

Rachel Hooper

March 17 Goya Hooper

& UNSEEN UNSUNG



Many of British Rowing's volunteers were honoured at a special ceremony on Saturday February 4th.

Zoe Gullen reports →

PHOTOS: NICK MIDDLETON



The awards lunch
at the River and
Rowing Museum



Above: Winners all



#1: Coaching Team of the Year winners, Chester-le-Street
 #2: Special Lifetime Achievement Award winner, Steven Kent
 #3: Katherine Grainger and British Rowing Chairman Annamarie Phelps enjoy the day
 #4: Club Performance Coach Award winner Rachel Hooper, right, with her mother Joyce
 #5: Yorkshire Volunteer Award winners – Amy Hopson, Charlotte Wilkinson, Julia McLeish, John Sparrow and Chris Whitehead
 #6: Tony Evans, John Bosco Ridge, Susan Pictor and Steve O'Connor
 #7: Club Development Coach Award winner, Phil Gunning
 #8: National Safety Award winner, Andrea Worley

“ I LOVE THAT I GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE PEOPLE BECOME AS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE SPORT AS I AM ”

It's very true to say that rowing is all about people, those who – often unseen and unsung – dedicate countless hours to the sport and clubs they love. The British Rowing Awards, held at Henley's River and Rowing Museum, celebrated just some of those who have made an outstanding contribution to rowing. Among the recipients of the Coach of the Year awards, selected by the National Coaching Committee, were Phil Gunning for his work with the juniors at Cantabrigian, and Chris

O'Hara, who has led the Oxford University Women's Lightweights to five wins in seven years at the Henley Boat Races, as well as success at national-level events.

There was a special lifetime achievement award for Steven Kent, who is, quite simply, the most successful coach in the history of gig rowing, having coached Caradon Gig Club to numerous county titles as well as gold medals at the World Pilot Gig Championships.

The Club Performance honour, awarded to a volunteer

coach, went to Rachel Hooper, lead coach of the junior girls at Northwich. Hooper led the squad to qualification at Henley Royal Regatta in 2016, as well as supporting athletes through GB trials, along with acting as a mentor for life off the water.

Hooper says: "Seeing the young women I coach develop their confidence, self-esteem and life skills through rowing is what I love more than anything. Coaching is about so much more than just making people go fast in a boat. "I am in a position where I can

make a really positive impact on the lives of young people and it's rewarding to see people flourish and grow. I am just one of a very dedicated team of coaches at Northwich, and the success we have seen is definitely a group effort. I hope that my award will inspire young athletes to consider coaching when the time is right for them. In particular, I hope my profile as a female coach encourages other young women into coaching in the future."

Alongside the coaching awards was recognition for some of the army of volunteers who give up their time to the running of clubs and events, rolling up their sleeves to make things happen.

As Sue Pictor, one of the Thames Region winners, put it: "Things need to be done, someone needs to do them, why not me?" Sue, who co-ordinates the masters women's squad at Putney Town and is part of the team that runs the club's bar and events, said: "I like volunteering because it is practical and tangible. I go home knowing that I have done something useful – taken money over the bar, helped to organise an event, got ten people to a regatta and raced, maybe even won.

"My career seemed to be increasingly dominated by meetings, strategies, slow decision-making with – at times – precious little action. Volunteering at the club is at the opposite end of the spectrum. Anything I do that makes the club run smoothly enabling others, and me, to focus on rowing feels good, and that helps to create a place where people come together for sport and socialising."

Chris Whitehead has a similar drive to help others enjoy the sport, having run City of Sheffield's learn to row for seven years. Whitehead also leads the club's recreational squad, and helps organise recreational

events, including a 60km row along the canals from Doncaster to Leeds last summer.

Off the water, Whitehead has taken on the task of improving the club's facilities. As he puts it: "We are the Sparta of rowing clubs. We share our facilities with the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam, so around 250 rowers all told – and we have one toilet and two showers.

"It took us a year to obtain planning permissions for a new boathouse and new water access – we row in a beautiful setting though planning is a challenge. But it's easy to enjoy volunteering at Damflask, because City of Sheffield is all that great sports clubs should be: friendly, welcoming, inclusive, but also with people who can help you achieve what you want in the sport."

Gloucester's Stephen Rose has been involved with the running of the club for 40 years, including 25 years on the committee, but says: "About 20 years ago, I reached a point in my life where I could no longer commit the time to regularly row in and coach crews. I still wanted to be involved in rowing and help my club become more successful. That is when I started to look for other ways to help that I could do at times that suited me."

This eventually came in the shape of the club's plans for a new boathouse. In 2003, Rose negotiated the land purchase, and has led the project since then.

"To date, we have delivered a landing stage, car park, boat ramp and the shell of the building; we will soon be opening the ground floor boat storage and toilets. We still have to raise the money to fit out the first-floor club room, bar and changing rooms and the top-floor gym, so it will be a couple more years before I can get back to rowing and coaching! The boathouse is by far the biggest volunteer project that I have ever →

WHY VOLUNTEER?

When I was a rower I was so focused on racing that I failed to see how important volunteers were to our sport. Now that I spend virtually every day of my annual leave volunteering at some regatta somewhere in the world, I can't understand why I never saw it. Without volunteers, rowing as a sport would simply not exist."

Guin Batten – Olympic silver medallist



Volunteers are the lifeblood of all rowing events, whether the Olympics or a small club event. Overused cliché but nevertheless true! From an event organiser point of view, people who give their time freely and do it without any shred of self-interest, just to make the event a success, make it just that and give it a very special buzz. When I volunteer, I do it not only as I enjoy using whatever skills I have to make a difference, but it is fun being part of a team and I love just being involved. I would always volunteer over being just a spectator."

Rachel Kornberg – Weybridge RC



It's a titanic effort to put on the British Rowing Championships, involving late nights, hours of work and sadly very little time for spectating. But I know that all of the team drive home after an event with a deep sense of achievement and satisfaction."

Jim Harlow – Vesta RC



When I volunteer my time or skills I feel I am thanking the people who volunteered before me, thereby helping me to learn to row, to train and race, to manage clubs and events. In turn, I hope I am inspiring someone else to give back when they are able."

Di Binley – Ardingly RC



Volunteering, for me, is about creating opportunities for other people to experience some of the benefits and pleasures that I have experienced throughout my life. Particularly in the sport of rowing."

Andrew Osborne – City of Bristol RC



“I WOULD ALWAYS VOLUNTEER OVER BEING JUST A SPECTATOR”



“THE JOY ON THE FACES OF THE JUNIORS AND THE PARENTS MAKES ME FEEL REALLY PROUD AND I KNOW THEN THAT I HAVE ACHIEVED SOMETHING WORTHWHILE”

#1: North West Volunteer Award winners – Emily Howe, Emily Harding and Andy Greenwell
 #2: Chris O'Hara, Education Performance Award winner
 #3: Andy Parkinson, British Rowing CEO
 #4: Katherine Grainger addresses the diners
 #5: Eastern Region Award winners – Simon Clark, Nathan Day, Simon Emmings and Paul Haines
 #6: WAGS Volunteer Award winners, Stephen Rose and Ann Hallett
 #7: East Midlands Volunteer Award winner, Phil Latka
 #8: Nathan Day, East Young Person winner

undertaken and there will be a great sense of achievement when it is finally completed.”

Alongside his long-standing service to Gloucester, Rose has been an umpire for 20 years.

A fellow umpire, and the East Midlands winner, Phil Latka is a much more recent recruit to the sport, but has nonetheless made an important contribution to his club and region.

Inspired by the London Olympics, Latka's twin daughters

started rowing, and he recalls: “While encouraging me to join up for the adult learn to row, Graham, the girls' coach, found out that I was a bricklayer and told me that the club had plans to extend the landing stages down into the river. So we all did that one Sunday morning, and as Graham said afterwards: ‘That's the spirit of Boston Rowing Club.’ Those words have always stuck with me.”

Since then, Latka has been a very active and enthusiastic volunteer, and then in answer to

a call from the club's committee to increase their numbers of umpires, he qualified as an umpire in 2015.

“I've always enjoyed helping out at the events held at Boston, so I thought I'd give it a go. The umpires in the region are a great bunch and so supportive. You can't help but notice how much work people put in to the sport to help keep us competing, but also to compete safely and fairly.”

Above all, Latka is proud to be a volunteer and, more importantly,

to be part of a team of volunteers.

"It's amazing how easy it is to get things done when surrounded by volunteers. Everyone's aims are the same."

This is a view shared by Simon Emmings of Chesterton: "There's always stuff that needs to be done, and everyone has something to offer. As a club we encourage people to come forward so we can build a strong community and develop people into roles running the club."

"It's good to step up, but you do need to help others come through; it's healthy for the club and healthy for you. You need to be objective: how can I help so everyone gets better? I think true volunteering is giving yourself to the whole scheme of things, and finding enjoyment in that."

Emmings was inspired by his first coach, Roy Cooper, who "gave us so much time. That set in my mind: that's how to do it. To get results you just have to throw yourself into it".

The same is true for Emily Howe of Windermere RC, which was formed soon after Howe moved to the Lake District. "The chance to get involved with a club just as it was establishing itself seemed like too exciting an opportunity to miss," she says.

"The most visible part of my role [as club secretary] is organising our sessions each week, and there's a fair bit of behind-the-scenes admin, but I've also qualified as a learn to row instructor. I'm in a unique position within the club where I help some people learn to row, get everyone who wants to join signed up, and then get to see them carrying on to become active members."

"I love that I get the opportunity to see people become as enthusiastic about the sport as I am. Whether they love going on social outings on a Thursday afternoon or are training to

race, there's an enthusiasm and friendship between all the members of the club that it is a really special thing to be a part of."

Also recognised for making a significant contribution to the sport in a relatively short space of time were the winners of the Young Person awards: Emily Harding of Manchester University Boat Club, Hull Kingston's Amy Hopson, Durham School BC's Ryan Bewick, and Nathan Day of Broxbourne RC.

After attending a learn to row course at Easter 2014, Day began volunteering on the same course the following year.

"I was just helping out and making sure everyone felt welcomed and was enjoying themselves. Once I started volunteering though, I quickly got hooked and was soon guiding sessions and planning activities."

Now a qualified rowing leader, Day says: "I get a great deal of satisfaction from creating an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere at the club. I really enjoy coming to the club and seeing the juniors go out on the water or into the gym and really pushing themselves to do their best. And after the race is finished and they run up to their parents to show them their medals, the joy on the faces of the juniors and the parents makes me feel really proud and I know then that I have achieved something worthwhile."

Andrea Worley, a winner for her work, alongside her husband (and Honorary Rowing Safety Adviser) Stephen, on the rewrite of RowSafe, agrees: "I like helping, feeling that I'm making a contribution. With RowSafe, it's great to see what we've done in print, and very satisfying that people are using it and liking it."

Worley, who is an umpire and the secretary of the National Coaching Committee in addition to her many club commitments,

has great enthusiasm for volunteering: "If you volunteer, you'll always be welcomed with open arms. If you think you might enjoy it, have a go, you can always walk away – but you will almost certainly find you don't want to." 📢

HONOURS ROLL

SPECIAL LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Steven Kent of Caradon Pilot Gig Club and the CPGA

COACH OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Club Performance (winner) – **Rachel Hooper**, Northwich RC

Club Performance (commended) – **Noelle Stallard**,
Broxbourne RC

Education Performance – **Christopher O'Hara**, Oxford
University Lwt Women's BC

Club Development – **Phil Gunning**, Cantabrigian RC

Education Development – **Steve O'Connor**, Fulham Reach BC

Coaching Team (winner) – **Chester-le-Street ARC**

Coaching Team (commended) – **Warrington RC**

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

East Region Open – **Simon Clark**, Star Club

East Young Person – **Nathan Day**, Broxbourne RC

East Club Admin – **Simon Emmings**, Chesterton RC

East Event Admin – **Paul Haines**, Cantabrigian RC

East Midlands Overall – **Phil Latka**, Boston RC

North Event Admin – **Richard Mortimer**, Durham Regatta

North Open – **Nicci Slipman**, Hexham RC

North Young Person – **Ryan Bewick**, Durham School BC

North West Club Admin – **Emily Howe**, Windermere RC

North West Overall – **Andy Greenwell**, Runcorn RC

North West Young Person – **Emily Harding**, Manchester
University BC

Thames Open – **John Bosco Ridge**, Reading RC

Thames Event Admin – **Tony (AJ) Evans**, Marlow Regatta

Thames Club Admin – **Susan Pictor**, Putney Town RC

Thames Safety – **Steve O'Connor**, Fulham Reach BC

Yorks Open – **Chris Whitehead**, City of Sheffield RC

Yorks Young Person – **Amy Hopson**, Hull Kingston RC

Yorks Overall – **John Sparrow**, York City RC

Yorks Club Admin – **Charlotte Wilkinson**, Hull Kingston RC

Yorks Event Admin – **Julie McLeish**, Guy Fawkes BC

WAGS Open – **Stephen Rose**, Gloucester RC

WAGS Club Admin – **Ann Hallett**, Taunton RC

West Midlands Club Admin – **Glyn Hawkins**, Stratford upon Avon BC

Safety Winner – **Andrea Worley**, Wimblesball RC

HARTFORD NEWS

Matt Langridge MARCH 17

inspires youngsters in Hartford

Pippa Watson-Peck

Children at the Grange Junior School made the most of an incredible opportunity to meet Olympic Gold medal winning rower, Matt Langridge, and be inspired by his story.

Matt, who is currently employed by the school as an Elite Rowing Coach, spoke about the many achievements of his glittering career encompassing World, European and



Matt Langridge shows his medals to a student at the Grange Junior School

Olympic titles and what it took to achieve his aims. Following his talk, Matt let the children wear his medals and posed for photos with the eager young people.

The school's rowing programme is really kicking in at The Grange Senior School. It has had some notable success in producing elite level athletes, with former pupil Emily Ford winning a silver medal at the U23 World Championships in Rotterdam last summer, her brother Tom Ford becoming a World Champion at the World University Rowing Championships in Poznan, Poland, and current pupil Ellie Cushen becoming single sculling National Champion.

ROWING

Victories for Northwich and Grange at Trafford

TEENAGER Georgia Shirley continued an impressive start to the season for Northwich Rowing Club with a commanding victory during last week's Head of the Bridgewater at Sale. She completed a 3,200m course in 13:25.2, almost three minutes faster than her closest rival in an under 18s girls' single scull. And Shirley, who took part in an assessment for Great Britain's junior team last month, also stroked an under 17s girls' double to

victory over rivals from hosts Trafford. Sophie Gillbanks was a victor in the under 17s girls' category, beating clubmate Imogen Wolstencroft by nine seconds. There was solo success as well for Patrick Brogan (under 15s boys) and Amber Sperring-Toy (under 15s girls), who both raced over a shorter distance of 1,000m. An under 15s boys' coxed quad, with Brogan, Josh Jackson, Joe Dawson, Amir Chowdry and cox

James Cruzalegui on board, celebrated success in their boat class with Lancaster Royal Grammar School a distant second. Cruzalegui also steered an under 15s girls' coxed quad, consisting of Sperring-Toy, Molly Garlick, Saffron Coppock and Olivia Dunnett, to first place in their category, timing 12:58.3. Meanwhile an under 14s boys' coxed quad from Grange School Rowing Club claimed class honours.

Mark Ravenscroft, Will Dunscombe, Cameron Brougham, Will Spencer and cox Ellie Shroeder edged out rivals from North Staffordshire by little more than half a second. At the Head of the Trent in Nottingham the next day, Grange's under 15s boys' coxed quad of Brad Strickland-Baker, Harry Barker, Sam Thorington, Jack McGinn and cox Ollie Andrew were fastest in their category, stopping the clock in 7:00.1 after 4km.

16.3.17

Teens wait on selectors' call

TEENAGERS are hoping they have done enough to impress selectors for a North West team at the Junior Inter-Regional Regatta during a trial on Sunday.

Georgia Shirley, from Northwich Rowing Club, was fastest in an under 16s girls' single scull along a course on the River Weaver.

She then joined forces with Sophie Gillbanks, Rachel Cooney and Charlotte Almond in an under 16s girls' quad that pushed Grange School into second spot by a 10-second margin.

There was a narrower gap between Northwich, who still topped the timesheet, and Liverpool Victoria among the under 15s girls' coxed quads.

Molly Garlick, Olivia Dunnett, Saffron Coppock, Amber Sperring-Toy and cox James Cruzalegui were on duty.

Tom Swithenbank and William Miles were comfortable victors in the under 16s boys' double scull ahead of a crew from North Staffordshire Rowing Club.

Gillbanks rowed along with Grange School's Ellie Cushen in an under 16s girls' composite double that saw off a challenge from Warrington by 11 seconds.

And there was a victory for Grange's under 15s boys' coxed quad that had Brad Strickland-Baker, Harry Barker, Jack McGinn, Seb Paisley and cox Olly Andrew on board.

They now await official confirmation of their place in the team for this year's regatta.

23.3.17

Wins at North of England Head

CREWS completed their preparations for one of the busiest weekends of the season when they took part in the North of England Head last Saturday.

The Schools' Head of the River takes place today, Thursday, on the boat the Boat Races course before the Junior Sculling Head at Dorney Lake 24 hours later.

Northwich Rowing Club make the trip buoyed by a pair of victories at Chester.

Georgia Shirley stroked an under 17s girls' quad, which also included Imogen Wolstencroft, Rachel Cooney and Sophie Gillbanks, to

victory in their boat class.

The stopped the clock in 19.29.2 over a 5,000m course, more than 30 seconds faster than second-placed York City.

There was a narrower margin between Northwich's under 18s boys' quad, with George Crouchley, Greg Murphy, Josh Burke and Kevin Dudley on board, and neighbours Warrington.

However those wearing green and gold took first place in 16.41.6.

Hannah Cooney stroked a Northwich crew to second spot in an under 18s girls' quad, trailing winners Shrewsbury by six

seconds.

Grange School sent half-a-dozen quads, and their under 16s boys' B crew were fastest in their category.

Raymond Yau, Patrick Lee, Oliver Cobb and Sam Houghton were made up their quartet, timing 10.19.4 over a shorter 2,750m course on the River Dee.

The Hartford school will be represented by six crews at the Schools' Head.

They include boys and girls' championships quads and entries in the under 16s age category too.

Northwich boats join them on the water at Eton on Friday.



The annual Northwich Regatta will be held on a different stretch of the River Weaver later this year

ROWING

23.3.17

Innovation can help lift regatta's profile

Rowing club enthusiastic about hosting annual showpiece as part of River Festival

By Andrew Simpson

ROWERS are optimistic a new setting for their annual showpiece can help to revitalise it.

Northwich Rowing Club will host their regatta on a course in the town centre as part of the inaugural Rotary River Weaver Festival in August.

They hope the spectacle of close, side-by-side racing can attract interest in their chosen sport.

"Rather than trying to tempt people down to us, we're taking the regatta to them," said Clare Briegal, who chairs the club's regatta committee.

"I think the impact of that can only be a positive one.

"It will make us more visible, and will attract a different sort of audience to one we're used to."

In 2015, the club hosted the 131st edition of the regatta.

However it was not held last year. British Rowing, the sport's governing body, reserves dates in the calendar for specific events.

The regatta's traditional slot, in May, is close to the National Schools' Regatta and the Junior Sculling Regatta.

Briegal said: "We'd started to struggle [for entries].

"In a way, that's because we'd become a victim of our own success and lots of our volunteers accompany our talented juniors at those national events.

"It's a big ask for them then to come back and help to run a regatta.

"We've applied to British Rowing as a new event that will run over two days during the festival in August."

The first day will be a traditional regatta, with the finish-line close to the Odeon Cinema at Barons Quay after boats have raced from the direction of Anderton Boat Lift.

A format for the second afternoon has yet to be decided, but could include races over a shorter distance, sculling demonstrations and other fun activities.

An indoor rowing event is a possibility too.

Briegal said: "The regatta is a favourite for our members, and an event we have a lot of affection for.

"But the initial response to this idea has been enthusiastic.

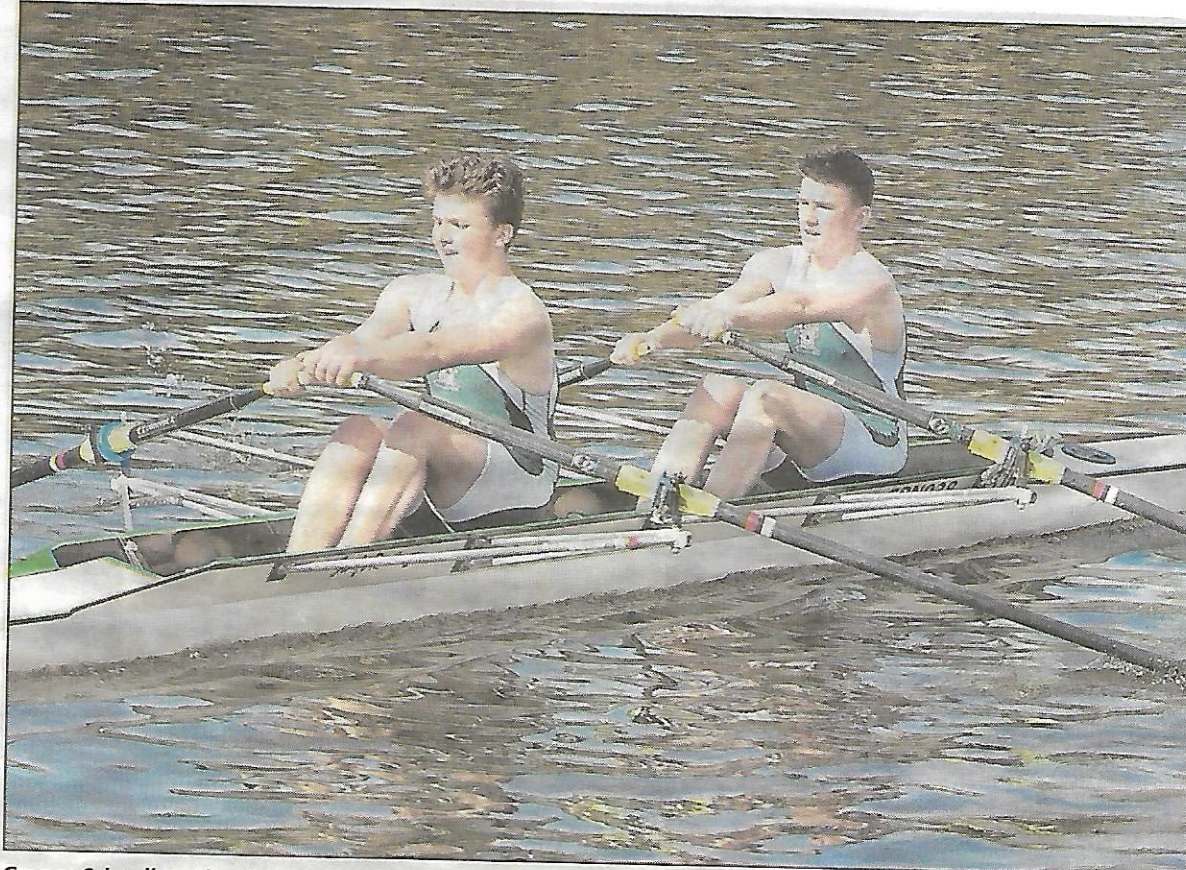
"It's important to innovate, and to look at different forms of rowing.

"We're excited to expose what we do to other groups that haven't perhaps considered our sport previously.

"The idea for a river festival isn't a new one, but we think this is the right time to try again.

"We'd love for it to be a long-term thing, although obviously we'll wait and see how the first one is received."

More rowing, page 67



Grange School's under 15s boys' double of Brad Strickland-Baker, at stroke, and Seb Paisley.

Picture: Andrew Lumley

ROWING

Teenagers shine at home and at trials

Northwich and Grange School Rowing Clubs celebrate wins at annual Spring Head

By Andrew Simpson

SELECTORS for the British junior rowing team invited teenagers who have honed their skills on the River Weaver to an assessment in Nottingham last week.

Charlotte Almond and Georgia Shirley, both from Northwich Rowing Club, and Grange School Rowing Club's Ellie Cushen spent three days training alongside the best young rowing talent from across the country.

They were joined there by Northwich's Beth Willford-Dutton, who is hoping to represent her country again this season after a promising debut at last year's Coupe de la Jeunesse.

Meanwhile rowers from both clubs made the most of perfect racing conditions during the North-

wich Spring Head on Sunday.

Willford-Dutton was a convincing winner in the women's senior single scull, while Kevin Dudley (under 18s boys), Joshua Burke (under 17s boys), Imogen Wolstencroft (under 17s girls) and Sophie Gillbanks (under 16s girls) all claimed category honours for the hosts.

Dudley was joined by Rhys Coffey, George Crouchley and Tom Swithenbank in an under 18s boys' quad that edged Grange over a 2,350m course.

The latter added a comfortable victory in an under 16s boys' double scull with William Miles.

Gillbanks returned to the water with Rachel Cooney to see off the challenge of their rivals from Liverpool Victoria in an under 16s girls' double.

Willford-Dutton, Wolstencroft, and both Cooneys - Hannah and Rachel - made up an under 18s girls' quad that was faster than their op-

position from Warrington.

There was a victory too for Katherine Schofield, competing in Sir John Deane's College colours, in a women's novice single.

Grange School sent more than 50 students to take part, and made a short journey home with four boat class wins.

Archie McCauley, Cameron Heron, Tom Clough and Jamie Hawes claimed category honours in an under 16s boys' quad.

Lucy Hall coxed an under 15s boys' quad, with Morgan Gray, Nat Morrey, Sam Thorington and Matt Kenyon on board, to a narrow victory over Warrington.

Brad Strickland-Baker and Seb Paisley pipped York City to first prize in an under 15s boys' double.

Grange's Frances Campbell and Neve Bradshaw made up a composite crew with Northwich duo Christina Preston and Schofield that was the fastest under 17s girls' quad.

ROWING

Youngsters hope to make impression on national team coaches

PROMISING teenagers attempted to catch the eye of selectors for the

Ellie Cushen joined Northwich Rowing Club duo Charlotte

the country. Beth Willford-Dutton, who

They then returned home in time to take part in the Northwich