



KAYAK KAPERS

April 2009

Getting ready for the great Molokai race

All aboard for Molokai. Let's get on with the thrills – but hopefully no spills – of ocean paddling. Not paddling along behind the breakers within sight of the beach. This is the real deal. Right out in the ocean. Out where the swell can be really big.

A band of intrepid Lane Cove paddlers is heading for the World Surf Ski Championship on May 17, the great race that goes from one island in the Hawaii group to another, from Molokai to Oahu.

This is not an event for the faint-hearted. The gun paddlers like it when it turns a bit wild. When the small-boat warning goes out they start smiling, because it means they can virtually surf the whole 55km.

The Lane Cove paddlers – all doing it for the first time – are Julie Stanton, Roger Aspinall, Tim Hookins and Matt Blundell. Tom Simmat had also planned to go, but committed the cardinal sin of allowing work (particularly repeat trips to Papua New Guinea, see page 6) to get in the way of his preparation.

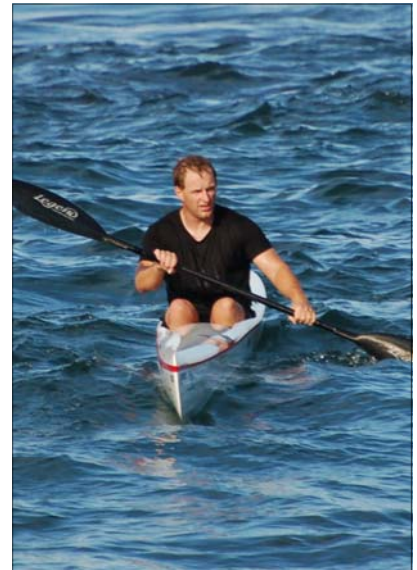
They have been training hard for up to 18 months to build up the skills and stamina needed.

Julie, Roger and Tim train in a squad led by 9-times Molokai winner Dean Gardiner and Yanda Nossiter. Mondays and Fridays they leave Balmoral at 5.45am for an hour and a quarter hit-out. Training varies but is mostly building up the

strength – our aerobic capacity and power,” said Roger, who originally intended to go only as landcrew but decided about Christmas to do the race.

“I'm pretty nervous because my ocean skills are not fantastic and I'll probably hire a Fenn XT for the race because it's more stable even if not as fast as the Epic V10L I have been training on. I'm just hoping to finish, I'm not after any glory.”

Julie said: “I go through stages, I think I'm going well



Matt Blundell has been doing a weekly paddle from Palm Beach to Manly to prepare for Molokai

then I hit a brick wall, and then things click into place and I'm going forward again. We're training with guys who have been doing this for 5 or 6 years and they're really good. It's a big challenge for newcomers to the sport. I'm a bit scared, I think I'll be able to finish but I won't break any records.”

She intends to hire a Mako 6, the same ski she is training on, for the race.

Roger and Julie estimate it will cost them \$5000 to \$6000 each to go to Molokai, with major items including airfares, escort boat and ski hire.

Tim said although they have been preparing for Molokai for a long time, training has become really serious this year.

“Roger, Julie and I have all taken enormous strides in being able to handle the big stuff. The biggest I have encountered so far was the Milnerton Run in Table Bay, South Africa when I was over there at Christmas. It was huge and scary but I handled it okay. I also tried Millers Run in False Bay, a bit further south near Cape Town. It has a big reputation but there was no wind the day I did it.”

He admits he is “slightly spooked by the idea of sharks”, specially when paddling alone offshore.

He is not aiming for a particular time at Molokai – “I just want to survive and not be the last one in. I have been



Julie Stanton, Tim Hookins and Roger Aspinall look pleased with their dawn training session

intensity, easing off and then building up again.

“We mix it up, depending on the conditions and doing work on our swell-riding technique. We're building up our



Julie heads out for a training session before the sun is up

training on an Elite, which is a beautiful boat, but over there I'll hire a carbon Mako 6, which is an earlier model."

Matt Blundell has been training with Tim Jacobs, who came 3rd in last year's Molokai.

"We go from the Spit and Dean is usually out there with his squad," he said. "We do much the same



Julie, Tim and Roger regularly train together

sort of training, things like 10x 10-minutes with a minute rest in between. I also do a lot of downwind paddling and do Palm Beach to Manly, 25km, at least once a week. I'm a better flat or downriver paddler than ocean paddler.

"At Molokai I'm looking at 4 to 4½ hours in favourable conditions, longer if the water is flat. I just want to get through it and have a bit of a holiday."

He is also hiring a ski over there. He'll have an Epic V10L, the same as he's been training on.



Matt at the finish of the 2008 20 Beaches

So, the propensity in LCRK for international challenges and excitement continues to grow. We had the Yukon River Quest in Canada, then the Fish River Marathon in South Africa. Not to mention Matt Blundell's various adventure racing forays. Now the Molokai. What's on the menu after that?

The NSW 2009 marathon series had a rocky opening in Canberra on Feb 7 when bad weather led to cancellation of the event. A strong north-westerly wind and choppy conditions resulted in a small boat alert being issued and there had been 35 withdrawals when the race was called off. By this stage most of the field had passed half way. The organisers announced that all competitors would get 50 points.

Disaster on Lake Burley Griffin

by Don Rowston

Jon Harris and I drove out on the M2 and M7 at 6.10am for the Canberra race. We arrived at the starting point on the Mongolo River at 9.20am. Just steady driving.

On arrival the temperature was 30°C. The start was delayed due to the big field and computer problems. Division 1 sprinted off at noon. Now, with the temperature close to 40°C we were wondering how we could keep cool. Our division 6 was probably the biggest start.

Wheeeep! and we were off, all sprinting away as usual. By the time we paddled about 1km to the entrance to Lake Burley Griffin we were in about 10th spot. Across the lake was the first bridge we would paddle under.

To our surprise on the southern side of the lake was a very stiff breeze creating a heavy chop which bounced off the wall along that side for about 1½km, making the conditions not very nice for what I call the flat boats – K and TK boats. Under the bridge, we were right on the tail of John

Greathead and Tony Walker's Vulcan. They were rolling up and down and sideways with the wind at 2 o'clock.

Near the High Court area the boats ahead of us seemed to be dropping like flies. At that stage there were a few swimming and most did not have skirts, so it's likely the flat boats just filled up with water. And that big wall, specially with waves bouncing off it, is not very friendly if you want to find somewhere to empty the boat out. It's deep water and there are only ladders every 100 metres or so.

Under the second bridge and about 1½km further along the conditions improved and were just like a normal series race. Down we went through the marked-out rowing course, turning under Black Mountain which offered some protection from the wind at the western end of the lake. On the way down we noticed Matt Swann and Jeremy Spear's Vindicator had decided



to take water and they had to stop to empty out. Steve Paget and his partner Michael had not picked a good day to try out their very sharp K2 for the first time together – disaster!

Half way back an official boat came head on to John and Tony, who were off to one side. They said something we could not hear. By this time there were just the two of us and a Rocket together, with only a very slippery mixed TK2 leading the division 150 metres ahead. We were looking at 2-3-4 positions with the wind at our backs and 3km to go. John and Tony's Vulcan eased off and we came alongside to be told the race was cancelled.

What a let down. So we all just cruised to the finish. Very disappointing. It was a tough day but we enjoyed the paddle.

Comment: Yes, it was a testing day but it's a great shame to cancel the event. Canoeing is about handling the conditions. The series races consist of 90% conditions that favour the flat boats, compared to multisport and other craft. Obviously the officials felt there were safety issues but it's unfortunate that those who battled through the conditions to get into good positions in their divisions were not commensurately rewarded.

Fundraising night for bushfire appeal

Lane Cove River Kayakers raised over \$2000 for the Victorian bushfire victims in a fundraising night on March 18. The usual Wednesday night time trial fees were replaced by a special charge with all proceeds going to the appeal, and everyone responded generously. 48 paddlers turned out on the night and, with a couple of hefty individual contributions, the amount raised reached \$1960. Well known marathon series division 1 paddler



Displaying the Quantum Kayaks T-shirts are Wade Rowston, Rob Vallis, Stewart O'Regan, Steve Paget, Bert Lloyd and Emma Lefroy

Stewart O'Regan, from St George club, then donated a number of Quantum Kayaks T-shirts and these were snapped up for an extra \$105, which took the grand total to \$2065. Not bad for a small club! LCRK is a community-based club and we accept our responsibilities as a member of the community, in this case to help those who suffered in one of Australia's worst natural disasters.

Richard and Phil in a glossy

An article about that epic paddle around Tasmania by Richard Barnes and Phil Newman appears in the latest issue of the high-quality, glossy magazine *Tasmania 40° South*.

"Two intrepid kayakers follow in the wake of Bass and Flinders," announces the magazine.

Written by Richard, the 6-page article carries the headline "Around Tasmania - the hard way" and is illustrated by some magnificent color pictures of the kayakers and the scenic and often rugged Tassie coast.

You can find copies of the magazine in most larger newsagents. It's issue 52 autumn 2009 and features a spectacular picture of a white-breasted sea eagle on the cover.



We have just received the extremely distressing news from Darwin that Frank McDonald has serious lung cancer. He and Marg are on their usual northern Australia caravan tour at this time of the year and went to see a specialist when Frank found he was tired all the time. He is returning to Sydney for further tests and may go into hospital for a procedure which it is hoped will alleviate his condition. Marg said Frank is holding up well and is not in any pain but is suffering from continual tiredness. They need our friendship at this difficult time, so all members are urged to send them an email of support to frankmarg@bigpond.com. They are very much looking forward to meeting up with their Lane Cove mates soon down at the river.



More Murray Marathon finishers

Apologies to Ian Thompson and David Hammond, both fairly new LCRK members, who were omitted from our Murray Marathon report in the last issue of *Kayak Kapers*. Ian had a great race in the Murray, placing 2nd (out of 7) in the 40+ medium rec category in 40h30m16s and a very creditable 59th in 32.24.11 on handicap. He told us: "I found it a very tough race, the most mentally challenging I have ever done. I paddled a 30kg plastic sit-on-top Ocean Sprinter and was very happy with a category 2nd. I didn't prepare as well as I might



Judy and Ian Thompson



David Hammond

have but I was lucky in that I had no major injuries. Day 4 was the toughest, although it was the shortest the weather was not great, there was hail and it was very windy. My wife Judy landcrewed for me as well as my father Tony, who came over from the UK, and my father-in-law and sister-in-law who live locally in Yarrawonga also helped." David teamed up with a couple of dragonboaters as a relay team in the Great Adventure classification. His mates had never paddled a kayak before but after a 4-week crash course turned up trumps. The trio completed the race in a Flash in about 37 hours. "If I had entered us in a competitive class our time would have been good enough to win the medium rec relay," David lamented.

Bert carries the flag in the Australian Masters

Bert Lloyd was the sole Lane Cove representative at the Australian Masters Games in Geelong at the end of February but found good company with 13 Manly Warringah members (Bert is also a MW member). Two of them were over 80 and still competing.

"The conditions were great and it was good fun, but kayakingwise it was not a success," Bert said.

He took his Wizard K1 down for the 12km marathon and came 4th out of 8 in the 60+ category on the fresh water Barrow River.

"I also tried the sprints, the 200m and 500m," he said. "Never again! I didn't get past the heats, 4th in both."



Some flies in the ointment

by John Greathead

Having participated in marathons at Wallamba, near Forster, on a couple of previous occasions, I was very pleased at the announcement that the State championships would be held there this year and was determined to attend. I anticipated a very pleasant weekend and was certainly not disappointed. The setting is excellent, as is the accommodation on-site (a necessity given the planned early start of the event).

The Paddle NSW team ran a smooth and efficient operation and should be congratulated. The on-site catering has improved and an excellent dinner function on Saturday evening allowed us all to catch up with old and new acquaintances

There were only three flies in the ointment from my point of view: firstly, the lack of competitors in both the

singles and doubles classes, only a total of about 36 bodies in each; secondly, the lack of participation of some clubs and in particular our own LCRK; and finally, the unavoidable presence of a number of water-ski boats.

I had originally registered in the UN1 V65 class but realised on checking the entries I was the only one. There were only three entrants in the TK1 V65 which meant that under current rules only 1st and 2nd would be awarded, so as well as the Marauder I took my TK1 along and was happy to join the other TKs in spite of my doubts about getting safely around three laps. This fear ultimately was realised, because after paddling neck and neck in second place with Kevin Nettle from Sutherland for 3¼ of the 4 laps I got careless and was tipped in by a large wash just short of the bottom mark.

I had thoughts of giving Kevin a run for his money, but after a 30m swim and an empty-out I only managed to come in at 1.44.35, a good six minutes behind him. He didn't realise I had capsized and admitted later that he was working hard thinking I was on his tail over the last 1k (I wish). Lyle Mead (Windsor) meanwhile had demonstrated his skill and fitness with a time of 1.32.02 and first place.

A similar situation arose on Sunday for the doubles where there were single entries in a class. The redoubtable Don Rowston and Jon Harris had arrived with a TK2 and were the only entrants in their class. They were ultimately entered in the V55 UN2 with Tony Walker and me, and as there were to be only three starts we lined up for 20k with the V45 TK2 in the third start.



Tony Hystek and Ian Hofstetter



John Greathead and Tony Walker

State Marathon Championships				
Class	Competitor	Distance	Time	Plc
V65 TK1	John Greathead	15k	1.44.35	3
V45 K2	Ian Hofstetter/ Tony Hystek	20k	1.33.55	2
V55 UN2	John Greathead/ Tony Walker	20k	1.53.53	1
V55 UN2	Don Rowston/ Jon Harris	20k	2.04.08	2

Tony and I were keen to see how the Vulcan compared to a TK2 with equal paddlers. This was not to be, unfortunately, as Jon suffered severe cramping during the event and they were forced to make a short stop during the race. Tony and I, however, were pleased to be able to hang close to Warren Lopez and David Lum, the ultimate winners of their race in 1.53.29. We finished 24 seconds behind in 1.53.53, probably one of our best times.

The only other competitors from LCRK were Tony Hystek and Ian Hofstetter, who gained a 2nd place in the V45K2 with a time of 1.33.55 behind Darren Lee and Pieter Boer 1.29.18.

We were granted the opportunity to attend the Marathon Committee general meeting on Saturday and to participate in discussions on how to improve kayaking/canoeing in NSW and to appreciate the effort put in and the responsibility borne by the Committee on our behalf. We must all make every effort to support these folk and Paddle NSW in promoting and administering our sport.



Don Rowston and Jon Harris

Disappointing turnout for 10k titles

Conditions were near perfect for the State 10,000m championships at Sutherland on March 28 - sunny, a gentle breeze, a high tide to take those sandbanks out of the equation, the channel marked to keep everyone in deep water and minimal interference from pleasure craft.

The race was held over two 5km laps and 30m-wide turns helped everyone, particularly the K boats. Scrutineering was efficient, the pre-race briefing excellent and the starts at 2-minute intervals went off with military precision.

And the results were up on the website next day!

PaddleNSW has lifted the bar in its race organisation and control.

The only thing missing was a decent number of competitors. Half a dozen was the most in any class, and 18 of the 24 single events had only 1 or 2.

In the doubles, 3 had 2 competitors and the remaining 11 had 1.

The old problem remains - while a marathon series race will attract 100 or 150 starters, state and also national titles get a poor response.

State 10,000m Championships				
Class	Competitor	Time	Plc	No. of boats
V35 K1	Steve Paget	57.03	6	6
V45 K1	James Mumme	57.02	6	6
V55 K1	Tom Simmat	56.02	3	6
V55 K1	Derek Simmonds	59.04	6	6
V65 TK1	Bert Lloyd	62.21	3	4
V65 TK1	John Greathead	67.01	4	4
V35 UN1	Jason Cooper	54.34	1	1
V45 LR1	Matt Swann	62.09	2	2
V45 MR1	Jeremy Spear	59.55	1	2
WV55 LR1	Liz Winn	61.14	1	2
V35 K2	Simon Mann/ Steve Paget	49.09	1	1
V45 MR2	Matt Swann/ Jeremy Spear	56.21	1	2
V65 LR2	John Greathead/ Tony Walker	59.38	1	1

Big plans for more races inside Sydney Harbour

by Tony Carr



With a record number of participants, this year's Bridge to Beach was organiser Dean Gardiner's biggest yet. The event attracted over 500 paddlers including 20 from Lane Cove. No swim race this year - the shark scare put paid to that.

"We had good representation from the top end of the sport as well as the weekend paddlers," Dean told us. "This event is particularly focused at that end of the market so it was great to see so many of them turning up."

Dean has ambitious plans for another event which will probably take place further up the harbour, with a



finish at Birkenhead Point. Lane Cove is fully supportive and has also suggested an alternative - a start at Roseville Bridge and finish at Clontarf or Manly Cove. Dean's immediate objective is to run two events a year: "Lots of work involved but a great way to expand the sport."

Lane Cove did well in the aquatic version of the City to Surf. Conditions on the harbour were perfect - blue skies edge to edge and a very light easterly.

The start, as usual, was like a washing machine. I had five guys in a tangle of surf skis come off in front of me even before I'd cleared the bridge.

Surprise of the day was Matt



Above: Lane Cove paddlers ready for action. Below: Our only double combo, Derek Simmonds and Don Rowston.



Blundell in a plastic. He blitzed the field in his usual way in 55.00, nearly 10 minutes ahead of the second placegetter in that class.

Graeme Jeffries had a fine victory in the sea kayak class in 57.10, with Craig Elliott 2nd almost 2 minutes adrift. Tony Hystek and Roger Aspinall

were 2nd and 3rd respectively in the over 50s.

Bridge to Beach				
Competitor	Class	Time	Plc	Cat Plc
Toby Hogbin	Open	52.00	22	19
Matt Blundell	PB	55.00	43	1
Tony Hystek	O50	55.46	50	2
David Kavanagh	Open	55.50	51	29
Roger Aspinall	O50	56.09	52	3
Graeme Jeffries	Seakayak	57.10	63	1
Tim Hookins	O50	58.33	73	5
Craig Elliott	Seakayak	59.03	78	2
Tom Simmat	O50	59.42	85	6
Steve Paget	O40	1.00.30	97	22
Len Hedges	O50	1.00.43	99	7
Evan Oppen	Open	1.00.52	101	45
Jason Cooper	Open	1.03.52	132	50
Don Rowston/ Derek Simmonds	MD	1.04.05	140	11
Wayne Wanders	PB	1.07.42	176	5
Jeremy Spear	Seakayak	1.09.16	182	7
Tony Carr	Seakayak	1.09.31	185	8
Matt Kavanagh	Open	1.11.43	202	68
David Hammond	O40	1.17.58	231	44

Pontoon expansion

Plans for expanding the pontoon to effectively triple the size of the launching area are proceeding, and currently extensive documentation is being prepared for a pre-DA to be presented to NSW Maritime.

The process is complicated and includes a range of matters such as environmental, habitat and underwater investigations. Jeremy Spear is heading up the proposal for LCRK.

Preparations are also under way to get quotes for the work.

LCRK is proposing to construct two additional pontoons which would be fastened to the existing pontoon, one upstream and one downstream. They will be made as low as possible to facilitate launching kayaks.

The plan envisaged would allow up to 6 boats, or 4 doubles, to be launched simultaneously. Access would be by the existing bridge and this should be sufficient, as most of our traffic is one way - either on to the water or off it.

The State Government has approved a grant of \$17,000. Willoughby Council, which has been extremely helpful and cooperative, and LCRK will each contribute \$7000.

As for the big question: when? At this stage we don't know, it depends on how long the administrative processes take. We are moving as quickly as possible.



Kobi Simmat and Fiona Hume were married in an outdoor ceremony at Clontarf on November 2. They are pictured here with Kobi's parents, Tom and Christine.

Tom Simmat's thirst for paddling is well established. And he's very inventive when it comes to getting out on the water. But in a recent visit to Port Moresby, where he is acting as an architectural consultant to SMEC in the design of a 1000-inmate jail at Mt Hargan, in the central highlands, he was left frustrated in his attempt to go for a paddle.

Confessions of a paddling addict

by Tom Simmat

It's not that I want to paddle every day, I simply have to.

More than a day without a paddle and my shoulders twitch. I can't sleep and I stare at puddles. All this is not helped by anti-malaria tablets.

It helps if I have alternative vigorous exercise, like a long jog or a couple of hundred laps of a pool.

In New Guinea you unfortunately cannot run around the block without getting mugged. You're driven from your hotel to the office, both of which are contained in guarded compounds.

Up to my last visit, my hotel had a nice but tired 15-metre pool. One hundred laps, a kilometre and a half. I could work out my shoulder twitch, and swim till I was exhausted and went to

hysterics, but I swallowed my pride, limped over and tried to explain I needed to have a paddle, not a puddle.

My Pigeon English does not go beyond "lic lic" (small), "lap lap" (piece of clothing), "belong" (belongs to) "su su" (milk). All put together it means "bra", which might be helpful in other circumstances but was totally irrelevant here.

After lots of waving of arms guard So Jo called over his mate So Good, whose English is a little better.

More waving of arms, like I was paddling.

"So you want a panoo, Mr."

The locals call a canoe a panoo. I was sort of getting my message across.

"Why you want a panoo? You want catch some fis?"

"No, I just want to go for a paddle,"



Panoo for hire: \$600

"Is it better I paddle up the river, or out into the lagoon?"

"At the beach there are plenty fis, Mr. And plenty crocs, Mr, and plenty sharks. If you panoo up the river, there are no more sharks, but the crocs, they get bigger. If you panoo out toward the reef, there are no more crocs, but the sharks get much bigger. But the fis are plenty. How long you want to fish for, Mr?"

"Maybe one hour, maybe two, maybe a bit more."

"How you get there, Mr?"

"I will take the company car, pick up the kayak on the way," I explained.

"Oh Mr, the first hour, down there, they watch your car to see if you come back. The second hour, they pinch your wheels, the third hour they pinch the your engine, so don't go out too long," So Good advised.

"So where do I pick up the kayak?"

"Go down to the supermarket at the docks, my four sisters and two of my brothers work there. They will fix you up with a fising panoo."

I found my way to the supermarket at the docks, found the four sisters and the two brothers, but their fising panoo was not quite what I had in mind. It was a pretty simple outrigger which they wanted to sell to me for the equivalent of about \$A600. They don't understand the concept of hiring. It was buy or go without.

And at the beach there were four vehicles without wheels and engines.

So I drove back to the hotel compound, my arms twitching, and again found myself staring at a yellow puddle in the car park.



Tom with So Good's four sisters, who were decked out in ceremonial dress to celebrate New Guinea Day

bed and slept.

This time I arrived to find an excavator sitting in a waterless pool, making sure no water ever stayed in that pool again.

After not many days I found myself staring at the waves on a small yellow puddle attached to my left shoe. I was brought to my senses when the skinny dog which was the source of the puddle bit my shoe and darted off.

One of the compound guards fell out of their little guard house in

I said

"Why you want to do that, Mr?"

"For exercise," I said, "so I can go faster."

"Why you want to do that, Mr? Go faster. You go out the fis they wait for you, you don't have to chase them."

"Where is the best place to go?" I inquired.

So Good sort of explained there is a bit of a beach where the river runs into the lagoon. "That a good place, Mr, plenty fis."

'A huge shark just swam beneath us'

by Tim Hookins

I started worrying about doing the Rottneest ocean race last January long before I left for South Africa on Boxing Day for a reunion with my venerable Uni mates from Cape Town. My first surfski outing in South Africa was on the Kei River in a Fenn double. An old childhood friend insisted he was an OK paddler and we borrowed the double. It took all of three minutes before we went for an ungracious swim in the brown water of the Kei.

My second warm-up effort was down the coast at Plettenberg Bay. I borrowed a tippy Millenium ski, and I had to go out through the surf on my own at a beach where I last swam 40 years ago. I gingerly threaded my way out between the rocky outcrops and had a careful paddle. It was a beautiful day and the coffee on the boardwalk café afterwards tasted great.

Paddle number three was an organised trip run professionally by John Blacklaws from www.Capevisits.com. Saturday afternoon was looking good for the run from Milnerton to Melkbosstrand (Milk-Bush Beach for those who do not speak Afrikaans). Conditions expected were a 30-40 knot wind running parallel to the beach on the Table Bay side.

John and his two mates, Rob Mousley of www.surfski.info fame and Dale, were busily getting their gear ready so I thought I better do the same. John advised me I could paddle his carbon Fenn Mako 6 and I just had to watch out it didn't blow away before I got it into the water. Once beyond the surf we could see the cradle of Table Mountain in the distance and Robben Island, the much hated political prison from the apartheid era, was away to the north-east. We were all wearing PFDs. Straight away there were large runners going in just the right direction, with the wind heaving us along. Perfect

except a bit scary. As we got further out to sea the swells became bigger and the wind just pushed us down them.

The Mako 6 becomes a bit unwieldy in big conditions and every so often I would slew around about 90 degrees and grind to a halt, the cockpit filling with water. When it got too much I went for a swim. I was so pleased to have had the training of Dean and Yanda's squad. I can get back into a Mako 6 in no time. Get my breath back and off we go again.

Presently John said I should work my way further out to sea. I soon saw why. There was a low headland running out in my path with huge breakers folding over it. So out I went!

About then John paddled nearer and said "Did you see that?" I said "What?" He replied "A huge shark just swam beneath us!" He thought it was a great white. I didn't even see it. I just realised that the swimming caper would have to end. But the surfriding continued.

You just feel that momentary lift, down you go and then the bow dives into the water and you are off. A thrilling sensation which is repeated every time you get going. Each time you have to put in a few rapid-fire paddle strokes and then involuntarily you put the paddle on to the water to balance yourself as you go, the blade slapping the water, sometimes for twenty seconds.

Again John called to me to work away from the reef which was rearing up in front of us. I could see the breakers rolling



in to the right and John was paddling strongly off to the left to avoid them. But the big runners persisted and I couldn't help just catching a few more. Then, too late, I saw a big breaker looming up on my left. No time to turn, I just had to take the thing sideways on. It simply crashed loudly right over me. I braced right with the paddle, shook my head and realised I had survived it. I got back alongside John and he was grinning at me, saying "I thought that was tickets for you, man!" A show of confidence in me?

We were just about ready to go in through the waves when we were embroiled in thick kelp beds. Each wave would lift us over them but in between the rudder would bang along the kelp roots and drag us slower. I was feeling pretty elated with the day's paddle as I reached the beach and I was puzzled to see John turn his ski around and paddle back out! He had noticed that Rob was in trouble and he went out to rescue him. I got ashore and turned around to scan the surf to understand what had happened. I could see Rob swimming in slowly with John near him, but Rob's ski was nowhere in sight. A white ski in white surf is impossible to see! People around us were saying they could see it every so often, but I never conclusively saw it again. Gone with the wind!

A wave like the one that got me had broken his legstrap and that was that. We bolted off down the beach in an attempt to see the ski drifting north. Then we hopped into the Jeep and raced off along the road to get ahead of the path of the ski. John decided to take the jeep on to the sand. I thought the sand was too soft and meekly suggested this to him. But too late. Next we were bogged in the sand. Eventually a rescue tractor had to come and pull us out of the sand. Even the tractor almost got bogged down!

What a day of adventure! And misadventure! It was dark by the time I arrived back at Franschoek, the mountain vineyard retreat where I was staying with my Uni buddies. I don't know whether they believed my story, but I tried not



to exaggerate.

Two days later John told me conditions were OK for us to do the much vaunted Millers Run. This is from Millers Point in False Bay back into the Bay at Vishoek (Fish Corner for those who don't speak Afrikaans) The advantage of this run is that you can get the Atlantic Ocean rollers coming into the bay supported by the wind which builds up the smaller waves in between. And these just roll along the coastline. We started off from the beautiful Millers Point with its rounded granite rocks, went out to the outcrop about a kilometre out. But the conditions were more balmy this time and the wind only about 20 knots. It was a languid paddle compared with Milnerton, although it was fun to pick up the swells and admire the beautiful ragged mountain peaks along to our left. I kept thinking I should bring my mates from LCRK here some time to enjoy it. It must be fabulous when the conditions are really good.

After that I was happy with my training program for Rottneest.

To get an idea of Millers Run, go to www.youtube.com and type in Millers Run. You'll see plenty of them. To see my report corroborated go to www.surfski.info and go to the article titled "How to sabotage a sale". When Rob finally got his ski back it was destroyed.

Lane Cove expats get together in Queensland

by Paul van Koesveld

The inaugural meeting of the Queensland Chapter of Lane Cove River Kayakers was held on the Coomera River on Sunday, Jan 25. Urs and Arni Mader, Nick Chai and I were graced by the presence of “Queen of the Yukon and other extraordinary endeavours” Liz Winn and of my wife, Angela, who seems to have kept herself behind the camera.

While there seemed to be some musings that the CR within LCRK could be turned into Coomera River, the connection to Lane Cove is clear.

The intention is for us to meet for a paddle every month or so. This will often be on the Coomera River, which is very close not only to Urs and Arni’s home but also to Nick’s, but sometimes at other paddling points including in Brisbane near where Angela and I live.

One of the photos shows Urs’ new feet-up paddling style



Yukon Queen Liz Winn (left) with the expats: Paul van Koesveld, Nick Chai, Urs Mader and Arni Mader



since Arni promoted him to the front seat in the Estuary, into which he doesn’t really fit.

Unfortunately we don’t have a photo of Nick “playing out in the traffic”, chasing large powerboats and jet skis to ride their wake, but anyone who’s paddled with him will be able to picture it in their mind.

Note: A follow-up paddle was planned at Kangaroo Point in central Brisbane so Nick could “play with the river traffic”.

Left: Urs demonstrates his new feet-up paddling style

Hawkesbury famils

Familiarisation paddles for the Hawkesbury Classic will be held on the following dates (all Saturdays):

Jun 13	Brooklyn-Spencer-Brooklyn	9am
Jul 4	Wisemans-Spencer	9.30am
Aug 29	Sackville-Wisemans	9.15am
Sep 12	Windsor-Sackville	8.30am
Oct 17	Windsor-Pitt Town-Windsor	7pm

Prior registration required with Lyle Mead at lyle@winningwayskayakcoaching.com.au or 0403-932-348.

If you’re planning on doing the Classic this year, these famils are a must. Not only do they introduce you to the river in bite-size portions, they are great training outings. And if you’re not doing the Classic, they still offer good training sessions in good company.

Recreational paddle on the Colo

The recreational paddle program, now operating under the banner of PaddleNSW, continued on March 28 with an outing on the Colo River, from the point near the Lower Portland ferry where it enters the Hawkesbury upstream to the Putty Road bridge. We were accompanied by Jeff Cottrell, a member of a wilderness group involved in a project to control black willows (an

undesirable species of willow). It was a leisurely fun day and the river seemed fine, but when we lifted our boats out of the water they were dirtier than I have ever experienced. And I always had thoughts of the Colo as a pristine, wilderness river! - JP

Future rec outings: Canberra April 25, Woronora/Georges Rivers May 9, Nepean Gorge June 21.



Lane Cove faces in the crowd paddling the Colo: Paul Myers and Justin Paine (3rd and 4th from left) and Tony Carr (front)

LCRK Committee

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President: Rob Vallis

Vice-President, Membership Secretary: Matt Swann

Secretary: Ian Wilson

Treasurer: Simon Mann

Marathon/BBQ: Ian Hofstetter

Wednesday night conveners: Steve

Russell, Steve Paget

Waterways: Jeremy Spear

Clothing: Tim Simmat

Website: Tim Dodd

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