



**Welsh Hockey Union Limited**  
Annual General Meeting  
Welsh Institute of Sport, Cardiff  
Plas Menai, North Wales  
8<sup>th</sup> January 2006



**Agenda Item 6**

**Reports**

**President's Report**

In my last year's report to you the members of WHU, I stated that we were in the first few months of a Modernisation programme, which was a key task for all the major Governing Bodies of Sport both in England. We have continued to work to this agenda and with the support and guidance from you our members we will strive to achieve a more, inclusive, streamlined but effective Governing Body. We realise that if we are to succeed we need to listen to, and communicate with, our Regions, clubs and members. I urge everyone to participate actively in all consultations and debates over the coming months; as I have stated on many occasions - the Welsh Hockey Union belongs to you the members and as Directors and Officers any decisions we make must be made in the best interest of everyone involved whilst also safeguarding the future of hockey in Wales.

The first opportunity to listen to your views will be at this year's AGM which will be held on January 8<sup>th</sup>. We are piloting a new format i.e. a two venue AGM linked by Video; the venues will be at WIS Cardiff and Plas Menai Gwynedd. Officers and Directors will be at both venues to assist with the running of the meeting and I urge you to attend and let your voice be heard.

This season has yet again seen further increases in membership, more specifically in junior membership. The SCW's Dragon Sport programme, which runs in most of the Welsh Primary schools, reports that this year Hockey has moved into the top four most popular sports with over 2200 Dragon Sports Community Clubs being established with almost 12000 players involved. Much of the credit for this must be attributed to the initiatives put in place by Debbie Austin our National Development Manager ably supported by her Regional Development Officers, the central office development staff and the Umpire and Coaching Consultants. But of course without the many volunteers in clubs and schools these achievements would not have been possible.

At this point I wish to pay tribute to Debbie who will be leaving Welsh Hockey to take up an appointment with the Sports Council for Wales. She has established and overseen some excellent and innovative development programmes and projects, her enthusiasm and vision has put hockey at the forefront of sports development in Wales. I thank her and wish her every success in her new position.

At International level this season we have competed in European Competitions at both Senior and Under 18's. The outstanding performance was that of our Senior Men who won the Bronze medal in the Trophy division, narrowly missing promotion to the 2007 Nations Cup, this result gave them a World Ranking of 23. The Women had a disappointing campaign finishing in 7<sup>th</sup> place, which resulted in relegation, but they have the ability to regain lost ground in the 2007 tournament. In the Under 18 Boys European Trophy our team had their best results to date and they finished a creditable third collecting the Bronze Medal. The Girls could not match their male counterparts and finished in 6<sup>th</sup> Position.

Domestic Competition continues to be the lifeblood of Welsh Hockey. Both National and Regional Competition committees run very full programmes of League and Cup competitions

for men and women at all age levels. My thanks to the Committee Chairs and their members for their work in this area.

Our two teams who compete in the English National League retained their position with Whitchurch reaching the promotion play offs. Despite a poor first half of the season, Swansea rallied to finish mid table. As I write this report we have reached the half way stage in the competition and both teams are in the top three positions.

My sincere thanks to all members of staff, the Chairman and my fellow Directors, to Coaches, Umpires, Teachers and everyone who works in any way for Hockey in Wales; it is because of the commitment, expertise and enthusiasm of all our volunteers, that we are able to maintain high standards and create opportunities for more people to play and enjoy our sport.

We are grateful to the Sports Council for Wales for their ongoing support.

Finally we still face many challenges if we are to sustain and achieve further growth in our sport. The only way we can successfully meet these challenges is if we communicate, work together and support each other from grass roots through to elite level and from club members through to Directors and Officers.

I look forward to seeing you and hearing your views at our “video” AGM in Plas Menai and Welsh Institute of Sport on Jan 8th at 14:15

It remains a great honour and privilege to continue to serve you as the President of the Welsh Hockey Union.

**Anne Ellis OBE**  
**President**

### **Chairman's Report**

In common with previous years, the WHU Board has over the last 12 months considered and acted upon a wide range of issues. Obviously I cannot cover all the issues that have received attention in a report of this length. However, I detail below some of the key matters that have been considered:

- Modernisation of the WHU structures and operational arrangements – this matter is the subject of a separate report at the AGM.
- Establishment of a range of sub-committees, task and finish groups and panels to consider or deal with a range of issues.
- Commenced the preparation necessary to develop a new Strategy for the next 8 years, i.e. incorporating the 2008 and 2012 (London) Olympics and the 2010 and 2014 Commonwealth Games.
- Consideration of a Club Development framework.
- Establishment of a new website ([www.welsh-hockey.co.uk](http://www.welsh-hockey.co.uk))
- Monitoring of financial and business performance indicators.
- Various updates and modifications to the Union's codes, regulations, policies and rules.
- Liaison with the Sports Council for Wales on a wide variety of issues.
- Proposals to modify the operational arrangements of the Great Britain Olympic Hockey Limited – this is particularly important in view of the forthcoming London Olympics.
- Assisting Swansea LHC and Whitchurch HC to retain their places in the English National League and hopefully gain promotion.
- Staffing Matters.

Two very special achievements must be recognised. Firstly the massive increase in membership numbers at both senior and youth levels in both genders, along with the increases in the number of primary schools taking part in hockey. Debbie Austin, her merry band of both professional and voluntary staff and all those who volunteer in club and regional hockey must be thanked for the increases in youth membership. The increase in senior membership is also most pleasing, although the reasons behind the growth are not quite so easily pinned down.

The second area that must be acknowledged with grateful thanks is the increase in sponsorship income. This achievement is largely down to the Chief Executive Officer, Mike Bull, who has had a golden year in persuading businesses to invest in Welsh Hockey. Sponsorship income of £250k over the next 4 years has been generated, which can only help Welsh Hockey to develop to even greater heights.

I couple my thanks to Mike for his efforts in generating sponsorship income with my equal or even greater thanks to the sponsors themselves. The full list of our sponsors is:

- Gilmour Sports
- HSBC
- RAF Careers
- Sport Experiences
- Marsh UK
- Professional Recruitment Wales Ltd

Please acknowledge our sponsors whenever possible and support our supporters by purchasing their goods or services.

My fellow Directors (Anne Ellis, Alison Cook, Karen Evans, John Turton, Ian Ord, Billy Barletta and Mike Bull) and the Umpire/Player Representatives (Colin Crayford and Jen Barton) have yet again given many, many hours to Welsh Hockey. On behalf of all members of the Union, I would thank them for their tremendous efforts and assistance both this year and in the past.

Details of Director *and* Umpire/Player Representatives attendance at Board meetings are set out below:

Director	28/1/05	13/3/05	20/5/05	22/7/05	30/9/05	2/12/05
Anne Ellis	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Alison Cook	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Karen Evans	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
John Turton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ian Ord	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Billy Barletta	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mike Bull	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alan Rookes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Colin Crayford</i>	<i>No</i>	Yes	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Jen Barton</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Bethan Walsh initially and Chloe Guy subsequently have also been invited to attend all Board Meetings in their role as Youth Co-ordinator.

Jane Price initially and Chris Brewer subsequently have acted as the Board's Minute Secretary. I would thank them both for their efforts in this role and would make particular comment about Jane who did the daunting work of Minute Secretary for the best part of two years. Her contribution to Welsh Hockey as Minute Secretary and in many other roles is much appreciated.

The Sports Council for Wales continue to be massive supporters of the Union's programmes and activities. In the 12 month period up to 31 August 2005, the Sports Council provided us

with grant aid in excess of £400,000, plus an incalculable amount in advice and general back-up support. This financial support is primarily aimed at youth development, the international programme, operation of the Academy and staffing. Quite understandably there are conditions attached to this grant aid and the Board and staff do everything possible to ensure that these conditions are met.

The Sports Councils contribution is not and must not be underestimated. I have said it on many occasions in the past, but would repeat yet again that the Union could not exist in its current form without their financial support and Welsh Hockey (and I suspect many other Welsh sports) would be a minor operation with limited competitive opportunities at all levels. On behalf of the Union and all its members, I would consequently like to say a huge THANK YOU to the Sports Council.

As mentioned in my 2004 report, John Mayock has taken over as our Sports Council Liaison Officer. John has added a different dimension to our work with the Sports Council and has provided invaluable advice both from the Sports Council's position and from his considerable knowledge as an international athlete. I offer John all our thanks for his efforts for Welsh Hockey in the last year and trust our working relationship will continue for some years to come.

The Union is extremely well served by its professional staff and I would take this opportunity to thank them for their continuing commitment. Mike Bull, Chris Brewer, David Griffiths and Debbie Austin continue to offer both the Union as a body, its members and our partner's excellent professional support and guidance. They have in turn been well supported by Robin Jones, Chris Marriott, Mark Hopkins, Steve Edwards, Sarah Powell, Anwen Owen, and Sarah Austin. Good luck to you all and thank you.

In recent years a number of Local Development Officers have been working on behalf of Welsh Hockey, although they are actually employed by Councils in partnership deals. Their contribution to Welsh Hockey has been appreciable, as witnessed by the increases in our youth membership. They are directly responsible for much of the work being undertaken with youngsters and I consequently also offer them our appreciation for their hard work.

I concluded last years report with the following statement:

'You should all be proud of Welsh Hockey and the Welsh Hockey Union. Far too many persons criticise the Union, frequently based on little or no knowledge of the facts. The truth, however, is that the Union is a forward thinking organisation, striving for excellence, and with the goodwill of its members, volunteers and staff there is no reason why Welsh Hockey should not continue to go from strength to strength.'

I believe this statement is still pertinent today and I consequently reiterate and emphasise this view.

**Alan Rookes**  
**Chairman**

### **Chief Executives Report**

I would like to start my article by thanking every volunteer, player, coach, teacher, parent, board member, staff member and sponsor for your support of Welsh Hockey. Having come from outside of the sport of hockey I am genuinely astounded by the level of commitment and dedication you all give to the cause. Thank you all!!

Looking back to the 6 September 2004 little did I realise on my first day the extent of the challenges that faced Welsh Hockey and indeed how long it would take to get the organisation into a position where we could honestly say that we were a modern business fully equipped for the rigours of business in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Indeed I specifically remember one evening during the first month of my employment having a discussion with my wife about

how long it would take me to get the modernisation process through. Buoyed by the mini success of putting in place a few new personnel and finance procedures I boasted that it should only take me about 12 months to put everything into place, my wife said 'don't be so silly it will take you at least three years' to which I replied 'we will see!' Well one year on I hate to admit it but my wife was right!!

#### What's been achieved?

Having said that it will take three years plus to get there, we have made significant strides in 2004/05 in a number of areas. I have highlighted some of the key successes below to add to those already highlighted in the Chairman's, Development and Performance reports:

#### Income Generation

New three or four year sponsorship deals have been signed with sponsors Gilmour Sports Ltd, Sport Experiences, HSBC Bank Ltd and RAF Careers. The combined worth of these deals over the four year period to the Union is £123000 which if successfully matched with the Sportsmatch scheme will expand to a whopping £220400.

#### Member Services

We have entered into partnership with our sponsors and suppliers to offer members a wide range of membership benefits and discounts. A few of the packages agreed are highlighted below:

Gilmour Sports - Online WHU Official Merchandise Shop

Sport Experiences – Sports Tour and Travel Deals

Lyreco – Stationery Suppliers

#### Communication Systems

The new and much improved WHU Website is now fully operational.

#### Corporate Governance and Strategic Planning Improvements

A number of improvements have been made in this area including:  
The production of Board Modernisation Action Plan;  
Implementation of Board Effectiveness Improvements;  
Strategic targets for 2002 – 2006 amended to reflect growth in membership and performance standards;  
Staffing resources have been restructured to be able to best achieve strategic plan targets;  
Annual operational plan produced which is linked to the four year strategic plan;  
Staff work programmes are now linked to the operational plan.

#### Operational Management Policies, Procedures and Systems

New procedures and policies are in place for Personnel, Operational and Financial Management. We now have a financial procedures manual, staff handbook, new financial reporting and recording system, child protection policy, sponsorship policy and have updated or are in the process of updating several other policies and procedures. In addition the Union has adequately equipped its staff and office with permanently sited and mobile IT and telephone systems.

#### What about the Next Twelve Months?

Without wishing to get carried away with the above successes and those mentioned in the development and performance articles overleaf, make no bones about it we face a tough

challenge to move this sport forward at the pace required to keep in front of all our competitors. Over the next twelve months not only will we need to keep improving in those areas already mentioned above but will also need to:

- Develop a New Strategic Plan for the period 2006 – 2014;
- Address the lack of media coverage and profile of hockey in Wales;
- Improve communication from the board down to the grass roots and vice versa;
- Restructure the way the sport is run in Wales both at and below Board level;
- Address Club Development weaknesses and Volunteer Recruitment Shortages;
- Revisit our Competitive structure so that everyone is accessing appropriate level competition;
- Improve our management information systems;

My hair might be going greyer by the minute but I am really looking forward to tackling the challenges ahead!! I hope that you will contribute in some way in helping us achieve our goal of being a National Governing Body that all others aspire to.

**Mike Bull**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

### **Development Report**

#### **Staff.**

Since last year's AGM, the Development Section has seen some changes to its staff. Chris Marriott former, LDO in the Vale of Glamorgan has relinquished his position to take up a new role as Education Development Manager. Vicky Hinsley has been appointed to assist Rae Ellis in Carmarthenshire to keep things moving along since the departure of her assistant Darren Bartley. During the summer International player Sarah Thomas led hockey development in the Vale of Glamorgan. Anwen Owen has been appointed as development support officer to implement the new club development and junior competition agenda.

There are a number of further changes afoot with new Hockey Development Officers planned for Wrexham and Ceredigion charged with the new club development support agenda. There is also the possibility that we will also have "Phase 2" Hockey Development Officers in a further three Unitary Authorities subject to a few final negotiations with our various partners. That would take us to a staff of 18, a far cry from the pioneering days with the Development "Section" comprising just one National Development Manager!

#### **Coach Education**

Work continues to bring our coaching awards in line with the other Home Countries alongside a comprehensive programme of Tutor training, mentoring and assessment that is helping us to have the right number of tutors to enable us to run a full and high quality coach education and development programme. Course resources for the Leaders Course have now been revised and Tutor notes written and the number of Leaders Courses delivered continues to grow. We are currently looking to run extra Youth Courses to cope with demand and will update the Coaching Calendar on the website with further details. Our National Trainer, Sarah Powell, is still working hard developing our Hockey NVQ's (Coaching, Teaching and Instruction Levels 2 and 3) and elements of these are starting to find their way into our Leaders and Youth Awards. Following the release of additional funding from the Sports Council for Wales, the WHU has appointed an Education Development Manager who along with the National Trainer will lead this important area of work. There are some planned additional areas for development during 2005 – 2006 which include establishing and delivering a new Coaching for Teachers Awards, along with the implementation of the HSBC Skills Awards.

## Youth Hockey

The number of Youth Competitions continues to grow with the most significant increase being the number of entries for the Activate competition with over 2000 players from over 200 schools taking part. It is now anticipated that as a direct result of our work with the SCW Dragon Sport initiative there are now in excess of 7,000 under 11's now playing hockey. The challenge for the WHU Development Section is to keep these players in the game through the provision of both competitive and development opportunities. A new RAF under 18 Girls Cup competition has been established this year, together with new Regional Leagues for under 11 Boys and Girls. If you would like more information on any of these competitions, please contact the Development Section at the WHU on [anwen.owen@welsh-hockey.co.uk](mailto:anwen.owen@welsh-hockey.co.uk)

The WHU is keen to initiate working partnerships with Further Education Colleges to continue to support the development of 16 to 19 year olds. We have devised an Accredited Centre programme which involves technical, tactical and sports science support for talented players. Jen Barton has agreed to undertake the role of coordinating a competitive structure for all Welsh Colleges to start in October 2005 to provide formalised playing opportunities.

## Youth Activators

The Youth Activators programme is now into its third year. Devised to bring young people into the areas of the game it has given them the opportunity to participate in areas such as coaching, umpiring, club development/administration, competition organisation etc. Following a Youth Conference last year, the Activators were given the opportunity to join the WHU Development Section staff and some of the Local Development Officers on the International Hockey Experience (IHE) at Disneyland Resort Paris during the Easter holidays. The Activators took on the role of coaches to the 58 Under 15 girls that signed up for the 5 day trip that included coaching sessions, tournaments and of course the chance to spend time in the Disneyland Parks. As a result of the success of the first trip, it is now intended to make this an annual event and the planning for next year is well in hand. The 2006 IHE will be bigger and better following new sponsorship from our travel organisers Sport Experiences.

The new intake of Youth Activators have now been selected, and will attend the 2005 Youth Conference which takes place at the Welsh Institute of Sport, Cardiff. Competition for places has been extremely high with more than 28 applications for only 14 spaces. Running from the 31<sup>st</sup> August to 2<sup>nd</sup> September, the Conference will give the Activators the opportunity to learn to work together to help to develop the game in Wales and of course to have lots of fun doing so! If you would like to find out more about being a Youth Activator, contact Chris Marriott at [anwen.owen@welsh-hockey.co.uk](mailto:anwen.owen@welsh-hockey.co.uk)

Two of our third Grade Activators, Jon Elliott and Chloe Guy have been selected to represent Wales at the bi-annual World Youth Festival which this year takes place alongside the Women's U21 World Cup in Chile in September. Following in the footsteps of the inaugural World Youth Promoter Bethan Walsh will be no mean feat, but we wish Jon and Chloe the very best for their exciting trip ahead and know that they will be real ambassadors for Welsh Hockey and their fellow activators.

## Club Development

All of the Local Development Officers throughout the Principality have now set up Hockey Forums which give the opportunity to drive and shape hockey locally to all schools, clubs and individuals. If you have some ideas, want to have your say, or just want to know more about the work of the forum in your area please contact your Development Officer or of course [anwen.owen@welsh-hockey.co.uk](mailto:anwen.owen@welsh-hockey.co.uk)

The three "Phase 2" Development Officers mentioned earlier will focus on club development issues to help provide support to new and existing hockey clubs to enable them to meet the challenge of the massive demand for hockey that Dragon Sport and WHU initiatives have created.

In addition to the Under 13 and Under 15 Girls elements of their work programmes, the Local Development Officers will be extending their work to include Under 13 Boys development. This programme aims to support the players that have progressed on to Secondary Schools from Dragon Sport hockey in Primary Schools.

The Centres of Local Development and Centres of Regional Excellence have now moved to the Performance Section of the WHU. The events have now been rebranded as Local Elite Talent Squads (LETS) and National Elite Talent Squads (NETS) and will be joined by a new Under 13 talent identification and development programme under the guidance of the National Performance Coach David Griffiths. Please see the Performance Section report for more information or contact [mark.hopkins@welsh-hockey.co.uk](mailto:mark.hopkins@welsh-hockey.co.uk)

The support of volunteers in clubs and clubs is vital if we are to continue to be the fastest growing sport in Wales, and we look forward to working with you all in 2005/6 to make this happen.

**Debbie Austin/ Chris Marriott/Sarah Powell/ Anwen Owen/Local Development Officers  
“The Development Section”**

### **International & Performance**

I would like first and foremost to thank the Welsh Hockey community for their warm welcome and support for some of the new things that I have been looking to introduce for the future of our sport.

Firstly we should look at the status that we currently enjoy, and I should pay tribute to my predecessor Alan Lints for the strong position in which our Performance area finds itself. I would also like to thank Mike Bull for his support, doubly important for someone entering a new hockey culture.

In terms of performance, we currently find ourselves in the following situation.

- Performance Clubs, Whitchurch and Swansea have entered and shown their quality in the English National League, currently sitting third and first respectively
- Our Junior Academy had wins against their Belgian counterparts in April (for the boys, a first win against one of the best U/16 teams in Europe)
- A win for our U/21 men against Scotland
- A bronze medal for our U/18 boys at the Euro Trophy
- Competitive performances, not represented by the results that we would have liked for our U/18 girls
- Strong Celtic Cup performances for both our women and particularly our men against A division countries
- A bronze medal at the European Trophy for men in Rome
- A disappointing seventh in Azerbaijan for our women

With expanded programs coming in to place for our junior programs, and the introduction of new National programs being introduced in the 2005/2006 season, it is easy to see that I consider the development of technical skills at a younger age to be a key area for Welsh hockey.

Our newly appointed regional Coaches, in addition to guiding through these initiatives will also be at the forefront of an expansion of our talent identification procedures. They are currently coaching new programs at U/13 level in the North and the South as well as working with their new regional Academy programs.



There is much work still to do, in terms of talent I.D. and finding people to support the new initiatives is on going, but the opportunities to develop more coaches and support staff is one of the key aspects of these new priorities.

All in all, an exciting time to come for Welsh Hockey and I hope that I will be able to repay some of the goodwill that has been pointed my way, in the form of results for our National Programs.

**David Griffiths**  
**National Performance Coach**

### **Competitions**

It is my pleasure to deliver this report on the domestic competitions during 2004/5

The domestic league season saw Whitchurch Men and Swansea Ladies participating in the English National League. To have two clubs that can offer playing experience at this level has to benefit Welsh Hockey as a whole and we need to support them both to ensure their continued participation. The men ended the season failing in the promotion play off's and Swansea came with a late run to comfortably avoid relegation. We wish them both well in 2005/6.

Whilst all the League competitions seem to be flourishing, many competitions do appear to be in decline with ever reducing number of entries and this calls into question whether some competitions continue.

There will be a full review of all domestic competitions at all levels in the first half of 2005/6 and this is a critical phase out of which will evolve how competitive hockey in Wales moves forward both domestically and nationally. We need to move forward with a thorough and robust review of all competitive hockey in Wales that comes within the remit of the WHU.

We have to balance the needs of senior hockey through Leagues and Cups, the youth & schools through their various competitions and the regional games that can become part of the selection process. We also have the various squads needing to hold training days and weekends which at the moment can conflict with club competitions and so raise the club v country conflict.

Trying to fit all this into the calendar is not an easy task especially when we have to schedule Welsh Cup dates around the days when English National League is not being played. We also have to look at the requirements of our sponsors who may place conditions on their financial support in that they wish to see it used in particular areas such as increased age group competitions.

This is not, however, a report about the difficulties we are facing. It is one that reflects the successes of the 2004/5 season, which is not just to applaud the competition winners, but to say thank you to all participants. I make no apology for repeating what I said last year in that each competition can only have one team collecting the trophy but the competition is about all who enter. They may play teams from a different region, at a pitch they may never have visited before and they may lose heavily but the enduring hope is that they will enjoy themselves.

That is what hockey is about.

This is also an opportunity to thank all those who give up their time to organise the national Competitions and in particular Anne Mullin. It is often said that we do not appreciate what people do until they stop doing it and if no-one is prepared to step forward then competitions will cease. I dread to think what will happen when Anne decides she has had enough. When

Roger Harris stood down at the end of 2003/4 the only reason the Men's outdoor competitions continued was because I took on this role but this cannot continue. The simple message is we need more volunteers.

I must thank John Taylor for his efforts in organising the RAF finals at Newtown this year and we very much appreciate the continued support of the RAF for this prestigious event.

There are many many others and really, saying thank you is not enough, but that is all I, on your behalf, can do. I hope that all your efforts are appreciated by those who participate as much as it is appreciated by Welsh Hockey.

Finally, a major thank you goes to our sponsors. The RAF continue to give us tremendous support, not only financially but by attending events, which bear their name. HSBC have also have continued their support even though it is no longer directed towards the Ladies National League.

It would also be very remiss of me not to thank those people without whom games of hockey would not take place - the umpires. I think I can safely say here that I know your efforts are not always appreciated but when talking to players and suggesting they might like to take up the whistle there are never many volunteers. However, if it wasn't for the umpires there would be no competitions so on behalf of all those players who did not shake your hand after a cup game last season, this is a thank you from them!

At the finals stages of all competitions you normally have the technical officials, more commonly known as "the table". This is what makes a final an occasion rather than just another game so thank you to all who "sat".

Finally, I would like to wish all Clubs, teams and players every success during the remainder of the season.

**Alison Cook**  
**Director – National Competitions**

### **Umpires & Technical**

I am pleased to present my "annual" report, the period since the last AGM, there has been continual hockey and umpires seem to have been available throughout.

Since the amalgamation of the men and women at regional level, progress has been quick and the elected committee must be congratulated for their work. They have been getting down to the important business of setting up systems and in particular providing more umpires coaching and training events.

It is still a battle to get the required number of umpires out each week for the leagues, and, although a number of level 1 course's have been held, it is now important that these new umpires become available each and every weekend to take over from the older members. Over the last year the Dragon and Foundation Awards has continued to flourish and younger umpires are getting the required training. However there is a need to push these awards to ensure that young people, as well as all those who wish to umpire, have the opportunity to continue to develop as our future is in their hands. During the year through the support of the Sports Council for Wales a consult has been employed to develop the coaching and umpire awards and the development of a strategy for the next five years. However this funding ceases in January 2006 and the WHUA has decided that as this work will need to be continued will be appointing an Education Coordinator to carry on this work at least for the next 12 months.

Wales can be justly proud of the achievements of their umpires and technical officials. During the season a number of Welsh officials received appointments to indoor and outdoor tournaments. It is particularly pleasing to note that a number received fairly senior appointments. It is also very pleasing to note that the many umpires who undertook European tournaments all had good reports. The one bit of sad news was that our World Panel Umpire, Steve Graham, has had to retire because he has reached the retirement age set by the FIH. It is sad that Steve was forced to retire as he was still umpiring at his very best and was still as fit as many younger umpires. The one positive is Steve has been placed on the FIH Trainee Umpire Managers list.

The work of the WHUA can only be successful through the hard work and dedication of the few who continue to show commitment and diligence. The Chairs of the various regions and sub committees have continued to assist the executive undertake its responsibilities. This does ensure that the umpire and technical message is spread throughout Wales and that consistency is maintained. Finally, I must place on record my thanks to Carolyn Llewellyn and all members of the Executive who continue to battle on behalf of the members of the WHUA.

**Colin Crayford**  
**Chairman WHUA**

### **GB Report**

The embers of the GOHB rejected the proposal to compete as GB in World competitions. England is once again the nominated team for GB qualification for the Olympic Games. The qualification process has changed and details can be found on the FIH Web site. The GB Board have appointed BDO as consultants to advise on future options for GB. The Board have also appointed an interim Chief Executive. Issues between GB, UK Sport and the BOA re a four-year playing programme are yet to be resolved; these discussions are ongoing and include the funding of a GB Programme.

**Anne Ellis OBE**  
**GB Director**

### **'Friends' of Welsh Hockey**

At the time of writing this report (November 2005) FRIENDS hold the following assets;

Cash at	Barclays Plc	2025
	Lloyds/ TSB	362
	Portman Building Society	10213
Stock of goods for sale at cost		1905
Loan to Welsh Hockey Union Ltd		15000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>29505</b>

The loan to WHUL is for a period of 5 years, interest free. Repayments to be made as annual surpluses allow. Final repayment due 2009.

At present there are 220 shares on issue at £1 per month and monthly prizes are 1<sup>st</sup> £60, 2<sup>nd</sup> £30, 3<sup>rd</sup> £15, 4<sup>th</sup> £15.

Clubs and members are reminded that the following items are available for purchase from Roger Caddick (029 2036 2860);

Pin Badges

Blazer Badges

Pennants

These items display the Welsh feathers

International Player's Ties are available through Teams managers or for past international players from Roger.

If you are not currently a member and wish to join, please call Roger on 029 2036 2860, or contact the Welsh Hockey Union office. Membership forms will be available at the AGM.

In the meantime thanks to all current members for their continued support.

**Roger Caddick**

**'Friends' Organiser**