



Somehow, another year has rolled by and with it another Hawkesbury Classic! 2019 promised some of the fastest tides in recent memory, with more than a few LCRK paddlers looking to crack a record. The club fielded a team of 21 paddlers in 25 boats across competitive, Wiseman's Dash and Brooklyn or Bust classes, and by general consensus the loudest and most enthusiastic landcrew on the river. Yet the night was far from a simple exercise, with strong winds in the afternoon playing havoc until sunset, and more than a few emergency repairs at Wiseman's Ferry and beyond. From wading in for the best photo angle to wading out of unannounced mud, it was another Classic night to remember.

## LCRK Results

### LCRK - 2019 HCC Results

Sorted by Record beaters, Finish Time, competitive classes first

31-Oct-19

HCC 2019 Results for LCRK Associated Paddlers

Name	#	LCRK Current Member?	Current Record	Official Race Cat/Class	Distance	Time	Htime	Position	Breaking Class Record	Set NEW Record	Within 1hr of Record?
Peter Manley , David Young	142	yy	8:57:00	Mens Veteran 50+ - UN2	111	8:51:40	9:36:51	2 of 3	1		1
Naomi Johnson	130	y	9:56:08	Ladies Open - K1	111	9:28:55	9:08:26	1 of 1	1		1
Tony Hystek	126	y	10:24:50	Mens Veteran 60+ - K1	111	9:39:00	9:57:31	1 of 1	1		1
Ruby Ardren	118	y	11:08:15	Ladies Veteran 40+ - K1	111	10:38:19	9:54:16	1 of 1	1		1
Tom Simmat	183	y	[New]	Mens Veteran 70+ - LRec1	111	10:46:38	9:50:22	1 of 2		1	
Brendan Trewartha	143	y	8:38:47	Mens Veteran 40+ - ORS1	111	8:48:56	9:24:54	1 of 3			1
James Pralija	153	y	8:27:48	Mens Open - ORS1	111	8:54:14	9:48:11	1 of 1			1
Peter Fitzgerald	220	y	9:06:32	Mens Veteran 50+ - ORS1	111	9:19:05	9:38:39	1 of 2			1
Gareth Stokes	205	y	8:57:42	Mens Veteran 40+ - UN1	111	9:43:09	10:22:48	1 of 2			1
Duncan Johnstone , Jeff Hosnell	198	yy	9:26:43	Mens Veteran 60+ - LRec2	111	9:52:52	9:43:22	1 of 3			1
Richard Yates , Tony D'Andreti	116	yy	8:21:43	Mens Veteran 40+ - UN2	111	9:34:15	10:42:35	1 of 1			
Don Johnstone	148	y	N/A	Brooklyn or Bust - BB1	111	9:53:18	-	1 of 29			
Trevor Nichols	140	y	N/A	Brooklyn or Bust - BB1	111	10:11:35	-	2 of 29			
Rob Llewellyn-Jones	157	y	N/A	Brooklyn or Bust - BB1	111	10:46:02	-	3 of 29			
John Duffy	101	y	N/A	Brooklyn or Bust - BB1	111	11:44:57	-	6 of 29			
Eric Filmlatter	171	y	N/A	Brooklyn or Bust - BB1	111	12:40:50	-	7 of 29			
Christopher Thompson	168	y	N/A	Brooklyn or Bust - BB1	111	12:43:30	-	8 of 29			
Kenji Ogawa	129	y	N/A	Brooklyn or Bust - BB1	111	14:33:30	-	16 of 29			
Richard Barnes , Annette Dawson	111	yn	N/A	Brooklyn or Bust - BB2	111	16:15:49	-	18 of 27			
david veivers	120	y	N/A	Brooklyn or Bust - BB1	65	8:45:41	-	24 of 29			
Wade Rowston	144	y	N/A	Brooklyn or Bust - BB1	31.2	4:22:00	-	28 of 29			
John Law	211	y	N/A	Wisemans Dash	65	9:01:00	-	4 of 9			

## From the President

Another HCC done and dusted with some impressive input this year from our club, and some impressive bling being earned by some of our impressive paddlers!

Congratulations to everyone involved; volunteers, landcrew and paddlers alike, whose efforts all made for a great day and night of paddling and socialising. We pulled in a whole lot of great times, and beaming paddlers. I expect a few of our records made that night are going to be around for a very long time.

Prezlanna

## From the Editor

This is the fourth year that I've been lucky enough to edit the LCRK Hawkesbury report, and it seems things are falling into a similar pattern. It's the end of October, I feel like I've got oodles of time on my hands, paddlers send me their fabulous stories...and then it's a month later and I haven't quite finished the race report!

Once again it's now early December and I tried to cram editing the race report around a whole lot of other things, but I'm still grinning because I seriously love reading everyone's Hawkesbury stories. It's utterly wonderful to hear about the many and varied experiences of this race and this river: PBs, records, first-time finishers and those that are happy to take their time. Weaving the stories together is also fun, trying to picture how the race unfolded from each boat and when (if at all) these boats teamed up or passed in the night. So many stories speak to the importance of Lane Cove as a team, from the fabulous support at Wiseman's (seriously, it's like getting an extra tank of gas!) to doubles partnerships and singles that team up on the night.

For a hilariously catastrophic list of things that could go wrong on the Hawkesbury but never did, I recommend Duncan's account of the night, which reads very differently indeed to Jeff's view from the back seat of the same boat! For a seriously big goal achieved, dip into Don's story, while Trevor is now an expert on quick rudder repairs and Fitzy on what definitely doesn't work nutrition-wise. Tony H, Tom S and John D all had run-ins with Hawkesbury mud, and Tom with plenty more besides. And Richard Y's blow-by-blow account should be on the reading list for first veterans and 2020 first-timers alike.

Here's to a Hawkesbury Classic that is vibrant for many years to come, supporting the great diversity of paddlers, LCRK and otherwise, that choose to take it on!

Naomi



*Pete, Dave and the awesome Wiseman's support crew!*

## Records and Honours

Variety of paddlers, paddling speeds and paddle goals is what makes the Hawkesbury so great. While some aim for PBs, or a casual night time jaunt down the river for a great cause, others have both eyes fixed on class records, or even the outright handicap! Alongside winning the coveted **Commonwealth Bank Trophy** for the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row, Lane Cove paddlers set four new records and took out a number of club and competition trophies.



*Brendan at the finish line*

For the third year in a row, **Brendan Trewartha** was in the Lane Cove boat to make it down the river the fastest. Despite his “not quite a PB” time of 8:48:56, he was the first single home. Alongside the LCRK perpetual trophy for fastest outright boat, he also earned the HCC Canoe Specialists Trophy for the fastest Vet 40+.

Following an epic hunt for a suitable K1, **Tony Hystek** put Chris Johnson’s Spirit XXL to good use, cracking the Men’s Vet 60+ K1 record with a time of 9:39:00 despite a run-in with some serious mud near Spencer. His duathlon effort earned him the Blue Earth Trophy for the fastest Vet 60+ paddler on the night.

**Tom Simmat** proved that age is no barrier to a solid trophy haul, creating a brand-new record in the Men’s Vet 70+ LRec1. He again took out the LCRK trophy for Oldest Paddler to complete the race – hand-carved by Justin Paine – along with the Classic’s Bruce & Joan Morison Memorial trophy for fastest Vet 70+ paddler in the event.

While constituted classes were slim on the ground at this year’s Classic, **Duncan Johnstone** and **Jeff Hosnell** were the fastest in the three-boat Men’s Vet 60+ LRec2 class. The record just evaded them...is that a good enough reason for Jeff to be talked into taking the Classic on again?



*Tom and Justin with the 'Oldest Paddler' trophy*



*Naomi receiving her trophies from club president Alanna*

**Naomi Johnson** rounded out a mammoth season by setting a new record of 9:28:55 in the Women’s Open K1. She received the Classic’s Waterski Gardens Pro Assoc trophy for fastest women’s crew in the race, along with LCRK’s beautiful trophy for the Fastest Single Woman to paddle. With a handicapped time of 9:08:26, she was also the fastest LCRK paddler on handicap, and 4<sup>th</sup> fastest on handicap in the whole competition.

The final LCRK K1 was **Ruby Ardren**, who cracked her own Women’s Vet 40+ K1 record of 2018 by half an hour, setting the new bar at 10:38:19. Ruby was also the most successful in predicting her final arrival via the club Hawkesbury spreadsheet!



The LCRK award selection was again augmented this year, with Justin Paine donating a new hand-carved trophy for the Fastest Double to complete the race. Despite a few mishaps along the way, the flying crew of **David Young** and **Peter Manley**, paddling in the Men's Vet 50+ UN2 took out the award in a time of 8:51:40.



*David, Justin and Peter with Justin's beautiful new trophy*

**Peter Fitzgerald** was again recognised as the highest fundraiser for the Classic, raising a fabulous \$8,700 for Arrow. Since 1998, the SHOCkERS have raised around \$239,000 to support Arrow's research, an impressive effort alongside actually paddling the race. Fitzzy's efforts were rewarded with the Spencer Township Shield, set a new race PB of 9:19:05, and was also the paddler who appeared least changed over the course of the race!



*Fitzzy at Windsor...and at Mooney Mooney some nine and a bit hours later!*

Two more Lane Cover Paddlers were recognised for their fundraising efforts, with **Don Johnstone** raising \$2,306 and **Rob Llewellyn-Jones** \$1,130.

The Straightjacket Awards celebrate paddlers who have completed a milestone number of Classics. This year, **Kenji Ogawa** achieved an impressive quarter-century, **Tony Hystek** clocked up ten years, and both **Duncan Johnstone** and **Don Johnstone** hit the five-year mark. None of these paddlers could quite say why the awards are named 'straightjacket', insisting that they might need another five Classics to work it out!



*One method of achieving Straightjacket awards: start them young!*

## Well At Least

***Richard Yates & Tony D'Andreti***

Men's Vet 40+ UN2

Time: 9:34:15

Paddling relationships: Open

Schadenfreude (*Pron: Shab-den-froid*) is defined as pleasure derived by someone from another person's misfortune.

Someone unacquainted with the attractions of marathon paddling might think that the HCC is custom designed to provide a night of schadenfreude for everyone not involved. However, Keg and I developed our own related mindset that I call 'Wellatleast'. I define it as deriving perspective from another person's discomfort. For example, you are paddling into a roaring tide around checkpoint E, the speedo is in single figures and it's a long way to Wisemans. You pass a plastic double BoB 2 and say to each other "Well, at least we aren't in that boat!"



*Richard and Keg powering through Pitt Town*

Keg and I had planned the HCC last year but were thwarted by circumstance. Luckily, I was able to paddle but poor Keg had to wait a full year before hitting the river. We both decided that our goal was sub-10, aiming for 9:30 and to finish without injury or being too shattered. Keg promptly went to work with the spreadsheet to allocate training paddles, session times and distances, food trials and the like. Consequently, we paddled a lot together in the supersonic in the lead-up this year. From a couple of months out we regularly paddled down to Fullers Rd Bridge before starting the Wed night TT, this spread further by doing another sojourn to Fullers post TT just prior to racing. We also paddled the Wyong 30km marathon and did 5 25+km paddles in prep. I snuck away for the Echuca Mini (50km) two weeks before the race while Keg had a week at the Gold Coast (we have an, ahem, open paddling relationship which also saw me double with Don for 50 points, but that's another story).

Anyhow, feeling well-prepared and rested the blustery start conditions were almost welcome as they gave a bit of a push to Kegs broad back for the first couple of hours. The wind was a bit fickle and at times blew up some waves that sat the rear of the boat out of the water, leaving it feeling a bit light and aimless. We complained to each other about that until we saw our first SUP at checkpoint A, then it was a case of "well at least we aren't paddling one of those". Food-wise, we covered our decks with GU sachets as well as baby food and chocolate bars. Alanna observed that the deck of our boat looked like the showbag wall display a Royal Easter Show caravan owned by the Garmin Sugar Company. Did I mention we had 4 GPS's? Yes 4. I think I chose my partner wisely in Keg. He has young kids at home so he is used to being up at all hours of the night, can survive on very little sleep and knows which is the best chocolate baby custard. We tested our food on our long paddles so we knew, babyfood-wise, what we did and didn't like. Chocolate custard...good, pumpkin risotto...bad, vanilla custard...good, butter chicken...bad. Back to the race.

It was windy and getting a little chilly. We both had short sleeves on and were planning on a change to longs at Wiseman's (it was in my clearly labelled Wiseman's bag). I sent mind messages to our landcew Michaela and Alex. Miraculously this worked, at Sackville we were greeted with both Sackville and Wiseman's bags so a swift change into longs was achieved. We had been stopped at the ferry just before the checkpoint and lost 2-3 minutes. That cooled us down so I thought it was a good idea to power up into the checkpoint to make up for lost ground. This served only to deplete Kegs reserves as he had been, unbeknownst to me, working very hard on keeping the boat stable in the wind (I didn't feel a thing). Well at least we weren't paddling a K2...



*Is this a new type of pre-race stretching?*

Back in the boat, Keg was cold and had gone a bit quiet. We had the tide and darkness against us. Luckily, the bananas and Up&Go at Sackville kicked in about 10 min later and we were rejuvenated. Keg was his chatty self again, the wind had dropped and all was well with the world, except for the tide. We kept passing boats which was handy as without the little green lights ahead we only had memory to guide us. My Magellan GPS had carked it. The screen was dark but would come to life at the press of a button, blinding me but showing a map. The map would then change so it was

no real help. The big Garmin in the back was also black like the boat, so no use. Apparently there is a night mode, but could we get it to work? Could we bollocks. Well at least we have our Garmin watches left. We hit the tree on the left side of the river around checkpoint E I think. Saw it just in time to avoid garotting myself and Keg. Backed out and went around and warned the boats behind us...to no avail. I'm not sure where the red cyalumes were. I wonder if they had been placed and then removed by some local ne'er-do-wells. Perhaps the same carnies that stoned Brendan on his way through?

The race got difficult from this point. The speed was low, it was dark and we were heading for the twists and turns leading up to and into the Big W. Luckily for us there were still boats ahead that guided us away from the jetties on the right river bank. These seem to get longer each year and they jump out at you in the dark. Prowling along Simmat-style too close to the bank tests one's nerve. Speaking of Tom, we passed him in this section on the bank side of him, within the buoy line. I was a bit chuffed at that until I saw lights ahead take a 90 degree left turn...we followed suit. We passed the V8 double for the second time in here as well.

To keep our spirits up we talked, ate, and strategised about Wiseman's. We picked up Steve Dawson for the last 10km or so into Wiseman's, always good for a chat. He regaled us with tales of his recent marathons in the states and the ubiquity of hallucinations in canoe marathon events. Can't say I've had them myself yet, but everyone's heard of the little green men that accompany you down the river. The lights of Wiseman's, always a mood-lifter, led us to the LCRK base camp. The exit strap set up by the mudlarks was a great innovation. We hopped out while our boat was sponged out (I can only apologise at this point, apparently the pump was having issues, I am sorry). Alex restocked the boat, Michaela fed us and provided the change of clothes. It was great to see so many friendly faces after 5+ hrs on the river. Being cheered on upon leaving is such a thrill. Realising you have 4 more hours is less of a thrill. Well at least we didn't fall in exiting Wiseman's into the side chop (Dave and Pete?)

Both ferries insisted on delaying us further but we were on our way soon enough. Keg had stuffed my life jacket with mint chocolate as a reward on this last leg. He had spoken of this manna from heaven in many previous paddles, I couldn't wait. We talked about times and what we needed to do to get under 10 hours which seemed a bit of a task at that stage. Luckily the river was like an airport terminal conveyor belt, ripping us downstream with 13 and 14km/hr regularly on the remaining GPS (14 is ripping for mere mortals like us). We passed the V8 double again for the 3rd time, nice blokes those chaps from Sutherland.

My Garmin then shut down. Well at least we had Keg's Garmin. Keg's Garmin then corrupted itself...4 GPS failures...I used the channel markers for left right navigation, but here is one point near Gunderman's where there is a red marker way off to right and nothing to the left, of course the river does go left, just to



keep you guessing. We started seeing the bioluminescence, massive green swirls in the paddle eddies. Not much from the bow wave but Keg had a great light show. Bumping into jellyfish pods saw them all light up at once into a dozen green circles...magic! Well, magic until the bloke in the front scoops up some tentacles onto the poor bloke in the back. It was a good shot apparently, straight down the front of the vest to sit in the belly region being ground through the shirt, stroke by stroke, a ticking time bomb.

Low tide pit stop passed us by and soon we had caught up to a flagging Gareth who had done a runner at about the 5km mark. Poor Gareth sounded like he had woken up in the back of a Holden Ute after the Dubbo B&S ball, such was his earlier efforts. Well at least it only took 80km to catch him. Coming up on Spencer we encountered Ruby grabbing a deserved washride from Duncan and Jeff. Tempers appeared a little frayed in the Zero Tolerance as we passed them. Apparently it had been a long night for Stadtler and Waldorf. Well at least Keg and I had maintained a sense of humour.

Kegs magic mint chocolate had well and truly done the trick as we were quickly at Bar Point and then the bridge was in sight. We had left just enough in the tank for a trademark sprint finish to cross the line in 9hrs 34 and a bit. The magic boat fairies took our boat at the finish, a medal was pressed into our hands and then, glory be, a bacon and egg roll was too. Delighted but too tired to do anything else we headed home for some rest. Physical damage included sore shoulders for me and a buggered wrist for Keg, though at least I didn't have a bellyful of jelly fish stings!



*The finish line...no jelly fish in sight!*

All-in-all a great HCC. Good tides, great prep, greater team. We trained, we paddled, we finished. I enjoyed every minute of it. Thanks Michaela, Thanks Alex, and most of all, thanks Keg, (well at least we managed a sprint start and finish). Thank you everyone who responded to my requests for assistance leading up to and on the night of the race. I am fortunate to be in club with so many capable and willing folks eager to be part of this great race. Bring on 2020.



## On Chop and Tea

**John Duffy**

BoB 1

Time: 11:44:57

Time spent at Wiseman's: Too little!

Lining up for the 4:15pm start, amid lots of LCRK supported cheering my name, I heard Richard Barnes yell out "go slow and stop at low tide pit stop". With nothing to prove and with only three longer training paddles after a great overseas holiday, I thought Richard's challenge was something I could accept.



*John - biggest smile on the river?*

I was very stressed with the direct-facing wind in the two long stretches coming into Sackville, and it shook my confidence a lot. I didn't stay long at Sackville and once it became dark, very dark, I still had trouble with the wind and the eddies. I slowed right down and braced a lot. Given the conditions I was astonished when Tony and Naomi flew past me and said they hadn't taken a swim.

I got to Wiseman's feeling good. Typically by that stage I have a serious butt problem, but I had borrowed the seat from the Frank McDonald and it made the world of difference. It was very lonely up to this point, and I couldn't enjoy my music as much on account of the conditions and the need for heightened concentration.

After Tony Carr and Chris gave me the best cup of tea I have ever tasted, I protested at the LCRK supporters at Wiseman's who practically frogmarched me back into the boat after 15 minutes. I had planned to stay at least 30 minutes with my wife! Jeers of "charge him for long time parking his kayak" had me leaving sooner than expected. I paddled the next two hours with a chap from Adelaide who comes across each year and was doing his 13<sup>th</sup> Classic. Warwick and Elke welcomed me as the first paddler to call into low tide pitstop, where the passionfruit slice and fire were very welcome. I fell over in the mud there and I expect that will completely wash out of my shirt by this time next year.



*John and Jessica at Sackville*

The crossing into Bar Point was scary as it was dark and I couldn't really work out which direction the chop was coming from and was nervously bracing after each few strokes. I crossed the finish in about 11 hours 45 minutes feeling pretty good. It wasn't my hardest in terms of exertion, but was the most difficult in terms of conditions and how mentally that impacted my ability. Some parts were just not fun at all but we must take the good with the bad. How I didn't go for a swim was for me a sense of wonderment and appreciation.

Congratulations to all who signed up, and thank you to all LCRKers and volunteers who helped out prior to and during the event.



## 'Laurel and Hardy'

**David Young & Peter Manley**

Men's Vet 50+ UN2

Time: 8:51:40

Swims: 2

Our preparations, like many others, were mixed. Yes, Peter Manley and I were paddling well in the Marathon Series (well Peter was), and while I started off with some good early ultra-marathon hit-outs – Wyong, Myall and an early famil, Peter sustained a severe knee injury, followed by an overseas holiday that put paid to his early training schedule. Come early October, it was a two-week crash course in getting in as many hours of paddling together in the Carbonology double, before I headed overseas. And it was that overseas trip that put an end to any more of my training as, after sitting next to a “sick as a dog” passenger for 14 hours, I picked up the dreaded lurgy and took this all the way down the Hawkesbury.



*Lesley, Pete, Dave and Allison, perhaps the most colour-coordinated team of the whole night!*

However, the lack of preparation was no excuse for the ‘rookie’ errors I proceeded to make, both before and during the race. *Mistake #1: my secret preparation of polishing the hull before a major race could not be achieved – the polish was in my car, but we travelled to Windsor with Peter in his car.* The hydration and carbohydrate loading went well leading up to the race, but as I was wary of the high temperature in the afternoon, I elected to wear a tank-top at the start, for the first time ever... *Mistake #2: paddling in a pack, with a fairly strong breeze, meant that I was continually being splashed with water and soon succumbed to the cold – poor clothing choice.* While walking to the scrutineering tables, both Peter and I were relaxed and confident, sussing out who our competition was. The sledging began, amid much laughter, following by some discussion on race tactics, many obviously dubious. Scrutineering went without a hitch, and back to Lane Cove’s palatial club tent to relax. Following barracking for fellow LCRK paddlers in the earlier starts, our preparations concluded and as I warmed up at the gateway to the water, I noticed that my paddle was slipping in the shaft. After a frantic run back to the car and a quick gaffa tape repair we were on our way to the water’s edge. *Mistake #3: test one’s equipment well before the race start.* Our landcrew of Allison and Lesley, all decked out in bright orange luminous tops, were well-briefed on what to do at Sackville and cheered us as we launched and lined up at the start.

The start was rather uneventful and we quickly established a cruisy position in the lead pack of five boats to Sackville. For the first 20km, we maintained a good average speed riding the wash of another double, but as the opposition tired, we took over the lead for most of the remaining 10km to Sackville. Our stop here was meant to be quick...hydrate (in my case with coke), and off again. Unfortunately, with the chill I was feeling, it was a change of clothes for me that set us back a couple of minutes. Thank goodness my landcrew ignored my instructions of clothing changes and had everything at the water’s edge, otherwise we would have lost more time. In the meantime, the eventual 2020 winners continued on without stopping, and alas, we would not see them again.

Despite the wind, we found the Sackville-to-Wiseman’s leg pleasant, but tough paddling against the tide. A few near misses with overhanging branches, jetties etc. kept us on our toes, and we entered Wiseman’s tired but in reasonable shape. The welcoming party was most joyous, and the ingenious ‘lift me out the boat’ contraption erected by the Mudlarks and supporters worked like a charm. Another coke, slice of pizza, a

change of bladder, and a change of paddle and we were on our way...well, sort of. In an effort to catch the second-placed boat (in a relay team), our first 30 strokes out of Wiseman's was so frantic that it resembled Laurel and Hardy paddling for the very first time...and we had our first swim together (my first ever in a flatwater race). Luckily the river bank, covered with reeds, was only 20 meters away, so we swam to the side and managed to re-enter the boat on our first attempt, albeit with reeds extruding from all parts of our clothing. We got caught by the first Wiseman's Ferry so paddled up to the SES craft and adjusted the paddle length and set off once again, in perfect synchronization. *Mistake #4: I gave Allison the wrong paddle settings and hence the swim.*



*David's Classic wouldn't be complete without a coke or two.*

For the first 15km out of Wisemans we flew down the river at 14-15km/hr, then my wheels started to fall off. At the 70km mark, I attempted to have sip of liquid from the newly replaced bladder, and just sucked air. I attempted 5 km later, and nothing...it must have a hole...and on checking the bladder on Sunday afternoon, yep, a pin prick of a hole. *Mistake #5: always check your bladder for holes and a secure lid fastening.* Having asked at several checkpoints for water, it was only when we were 17km from the end that I was successful with my pleading. But getting the water bottle was precarious...the river was flowing so fast that as we came next to the vessel to collect the water, we were thrust up against the side, and nearly got sucked under the boat. After a couple of agonising minutes, and with a water bottle in hand, we managed to free ourselves and continue on our merry way. However, the dehydration damage had been done, and in combination with my cold, the jet lag, and the

repeated coughing, my balance started to go.

We limped past Spencer, past Bar Point and could see the Milson Passage SES vessel in the distance. Given that we were tiring, and on the home stretch, I shouted to Peter to beware of the eddies. Not 10 seconds later, SPLASH...so quick and we were in the water right in the middle of the Hawkesbury River at its widest point. I won't bore you with the numerous attempts Laurel and Hardy had at trying to get in the boat...“let's try this way...oops that didn't work, how about this way...oh shit”, over he goes again head first back into the water. Needless to say, we were both not amused at our midnight antics. Having now gracefully floated close to Milson's Island with the outgoing tide, and watched several paddlers cruise by completely unaware of our predicament, we finally managed to get the two tired bodies back in the double. *Mistake #6: as part of one's preparation, at least try one re-entry so one knows what the hell to do, even better try it in the dark as one will soon realise that a lost black paddle is very difficult, if not impossible to see in the dark. So once found, one holds on to it for dear life.*

We managed to navigate through the narrows, and gingerly paddled across the river to the finish. All in all, given the events of the night, our time of 8:51 (placed 4th overall) was pleasing. On a slight positive, we did break the old UN2 record, but this was smashed by the eventual winners, also in the UN2 category.

A special thanks goes out Allison and Lesley for your excellent land crewing skills, your encouragement during the race, and your patience and understanding with Peter and I spending so many hours away together. And to the other LCRK members and supporters who assisted at all four points along the river, especially at Wiseman's and the nutty Mudlarks. Don't tell Allison, but HCC number 8 may be on the cards next year!

## A plan to cruise...

### **Wade Rowston**

BoB 1

Made it to Sackville

My preparation had been ideal having paddled the Wyong, Myall, and Clarence 100 ultras and completing them all comfortably. I finally appear to have resolved the nausea issues that have marred previous recent HCC attempts with a major reboot on electrolyte and energy intake. So I started this latest attempt feeling fairly confident that I could cruise to the finish.



*Wade before the cold feet!*

After the start I was enjoying the scenery and was unworried by the high wind conditions having chosen a Stellar SR ski to paddle. Coming into Sackville there were two long legs hard into the wind and I noticed my feet were getting quite cold. Also, a light sinus headache I had earlier in the day turned quite bad with the wind going through my nose and out my ears (or at least that's what it felt like). I assumed some Panadol and a change of shoes at Sackville would solve my issues and I'd be on my way.

Unfortunately Panadol and Nurofen did not cure the headache and I could not warm up so I took the cautious approach and withdrew rather than risk another trip to hospital. Back to the drawing board!



*Ruby at Pitt Town with a smile to rival John's*

## K1 Surfing

### **Ruby Ardren**

Women's Vet 40+ K1

Time: 10:38:19

Own records broken: 1

To continue the trend of the first three races in the Paddle NSW Ultramarathon Series, the Hawkesbury this year turned on strong winds that stuck around from my start at 4.30pm until late into the night. With Naomi kindly moving to a later start, I was able to get to the bridge first! Well, that was that race done.

Next, I somehow managed to be the first woman into Sackville, taking advantage of the following 'seas' to do a bit of surfing, but Kate Dawson snuck past while I was doing a quick stop. I caught up to her, but then realised I hadn't set my GPS up for the night and lost her, never to catch her again. I had to stop at F to remove weed from my boat, got a bit sleepy through the Big W (or boobs as I heard another paddler refer to them – actually he marked his location by pointing out they were on the second boob...), but arrived at Wiseman's unscathed and not too far off my predicted time. I had to get out of the boat at Wiseman's because it was too deep to stay in it, which was a good move because my lovely husband and professional landcrew got me a coffee, which was just what I needed.

I got back on the water for the outgoing tide and also managed to pick up Duncan and Jeff, who let me hang on all the way to the finish, just as the tide was starting to slow down. It was great to have a bit of company and the stretch went very quickly. It's inspiring (and hard) to race against women like Naomi and Kate and I'm very happy to better my record of last year and get a PB. Looking forward to next year's race already!



## **“We’re not racing!”**

**Jeff Hosnell and Duncan Johnstone**

Men’s Vet 60+ LRec2

Time: 9:52:52

John Denver choruses: 1



*Complete focus from front and back, and this was before the start!*

**Jeff Hosnell:** 2019 has been a full year of paddling, and I am proud of what I have achieved. Early in the year I teamed up with Duncan at Albury for the 30km race. We enjoyed the experience, and with his normal partner Matt injured, we got to use his double in a number of races. Duncan asked would I be interested in paddling the classic to help him achieve his big 1000km journey. My only experience of the Classic was back in 2001 when I tried to compete paddling my UN Excalibur. I was put in the last start group with all the Rockets and was left behind and paddled on my own, couldn’t handle the night paddling and pulled out after Sackville. I swore I would never do this race again, but with Duncan’s experience and encouragement I said yes. We had a great build-up, lots of kms, and I was able to do adjustments to my seat and had plenty of advice from fellow Lane Cove paddlers. I must say our club support for this race is just amazing before, during and after – no club does it like us!

I really loved this race for the many different challengers during the event, the highs and lows, and the fact that paddling with Duncan made it possible. We had a great first leg to Sackville with very fast splits. Awesome help at Sackville, our support crew of Laura and Liz were fantastic with so much encouragement. I topped up fast and was rearing to go but Duncan needed lots of tender care from Liz, then Matt was calling out the time and I was waiting sitting in the boat and then we were off. It was really dark now and as everyone knows I hate paddling in the dark, but it’s so easy in the back. I could never paddle this race on my own, I don’t think I would see any of the checkpoints. On this leg early on I had trouble with matching Duncan’s stroke, I don’t know if I was spaced out but it was really weird. Caught up to John Duffy before Wiseman’s and got to sing in a trio of John Denver’s *Country Road*, that was cool.

At Wiseman’s amazing work by the Lane Cove support crew, how they got me out of the boat without falling in! Thank you to everyone, Laura had all my stuff ready, and again, so much support. I had a sore back which had a good rub, and food. We got going again with lots of encouragement from Duncan – he knew where to go as I couldn’t see anything. Ruby tagged on for the next 40kms, she was such good company and we weren’t pushing it so she handled our pace easily. After about 10kms both my shoulder blades started to hurt real bad, I have never had this before, it never left so lots of changing position and stretching, a hard 30kms.

I did not enjoy the changing of distance to go being called out by Duncan and Ruby, 12kms to go...30mins later 14kms to go. Great to see the Mooney Mooney lights, so pleased it was a fast finish not like the paddlers had last year. So nice to see Laura and Liz at the end, lots of hugs. I was tired and cold on land, Duncan talked me into a massage this was great in helping the recovery, and by Monday no pains or tiredness.

Thanks again Lane Cove and Duncan you helped me tick this race off my bucket list. Ask me if I’ll do it again? Maybe when I’m 70 and can go after Toms record! Not if Laura has her way, and she usually does...



*Complete focus still in place at Pitt Town!*

**Duncan Johnstone:** Despite lining up for my seventh Hawkesbury Classic, this race remains the most daunting and my nerves start their mind games days before. Having already completed 760 competitive kilometres towards My Very Big Year you'd think I'd be used to the mental mind games that go into preparing for another ultramarathon. Yes, Jeff and I had pretty much got the boat preparation, nutrition and our support team sorted, but the HCC always throws up an extra challenge or two. This year it was in the form of strong winds and heat right at the start, but as the day turns to night

it can also be the tide, eddies reach to tip you out of your boat, then there are mudflats waiting to drop you waist deep into mud should you be trying to wade ashore at Sackville, floating buoys that go thud in the night, boguns throwing rocks in the night as they catch you in the light of their car headlamps, jetties that suddenly reveal themselves through the dark as you hug the shore to avoid the incoming tide, boat issues, and it's funny how the rudder seems to feature prominently. By the Big W your seat and aching muscles will surely come into play and whilst they may receive some respite at a Wiseman's after a rub down, a fresh set of clothes and steaming noodles, they will again emerge in the small hours of Sunday to remind you to change your seating position, or sit up and relax and try and ease the tremendous tightness developing across your shoulders or between your shoulder blades and to loosen your ever tightening grip on your paddle.

I had none of all this. This year our trip down the mighty Hawkesbury went by as if in a trance. Naomi, looking to use us as a washride underestimated her and Tony's good speed and quickly disappeared. There was way too much focus on getting down the river as quickly as possible despite my voicing to Jeff on so many occasions, "we're not racing, I just want to make it to the finish". "Jeff, we've got to slow down, at this rate we'll never make it". This was put into perspective and made to look positively slow in comparison to the 'big guns' Pete, David and James as they swept past us before Sackville after starting 15 minutes behind us. Records were beckoning. At Sackville I held up Jeff as our 5 minutes stretched somehow to 7. The trip to Wiseman's was uneventful except for hitting the odd buoy, which Jeff was still trying to get me to avoid. Just before Wiseman's we enjoyed a musical interlude with John Duffy as we all joined in for a fine unaccompanied rendition of John Denver's *Country Road* before again disappearing into the dark.

Wiseman's came and went, and Jeff's fears of falling out were quietly and quickly allayed by the excellent handling skills of the mudlarks, the attentions of a doting land crew in the form of Liz, Laura and Allison, who somehow lulled us into staying well beyond our allotted 10 minutes. By now the tide was ripping out and Jeff's shoulder blades were ripping into him. Picking up Ruby we made easy but good headway down to Bar Point with a deteriorating Gareth struggling with a protesting bottom. Within sight of Spencer the 'boys in black' finally reeled us in. Tony and Rich eased past us down to Bar Point. Finally stretching out we pushed through the slowing tide through Milson's Passage and to a very welcome finish in under 10 hours. Some race, Jeff!

To our amazing, undaunted, caring landcrew, Liz and Laura, a big thank you. A big heartfelt thank you to the organisers, to all those who volunteered their time and equipment and congratulations to all those who took part, record or no record.

## What did the camera capture?



"Kermit you're not going to croak yet..." – Ruby

"I'm sure I packed the biscuits in here somewhere!" – Naomi

"Kermit! I know you're in there somewhere!!!" – Ian

"Let me just start this secret engine" – Wade

After 39 HCCs, Richard Barnes has clearly lost his head. – Cathy Miller

"You put your left foot in you put left out you put your head in and you shake it all about and you do the hoochie coochie and turn around and that's what it's about" – Jeff H (now drawing on personal Classic experience?)

"...and now I have to finish building a dog fence" – Trevor

"Damn it, I left my sunnies at Windsor!" – Naomi

"What! No one told me turn right at Spencer" – Craig

"Damn, that rudder, should've used the udder rudder" – Duncan





## Avoiding Little Green Men

**Rob Llwellyn-Jones**

BoB 1

Time: 10:46:02

K1 Obsession: growing

My preparation for this year's race was unusual. I didn't do the Marathon series and didn't paddle more than 12 km in one session until about mid-September. In May, encouraged by John Duffy, Ruby Arden and Brett Greenwood I took up the challenge of paddling a K1. I hoped it would improve my paddling posture and my forward stroke. Heading into winter isn't the best time to enjoy frequent Nemo Awards at Narrabeen Lake but I deluded myself that having paddled a Vault ski I wouldn't be too unstable in the Vadja Spirit. I soon discovered that you can usually find a sand bar not far away when you tip into Narrabeen Lake. Winter arrived so I quickly headed to warmer climes taking my newfound K1 passion on holiday aka "visiting UK family." It might sound exotic to get a Nemo Award on the river Thames but even in what the Brits call summer it was still cold! Returning home, I decided to further test my family's patience with what daughter Emma now calls "Daddy's Paddling Obsession" and decided to do my 4th HCC. So it was back into the ski for me! I was soon racking up the km's and further testing my better half's patience. Race day dawned with high winds and my traditional internal debate about which rudder to use. This was conveniently decided by the discovery that only the ultra-small rudder would fit next to the reed deflector I had recently installed!



*Rob leading the pack through Pitt Town*



*Still smiling at Wiseman's!*

I started the race promising my support team not to go out too hard but when Don Johnstone suddenly disappeared in the opposite direction just after the new Windsor Bridge, I put my foot through the floor fearing that he'd found a short cut I'd missed! Curiously I soon found myself leading the pack from the 4:15pm start. Either that or I was out there alone and everyone else was with Don! Even more curiously, a few km's from Sackville Don and Trevor suddenly re-appeared and emerged from their paddling time warp, or their not so short "short cut." We were soon happily exchanging wash rides through a blustery gale. I arrived at Sackville feeling great but my support team (wife Lindsey, daughter Emma and friend Chris) were worried I was going to hit the wall if I didn't slow down. I needn't have promised them that I'd be "good" on my way to Wiseman's because the incoming tide soon slowed me down. Don and Trevor had sped ahead leaving me to battle the time warp that had slowed their pace on the way to Sackville. The lights of Wiseman's were a merciful relief after

hours of scanning the river for the "little green men" (aka LGM) who so effectively ended my 2017 HCC campaign. Like the Yeti (or sharks in the river) I'm sure they're out there but I just didn't bump into any LGM this year! Thank God!

As the tide picked up pace so did I. Thankfully the wind had died down and the clouds had been swept away. Paddling along the dark stretches of the ever-widening river with the milky way sparkling above and phosphorescence glittering off my paddle was exhilarating! It's why I got addicted to paddling – when

you're in the "zone" it feels like you're flying and every other concern (even the pain in your bum) disappears. But my mysterious endorphin-fuelled high didn't last. Reaching Spencer when the tide turned brought me crashing back to the reality of aching joints and muscles threatening to boycott the remainder of proceedings. But buoyed by the prospect of crossing the finishing line I kept on and soon the lights of the freeway were in sight. My garmin battery had died long ago so I was stunned to be told that I'd beaten my HCC PB by 2 hours which made all the effort worth it!

As for 2020 - I reckon it will be hard not to reach up to those stars again so long as I can keep those little LGM buggers from sitting on my shoulder. Thanks to all those who volunteered for LCRK. Special thanks to support team Lindsey, Emma and Chris and to John D for encouragement and Brett G for coaching and positive motivation. I couldn't have done it without you all! It was a great night!



*Rob with Lindsey, Chris and Emma at the finish*

## Hawkesbury-cam

It has now become something of a Hawkesbury tradition that paddlers rounding a certain bend at Pitt Town should smile for the camera. Ian Wrenford's choice of photo spot is some metres out into the (mercifully shallow) river, and in order to capture everyone that paddles past he sits patiently in the water for several hours.

This year, Jana Osvald was back on photos, snapping shots of happy and exhausted paddlers alongside landcrewing for Don. Marg Fraser-Martin join the photo crew to take some fabulous shots and Sackville, then headed down to Mooney Mooney via motorbike in the wee hours to capture events at the finish line. Thank you all!



*Ian's Pitt Town view once all the paddlers had passed by*