

## WSRA Chairman's report 2007/8

Dear members

As the excesses of Christmas become a faint memory and our dreams turn to straining oars and the heaving swells of the Irish Sea I am pleased to report that the Welsh Sea Rowing Association has had a very successful year despite the appalling summer weather of 2007.

Your committee (to which I am extremely grateful) has worked hard over the last 12 months to provide members of the WSRA with a range of exciting league and non-league races, whilst maintaining an impressive safety record.

**On the water.** The two leagues functioned well although our effort to integrate the league structure did not work as well as we hoped. Although league competition was limited by numbers in the south the friendly races were extremely well attended. The focus on enticing novice rowers into the sport was very effective and I hope that these new rowers and clubs will compete in the leagues in the future. In the North the league structure seemed to have a stronger base and resulted in some highly competitive races. The new club 'Mochras' provided some stiff opposition and they have my congratulations for a highly successful first season. The Championship races were not so successful with two out of the four races being cancelled due to appalling weather conditions. In the coming year we will reduce the races to three and provide alternative dates if they suffer cancellation from bad weather.

My biggest disappointment was the further reduction in junior members within the association and junior teams taking part in races. Clubs must be more active in recruiting juniors and creating links with local schools.

**Off the water.** Although individual clubs have active social calendars, the social side of the WSRA continues to decline and this was epitomised by the lack of interest in the annual dinner. I am at a loss to find a solution to this and would welcome suggestions.

**Finance and strategy.** Financially the WSRA is extremely sound and we are entering a position where we would be able to finance our own initiatives to support clubs and rowing. This is very important in a climate of reduced grant funding. Our contacts with WARA have strengthened and our development plan (submitted last year) will enable the flow of grants to start once again. However, we have been asked to actively prioritise applications and so this gives the WSRA greater control of where the grants go. This was done with the guidance of the Sports Council for Wales.

**People – some special thanks.** I would like to thank all of the committee especially my Vice Chairman, Dave Thomson and secretary Helen Stewart. Without their hard work we would not be in the position we are in today.

Finally we are losing our safety officer Mike Swann. Mike has been very active and helpful over the last few years and I would like to record my thanks to him for all his hard work.

Really finally I would also like to record my thanks to all the clubs and rowers that make our events so excellent. I feel that we still offer tremendous value, great fun and excellent friendship – lets keep it that way.

Mick Fothergill (WSRA Chairman) Jan 2008