

**WELSH YACHTING ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REVIEW**  
**ADOLYGIAD BLYNYDDOL CYMDEITHAS HWYLIO CYMRU**

**2011**



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## 1 WELCOME / CROESO

Welcome to the 2011 annual review.

Over the last 12 months the Welsh Yachting Association has gone through a period of change. Change is never easy and often leaves people feeling like they are being left out and vulnerable. We hope that the changes to our governance structure that are being proposed at the EGM on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November will help us become stronger and takes us forward as an organisation.

We are often asked who are you and what can you do for my club or organisation?

The simple answer to this question would be to say that we are about More and Better Sailing and we strive to “enable the best to reach for the top and encourage the rest to achieve more than they thought possible”.

The WYA is the National Governing Body for all boating in all its forms in Wales. We are the RYA’s Regional Council for Wales and we are the only Sport Wales recognised governing body for the sector. Our head office is located at Plas Menai National Watersports Centre, near Caernarfon and we have a Regional Office at the Sport Wales National Centre in Cardiff. WYA has five full time staff as well as a number of partnership and contracted posts that mean we are able provide a service in all three of our regions.

The WYA receives the majority of its funding from Sport Wales, and in return we are challenged to contribute to their Vision for Sport and the Welsh Governments Creating Active Wales Strategies. Our current Strategic Plan is coming to the end of its third year and our main priorities are:

- Club Development – helping clubs grow their membership
- Increasing Participation – introducing more people to our sport
- Improving Levels of Performance – More Welsh sailors winning Olympic, World, European and British medals
- Improving our Organisational Effectiveness – being better at what we do

We have an excellent relationship with the RYA, our British Governing Body. One question that is often asked is, “why do we need to affiliate to both organisations”? The benefits of RYA membership are well documented; the use of the racing rules, insurance, legal support to name but a few. However the RYA will not and does not have the capacity to help develop your club. This is our remit and in order to access this additional support all we ask is that you affiliate your club to the WYA.

If your club wants to grow and develop, if you need help and advice, please contact your Regional Development Officer or look for more information on our website [www.welshsailing.org](http://www.welshsailing.org)

## 2 CHAIRMANS REPORT

It seems strange that this is the second report I have compiled for a 2011 AGM, but with the new Companies Act in force, we now have to hold this meeting within 8 months of the end of our financial year, and I am sure that no-one wants to debate our activities around Christmas. The year in question finished at the end of March, but as I have done for the four previous years, I will include points that are topical and relevant to the current time as well.

### 1. Finance.

It will be recalled that at the last AGM, I emphasised our dependence on Sport Wales funding and noted that we had just completed the first of a four year funding package. I raised concerns that with the Welsh Governments funding cuts announced, we were awaiting information as to how these reductions would be passed on to National Governing Bodies. I detail these decisions in section 5 below.

Our reliance on grant assistance continues, but by the time of this meeting, the Directors will have considered a draft sponsorship package, which will address our need to raise funds privately. In today's financial climate, it will be challenging to secure prime sponsors, but I ask all members to assist in this matter by advising us of businesses and organisations that they feel may be worth approaching. We are aware of some, but our knowledge has to be limited when compared with the wealth of expertise in our clubs around Wales.

I am pleased to report that we ended March 2011 more or less on target as far as programme was concerned, with a small under spend due to budgeted work not being completed, almost entirely due to illness. This work was later finalised by the end of May this year.

Our accounts continue to be supervised by Dave Vickery, but with our Office Manager, Ceri Yeomans, currently undertaking the final year of her 3 year AAT course, I expect that he will be able to step back with the full confidence that our day to day financial affairs are in good order. I thank them both for the work they have put in to enable the Directors to have a full financial picture available monthly.

### 2. Performance.

As we approach Olympic year, I must start this section by conveying two Welsh sailors, Hannah Mills and Steven Thomas, our very best wishes for Weymouth next year. They have already won their places in the GB team, and, Chris Grube and David Evans may yet win another.

As I have pointed out to Sport Wales and many others over the years, the achievements now being seen at this very highest level are the result of work put in by staff and volunteers some 10 to 15 years ago. Since then we have expanded these activities greatly, and more and more Welsh sailors have gone on to World, European and National success. I am absolutely confident that in future years, the young sailors who have participated in the Welsh National Squads over the last 10 or so years will challenge for Olympic places. As greater numbers have passed through our structured training, we will inevitably see more medals coming home to Wales.

However, a major disappointment is that sailing remains outside of the Commonwealth Games. Without sailing, there would be no Commonwealth, and our sport's absence denies Welsh sailors one of the few opportunities to represent their country, and also to podium.

The creation of the Welsh Sailing Youth Academy, to bring together the training of all sailors in Youth classes is a very positive step in the right direction, and under the guidance of Olympic coach, Chris Gowers, will assist these groups to higher levels of performance.

Once again, I can report on major Welsh success in UK, European and World championships. Matt Whitfield has been outstanding throughout the year. Not content with being selected for the Oppy Worlds in New Zealand this coming December, he has also won the Inlands, gained 1<sup>st</sup> Brit in the UK Nationals, but also kept his hand in by winning the Feva UK Inlands, and then the Worlds! Rightly he has been nominated as the Young Sailor of the Year.

Many other sailors have excelled, Danielle Rowe emulated Ellie Meophan by gaining first girl at the Topper Inlands, Huw Edwards was 3<sup>rd</sup> Junior Oppy at the UK Nationals, and Welsh sailors have gained selection to represent the UK at the 4.7 Laser Worlds, 420 Europeans and 470 Europeans. Welsh representation in GBR squads continues at a very satisfactory level and it continues to be a major challenge to maintain these levels.

Finally, I am delighted that following a meeting of the 3 Home Countries in May, the Nations Cup is returning, and will be sailed in January 2012. This is a major opportunity to compete against top class UK sailors, and gives us another chance to measure our training methods against other. At the time of writing, it appears that English sailors will be denied the opportunity to compete, but I hope that this will change.

As I say every year, it continues to be the Association's policy to support all talented sailors, and it is our intention to ensure that even in these difficult times, we continue to offer as much as we can to maintain our place as the most successful part of the UK in terms of bringing forward the talent that exists in Wales.

### 3. Development.

All the performance successes above could not be achieved without successful development at grass root level.

I mentioned in my last report that we had doubled our target for first sailing opportunities to 24000 in 4 years, as the original target had been met in less than two. This has again been revised upwards, to 30000, as more and more local authorities have started to work with us with Local Authority Partnership Agreements (LAPAs). This has enabled us to part fund more OnBoard Development posts, and makes contact with an increasing number of schools.

Some very enthusiastic and talented people are now working with us, perhaps for the first time, as we have partly funded their posts, but also increased the number of young sailors wanting to continue in our sport and move into clubs. One or two clubs have found that they are not prepared for these numbers, but this is specifically a role of the Regional Development Officer, to build capacity, and it is this increase in demand that will surely drive growth.

One very positive development, which happens next February, is the creation of 'The Big Weekend' when volunteers from all over Wales will come together at Plas Menai for a series of Instructor, Race Official and other conferences, to meet socially and throw around ideas with the one aim of improving sailing in Wales. Contact your RDO for further details and book early as accommodation is not unlimited.

Another great initiative has been the introduction of 'Club Contracts' where we agree with a member club a programme of activity and then wholly or partly fund that activity. This has been piloted in two clubs up to March 2011, and has been completely successful. It allows any club to move forward at a speed and with

activity levels that they are comfortable with; an agreed programme is delivered, and leaves the club in control with trained volunteers.

#### 4. Staffing

For once, I intend to leave this part of my report to our Chief Executive, to enable him to report fully on the comings and goings.

However, I would again thank everyone, both full and part time, for the work they have done over the 12 months. It may appear to them sometimes that they are walking up a waterfall, with criticism from some quarters, and little praise. However, I am acutely conscious that without their efforts, willingness to work unsocial hours and generally put a 8 day week into seven, that we would not be where we are today.

As Chairman, I am also aware that we often overload our staff with new initiatives, while expecting existing projects to be maintained. That this is frequently done without complaint is a tribute to the drive and resilience that they exhibit, and we are all grateful.

#### 5. Sport Wales

It is with mixed feelings that I report that Sport Wales decided to absorb the reductions in their funding mentioned above entirely within house, and to ensure that NGBs continued deliver their agreed programmes. I am delighted on behalf of the WYA that we have been able to do this, but I have also observed the pain within Sport Wales as valued members of staff left to pursue other opportunities. Our SW Development Officer, Kieran Harris, left at the end of August this year, and I thank him for his assistance in these difficult times, particularly in the area of marketing and sponsorship.

Happily the enduring assistance that we have become accustomed to has never wavered. We now exist in an era of 'High Challenge – High Support' and as one of Wales' key sports, we have been challenged to have unreasonable ambition. This means that we should look to see what we would like to achieve if there were not any constraints and plan accordingly. So if you hear that Welsh sailors have won all the Olympic gold medals in future games, then it is unreasonable ambition that has led to this result. Practically, it may take more than a few years, but our goals of aiming higher should not be constrained by our own lack of vision.

Finally, with the sad departure of Kieran Harris, I am pleased to welcome Manon Rees-O'Brien who has taken over his responsibilities, along with many others. It is also a pleasure to report that Alan Williams, who most of you know, is now a successful author, and we await his next tome with anticipation.

#### 6. Royal Yachting Association

As I retire as WYA Chairman, I also retire as the Welsh representative on RYA Council, their Board of Directors. The RYA is also seeking to modernise their Board, and by the time of our AGM, their proposals will have either been accepted or rejected by their membership. If the former, this will result in the probable loss of any Home Country representation on the new RYA Board, and this matter was addressed at a conference in Edinburgh, attended by ourselves and representatives of Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The result was an agreement that the Chief Executives of the 3 Home Countries will meet quarterly with the RYA CEO, and bi-annually with Chairmen attending as well. It is expected that this arrangement will ensure that matters that are specific to the Home Countries will be addressed by the UK Governing Body and that we are not merely treated as a Class Association.

This all stems from issues that inevitably occur due to the conflict that the RYA have with dual roles as the UK NGB, and the organisation responsible for the development of sailing in England. Add to this the overwhelming numbers of RYA staff funded by Sport England, and it can be seen that difficulties may arise. This was borne out by the publication by the RYA of an excellent book on Club Development earlier this year, which gave practical information specifically for England, but absolutely none for Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. It is sad to report that the usefulness of this book was considerably reduced by the lack of a moment's thought, but the new arrangements should make this a rare occurrence in future.

#### 7. Volunteers

Every year I specifically try to thank our volunteers who turn out in all sorts of weather, do the things that often lack the glamour that some roles offer, and without whom, sailing in Wales would be a poor shadow of what it is. This year is not an exception, but I would also like to include those volunteers who work in our clubs, doing the practical things that give our sport such a friendly and supportive atmosphere in which to work.

To each and every one of you who has given up that special thing, that once given cannot be reclaimed, that we all value most, in other words your time, may I thank you on behalf of all those who have benefited from your efforts.

#### 8. Other Matters

For once, there is not much else to cover, partly due to the fact that it has only been 9 months since I last reported. I hope that by the time this report is formally laid before you, our abortive EGM will have reconvened and successfully adopted the new Articles of Association. I wrote to the Chair of Sport Wales about the dire circumstances we found ourselves in, and have received assurances that this AGM will not incur the same difficulties as before. By now we will know the result!

#### 9. Summary

A year in which the Welsh Yachting Association has progressed significantly in most core areas, in which we look forward to the Olympics next year with bated breath and the hope that Welsh sailors perform well, in which more children than ever before have tried their hand at sailing, and in which more and more have been retained in our sport.

A year in which more Welsh sailors have competed at European and World level, a year in which we have more Instructors, Coaches and volunteers than ever before, a year in which we developed relationships with more Local Authorities than ever before.

However, a year in which we find that we had still work to do in assisting our clubs to grow, where we still had work to do raising funds through sponsorship and commercial activity and where we have started to face the challenges of our next 4 year funding cycle, to develop new ideas, new ways of working to meet the new opportunities that are presented to us.

#### 10. Personal

As you will be aware, I retire as Chairman at this meeting. I hope that I leave with the Association in a better position than when I started in this role, but that is for others to judge.

However, I would like to say that I have thoroughly enjoyed every minute of my time as your Chairman, and I would like to record my thanks to everyone who has supported me. Without that support, it would not have

been possible to do half the things that I have been privileged to do, to meet some wonderful people who care as much about Welsh sailing as I do. To each and every one of you, a true thank you.

Hopefully, I will still be around to do more of the mundane things that I have missed over the last few years, but be assured (or worried!) that I will always have Welsh sailing in my thoughts.

Finally, I hope that my successor elect, Dafydd Griffiths, will take as much pleasure and pride in the WYA as I have. It is a great organisation and I know that he will lead us forward to more and better sailing in Wales.

Anarchy

Chaos

Despair

Confusion

My job here is done.....

Chris Basten

### 3 CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT

It is my role as Chief Executive to steer the WYA and ensure that we are delivering on our strategic plan as well as the day to day management of the association.

18 Months have now passed since my appointment. In this time a number of changes have been made to the way we operate, however there is much more to do. Implementing these changes has not been plain sailing, and this year's AGM will see the culmination of a lot of hard work and our new governance structure being voted in by our members(hopefully). At the heart of the changes is a larger Board of Directors with a broader range of skills. The abolishment of the Strategy Committee and the creation of new Themed Committees whilst ensuring that our three Regional Committees are linked in to everything we do so that the members are able to influence and help shape our strategic direction in the future.

Those of you who cast a microscopic eye on the accounts will see that we made a surplus last year and for the first time in a very long time we spent all our Sport Wales grant aid. Funding remains our biggest challenge and our biggest opportunity. The impact of the UK Governments Comprehensive Spending Review did not hurt us, and the next 12 months looks like being another standstill settlement. However, the long term impact of not being a Commonwealth Sport and the Welsh Governments 2014 Commonwealth Games aspirations could have consequences for our next 4 year funding cycle from 2013. Sport Wales has been through a period of change and we are working closely with them making the case for sailing and all its related disciplines.

One of our biggest opportunities is around attracting corporate sponsorship. Whilst all the major industry related suppliers are tied into the RYA, there are those who still want to support a Welsh based governing body and the brand association that comes from this partnership. Some support has been achieved this year and I am grateful to Acorn Adventure, Firmhelm and to Blue Finn for their continued support.

Sports development and participation activity had increased this year. Our OnBoard participation programme continues to grow from strength to strength. To date we have delivered over 18,000 participation opportunities and retention is around the 3%. This is an area we hope will improve by the end of 2012. The increase in support from Local Authorities(LA) has been fantastic and as a result we have new Onboard partnerships with Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Powys and Denbighshire County Councils.

Our direct investment into clubs has been increased allowing those clubs to deliver adult, family as well as youth and junior participation. Our Activate programme run by Nick Wymer targeting adults has not been so successful and we have only managed to run two part filled courses in North and South Wales – the course in the west had to be cancelled due to a lack of interest. Our Community Coaches in North and West Wales have also been supporting clubs like Shotwick, Pwllheli, Fishguard, Teifi, Saundersfoot and Tenby to deliver more and better sailing.

There is always more that we can all do to help clubs who want to develop and grow. If you are one of these you should come and speak to us – we can't do it for you, but we certainly can't do it without you!

Improving our communication channels has been something that we have worked on this year. The information that we send out however is only as good as the person who receives it, and we have no control of what happens to posters, letters or electronic mail once they get to your club. In the last 12 months we have made better use of social media to widen our communication channels – are you following us on NING and Facebook, is your club linked to our news pages through the RSS Feed? These are all free and simple ways to stay in touch and find out about what is going on. To find out more about these applications please visit our website at [www.welshsailing.org](http://www.welshsailing.org) The website is much improved, however there are limitations on what we can do with it. Fans of the website will be glad to hear that a new website will go live in April 2012. Our

thanks must go to Christine Stanley for all her help and support in developing our events site and the development work on the website.

In 2011 we added another event to our portfolio with the introduction of the North Wales Festival. Bala Sailing Club did us proud and 78 young sailors took to the water. On the same weekend 99 young people competed at the annual Acorn Regatta at Llangorse. Much praise and a vote of thanks must go to the WYA Staff and all the volunteers who make it possible for us to run our events. Event entries across the Regional CYRC's and our domestic events were up in 2011 this culminated in 148 entries at the Volvo Welsh Youth & Junior Championships. This event would have broken the 170 barrier if we had not clashed with Laser and other qualifying events across the country. This has prompted some changes for 2012 and we will be moving the Welsh Youth & Junior Championships back to April and running a smaller Junior/Zone event in West Wales in September 2012. Our Welsh Schools event in Mumbles was a great success as well with 96 entries - thanks must also go to the Red Arrows display team for a memorable display on the Saturday – just as we were taking Sport Wales and Local Authority partners out on the water!

Over the winter we will be developing a new Welsh Sailing Events Strategy following discussions with the Welsh Governments Major Events Unit(MEU). The MEU want to see more sailing events coming to Wales with a particular focus on World and European Championships in the Olympic and Olympic feeder classes. Regional consultation events will be held in all three regions so please keep an eye out for your invitation.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the success our athletes have had both in the adult Olympic and Paralympic Classes as well as our Youth and Junior Sailors. The Chairman has already named names and I add my congratulations to them all.

Looking forward there is much to get excited about. We are now less than 12 months away from the London Olympic and Paralympic Games. Two sailors selected in Hannah Mills and Stephen Thomas and the possibility of more to come! The sports development benefits are also as exciting and there is more on this later on in this review. Next year will see the development of our next strategic plan, a new Board will be in place to continue to take us forward and I hope that more clubs will want to become part of the OnBoard and club development initiatives. Much to look forward to and also lots of room for improvement – all great challenges that I am looking forward to discussing with our members.

At this year's AGM Chris Basten step down as WYA Chairman after 4 years in that capacity. In total Chris has given over 20 year's unbroken service to the WYA in a number of different capacities. This commitment will be recognised by the RYA on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November when Chris will be awarded the prestigious RYA Regional Award from HRH, The Princess Royal in London. During his time as Chairman he has had to deal with a number of staffing issues and as a consequence has been a hand's on Chairman – whilst still running his own business. Chris leaves the WYA in a very strong position. On behalf of all the staff I would like to thank you for your support and friendship and we all wish you the very best for the future.

Finally I would like to pay tribute to the Staff, our contracted coaches and our volunteers. WYA is extremely fortunate to have such a committed and knowledgeable workforce both in a paid and voluntary capacity. Coaches like Chris Gowers and Alan Williams who are respected across the world for their experience. Our young and enthusiastic OnBoard staff, Sean, Sam, Leah and Matt. Our fantastic volunteers too many to mention individually, who sit on our committees and help us run successful events and of course the Associations full time staff who work long hours well beyond the call of duty to make sure that we deliver more and better sailing. I thank you all and hope that we will continue to have the benefits of your services in 2012 and beyond.

#### 4 HONORARY TREASURERS REPORT

It is with great pleasure that I submit the accounts for your approval.

This is the last report from the Association's Honorary Treasurer to the AGM as the role disappears under the new governance arrangements but it will be replaced by a Director of Finance. This position will be appointed from within the new Board of Directors.

This report relates formally to the 2010/11 Accounts that were approved by the Directors on the 22 of September 2011.

Following approval of the last AGM on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February this year the accounts have been sent out electronically to all member clubs. Dave Vickery our Financial Advisor or I will endeavour to answer any questions at the meeting or subsequently by correspondence. Members who would prefer the accounts in a paper or hard copy should contact the office and we will facilitate this for you.

I would like in particular to recognise and thank Dave Vickery and Ceri Yeomans for all their hard work in preparing these accounts and developing our management accounts system over recent years.

## 5 REGIONAL REPORTS

### 5.1 South Region report for 2011

The South Region has few clubs, but they are fairly large and active. As they are broadly speaking self-sufficient, there is little cohesion between them – it's not apparently necessary.

However, there has been significant progress towards the establishment of a South Club Forum / Regional Committee. Four meetings have been held since the last AGM, with a good turnout from a representative number of clubs. There is obviously interest in re-gaining connection to Welsh Sailing, but a lack of clarity on what clubs want, and how to make it function effectively.

#### Work started

At one meeting following the WYA Strategy committee in February we agreed four "quick win" work packages;

- Non Youth Pathway; Lead is Bill Jackson and it ties in with his wider Strategy Board work.
- Adult Training and Development; Led by Idris Dibble
- Co-ordination of South Wales Club Calendars; led by Lawrence Wells
- CYRC; Phil Hall

#### Results

- The non-youth pathway boat is effectively the RS 200 – and there are some in clubs in the South, but we need a pan-Wales drive to develop some ideas and make this happen convincingly. (RS can offer dealer level discount for orders of 4 boats or more)
- We hope that we can provide data and examples of good practice to promote adult training – and have shared a number of ideas already. A lot of this is probably on the RYA website – but needs a bit of mining to locate it
- We have started sharing dates on the 2012 programme – time will tell if this works or not
- CYRC has again been successful with enthusiasm and skill being shown and developed. Prizes awarded and overall this continues well.

#### Shared views

Clubs and WYA communicate well at a number of different levels, notably on Instructor/coach links, and on training/development/squad/CYRC topics. But, there is little direct communication with the committees that actually run clubs.

- We must improve communication and visibility between "the centre" and Clubs
- We must find a way of sharing contact details across clubs more readily
- We considered the concept of Regional "Club Clinics", which have a number of attractions
- We need to link the clubs back to the WYA sailing web site with a little overview of each club. (small development from what we have now, possibly segment by region to prevent it becoming too large a page)
- "Try a boat" days
- Bring in the related organisations? Sea Cadets/Scouts/local schools?
- Hold topical talks at intervals, such as the Racing Rules change in 2013, normally presented to the Instructors meeting, but Instructors mainly teach sailing, not racing?

#### 2012 plans

- We ought to try to co-ordinate with the national Olympic publicity
- We ought to do better to avoid event clashes
- We ought to focus the club's minds on what they want from the WYA and what they can contribute to WYA) in the next 4 year planning cycle.

## 5.2 West Regional Report for 2011

The W.Y.A. is undergoing fundamental changes, which will positively affect member clubs in all regions.

The emphasis is being changed from 'top down' (board) to 'bottom up' (clubs) but to achieve these aims necessitates the clubs being more engaged, through their regional committees. The idea is that the regional committees will, as much as possible, be autonomous with a formal committee with designated posts; the pitfall of any plan of this nature is that it relies on a small pool of volunteers who in many cases are people who have time consuming positions in their clubs already.

Every year we embark on a programme of Open Winter training followed by the C.Y.R.C.s (club youth racing circuit). Last year was no exception and the programme was extended to allow further 'buddy club' training prior to the start of the season. I would like to thank all clubs and individuals who supported and put so much effort into these events and their success. The support of the community coaches, Chris Jeffreys and Nick Berridge has been invaluable and the scheme will continue with particular emphasis on Optimist training (Chris Jeffreys) and Topper training (Nick Berridge)

One successful innovation was the introduction of a distinct West training squad (separate from the South and West combined regional squad). Members had their own unique bright green squad hoodies and the idea allowed individual sailors from different clubs to train together as it has been realised that many clubs rein back their winter activities and with only limited numbers at any one club anyway there needed to be a system to draw the sailors together.

The Optimist group was particularly successful with several youngsters progressing to compete in events at a national level. One young sailor from Tenby leapfrogged directly into the Welsh National Optimist squad and others have been selected for the regional South and West squad against stiff competition from larger centres.

There are several other young sailors from right across the region, sailing the whole range of dinghies, from Optimists to 29er's, at national squad level and it is sometimes overlooked that Pembrokeshire sailors won the county prize for the second year at the Schools Championship held in Mumbles this year.

The winter open training has already started, alas the initial two days at Fishguard were 'blown out' but we did manage to salvage one day as a shore based meet and greet day, which was most successful. Sessions will alternate between Fishguard and Neyland and will continue through to March, it is hoped that the use of two separate venues for training will encourage travelling, which becomes such a major consideration as sailors progress up the Pathway.

Pembrokeshire Adventure Centre, as the main commercial sailing centre in the area plan to hold an early season Open Day/Regatta for those sailors who, have attended the centre and gained their stage one qualification. It is hoped that local clubs can attend and use it as a bit of recruiting drive to encourage membership of their individual clubs.

Clubs like Neyland and Tenby have benefited from the 'On Board' scheme and in Tenby the major problem is the management of the numbers of young sailors, but with the emphasis on retention supported by Community coaching proving to be a successful formulae the way ahead is obvious and will be continued.

Communication is a vital tool and it is important that we use the latest technology to best advantage. Many of us, I certainly include myself, have great difficulty keeping abreast with the latest and ever changing developments. Ensuring information is current and available is important and a time consuming task but we must prioritise it as important and examine what we want, what is best and how to achieve it.

West has seen a drop in the number of affiliated clubs, no Carmarthenshire clubs are members, the hard core of clubs are prospering but we do need to reach out and widen our membership. For the cost of affiliation member clubs get an excellent return and it is a pity many are missing out, we must address this.

### 5.3 North Wales Regional Report for 2011

During the year I have managed to visit various clubs, attended CYRC's and Regattas plus regional committee meetings. All the clubs we have visited have made us feel very welcome I am always impressed with the amount of work the volunteers put in to ensure that their clubs continue to operate as well as the support they provide our events.

The 1<sup>st</sup> North Wales OnBoard Regatta at Bala was very well attended with 78 participants. The Saturday Open Training could have been blighted by the bad weather but 51 participants braved the rain to get out on the water. Thankfully sun came out on the Sunday to ensure a great weekend was had by all. The parents gave enthusiastic feedback and would like to see a full weekend next year. Thanks to Ruth who was ably supported by Leah the on OnBoard Officer and to Phil and everyone at Bala Sailing Club for arranging such a successful event.

The CYRC series were very successful this year with over 60 boats at most events. Last year our Xmas Regatta had to be postponed. This year we will (we hope) have 2 Xmas Regattas in one year. Thanks to Mary Gowers for all her hard work and organisational input we still need more help in the race office and we are revisiting the protocol for running CYRC's in the New Year. More volunteers are always welcomed and one lady has offered to run a crèche at the events in 2012.

Winter Training –All the clubs and dates have been set for North Wales. I would like to thank all the clubs and wish them happy and successful training. One family from Manchester has decided to join the NW open training because of the quality of what is being provided and the warm welcome they have received.

This year the Regional Committee have taken on Activate Your Laser with Nick Wymer. A lot of clubs are starting to take this forward. Let's hope it will regenerate some Lasers and increase our membership in the clubs.

At one of our Regional Committee meetings we held a successful workshop with 3 discussion groups on 3 different subjects. A Regional Committee decision was made to hold an open discussion at each meeting on a certain subject. These are proving to be popular and pinpoint potential ways forward for Clubs and the Association. A subject from these discussions is due to come up in the New Year when we will be looking at initiatives around increasing female membership and ways of increasing the numbers of adult female sailors participating in our clubs.

Throughout the year a lot of work has gone on between the Regional Committee Officers and WYA Staff working towards the New Articles of Association and Terms of Reference for WYA. It is great to see them move towards fruitarian and we are nearly there, voting will take place at the AGM.

I would like to thank all our WYA officers for their work during the year and especially Ruth our RDO.

Thanks to all the club reps who have attended our meetings and their valued input between region and their clubs without you none of this is possible. Thank you to all the Regional committee for all their work and support throughout the year.

## 6 WELSH NATIONAL SQUAD / PERFORMANCE REVIEW

This report summarises the achievements of the Welsh National Squad during the season 2011 to date. This report goes on to highlight our key performing athletes and shows the strength across the programme from Junior to Olympic level.

**2011 marks another outstanding year for Welsh Performance sailing; beginning at the top our highlights include:**

### Olympic

Double success during 2011 saw Stephen Thomas become the first UK athlete selected for the 2012 Paralympic Games back in July following 2 Gold's in the world cup series and a silver medal at the IFDS worlds. Hannah Mills with new partner Saskia Clarke cemented their place as they pole vaulted to the GBR 1 position with Silvers in the World Cup series, European Bronze, and finally silver at Sail 4 Gold to seal their place on the Road to London (Weymouth) 2012.

With 470 and 49er selections yet to be made with the forthcoming world championships in Perth all is to play for as Chris Grube and David Evans in their respective classes seek to emulate their Welsh counterpart's with Olympic Selection in the exceedingly competitive 470 and 49er classes.

As our future Olympiads fly the flag for GBR and Wales it is down to us all to play our part in supporting the team via the array of multimedia platforms leading into the games and concurrently help raise the profile from schools and clubs to the tea rooms of sport wales and the media or any other business environment for that matter!

### Youth

2011 has seen the launch of the Welsh Sailing Youth Academy where 8 single handers and 7 Double Handed Sailors have been selected. The changes in place allow year round support, tailored training with sailors offered coaching local to them to suit their needs as well as Academy weekends and on-going competition support. It's with delight we welcome single handed head coach Chris Gowers to lead the Laser program assisted ably by Sean Evans.

It's vital to recognise the importance of the junior program which I will come on to, but it is a pleasure and credit to the sailors and the many individuals who work or have worked with them that our yesteryear best juniors sailors are driving up the numbers of Welsh sailors within the RYA Youth set up. In fact, I undersell our sailors following a season which finds Wales; -

Laser Radial Boys – 1<sup>st</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> in the UK series ranking as Micky Beckett picked up the U19 National title back in August, and David Paine holding the top U17 year old from the UK Youths.

In the girls, Wales rank 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the country as Ellie and Hannah showed also what they could do on the international stage as Ellie picked up European and World U17 fourth, and Hannah held the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot all week in La Rochelle until the last day; finishing 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> British sailors respectively at the Worlds is not a bad achievement.

In the Double Handers – only Toby Morsley is representing Wales in the 420 class, picking up Flanders and GBR Nationals 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Nia and Molly finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> at the UK Youths have now since moved on with Molly sailing with a new helm and Nia selected to the RYA Keelboat squad and now in University.

The lack of 420 sailing is a worry with no formal group in place to work with; whilst the 29er class after several barren years since Bleddyn Mon has seen a



revival with 6 boats training and 3 selected to the Academy with immediate effect.

Are these trends cyclical or are there interventions we could be making?

**Junior**

A stand out season by “Wales Young Sailor of the Year” Matthew Whitfield marks the telling story of 2011 as the optimist class continues from strength to strength. Perhaps more impressive that Matthew’s individual success is that 21 Welsh Optimist sailors were ranked in the GBR 100 by the end of season rankings!

Other notable success saw Daniel Whitely and Will Creaven gain British European Team selection, whilst Huw Edwards grabbed 3<sup>rd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> in the juniors at the Majors this year.

Interestingly of the top 21 Optimist sailors in Wales all are from CBYC or PDSC except 3 who are from Pwllheli. It’s also a frightening statistic to know the top ranked GBR sailor is age 11!

In the Topper class the age profile of the class means many good sailors miss out on the squad pathway. Nevertheless it is a credit to the team and sailors we have that the UK top ranked girl is Tilly James (UK2) UK Inlands Champion in Danielle Rowe and we make up 4 of the National and 4 of the Intermediate squad places. This is 8 of 48 GBR places and close to our all-time best!

The regional squad programs in Topper have since been put on hold with increased investment directed at club level to increase and identify more sailors in age eligible for future WNS places.

The transient 4.7 class found Wales picking up GBR Gold and Silver at the Lase 4.7 Nationals, in Matthew Whitfield and Tom Joesbury, as David Pain finished his 4.7 time representing GBR in Flanders (top GBR) and San Francisco (2<sup>nd</sup> GBR).



**Matt Whitfield - 2011 achievements**

- British Optimist Selections – Winner
- Selected to GBR Worlds team for second time
- British Optimist Inlands – Winner
- RS Feva Inlands – winner
- RS Feva Nationals – runner up
- RS Feva Worlds – World Champion
- Then hoped into a Laser 4.7
- Laser 4.7 Nationals – winner (GBR)
- Laser 4.7 Zone Championships – winner
- Laser 4.7 LADDER (2<sup>ND</sup> and 1<sup>ST</sup>)

2011 Medal Tally (National Championships / International Event Medals)		
<b>Olympic &amp; Para Olympic</b>	8 Total	3 Gold 3 Silver 2 Bronze
<b>Youth All</b>	8	1 Gold U19 1 Gold U17 1 Gold U16 3 Silver U19 2 Bronze U19
<b>Junior All</b>	15	7 Gold (senior U15) 4 Silver (senior U15) 2 Silver (Junior U13) 2 Bronze (Junior U13)

To date with some competition within the 2011 season remaining. The 2010 total was 29 medals.

The detailed sailor review, new program developments of RS Feva, and Volvo Champion Club and the domestic competition and club analysis are not contained within this AGM summary report.

## 7 ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING REPORT

2011 has been another busy year with consultations via the RYA that affect boating interests in Wales. Our regional representatives have dealt with these efficiently and I thank Susanne, Dominic and Tim for their efforts.

The off-shore renewables continue to grow with both wind and tidal stream projects moving through the various planning stages. The RYA has lead on most of these and we play an important regional role in liaison with member clubs.

The environment and planning pages of the RYA website provide up-to-date guidance on many issues as well as advice to clubs on practical planning and environmental management issues.

As members of the Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership we have input into the selection process for marine conservation zones which will be subject to the first round of public consultation in early 2012. The Welsh Government's approach to marine planning is in its early stages and again through the WCMP boating interests are being represented.

My tenure on the RYA's Planning and Environment Committee comes to an end in January 2012 and a replacement has still to be confirmed. If anyone with relevant competencies has interest in the committee's work please approach Alana Murphy at the RYA in their Hamble HQ or contact me for further information.

## 8 SAIL FOR GOLD IN 2012 – OLYMPIC ACTIVATION CAMPAIGN

**Is your club up for the challenge in 2012?** At the time of writing this document there are 268 days to go until the start of the games of the 31<sup>st</sup> Olympiad and 301 days until the start of the 14<sup>th</sup> Paralympic Games. As we move further into 2012 the media hype will get louder and our television and press will report on nothing else. We already know that two Welsh Sailors in Hannah Mills and Stephen Thomas have been selected with another two still battling it out in the very competitive male 470 and 49ER classes.

Sailing has been one of the most successful sports for Team GBR over the last three games and the plans are in place for another dominating performance on the home waters in Weymouth and Portland Harbour.

The games are far more than a spectacle and elite athletes – it provides us all with a real opportunity to grow and develop our sport – but are you signed up to our Activation Campaign?.

Welsh Sailing in association with the RYA has launched a programme called **Sail for Gold** which provides a framework of on- and off the water activities which you can tailor to suit your needs. We hope to inspire new and existing sailors to get out on the water, make clubs the focal point for members to join in the spirit of the Olympics, and maximise support for the world's most successful Olympic classes sailing team, "Skandia Team GBR".

I would like to invite and encourage you to sign up for these initiatives, to help your club or training centre get engaged with the best of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Clubs in Wales have the added benefit of accessing the Community Chest grant scheme that could realise up to £1500 for your club to train new volunteers as AI, DI's or even those all-important powerboat drivers that allow activity to happen safely. To purchase new equipment like buoyancy aids or training implements – there are a number of possibilities.

Sail for Gold is a comprehensive programme of activities designed to bring the Olympics to you. It includes a celebration of the long and successful heritage of the British Sailing Team, events to get your members on the water, activities that will inspire your local community, and a website that will provide up to the minute Team GBR news, commentary and results from Olympic selection through to the Olympic and Paralympic regattas.

Getting involved is simple. Nominate a **Sail for Gold Activator** - your representative and point of contact for us to communicate information about the planned activities and events. Contact your RDO if you need any help with sports development planning or completing the Community Chest form.

Sail for Gold can only achieve its potential with your commitment and whilst participation is voluntary we are confident you will want to join in this once in a generation opportunity. In order to register the name of your Sail for Gold Club activator, receive further details of the programme including some key dates 2012 simply click on this link: [www.rya.org.uk/go/activator](http://www.rya.org.uk/go/activator)

Some of you will wish to team up with neighbouring Clubs, Training Centres, Sailability Groups or other Class Associations – in which case, please appoint a single Sail for Gold Activator. I hope you are all as excited as we are about the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics and will take advantage of the opportunity to get your members and customers involved and to help us support Team GBR.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity – a home games and a great way of developing a lasting legacy for your club by welcoming new members, reengaging with those who no longer participate and recruiting new volunteers.

