



KAYAK KAPERS

August 2007

Aussie flag flies proudly at Yukon

Our team of wonder paddlers has returned triumphant from the Canadian wilderness where they extended Australia's sporting reputation in style with an incredible display of endurance paddling in the Yukon River Quest.

Urs Mader and Tom Simmat were 2nd and 3rd respectively in the men's single kayak and the pair of Peter Anderson and Steve Pizzey were 2nd in the men's double kayak.

Making up the Aussie contingent was Central Coast's Liz Winn who won the women's single kayak.

Apart from Voyager canoes which took the first four places across the line - these craft have 6-8 paddlers and weigh as little as 36kg - only two boats beat the Lane Cove boys in.

5th was a Canadian double and 6th was a transplanted Pommie from New York who is an outdoor adventure instructor. He edged out Urs by a mere 6 min 53 sec to claim the title of fastest single. (Coming into Kirkmans he started hallucinating from tiredness and wanted to get out of his kayak so he could walk to the nearest highway - which was actually hundreds of kilometres away - and find a pub. The winning double crew stopped him and he recovered after the 3-hour break at Kirkmans.)

Urs' race time in 7th across the line was 47h 43m 55s, which works out to an average of 15.5km/h (for most of the race he had the benefit of a fast flowing river). Peter and Steve finished next in 8th, 1m 13s later, and another 27m 30s further back was Tom in 9th.

Liz paddled a very determined race and left a stream of male singles and doubles in her wake in crossing the finishing line 32nd outright and 1h 27m 33s ahead of her nearest women's single competitor.

Landcrews giving untiring, enthusiastic support to their paddlers were Arni Mader, Christine Simmat, Steve's father-in-law Lynton Jamieson and brother Mark, and Liz's daughter Katrina Harding.

The Lane Cove team hired a house in the starting town of Whitehorse and this became the Australian "embassy", resplendent with a national flag which Tom screwed on to the front fence. Liz organised Australian uniforms with the flag on the front and back and "Australian Ultra Marathon Kayak Racing Team" embroidered across the chest. Christine supplied Australian caps and the Aussies wiped out all competition as the best dressed team.

Only Tom had been to the Yukon before (it was his 3rd time) and the unselfish help and guidance he gave to the others played a major part in their success. The advice from the guru, including before they left Australia, meant the first-timers were excellently prepared and knew both what they were in for and how to go about it.

During the compulsory 7-hour stop at Carmacks they all slept well in motel rooms, but at the Kirkmans Creek compulsory 3-hour stop there were no such facilities, so it meant get out your groundsheet and make the best of it.

Tom (Horizon Tourer), Urs (Reflection) and Liz (Mirage 530) took their own kayaks while Peter and Steve hired a local G3 Passat, similar to a Mirage double but 5cm wider (the minimum width for a double for the race). Peter and Steve didn't like the Passat's huge rudder, so designed a smaller one which they had fabricated from aluminium by a local machine shop.

All the paddlers had dramas of one sort or another during the 740km race.

Volunteers left Urs' kayak in the morning sun at Kirkmans and during the 3-hour break it "cooked" his liquid food supply, turning it sour and undrinkable. "I had only a limited amount of water for the final 170km and had to ration it, which meant slowing by maybe a kilometre an hour, and for the

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The Australian contingent in Canada. Rear: Lynton Jamieson, Peter Anderson, Steve Pizzey, Urs Mader, Mark Pizzey. Front: Liz Winn, Tom Simmat, Katrina Harding, Christine Simmat, Arni Mader

	Start Whitehorse	Laberge	Little Salmon	Carmacks	Fort Selkirk	Kirkmans	Finish Dawson	Race Time
	0 km	55km	257km	325km	432km	582km	740km	
Urs Mader	12.30pm	4.26pm	6.34am	9.50am	0.45am	8.55am	10.13pm	47.43.55
Peter Anderson/ Steve Pizzey	12.30pm	4.16pm	7.41am	11.10am	1.50am	9.41am	10.15pm	47.45.08
Tom Simmat	12.30pm	4.15pm	6.34am	9.43am	0.51am	9.41am	10.42pm	48.12.38
Liz Winn	12.30pm	4.50pm	10.25am	2.06pm	5.57am	4.02pm	6.26am	55.56.03

Carmacks and Kirkmans times are arrivals. There were compulsory stops of 7 hrs at Carmacks and 3 hrs at Kirkmans.

Ian and Matty A lead the way

Lane Cove paddlers are continuing to turn in good results at the Winter Marathon Series but the numbers were down on the previous couple of races. The cold weather must be keeping the waverers in bed.

Certainly the weather was a reasonable excuse for those who missed out on Forster. The Saturday drive up the coast was through that horrendous storm which lashed and flooded the Hunter Valley, but the kayaking gods were kind enough next day to let the conditions abate while the race was run.

WMS Race 5 Forster

Competitor	Div	Time	Plc
Ian Hofstetter	2	1.40.07	3
Tony Hystek	4	1.46.49	1
Julie Stanton	4	1.48.57	3
James Mumme/ Matthew Swann	4	1.49.35	5
Simon Mann	4	1.53.33	9
Ian Purves	5	1.54.03	8
John Greathead/ Tony Walker	6	1.55.21	3
Stephen Paget	6	1.58.09	5
Bert Lloyd	6	2.03.16	14
Trevor Williamson	6	2.11.10	18

Ian Hofstetter once again set the pace for LCRK, continuing his outstanding form this season in division 2. Tony Hystek took no prisoners in crossing the line first in division 4, with Julie Stanton close behind in 3rd spot

In division 6 we had only 4 boats, well down on the usual fleet which contests this class, and John Greathead and Tony Walker did well for us.

At Windsor Matt Acheson usurped Ian Hofstetter's role as the club's van-

guard with a close division 2 second. In division 4 James Mumme and Matt Swann made it two 5ths in a row, tipping out Michael Mueller by a nose.

In division 6 John and Tony were again our best with yet another 2nd but again had a problem with a couple of lasses in a Canberra double who like winning.

The Windsor race was run downstream, under the bridge, this year to get away from the weed. A good move.



Justin Paine, Trevor Williamson and Greg Appleyard at Windsor

WMS 6 Windsor

Competitor	Div	Time	Plc
Matt Acheson	2	1.35.57	2
Ian Hofstetter	2	1.39.25	6
Peter Giesbuhl	2	1.43.38	9
Richard Barnes	2	1.48.25	14
Tim Sindle	3	1.54.11	8
David Edelman	3	1.55.46	10
James Mumme/ Matthew Swann	4	1.49.15	5
Michael Mueller	4	1.49.17	6
Tom Simmat	4	1.54.11	11
Tim Hookins	4	2.03.43	14
Ian Purves	5	1.56.14	10
Tommy Nolan	5	2.05.18	19
John Greathead/ Tony Walker	6	1.56.45	2
Stephen Paget	6	1.59.10	6
Greg Appleyard/ Trevor Williamson	6	2.01.29	8
Bert Lloyd	6	2.03.59	12
Paul van Koesveld	6	2.08.30	17
Wayne Wanders	6	2.13.08	19
Justin Paine	6	2.26.24	26



Tony Walker (centre) holds his own in discussion with Kenji Ogawa, John Greathead, Greg Appleyard and James Mumme at Windsor

Another job for Roger

Roger Aspinall has become the new President of NSW Canoeing following the resignation of Peter Clark. Roger is also Chairman of the NSW Marathon Technical Committee and a member of the Race Committee for the 2007 Hawkesbury Classic.

Other LCRK personnel on the Classic Committee are Roger Deane (race

controller), Robert Grozier (scrutineer) and Richard Barnes (member).

Plucked from Murray

Trevor Williamson has just notched up another first - first time to be plucked from a race by a rescue boat. He had joined Noel Camin, Diane Chellew and Bernie Craggs in the Just Paddlers K4 for the 3-day Murray 200, but 50km

after the start at Berri problems with the seat forced him to pull out with pinched nerves in both legs.

The rules require boats to start and finish with the same crew, with no replacements, so he jumped back in on day 3 to paddle the final 12k into Morgan. The foursome/threesome established a record of 22.28.04 for the mixed 50+ K4.

Graeme Jeffries is our new President

Graeme Jeffries was elected President of Lane Cove River Kayakers at the AGM on Aug 3, succeeding Tim Hookins who retired after two years in the post.

Graeme praised Tim for being "integrally involved" in club activities right across the board in a presidential term which saw major advances in a number of areas. One of these is membership which in the last year soared from 80 to 127. Tim was elected Secretary for the coming year.

Re-elected Treasurer Nick Chai reported that the club is in

a healthy financial situation, with more than \$10,000 in the bank and total assets exceeding \$15,000.

Elections for the remaining Committee positions saw an infusion of new blood, with Derek Simmonds, Rob Grozier, Don Rowston and James Mumme not seeking re-election. The new Committee members are Ian Hofstetter, Tony Hystek, Justin Paine, Tom Simmat, Matt Swann and Rob Vallis.

The Annual Dinner which followed was attended by 50 members and guests. For more pictures see www.lcrk.org.au.



Tim Hookins is given a paddle cover at the Lane Cove River Kayakers AGM in recognition of his services as President. With him are Graeme Jeffries and Nick Chai. At rear is the Goddess of Kayaking.



Deb Meade (right) receives the prize for the best article in *Kayak Kapers* in 2006-07 from Trish Hamilton, one of the judges. The other judges were Martin Dearnley, Ian Hofstetter, Tim McNamara and Alan Whiteman.



Tasmania circumnavigation

by Richard Barnes

March 26 to May 20, 2007.
53 Days, 1912km.
Anticlockwise, starting and
finishing at Devonport.

Two months holidaying in Australia's most exciting wonderland is a recipe for memorable experiences. Phil Newman and I tried to pick one highlight from each day's action. Here is a selection.

Day 1 Fast and safe *Spirit of Tasmania* unloaded a car, two sea kayaks and a mountain of gear. It took most of the day to find provisions and cram all our belongings into the kayaks. We launched into a jumbled Bass Strait and a stiff headwind to make just 6km before stopping for the night.

Day 3 Paddled around our first landmark lighthouse on Table Cape, then found a secluded beach directly below enticing us in to camp. We surprised a skinny-dipping local lady who was happy to share her coastline with wayward seakayakers.

Day 4 Boat Harbour SLSC café set a benchmark for Devonshire teas not to be beaten anywhere else in Tasmania. Big and warm scones were served on china plates way too posh for paddlers still dripping water from spraydecks and lifejackets, and the serviettes were useful for cleaning salty glasses.

Day 5 Stanley has The Nut for regular tourists, but it also has an island seal colony, the first and only one we saw on the north coast of Tasmania. Maybe 100 of these inquisitive mammals cruised close to the kayaks, popping up alongside to have a good stare at these intruders in their playground.

Day 6 The closest building to our boat ramp landing was the Smithton scout hall. Scout leader Terry happily gave us the keys to this dry cosy overnight camp and boiled up our next half dozen eggs in their coffee urn.

Day 7 Black swans came to signify shallow water. Round Robbins Island, there were acres of these birds wading knee deep where there should have been blue Bass Strait.

Day 8 We rounded Woolnorth Point, the north-west corner of the state, signifying the start of the wild west coast. Confronting us was a strong SW headwind and big confused seas pumping through the gap between the daunting Doughboys Islands.

Day 9 Easter Friday. Our Sydney supporters had stashed away an easter egg each, so we sat under Bluff Lighthouse enjoying this treat.

Day 10 Dinners were always three courses. It was Phil's turn to cook. Highlight was the fire-warmed garlic muffins to accompany the beef jerky soup. This was followed by deb potato,

dried peas and devon steaks, and rounded out by peaches in jelly.

Day 11 We had planned to paddle up the Pieman River, but the bar crossing was too daunting. Two days later, a fisherman died trying to cross this bar.

Day 12 Disaster. Phil backed on to seaweed and snapped his rudder. Almost instantly we were engulfed in Tasmanian hospitality. John from Conical Rocks transferred his generator from his shack to the beach in a wheelbarrow so he could help drill holes to cable-tie the pieces of the rudder back together again. Matt Wootton on the other side of the state offered to drive across to deliver a replacement rudder. Fortunately the cable ties with a bit of araldite and string kept the rudder together for the remainder of the trip.

Day 13 Our longest non-stop leg for the journey, 5½ hours for 36km to Hells Gates at the mouth of Macquarie Harbour and Strahan.

Day 16 A pod of a dozen dolphins came to play around Maatsuyker, diving under the hull and corkscrewing as they went by.

Day 20 Port Davey welcomed us in brilliant sunshine and calmish winds. It's the only guaranteed safe landing in the southwest. Ranger Joe informed us the whole Southwest National Park is fuel stove only, and demanded we extinguish our dinner fire immediately. For the next week, the fine for daring to light a fire and dry out would be \$5000.

Day 22 Passing South-West Cape signified the end of the wild west. We celebrated with jam tarts. Strong southerly headwinds were replaced by strong easterly headwinds.

Day 23 In calm conditions we made the 24km crossing to Maatsuyker Island and Australia's southernmost lighthouse. Caretakers Mick and Pam took us on a tour, setting the clockwork mechanism in motion and taking us inside the crystal lantern. Unfortunately we couldn't help with their supply shortages of potato chips and toilet paper.

Day 24 In the morning we found Flat Top Island and the 100m-long tunnel through its heart. Although unsure of our chances of surviving being squashed into the tunnel roof by a roving swell, we were lured into a heart-in-mouth dash through this unique natural challenge. Seals were sunbaking at the exit portal. In the afternoon, John, Mardi and Andrew flew in to meet us, bearing gifts of fresh food.

Day 27 In awe we passed the Fluted Cliffs on South Cape. 200m sheer rock walls soar straight out of the ocean, and dwarfed our kayaks. Shortly after, at South-East Cape, we clocked 1000km.

Day 28 Exactly two weeks after our last shopping opportunity in Strahan, we landed in Southport. The time was 12.30pm, but the shop closed at midday. We stared in the windows at



Fluted Cliffs, South Cape



Richard Barnes off South West Cape



Phil Newman dressed for the conditions

our dreams of a meat pie and a hot cup of coffee. Jehovah's Witnesses came to our rescue with fresh bread rolls and a variety of fruits.

Day 29 Bruny Island is a gem of natural grandeur. We revelled in paddling under towering cliffs, into sea caves and through arches and tunnels.

Day 31 We slipped into Hobart. Most of the sights were hidden in mist. In windless conditions our 7km/h rocketed us past all becalmed weekend sailors. Dinner steaks were shared with Matt Wootton, the legend who has completed three Tasmanian circumnavigations.

Day 32 Like the Sydney-Hobart sailors, we cruised past the Iron Pot. Our largest pod of dolphins, at least 50-60 of all sizes, splashed by.

Day 35 Tasman Island defied our landing. There was no chance to go exploring its famous lighthouse. 30-knot NE winds whipped up canoe-bashing chop and slashed our progress to a 4km/h slog.

Day 36 The only day the weather got the better of us. We retreated to shelter in Fortescue Bay. The aura of Andrew McAuley's Tasman crossing was tangible here, as this was his departure point.

Day 37 Deep Glen Bay was a little wanting on flattish tent sites. Phil chose a boulder field, and slept bent around the bigger bumps. I chose a big rock ledge on a 20° slope, and planted boulders inside the tent to stop sliding out. We were entertained over dinner by a fairy penguin parade. Next morning the penguins squawked their way back to the ocean before dawn.

Day 39 Perversity personified – we paddled into a headwind out to Maria Island. The wind strengthened to a kayak-challenging 25 knots, then on our afternoon course back to the mainland rose to 30 knots.

Day 40 Orford IGA provided our next kayak-filling shopping spree. We used the shopping trolley to cart the bulging bagfuls back to the kayaks.

Day 42 At Chicken Bay we woke to a westerly gale with wind throwing spray at the tents. Not a chance of braving conditions that would have stolen the paddles from out of our grasps.

Day 43 Bicheno welcomed stray seakayakers by presenting a selection of bandstands as overnight shelter.

Day 44 Not a breath of wind. Aqua blue water clear to infinity. We paddled in dreamy amazement.

Day 45 Oops! Dreamy complacency saw me stray too close to shore and get dumped by a bigger example of a shore break. Fortunately we'd had our first practice rolling session the day before, and I popped upright again.

Day 47 We decided to detour offshore to Swan Island, just off the NE tip of Tasmania and notorious for its ripping Bass Strait tides and general stormy weather. We paddled the 10km crossing in a flat windless calm.

Day 48 The return crossing from Swan Island was again in calm conditions, made challenging by a fog cutting visibility to the tip of our kayaks. We could lose each other, and for once paddled out of sight of land. Our GPS provided our best guess as to which way the tide was taking us.

Day 50 Welcomed into Bridport by the Maatsuyker Canoe Club president Jeff Jennings. He is the mecca for all kayakers in Tasmania, providing an inexhaustible storybook of adventures, stunning video footage of kayakers and other sea life, and our first showers for 35 days.

Day 51 It rained pretty much all day and after one of our longer logs nudging 50km, the wind blew us into a caravan park at Low Head. The deal on a cosy cabin won over unpacking our soggy tents, and we reacquainted ourselves with the



Phil Newman is almost lost beneath spectacular, towering Bruny Island

convenience of cooking on an electric stove.

Day 52 Bass Strait teased us with some slightly more serious stuff, and we hammered our way into headwinds and swell at a demoralising rate, struggling to break 5km/h. Landed and camped at Point Sorell among Tasmania's biggest fairy penguin colony.

Day 53 We reached Devonport and...nothing. So we left the kayaks at the boat ramp from which we had launched 1912km earlier, and went off in search of a celebratory Devonshire tea.

This diary account has been shortened. For the full article and more magnificent pictures, go to www.lcrk.org.au.



No hot and cold running water at this campsite



Tasman Island ... the kayakers were unable to land

Get familiar with the Classic

The familiarisation paddles for the Hawkesbury Classic are under way – they're not races, or so they say – and the efforts of some of Lane Cove's entrants shows they are going to be in good shape come the big event in October.

The opener on June 30, Brooklyn-Spencer-Brooklyn, had a bruising start



Tim Sindle gets ready at Brooklyn

and some of the K1s and TK1s in the field of 64 found it tough going through the waves up to Milson Passage.

Ian Hofstetter (2.00.35) did some sightseeing at the top mark but then put the pedal down and hauled back a huge deficit to overtake Michael Mueller (2.00.41) on the line and snatch 2nd behind a supercharged Supersonic.

Then, keeping company in a pack, came James Mumme/Matt Swann (5th in 2.02.39), Julie Stanton (6th in 2.02.43), Roger Aspinall (7th in 2.02.44) and Graeme Jeffries (8th in 2.03.04).

Times of other Lane Cove members included Tim Sindle 2.10.43, Craig Elliott 2.13.51, Ian Purves 2.16.30, Jeremy Spear 2.18.26, Tim Hookins 2.18.56, Steve Paget 2.20.56, Tony Carr 2.22.14, Michael Venter/Steven Howcroft 2.27.06, Ian Wilson 2.27.16, Jason Cooper 2.28.56, Christie Brown 2.31.51, Justin Paine 2.39.47, Nick Ridgwell 2.49.10.

The Wisemans-Spencer dash on

July 28 was a flyer due to a fast outgoing tide and there was a buzz of excitement when a helicopter came along the river just above the fleet to land at a property opposite Low Tide Pit Stop.

Once again Ian Hofstetter was 2nd in a time of 2.07.48. Tony Hystek, in his wooden 6m Chesapeake Pax 20, was close behind the K1s in taking out 4th in 2.08.09.

Top-10 finishes were also recorded by Tim Hookins, making a return to form (6th in 2.10.54 in Christie Brown's Sonic), and Rob Vallis (9th in 2.11.49).

Times of other Lane Cove paddlers included Ian Purves 2.14.46, James Mumme 2.21.04, Matt Swann 2.22.27, Tony Carr 2.23.13, Steve Paget 2.24.47, Jeremy Spear 2.26.02, Paul van Koesveld 2.26.32, Jason Cooper 2.28.37, Justin Paine 2.42.04, Jennifer Neil-Smith/Rowena Frith 2.43.05, Nick Ridgwell 2.53.27, Claude Person 3.03.30.

PFD testing for Classic

Do you want to get your PFD tested and certified before the Hawkesbury Classic? (Testing is compulsory.) You can have it tested on race day and start off with a wet PFD. Or you can have it tested earlier at the following venues:

- Blue Earth's shop, 48a Formosa St, Drummoyne in business hours any time after Sept 1.
- Sackville, Sept 22, after the familiarisation paddle.
- Lane Cove, Oct 10, at the weekly club paddle.
- Windsor, Oct 20, after the familiarisation paddle.

Info nights for Classic first-timers

Blue Earth is conducting two New Hawkesbury Classic Paddler info nights at which experienced Classic paddlers will discuss important issues such as nutrition, clothing, training, pit stops, landcrewing – and tips on how to just finish the race.

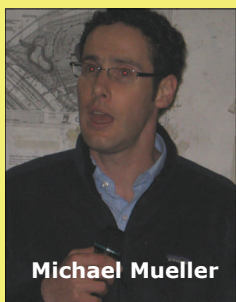
They will be informal affairs, with beer, wine and a few nibbles, at 48a Formosa St, Drummoyne. A 10% discount will be available on all equipment and accessories purchased on both evenings. The dates are:

Tuesday, Aug 14: 6pm for 6.30 start. This is 1½ weeks before the 3rd familiarisation paddle, so you'll have a chance to apply what you learn on the night.

Tuesday, Oct 9: 6pm for 6.30 start. This is 1½ weeks before the final familiarisation paddle, just time for a final hit-out on the water.



Graeme Jeffries



Michael Mueller



Justin Paine



Rob Vallis

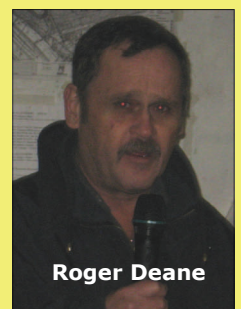


Jay Wilson



Matt Blundell

This year's Hawkesbury Classic is a big challenge for Lane Cove River Kayakers – can we win the Commonwealth Bank Cup as the best club for the fifth straight year? In a bid to make sure our racers have the best preparation possible, the club held a special Classic briefing session in conjunction with the BBQ on June 27. A number of non-member first-timers were welcome guests. Classic veterans Rob Vallis, Michael Mueller, Graeme Jeffries and Roger Deane gave valuable advice on a range of aspects, including planning, training, strategy, race drinks, landcrewing and race procedures. Tom Simmat (race clothing) and Paul van Koesveld (first-timer's viewpoint) were unable to attend due to overseas travel but prepared notes for presentation. The event was organised by Justin Paine. (A summarised transcript of the session, prepared by Alanna Ewin, will soon be available on www.lcrk.org.au.) Further short sessions for BBQ



Roger Deane

nights leading up to the big race on Oct 27-28 have been arranged. The first was on July 18 when Matt Blundell demonstrated stretching exercises. Future sessions will include drinks systems/liquid food (Aug 15), race nutrition (Sept 12) and sports psychology (Oct 10).

Recreational paddling program launched

by Tony Carr



Three diverse and attractive locations have been selected for the initial series of recreational paddles for members, their partners and friends. The initiative has the backing of the LCRK committee. If they are supported, more will follow. You can register for them now.

Central Coast Spectacular – Sunday Sept 9

The group will set off from Ettalong Beach, which is an easy drive along the F3 from Sydney. From there paddlers will go under the Rip Bridge to a number of islands, one occupied exclusively by pelicans. Then through a scenic channel to Brisbane Water. On to a wonderful west-facing beach for lunch – and a dip if it's warm enough. Back to Ettalong Beach down the eastern side of the waterway. Starts at 9.45am, finishes around 3pm. Brand new sit-in doubles with rudders available for hire at \$40 per person.

Georges River Exploratory – Sunday Nov 4

This is a week after the Hawkesbury Classic, when we'll all feel like taking it easy.

The group will meet at the strangely named Cattle Duffers Flat in the Georges River National Park (30 mins south of the CBD). Then paddle upstream, stopping for lunch on the way. The park contains some of Sydney's best river habitat for native plants and animals. Meandering waterway, bush-clad banks and some nice pull-in points. Starts 9.45am, finishes at 3pm. Hire doubles available for \$40 per person.

Total Body Workout – Sunday Dec 2

This is one for the body-thrashers! Paddle, walk and swim. Location is the Royal National Park in Sydney's south. The group will depart from Bundeena at 8.30am and paddle over the sandbar and westward along the scenic waterway of Port Hacking to Audley Weir. Then back to Bundeena for lunch – and for those who wish to, off in the afternoon for a bushwalk on a circular track in the National Park, with swimming opportunities. Finish about 5pm. Sit-in doubles available at \$40 a person.

These are not time trials or race events. They will be run at a pace that everyone is happy with – we'll be able to chat and enjoy the scenery! Non-member mandatory single-day insurance cover is \$10.

To take part in any of these paddles **you must register in advance with me**. Numbers are limited so get in now (Spring is just around the corner). Contact me at tonycarr@ozemail.com.au

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Aussies at Yukon

last 20km I had no water," he said.

The landcrews had a beer waiting for him at the finish, his first for 6 months, and that made up for everything!

Tom started strongly but at Carmacks eager volunteers accidentally tipped him into the water. He suffered a deep graze to his side, lost his gloves, he and the kayak were soaked and he subsequently lost a vital 1½ hours sleep.

Before leaving Carmacks he changed his paddling pants but the new pants were too tight over his thermals, hurting his legs, and he later had to remove them. That's a good trick in a crowded kayak cockpit in a river flowing at 10-12 km/h! He reckons overcoming this problem cost him 1½ hours.

Then he followed a Voyager crew, thinking as locals they would know the best route through a maze of islands. They finished up in dead

water. When he accused them of poor navigation, they said: "We can't keep up with the leading Voyagers, so we decided to go looking for moose."

Liz had an MP3 as a constant companion, enjoying the strong beat of, among other songs, Madonna's "Confessions on a dance floor". Fatigue became a problem and when she found herself nodding off and jerking awake – "there were competitors who went to sleep and fell in the water" – she tied her paddle tether to a tree and slept in the boat for an hour.

Peter, 26, and Steve, 32, were happy with their navigation and eating, and particularly with the way they recovered during the two compulsory stops.

Even so, Peter in the rear seat noticed Steve paddling erratically at one point – "I think he was virtually paddling asleep."

A competitor's account of the race and pictures will appear in the next issue of *Kayak Kapers*.

Don't muddy the water

by Ozzie Folbot



I phoned the Prime Minister earlier this week to invite him to one of our Wednesday night kayak time trials.

He was most enthusiastic. "I'd love to come down," he said. "It's been ages since I did any rowing."

"Well, you won't do any with us," I explained. "We paddle."

"Paddle! I'm an expert at that. I've been paddling stories about the Labor Party for so long some people are starting to believe them."

"I'm sorry. I must have sounded like a New Zealander. I said *paddle*. The difference is we look where we're going, whereas rowers have to look over their backs."

"Rowers would make better politicians, then. You have to keep looking over your back, that's where the knives come from. Ha ha ha."

I gave him a moment to settle down, then said: "It would be good if you could come while you're the Prime Minister. Any time before about October would be good."

"You've been watching too many polls," he snorted. "I'm going to win this election and continue on as Prime Minister."

"In that case, any time in the following three years is okay."

I mentioned the invitation to some of our club members and they felt we had to be even handed, like the ABC.

"If you invite Howard, you have to ask Rudd along, too," said Arthur.

"It would be good to have them both on the water at the same time," said Colin. "They'd only have to dip their hands in the water and they'd have plenty of muck to throw at each other."

"Inviting Kewie could cause a problem," said Alex. "How are we going to fit all the union heavies with him on the water at the same time?"

"That's easy," I replied. "Make sure the construction workers turn up and he'll have to kick them all out."

Alison was worried that they might come on a BBQ night. She didn't want to ask invited guests for five bucks for a sausage sizzle, but felt the Parliamentary Privileges Committee might be annoyed if the polities were seen to be getting free food and entertainment.

"Tell them we have a sister club relationship with Osaka Paddlers and this is to ready them for an overseas junket. No-one will ask any questions," said Colin.

"Do you think Howard might put his hand in his pocket and give us some money for a clubhouse?" I asked.

"If his hand goes into anyone's pocket it will be ours," said Arthur. "But you're right. Now is the time to ask. They'll promise anything for a few votes."

Brian was his usual cynical self. "Promises, promises," he laughed. "You've got a better chance of a troop withdrawal from Iraq than these blokes keeping an election promise."

Kayaking Capricornia

by Jeremy Spear



Mid last year some friends suggested we join them for camping holiday in January. On an island. 75km offshore on the Great Barrier Reef! Seemed like it could be a bit of an adventure.

We drove to Gladstone – there is nothing like a kayak for use as a luggage pod – and unloaded all our camping gear into large stillages which were forked on to a barge for our 8-hour passage to North West island. The island is about 12km x 4km at low tide and about 3km x 1km at high. Either way it's a good paddle around – the scenery and wildlife change constantly and never disappoint.

It is very popular and why not, being one of only a few islands on the GBR where you can free camp and be surrounded by wildlife in a pretty perfect climate. The barge drops its bow door and delivers you wherever you like within the extensive camping area and then departs, leaving you on your own for the duration.

Others camping there also took kayaks so there were plenty of paddling partners. The kayaking is great. An easy, open-water 6km takes you to Tryon Is (a BOM met station).

This is different to paddling in the harbour or on rivers. Your life is dictated by the tides. Low tide means snorkeling, lazing, reading and prepping food. High tide means fishing from a tinnie or paddling.

The sand is quite gritty as it's made from ground up coral and shells. Reef shoes are recommended at all times (yes, some of the kids ignored this advice and ended up with coral cuts – nasty when infected).

We paddled with all sorts of wildlife: turtles, both green and loggerhead, sharks – white tip, black tip and bronze whaler, sand rays, sting rays, and best

of all the dancing manta rays.

Bird life is extensive. So extensive at nights that it can be difficult to sleep. So extensive that you will often find yourself having to give way to them. They crap everywhere (it used to be a guano factory and mutton bird cannery) so you need to cover your tent with a cheap disposable tarp. The noddies are elegant, harmless and in their thousands. Do not stand in their way when they are returning from the sea in the evening – they have right of way

and will hit you, especially if you are wearing a head-mounted lamp. Mutton birds are extremely graceful at sea and their GPS is incredibly accurate, but once on land you have never seen such bumbling boobies. They crash-land into anything left in their way – tents, children, camp stoves. Do not play French cricket near mutton bird burrows as the poor fools will try to hatch your missing tennis balls!

Oh – and never leave your kayak on the beach. There is nothing like a 100kg turtle mother intent on laying her eggs to bulldoze it out of the way. Failing that, if she nests nearby she will probably fill it with flung sand – hundreds of kilos. One Canadian canoe was barged and filled one night.

Several hundred nesting turtles every night laboured up the sand towards the low scrub. We saw many baby turtles hatch and head towards the sea. One in fifty make it that far and not many of the remainder reach adulthood. Predators start with seagulls and continue with sharks cruising in the shallows.

You can't get much closer to nature than to share a hammock with one of your children on the beach, under a full moon with brilliant stars above, only to

be bumped from underneath or have sand flung at you by a laying turtle two metres away.

The sea is warm, as are the nights. True trade wind SE slight breezes. The swells are typically very



slight, although there can be a bit of a chop and current with localised weather patterns.

Not a good idea to capsize surfing the big stern waves from turtles while not wearing a PFD, and while technically 75km offshore in an offshore breeze. Getting back in is really quick if you think of the sharks! We were half way down while diving to a coral bommie about 12m below the surface when the two bronze whalers came directly towards us. This saw us going vertical and landing in the tinnie quite gracefully. They are very well fed and were only checking us out (we hoped).

This report has been edited. For the full report, more pictures and more information about holidaying on North West Island go to www.lcrk.org.au.

Skills sessions

Join our monthly technique sessions with Mark Sier (beginner and intermediate) and Matt Blundell (advanced) and improve your paddling. They're held on a Sunday. Phone Rob Vallis 0428-526-018 for details.

Timekeepers

Aug 15 Graham Willis, Chris Kent (BBQ)
Aug 22 Tim Sindle, Richard Barnes
Aug 29 Paul van Koesveld, Paul Myers
Sept 5 Ian Wilson, Bob Kenderes
Sept 12 Jon Harris, Bert Lloyd (BBQ)
Sept 19 Tony Walker, John Greathead
Sept 26 Matt Acheson, Matt Blundell
If you can't make it, arrange a swap or advise Rob Vallis 0428-526-018.

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