



KAYAK KAPERS

April 2007

Andrew McAuley: The spirit lives on

Andrew McAuley was lost at sea on about February 9 after paddling from Tasmania to within a few kilometres of the New Zealand coast. The loss of this great adventurer was a terrible blow to the kayaking world. We had followed, day by day on his website and through other channels, his bold bid to become the first person to paddle from Australia to New Zealand. As he survived each threat the weather threw at him, including some very nasty fronts, our admiration grew even stronger. Then came that dreadful Friday when a garbled transmission picked up by New Zealand coastguard led to the fear he was in trouble. This was confirmed, and although a sea and air search discovered his sea kayak, he was never found. As the nation grieved, Lane Cove members donated \$3600 which was sent to his wife Vicki and son Finlay, 3. Tasmanian friend Laurie Ford, in a tribute poem, quotes him saying before his departure: "I have this urge inside me, saying 'come on, give it a go'." He may be gone but his legend and his spirit will live forever.

Exceptional skills by Paul Loker

I am fortunate to have been a friend of Andrew McAuley, and to have participated in many paddling trips with him.

The most memorable being in January 2003, when I paddled in Tasmania, from Strahan to Dover, with Andrew and Laurie Geoghegan. During these 400km we experienced a wide range of sea conditions, and I was glad to have been in Andrew's company. His relaxed manner and incredible modesty, hiding exceptional outdoor and paddling skills, gave me the confidence to perform and enjoy paddling through this fantastic wilderness area.

I will never forget paddling out to Maatsuyker Island off the SW coast. We had 6m swells and 35 knot winds on the beam. Although the adrenaline was pumping furiously, having Andrew being comfortable in these conditions gave Laurie and I the confidence to safely make the crossing.

The three of us enjoyed this trip, and have great memories of the adventure, which for me was at the upper end of my ability. Andrew, however, had a great appetite for extending the limit, so paddled back across Bass Strait via King Island, whilst Laurie and I took the ferry.

Andrew continued training with long hard sessions in the kayak, and in November 2003 did the first direct cross-

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What went wrong?

What disaster led to the loss of Andrew McAuley's life when he was so frustratingly close to his goal? We will probably never know for certain, but there has been considerable speculation. Highly respected Tasmanian sea kayaker **Laurie Ford**, on his website members.iinet.net.au/~lford1, offers this "possible explanation of what happened" which he compiled after speaking to Paul Hewitson of Mirage Kayaks, builder of Andrew's kayak.

Some info about Andrew McAuley's kayak when it was inspected by the builder, after it was brought ashore in New Zealand.

First of all, the kayak was in excel-

lent shape, apart from Casper the cockpit cover missing - and there is a suggestion that this could have actually

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What went wrong?

broken away in the 24 hours after Andrew was separated from the kayak. It would have been full of water and being washed about in the swells, and could have easily broken away.

The pump batteries (two of them, with separate switches) were fully charged, and the pump worked when tested. The satellite phone still worked, although the battery was getting low. The socket in the kayak that was used for charging was corroded, it was inside the rear compartment, and had been under water for 24 hours.. The three GPS's were still working. The EPIRB was still in the kayak and was tested OK. The paddle was still attached to the kayak. There was food in the cockpit.

Paul has viewed some of the video (the NZ police still have some of the waterlogged video). The video plainly shows him wearing his drysuit in the kayak. I know from talking to him at Fortescue Bay that his intention was to always put this on if his weather forecaster in Sydney warned him of a big blow coming. This would mean that if anything happened and he ended up out of the kayak he would be prepared for it. So some of the video shows him wearing it. A very sensible precaution.

In the video he also mentions that he had capsized twice, and had to climb back into the kayak. ***This was quite difficult ("gnarly" to use his own words) and he was very concerned that he not capsize again.*** A normal kayak can be re-entered over the back deck, but Casper would stop this method. And the front deck had gear on it as well, including a mounted video camera. Some of you might wonder why he didn't roll up. For a start, there was no normal seat in the kayak, and it was a very large cockpit. Because he had to slide down into it to sleep, he was sitting on a bean bag that he specially made, and I can remember him saying that this was a vast improvement over the bag he was using on the first

aborted trip. This bean bag was also used as a pillow for sleeping. The other reason for not having a normal seat was that the rear compartment was accessed from inside the cockpit, through a hatch in the rear bulkhead. There was no external hatch on this compartment. To get stuff out of here he had to lie down in the kayak, roll over on his stomach, remove the hatch cover. His gear in here had long strings attached to them so they could be pulled out.

What went wrong? This is the best guess made by the people on the spot – but is conjecture, as told to me by Paul.

He was getting tired (he went through emotional highs and lows – this from the video), but was finally in good weather, and in sight of land (the peaks of the mountains anyway). A small front came through that he possibly didn't bother putting his drysuit on for, maybe because it was a very hot day. He was probably exuberant at being close to land and may have paddled more than he was fit to do, and was extra tired. The cold front capsized him and put him in the water. He could not get back in. He got in under the kayak and unscrewed the rear hatch to get his drysuit out, and the VHF radio. If he was tethered he would have to untether to get into the dry suit. Somehow he got separated from the kayak and it blew away from him faster than he could swim – especially in a drysuit, or half in one.

The rest you know.

I repeat, the above is conjecture from the people on the spot – but a reasonable explanation that would cover all the facts.

Why didn't he go for the EPIRB? I know Andrew thinks the same as I do on this subject. It is a last resort. It is far better (if possible) to make contact by phone or radio and let people know the ***exact situation*** – rather than the huge panic and search that an EPIRB generates. Having said that, I'm quite sure that he would have intended to set it off (as I would) once he was in

the drysuit. It was the separation from the kayak that brought him undone.

What lessons can be learnt from this tragedy? First of all, ***it is possible to paddle a kayak from Tasmania to New Zealand. Never forget that.*** Andrew planned this expedition in meticulous detail, and he was right – it can be done

Had he had a small strobe light in an inside pocket of his paddling jacket he may well have attracted the attention of the two helicopters that went out searching on the Friday night. And in hindsight the EPIRB should always be attached to the person, not the kayak.

Note: Laurie has written a memorable tribute poem to Andrew titled "So Bloody Close and Yet So Bloody Far!" You can see it at members.iinet.net.au/~lford1.

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Exceptional skills

ing of Bass Strait. Without making a lot of fuss, apart from his usual meticulous preparation, he started from Tidal River and paddled the 220km to arrive in Boat Harbour 35 hours later.

Over the next few years, we had regular trips away, usually paddling the NSW-Victorian section of coastline. Andrew always had future expeditions planned, and on these trips he would always be trying out new ideas, evaluating equipment and getting extra feedback from the rest of the group.

One of these expeditions was the crossing of the Gulf of Carpentaria from Weipa to Gove.

This necessitated spending six and a half days in the kayak to make the crossing of 530km. Andrew's preparation for this trip was done with his usual meticulous attention to detail, planning and practise.

And involved spending many weekends sleeping out in the kayak off the NSW coast, fine tuning his equipment and skills.

I know I'll miss Andrew, as a friend and great inspiration.

Trapped in car wreck

Trish Hamilton suffered serious head, ribs, arms, knees and ankle injuries in a head-on car crash on Alford's Point Road in early March. She was trapped in the wreckage for 90 minutes before rescuers could free her so she could be airlifted to Liverpool Hospital. She's going to be in hospital and rehabilitation for a while. She'd welcome a call on 0414-530-164 and/or a visit.

Record time trial fleet

On March 7, 51 boats took part in the LCRK Wednesday night time trial, equalling the record set around Christmas. This illustrates the club's growing

membership but does not come without certain logistical problems.

Yukon, here we come

Australia will have a 3-boat challenge in this year's tough Yukon River Quest in Canada – and all will come from Lane Cove River Kayakers. Leading the charge will be Tom Simmat (Team Down Under 1), taking on the wild river and the wilderness for the third year in a row. Urs Mader, as endurable as a Swiss watch, will be making his debut as Team Down Under 2. Joining them in a double will be LCRK new members Peter Anderson and Steve Pizzey, Team Wobbly Wallabies. There's a chance a

fourth Australian will be competing. Liz Wynne from Central Coast is waitlisted number 4 in the restricted field for the 750km event, due to start on June 27.

Timekeeping roster

Apr 11	Grahame Horne/Tony Carr
Apr 18	Derek Walker/Michael Mueller
Apr 25	Dave Kavanagh/Simon Mann
May 2	John Arkwright/Trevor Williamson
May 9	Steve Russell/Andrew Stauber (BBQ)
May 16	Ian Purves/Len Hedges
May 23	Wade Rowston/Don Rowston
May 30	David Edelman/Graeme Jeffries
Jun 6	Richard Frykberg/Ian Hofstetter
Jun 13	Mike Fowlds/Simon Rintel (BBQ)
Jun 20	Roger Aspinall/Julie Stanton

The Men's Health Bridge-to-Beach on March 11 had 11km races for paddlers and swimmers from Sydney Harbour Bridge to Manly wharf. LCRK members found it an exciting event.

Drop the hammer ... and win! by Matt Blundell



The day dawned fine and clear, a great start to a day on the harbour. A little bit of a late start and the horn goes off.

The plastic singles charge off the line, a wonky line at that as anywhere under Harbour Bridge seems to be okay to start.

Two minutes later it's our turn as all the doubles blast off. Mike Snell and I sprint off the line, giving it 100%. I glance down at the GPS which I have attached to the RED7 double and it's reading 20km/h.

We fly past the single plastics. Along with two other doubles we soon clear out from the plastics and other doubles and have clean water. We are averaging about 15km/h. Swapping leads with a double ski from Wollongong, the pace stays high.

Before we know it we are fast approaching the swimmers. All I can say is it's an awesome effort by these guys and girls because 11km is a long way to swim. Rather than me.

Keeping the pace up, we settle into a steady rhythm and start to clear out, helped by a bit of luck as the 'Gong boys have a few steering issues. We soon have a handy lead of 50m and continue to push on. Across Middle Harbour and towards the last buoy we must negotiate.

A bit of excitement here as I spot a 1.2m shark only 2m from our RED7! But no time for photos. We catch another runner and the speed picks up. We can see the finish now and we start to relax.

Then a quick check from Mike and he spots one of the other doubles only 10m behind. We drop the hammer and put 30m into them and head for the big red buoy, not realising we don't actually need to turn around it. The other double follows so we are able to hold our lead to the beach. We hit the beach in front, then run 100m or so to take line honors. That run last year was

a lot easier!!!

Three minutes later Tim Jacobs comes in to win the individual ski. Soon after him I see Tim and Oli Hookins come in for 5th in the doubles in the Supersonic. Then in the distance I see a couple of sea kayaks battling it out. It's Matt Acheson and Graeme Jeffries, closely followed by Jeff Bannerman. Matt gets the win by 10 seconds and he soon tells me that he had a swim as well.

A great race was had by all 600 or so competitors. So if you missed it this year, pencil it in the diary for next year. It's not every day you start under the Harbour Bridge and race through Sydney Harbour.

Some of the other Lane Cove competitors made these comments:

Graeme Jeffries: It's the best race of the year as far as I am concerned. The start under the Harbour Bridge, with over 100 other boats, is awesome. The finish at Manly Beach is fantastic. You go from a choppy wave start, then from Bradleys Head to Obelisk Beach you have all these runners, then the whole conditions change with the swell from Middle Harbour, and finally there is a flatwater sprint to the finish.

Tim Hookins: Lane Cove was really well represented and did well. In a final burst on the water Oli and I overtook two other boats 30 metres in front of us, the Oli blitzed it on the final run to the finish line. That run nearly killed me, and then I found they only counted the first paddler in a double and they took no notice of me.

Frank McDonald: It was a schmozzle at the start and a schmozzle at the finish. Trying to register and find parking was a problem. But the conditions were great and it was a fine sunny day. I didn't think I was doing any good until I pulled in and saw so many behind me.

Bert Lloyd: Trevor Williamson and I got

Name	Time	Class	Plc
Matt Blundell/ Mike Snell	46.38	MDbleSki	1
Tim Hookins/ Oliver Hookins	51.53	MDbleSki	5
Kobi Simmat	55.22	MOpen	17
Matt Acheson	58.58	MSeakyk	1
Graeme Jeffries	59.08	MSeakyk	2
Jeff Bannerman	59.46	MSeakyk	3
Glen Orchard	1.01.06	MOpen	39
Tom Simmat	1.01.06	M5Open	3
Trevor Williamson/ Bert Lloyd	1.01.54	MDbleSki16	
Tony Carr	1.07.25	MSeakyk	7
Daen Simmat	1.08.57	MOpen	60
Derek Simmonds	1.09.31	MSeakyk	8
Dean Wayne	1.09.59	MSeakyk	10
Frank McDonald	1.13.03	MSeakyk	12

in the wrong start wave and copped some abuse as we tried to push through to the right start. The race was very congested but everyone had a good time. The real heroes were the swimmers who went off about two hours earlier.

Derek Simmonds: It was colourful, fun, great. Starting under the Harbour Bridge on a brilliant sunny morning – what could be better than that! The start was amazing, total chaos and churning around like a washing machine. I was glad I was in the Greenlander and not something tipper.

Clean up Lane Cove River

Matt Swann believes LCRK should have a special half-day cleanup of our river—the amount of rubbish is disgusting. He went out on Clean Up Australia Day with son William, 14, and says a club effort could be a fun social outing as well as generate good publicity.

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Matt Blundell and Mike Snell leave the field in their wake

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Is kayaking suitable for women?

Kayak Kapers asked our female paddlers the following questions: *For women, what are the pluses and minuses of kayaking as a sport? What are your personal likes and dislikes?* We received these comments.

Marg Cook

Pluses: I love the water, love the feel of the boat moving through the water. I love the whole body involvement in the kayaking style. Despite my short stature I can compete with people many times bigger and stronger. I love the camaraderie.



Minuses: The sport is a bit male-dominated. I could never have the sheer power of the men – women don't "rate" when it comes to short distances.

Merridy Huxley

Pluses: We can compete in the same competitions as men. We can compete with men and other women regardless of age,



We can choose to compete or even just participate at any level. We can participate regardless of age, body size or fitness level. We can be involved from a social paddler right through to representing at a national level. We can be involved as an individual, as a team (double or 4-man craft ie K4), as a club member or as a state or national rep. On a lighter note – women can admire the male physique, purely at an anatomical level, of course!

Minuses: Safety can be an issue, would like to be able to train more at night. The problem of moving kayaks around – getting them on and off cars, storing kayaks and getting them in and out of the water, I often find that after a hard race it's a real chore to lift and walk with a kayak. Sometimes men don't take us seriously!

Personal likes and dislikes: I enjoy the intensity and physical nature of kayaking – the challenge of competing in a marathon and racing against others but also racing against our own time frame. I like the camaraderie of a double, or last year of the K4 – the need for compatibility but recognising individual differences, awareness of the needs of other team members, motivation and setting a team goal. No dislikes as such.

Arni Mader

Pluses: If you are in an uneven physical relationship, as often is the case with a man and a woman, it can be a problem in doing sport together. But in kayaking you get in a double and it doesn't matter, each can have a satisfying workout. This hap-



pens in our case, where Urs is obviously stronger than me, and is the real cruncher for us for kayaking.

Minuses: There is a lot of equipment to get ready and wash afterwards. You have to put the kayak on a car – and it's heavy. It's not like putting on a pair of runners and going for a jog. But the positives outweigh the negatives by far.

Marg McDonald

I feel kayaking is a good sport for women in that it strengthens the back and tummy muscles, it tones the flabby parts of the arms and also strengthens the legs.



One of the minuses is lifting a kayak on to and off a vehicle – generally too heavy for slightly built women.

On personal likes:

- I enjoy the competitiveness of the Wednesday night paddles.
- I enjoy being on the Lane Cove River at night with the night water sounds and the traffic going over the bridge above as we paddle underneath Epping Road.

It's great to travel to different events in the country.

Deb Meade

Pluses: Great for fitness, fun, stress relief (you can take out your aggression on the water), keeps you strong (upper body toned), health benefits of outdoor exercise.



Minuses: Trying to carry a heavy boat around and lift it on to car racks (particularly when you are short), expensive, male-dominated sport, competition limited for women and the profile is much lower, not enough women involved in our sport to encourage other women, females not respected on the water.

Personal likes: I love being on the water in summer (especially on the harbour on early mornings and watching the sun come up and the city come to life). I also love paddling on Wednesday nights as the handicap racing provides a great opportunity to wind down after work and it is lovely being able to make the most of the daylight hours over summer. I love the feeling of fitness and strength that kayaking provides. I also enjoy being a member of LCRK. Everyone is very friendly, helpful, encouraging and supportive and the club camaraderie is fantastic. The social side of things (eg monthly BBQs and annual function etc) adds to the enjoy-

ment. I enjoy racing, the adrenalin associated with it, the satisfaction of completing endurance events such as the Hawkesbury Classic.

Personal dislikes: The attitude and disrespect some males display toward women particularly those I have experienced when participating in the Winter Marathon Series (eg males from other clubs refusing to abide by race rules such as giving right of way to the paddler in front when turning, they are of the opinion that the racing class they are competing in is superior to mine so they are more important even if it means pushing me off and placing me at risk from a safety perspective – prior to the divisional series being introduced). Dealing with wet gear (washing all the equipment and clothing). Lack of paddling clothing suitable for women (eg Mens Health series shirts are always too big and uncomfortable to paddle in). Availability of prizes for women in competition is inferior to those for men. It can be a very lonely race when you are a female paddler in a slow race – it gets a bit discouraging when everyone keeps passing you and you are always crossing the finish line at the back of the pack.

Rhiannon Sier

Pluses: Enjoyment and fun, exercise.

Minuses: Lack of change-rooms.

Likes: Mixing with others, learning a new sport, just for fun, PBs.

Dislikes: Cold weather.



Julie Stanton

Pluses: Social, keeps you fit and healthy, offers an escape from the daily routine.

Minuses: Need equipment and time taken to find launching areas close to home (not like jogging where you can don a pair of runners and off you go).

Personal likes: I love being on the water and knowing that I can push my limits if I want to or just have a "therapeutic" paddle and soak up the experience.

Dislikes: Not enough women competing. I'm not fast enough for the boys but too quick for the slower paddlers. I'm usually always in the middle which isn't very motivating.



In the next issue we ask the ladies: Should more be done to encourage women in kayaking?

Lane Cove Kayakers had two competitors in this year's great annual adventure race across New Zealand. Neil Meade and Tim Single were in the 25th anniversary Speights Coast-to-Coast in February. In the individual one-day race (it can also be done over two days) each had to complete a 3km run, 55km road cycle, 33km mountain run, 15km cycle, 67km kayak and 70km cycle. The race started at the water's edge at Kumara Beach, on the South Island's west coast, and finished at the water's edge at Christchurch, on the east coast. It was a race of high adventure and turned into ...

A desperate race against time

by Deb Meade



The starting gun for the NZ Coast-to-Coast is fired at 6am and 205 competitors scramble over the rocks as they embark on a 3km sprint to their bikes and start a 55km ride to Aickens. The sun is up but the temperature has dropped.

At 8pm Tim arrives in the second big pack, just 15 minutes behind the race leader. He has had a great first leg and is in 64th position. He is looking strong and seems to be enjoying himself. As he heads off on the mountain run we think that Neil shouldn't be far behind.

At 8.30am we feel relief when Neil finally appears. He didn't get away to a quick enough start in the run and was soon dropped and left on his own, pedaling straight into a vicious headwind without a pack to ride with. He is in 188th place – almost at the back of the field.

He starts the run leg and we head to Klondyke corner to drop off the bike and cycle gear at the next transition area, then continue to Mount White Bridge where the kayak leg begins. The kayak and all the associated gear have to be carried 800m down a steep gravel road, over a bridge and across about 100m of rocks to scrutineering. After that it's back to Klondyke for the end of the run leg. We have some time to kill before we see the boys again. By now they should be making their way up Goat Pass, an ascent of 1100 metres, negotiating at least 27 stream crossings along the way.

We wait for what feels like an eternity until I spot a glimpse of red in the distance. The skinny frame and gangly arms are unmistakable. It must be Tim! He has finished the run leg in 4 hrs 29 min and is still looking good. He refuels and after a 2-minute transition leaves on his bike at 12.32pm.

Considering running is Neil's least favoured leg we estimate that it will be at least another hour before we see him. As the time approaches 1.45pm we are reminded that the cutoff time to get to the start of the kayak leg is 3pm. We knew that cutoffs applied but we really had not foreseen them as being an issue – we never even considered

this in our contingency plan!

Just after 2pm a couple with binoculars who were perched beside us let out a cheer as a solitary figure transpired. "It's definitely our boy!" they screamed with delight. As the figure came closer that distinctive loping running style seemed to confirm it is Neil. "Are you sure it's your boy?" I inquire, "because it looks a lot like mine!" And it is. This transition needs to be absolutely perfect to give him every opportunity of staying in the race.

I run alongside him shoving a banana down his throat and removing his cap, bib and backpack. Landcrew friends Debbie and Rick get his bike gear on and he rides away at 2.10pm – a transition of about 30 seconds after a 33km run that had taken him 5hrs 38 minutes.

Officials at Mount White tell us he has to be sitting in the kayak on the river by 3pm to avoid disqualification. We realise we can dress him while he is sitting in the boat so long as he is "on the water". With 3 minutes to go, we catch sight of Neil and Debbie run-

Neil still has a tough task ahead of him to arrive at Woodstock before 7pm to avoid the next cutoff. He will encounter 25km of flat braided river before entering the 25km gorge rated as a grade 2 stretch. Then 17km of braided flat water paddling will follow with willow trees from Woodstock to Gorge Bridge, the end of stage 3.

At the Gorge Bridge we watch as crew after crew haul their jelly-legged competitors out of the boat, removing their cold, wet clothing and supporting their weary bodies as they soldier on up another gravel hill to the bike transition area 500 metres away.

An update brings good news. Tim passed Woodstock at 5.48pm. We estimate we should see him around 6.30pm. He arrives right on time.

"The first hour was a bit of a battle, my arms felt too tired to lift the paddle and I couldn't keep my eyes open. I think I had a sugar overdose from all the energy bars, goo and electrolyte drink I had been eating all day. I stopped eating and after an hour felt



Tim and Neil check out their kayaks in safety in Christchurch

ning halfway down the hill. There will be no time to dress him warmly in layers or put the long skins on so I decide he will have to make do with the long sleeved thermal and the short wet suit pants. Once in the boat we fit his shoes and secure the skirt. With a wave of the paddle and a 'thanks everyone' he is off down the Waimakariri River with just 5 seconds to spare. He is the last competitor to make it on to the water before cutoff.

good again. I still had a 4-minute short cut up my sleeve came out just in front of some Kiwi paddlers who had passed me 40 minutes earlier. I just piped up in my thickest South African accent, 'Ja, it's all about the local knowledge!' I scraped the nose of my boat on a rock in one of the rapids. For the rest of the paddle my boat leaked and I had to stop and empty it twice!" he says.

By the time we reach the bike, Tim is shivering and his lips have turned

blue. He wants to cycle in the wet pants he had paddled in but we force him to change. At 6.40pm he leaves on the final 70km bike leg, smiling and munching on a ham and cheese roll.

20 minutes to cutoff time and our thoughts turned to Neil.

At 7.02pm the last 3 numbers are radioed through. An official announces that if a competitor's number is not on the white board detailing race progress by now they will be eliminated. The remaining land crews are instructed to drive to Woodstock to collect their competitors.

Tears fill my eyes as I realise how disappointed Neil will be to have come so close only to be denied the opportunity to finish the race. I don't want to leave until I know for sure he has been eliminated.

It is another 20 minutes before more numbers are written up on the white board. They belong to competitors who have been picked up and eliminated. Then number 39 paddles in unannounced. The officials had got the number wrong, since 59 not 39 had appeared on the white board. 180 had passed Woodstock at 6.59pm so we hold on to the slim hope that perhaps 180 is actually 181.

At 8pm my attention is suddenly drawn to the announcement of another competitor coming round the corner. "Number 181, Neil Meade". I can't believe it, he has made it! I am elated and jump up and down in jubilation.

Neil is worried that he may have been disqualified. He paddled past Woodstock at 7.02pm. The officials on the bank cheered him through, however the jet boat official was not so supportive and told him to go to the beach as he had missed the cutoff time by 2 minutes. He and three others ahead of him banded together to defy the jet boat instructions. A chase by the jet boat resulted in a severe reprimand. One boat succumbed to the pressure and headed to the bank while the remaining three waited until the jet boat had disappeared from sight before continuing on their merry way. Despite being the last competitor to start the kayak leg, Neil managed to pass at least 15 boats along the way and after passing another 5 post-Woodstock he reached the Gorge Bridge 15 minutes ahead of the cutoff. As far as we are concerned he crossed the timing mat at the end of the kayak leg with the electronic device around his ankle still intact so he is still in the race.

Neil is freezing and asks for a thermal but they are in the car. I take off the thermal I am wearing and pull it over his head, trying to stretch it to fit his larger frame. By 8.15pm he is on his way and we hurry back to the beach to collect the kayak and re-pack the car.

Tim and Neil cycle straight and flat into a headwind for 70km. Tim crosses the line at 9.06pm. He has completed the race in 15 hours 6 minutes, almost 3.5 hours behind the race winner.

At 10.48pm it is Neil's turn after 16 hours 48 minutes.

Of 205 competitors in the individual one-day event (considered the World Multisport Championship), 157 finished.

NOTE: To check out video action of the elite competitors on the course, visit

www.coasttocoast.co.nz.

POSTSCRIPT: Four weeks later Neil completed the 45km 6-foot Track mountain run from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves in 5h 49m and the following week went with Tim to Jindabyne for a Sri Chimnoy 12-leg swim/run/paddle/mountain bike endurance race.

This article has been shortened. To read the complete exciting story and see more pictures, go to www.lcrk.org.au.

WINTER MARATHON SERIES

A great spot for swimming

by Michael Mueller



Nelligen. The first race of the season. My first race marathon series race in over a year. Was I nervous? Yes, but not about the race. On the drive down, I was already psyching myself up for the big challenge of the weekend – sharing a room with either Nick Chai or Rob Vallis. Luckily (I think), I ended up drawing Rob, although we have now given him the nickname of "Motorbike" Vallis. Many other stories could be told about the weekend, but as you know, what goes on tour, stays on tour.

I drove down with Rob, while Ian Hofstetter accompanied Nick on a leisurely (and apparently beautiful) drive down the coast from Sydney.

We were fortunate enough to stay at Matt and Margaret Swann's beach house in Bawley Point. In residence were Mr President (otherwise known as Tim Hookins), Rob "I love yous all" Vallis, Nick "Show me the money" Chai and Ian "Give me a nickname" Hofstetter.

Matt and Margaret were wonderful hosts (thank you again!), and arranged a terrific carbo-loading dinner on the Friday night.

Day 2. After a great breakfast overlooking the beach (life's tough...), we were on the road to Nelligen. Nick's car was in the lead, and I couldn't help but

Competitor	Div	Time	Plc
Peter Giesbuhl	2	1.45.58	4
Thomas Reif	2	1.47.16	5
Ian Hofstetter	2	1.49.23	6
Craig Elliott	4	1.57.02	2
Tom Simmat	4	1.58.06	3
Michael Mueller	4	1.59.34	5
Rob Vallis	4	2.00.38	8
Len Hedges	4	2.00.52	10
Merridy Huxley/			
Warren Huxley	4	2.02.23	12
Nick Chai	4	2.02.49	13
Simon Mann	4	2.06.02	18
Tim Hookins	4	2.19.37	22
Tony Hystek	5	2.03.03	2
James Mumme/			
Matthew Swann	5	2.05.16	7
Ian Purves	5	2.10.45	9
Stephen Padget	5	2.26.42	17
John Greathead/			
Tony Walker	6	2.08.35	2
Bert Lloyd	6	2.24.09	15
Trevor Williamson	6	2.24.51	16
Daen Simmat	9	1.08.36	6

remark to Rob: "He should enjoy it – that's the only time he's going to be ahead of us today!" (Sorry Nick)

We made it to Nelligen in plenty of time. The heat and humidity were stifling, and everybody felt lethargic by race time. A swim at the beach seemed much more appealing at this point than



Matt Swan, James Mumme, Tim Hookins, Tom Simmat, Len Hedges

a tough 20km paddle in the midday sun. Actually, some people took the opportunity to go for a swim DURING the race (but they'll remain nameless, right Mr President?).

It certainly ended up being a tough race, with some nasty shallow spots which made it feel like we were hauling sea anchors, along with a secret short cut, which some people took, and oth-

ers didn't.

There was a big LCRK contingent, which was great to see, and all performed really well. We'll certainly all be better for the paddle.

Testing conditions in Canberra

by Tim Hookins

The weather was looking ominous as we cruised into Canberra with rain belting at the windscreen for the second race of the Winter Marathon Series, but as we arrived the usual cheerful crowd put us into the right mood.

Roger Aspinall was there sorting us into the right divisions and there were the optimists like Rob Vallis putting

Mueller.

Tom Simmat and Len Hedges were doing just fine in the first pack when suddenly Len lost it, turned around and whacked another boat sideways on. I thought Len had snapped, but he explained to me as I went by that only his rudder cable had snapped. He fixed it and went on, but eventually had to



Rob Vallis (centre, white cap) and Craig Elliott (blue shirt) in the thick of the action as the paddles fly for the start of division 3

himself up two divisions into div 3 and the pessimists whinging about being in div 5.

To put on sun cream or not to put on sun cream? Sun cream was necessary in the end, although the sun came and went all through the race.

The starts in the divisional format are always great and I took up my place at the back of div 4 along the narrows of the Molonglo River. Ahead of me were a bunch of Lane Cove regulars including Nick Chai and Michael

clear weed from his rudder 3 times. Lesson for all paddling skis at Burley Griffin: use a small rudder. Tom did this, did really well and came 3rd in div 4.

IT became quite choppy in the open bit of the lake near the fountain, but got smoother towards the top mark at the dam wall. The open stretch on the return was pretty choppy and the rescue boat had quite a few customers. The K1 beginners like myself had a time of high concentration but we survived, despite some unplanned swim-

Competitor	Div	Time	Plc
Ian Hofstetter	2	1.41.48	3
Rob Vallis	3	1.52.05	5
Craig Elliott	3	2.02.06	7
Tom Simmat	4	1.51.57	3
Michael Mueller	4	1.52.29	4
Tony Hystek	4	1.54.07	8
Nick Chai	4	1.57.16	10
Simon Mann	4	1.57.53	12
Tim Hookins	4	2.00.02	13
Len Hedges	4	2.10.29	14
James Mumme/ Matthew Swann	5	1.54.06	7
Ian Purves	5	1.55.56	11
Frank McDonald	5	2.03.14	20
Tommy Nolan	5	2.03.34	21
John Greathead/ Tony Walker	6	1.58.46	1
Tony Carr	6	2.06.18	8
Christie Brown	6	2.08.45	14
Stephen Padget	6	2.11.32	18
Bert Lloyd	6	2.13.15	23
Trevor Williamson	6	2.13.19	25
Mark Sier/ Rhiannon Sier	6	2.23.49	27
Christine Gordon	9	1.32.53	17



The smooth operator: Roger Aspinall never has any problems

ming just by the National Gallery. This is not an easy place to get a rescue.

Kayaking on holiday in NZ

by Frank McDonald

My wife Marg and I landed in Auckland on January 30 for a month's holiday. The Bay of Islands sounded all right so headed straight up there. At Paihia we immediately booked a double kayak for 3 days as the hundreds of islands in the bay looked great for investigating. However, the weather closed in and didn't look too good for kayaking in the outer islands, so we settled for a leisurely one-day paddle to Russell, a very historic and scenic village in the bay.

From here we drove along the coastal road to Cape Reinga, the tip of

the North Island, then south to Wai-tomo which is renowned for its glow worm caves. Here we did abseiling, rock climbing, caving and blackwater rafting through glow worm caves sitting in rubber tyre rings - fantastic.

Then it was time to get to Wanganui for the NZ Masters Games. In the tennis I picked up gold in the vets 50 mixed doubles and also in the vets 60 mixed doubles - it pays to have strong partners. The tennis clashed with the kayaking and cycling but we will organise a kayak and bike for 2009.

After the tennis was over we headed up to Taumarunui for a 5-day, 4-night paddle down the Wanganui River in very sturdy, heavy plastic kayaks. It's a 150km downriver trip with grade 1 and 2 rapids, paddling in absolute wilderness. It is actually classified as one of the Great Walks of NZ, even though it is a paddle! The first 3 nights we camped on our own, with the 4th night at Tieke Marae, a Mauri marae where we met a poi carver (totem pole) who was restoring the Marae's poi.



Do we want recreational paddles?

In the February issue of *Kayak Kapers*, Tony Carr urged Lane Cove River Kayakers to organise regular recreational club paddles. We invited you to tell us what you think of the idea and received these comments.

Frank McDonald: Lane Cove River kayakers aren't social unless there's a competition on. 4 or 5 years ago a BBQ at Roseville was organised by the club and about 3 people turned up. I'd like to be proved wrong but ...

Bert Lloyd: We should definitely have social paddling. I wouldn't commit myself to going because I'm busy most weekends.

Ian Purves: It's a good idea. Windsor does a once-a-month social paddle with partners, usually with a barbecue or picnic lunch and they're successful.

Tony Hystek: The main difficulty with Wednesday nights is that we don't get the time to talk about kayaking and anything else and have a laugh and play silly buggers. I'd be into social paddling to be able to do that. I'd also look at it for cross-fertilisation of training ideas and technique.

Derek Simmonds: Let's have some overnight social paddling, up around Myall Lakes or somewhere like that, make it an overnight adventure. I like the idea. Absolutely. I'm right behind it.

Tony Walker: I like the idea and I'd be in it. It might be a problem for some of the faster boats, like the K1s, but those people will probably want to be going faster somewhere else anyhow.

Arni Mader: Personally I have so many other interests, including sailing, that with training and Wednesday nights I don't have any additional time for kayaking. I think the idea for recreational kayaking is absolutely fantastic and if I were not doing other things I would welcome it, but at the moment we are fully booked.

Roger Deane: I think LCRK should get in-

volved with recreational paddling, not only for the purpose of expanding the club's interests but also for the social benefits.

Tim McNamara: An excellent idea for those interested.

Merridy and Warren Huxley: We're very interested in social weekend paddles.

Justin Paine: I tried to organise an informal social outing on the Macdonald River just before Christmas and only one other paddler turned up. I'm very keen on recreational paddles and I accept that my Christmas timing was poor, but there seems to be a general apathy to the idea in LCRK.

Sam Sharbine: It's good to see that someone is doing something constructive in the world of kayaking. You know that I would be in this if I were still in the country.

What do you think? Do you have any issues or aspects of paddling you want to comment on? Any ideas you want to share with your fellow paddlers? *Kayak Kapers* invites comments from LCRK members on any relevant subject. You can send them to Editor Justin Paine by phone (9858-3323), mail (33 Glenayr Avenue, West Ryde 2114) or in person any Wednesday night at the river.

Jason Cooper: I am interested in going on a paddle on weekends.

Trevor Williamson: Good idea, I think you will find that there is a large number of small groups in the club who do this sort of thing among themselves already.

Peter Carmody: I think adventure paddling has market potential and I support your

endeavours to build this market. On Sunday after the Mens Health (Bridge-to-Beach) several of us were discussing some ocean adventure paddles.

Matt Swann: I support you wholeheartedly on the subject of some relaxed "coffee and cake cruise" social paddling as a club activity and with others who are not as mad as us playing "chasings in the dark" on Wednesday nights. Social paddling gives me a chance to smell the roses, appreciate the scenery (and aren't we blessed with lots of that around Sydney) and generally relax. I'd be keen as part of a social group that perhaps has a paddle to somewhere for a coffee or a picnic say once per month.

Ian Wilson: Having a sea kayak, I think the idea of a recreational paddle is great, especially the idea of paddling in Port Hacking (at low tide hopefully some surfing on the Bundeena Bar).

Len Hedges: I don't care. I won't be joining.

Michael Venter: I am in favour.

Nick Chai: I am in favour, but only if there are dedicated volunteers/organisers to do this. The current committee doesn't have the resources to administer this.

Martin Dearnley: I am in favour but the recreational paddles should be organised by different people from the Wednesday night organisers.

Don Andrews: I am in favour.

Bob Kenderes: I would probably be able to do some rec paddling monthly.

Ian Hofstetter: I don't have a problem with the club organising social paddles, but we do have the familiarisation paddles which I think are more useful.

Adventure racing is fun

by Tony Carr

We'd obviously missed the checkpoint.

"It's on the bridge," yelled my paddling partner, neck deep in swamp water, clutching his boat with one arm and pointing towards the bridge with the other. My boat was wedged between a log and the bank in the narrow creek, so I figured it would be a good time for us both to vacate the mosquito-infested salt marsh, scale the steep and greasy bank and bush-bash our way through thick scrub to the bridge.

Got there just as the thunderstorm hit ...

Adventure racing is fun!

Meantime, there were those who knew what they were doing. Lane Cove's Matt Blundell and his double partner Mike Snell blitzed the field to win the Max Adventure Challenge on the Georges River on February 3. They scored a perfect 550 points, cleared all

24 checkpoints and did it in just over 3 hours 57 minutes, well ahead of all other competitors and an hour ahead of the time limit of 5 hours.

It was a great day, helped along by the professionalism of Gary Farebrother and his Maximum Adventure team, who put the 100-plus paddlers through their paces in quick smart fashion. One nice touch was the availability of rental boats, which encouraged a lot of people who wouldn't otherwise have taken part to give it a go. This is the way to



grow a sport.

Paddlers gathered at the delightfully named Cattle Duffers Flat in the Georges River National Park – an ideal location for a 5-hour race that combined paddling with orienteering. The river twists and turns, has lots of tricky creeks and inlets, with bush tracks on either side.

Gary has plans for lots more events like this. Keep an eye out for them and get involved.

Just don't forget the Aerogard!

