

HHCC Chairman's Annual Report AGM 24 April 2014

Trips

Several day paddles and trips took place over the past year including a club outing to join the 'Doggy Paddle' along the Thames and a paddle from Cricklade to Lechlade over the Easter weekend.

As usual we ran a very successful Open Canoe weekend – 14 paddlers aged from 11 to 60+ travelled to West Wales in September to tackle the rapids on the River Teifi with our friends at Llandysul Paddlers. This year we combined it with an intro to whitewater kayak course.

A trip to Devon also proved popular in March. A dozen people headed west hoping for a paddle on the Dart Loop, but the levels were too low. Fortunately we had booked coaching with Keith Putnam whose fantastic local knowledge gave us an enjoyable day on the sea at Looe on the Saturday, followed by a day tackling the weirs on the River Exe.

Competition

It's been a fantastic year for club racers.

With the change to the membership year we can report on TWO Devizes to Westminster race winners – Shirine Voller & Mike Thornton won the Canadian Senior Doubles in the 2013 race and James Prowse paddled with Tim Penson from Exeter CC to take the same title for 2014.

Several club paddlers competed successfully in the Waterside & Thameside Series. Several combinations broke long-standing course records: Mike Thornton & Mark Petersen for Waterside D and James & Tim for Waterside A

Wes Boniface competed very successfully in slalom and was promoted to Division One.

A good number of members also compete in Rafting and Dragon Boat Racing events. Several club members were in GB dragon boat squads and came back from the 2013 World Championships with gold, silver and bronze medals.

Robin Oakley and Mark Petersen were members of the very successful GB Grand Dragons open squad.

Ruth and Shirine are training regularly with Royal Canoe Club Outrigger Canoe Club at Kingston and competed at international level over the summer. Shirine travelled to Hawaii and both Ruth & Shirine were in the winning boat for the famous Porquerollaise Wahine (women's) Outrigger Canoe Race in the South of France.

James Prowse won both the overall points trophy and the 2 km title for the Silverwing series.

Coaching

Our regular spring/summer Beginners' Course was again filled to bursting, with 26 participants enjoying a 10 week introduction to kayak and canoe. Thanks to Helen for organising and all the coaches who gave up their time to help, particularly Ruth who organised some follow-up sessions and has also made several successful grant applications to expand our fleet. Our most recent acquisition was another four GP kayaks aimed at juniors and small adults, plus some junior paddles.

A few of our coaches continued to mentor new paddlers throughout the summer and autumn. Thank you to all for giving up your time to help others to progress.

Thanks to Ruth who organised a ten-week course in Townsend School's indoor pool over the winter, which saw most participants learning to roll and everyone practising rescue skills in a safe warm environment.

New boat store

As you know, last year we were delighted to be able to undertake a total refurbishment of the club house, thanks to a grant of nearly £33,000 from the 'Inspired Facilities' programme as part of the 2012 Olympic legacy.

The final phase of this project was the new boat store at the rear of the building. This is currently being used to store boats for coaching.

New C2

The most recent addition to our racing fleet is a C2 bought for the bargain price of £220. This will fill the gap for a training boat suitable for people wishing to progress to racing C2 but not yet ready to paddle the club's We-Noh-Nah ICF which has unfortunately been damaged by inexperienced paddlers.

Olympic Plaque

We were delighted to be nominated as Olympic silver medallist Richard Hounslow's 'home club' – the place where he started his journey to London 2012. We have received a commemorative plaque that will be mounted in the club house and we hope that Richard will attend an official unveiling ceremony in the summer.

Thank you

Finally thanks to everyone who has helped with the club throughout the year. We're developing a great reputation as being somewhere that offers paddling to all, whether beginner, disabled or elite athlete.

Looking at race results over the past few years we really can consider ourselves the premier Canadian Canoe Racing club in the country.

And that brings me on finally to say that we do really need some racing members on our committee. The current members are doing a grand job of promoting paddlesport and introducing it at a beginner and intermediate level, but those who race at national level are not well represented on the executive at present.

I've very much enjoyed acting as your Chairman over the past couple of years and hope that all the good work going on at the club will continue with everyone's support.

