



February 2013

What a double – the Hawkesbury and the Murray!

Rae Duffy took out a magnificent all-the-way handicap victory in the Murray Marathon, giving her the incredible achievement of winning the prestigious handicap title in Australia's two premier endurance kayak races, the Hawkesbury and the Murray, in the space of two months. She was given the leader's yellow vest at the end of day 1, when she led by 3 minutes, and was never headed in the remaining 4 days.

At the end of the 404km race she had a margin of almost half an hour over her nearest competitor. "I'm stunned at getting the double," she said. "It's a phenomenal sense of achievement. In both cases I just went out to paddle and see what I could do for me. I didn't enter with the handicap in mind – handicaps are such an elusive thing, with so many different formulas."

The twin wins would have sent people running for the record books, except that records for the two races are hard to access.

Tom Simmat said: "I think Paul Bourne (from Windsor) has won both but I think Rae is the first to do it in the same year. Paul won the Murray on handicap in 1998, and it was about that time he won the Hawkesbury." (Tom has won the Murray on handicap 4 times and has a handicap second in the Hawkesbury. *Kayak Kapers* tried to contact Bourne to check but he did not return our call.)

Rae's win continued Lane Cove's run of dominant performances in the Murray. Tom won on handicap in 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2010. Tony Hystek won in 2009. In 2011 Jason Cooper and Bob Turner had the fastest overall time and were third on handicap.

Coming on the back of our overwhelming performance in the Hawkesbury Classic, Rae's triumph and the performances of our other paddlers down south capped a remarkable year for Lane Cove. It was a year when our veterans flexed their muscles and a band of vibrant newcomers brought renewed vigour to the club.

We had 45 boats in the Hawkesbury and 11 made the trip down to the Murray, probably a club record in both cases. Tony Hystek was second fastest overall (behind a double) and the fastest single in the Murray. Urs Mader came down from Queensland and teamed up with an American mate to be fourth fastest, and Tom Simmat was seventh fastest.

All our representatives did us proud, particularly first-timers who had to miss a day or a section through exhaustion but

came back on the river next day to battle on.

The quote of the year came in the evening of the first day, when Rae and Tom bumped into each other at the motel where they were staying. Tom knew Rae was leading on handicap and said: "Looks like you've got the double." Rae, who hadn't seen any results, replied: "What do you mean? I'm paddling a single."

How many know that she had an ankle replacement 8 years ago and took up paddling only 4½ years ago because her surgeon ruled out any sport or activity involving running, jumping, hiking etc?

"Someone mentioned kayaking and I thought I could do that," she said. Hhmmm.

She joined NSW Sea Kayakers and has done lots of offshore expeditions and kayaking holidays with them. In 2010 she had to be rescued off the rocks of the Royal National Park by helicopter when crashed by a big wave.

Joining LCRK added a new dimension to her paddling. "I've been inspired and encouraged by so many members. When I first joined it was hard to believe that I was out there paddling with Liz Winn, Tom Simmat, Matt Blundell, Tony Hystek, Julie Stanton and heaps of others whose names I'd seen in articles and in the records book for the Classic."

She had some doubts about doing the Hawkesbury in the Flash she uses at LCRK and said: "I had never paddled more than 20km in a Flash a month before the Classic, but four 40km training paddles gave me confidence. After the Hawkesbury I thought if I was fit enough to do that I might be fit enough to do the Murray, although I didn't know how I would pull up day after day as it was my first Murray. It was a good year to have a crack at it."

Her stamina and ability to maintain a relentless pace are impressive (in the Murray she stopped once for 5 minutes on day 1 and had no stops at all on the remaining days) but she says: "I have one speed, I can't paddle any faster."



Like everyone else she enjoyed the crowd support along the banks all the way through the race. "The river was closed to jet skis, power boats, the lot. You'd think they would throw stones, but they were swimming and cheering. Kids even offered to squirt us with water pistols to cool us down."

River levels were extremely low and although Richard Barnes estimated the average flow at 2km/h, Tony Hystek reckoned the slower flow added 1½ hours to total times. Even worse, the low levels turned sunken logs and trees into snags sometimes lurking just below the surface, sometimes almost blocking the river. Many competitors reported damage from



Time to relax. Christine Simmat, Rae Duffy, Tony Hystek. Seated behind them: Tom Simmat, Bruce Dailey.

hidden obstacles. Efforts to clear the river after the 2010 flood apparently were stopped because they were removing wildlife habitat.

Richard's familiar blue and gold singlet was hidden by *blue pyjamas* as he sought protection from the sun. He teamed up in *Kermit* with younger sister Linden, who hadn't been in a boat for a year. That might faze mere mortals like the rest of us, but not a Barnes! As soon as the race ended, Richard and fellow competitor Peter Edney headed further south to paddle from Tasmania to Victoria with LCRK clubmates John Duffy and Andrew Pratley (see page 8).

The Murray marked the end of our most successful women's double combination since the partnership of Marg Cook and Merridy Huxley, with Janet Oldham and Friederike Welter calling it quits. They said they had always planned this to be their last race together, but they remain best of mates. Their team name for the race was Garfield, originating from the fact that they paddled a Vadja Civet Cat K2 and Fred had a psychedelic orange and white striped cover for it

After the race Janet left for Ethiopia for some high altitude

trekking in the Simien Mountains.

For Craig Ellis, this year was about looking after unfinished business. Last year he paddled the first 4 days in a Sonic, then came back to Sydney to prepare his yacht *Future Shock* for the annual Pittwater-Coffs Harbour race (which he won). This year kayaking took the number one spot and he and younger sister Carmen put in a fantastic performance to come 13th overall.

Cathy Miller and Trevor Waters treated the race as the first stage of their plan to paddle the full length of the Murray. On day 2 they decided to sleep in and did only half the distance. As soon as day 5 was over they were off to the Upper Murray.

"It was just the two of us with the Mirage 730, from Bringenbrong Bridge just below Khancoban to Lake Hume Weir. It is 175km, with grade 1 rapids. We'd originally planned 5 days to do it but as Trevor had to go back to work we squeezed 175km into 4 days with car shuffles etc built in, and carried our tent/food etc the last 2 days into Lake Hume," Cathy said.

"It was fabulous as we started with a 1.1-m river height at Bringenbrong Bridge and had some portages on the first day. On day 2 they started releasing water from Khancoban Dam and it rose to 1.9m, so we had great flows all the way to 90km short of the Weir. All was good till the 40° temps hit us when the water flow stopped at Lake Hume Weir. The end result is that with the Murray Marathon and the Upper Murray section, in 9 days of paddling we knocked off 500km of our planned 2500km Murray-by-stages-trip. When we came home, all Trevor wanted was a beach holiday so he could relax!"

Urs Mader travelled from Queensland with wife Arni to do a cameo paddle in the Hawkesbury, and came down for another in the Murray, this time with American friend Bruce Dailey, and Arni as landcrew. Urs and Bruce are planning to do the 715km 2013 Yukon River Quest in Canada in June. Ron Elliott lent them a Tomaree double which they took out into the harbour into a stiff 25 knot nor'easter for a pre-race trial run.

"Bruce is into all sorts of adventure sports and just having summited Mt Everest in 2012 likes a bit of a challenge to say the least. Anyhow we made it safely back to Rose Bay, but he topped it by entering us into a surfski race on Saturday just to have a bit more fun," said Urs.

"After this race that I knew the Tomaree was an exceptionally fast sea kayak and that we could push it down the Murray at a respectable pace. So much so that we have now ordered a new Yukon-compliant Tomaree from Ron Elliott. We will transport it to Canada and after the race we will leave it in White Horse so that any keen paddlers can book and race this kayak down the Yukon again."

Tom Simmat said a formal announcement was made at the Murray by Canoeing Australia that there will be an Australian ultra marathon champion over three races in the one year – the fastest outright in the Hawkesbury, Murray 200 and Murray 400. "Had it been held last year Tony Hystek would have won it," he said.

LCRK competitors gave these accounts of their race:

Rae Duffy (landcrew Ann and Kevin Byrne): "This was my first Murray and I remembered what Tony Hystek said – *don't burn yourself out on day 1 and don't be silly*. Day 1 I was on my own a lot and was exhausted at the end, but had the handicap lead by 3 minutes. They gave me the leader's yellow shirt which was exciting. I wondered if it would make me a target, it certainly gave people something to talk about. Tom Simmat was in the same 7.30am start each day and I tried to keep him in sight for about 20 minutes if the straights were long

[Thanks to Alanna Ewin who took most of the pictures for this article.](#)

Lane Cove at the Murray Marathon 2012										
Competitor	Category	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Total	Plc	Hcp	Hcp
		92k	96k	76k	63k	75k	404k		time	plc
Tony Hystek	UNR1 50+	7.11.18	7.36.10	5.57.00	4.47.31	5.46.25	31.18.27	2	32.24.11	7
Urs Mader/ Bruce Dailey	RKL2 40+	7.12.33	7.28.31	6.02.56	5.01.47	5.53.37	31.39.26	4	32.51.37	11
Tom Simmat	RKL1 60+	7.26.34	7.55.27	6.29.58	5.18.06	6.21.15	33.31.22	7	31.38.44	5
Craig Ellis/ Carmen Ellis	UNR2 X	8.02.07	8.31.23	6.38.32	5.45.21	6.54.49	35.52.14	13	38.29.21	28
Rae Duffy	RKM1 W50+	8.27.49	8.45.51	7.06.16	5.57.31	6.57.29	37.14.59	16	30.01.24	1
Janet Oldham/ Friederike Welter	K2	8.47.56	9.33.03	7.38.48	6.22.10	7.09.55	39.31.53	27	37.04.50	24
Peter Edney/ Jen Broadbent	TK2 X	9.03.58	9.45.58	7.57.04	6.38.48	7.21.53	40.47.42	30	41.24.25	35
Richard Barnes/ Linden Barnes	RKL2 X	10.00.25	10.01.49	8.28.13	6.56.22	8.09.43	43.36.44	39	43.23.29	41
Cathy Miller/ Trevor Waters	RKL2 X	10.02.26	4.57.04	7.50.55	6.45.20	7.09.20	36.39.07			
Neil Duffy	RKL1 50+	9.33.23	-	7.29.34	6.33.51	7.36.22				
Meg Thornton	OS1 W50+	10.30.31	-	9.37.58	7.21.16	-				

enough. Quite often I was second or in a pack behind him. I thought the wind was bad on day 1 but day 2 made it look like a picnic, it was strong enough to sink TK1s within a kilometre. I teamed up with Shane from Sydney and we took turns at washriding each other. I had a 5-minute stop on the first day but paddled without stops on the other days, I was carrying enough water and found no need to stop. There was a great atmosphere, all the people on the river bank clapped and cheered even though the river was closed to them. In 5 days I did not hear a single negative comment which was awesome."

Tony Hystek (landcrew Alanna Ewin): "I went into the race massively dehydrated. I started with electrolyte and drank 8 litres on the first day. That night I topped up and on day 2 I had to stop three times for a pee – I don't do it in the boat, I stop at a convenient log and



take aim. I also had stops for food and to fix my rudder, 5 stops in the one day! Day 2 was a recovery day, I was just trying to get back to normal. Day 4 was my best day, really good conditions for me. I just went flat out and not only made up the 9 minutes I was behind Wayne Parker but was ahead of him by 15 minutes at the end of the day. On days 2, 3 and 4 I hit trees under the water and holed the boat. They hit the rudder and caused cracks just behind the rudder but I didn't take on much water. I glued them up with Araldite at night."

Urs Mader/Bruce Dailey (landcrew Arni Mader): "This was my 3rd and Bruce's 2nd Murray. Day 1 we flew out of the starting blocks and never stopped till the finish. In our start we had 2 Sladecraft SLRs and to our surprise we overtook one of them. The other SLR we could never catch as the Two Short Men, as they were called, paddled superbly and never faltered (and were the fastest boat every day). The weather was great with much cooler temperatures than I had experienced on my previous Murrays. The organisation of the race and the access to river has improved also, making it the best Murray Marathon for me by far. Bruce and I used Hammer Perpetum mixed with water and I trialled Perpetum Solid tablets. I was very happy with them I will be using them in the Yukon race as well. While they do not have many calories they work very well in preventing cramping. Day 5 was the best day for us and we finished in great spirits – Bruce and I are still on speaking terms."



Tom Simmat (landcrew wife Christine): "I paddled my Infennity which is a converted ski, a hybrid, it was classified as a long rec. The water level was low, with a lot of fallen trees exposed and debris everywhere, and there was less flow than usual. Day 1 was straight forward, days 2 and 3 the wind blew in our faces and was unbelievable, it was 'doubles weather' – doubles have much more power and handle these conditions better. Day 4 was the worst day for snags, trees had fallen from both sides and went right across the river. Day 5 was very slow, shallow and lots and lots of snags. Each day I was in the 3rd start, which became the 2nd start, and within two hours I was on my own out the front. The doubles would come through and go past, so I found it very lonely. I was trying to beat Urs Mader's long rec

So I said to Mad Mick:

"The joke's on us"

by Tom Simmat



Day five did not start well. There was a queue at the launching ramp and we were directed on to a small beach just to the right. Before I comprehended the implications of the deep dog prints in the sand, I was up to my waist in mud.

Four hours into the day I was at least satisfied that I had recovered my Crocs from a metre down, lest they become embedded only to be recovered in a fossilized form by some geoethic scientist in the next geo whatsit age.

But the exercise had torn off the bandage on top of my foot, the bandage that protected a scab where a leach had latched on just before Christmas. It rubbed on my toe strap and was now streaming blood into the footwell.

The sun and the wind on the first four days had burnt through my bottom lip. Cracked, and that too was now bleeding. I could taste the blood mingled with my watered-down apple juice I was sucking from the bladders in the cool bow of the boat.

This year had been a lonely race. After my 7.30am start I soon caught most of the seven o'clock starters, that is except for Mad Mick. At least that was the name written on the side of his canoe, and a very good canoeist he was.

He paddled hard, in the remnants of bright yellow pyjamas.

A few years back Mad Mick laid down a very firm but unwritten rule. No one was allowed to pass him unless they told him a joke. Day one I sung him the tale about people turning up to the Salvation Army drunk, from eating their own rum balls.

Day two I managed to sneak past him while he was in showing off at checkpoint Beta. Day three I was in all sorts of trouble for sneaking past him on day two, and telling a joke on day one that was really a song. I pointed out it was sort of a comic opera, but he found that unacceptable.

Day four, I found out that two years ago, I had told him the one about the Irish helicopter looking for a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow and also the one about the three dinosaurs, Foot-Foot and Foot-Foot-Foot, so I was reduced to telling him the one about the chicken who cut off her wings and sold them to KFC. I was now out of jokes and I knew Mad Mick must be just ahead around the next bend.

I just could not think of another joke, any joke. I was trying to focus on my boat speed keeping it above 12.5ks, looking for the fast water as I approached the next bend, cutting it fine and following the faster current across to the opposite bank.

And again the hum of a diesel engine and the whine of a pump as I approached yet another pumping station emptying the Murray. This year was the lowest I had seen it and a real contrast to two years ago when it was in flood. This year many more exposed fallen trees, more exposed wide muddy banks, more cows stuck in the mud, more dead fish, and eroded roots around the base of the river gums and a lot less river flow.

My speed increased to 12.7 as I approached four large pipes going up the bank and I felt them draw me across toward them. I passed, the speed dropped to below 11.5km and there is Mad Mick rounding the corner 100 metres ahead. I wonder if he has heard the joke about the country that pumps its most valuable resource, water, out of a river into a maze of open channels to fill rice paddies, evaporating in 40 degree heat.

After the finish a New Years beer will solve all the world problems. My cracked and bleeding lips turned out to be a painful challenge, but no way was I going to sit at the bar of the Orient Hotel in Swan Hill on New Years Eve drinking beer through a straw.

record for vet 50 and 60. Day 1 was just ahead, days 2 and 3 which were windy I was behind, day 4 I was ahead and day 5 I was just behind again. For the whole race I was 13 or 14 minutes behind. The checkpoints were better organised and overall arrangements were better for landcrews. We had camping for two nights each at three different points which was also an improvement.”



Craig and Carmen Ellis (landcrew: Sally, Tig, Decklan and Matilda Ellis, Jason Cooper): “Carmen and I trained hard in the month leading up to the Murray, putting in at least 10km of training between us. We weren’t in the best shape for paddling at the start of the race, but we intended to paddle ourselves fit! We started right at the back at 8.45am (back of the pack) in our Carbonology double surf ski with only the school relays behind us, so we had a lot of catching up to do. Day 1 was a long haul, and took us a little while to get used to the boat. Day 2, we were hurting a bit, and struggled with the longest distance day – 96 km. Day 3 was our best day, the course is fast through the narrow section and we were on a mission to beat the insane team of Adele and Stewart from Melbourne into Echuca! Day 4 was tough, and Craig had sores along his back from rubbing pants.



And both of the brother sister duo required bottom rubs at checkpoints! On day 5 our landcrews gave their two cents worth: ‘Carmen, maybe Caesar salad is not the food of champions in a marathon race? Craig, maybe next time, to avoid the sores on your back, one pair of shorts might be better than 3 to pad out your bum!’ Anyhow, we came 3rd in our division.”

Janet Oldham/Friederike Welter (landcrew days 1 & 2 Ferg & Trish, friends of Alanna Ewin’s, days 3-5 Mark Knox & Mark Shircore who travelled from Perth to crew): “The Vic Super Murray marathon in our trusty Vадja Civet Cat (Marathon) K2 proved to be the anticipated pinnacle of our 2012 marathon trifecta as well as a fitting end to our marathon doubling ‘career’. We had always intended to give up doubling after this race and it was good to go out on a high. The course took us through some stunningly beautiful scenery, especially



between Tocumwal and Barmah, with an osprey topping it off by diving into the river right next to us – we clearly weren’t moving fast enough to worry him! The race itself was gusty with day 2 proving a real test for body and mind, combining the longest day with strong winds which seemed to mainly hit us head on.” Freddie: “Did I love it? Not sure, I definitely love knowing I never have to do it again (but can if I want to) and I loved being warm (mostly) and having daylight. Will I do it again? Maybe. So as an era comes to an end, a big thank you to my doubling partner, it’s been a complete blast and I am glad to say we are still talking to each other, and will make the occasional appearance in the marathon 10s.”

Richard Barnes/Linden Barnes (landcrew Eric Barnes, John Barnes): “Linden hadn’t paddled for a year, so she had no training, but we had a wonderful time, stopped at all the major checkpoints and had a party at each. Our landcrew went to the bakery and had delicious things for us to eat. The wind wasn’t that bad and we didn’t hit any logs although we cut every corner, you just have to look at the ripples. I was hot and Linden was freezing, her fingers would freeze and go white. On the second day we dug an old raincoat out the car and she wore that for the rest of the race, even on the hottest days. I



Look at Linden, Richard and John Barnes and you’ll see why Eric Barnes is laughing. Let’s hope Linden doesn’t go into any banks in this outfit.

wore my usual singlet and over it I had some blue pyjamas to stop sunburn. Every day Linden revved up over the last stretch, urging us to go faster. Our GPS had us consistently doing 6-minute kilometres, and she got excited and decided we had to 5½-minute kilometres.”

Cathy Miller/Trevor Waters (landcrew Gordy Kirkby, who was intending to paddle but dislocated his shoulder on Christmas Day, hence he became the one-armed landcrew for 3 doubles!): “Our goals were to enjoy the event; improve on our forward stroke after recent coaching by Tony Hystek; and kickstart our goal of doing the 2500km length of the Murray in stages. We also had to pace ourselves so we could turn around straight afterwards for the 175km Upper Murray section. We got off to a late start the first day, because we learned the hard way that you can’t drive with your race number attached to your kayak. We did a reverse car shuffle late into the evening, so when the alarm went off the next morning at 4:45am Trevor’s words were ‘You’ve got to be joking’. So we set our alarm clock for a few more hours precious sleep and did the half-marathon. Day 3 we loved talking to other paddlers all the way down the river, and we finally hit our groove on day 5. Luckily there’s room in LCRK for paddlers who aren’t always serious racers, and could be seen stopping for sandwiches and tea at each checkpoint!”



Neil Duffy (landcrew Ann and Kevin Byrne): “I found the scrutineering minimal, not at all like the Hawkesbury. Day 1 I was okay for the first 45km, then my lower back became really sore and I couldn’t rotate. I chose not to paddle next day, the wind was very strong and I would not have finished. It was a

smart move as I was able to do the remaining days, otherwise I would have become a member of the land-crew. On day 3 the river was very scenic and my highlight was drag-racing a paddle wheel steamer to the finish at Echuca and beating it. Day 4 was a slog with less flow in the river because it was coming in to a weir. On the last day all went well and I averaged just under 10km/h, with a maximum of 15km/h when I got into an eddy or something. I was a bit wobbly walking up the riverbank at the end and had to have two goes at it, but it was really good to finish."



Meg Thornton (landcrew son Tom): "My objective was different to others from LCRK - I wanted to spend as much time as possible on the river because I like travelling downriver. Day 1 was great apart from a little trouble with a hidden log which took a slice out of my rudder. I patched it with gaffer tape. Day 2 there was a full-on head wind and I had stability trouble on my Epic V10 sport ski, it got a bit hairy. Eventually the group I was in, including the legendary Bill Robinson, missed the cut-off and had to leave the river. On day 3 there were a lot of fallen logs and I did my rudder in big time, I couldn't use it and put a spare on at the next checkpoint. It was dramatic coming in to Echuca with all the paddle-wheelers, a touch of Huckleberry Finn. I loved day 4, really hit my straps, everything was good in the world. Day 5 was a ripper, I was going like the clappers and had the time of my life. I wanted to make it last so waited a while at one checkpoint. And all the time Tony's voice was in my ear saying *Drive, core, rotation!*"



Peter Edney/Jen Broadbent (landcrew Jen's parents Adrian and Gail): Peter: "Jen and I paddled a TK2 in the mixed full distance. Our team name was Never Trust A Redhead - presumably a reference to myself, although the race announcers assumed it was a reference to our prime minister... Jen had decided that after landcrewing a number of races for me she was keen to be part of the action on the water. 8 weeks later we eventually made the finish of the Murray in high spirits! We had troubles making the cut-off times on day 2 with our allotted 8:15 start. But after some hard work we made it through the last checkpoint, overtaking many boats that were cut off by the

checkpoint on the way. The highlight was definitely the Barmah forest! Incredible scenery and great flow! Although we did have a narrow miss with a large log." Jen: "Dad competed in the Murray when he was at uni (1970-2), and was really proud that kayaking seems to run in the family, and that we finished the whole race. It was definitely the hardest thing I have ever done in my life, and a first-hand lesson in 'you can do anything if you are determined enough'. The hardest parts were psychological: each day paddling the first 5-10km - because it's so far to go - and then the last 5km - because we've gone so far why aren't we there yet? The best bit was having Peter in the boat to talk to and encourage each other, there is no way I would do this race by myself. His experience in marathon racing was helpful because he had a better idea how his body might respond."



Timekeepers

- Feb 13 Andrew Benoit, Tim Knox
- Feb 20 Tim Dodd, Anjie Lees
- Feb 27 Meg Thornton, John Thearle
- Mar 6 Cathy Miller, Trevor Waters
- Mar 13 Tony Carr, Paul Gibson
- Mar 20 Derek Simmonds, Danielle Seisun
- May 27 Matt Shields, Tim Binns
- Apr 3 Craig Ryan, Rae Duffy
- Apr 10 Richard Lindsay, Michael Mueller

Please confirm your availability a week before with Andrew Mathers at roster@lcrk.org.au.

PNSW Ocean Series

Newcastle long course, Jan 12: Matt Shields 2.22.53 24, Tom Simmat 2.26.32 28.

Ocean racing

The Doctor, Rottnest-Fremantle, Jan 19: Glen Orchard 2.06.32 94 categ 45, Tom Simmat 2.26.39 192 categ 4 (285 entries).

PADDLER'S DIARY

Marathon 10 series

- Sat Mar 16 Canberra
- Sat Apr 20 Wagga Wagga
- Sun May 5 Wyong
- Sun May 26 Narrabeen
- Sat Jun 8 Woronora
- Sat Jun 29 Penrith
- Sat Jul 20 Burrill Lake
- Sat Aug 3 Windsor
- Sat Aug 24 Swallow Rock
- Sun Sep 8 Lane Cove
- Sat Sep 21 Final round of M10 and State Marathon Championships, SIRC Sydney

Fri-Sun Mar 29-31 (Easter) ANPHA 2013 Australian Canoe Marathon Championships, Perth

Wed-Sun Apr 3-7 Australian Canoe Sprint Championships, Champion Lakes, WA

Open water series

- Sat Mar 23 Cronulla Bay Runner
- Sat Apr 20 Manly final (may change to Apr 6)

Harbour series

- Sat Feb 9 Botany Challenge
- Sun Mar 3 Lake Macquarie Paddlefest
- Sat Apr 13 Rose Bay Challenge
- Sat Apr 27 Middle Harbour Challenge
- Sat May 11 Pittwater Challenge

Iceberg series

- Sat Jun 22 South West Arm, Swallow Rock
- Sat Jul 13 Stroke the Lion
- Sun Aug 11 Lake Macquarie
- Sat Aug 31 Middle Harbour GP Circuit

Sun Feb 24 Bridge to Beach
Sat-Mon Jun 8-10 Riverland Paddling Marathon, SA

- Sat-Sun Aug 3-4 Avon Descent
- Sun Aug 11 City2Surf
- Sat Aug 17 Akuna Bay Multisport
- Sat-Sun Oct 26-27 Hawkesbury Classic
- Fri-Tue Dec 27-31 Murray Marathon

LCRK at NSW Sprint Championships

Volunteers from LCRK turned out in force to help at the NSW Sprint Championships on Jan 12-13. They were led as usual by Nigel Colless and included Jeanine Colless, Steve Paget, Tony Hystek, Alanna Ewin, Bert Lloyd, James Mumme, John Thearle, Roger Deane, Paul Van Koesveld, Wade Rowston, Joy Robinson, Richard Robinson and Tim Hookins.

Craig Ellis did his best to entertain them and spectators in general by falling in twice in the same race. The rescue boat crews thanked him for relieving their boredom, and he was also praised for his scientific contribution in stopping to take water samples.

Some off Australia's best paddlers took part, including the 2012 Olympic gold medal K4 crew who proved their London win was no fluke by winning again.

Results for LCRK paddlers in age group events included: K1 35+ 200m final: Jason Cooper 50.7 3. Womens K1 35/45/55+ 200m final: Ann Lloyd Green 1.05.1 4. C1 -18/O 200m final: Tim Binns 58.7 5. K1 35+ 1000m final: Jason Cooper 4.48.9 2, Craig Ellis 5.04.4 3. K2 1000m 35/45/55/65+ final: Craig Ellis/Jason Cooper 4.35.4 3, Ann Lloyd-Green/Dave James 5.45.1 6. C1 -18/O 1000m final: Tim Binns 5.54.6 5. Womens 35/45/55+ 500m final: Ann Lloyd-Green 2.52.6 5.

CHRISTMAS BBQ



Tom Holloway receives the Crudlime Cup and the coveted No. 1 time trial number from President Wade Rowston. He won the monthly competition with 401 points. Others in the top 10 were Jason Cooper 382 2, Jeff Tonazzi 372 3, Wade Rowston 371 4, Craig Ellis 358 5, Martin Dearnley 357 6, Toby Hogbin 355 7, Tony Hystek 353 8, Tom Simmat 351 9, Phil Geddes 348 10.



Despite missing a large part of the year with injury, Tracey Hansford still had enough points in hand to comfortably win the Coffee Cup for the 6km time trial competition. She had 341 points, followed by Paul Gibson 283 2, George von Martini 244 3, Justin Paine 242 4, Jana Osvald 139 5.



A new club award was Rookie of the Year and it went to Anjie Lees who has made amazing progress and developed into a strong competitor since joining LCRK.



The award for the Most Improved Paddler in 2012 was a three-way tie between Carmen Ellis (left), Janet Oldham and Friederike Welter (inset).



An act of desperation or a leap of faith?



The cast of "The Sound of Music" made a watery but musical entrance to the BBQ. Featured were Tony Carr as Mother Abbess, Kyle Wilson as Maria and Andrew Pratley as Captain von Trapp. They were propelled by lesser members of the entourage Peter Edney and Neil Raffan.



Bass Strait: 'This is what living is all about'



"You sea kayakers all seem such intelligent people, but you do such stupid things!". So said Mal McQueen, a Flinders Island farmer to us. Yes, to many people a kayak crossing of Bass Strait seems a high risk and dangerous adventure but in reality, with good planning, access to up-to-date weather forecasts and a level head, much of that risk can be managed.

Our team of 4 from Lane Cove – Richard Barnes, Andrew Pratley, Peter Edney and myself (Richard, Andrew and Peter are also active members of Sydney University Canoe Club) – completed a south-to-north crossing on January 17 after leaving Tasmania's Little Musselroe Bay on January 3 amid the locals shaking their heads. Richard and Peter were backing up from the gruelling 404km Murray Marathon only 3 days prior to our start, and that was a feat in itself.

Remarkably this was Richard's fourth crossing. Richard and I paddled Mirage 580 singles, with Andrew and Peter in a Mirage 730 double. The singles were loaded with an extra 40-60kg of gear, food and water. The double was carrying considerably more.

We took the island-hopping eastern route which included overnight stops at Swan island, the east coast of Cape Barren, Flinders, Roydon (just off the northwest of Flinders), and Deal and Hogan Islands. While this route removes much risk and by deduction, perhaps removes some of the challenges, this is well and truly offset by getting to experience so much of what the islands have to offer.



Landing on the Victorian mainland ... Richard, Peter and John

by John Duffy



It was what we experienced on all those islands which made the trip so memorable. The pristine beaches without a single footprint and beautiful deserted islands with huge mountains had to be seen up close to be fully appreciated. Climbing to the 800m summit of Mt Strzelecki on Flinders Island wasn't easy but well worth the effort for the spectacular scenery.

Penguins continually kept us awake most nights. Passing them as they came ashore in the morning as we carried the kayaks down to the water in the dark early one day was a treat.

As far as wildlife is concerned however, nothing surpasses the seal colony on Wright Rock (in the 70km gap between Flinders and Deal islands) for an experience. The thousands of seals were very curious and I'm not sure who had more fun – the curious seals as they checked us out or our thrills from them frolicking a few feet from us.

The Deal Island lighthouse and cottages oozed history and the caretakers were extremely welcoming. What an amazing place. We proudly wrote our names in the famous Hogan Island shack log book, a tradition which goes back to the first kayakers more than 20 years ago.

The joys of two weeks of fireside camping at these idyllic locations with most of the crew trying to outdo each other with their dessert creations also added to the trip. Richard was a clear winner, having prepared a sponge cake and a cheese cake in the fire on separate nights with minimal ingredients and utensils.

After trips such as this people want to know two things. Non-kayakers always want to know whether we saw any sharks. The answer is no (and incidentally I have never seen one in all



Approaching Trousers Point, Flinders Island

my years paddling offshore, although that doesn't mean they have never seen me). And kayakers with any experience always ask whether anyone fell out. The answer is yes.

After our 15-hour crossing to Deal Island, the weather forecast suggested we would be stuck there for a couple of days. That was OK but the next day we took a punt to sneak around to the other side of the island which would be closer to the caretaker's cottage and hence water, rather than walking the 4km there.

From our sheltered cove we could see the weather deteriorating but were prepared to poke our noses out and take a look. This looked positive along the southern side so we continued but rounding a point one hour later, totally out of the blue we were faced with 3m swells and 30 knot winds. The sea was very angry, my friends. After 5 minutes of paddling into that, having paddles ripped from our hands by the wind and getting absolutely nowhere we wisely gave it away.

Regrettably my waterproof action camera on the front of my kayak had packed it in early in the trip so we didn't get to record the conditions. But none of us will forget them in a hurry.

We were reluctant to return to the campsite we had only just packed up earlier that day so we attempted to get to the same destination on the other side of the island but this time



by going around the north. We suspected winds would still be stiff but hoped they would be abated somewhat from the cliffs.

But although there was no swell, the winds were just as severe and were hitting us side on. Again we made an easy group decision to turn back but with the

wind gusts biting into my wing paddle, on the return journey the wind physically blew me out of the kayak.

While I had learned to roll prior to the trip it wasn't something that came naturally so I undid the spray deck and with Richard's assistance was back in my boat in 60 seconds. It was a valuable lesson on a number of fronts and in a bad case of kayak *deja vu* we limped back to our previous campsite after paddling almost 30km and getting absolutely nowhere.

We have since made an application to the Geographical Names Board to have that bay renamed Duffy's Exit.

Over the 15-day trip we paddled every day except one. On some days we achieved only a few km's on account of rough weather, other commitments such as fitting in a trek or just taking it easy. We could have pushed a bit harder but Bass Strait has a way of making you slow down and fit into her



Andrew, Peter, John and Richard celebrate their successful south-to-north eastern Bass Strait crossing in the pub at Port Welshpool

schedule anyway.

We had a saying on this trip ... "Bass Strait giveth and Bass Strait taketh", meaning luck and fortune tend to swing both ways and this isn't the place for breaking records.

Physically the trip maybe wasn't as demanding as the first-timers among us expected. The long crossings (1 of 15 hours, and 2 of approximately 9 hours) were helped by religiously stopping on the hour for a few minutes to stretch and snack, playing games to help the time pass by, and continual banter among the team. (Ask Andrew to sing America's 50 states in alphabetical order.)

The 15-hour leg (70km) was stretched when for a couple of hours we were inexplicably down to a heart-breaking 2km/h. The thought of finishing this leg with a surf landing in the dark crossed our minds but eventually speed increased to our normal rate of around 6km/h and sometimes pushed higher.

After hitting the water at 5:20am we were relieved to pull into Deal Island at 8:20pm.

This was the adventure of our lives. As has been demonstrated countless times over the years, it is achievable by anyone with experience, the right kayak and most importantly a sense of adventure. There will always be many reasons why not to do it and only one reason why anyone would do it, that being a desire to personally accomplish something big and different.

Michael Collins (Apollo 11 astronaut) said: "To go places and do things that have never been done before - that's what living is all about". Well, what we did has been done before but it certainly was what living is all about.

Andrew, Peter and myself are very grateful to Richard for joining us on this trip. His guidance and experience gave us a lot of comfort but what is often taken for granted is Richard's genuine desire to unselfishly share his experiences and by virtue of this, promote the sport of kayaking.



Peter, John, Andrew and Richard atop Mt Strzelecki



When you gotta go, you gotta go ... Andrew found out that objects placed in moving water don't always finish up where you intended

Racing the rapids of the Waimak by Matt Blundell



The Waimak Classic River Race is New Zealand's premier white water long distance kayak race, held on the Waimakariri River, Canterbury. Now into its 24th year, the 67km paddle from Mount White, near Arthur's Pass, to Gorge Bridge on the Canterbury plains is held on the grade two river which is famous for its snow-fed waters and huge gorge which covers over half the race.

On December 7 I headed over to Christchurch to defend the title I had won the previous year. I was not sure how I would fare due to a new addition to the family and hence a lack of training, but with a solid month on the water I had started to find some form.

On the Saturday, after sorting out the Walkabout Kayaks Phantom which I would be using for the race, it was off to the river for a course recheck. And my good friends Len and Kate who also organise safety for the race had arranged a jet boat to check the river. I must recommend this as a great way to check the course without burning too much energy, and very exciting as well.

Two hours later we were back at the car and the river looked great with a med-high flow that was dropping. I jumped into my kayak to paddle the last 12km of the race to get a feel for the kayak and make sure all was ok. I paddled this in 42min taking it easy (a lot of flow).

Race day, up at 5am and off to the start – a 90min+ drive and try to catch a few extra zzz on the way. Arrive at the start, fine and clear, the river has dropped but still a good flow. Get my compulsory gear checked, then it's time to relax and wait for my start which is 20min after the first.

The Waimak Classic is a race of three parts: the first is a wide braided river 25km, the second 30km of gorge, and then another 15km of braids to the finish.

In no time at all it's time to rock 'n roll and we are on the

water with 40 kayakers all trying to find their place on a very fast flowing river. With penalties for jumping the start, I hang back. Not the best move as I am about 100m off the front when the gun goes, and we are off.

It's a long race, 70km, so no hurry to get up to the front. I settle into a steady rhythm and slowly pull back the front group, catching up at about the 5km mark.

Once with the leaders I follow for 20 minutes before I take the lead, the advantage of leading is you pick your lines and have cleaner water. The disadvantage is if you choose the wrong chute or braid you can lose minutes, even the race.

I up the pace and a small gap appears behind so I push on for another 20 minutes at a solid pace but keeping some in reserve in case. I check behind – no one to be seen. I push on hard to the start of the gorge where it is harder to see people so gaps open up. And the rapids increase in size as often the river flows straight into a bluff which can be tricky for the unprepared or tired paddler.

I push on though the gorge, picking off the early starters and 5km from the gorge end I pick off the last of them, the women's leader and eventual

winner Sophie Hart and over 50s winner Keith Aldersen.

I reach Woodstock, 15km to go of braided river, lots of choices to make, the wrong braid could cost me the race. I play it safe and stick with the main flow, my speed drops to about 19km/hr for the last 10km as I start to fatigue, but with the buffer I have built up I hang on to win by 2mins from Hayden Keys, with Ian Huntsman another 5sec back.

I will be back next December to defend my title in the race's 25th year. Anyone interested in coming over let me know and I can help with logistics etc.



Nature Notes

by Jon Harris

Being a bird-watcher from way back, I have always enjoyed the sightings of various species of birds as we paddle on the Lane Cove River. So I thought I would submit regular articles on various birds and other fauna and flora of the River, and considering our preoccupation with the humble Pacific Black Duck, it will be first on the list.

The Pacific Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*) is the bird we see most often on our Wednesday night paddles. It is a very adaptable and tough species, feeding by upending and dabbling in the mud for worms, soft vegetation and insects.

It is nomadic and is widespread throughout the western Pacific, from northern Indonesia to the Polynesian islands down to the New Zealand sub-Antarctic islands. It is easily confused with the Chestnut Teal (smaller and very similar plumage).

It cross-breeds readily with the Mallard duck and builds a sturdy nest in grass, swampland, hollow logs, etc and lays 8-10 creamy white eggs. Regular paddlers may have noticed family groups on the river with both mother and father tending their brood, each week the chicks are noticeably larger.

Unfortunately many chicks and even some adults fall victim to birds of prey, but that's how nature works – an ever-turning cycle of life and death.



At the 2012 PaddleNSW Paddlesport of the Year awards Tracey Hansford was named Paddler of the Year with a Disability. She is shown here receiving her award from Bruce Morison, with Joan Morison looking on. Tracey has since undergone reconstruction of both knees and is already back in the boat and tearing up and down the river.

Amazing Galapagos

by Danielle Seisun



"WOW, this is unbelievable, amazing !!!" – the common expressions used when seeing the enormous variety of wildlife in the Galapagos.

First sightings are always so exciting. That excitement didn't dwindle with curiosity and wonder what may be up ahead. Sightings were so frequent that jokingly we would announce another by "Ho hum, another turtle", "Ho hum, another sea lion ahead at 9 o'clock".

Our 11-day expedition in the Galapagos was set to be a trip of a lifetime, removed from time other than the time between scrumptious meals to leave our 72-foot catamaran to go snorkelling, kayaking, hiking. Reminding ourselves this was an expedition, not a cruise, we collapsed into bed after each active and complete day from sunrise beyond sunset.

Comforts of the boat and helpful crew of 6 for a small number of 9 guests was sure to result in an intimate trip designed to show us the best of the Enchanted Islands.

An expedition which covered a new island for each day began at Santa Cruz and cruised further to San Cristobal, Espanola, Floreana, Santa Fe and South Plaza, Sombrero Chino and Bartolome, to return yet again to Santa Cruz.

Our feathercraft kayaks, surprisingly quite comfortable, gave us a great opportunity to view the abundance of life from another more intimate point. Kayaking two to three hours a day, we set out along the coastlines of various islands, accessing areas otherwise not possible, along cliffs formed by eroded cinder cones and layers of old basalt with giant cacti jutting from the edges.

We were able to kayak inside sculpted tunnels and caves used by many species marine birds for nesting. Dramatic views of the skirting scenic cliffs and the ocean were new for me, I found it quite extraordinary in its magnitude.

Large bull sea lions patrolling their territories were a common sighting; loving mothers with babes, and the highlight of all highlights were the playful pups. They swished around the boat, curious, playing, so close, unafraid. These were incredibly special moments that have captured a space in my heart forever.

Reddish marine iguanas basking in the sun appeared to

live quite harmoniously with the Sally Foot crabs also covering the lower levels of basalt rocks.

Bird life was prolific with pelicans and blue foot boobies commonly torpedoing themselves into the water to catch fish. It could be quite a shock if you were snorkelling not far away, exciting if in front of boat. Frigate birds were never too far away, looming above.

I expected to enjoy the kayaking as much as I did. Perhaps of greater surprise for me was the snorkelling, having an opportunity to be part of that underwater playground with enormous schools of colourful fish, significant numbers of white-tipped reef sharks almost brushing past you, again not at all worried or seemingly interested in our presence, stingrays, and all of the small delights of being witness to a natural aquarium with great diversity.

While there were so many exciting moments, the highlight of the trip for me was one particular snorkel where I stayed in the one position 10 to 15 minutes with a sea lion circling us, as if performing a dance! It was simply magical!

And of course, never ceasing to disappoint, dolphins riding the bow of the boat and baby albatrosses learning to fly.

Some trip details: Prior to this trip I trekked the Inca Trail so I flew an indirect route. However, you can easily fly from Sydney by Qantas/LAN via Santiago to Quito. Our group met in Quito, a wonderful city in itself. If you have a tendency toward being pampered, while in Quito take a trip to the Papallacta spa resort. It's the real deal.

From Quito we flew to Santa Cruz where we met our crew and naturalist guide (the most amazingly well-informed guide I have ever met) who looked after us in the most extraordinary manner for the week. The 11-day tour it cost

about \$5000 all inclusive of meals, soft drinks, equipment. In addition, of course, you need to get yourself there.

Others I travelled with have toured with Natural Habitat Expeditions previously, and also rate those trips very highly. Being on their mailing list will no doubt keep a hole in my wallet with other kayak adventures including Kayaking Greenland's Arctic Riviera, Paddling & Exploring the Pearls of Indochina, Kamchatka Kayaking & Hiking Adventure, Portugal's River of

Wine by Kayak, Sea Kayaking & Exploring Croatia & Montenegro. Go to www.nathab.com.



Saved from the knacker's yard

Do you remember that in mid December I sent members an email saying someone had dumped an old fibreglass touring kayak at Wharf Rd boat ramp, near West Ryde, and that it seemed a candidate for a DIY restoration. It was about 5.9m long and 53cm wide, and looked like a fast boat. An odd feature was a rudder which was built into the hull line and had a retractable fin.

Well, I had an interesting reply from Don Andrews which said: "The kayak is an Extended North Sea Tourer. It was my design, it was moulded by Q Craft and it was not a success. Too tippy and not as fast as we thought it would be. The rudder was my design. It worked real well. I think it was the first under slung drop down rudder. An SA kayaker after inspecting it at a NSW Sea Kayak rock and roll event then claimed it as his own design." Someone apparently thought it worth saving, because it disappeared overnight. I don't know who took it.

by Justin Paine



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Paddling down the Macquarie River by Paul Gibson



The trip was called WomDomNom (from Wellington on Macquarie, Dubbo on Macquarie, Narromine on Macquarie), a 4-day recreational paddle and camping trip organised to raise awareness for muscular dystrophy.

Day Zero. Had a leisurely drive from North Sydney up through the mountains and across the Western Plains to Wellington. Great to see the expanse of the plains even though there was some storm activity.

Pitched my tent in the caravan park and headed off to meet up with organisers in the very quaint tavern, where we had an excellent dinner, however had to do an emergency dash back to the tent to make sure it wasn't destroyed by a sudden hail storm. Great baptism for the new tent!

Met up with Andrew Mathers from LCRK, so that was great.

Day 1. The put-in at Wellington was into a rapidly flowing Macquarie River. The locals indicated that some 6000 gegalitres was being released for irrigation purposes. The river was very active with numerous eddies and currents around numerous old logs.

We had four team leaders who were all locals from the Dubbo area and their skill was required early on when one of the paddlers misjudged the entry into a rapid and ended up in the willows. Several people had to assist to extricate him and rescue the kayak. Nothing like a bit of excitement.

The weather was extremely hot, but on the water there was always a cooling breeze and the flow of the river meant the 40km was very relaxed.

After a couple of stops (lunch was provided by landcrew) we arrived at the first camping area in the early afternoon. The landcrew had already established a large marquee and soon the multiple eskies were open and liquid refreshment enjoyed. Drinks were provided with an honesty system of paying. The landcrew provided the evening meal.

Day 2. The river at this point is at least 10-20m below the surrounding plains, so it is hard to imagine it in flood. As we still had excellent water speed, when we came across obstacles we had a few portages with the previous day's experience of the trapped paddler making the leaders more cautious. One of the low bridges was submerged and was acting like a weir. Andrew demonstrated how to hold his kayak heading upstream into the standing wave directly below the weir.

We were joined by other paddlers who had signed on for either three or two days. The range of craft was diverse with

some being more like bath tubs. Some plastics were supplied by the organisers.

Andrew teamed up with one of the young paddlers from Dubbo and gave him some tips ... and drag racing.

The end of the day was rewarded with a cooling swim while holding on to something to stop being swept away.

The camping area was in a winery just outside Dubbo, where the winery restaurant did the catering for us and brought

down beautiful trays of food. The night's entertainment was short films from Tropfest.

Day 3. A quick paddle and portage around Dubbo, with a visit to Dubbo markets and coffee and then we were heading off towards Narromine.

The river cuts into the land and what was probably a food plain river, almost on the same level as the plain, is now a severely cut-in river, metres below the plain. The irrigators all have massive pumps and lines into the river. As the river twists, the cut into the bank in the faster flowing section is obvious, exposing the roots of trees clinging on to the side.

Once again the landcrew had set up the marquee and dinner and refreshments were enjoyed into the night. Some of the local lads provided their own entertainment...

Day 4. Last leg of the 150k trip. This time we saw a

trapped lamb, caught in the root ball of a tree, right down near the water. We made several attempts to get it to scramble out, but it was clear it was not going to make it. Unfortunately we had to leave it.

Arrived in Narromine in early afternoon for a late lunch and champagne send-off. As my car had been transported to Narromine by the landcrew, Andrew and I packed our gear and headed back to Wellington to pick up Andrew's car.

All in all a very enjoyable four days, with fantastic landcrew support.

NZ wild river race postponed

The Wild Descent kayak race down the Clutha River in New Zealand's South Island, which was to have been held January 17-20, has been postponed after largely unprecedented rainfall resulted in flood conditions which raised safety concerns. It is to be rescheduled some time after mid March. Matt Blundell and Mike Snell had planned to do the 4-day, 261km race.



Myall in doubt

The Myall Classic, long a favourite of Lane Cove paddlers and considered a great preparation for the Hawkesbury Classic, is in danger of disappearing from the race calendar. The past organisers of the event are no longer available. Paddle NSW is hoping someone will step up and take over this iconic event, which has been held in September, about a month before the Hawkesbury.



Jana Osvald had a nasty accident just before Christmas while swimming in North Curl Curl pool. She was thrown by a freak wave out of the pool, through the handrail and on to rocks about 20m away. She suffered bad gashes to her head and face, but said the bashing to her body felt the worst. Fortunately lifesavers came to her aid and she spent several nights in hospital, where 35 stitches were inserted in her facial cuts. She also had a severe whiplash and required plenty of physio.