

## **Scottish Rowing in 2007**

*by Mike Haggerty*

While generally speaking, 2007 was a year of achievement and progress for Scottish rowing, there were disappointments too.

The clear highlight of the year was the successful hosting of the World under-23 Championships at Strathclyde Park, yet another example of how the Scottish rowing community – aided and abetted by many friends from beyond the country - routinely hosts slick events that work for everybody, and delivers with smiles on faces and a ready willingness to go that extra step to help our guests. This combination ensures that, every time Strathclyde Park is thrust onto the international stage, new friendships are made and Scottish rowing's reputation for efficiency and friendliness is enhanced – a genuine win/win situation.

The achievements of the whole Scottish rowing family during these Championships were matched on an individual basis by Aberdeen's Gary Bain, who, during the event, passed the FISA umpires' exam, becoming only the fifth home-based Scot to have held this international licence.

At the end of the year, there were changes on the Executive Committee of the Association, with Mike Morrice, stepping up from being an Ordinary Member to the role of Vice-President, Participation, and Ian White, like Mike a member of Edinburgh club St Andrew, coming in as Vice-President, Performance, taking over this role from Iain Somerside. These two roles reflect a new governance structure being introduced by the Association, and further changes saw Mike Haggerty move from Vice-President to being Ordinary Member with responsibility for Communications. The other Ordinary Members are now Graeme Cunningham, in charge of Coaching, and Graeme Stewart, who has responsibility for Governance. Ian Radcliff of Stirling has also taken up the role of Association Secretary.

In August, Glasgow was chosen to be host of the 2014 Commonwealth Games, and, in rowing terms, this achievement served to remind us of how disappointing it is that rowing cannot be included on the programme.

Since the launch of the Glasgow bid, Scottish rowing had been closely involved, with several individuals helping on many different levels. Indeed, some Commonwealth delegates were hosted during the World under 23s, all expressing deep admiration for the venue and its organisation. Despite the cordial relationships rowing had enjoyed with the bid team, decisions taken at the end of 2006 by the international Commonwealth Games Federation mean that rowing as a sport does not have sufficient status to be considered for any games programme, meaning that when 2014 happens, we will be on the outside looking in. This will also present challenges going forward, with Scottish sports funding doubtlessly being targeted on Commonwealth sports.

To add further to this difficulty, it appears from meetings held by FISA and others during the Sri Lanka Commonwealth Congress, that there is little chance of rowing's status being improved in future years, leaving the Commonwealth Games as the only international "regional" multi-sports celebration not to have a regular rowing presence.

On a more positive basis, school-based development work is continuing with much success, with projects now well-established in Aberdeen, Glasgow and elsewhere, including Inverness, and others set to come on-stream during the year.