Coach & Blog Expert) plus all the help & assistance from the parents for making this all happen – and achieving the front cover spread in Canoe Focus!

We have been a significant part of the most successful year ever across GB Canoeing with Ed McKeever's Gold & Jonnie's Bronze medal and Hannah Brown's debut in Canoe Sprint. Melvyn Swallow also won the World Masters Marathon Championships in Rome. Another milestone was passed when Ian Tordoff's Record for crossing the channel finally fell to Paul Wycherly!

Neil Stamps and Miranda Churchill have done a tremendous job in updating the website and bringing it bang – up to date. A huge thanks to both and an area I know Neil is continuing to work on and has a range of new ideas.

Once again I'd like to give a special thank you to all the coaches, team management, parents and other helpers who made this all happen. For me this continues to be one of the great strengths and joys of our sport. Particular thanks goes to Vince Postill our new Hon. Secretary and to all our national coaches; Phil Caunt, Carl Foody, Jonnie Folland, Mike Mason, Nigel Jones, Neil Stamps, Alan Tordoff and James Wingfield; for their continuing work on WWR regional development to Kevin Bowerbank, Jon Finch, Mackon Khela, Torsten Krebs, Martyn Steele, John Sherwen, Nicky Cresser Neal Underwood and to Simon Wright for his continuing sterling work as treasurer now into his fourth year abroad having moved from Italy to Abu Dhabi. Having such an experienced team, with all the support they get from across the sport has been essential to delivering the great international results we have achieved.

I would also like to again thank all the Race Organisers and in particular those coming forward with new races – without them we would not have a sport! (PS Anyone want to take on the Dee Race?)

**1) Raising the Profile of Paddlesport - To manage and run an enjoyable programme that meets the needs of the whole WWR paddling community. Deliver a competition programme that attracts and stretches all our paddlers**

We have changed and simplified the Division A & Division B races into a National & Regional Series and will integrate the Wavehopper races into this process. We have also returned to a September – August Race calendar. The availability of the website and Facebook sites mean that the limitations of an annual yearbook and alignment with GB Canoeing isn't the issue it once was. We have also pruned the series as we have said we would for a number of years – retaining a number of events as Open Championships (like the Dee) and Open Events – like the Tyne/ Tees & Tour d'Ecosse events. So for those who like river racing we will be continuing to put on the breadth of events whilst there is demand whilst focusing on the specific series.

The aim is to follow the French model with a broader club based regionally-run set of races and a small number of national events. The hope is that we can recover participation so that people need to qualify at a couple of regional events. We are not at that situation so anyone with the appropriate skill levels is welcome to take part in the national series races and we'll review progress at each ACM. The regional races and British Universities & Colleges (BUCS) races have continued to grow with new initiative to put on new races in the NE and the re-instatement of the Scouts Ribble Race so I suggest we continue to learn from this, capitalise on the wave of enthusiasm after the Olympics and continue to experiment with new formats.

Areas for further attention are:

- Use of the new race results spread-sheet with the simplified rules should make it easier for organisers and ranking list compilers alike. Having a clear list of race participants should also help us to keep in touch with athletes and encourage them to come back to more regional and national series races
- More support for Masters: encourage masters to return to attending races and to introduce a new National Masters category into the existing structure, starting with three designated races and an annual prize .
- Continued focus on Flagship events for the Open Championship Events and in particular the Bala Festival/ British Open Event in July.

This fits, of course, with our two key priorities to increase participation and to win more medals in international competition. I'd like to thank Don Christie for all his help in the last two years. As he now wishes to stand down there is a need for someone to take on the calendar development. We still need someone with deep knowledge of the sport to provide direction, advice and guidance. We also need a national bib coordinator. Both these roles need permanent volunteers to lead them.

## **2) Paddler Focus - *To make the sport accessible to all who want to participate***

Development work has continued in many different ways with Kevin Bowerbank, Jon Finch, Mackon Khela, Torsten Krebs, Martyn Steele, John Sherwen, Nicky Cresser and Neal Underwood, with their respective clubs all working hard to meet demand. Two years on we are still waiting to use the BCU launch of the Star Awards to align with coaching and long term athlete development across the BCU and all UK sports. This was based on the work Jes Oughton did establishing the Academy, a simple proven approach to enable new individuals and clubs to learn and experience the enjoyment of river racing.

Coach development will try to use the existing resources in place though the BCU. This has been a real challenge and the lack of progress or support for our top coaches is one of the real issues and was a contributory factor to the decisions to stand down this year. I'd like to address if I had more time. It is also really disappointing that none of the PDO's with a Wild Water Canoeing background have anything to do with supporting development in any way or form. We have had a welcome increase in support from Canolfan Tryweryn and the Scottish Canoe Association. East Midlands remains the biggest gap in our coverage at the moment

The BCU's governance council for Canoe-England is now in its third year. This brings together all the regions and all the different canoeing disciplines in one forum. For me it continues to provide a useful communications role – but needs to be empowered to do more. Nigel Jones is our nominee on to the coaching committee; John Sherwen, Mike Mason, Lynn Anderson and Phil Brown cover the English. If anyone is already on a relevant committee or would like to help build up our links in other areas or regions please let Vince Postill or me know.

Making the sport accessible, friendly and welcoming to all is, I think, the key area we need to address. The focus across the UK is rightly on increasing participation and enjoyment of sport at all levels. The BCU recognise this and our next development plan and committee structure needs to reflect this.

We continue to have the Perception Wavehopper Challenge, The Bala Festival, The Northern Series, the Wessex Series, the Barrow Series and the Sharks. Canoeing doubles development continues to be focused on Chester as our national centre of excellence. Support from the Andy Clough memorial fund continues to be immensely helpful in supporting our C2 athletes' development. Our initiatives in masters' events in 2007/8 have continued to be on hold but what we have done is continued supporting international masters racing with great results.

We are continuing to focus on university students with continuing great participation at the BUCS championships on the Washburn and we have managed to align with the autumn calendar. Unfortunately although the BCU has contacted the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) about whether we could bid for 2014 Slalom are not able to support this with their other commitments. For me this remains important as it should fill a key gap for aspiring athletes as a stepping-stone to the World Cup and the European Championships – and is great fun.

There is a continuing lack of new boats and although I understand Desperate Measures in Nottingham are supplying cheap introductory WWR boats based on the French KL design and constructed of vacuumed diolin/epoxy I have not had any feedback on how this is going. Please let me know. For C2's please continue to contact Iain Clough who will be delighted to help through the Andy Clough memorial fund.

I'm pleased to say that through the good offices of Jon Finch the Minibus and Trailer situation has been transformed and they are starting to pay their way and reliability has been transformed.

### ***3) International Success - To help paddlers realise their full potential in International competition.***

I'm yet again absolutely delighted to see the continuing success at international competition. Ben Oakley and Radka Felingerova's individual bronze medals and good quality individual performances at senior and junior level and Hannah Brown's inclusion in the Canoe Sprint Squad continue to demonstrate how good our athletes and team management actually are. This has been a very long-term achievement by Jamie, Neil, Alan and our entire coaching and management team. Our performance plan was put together in 1996 and we have been working steadily towards this ever since!

As I've already said in the highlights the Olympics, World Championship and Junior European results were absolutely fantastic.

With the standing down of the management and coaching team after a decade of continuity we will be entering a new era. The aim is to continue our focus on elite performance to deliver our promise of helping our best athletes achieve their full potential. What we will be looking to is a new way of doing this over the next year. I'd also like to give a big thank you to Hannah Brown for her help with the junior team,/ Anyone who would like to help in any way please get in touch.

I personally remain absolutely committed to delivering for all our athletes at all levels and aspirations involved in the sport, not only at the elite level. My personal focus has always been more in participation – I enjoyed running the Irwell Regional Race at the Burrs Activity Centre just as much in sharing the excitements and disappointments of World Championship events. Having seen Ben Oakley from his very first training camp in Bath when he was around twelve to now being a Bronze Medallist and fully qualified Doctor, Radka through her successes at the Tasmania World Cup and disappointments at the Europeans through to her success on the Isere,

Hannah Brown from her swim at her first selection race on Bala Mill through to her World Championship Silver and now inclusion in the Canoe Sprint Squad, Robyn Webb's Paddle-ability Endeavour Award make me very proud indeed.

We have a great sport that appeals to many people at all levels. To make this a reality it is not a question of spreading the existing elite coaching staff more thinly but of bringing in many more people in at club and regional level. This can only be done by reaching out to many of the "friends of WWR" across the country and enlisting their help. Please contact me if I can help in this. We already have our top national coaches and athletes taking youngsters down on the Saturday's before races. Having elite athletes helping our new entrants is one of the things that helps keep me going!

Sue Hornby, Andy Goodsell and John Handyside continue to provide invaluable links with coaching and competition to ensure we remained aligned with the BCU's overall direction.

So to conclude I would again like to thank everyone for coming to the ACM and again wish you all the very best for the coming season. Happy Paddling!

*Peter Schofield*

Llangollen 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2012



## 5) Secretary's Report

### ATTENDEES TO WWR MEETINGS 2011 -12

SCHOFIELD	Peter	5	dial in 1	VP and PS Only 23/05/12
POSTILL	Vince	5	dial in 1	VP and PS Only 23/05/12
CHRISTIE	Jamie	1		
OUGHTON	Jes	1		
FINCH	Jon	5	dial in 1	
UNDERWOOD	Neil	3		
BROWN	Louise	3		
STAMPS	Neil	1		
KREBS	Torsten		dial in 1	
ANDERSON	Paul		dial in 1	
GOODSELL	Andy		dial in 1	
WRIGHT	Simon		dial in 1	
BOWERBANK	Kevin	2		
PEARTON	Ross	1		

<b>BREAKDOWN OF MEETINGS</b>	
07/09/2011	no minutes
AGM	Minutes taken by Steve Oxtoby, not received
07/12/2011	no minutes - notes only from Jamie Christie
18/01/2012	Minutes available
22/02/2012	Minutes available
11/04/2012	Minutes taken by LB, not received
23/05/2012	VP and PS Only
09/06/2012	Bala minutes available
29/06/2012	telephone call JF VP PS
07/12/	No meeting
08/12/	No meeting
09/12/	No meeting
17/10/2012	Minutes available

## 7) Treasurer's Report

Please find attached the WWR account for 2011/2012 and budget proposal for 2013.

I am still awaiting the Junior accounts, so there are no contributions showing from them and it is assumed all the £5k given was spent. Buses seem to have had not too bad a year.

There will be small amendments when the final year end reconciliation is done at the BCU office, for example there are some race fees missing that should have been credited to us that I can't see. (£50 from Derwent for example)

Main debtor is Perception, GBP1554, I have invoiced them, (yesterday) they usually pay before Christmas.

If/when the budget is approved I will send on to Andy Goodsell to go into the our funding request

**BCU Wild Water Racing Executive  
Budget for Year Ending 31 October 2012**

**Income and Expenditure Account**

	2012 Budget		2012 Actual	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>				
Sports Council Grants - £29k split thus;				
International Competition		19,000		19,000
Administration		1,000		1,000
Paddler Contributions		0		2,267
Race Fees		200		147
Wavehopper Royalties		1,500		1,554
Interest received		0		0
Other Income		1,500		240
		<u>23,200</u>		<u>24,207</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
International Competition Expenses	4,000		4,364	
Junior Team Competition	3,000		5,208	
Senior Squad Training expenses	1,000		3,882	
Junior Squad development	1,500		300	
Minibus expenses	9,000		6,717	
Race Expenses	1,600		725	
Development and Coaching	1,500		450	
Marketing / Website	1,000		0	
Prizes	400		323	
Sundry expenses	500		0	
Tax on interest	0		0	
Expenditure		<u>23,500</u>		<u>21,970</u>
<b>Excess of I over E</b>		<u>-300</u>		<u>2,237</u>
Depreciation - VW Bus. R91 KDF	80		80	
Depreciation - White Merc FE51 WHL	238		238	
Depreciation - VW Bus. RE05 BCV	1,172		1,172	
<b>Surplus / deficit for the year</b>		<u>-1,790</u>		<u>747</u>

**Balance Sheets @ 31 October**

	2012 Budget		2012 Actual	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>				
Net Book Value - VW Minibus. R91 KDF		240		240
Net Book Value - White Merc FE51 WHL		713		713
Net Book Value - VW Minibus. RE05 BCV		3,516		3,516
<b>Debtors</b>				
BCU Central account		3,500		2,920
Other		1,842		2,481
Cash at bank		3,000		5,277
<b>Creditors</b>				
Andrew Clough Memorial Fund		-793		-793
Other		-200		0
		<u>11,818</u>		<u>14,354</u>
Reserves @ start of year (1st Nov)		13,607		13,607
Surplus/(deficit) for year		-1,790		747
Overall Reserves @year end (31st Oct)		<u>11,818</u>		<u>14,354</u>

**BCU Wild Water Racing Executive  
Budget for Year Ending 31 October 2013**

**Income and Expenditure Account**

	2013 Budget	
	£	£
<b>Income</b>		
Sports Council Grants - £20k split thus;		
International Competition		19,000
Administration		1,000
Paddler Contributions		0
Race Fees		200
Wavehopper Royalties		1,500
Interest received		0
Other Income		1,500
		<u>23,200</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
International Competition Expenses	5,000	
Junior Team Competition	3,000	
Senior Squad Training expenses	1,000	
Junior Squad development	2,500	
Minibus expenses	8,000	
Race Expenses	1,000	
Development and Coaching	2,500	
Marketing / Website	1,000	
Prizes	400	
Sundry expenses	500	
Tax on interest	0	
		<u>24,900</u>
<b>Excess of I over E</b>		<u>-1,700</u>
Depreciation - VW Bus. R91 KDF	60	
Depreciation - White Merc FE51 WHL	178	
Depreciation - VW Bus. RE05 BCV	879	
<b>Surplus / deficit for the year</b>		<u>-2,817</u>

**Balance Sheets @ 31 October**

	2013 Budget	
	£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Net Book Value - VW Minibus. R91 KDF		180
Net Book Value - White Merc FE51 WHL		535
Net Book Value - VW Minibus. RE05 BCV		2,637
<b>Debtors</b>		
BCU Central account		3,978
Other		2,000
Cash at bank		3,000
<b>Creditors</b>		
Andrew Clough Memorial Fund		-793
Other		0
		<u>11,537</u>
Reserves @ start of year (1st Nov)		14,354
Surplus /(deficit) for year		-2,817
Overall Reserves @year end (31st Oct)		<u>11,537</u>

## **8) BRITISH CANOE UNION WILD WATER CANOEING 2012 TEAM MANAGER & HEAD COACHES REPORT - SENIORS**

This year Great Britain contested the Senior world championships at La Plagne, France and the Junior European Championships in Solkan, Slovenia. The coaches and team management chose not to support the World Cup series this year due to incompatibilities with our focus of the World Championships. Team positions were offered, with only one athlete attended on their own. Great Britain ran two training camps prior to the worlds which were largely successful, and provided a good preparation base for the competition.

Whilst we took a slimmed down team from previous years, we still saw top level performances in all the classes, and historic results in Womens' C1 and Mens Kayak.

We saw our first international Womens' C1 competitor with Radka Felingerova. From a very promising start only one year ago she made huge improvements in a very short space of time, culminating with Bronze medals in the World Cup and World Championships. I do not believe this result would have been achieved without the constant and tireless assistance from David Kelly, who dedicated a significant amount of his time to assisting Radka with her preparations. I would like to take this opportunity to thank David for his work not only with Radka, but with the entire squad and coaching staff over the past years.

Radka was not the only world medalist this year, as Ben Oakley took an historic Bronze medal in the Men's Kayak Sprint. After an admittedly shaky semi final, Ben took the race to the world, putting down a fast and clean time that put the remainder of the field under severe pressure, resulting in many errors and the first men's individual medal since 1989.

This result is a testament to the consistent and balanced preparation that Ben and Alan Tordoff have devised, and shows that it is not only possible to compete on the highest level - but that this can be balanced with academic life. Many congratulations to the newly qualified Doctor Ben Oakley!

The junior team trip this year combined a development team with the national team. It is the intention for a development trip to be run each year for the juniors. Whether this trip will run alongside the team or to a separate venue will be determined by the suitability of the venue for development, and the availability of coaching and support staff.

With the stepping down of Carl Foody, Phil Caunt, Neil Stamps and last year Alan Tordoff our coaching staff is now significantly reduced. We now face a very tough time to be able to support development and competition trips both domestically and internationally.

The coaches will be looking to more small groups of paddlers taking the initiative to attend rivers or C class events to push the standard forward, to supplement the work that national coaches and trips can provide. This is a model that has worked well in the past - and is one the coaches would like to see flourish again.

Without new volunteers to assist the key work our existing team management and coaching staff do, we will find it hard to provide the platform for the next generation of paddlers to flourish. I would encourage anyone who is interested in providing assistance or expertise to come forward. The broader the base of support the less we need to lean on a single person. We know we would like to do more for the sport, but this does need your help.

It is with that in mind that I would like to conclude by thanking all the Management, support and coaching staff who have assisted domestically and internationally - both at club and national level. Without you, there would be no team.

Neil Stamps & Jamie Christie  
22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012

## **BRITISH CANOE UNION WILD WATER CANOEING 2012 TEAM MANAGER & HEAD COACHES REPORT - Juniors**

Wild Water Racing Junior Europeans 2012 Solkan, Slovenia

Between the 30th August – 2nd September the Junior Wild Water European Championship was held at Solkan, Slovenia. This was a Championship of many firsts! It was the first race course to start in one country and finish in another; it was the first combined event with canoe Slalom. And for many of the British junior team it was their first major international!

Friday 24th saw the group of 8 paddlers, 2 coaches and 1 team manager (plus the essential drivers and chef) head out across Europe. The team this year included the GB Squad Selected paddlers and Development selected paddlers. In MK1 we had Matt Bishop, Scott Finch and Josh Hook with Grant Underwood as development. In the WK1 we had Gemma Bishop and representing development Clare Brown, Lucy Brown and Rachel Slade.

With an uneventful yet long journey over the team was eager to get to the course and on the water. For anyone who has been to Slovenia and had the delight of paddling on the turquoise waters of the river Soca know of its breath taking beauty. The scenery is stunning and the water so unbelievably clear.

Once the juniors had stopped gawping they were on the water like a shot! This year we were treated to a fun sprint race course down the Solkan Slalom course, with narrow flow lines and boily eddies the course was deceptively tricky. It was very short, lasting 65 seconds for the top men so any mistakes were very costly. The classic race started above the sprint course; went down through the exciting rapids and was then followed by 16 minutes of urmmm flat water. Unfortunate for a wild water race but the organiser had decided to do so to try and attract cross over from other canoe disciplines. We will see if this works for future years (anyone tempted?)

During Sunday to Tuesday the team paddled twice day, learning the ins and outs of the course. Some finding the eddies more attractive than others! We mainly concentrated on the tricky Sprint course, with different water levels each day the paddlers were always kept on their toes! A couple of sessions on the Classic proved enough to learn it. During the off time in the days the team explored Solkan and to the delight of certain boys they discovered an Ice Cream Parlour that had created 'red bull' flavoured ice cream! Needless to say they visited more than once. In the evenings the team recapped the days paddling with Helmet cam footage. Wednesday there was a rest day from paddling with a trip up road to see the legendary Bovec race course.

The new compact race schedule of just 3 days meant the team had to work as a tight unit so that everyone was where they should be at a given time. The teamwork on this trip was impeccable, each paddler acting with a highly professional attitude throughout the week. Simply following from the fine examples set by our Olympians!

Race Day 1 – included individual Classic race followed by the team sprints. All the British athletes attacked the gruelling Classic race and finished with personal satisfaction and the knowledge that they could not have physically paddled any harder. The last racers in the MK1 category suffered from a horrendous storm which swept into the area within a minute of the skies darkening, scary! Fortunately the sky cleared for the team sprint. The team

race involves 3 paddlers racing down together to finish with the fastest time possible, we had entries in the forerunners with the 3 development girls and a boys team in the MK1 category. The forerunner girls had a clean run and posted a competitive time compared to the main competitors. The boys had a solid first run but a mistake on their second run saw them finish in 10th place. Race Day 2 – was the individual sprints. With margins small over this short course 2 clean fast runs were needed to qualify for the final. Forerunner Grant Underwood had a very tidy run down really performing his white water skills well under racing pressure. Gemma pushed the qualification mark but just missed out and the boys showed learnt lessons on their 2nd race runs after untidy 1st runs. All the team watched the finals in the evening, taking in the technique and power of the top paddlers. The MK1 was won by a Slovakian paddler who made both K1 flat water A finals and slalom finals at both junior European competitions this year, talk about cross discipline paddling!

Race Day 3 – the final day this included a festive local rafting regatta and the Team Classic race. Team tactics and washing hanging played a crucial part in this team event with the flat nature of the river. The boys bettered their placing than their team sprint result finishing 9th. With the forerunner girls (Rachel, Clare and Lucy) also having a great race, improving Lucy's individual time by over 30 seconds.

Individual performance of team paddlers

Gemma Bishop was our sole WK1 representative and achieved a personal best performance in the Classic with a 24th placing. But in the sprint she really shone, pushing extremely close for qualification spot for the finals missing out by just 1.67 seconds she finished in 15th. A superb finish to her junior career. For the Boys, Scott Finch achieved a fantastic 22nd placing in a highly competitive Classic race, with Matt Bishop making an international debut with a 31st placing. Josh Hook (Hooc) was Mr Consistent finishing 34th place for both the sprint and classic races. A very bright future for Matt and Scott both only 16 and were right on the edge of top 30 and top 20 performances respectively.

Our forerunner paddlers took a lot from the week, absorbing the Championship atmosphere both on and off the water. They will have learnt a lot and be inspired for future years, one to watch!

A great trip and big thanks to all those who helped run it.

Hannah Brown



## **9) PROPOSED MOTIONS**

- (i) ICF Safety & Materiel Rules for helmets, buoyancy aids, footwear and boat weights be adopted. Proposed by Neal Underwood and agreed unanimously. Implementation to be defined by the WWR Exec.
- (ii) ICF Sprint Race Format. Agreed to the principle of a single run counts. Implementation to be defined by the WWR Exec. Proposed by Neal Underwood and agreed unanimously.
- (iii) Race Fees for 2013 be £10 Seniors, £8 Under 23's & £5 Juniors for National & Regional Races. This was agreed at the 2011 ACM but not fully implemented as no minutes were circulated.

## **10) ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

It was proposed that the following be re-elected in their existing roles:

- Peter Schofield Chairman
- Vince Postill Hon. Secretary
- Simon Wright Treasurer
- Phil Brown Ranking List Compiler
- Jon Finch Buses & Calendar
- Neal Underwood Publicity & Marketing

## **11) AOB/ MATTERS ARISING**

- The Meeting paused to remember the untimely passing of Debbie Hales, former GB Team athlete and part of the first successful ladies expedition down the Dudh Khosi. Debbie will be sadly missed and our thoughts and prayers remain with her Husband and Family.

The following points were noted to be followed up by the WWR Exec. During the year:

- The assessment weekend in February / March participation should be opened up to any aspiring athletes wishing to join the GB Squads. We will start using the new BCU 3\* awards to provide objective assessment & feedback to athletes
- Fund-raising needs a more systematic approach. PJS will approach Keith Wickham & Stuart Brass for help and advice. Other areas for attention are
  - o Access to Olympic Legacy Funds
  - o Use of Local Authorities Fund raising officers, the Charities Information Bureau & Lawn Tennis Assoc websites.
  - o Club funding for coaches training
  - o Environment Agency "splash" funding
  - o A grant applications for a mini bus
  - o Carrying adverts on the website
  - o Strengthening our links with other Extreme Sports