

The Association Secretaries Report on the 58th South Coast Championship Regatta (and the 9th South Coast Junior Regatta, hosted by the Hants & Dorset ARA in Swanage, Dorset, over the weekend of 13th/14th September, 2014.

It was the Hants & Dorset ARA's turn to host the 58th South Coast Rowing Championships – and the 9th South Coast Junior Championships – with a return to a Coastal venue – at Swanage in Dorset – for the first time since 2003 - following two very successful H&D hosted events at Dorney Lake in 2007 and 2011. A two day event – with the Championship and Open Fours events on the Saturday and Junior – and for the first time, open small boat events on the Sunday.

In addition to the risks of a Coastal venue the small but dedicated organising committee, drawn from several Hants & Dorset Clubs faced a number of difficulties that they had not anticipated – among them the loss of key committee members, a date clash with Swanage Marathon – which probably worked in our favour in the end due to shared facilities, the on-going and much delayed improvement work on Swanage Promenade and the need to switch the venue for the alternative course fairly late in the day due to concerns over its fairness and access. With all these issues eventually overcome – the concerns in the week running up to the Championships focused on the poor weather forecast, with uncharacteristic Easterly winds – the worst case for the normally sheltered Swanage bay – prevailing all week. Mindful of the disappointment of the Deal Championships in 2013 where, for the first time in its history two Championship events were not staged because of the conditions – the committee had put together a plan that would give four options over the weekend for completing at least the Championship events.

By the time of the well-attended Reception on the Friday evening got underway – and following the earlier meeting of the South Coast Council – it was clear that the primary course at Swanage would be unrowable on the Sunday – but there appeared to be a window of opportunity to stage the Saturday events – where the conditions would be difficult but racing possible. So the committee, in consultation with the South Coast Council came up with a revised plan that involved switching all the Junior Coxed Quad events to the Saturday – after the main regatta was completed delaying the finish but ensuring that almost everyone who attended got to race. This brave decision looked like it might back fire as the Clubs gathered for the start of the Regatta on Saturday as although the anticipated conditions in Swanage Bay were rowable they delayed – and in one case prevented - the arrival of the support boats – and a breakdown to one of the safety boats added a further complication. It is to the credit of the organisers that their planning was such that they were able to switch boats around to accommodate the regatta's needs – although this did delay the start of the regatta by nearly an hour. But once the Regatta was underway, with the cooperation of the Clubs and dedication of the race officials, some time was made up and the Championship and Open fours events were all completed just half an hour behind the scheduled time. The switch of the Junior Quad events to the end of the regatta, from Sunday, obviously added further time and these events did not run quite as smoothly with boat and crew changes and the limited experience of the Junior rowers coping with the at times difficult conditions. Certainly great care had to be taken when boating and coming ashore and a number of crews were swamped undertaking these tasks – but no crews sunk during the racing – confirming that the decision to go ahead on the primary course was the correct one.

The total entries for the weekend were 229 – and following the cancellation of the Senior and Junior Small boat events 153 actually raced – less any scratching's on the day. There

were 32 crews involved in the Championships races with WEARA having one entry in each Championship event – a small but encouraging improvement on 2013. As a result the Hants & Dorset ARA invoked rule 25B for two events -Shanklin entering the Men’s Coastal Junior Fours and Lymington the Men’s Senior Fours. CARA did not take-up this option. Crews from Hants & Dorset Clubs provided 68 of the 97 entries in the open events – over two thirds of the crews entered – CARA had a disappointing 26 entries – and WEARA were even more of a disappointment with just three crews entered. The Junior and open small boat events planned for the Sunday attracted 100 entries – 72 in the Junior events where H&D Clubs with 48 entries again provided around two thirds of the entries received with CARA a disappointing 15 and 9 from WEARA which was a little more encouraging. The open small boat events attracted just 28 entries in total – with H&D Clubs providing more than half with 17 and CARA providing the other 11 – with no entries from WEARA Clubs - raising question mark over it is worth including these events in future Championship Regatta’s. However the main challenge remains - how do we attract more entries from the WEARA Clubs across all events?

As ever, with his permission and my thanks, I turn to John Bailey’s press report for an unbiased review of the Championship races -

“Grey skies and a tumbling surf greeted crews at the 58th Annual South Coast Rowing Championships at Swanage on Saturday, and a delayed start due to the late arrival of the Official Starters Boat due to conditions in Poole Harbour led to an air of apprehension amongst the crews and the hundreds of supporters who had travelled from all over the West of England and South Coast from Herne Bay and Bideford. With the Junior Regatta, scheduled for Sunday, already cancelled after an adverse weather forecast, It looked a brave choice by the organising Committee for the Championships to go ahead at Swanage instead of moving to the more sheltered reserve coarse in Poole Harbour as, with the surf picking up with the rising tide, many of the crews in the early supporting events were soaked to the skin just getting afloat. But for once the delayed start worked in the organizers favour, with the sun breaking through and the seas becoming more settled, the first of the Championship events got underway an hour behind schedule.

Masters Championship.

Masters Championship Fours with crews from Folkestone, Hastings, Poole, BTC (Southampton) and Bideford AAC (Blues) coming to the line. Poole with M Sewell (Bow), R Wilson (2), R Murphy (3), P Jacobs (Strk), F Hill (Cox) were first to show after the start, closely followed by Folkestone and Hastings with BTC and Bideford taking time to settle to the following seas driving the crews down the course demanding solid entries and clean finishes to each stroke to avoid being trapped by the waves. Poole extended their lead throughout the race but positions never changed with Folkestone following them over the finishing line in second place, Hastings third being closed down by BTC, followed by Bideford Blues.

Ladies Junior Championship

The Ladies Junior Championship saw crews from the Southampton based Itchen Imperial and BTC clubs dominate from the start, with Itchen P Emery (Bow), M Paul (2), B Jones (3), L Townly (Strk), S Moore (Cox) proving the stronger, establishing clear water between their boats, BTC unable to match their rhythm or power, leaving the Coast crews from Shoreham and Hasting to fight their private battle for third place whilst Exeter did their best in conditions that were clearly not to their liking.

Men’s Junior Championship

With a marked improvement in conditions as the tide passed its peak, Poole and Shanklin moved quickly into their rhythm and looked to be the early leaders as the two Deal crews kept their eyes on each other, whilst BTC and Bideford Reds took time to settle. At the half

way stage Shanklin looked likely winners but with 500 metres remaining a push by Deal A M Handley (Bow), O Mullaney (2), R Mullaney (3), L Mullaney (Strk), J Dodrill (Cox) took them past Shanklin and Poole. With the finishing positions between Poole and BTC also deciding who would be this season's Hants and Dorset Champions, Poole raised their rate keeping an eye on the improving BTC, but it was Shanklin who hung on to the Deal A crew's stern to make a race of it, but Deal A were in control, crossing the finishing line with barely a length separating the two crew leaving Poole to finish third with the Hants and Dorset Medal as their consolation.

Men's Junior / Senior Championship

Herne Bay, Lymington and Ryde made all the running in that order, with Herne Bay G Holness (Bow), T Walton (2), L Towner (3), W Campbell (Strk), D Wareham (Cox) looking certain winners as they lifted their rate to establish a clear lead despite an unexpectedly high performance from Lymington. But the expected charge from Ryde, who had dominated the Hants and Dorset season, never came and Herne Bay were more than six lengths clear of Lymington as they crossed the line with Ryde a disappointing third followed by Deal and Bideford Reds.

Ladies Senior Championship

Bexhill's R Holdaway (Bow), K Skelton (2), M Hill (3), E Young (Strk), L Quinn (Cox), pushed hard from the start, settling quickly, they establish clear water between themselves and Itchen Imperial who seemingly had their eyes set on the progress of the Coalporters a length and half further back. With neither Itchen nor Coalporters making any progress the Bexhill Ladies seemed content with a bit of a push at the half way mark to increase their lead but Itchen were far from finished and with 200 meters left they put in their effort and with the angle of the finishing line in their favour had a chance, but Bexhill had done enough, crossing the line with just a length between the two crews.

Men's Senior Championship

With Itchen Imperial looking to repeat their last season performance when they won their first Bideford Bowl Championship in appalling conditions at Deal and, with BTC, the current Hants and Dorset Champions looking for their third Bowl win in five years, still smarting after finishing second behind Bexhill in the Grand Challenge Cup final at Southsea Regatta. And Deal, much fancied amongst their own supporters and Plymouth an unknown quantity from the West of England Association being a wild card along with Lymington who are known, on occasions, to do the unexpected, this year's Bowls race had all the ingredients' to be a classic. Three false starts highlighted the tension, but on the fourth they were away with Bexhill on the outside, Deal on the Inside with BTC and Itchen the meat in the sandwich. Itchen and Bexhill had the best of the first 100 metres, leading BTC and Deal by a length but unfortunately that's as close as it got. Whilst Itchen fought a losing battle to stay ahead of BTC, Bexhill's M Mitchell (Bow), D Holdaway (2), M Hellier (3), K Cahill (Strk) R Holdaway (Cox) moved relentlessly ahead, BTC took up the chase but were no match for Bexhill who crossed the finishing line with six lengths to spare with Itchen a further length and a half behind BTC.

While only winning two Championships was disappointing for the Hants & Dorset ARA – and CARA's for wins was an impressive set of results – the performance of the Hants & Dorset representative crews should not be under estimated with several finishing in podium places securing the aggregate shield for the Association with 29 points against CARA's 25.

The Hants & Dorset also dominated the open events winning nine of the ten events staged - Ryde winning the Men's and Ladies Open Seniors, Christchurch the Men's Juniors, Shanklin the Ladies Novice, Lymington the Maters B and BTC the newly introduced Ladies Masters event. But the best performance in these events came from Itchen Imperial who won the

Men's Novice, Ladies Junior and Masters A events. Herne Bay was the sole non-Hants & Dorset winners taking the Open Junior Senior Event. The Hants & Dorset ARA therefore comfortably won the Open Events aggregate trophy – with Itchen the lead club with 19 points and Ryde runners-up with 10.

In the four Junior events that were staged a WEARA Club actually won an event – the Girls J16 Coxed Quad going to Bideford ARC – but wins for Shanklin in the Boys J16 Coxed Quad, Newport in the Boys J14 Coxed Quad and Christchurch in the Girls J14 Coxed Quad ensured that the Hants & Dorset ARA took this aggregate trophy as well – Christchurch's 3rd place in the Boys J14 Quad securing the Trophy for them.

With the Hants & Dorset ARA securing all three aggregate Trophies I think we can claim to be the South Coasts top Rowing Association once again.

I am not going to comment in this report on the organisation of the event – which should be left to others to comment on – and will be the subject of a “wrap-up/de-brief” meeting for the organising committee on the 21st of October. However I would like express the thanks of the Association to all those who served on the organising committee and supported the event over the weekend for their dedication, enthusiasm and hard work.

The challenge going forward will be who will organise our next Championship where will it take place – with the change to a three year cycle – that's in 2017 – requiring the process to begin within the year.

Steve Bull,
Association Secretary,
Hants & Dorset ARA.
October, 2014.

Entries.

	CARA	H&D	WEARA		CARA	H&D	WEARA		
Saturday	Championship				Open				
	12	14	6	32	26	68	3	97	129
Sunday	Junior				Small Boats				
	15	48	9	72	11	17	0	28	100
40 of these crews/scullers did not race.					None of these crews raced -			76	229
					Actually raced -			153	

RESULTS.

South Coast Championship Results - Swanage 2014

British Rowing Almanac Format.

Date

13th September 2014

Boat Type	Men's Ladies Mixed	Event Type/ Status (Coastal)	Total Event Entries	Winning Club	2nd	3 rd
South Coast Championship Events						
C4+	Men's	Senior	6	Bexhill	BTC	Itchen Imperial
C4+	Men's	Junior Senior	5	Herne Bay	Lymington	Ryde
C4+	Men's	Junior	6	Deal	Shanklin	Poole
C4+	Ladies	Senior	5	Bexhill	Itchen Imperial	Coalporters
C4+	Ladies	Junior	5	Itchen	BTC	Shoreham
C4+	Men's	Masters	5	Poole	Folkestone	Hastings
Aggregate				Hants & Dorset (29)	CARA (25)	
Open & Invitation Events						
C4+	Men's	Senior	8	Ryde	Lymington	Coalporters
C4+	Men's	Junior Senior	4	Bexhill	Westover	Southsea
C4+	Men's	Junior	20	Christchurch B	Shanklin	Deal
C4+	Men's	Novice	16	Itchen Imperial B	Herne Bay	Itchen Imperial A
C4+	Ladies	Senior	6	Ryde	Coalporters	Southampton
C4+	Ladies	Junior	19	Itchen Imperial A	Itchen Imperial B	BTC
C4+	Ladies	Novice	14	Shanklin A	Deal	Southampton
C4+	Men's	Masters A (40)	6	Itchen Imperial	BTC	Lymington
C4+	Men's	Masters B (50)	4	Lymington	Bexhill	Herne Bay
C4+	Ladies	Masters		BTC	Christchurch	Southampton
Aggregate				Itchen Imperial (19)	Ryde (10)	BTC (9) Lymington (9)
Junior Regatta Events						
C4x+	Boy's	J16		Shanklin A	Deal	BTC
C4x+	Girl's	J16		Bideford ARC	Worthing	Bexhill
C4x+	Boy's	J14		Newport	Itchen imperial	Christchurch
C4x+	Girl's	J14		Christchurch	Itchen Imperial	
Aggregate				Christchurch (6)		