



KAYAK KAPERS

February 2011

Tom Simmat nails yet another Murray

Another Murray Marathon, another Simmat win. It's just as well for the other competitors that Tom Simmat goes south for the great race only every second year. His handicap victory in the 2010 Murray brings his tally to 4 wins and a second from 5 starts.

Once again he led from start to finish, not giving anyone else a look-in and stretching his first-day lead of about 7 minutes to 29 minutes 5 seconds at the finish.

Fellow Lane Cove competitor James Mumme announced after the race: "We have renamed the event the Tom Simmat Murray Marathon."

The win capped a stunning year for Tom. In July he and Steve Pizzezy won the world's longest canoe/kayak race, the Yukon 1000 - a 1600km endurance epic through Canada and Alaska. In October, on an untried kayak, he smashed his class record in the Hawkesbury Classic by almost 1¾ hours.

It was Lane Cove's second triumph in the Murray in successive years.

Tony Hystek, who won last year, again had a tremendous race, coming 4th on handicap and 3rd fastest overall.

Despite hypothermia problems on the first two days, James Mumme and John Thearle in their Zero Tolerance double were extremely competitive and were 7th fastest, and 12th on handicap.

Rob and Marg Cook, in their Vulcan, paddled quietly and steadily and left a lot of big names in their wake as they completed the race as the 10th fastest boat, and 16th on handicap. They were denied a category win because organisers told them there was no mixed category for them and they had to compete against a men's double.

Richard Barnes and Andrew Mathers also had solid races, finishing 17th and 27th fastest and 34th and 29th on handicap respectively.

Fastest paddler was ex-Olympian Damien Daley, from Freshwater, on his DD3 ski, in 20.46.51. He was 11th on handicap.

The 42nd running of the Murray Marathon started with the traditional day 2 (Tocumwal-Picnic Point) cancelled due to flooding of checkpoints, and the final day (Murrabit-Swan Hill) to be paddled twice to make up for it. It finished in an anticlimax with the last day being cancelled due to bushfire danger in the Wimmera and Mallee regions - ironic that bushfires should threaten at a time of heavy rainfall and flooding - and the times at the end of day 4 being declared the finished times.

With water lying everywhere, mosquitoes were in plague proportions. Landcrew Marie Carr said she used up three cans of mossie spray and reported that at times the wall of the tent was black with invaders.

Simmat paddled the same Apollo XI which he won for breaking the class record in the Hawkesbury Classic two months earlier. He made some more modifications to it, including enlarging the deck hatch in the cockpit bulkhead so he could put two 3-litre drink bladders in there, with drinking tubes leading

back to the seat. A motorbike-style windscreen at the front of the cockpit kept water out of the footwell as well as offering streamlining and a mounting position for his GPS.

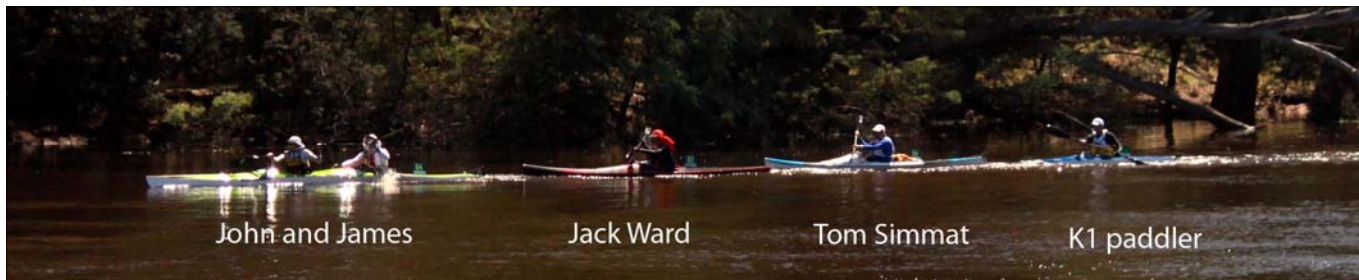
Tom had a great contest against Jack Ward for the whole four days. They were in craft with virtually identical hulls - Jack in a carbon Flash and Tom's Apollo ski being a Flash hull with a ski deck.

"Jack had a much lighter carbon boat and I was dragging a



Tom Simmat in his Apollo XI, with a motorbike-style cowling

Competitor	Category	Day 1 94km	Day 2 76km	Day 3 63km	Day 4 75km	Total Time	Plc	Cat plc	Hcp time	Hcp plc
Tony Hystek	UNR1 V50	6.30.13	5.57.04	4.08.06	5.11.08	21.46.53	3	1	19.09.46	4
James Mumme/ John Thearle	RKL2 V40	6.55.40	6.04.56	4.20.32	5.28.55	22.49.32	7	1	21.05.26	12
Tom Simmat	RKM1 V60	7.07.32	6.29.26	4.32.41	5.47.55	23.57.34	9	1	17.52.26	1
Marg Cook/ Rob Cook	RKL2 V50	7.12.29	6.35.11	4.38.08	5.48.08	24.13.57	10	2	21.38.23	16
Richard Barnes	K1 V50	7.37.17	6.52.59	4.59.12	6.13.04	25.42.32	17	1	25.42.32	34
Andrew Mathers	RKL1 V40	7.29.22	7.36.09	5.17.55	6.46.36	27.10.03	27	2	23.57.43	29



couple of ventures under the hull, also Jack had better control as he had a great looking low-profile underslung rudder,” Tom said. (Tom had put a kick-up rudder on the Apollo, in anticipation of snags.)

But because Tom was in the 60+ category and Jack was in the 50+, Tom had a better handicap rating: 0.746 compared to 0.779.

And this was to prove decisive, as although Jack’s total time of 23.34.01 was faster than Tom’s 23.57.34, he was 29m 5s behind in 2nd spot on handicap.

“The river was running fast on most days, we were regularly doing 12-13km/h and up to 15km/h,” said Tom. “It wasn’t

puts it down to food poisoning and is not very happy about the incident.

He was rather relieved when the organisers announced day 5 was cancelled. “I would have been all right but I was very weak, it would have been an interesting day.”

Tom has written a detailed report of his preparations for the Murray and a day-by-day account of the race itself which can be seen at www.lcrk.org.au. Anyone who did not follow his blog during the event should have a look at it at <http://tomsimmat.blogspot.com>. Mention should also be made of the interesting and informative reports Tony Hystek filed during the race which were emailed to club members.

Comments from the other Lane Cove stalwarts in the Murray Marathon:

Tony Hystek: “Day 1 was cold and miserable, 10-12°, and I couldn’t decide what to wear. I eventually went with one thermal but the strong headwind created a serious chop, like in the end of the recent Hawkesbury Classic, and we were consistently wet and therefore cold. I spent the first 2 days getting race fit again. This year I paddled virtually the whole distance on my own. I started from the back of the pack each day and couldn’t keep up with Damien Daley, so I had no-one to race against. Darryl Long was starting half an hour before me. Last year I had James Preto and also Jack Ward and Mick Carroll, so I was always racing someone. By comparison, Tom Simmat and Jack Ward were pushing each other all the time and racing the whole distance. After day 3 I was 10 minutes behind Darryl Long on handicap but got to within 49 seconds of him after day 4. Then day 5 was cancelled. I’m sure I would have had him on day 5 because I was starting to paddle strongly, but I was happy to be 3rd fastest and 4th on handicap.”

John Thearle: “On the first day everybody was cold and I feel the cold more than most. It was like the 2009 Hawkesbury when I suffered from hypothermia. Fortunately I had my space blanket in my PFD and half way through the day we stopped and I wrapped it around myself. I had skins on under a thermal and I think they formed a cold layer. We stopped in the middle of nowhere, I was so cold I was closing down, I had no strength. I sat on the bank shivering while James emptied the boat. I put the thermal under the skins and that was better but I was still cold. I was still pretty sluggish but picked up, although at the end of the day I was still shivering. On the second day I had skins under the thermal expecting it to be warm but was still

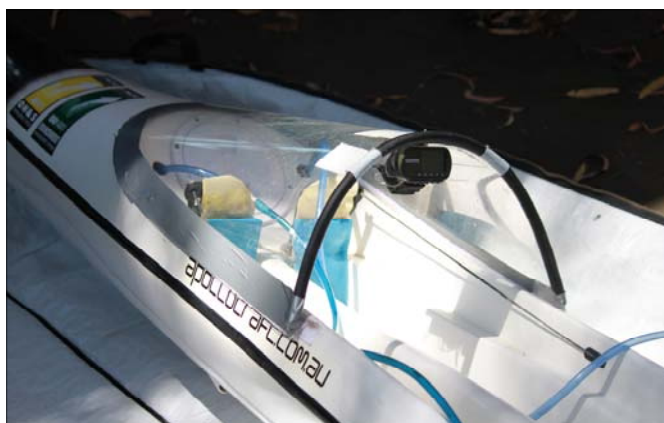


Tom Simmat rounds a fence to finish the first day at Tocumwal. He’s well rugged up with a thermal on a cold day which started about 10-12° and was kept cold by a strong icy headwind.

muddy, but crayfish were trying to get out of the water, there was something wrong. There was so much water in the river that where banks were normally 4m up in the air, this time we were right up on the banks and could see all the farmland.”

On the evening of day 4 he and wife Christine decided to dine out in an expensive restaurant, where he had leek and potato soup followed by grilled fillet of lamb on a bed of garlic potato mash, topped up with fruit salad and ice cream.

Dinner cost \$137, but he lost his as he left the restaurant, just making it to the men’s toilet in time to heave the lot up. He



Tom mounted a motorbike-style cowling over the cockpit of his Apollo XI ski to keep the footwell dry and provide a mount for his GPS. Drinking tubes lead back from two 3-litre bladders placed in the cockpit bulkhead.



ST GEORGE (or ST THOMAS?) vs THE DRAGON. Tom poses with “Rain Dragon” by artist Andrew Whitehead, in the small town of Lockhart, near Tocumwal. It was his response to “Double Dragon”, the entry under which fellow competitor and tough opponent Jack Ward raced in the Murray Marathon.



Tony Hystek and Alanna Ewing



Richard Barnes is all covered up



Andrew Mathers unloads his boat

cold, half way through I took the thermal off and the sun got through to warm me. Day 3 was warm enough and pleasant. James and I went out hard but I blew up after 15km. Day 4 was our best day, it was 36° and I was warm and toasted."

James Mumme: "I was really pleased with the way we went, a race like this brings out either the best or worst of you and we did it well, we had to work our way around a few problems. Day 1 was a disaster. John got hypothermia and we also had logistical problems but we handled them quite well. By day 4 we hit our straps. Tony, Alana and Christine were fantastic with their assistance. Although there was no sign of fire we understand why they had to cancel the last day. It was a really good event. We've renamed it the Tom Simmat Murray Marathon."

Rob Cook: "We wanted to enter in the mixed 50+ LR2 category but they didn't have a mixed category so we had to go in the 50+. Day 1 was cold and we dressed for it with thermal tops, spray decks and PFDs. PFDs are not compulsory and a lot of people didn't wear them and they paid for it. The wind was strong but we were in a stable boat (Vulcan) and it was no problem. By the end we felt fantastic to have raced strongly each day, we weren't overdoing it. Day 3 was a good day, we started with a different group of people, among them those who raced just one day. They included two sisters in their mid 20s who had done the Murray before and were good paddlers, one of them had been training on the Thames in England. They were cheerful and upbeat and dragged us along. James Terpening and Elke van Ewyk were a terrific landcrew. The mossies were pretty thick and limited our enjoyment on land. We camped all except the last night and lying in the tent you could hear them buzzing around on the other side of the mesh. You just had to use lots of repellent and learn to live with it."

Marg Cook: "It was great paddling with Rob, I hadn't done the Murray with him since 1983 although he crewed for me a lot. We first met bushwalking but met up again paddling in 1978, so we have had plenty of opportunity to get our act together. We had a really good event, paddling within ourselves, and were pretty happy to finish 10th overall against some hotshot paddlers. The Murray is an event that favours those who paddle carefully, it doesn't favour the gung ho's who go like heck one day and pay for it the next. We ate every hour, goo or bananas, with one eating while the other paddled, and lost almost no time."

Richard Barnes: "This was my 15th Murray and for the 15th time I had the same landcrew - my parents Eric and Barbara and sister Linden. Every morning they raided the bakery at the local town and came up with some goodies, like beestings, a classic Victorian cake full of custard with flaky pastry. The river flow was fast on some days, slower on day 2 when the water spilled into two lakes and the first checkpoint disappeared under water. I just ambled along and enjoyed everything, stopping on all except the short 3rd day for lunch - turkey and ham and salad sandwiches. I would have liked to do some exploring among the trees, there were lots of short cuts but they won't be there next year because the water will be lower. One of the highlights was the day I caught up with Andrew, and Tony caught up with both us. It didn't last long, Tony did the true racing thing and sped on. The mosquitoes were rampant and could eat through socks and clothes. We paddlers escaped out on the water but the landcrew had to lather themselves in all sorts of concoctions, veritable chemical potions."

Andrew Mathers: "The first day was great and I enjoyed it, it was probably my best day. But half way through I pulled my right shoulder and it gave me grief for the rest of the race. I had to take painkillers for it. On the second day I was looking after my shoulder and on the third and fourth days niggling concern that my shoulder might pack it in slowed me down. I was the only one from Lane Cove flying club colours with my long-sleeved LCRK top. I had a thermal under it every day except the fourth, it was windy and I didn't overheat. Mosquitoes were a problem for the landcrews but not so much on the water. I had mixed feelings when the last day was cancelled, I was happy not to have to do it. Overall I was satisfied with my race but want to go again and do it better."



John Thearle and James Mumme ready to get under way



John Thearle recovering from hypothermia: note the space blanket under the PFD

For lots more pictures, go to the photo gallery at www.lcrk.org.au. For detailed results of the Murray Marathon go to www.murraymarathon.ymca.org.au.

We're paddling backwards to Christmas

The 2010 Christmas paddle and BBQ brought the usual scenes of chaos on the river and convivial festive spirit around the sausage sizzle. New to the itinerary this time were backwards and blindfold races, resulting in expected and widely hoped-for mayhem. There is enough argy-bargy at the best of times during these end-of-year sign-offs, but add to that a flock of kayakers without vision or going in the direction usually reserved for rowers and it becomes bedlam. All good, clean, healthy outdoor fun. Prizes awarded later included best decorated boat Matt Swann and David Bloomfield; best dressed paddlers the sartorially splendid Rob and Marg Cook; best ensemble Tony Carr and Steve Russell (disguised as Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott); best Christmas costume Andrew Mathers; biggest pest Richard Barnes; blindfold race Jeremy Spear and Paul van Koesveld; backwards race Martin Dearnley and Wade Rowston. Tim McNamara received a special award for attending more Wednesday night time trials in 2010 than anyone else in the club (43, plus another the following week, a total of 528km, but who's counting). A feature of the BBQ was the presentation to Richard Barnes of a special cake to mark the auspicious occasion of his 50th birthday – unfortunately there wasn't enough room on it for 111 candles. There are dozens more pictures in the Photo Gallery at www.lcrk.org.au.



The start of the backwards race — competitors are reversing to the right

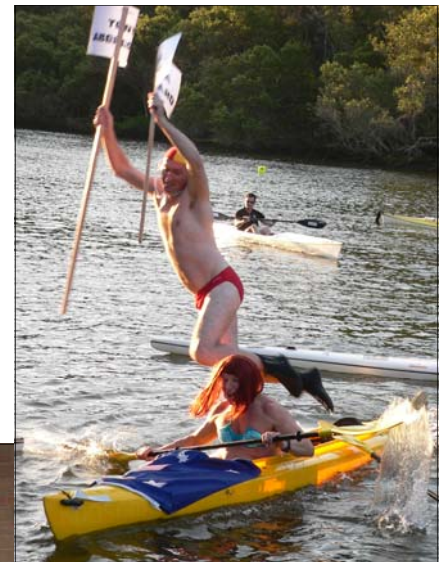




Marg and Rob Cook on their way to a nightclub



Competitors line up for the blindfold race – each had a sighted guide





Richard Barnes huffs and puffs to blow out the candles on his 50th birthday cake, held by Ian Wilson



James Terpening in the beautifully crafted timber kayak he made; it's slightly longer than a bathtub and wider



Is the NSW Marathon Series in need of a major makeover? There has been widespread criticism of the series, with numbers of participants falling. Two regular competitors offer their thoughts about how to improve the series. The debate continues.

Better matching of classes needed

by Derek Simmonds



In my opinion, the NSW Marathon Series is the enduring centrepiece of flat-water marathon racing. Over the years it has evolved a unique mix of qualities including friendliness, enjoyment of our beautiful waterways, and intense competition. Its central quality, however, is fun.

Unfortunately, in recent years numbers have dwindled and dissatisfactions have been expressed. Much has changed from its heyday, and now is a good time to pause, reflect, seek opinions, discuss, fine-tune and carefully trial changes with the aim of reinstating the series to its centrepiece position.

Some personal thoughts as a chronic paddler, rarely a volunteer, include:

1. There has been a large increase in kayak and other sports events competing for those precious weekend days. This challenges us to position, conduct and promote the series strategically. This might involve engaging with the large non-club recreational kayak community through marketing and publicity and encouraging media coverage through reporting on races and results eg sports pages of newspapers.
2. Some of the courses have been less than beautiful or suitable for marathon races eg Cooks River requiring protective clothing and the weed-infested Nepean, more suited to walking on water than paddling.
3. Earlier pre-division series were essentially class-racing, with small fields competing intensely boat-to-boat. Competitors got well acquainted and it was great fun, even if you were the champ of only two. It sometimes seemed as though everybody podiumed. This was especially good for impressing the fans at home. With reduced numbers and more boat classes, pure match-racing might not be practical, but there is an argument for better 'matching'. Separat-



Congratulations to Toby Hogbin on the birth of son Thomas on Jan 27.

ing doubles from singles (by creating say three doubles classes) and introducing age and gender classes, and perhaps a limited number of classes for the more popular boats such as multisports or skis, might revive some of the fun of match-racing. A novices class might encourage new paddlers.

4. Computer glitches have compromised the fun and glory of race-day presentations around the barby immediately following the race. These were a core part of the old tradition, and enhanced the sense of occasion and community feel. Nice glitzy certificates would enhance presentations and add to the sense of achievement. Race-time/result certs for all, proving you were a champ in your own boat, are encouraging, and good boast aids to flash in front of family or friends. I've heard some people even like to display them on the fridge or workstation partition.

5. Since there is so much happening in the summer months, perhaps we should return to winter dates (incorporating spring and autumn). For many the Hawkesbury Classic is the climax of their paddling year. I question the wisdom of having the last series race after it. It is somewhat of an anticlimax after the big one. Why not have the last series race and presentation pre-Classic, especially since many include series races in their Classic training schedule.

6. For me, and many others I have spoken to, the Wagga race is a race too far. While I appreciate the sentiment of supporting regional clubs, this needs to be weighed against the time and cost involved in our time-precious world. Awarding double points to Wagga is a disincentive to commit to the rest of the series for those who are unable to make the trek.

7. Encouraging more healthy choices than the sausage or bacon-and-egg sandwich at the post-race barbies might encourage more to eat and stay for the presentation.

8. The final presentation needs to regain a sense of occasion, perhaps with a celebrity paddler presenting, and a party atmosphere conducive to partners and families. This might best be achieved by holding it separate to the last race in a well-chosen venue.

In my opinion, the series will regain its centrepiece status and thrive only if its spirit of friendship, fun and celebration of paddling on our beautiful rivers is protected and nurtured in numerous ways. This spirit is embodied by the volunteers who make it work and the attitudes of the paddlers. Let's fine-tune a great paddling tradition constructively.

Spread the word to attract new paddlers

by Tony Carr



There is a great opportunity to relaunch the marathon series and bring on board people other than the already converted. It is a brand and like any brand during its lifetime needs renewal.

My view is that major effort needs to be put into communication – to demonstrate to that large audience of paddlers who haven't yet taken part to give it a go. I have tried to persuade many of my *Freedom Outdoors* paddlers to take part and their reaction – and questions – are probably typical of what you'd expect from newbies: What's it actually like to do a race like this? Is it suitable for someone who has done a lot of recreational paddling, but no racing? Where can I see photographs of the events? Will it be fun or just hard work?

What they are really saying is take me through the experience – give me the details and convince me I should do this, and then I'll think about it.

The marathon series has suffered from a common marketing malaise: the curse of assumption. It's been assumed that everyone knows how it works and what it's like to compete. If we put on a terrific event, everyone will come. Right? We'll, we've seen they won't.

What PNSW must do is put together a terrific section on the website with lots of pics, heaps of explanation and details, details, details. Last year I hunted in vain for definitions of the 6 divisions, which is pretty basic stuff. There needs to be an FAQ section, some enthusiastic testimonials from past participants, a description of each course, with maps and pics. Chat about the awards function and a piece on how every paddler who participates over the year will be recognised for their efforts. Pics of the winners receiving their awards, and more. This all needs to be produced on paper and distributed to the clubs too.

Armed with those tools, the task for all of us – not just the PNSW committee, but all paddlers who want to see the series survive and prosper – is to take the story to prospects in a persuasive and involving way: tell them what it's like to compete and why it's such fun. And make the sale!

Flood donation

LCRK gave the whole of its takings for the first monthly BBQ of the year, plus the time trial fees – \$250 – to the Queensland flood appeal.

Racing calendar 2011

Race dates for 2011 include:

Marathon 9 Series

Mar 19 Sat Woronora
Apr 9 Sat Canberra
May 7 Sat Penrith
May 22 Sun Narrabeen
Jun 26 Sun Wyong
Jul 23 Sat Windsor
Aug 20 Sat Port Hacking
Sep 11 Sun Lane Cove
Nov 5 Sat Wagga

NSW Marathon championships Jul 2-3 Sat-Sun SIRC

National marathon championships April 22-23 Victoria.

Harbour Racing Series: Feb 12 Cronulla, March 6 Lake Macquarie, March 19 Northbridge, April 2 Balmoral, April 30 Rose Bay, May 14 Pittwater.

NSW open water championships Feb 19-20 Coffs Harbour.

NSW sprint championships Feb 27 SIRC.

National sprint championships March 16-20 Westlakes, SA.

PNSW sprint series: June 5, July 16, Aug 20, Sept 24, SIRC.

Other dates:

Bridge to beach April 17.

Sydney Morning Herald half marathon May 15.

Yukon River Quest June 29.

Avon Descent Aug 6-7.

City to Surf Aug 14.

Akuna Bay Multisport Aug 20. (Entries open March 1. Note this clashes with Port Hacking marathon.)

Myall Classic Sept 17.

Sydney Running Festival (42k, 21k, 9k, 4k) Sept 18.

Fish River Marathon Oct 7-8.

Hawkesbury Classic Oct 22-23.

Murray Marathon Dec 27-31.

Bike "races": March 6 Tour de Hills Bicycle Classic 100km or 50km Hills District Sydney www.tourdehills.com.au. March 13 Loop the Lake 85km or 40km Lake Macquarie www.loopthelake.com.au. April 10 Blayney to Bathurst Cyclo Sportif 110km or 70km www.b2b.asn.au. May 1 Century Challenge 100km or 40km Central Coast www.centurychallenge.com.au. If you want to be part of an LCRK team contact Derek Simmonds at dwsimmonds@gmail.com or 9869-7510.

Timekeepers roster

Feb 16 Tony Carr, JP McLoone
Feb 23 Wade Rowston, Trevor Distin
Mar 2 Craig Ellis, Scott Gilbert
Mar 9 Alan Whiteman, Rod Stubleby (BBQ)
Mar 16 Richard Barnes, Richard Andrews
Mar 23 Tom Holloway, Nigel Colless
Mar 30 Tim Dodd, Tim McNamara
Apr 6 Matt Acheson, Dean Wayne

Wednesday nights at the pontoon

with Tim Dodd



This year's most popular New Year's resolution must have been "I will do more paddling on Wednesday nights". What else could explain the massive turnout of 40 boats on January 5 for the first time trial of 2011, right in the midst of the holiday season? Or maybe it was because January 5 was also the first round of our handicap competitions, the Crudslime and Coffee Cups, and nobody wanted to squander the opportunity to make an early start in earning points.

Bert Lloyd was seen back in a single for the first time in about a year and put in some creditable times in his Marauder, Jason Cooper was back as number 46 after relinquishing his No 1 number board and title of Crudslime Cup champion to Tony Carr, and Len Hedges brought out his outrigger for its first 2011 appearance, something which he promises we will see regularly.

Also great to see a number of paddlers boosting the ranks of those who do the 6km - Jeffrey Tonazzi, Elke van Ewyk, Marie Carr, Justin Paine and Andrew Mathers among them. This year the Coffee Cup has been established as a Crudslime Cup equivalent for the 6km

contingent and we hope it will be keenly contested.

This big mystery is what Michael Mueller was doing over Christmas. He came back in the New Year with times consistently well under 60 minutes for 12km and 2 minutes or so better than his typical times last year. Let us in on the secret Michael!

Nearly as fast off the blocks in the New Year was Nigel Colless. By mid-January he was down to 64.05 in his K1 - well past the wobbly stage.

Two of our newer members, Janet Oldham and John Duffy, started on the 12km course in January. Each has already shaved minutes of their initial times. John's best is 80.08 in his Mirage, and Janet is down to 76.20 in her TK1.

Welcome to a number of new members who have joined LCRK recently: Frederike Welter, James Bullen, Jacqui Perkins, Dominic Fegent, Phillip Geddes and Richard and Joy Robinson. And welcome back to Bruce Goodall, our latest new member and old-time Lane Cove stalwart.

The Doctor (Rottnest-Sorrento Jan 22)

LCRK competitors	Time	Plc	Cat	Cat plc
Glen Orchard	2.13.43	119	Open	66
John-Paul McLoone	2.24.13	159	Open	80
Tim Hookins	2.38.00	188	50+	20
Tom Simmat	2.55.00	203	Ski under	9
			20ft	
Neil Carlyle	3.13.00	222	50+	23



Tony Carr recently organised this SOS display on Lake Narrabeen as part of a campaign to save the lake's shores from developers. Several LCRK members took part.

Pontoon improvements

A working bee led by Jeremy Spear celebrated Australia Day by laying carpeting on the step of the pontoon to improve access for paddlers. The bees included President Matt Swann, Roger Deane, James Mumme, Tim McNamara, Kenji Ogawa, Justin Paine, James Terpening and Ian Wilson.

Sick bay report

Don Rowston is recovering well from a broken ankle suffered while playing tennis before Christmas. However, he's not likely to be back on the water for another month or so.

Derek Simmonds severely ruptured a quadriceps muscle while on a bike training ride early in January. He had been preparing for several one-day hilly races during what is an annual trip to New Zealand. He and wife Sue have gone to the Land of the Long White Cloud but there won't be any bike racing.

20 Beaches

Palm Beach-Freshwater, Dec 18

LCRK competitor	Time	Plc	Cat	Cat plc
Matt Blundell	1.46.44	48	MO	34
Toby Hogbin	1.48.11	57	MO	36
Tim Hookins	2.09.25	179	M50+	19
Tom Simmat	2.13.19	189	M50+	24

LCRK Committee

PO Box 163 Lane Cove 1595

ian@idplanning.com.au

0417-009-802 www.lcrk.org.au

President: Matt Swann

Vice-President: Tim Dodd

Secretary: Ian Wilson

Treasurer: Simon Mann

Membership and Website: Andrew Mathers

Kayak Kapers Editor: Justin Paine 9858-3323

Committee members: Marie Carr, Tom Holloway, Liz Winn