



KAYAK KAPERS

August 2008

AGM and Annual Dinner





There are a lot of fresh faces in the new Club Committee. L-R: Simon Mann, Jeremy Spear, Tim Dodd, Rob Vallis (President), Steve Russell, Ian Wilson, Matt Swann, Steve Paget, Justin Paine, Tom Simmat, Graeme Jeffries.



Peter Anderson receives the award for best article in *Kayak Kapers* in 2007-08 (about his race in the Yukon River Quest) from James Mumme, on behalf of the judges, at the Annual Dinner. At right is KK editor Justin Paine. Other finalists in the best article competition were Jeremy Spear, Richard Barnes, Tom Simmat and Tony Hystek. The other judges were Ian Hofstetter, Paul van Koesveld, Alan Whiteman and Liz Winn.

Memories of 2007-08

A slide show of more than 150 photographs covering all aspects of LCRK activities, from races like the Hawkesbury Classic, Yukon River Quest and Winter Marathon series to club events like recreational outings and the fat boat race, was shown at the Annual Dinner. It is a great record of Lane Cove River Kayakers in the past year. Everyone is in it! Copies are available on DVD for \$5. Also available on CD is the LCRK Hawkesbury Classic training manual (plus the Big Kayak Test) for \$5. Contact Justin Paine 9858-3323.

LCRK Committee
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www.lcrk.org.au
 President: Rob Vallis
 Vice-President: Matt Swann
 Treasurer: Simon Mann
 Committee: Tim Dodd, Graeme Jeffries, Steve Paget, Justin Paine, Steve Russell, Jeremy Spear, Tom Simmat, Ian Wilson.

Rec paddles

A new series of recreational paddles has been organised by Tony Carr. They offer a leisurely day out on the water in good company. Partners and friends welcome. You can register for any of them with Tony on 0417-502-056 or tonycarr@ozemail.com.au.

Sunday, Sept 21: Nepean River – Douglas Park, Menangle Bridge. Joint with Windsor Canoe Club. This is steep gorge country, with sea eagles and water dragons. Hosted by Paul Bourne.

Saturday, Oct 18: Berowra Waters. Cruise up to Calabash Bay and visit hidden ruins, then on to a lovely beach at Bennetts Bay.

Sunday, Nov 23: Historic Parramatta River. See the ship cemetery in Homebush Bay, including the collier under which Japanese submarines sneaked into Sydney Harbour in 1942. Hosted by Derek Simmonds and Justin Paine.



Neil and Deb Meade and son Liam, now 8 months old, are off at the end of August to Abu Dhabi where Neil, an engineer, will be a project construction manager for Worley Parsons in an \$80 billion petroleum development. They'll review plans for the future after 2-3 years. We wish them good luck.

You need gold to go for gold

Ever wanted to compete in a world championship? Race against the best in the world? Maybe win a medal?

Next year you'll have your chance when the World Masters Games are held in Sydney. But you'll need gold in your pocket. The cost is \$220 for "entry into one Sydney 2009 World Masters Games sport competition". If you want to take along an "accompanying person" it will cost you another \$110.

Among the many sports which will be contested are kayaking and canoeing: marathon, flatwater sprints, slalom and canoe polo. As the disciplines are scheduled for different days, you'll be able to enter more than one. (Hopefully the \$220 entry fee entitles you to multiple entries within that one sport.)

The kayaking/canoeing will be held in mid October 2009 at Penrith's International Regatta Centre and Whitewater Stadium and in the Nepean River at Penrith. Canoe polo is on Oct 10-12 (Sat-Mon), marathon on Oct 13-14 (Tue-Wed), slalom on Oct 15 (Thu) and sprints on Oct 16-18 (Fri-Sun).

Age groups for men, women and mixed for the marathon, sprints and slalom range in 5-year breaks from 30+ to 85+ which means that almost everyone in Lane Cove River Kayakers will be eligible. We've got plenty of young masters, middle age masters, old masters and antique masters, so it could be a great festival for us.

Marathon will be the discipline that interests LCRK paddlers most, and the boat classes planned are K1, K2, C1, C2, TK1, TK2, TC1, TC2, OC1, OC2,

Rec1 and Rec2. (Rec 1 and Rec 2 are described as "recreational and racing boats, eg surf skis etc").

The race distances are somewhat shorter than we have been used to racing – 30+ to 45+ will be over 21km, 50+ to 65+ over 14km and 70+ to 85+ over 7km.

Sprints will be held over 200m, 500m and 1000m in K1, K2, K4, C1, C2, C4, TK1, TK2, OC1 and OC2.

Slalom classes will be K1, C1, C2 and teams comprising 3xK1 for men and women.

Canoe polo will be held in 30+ and 45+ classes for men and women, and in 30+ and 45+ classes for an open division in which any number of males and females can participate.

There will be 28 sports in the Master Games, also including cycling, swimming and orienteering.

Entries close on July 31 2009. For more details on the Games, go to www.2009worldmasters.com.

How the Wednesday time trials began

On January 30 1990 the first of what has become the regular Wednesday evening kayak time trials on Lane Cove River was held. Up to that time members of Lane Cove Valley Canoe Club, predecessor to Lane Cove River Kayakers, used to meet after work for a paddle on any afternoon of the week. One of them was **Peter Janecek**, who organised the time trials and kept records of those early days. Reprinted below are the instructions he gave to the 1990 pioneers and the results of the first 5 time trials.

The story of the Crudslime Cup

The Crudslime Cup is eagerly contested by paddlers of quality in various craft each Wednesday evening on the Lane Cove River.

The coveted award has been so named as no Lane Cove boat ever stays white for long. It's that rich streaky brown finish on every boat that has given the Crudslime Cup its name.

The K1 on the trophy, along with its paddle, is a faithful model of the *Limfjorden* racing craft of the early 50s designed by Jorgen Samson who went on to later design the *Tiger*. This model, built by a European artisan, was brought to Australia by the great Hungarian paddler Ferenc Gall. It was presented to the newly formed Lane Cove Valley Canoe Club by Gary Burnham, a long time Lane Cove paddler, from his own collection, to form the centrepiece of the Crudslime Cup.¹



Crudslime Cup pointscore system

The Cup is a handicap series contested over 5 races in all weathers. A new series begins upon completion of the old. The course is one lap between Figtree Bridge and Fullers Bridge, starting and finishing at Wirong flat. The course is 12.5km.

If 5 paddlers turn up the race is on and points are awarded. As a preamble to the (Hawkesbury) Classic, two-lap "Crudslime classics" will form part of each series and will be held on the Wednesday closest to the full moon. Double points will be awarded for these events.²

Each paddler scores points in each completed race. If 5 finish an event, the hindmost receives one point whilst the foremost gets five.

In addition 2 points will be awarded for each completed race. A paddler completing a whole series of 5 races will receive a further 2 points.

What to do on race day

Lane Cove paddlers are undoubtedly people of rare quality. They can therefore be relied upon to start when asked, to take and report their own times accurately and never biff the handicapper.

A rare feature of Crudslime Cup racing is that no fee is charged, the company of good fellows being sufficient reward for the small amount of administrative overhead required. Here is how to make it easier for the handicapper ...

- Turn up early ... if possible before 1800hrs as the slowest must be on the course by then so the speedy ones don't fret too much waiting to start (finely tuned athletes can be a nuisance at times)
- Check your start time with the starter/handicapper in case you are new or have moved from your start group
- Get onto the water and thrash about waiting to be called to the line. Have your watch ready. You must take your own time.
- Paddle the course manfully (personfully?). Start from the ramp at Wirong Flat and proceed by whichever route you fancy toward Figtree Bridge.

Turn around the large fat green pole closest to the bridge³ and go back upstream to the next turn around Fullers Bridge. The finish is back at the ramp.

- Now the tricky bit starts ... As soon as you finish you must do two things ... this may prove taxing.
 1. Check your watch and see how long you took over the lap.
 2. Take note of who you finished behind.
 - Have a little rest then come ashore. This may seem obvious but you can't take chances with some people. The Syd Greenup incident at Wagga only serves to prove my point.⁴
 - Seek out the starter/handicapper and tell them your time and who you finished behind. They cannot chase you so if you want your performance recorded ... tell them.
 - Stand around idly chatting about the sharks/eels/boats/how unfit you are.
 - Go home to your loved ones.
- See how easy it is ...

¹ The K1 was carved from wood from the famous Black Forest, mounted on inch-thick mahogany. It went missing after about 6 years and its whereabouts are unknown.

² The Commonwealth Bank Cup, presented to the most successful club in the Hawkesbury Classic, was won by the Lane Cove Valley Canoe Club every year from 1990 to 1999, a record unmatched by any other club.

³ The turnaround point was later changed to the red pole, further to the west, to keep paddlers out from the wall where fishermen gather.

⁴ A paddler named Syd Greenup temporarily went "missing" after a State marathon race at Wagga, causing a widespread search. The incident led to a lot of comment later.

Crudslime Cup pointscore. Series 1.								
Paddler	Cl	Hcp	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Race 5	Points
P. Janecek	OK1	3	62.18	61.30	61.49	61.15	50.30	46
P. Lancaster	OC1	4	64.06	63.35	-	-	63.15	36
Isaacs team	Any	8	-	66.40	67.00	74.37	64.40	36
A. Mann	OK1	2	61.05	-	-	60.35	59.30	34
R. Hislop	DRR	0	-	63.15	65.00	60.18	DNF	32
Rowan X	OC1	8	67.29	66.50	67.50	-	66.50	29
P. Tedesco	OK1	0	58.51	59.45	59.10	-	-	28
P. Armstrong	OK1	3	-	-	-	63.33	60.30	25
Jones team	TC2	17	-	76.35	-	74.59	75.20	21
I. Westlake	TK1	14	-	72.45	76.25	72.10	72.30	18
P. Hinds	SS1	13	-	-	74.00	78.14	71.00	18
W. Rowston	TK1	13	-	-	76.35	73.11	72.10	17
T. Maguire	OK1	5	-	-	-	-	64.30	16
D. Hislop	DRR	9	-	68.00	-	67.19	-	16
John Murray	OK1	15	-	-	DNF	-	64.30	15
W. Burnham	OK1	0	-	-	-	-	57.30	12
D. Rowston	TK1	13	70.44	73.04	-	-	-	11
I. Adamson	OK1	0	-	-	DNF	-	57.30	11
P. Hillig	OK1	5	-	-	-	-	62.30	10
M. Weaver	OK1	0	58.40	-	-	-	-	9
D. Salter	OK1	8	-	-	-	73.02	66.56	9
D. Egan	OK1	9	-	68.40	-	-	-	3
T. Kulchar	TK1	17	-	-	-	-	76.00	3
T..Daven	DRR	13	-	-	-	DNF	-	-
J. Foster	OK1	3	-	-	-	-	DNF	-

Lane Cove sizzles at first famil paddle

Lane Cove made its intentions for this year's Hawkesbury Classic clear at the first of the familiarisation paddles, taking the trifecta and filling 4½ of the first 5 places.

The event, from Brooklyn to Spencer and back, attracted 77 craft and good weather.

The doubles of Craig Elliott/James Mumme and Michael Mueller/Rob Vallis turned the trial into their own personal duel and battled it out, neck and neck, for the whole race. Craig and James edged in front at the finishing line to win by an eyelash.

Tony Hystek was third after a lonely race, and Bruce Goodall, with long-time partner Christine Lalor from Windsor, just sneaked over the line in front of Simon Mann for fourth.



Rugged up before an early morning Brooklyn start. Rear: Urs Mader, Jason Cooper, John Greathead, Tony Walker, Liz Winn, Tony Hystek, Michael Mueller. Front: Kenji Ogawa, Tony Carr, Rob Vallis.

Brooklyn-Spencer-Brooklyn		
Paddler	Time	Plc
Craig Elliott/James Mumme	1.45.11	1
Rob Vallis/Michael Mueller	1.45.12	2
Tony Hystek	1.49.07	3
Bruce Goodall/Christine Lalor	1.55.34	4
Simon Mann	1.55.36	5
Jason Cooper	2.01.00	13
Urs Mader	2.01.23	15
Tony Walker/John Greathead	2.02.14	16
Ernest Friedlaender/ Dirk Langenfeld	2.05.14	25
Wayne Wanders	2.05.25	26
Matt Swann	2.09.57	33
Liz Winn	2.10.48	34
Steve Russell	2.11.40	36
Tony Carr	2.12.06	38
Kenji Ogawa	2.14.16	43
Bert Lloyd	2.18.55	46
Justin Paine	2.22.07	49

Lane Cove provided nearly a quarter of the field, and it was good to see Kenji Ogawa back on the water in his purple Flyer.

He's planning to do the Classic this year and is improving steadily following the operation which kept him out of last year's race.

Join in – be a Classic volunteer

Volunteers are needed for a number of roles in the Hawkesbury Classic. If you aren't competing, volunteer for one or more of these jobs. You'll find it very rewarding and enjoy the company of others doing the same thing.

Landcrews: A number of LCRK members wanting to do the Classic this year are without landcrews. If you can help out, contact one of the club officials. We're trying to organise LCRK landing spots at Sackville, Dargle and Wisemans checkpoints this year, as this brings all the crews and landcrews together. We need help from someone who'll be at these checkpoints to do this.

Scrutineering: Chief Classic scrutineer Rob Grozier needs extra hands to do a number of tasks associated with scrutineering. Contact Rob on 0410-573-635.

Other roles: LCRK members traditionally help out with a number of other jobs at the Classic, like assisting with registration. Last year several did this and then went on to landcrew through the night. If you're available, contact Rob Grozier.

Get your PFD tested for the Classic

As in past years, Wendy McLean will be carrying out pre-race testing of PFDs. You can get them checked on the following dates:

Sept 14: At the Lane Cove Marathon 10 race, Blackman Park, from 10.15am.

Sept 21: At the Central Coast Canoe Club 30km race, Wyong, from 10.30am.

Oct 4: At Wisemans Ferry, after the Sackville-Wisemans familiarisation paddle, from 11.30am.

Oct 25: At Windsor, after the Sackville-Windsor familiarisation paddle.

Murray future uncertain

Is this year's Murray Marathon going to be the last one? The Red Cross is reported to have pulled out of the annual event for future years, leaving its future in limbo. If you haven't done it, this year may be your last chance, although some Murray veterans are confident a new sponsor will be found.



When we first saw the huge hole in the ground next to the steps leading down to the pontoon on July 2 we wondered what it was. Perhaps the Council was going to fill it with water so we would have a pond where we could practise Eskimo rolls, or tipping out of K1s. A week later all was clear, as this picture shows. It is a 65,000-litre water tank, to be used for watering the athletic field. Groundwater leaking into Lane Cove tunnel will be pumped into it instead of being discharged into the river, as at present.



Phil Newman certainly made a big splash, figuratively speaking, with this double-page color spread in *The Sydney Magazine*, a supplement with the *Sydney Morning Herald*. It was the main item in a special feature on how some commuters find alternative ways to get to work. It says in part: "He paddles to work at BridgeClimb in The Rocks three days a week – Monday, Wednesday and Thursday – taking in the harbour as he commutes. He's been at it for four years. The 53-year-old maintenance manager drives from the family home in Westleigh to Wirong Flat, on the Lane Cove River in Chatswood West, where he puts his kayak into the water, heads downstream and finally paddles across the harbour to Pier One at Dawes Point, under the bridge. He keeps his work pants in dry bags in a compartment at the back of the kayak, and picks up his shirts from a drycleaner in The Rocks. The paddle takes 75 minutes each way depending on the wind and tide – "longer than it used to take," he admits. But it's worth it just to avoid traffic. "You've got to consider the environment too. I don't agree with all these cars pouring into the city each day, and most of them with only one person." He may be slowing down in his 50s, but Newman is incredibly fit. Each morning when he reaches his destination, he carries his kayak – a plastic sit-on-top he bought second hand for \$900 – up the Ives Steps to a nearby park bench, where he secures it with a bicycle lock. No-one has tampered with his kayak in the park but on the harbour he has been capsized by a fishing boat, abused by a ferry captain and stopped by water police during APEC. Most of the time the trip is incident-free and Newman – sometimes paddling alongside fairy penguins – has time to daydream in a way those shoe-horned into a peak-hour bus do not. It was on a such a dreamy commute that Newman made plans to kayak around Tasmania. "I was paddling along thinking 'Where could I go with this thing?' When you're in a boat you can go anywhere. I had never been to Tasmania and it appealed to me." The expedition took Newman and a mate 53 days to complete last year. It was a life-changing experience. "It was about finding out that you don't have to go and do something big like that, you can just do it every day," says Newman. "Just paddling my kayak to and from work, that in itself is a mini adventure. You don't have to go to the other end of the world to have fun; you can have fun every day."

More losses to Qld

Queensland is continuing to poach our players. Maybe it's time we started enticing some of their stars to join us.

Previously we reported that Nick Chai is heading to Maroons territory in a job-related move.

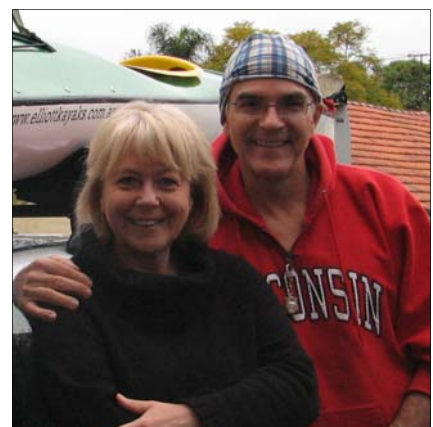


Paul van Koesveld

Now the same thing is happening

to Paul van Koesveld, who's going north of the border for two years. After that he'll reassess his options but as he's keeping his home here we expect him back. He's hoping some carefully planned interstate travelling will enable him to be in the Lane Cove squad for this year's Hawkesbury Classic.

Moving to the Gold Coast permanently are perennial Classic champions Urs and Arni Mader. They're going in October but will be back to paddle with us whenever they can. Urs says he's a definite starter in Lane Cove colors for the Classic this year. He'll be doing it alone in a Marauder, and Arni will be landcrewing for him.



Arni and Urs Mader

M10 Race 5 Forster

Competitor	Div	Time	Plc
Matt Blundell	1	1.32.39	3
Bruce Goodall/ Steve Steward	2	1.37.26	2
Michael Mueller/ Rob Vallis	2	1.37.50	3
Ian Hofstetter	2	1.39.33	5
Tony Hystek	2	1.42.35	7
Craig Elliott/ James Mumme	2	1.42.37	8
Richard Barnes	2	2.06.44	11
David Kavanagh	3	1.45.01	1
Tom Simmat	3	1.48.51	6
Thomas Reif	4	1.46.27	1
Simon Mann	4	1.49.27	3
Steve Paget	4	1.50.28	5
Roger Aspinall	4	1.53.38	9
Tim Hookins	4	1.55.05	10
Jason Cooper	5	1.54.15	2
Marg Cook/ Merridy Huxley	5	1.55.23	7
Andrew Charlton/ Mark Gillett	5	1.58.09	11
Jon Harris/ Don Rowston	6	1.57.28	4
John Greathead/ Tony Walker	6	1.57.36	5
Bert Lloyd	6	2.07.37	18
Justin Paine	6	2.13.48	21
Trevor Williamson	6	2.26.29	26
Andrew Whitehead	9	1.18.40	25
Joanne Mansell	9	1.18.56	26

Divs 1-6 = 20km, Div 9 = 10km

M10 Race 6 Windsor

Competitor	Div	Time	Plc
Matt Blundell	1	1.31.13	3
Matt Acheson	2	1.35.46	2
Craig Elliott/ James Mumme	2	1.37.19	3
Tony Hystek	2	1.38.06	5
Michael Mueller/ Rob Vallis	2	1.38.40	6
David Kavanagh	3	1.41.28	2
Dean Wayne/ Steve Cooper	3	1.43.47	7
Tom Simmat	3	1.44.55	9
Richard Barnes	3	1.46.08	12
Mark Gibbins	3	1.48.55	14
Tim McNamara/ Derek Simmonds	4	1.44.05	1
Bruce Goodall	4	1.44.43	3
Simon Mann	4	1.45.11	5
Tim Hookins	4	1.47.03	6
Len Hedges	4	1.48.44	14
Steve Paget	4	1.50.07	18
Jason Cooper	5	1.50.21	3
Urs Mader	5	1.52.09	8
Steve Russell	5	2.01.01	16
John Greathead/ Tony Walker	6	1.53.12	4
Wade Rowston	6	1.53.19	5
Jon Harris/ Don Rowston	6	1.55.51	6
Wayne Wanders	6	1.58.20	13
Matt Swann	6	2.04.56	22
Bert Lloyd	6	2.05.37	23
Justin Paine	6	2.10.14	28
Trevor Williamson/ Greg Appleyard	6	2.10.27	29
David Hammond	9	49.53	7

Divs 1-6 = 20km, Div 9 = 10km

Saga of the duelling doubles

That great kayaking serial, *The Duel of the Doubles*, starring box office superstars Craig Elliott/James Mumme and Michael Mueller/Rob Vallis, continued at races 5 and 6 of this year's Marathon 10 series (and in the Brooklyn-Spencer-Brooklyn Hawkesbury Classic preview, see page 4).

The previous two races of the Marathon series finished all square, and so it was again after the two events in July.

At Forster, Michael and Rob cruised away to a margin of 4m 47s at the finish.

At Windsor, Craig and James decided to raise the bar and swapped their Vindicator for a K2. They crossed the line 1m 21s ahead of their rivals, but Michael and Rob, to be fair to them, were battling the aftermath of colds and not at their peak.

It's good competitive fun between close friends, and the end of the serial hasn't been written yet.

It should be noted that this is a personal duel, and other Lane Cove paddlers are also prominent in the division 2 results. At Forster Bruce Goodall partnered Steve Steward, with

whom he's doing the Classic this year, into 2nd and at Windsor Matt Acheson took 2nd.

A big Lane Cove contingent turned up at Forster and, no doubt buoyed by



Where would we be without bureaucrats? Tim Hookins find time before the Forster race to do some paper shuffling.

a cheerful BBQ the night before, came away with some outstanding results.

Dave Kavanagh won division 3 in a tight finish (and was just knocked back



Lane Cove's finest lounge about after the race at Windsor



There was lots of food at the Forster BBQ, held at Cabana Tony/Alanna

into 2nd at Windsor), Thomas Reif won division 4 and Jason Cooper was 2nd in division 5 (and was 3rd at Windsor).

Tim McNamara and Derek Simmonds piloted their Vindicator to a hard fought victory in division 4 at Windsor.

Another longstanding personal doubles contest continued in division 6 between Jon Harris/Don Rowston and John Greathead/Tony Walker, with Jon and Don finishing ahead at Forster and John and Tony turning the tables at Windsor.

For detailed Marathon 10 results go to www.paddlensw.org.au.



Above: Steve Russell borrowed Tony Hystek's "woodie" for race 6. Below: James Mumme and Craig Elliott prepare for battle at Windsor.



Wade Rowston in hot pursuit of John Greathead and Tony Walker coming up to the finishing line at Windsor



Whale watching from a paddle board

Rob Grozier filed this report on what can happen if you take the afternoon off and go paddle boarding:



On arriving at Little Manly Cove I found the Channel 7 helicopter hovering over two whale-watch boats right off Manly Point. With adrenaline pumping, I quickly set off around the point to find 4 whales, 3 adults and a calf, heading in towards Manly wharf. To my amazement the two large boats headed back up harbour leaving only me, a kayaker, an outrigger and a couple of small yachts with these huge mammals. The word had gone out on the ABC and large crowds gathered on the shore, hooting and hollering with each manoeuvre of these surprisingly agile 30-tonne creatures. At one stage, we had them slightly behind and to our left by 100 metres, with the next sighting to our right by 50 metres. They had passed right underneath us, blowing as they resurfaced, a spectacular sight in the calm air. Their breath hung in the air for some time. Suddenly standing on 10kg of epoxy felt a very insecure place to be but there was a real feeling of calmness out there. One of them came to the surface vertically (spyhopping is the term used), his big barnacled head right out of water having a look around not 50 metres away while the others carried on with their antics, flapping, slapping and blowing. Eventually they turned and seemed to be heading to sea but again amazingly turned left around Manly Point and headed right into Little Manly Cove. Manly ferries had been stopped so the scene was quite surreal. While talking to the outrigger guy and out the corner I my eye I saw this huge flipper smash into the water as though to catch our attention. That brought huge cheers from the crowd on shore. The police had now turned up and warned us to stay a distance away. But Officer, we pleaded, it is the whales that continue coming closer to us. We followed them as they eventually moved towards the Heads with the sun setting on a perfect Sydney winter day. Such was my focus on this wonderful sight, I had not realised that (on this craft) I was way beyond my comfort zone out between the Heads, so I reluctantly decided it was time to head back

before the sun set and the ferries started up again. That hour was truly one of the most extraordinary times of my life.

Rob also reported on the Pope's visit:

Just three souls paddled across the Heads to Paddle with the Pope. Tim Hookins, Ian Cooper and I were carried across by a strong northerly at our backs and enjoyed catching some nice swells along the way. Security was tight with Police and Maritime in attendance. With the wind making it very difficult to pull up at the exclusion zone, we often found ourselves well within the zone. Tim was battling to bring his big ski around in the wind and was notified that one more indiscretion across the "thin blue line" would result in him being "taken in". The authorities were very toey. The Pope passed by with the fireboat water canon and following flotilla, making for a spectacular sight.

Footnote: A few paddles later, Rob stubbed his foot on a trailer tyre when coming in at Little Manly and broke his little toe. He had to go to hospital to have it pointed back, painfully, in the correct direction. He's out of action for a few weeks.





The challenge of Geoquest

by Richard Barnes

Geoquest is possibly Australia's premier adventure race. It's held each June long weekend, in exotic locations up and down the coast. This year's destination was Coffs Harbour.

The key ingredients of adventure racing are kayaking, mountain biking and hiking, usually with other facets thrown in to add to the adrenalin thrill factor. Competitors race as teams of four, all members having to stick together all the way. All the way for Geoquest means 48 hours non-stop. That's two nights without sleep.

Motivation to compete is a combination of time to share with friends; voyaging into the unknown world of sleep deprivation; overcoming challenges; seeing beautiful places; and simple old fun.

Team Goldfish has been entering these races for five plus years. This year's members were me and my sister-in-law, Mardi Barnes, plus two newcomers to the sport, Marc and Nicole. Marc lives at Coffs, so would be able to help with lots of local knowledge. Nicole was going to fly down from Mackay Qld to join us.

Another regular, Buzz Powell, had branched out to set up team G-Oldfish, which included other LCRKers Marg Cook and Merridy Huxley. For Marg and Merridy, and Marc and Nicole, Geoquest was to be their first experience of competing in anything longer than 24 hours. Contingency planning allowed for potential catnaps. Unfortunately G-Oldfish got all their training perfected, but a family crisis forced them to pull out.

Matts Blundell and Acheson are other adventure racing regulars, but in their case the arrival of a new generation of racers halted their weekend away.

The course becomes known only 12 hours before the start. This year there were to be three loops radiating south, north then west of the start-finish race headquarters. Total race distance 230km. Each loop contained a mix of the hiking-biking-paddling challenges.

Thrown in was a boogie boarding leg to ride some famous point breaks, and something billed as a moonlight estuary ramble. Team Goldfish hit this one round 2am Sunday morning. Like so often in the Hawkesbury Classic, the moon was feeling very timid. It was also spot on high tide, so where other teams had skipped across sandbars, the Goldfish



Teams prepare for a Le Mans start in Coffs Harbour

swam.

The course favoured runners with GPS-like navigation skills. There was a very long hike leg down into the Nymboida River gorge anticipated to take up to 12 hours scrambling through rainforest vines and mud. It was not a canoeists' course, with only two shortish paddling legs. Kayakers honed by Wednesday paddles at Lane Cove wished for more.

Canoe Leg 1 was the opening leg, starting 7am in Coffs Harbour, then heading out to sea and 26km up the coast to Woolgoolga. Scenery was superb, particularly the Solitary Islands and lighthouse.

We began 10 minutes behind the field after breaking a rudder cable in the Le Mans start. Our choice of boats was two double Mirages. As we pegged back multiple swimming ski paddlers we were mighty glad of our stable choice.

Strong trailing winds helped push us north but did kick up a rugged chop.

It was Goldfish Marc's first ever sea kayak venture, leading to a few nervous braces but also an overwhelming sense of achievement to overtake almost a quarter of the field along the way.

A giant sea turtle surprised us, until we surprised it and it dived and disappeared. Bicycle helmets worn all the way in case of a rough landing became an unnecessary precaution as we cruised to leg-end in headland-sheltered calm and awaiting cheering landcrew.

Steep downhills, long uphill and single track awaited on the cycle legs. Team Goldfish are the only crew to use tandems. Mardi up front piloting one also becomes the map board. So far we've proven it's impossible to cartwheel a tandem, no matter how steep the track or hard the braking.

Canoe Leg 2 was a 16km meander on the Corindi River at Red Rock. It would have been a breeze for the leaders in daylight. In darkness, it was hard even to see the mangrove branches seconds before we came too close to them. Just finding the river was a challenge. One team was fabled to have tried sticking to the left bank to save getting lost, until they realised they were repeating their course, having circumnavigated an island. The upstream stretches were glassy smooth, reflecting pinpoints of starlight. Goldfish were later surprised and a bit proud to set the outright fastest time for this leg.

Our overall results were at the other end of the scale, well beaten last of the teams to complete the whole course. Presentations were long done and the winners heading home when we crossed the finish line 55 hours after starting. We did maximise the fun.



Marc and Richard in tandem