



KAYAK KAPERS

October 2007

Tough training for Hawkesbury Classic

There's been some heavy training going on as Lane Cove veterans, plus a few newer to the scene, prepare for the annual dice on the Hawkesbury River. This has been particularly noticeable in the most recent of the popular familiarisation paddles where a few of our notables, not content with finishing at or near the front of the pack, elected to paddle all the way back to the start.

Michael Mueller/Rob Vallis in a Supersonic and James Mumme/Matt Swann in a Vulcan are prime examples of this masochism, showing plenty of speed as well as endurance.

Ian Hofstetter in his K1 did the return trip in the Sackville-Wisemans outing, and Tony Carr doubled up in his Challenger in the Windsor-Sackville trip.

Lane Cove members turned out in droves for these familiarisation paddles, organised by Windsor Club, and their times included:

Sackville-Wisemans: Michael Mueller/Vallis 2.42.20 (2nd), Tim Hookins 2.44.31 (4th), Tony Hystek 2.49.04 (5th), Urs and Arni Mader 2.50.16 (6th), Ian Hofstetter 2.51.23 (8th), James Mumme/Matt Swann 2.56.49 (12th), John Greathead/Tony Walker 2.59.23, Jeremy Spear 3.06.31, Paul van Koesveld 3.07.59, Jason Cooper 3.13.29, Wayne Wanders 3.17.07, Ian Wilson 3.27.52, Justin Paine 3.36.36, Chris Kent 3.38.20, Jennifer Neil-Smith/Rowena Frith 3.44.15, Nick Ridgwell 3.51.32.

Windsor-Sackville: Michael Mueller/Rob Vallis 2.18.18 (1st), Tony Hystek 2.34.40 (5th), James Mumme/Matt Swann 2.35.48 (6th), Ian Hofstetter 2.37.35, John Greathead/Tony Walker 2.42.10, Ian Purves 2.43.18, Len Hedges 2.50.30, Jeremy Spear 2.54.08, Paul van Koesveld 2.58.15, Wayne Wanders 3.04.23, Christie Brown 3.07.12, Tony Carr 3.11.40, Trevor Williamson 3.14.02, Justin Paine 3.17.58, Chris Kent 3.30.32, Greg Appleyard 3.35.28, Jennifer and Henry Neil-Smith 3.50.48.

LCRK President Graeme Jeffries reckons we need 4 records and 6 or 7 others earning big points by finishing within an hour of the class record to retain the Commonwealth Bank Cup for the 5th straight year.

The relatively new pairing of Tim Hookins and Tony Hystek will be competing in their Supersonic in the 50+ UN2 class where the record in 12.55.15. Their two emphatic wins in the Winter Marathon Series at Port Hacking (see page 3) and in the 47km Myall Classic (see page 7) leave no doubt as to their sustained power and speed.

Julie Stanton has an even "softer" record to tackle in her Sonic in the 40+ UN - 13.12.14.

But there are no "gimmies" in the Classic. In a night race as long as 111km anything can happen.

Urs and Arni Mader were record breakers last year in the 50+ Mixed Rec 2 with a time of 10.40.59. This year in a faster Vulcan they switch to the 50+ Mixed UN2 and are confronted with a record of 10.22.46.

Tom Simmat was another record breaker last year with 10.14.43 in the 50+ LRec. In his own Simmat Special (the Cow) he will be facing an record of 10.15.44 in the 50+ SRec this time.

There are some interesting stories behind many of the entries.

The familiar combination of Merridy Huxley and Marg Cook will be absent, as Marg has only just returned from a 6-month

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Competitors in the 2007 Hawkesbury Canoe Classic are expected to include:

Roger Aspinall	40+ MRec	Flash
Matt Blundell	Open K1	
Richard Barnes	40+ K1	
Christie Brown	Open UN1	Sonic
Tony Carr	60+ LRec	Challenger
Jason Cooper	MRec	Mirage 580
Tim Dodd	40+ MRec/BorB	Mirage
Ian Hofstetter	40+ K1	
Tim Hookins/ Tony Hystek	50+ UN2	Supersonic
Merridy Huxley/ Warren Huxley	Mx 40+ UN2	Supersonic
Bob Kenderes	Open SRec	B-Line
Chris Kent	BorB	Mirage 530
Bert Lloyd/ Trevor Williamson	50+ LRec2	Mirage 730
Urs Mader/ Arni Mader	Mx 50+ LRec2	Vulcan
Joanne Mansell	BorB	Marauder
Michael Mueller/ Rob Vallis	Open UN2	Vindicator
James Mumme/ Matt Swann	40+ LRec2	Vulcan
Jennifer Neil-Smith/ Rowena Frith	BorB	Mirage
Phil Newman	50+ LRec	Sea Leopard
Kenji Ogawa	50+ LRec	Flyer
Steve Paget	Open TK1	
Justin Paine	60+ MRec	Mirage 530
Steve Russell	Open	TK1
Don Rowston/ Wade Rowston	40+ LRec2	Mirage
Tom Simmat	50+ SRec	Simmat Special
Jeremy Spear	40+ MRec	Marauder
Julie Stanton	40+ UN	Sonic
Paul van Koesveld	50+ MRec	Marauder
Wayne Wanders	40+ MRec/BorB	Mirage 580
Andrew Whitehead	BorB	Mirage 580

Tribute to an extraordinary life

The Australian Geographic Society has posthumously honoured Andrew McAuley with the distinguished Lifetime of Adventure Award. McAuley, who lost his life in February after paddling from Australia to within sight of the New Zealand coast, was previously named the 2005 Australian Geographic Society Adventurer of the Year. *Australian Geographic* editorial director said: "Andrew McAuley was not so much a thrill seeker as someone who reached for the stars. His legacy for the rest of us is that it's not the nature of your chosen adventure that matters – it's stretching your own personal boundaries... We pay tribute to his extraordinary life."

European holiday. Merridy will do the race in a Supersonic with husband Warren and they showed with their fine outing in the Myall Classic, where they finished in a whisker over 5 hours, that they are a real threat.

Bert Lloyd and Trevor Williamson are fine-tuning their 50+ LRec2 challenge by doing the final 380km of the Murray from Morgan to Goolwa (with Greg Appleyard, it's the final leg of their multi-year coverage of the Murray). Bert is also tackling the Australian Masters in Adelaide.

Peter Anderson, Steve Pizzey and Tim Sindle were looking for a fourth (sounds like a game of bridge) for a borrowed St George K4 but it was sold. Tim is now off to South Africa, and Steve and Peter at last report were undecided about going in a double.

Phil Newman has a very sleek Sea Leopard on loan as part of a demo deal (that's demonstration, not demolition) with Rafter Kayaks.

Don and Wade Rowston are back for another go and on their Winter Marathon Series form are in for a good performance.

Seminar transcripts on the Web

Transcripts of the addresses given by speakers at the Hawkesbury Classic seminar series at recent LCRK barbecues are now available on the LCRK website. They form a comprehensive package offering advice on how to prepare for and race the Classic. They are also a useful check list to make sure you haven't missed anything in your preparations. You can access the website at www.lcrk.org.au or through the club links at www.nswcanoe.org.au.

Tips for landcrews

Give these tips to your landcrews.

1. Above all, be there for your paddler. Every year some competitors are left shivering on the river bank at checkpoints because their landcrews are not there. All the preparation in the world is worthless if you can't deliver.
2. On race day, keep your paddler rested by checking the paperwork, waiting in the inevitable scrutineering queue, etc.
3. Plan the race carefully with your competitor. Decide where he/she is going to stop and be there early. Planning to arrive early gives you time to recover if you take a wrong turn in the road, have difficulty parking, etc and also gives you time to suss out the check point.
4. Decide where at each checkpoint you'll meet and how you'll make contact (colored lights, shouting numbers or names, etc). Remember that the checkpoints are going to be as busy as Pitt Street at lunch time.
5. Decide in advance just what your paddler will need at each checkpoint (drinks, food, clothing, mopping out the boat, etc) and be ready to meet these needs quickly.
6. Be prepared to get your feet wet. It will help to have water to wash sand off your feet later, a towel to dry them and dry shoes. You may have to repeat this process several times.
7. Know where the nearest toilet facilities are. Take toilet paper.
8. Keep your paddler rugged up and warm while he's on shore. And try to keep him moving, the body cools down quickly when you stop after vigorous exercise. Have a blanket to wrap around him.
9. A change into warm, dry clothing can make a world of difference for a cold, wet, tired paddler.
10. Let your paddler know how he's going compared to his race plan. If he is competing against some rivals, try to monitor their progress.
11. At all times, motivate and encourage your paddler. But at the same time make sure he's fit to continue and seek medical assistance if in doubt.
12. Don't rely on using a mobile phone to check your paddler's progress. Reception can be poor to nil.
13. If your paddler has to withdraw, console him and tell him personal welfare and safety come first.
14. If you've got a camera, ask someone to take a few shots of you and your paddler. You'll enjoy them later.
15. At the finish, get your paddler's boat out of the water and back to the car, get him dried and changed and have food/drink ready. Congratulate him on finishing and let him know how his friends went in the race.
16. Don't forget yourself. Have fun. If you have someone to talk to at checkpoints the event will be much more enjoyable. Look after your own food and drink needs and keep warm. Rugs and folding chairs add to comfort. If wet weather is likely, be prepared for it. Remember, it's going to be a long and tiring night.

Up the creek without a ...

by Ozzie Folbot



I've been trying to persuade Freddie not to hire an Avis furniture van for the Hawkesbury Classic but so far without success. He keeps telling anyone who'll listen that his mum used to say "If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing well."

I'm sure I can get by without him bringing two spare kayaks but Freddie is one of those precious people who sticks to his guns through thick and thin.

"Listen, if I'm going to be your landcrew I've got to be ready for any contingency," he said to me. "For instance, it won't be any good you asking me for a plate of hot noodles if I can't provide it."

"I won't want hot noodles," I said. "I don't like rice noodles, hot or cold."

"You might change your mind. I'll have a whole menu for you to choose from."

"Why don't you turn it into a Café de Kayak?" I said. "Freddie's Fast Food. You'd make a fortune. Most landcrews would kill for a coffee or a hot pie at 2am."

"You'll sing a different tune if you need more drink and I don't have it."

"I'm carrying four litres of sports drink and four litres of water. That's more than I drink in a week."

Freddie threw his hands in the air. "Next you'll be telling me you won't need a change of clothes."

"Well, I do think 12 thermal tops, 6 thermal pants, 5 woollen jumpers, 4 cags, 7 beanies, 3 pairs of boots and woollen socks and half a dozen pairs of gloves is a bit over the top. And that trunk with all your repair gear can be dumped - the repair goo wouldn't have time to set before the cutoff time."

He wagged his finger at me. "You'll also need to rethink your refusal to carry a spare compass, spare torch and spare maps. It's easy to lose your way in the dark."

I was tempted to tell him I can't read a compass, I can't follow maps and I won't need a torch because there will be a full moon but I bit my tongue. No point in being churlish.

"Look, I admire your commitment," I said. "But you'll have to leave the van in the car park at each check point. How are you going to get all this stuff down to the river?"

A triumphant smile flashed across his face. "Everything will be in a container and I've lined up a forklift. And I forgot to tell you - I've got two spare paddles, a spare PFD, a satphone, an emergency flare and beacon, and a 10-litre drum containing survival rations to duck tape to your boat."

"Just as well I've got a Mirage, otherwise the extra weight would sink me," I said sarcastically. "What would you do it I was in a K1?"

"That's easy. I'd lock you up. Anyone who wants to do the Classic in a K1 should be committed."

Don and Wade win at Wyong

Don and Wade Rowston finally edged out the two Canberra schoolgirls who have been blitzing division 6 when the Winter Marathon Series visited Wyong. There wasn't much in it, a handspan or so according to Don and a second according to the timekeepers, but a win is sweet by any margin.

John Greathead and Tony Walker, who have been on the receiving end from the sweet-stroking Canberra girls in several earlier races, came in 5th this time.

Ian Hofstetter had a big win in division 2, continuing the fine run he has been having this season.

In division 5, Derek Simmonds and Tim McNamara had a steering failure – again – and finally limped in like a drunken sailor at the tail of the fleet. It's the second such failure in two outings in Derek's K2. Looks like they're in desperate need of a quality maintenance manager.

At Port Hacking, Tim Hookins and Tony Hystek came up trumps in a hard-fought finish to take out division 2. Their time of 1.38.13 would have put them in the middle of the division 1 field.

Lane Cove was strong in division 4 with Rob Vallis 3rd, Tom Simmat 4th and Michael Mueller 6th, and also in division 6 where Steve Paget was 2nd, John Greathead and Tony Walker 4th and Don and Wade Rowston 5th.

It was good to see Ian Purves back on the water following recent health problems.

On the bank watching was Trish Hamilton, recovering well from that horrific car crash in March. She's had a brief outing in a Canadian but flexing difficulties with her knee are delaying a return to kayaking.

Detailed results of the WMS races can be seen at www.nswcanoe.org.au.

WMS Race 7 Wyong				
Competitor	Div	Time	Plc	
Ian Hofstetter	2	1.41.15	1	
Peter Giesbuhl	2	1.46.34	8	
David Edelman	3	1.50.23	5	
Rob Vallis	3	1.56.26	8	
James Mumme/ Matt Swann	4	1.52.42	4	
Tony Hystek	4	1.52.44	5	
Tim Hookins	4	1.52.45	6	
Julie Stanton	4	1.53.08	10	
Tom Simmat	4	1.55.56	12	
Tim McNamara/ Derek Simmonds	5	2.22.23	14	
Don Rowston/ Wade Rowston	6	2.00.41	1	
John Greathead/ Tony Walker	6	2.03.52	5	
Bert Lloyd	6	2.05.46	9	
Steve Russell	6	2.08.59	10	
Greg Appleyard/ Trevor Williamson	6	2.10.36	11	
Wayne Wanders	6	DNF		

WMS Race 8 Port Hacking				
Competitor	Div	Time	Plc	
Tim Hookins/ Tony Hystek	2	1.38.13	1	
Richard Barnes	2	2.03.38	9	
Craig Elliott/ James Mumme	3	1.52.25	4	
Rob Vallis	4	1.54.32	3	
Tom Simmat	4	1.54.47	4	
Michael Mueller	4	1.56.17	6	
Len Hedges	4	2.02.49	14	
Derek Simmonds	5	2.04.27	12	
Ian Purves	5	2.09.48	14	
Tommy Nolan	5	2.12.45	15	
Stephen Paget	6	2.02.20	2	
John Greathead/ Tony Walker	6	2.02.57	4	
Don Rowston/ Wade Rowston	6	2.03.14	5	
Bert Lloyd	6	2.12.22	14	
Greg Appleyard/ Helen Tongway	6	2.18.06	16	
Paul van Koesveld	6	2.20.50	18	
Justin Paine	6	2.32.38	20	



Happy paddlers at Port Hacking ... before the race: Wade Rowston, Tony Hystek, Bert Lloyd, Don Rowston

This year's Avon Descent in WA was not a happy event for the three Lane Cove warriors who flew over for this great 2-day race. In fact, it was a bit of a bummer.

The highest water levels in the last decade led to the rapids being very rapid indeed – and bruising.

Dean (Kato) Wayne had the saddest and most dramatic tale to tell. After a good opening day, he was well into day two when he came to grief on a rapid about 40km from the finish. The nose of his K1 speared into the cockpit of an abandoned double hidden below the boiling water and stopped dead.

The weight of the torrent gripped the back of the brand new kevlar K1, twisted it and bent and flattened it around a rock. Kato was trapped in it for about five minutes – fortunately with his head above water – before he managed to rip his neoprene pants free of an obstruction and escape with injured calves and ankles.

Boats battered in bumpy bashing

The man and woman who minutes earlier had scrambled ashore from the abandoned double were among those on the bank who tried to rescue him.

"It's the first time I have had to scream for help," said Kato.

Tim Sindle also had a good first day and was cruising along nicely on the second day when he smashed the nose of his fibreglass K1 on a rock. He duck-taped the nose together but the tape kept wearing off on rocks and the boat kept filling up.

"It was horrendous. I took 8 hours 45 minutes for the last 70km," said Tim.

Matt Blundell avoided any major calamity but was disappointed with his 53rd place.

"My training was all right and I felt okay, I just wasn't going very fast and I don't know why. I'll have to wait now for next year," he said.

Four Australian kayakers competed in this year's Yukon River Quest. In this gripping article Peter Anderson describes how he and Steve Pizzey, in a hired G3 Passat double, rose to the challenge of the endless hours of paddling the turbulent river. The other Aussies, Urs Mader, Tom Simmat and Liz Winn, were all in singles.

Yu-Kon Do It

by Peter Anderson

Canada's Yukon Territory is two-thirds the size of NSW, yet it has a population of just 31,000, mostly concentrated in the capital, Whitehorse. In winter, temperatures that can drop below -40°C freeze the Yukon River, setting the scene for the 1,600km Yukon Quest, known as the toughest dogsled race in the world.

In summer, teams gather on the river for the world's longest wilderness paddling marathon. After a LeMans-style start in downtown Whitehorse, teams paddle for 740km round-the-clock under the mid-night sun, stopping for just two mandatory rests at Carmacks (7 hours) and Kirkman Creek (3 hours). It is a grueling wilderness adventure race that tests the stamina of all competitors, and the prize, for many, is just finishing.

The siren whoops and I find myself pounding down the street, already stretching out to keep up with Steve who is running like a man possessed. Soon the pack around us thins out. We clear the railway tracks and slither down the riverbank. Steve's brother, Mark, is standing in the water up to his knees, holding our tandem kayak.

With a few quick hard strokes we are out in the current, with the shouts and splashes of other competitors already fading upstream as I snap down my spray deck, flip down the rudder and put on my drinking system. Ahead of us lies 740km of unknown wilderness, but for now we are the leading kayak in the 2007 Yukon River Quest.

For us the decision to race came after Steve saw a documentary on the River Quest (undoubtedly while lying on the couch nursing a hangover). For 10 months since we had been inching up a mountain, steadily building our paddling experience from a base of virtually zero by paddling everything we could get our hands on - surf skis, touring kayaks, sea kayaks, K1s and K2s - playing canoe polo and paddling

white water.

The last five days since we picked up our race boat had been frenetic as we worked on our seating positions, cut a faster rudder design and built plywood footplates. The tandem is new, but in line with the tandem rules it's shorter and wider than a Mirage. Yesterday we had practised Eskimo rolls in the unfamiliar boat, momentarily stunned as we hit the icy water before training took over. I felt ready.

I'm dragged back to the present as



Steve and Peter in unison in their G3 Passat

I hear voices behind me. Glancing over my shoulder I am automatically positioning so we can ride the wash of the faster boat. The race is on.

Three and a half hours later we reach the beginning of Lake Laberge, a spectacularly beautiful lake over 50km long. By now we are the second placed tandem, but in my mind I am already thinking 6 hours ahead, wanting to get off the dead water of the lake into the quicker flowing river beyond. The arrival of a sudden storm brings me back to reality.

I'm glad we have recently eaten and for the next hour we push directly across the lake into the strong wind and rain. While paddling alongside Tom Simmat in his Horizon Tourer, we are caught and passed by a South African tandem. My opposite man smirks at me, but we resist the temptation to chase them so early in the race.

Later we are passed by another

tandem. We wash ride them for a half hour or so, but they seem to throw off very little wash. Steve is polite to a fault and checks our boat when we bump their stern, until I politely offer to murder him if he does it again. Eventually we can't maintain the pace without jeopardizing our race, so we let them go, dropping back to fourth.

Eight hours into the race we are exhausted, but a cheery hail from Urs Mader, arriving behind us in his Reflection, revives our spirits. We thank him

as he slows to allow us to get on his wash, feeling a huge gratitude as he tows us the last 5km or so off the lake. We pass the two other tandems on the bank and are back into second place as we exit the lake back into the fast flowing river, the three Aussie men's boats now paddling together.

The next 15 hours pass and are barely remembered. We play leapfrog with the other two tandems. They paddle

faster than us, but we never rest. For a few hours the sun disappears, and we don beanies and parkas as we paddle through mist and twilight. Two single kayakers slip past us in the mist, traveling impossibly fast.

The sun rises and we are still paddling. The monotony becomes overwhelming.

My competitive ambitions have been eroded, my race to the Carmacks 7-hour rest stop now driven simply by the desire to end my personal suffering as soon as possible. We inch our way up our laminated maps. Every two hours we get to turn a page, which for us becomes a huge treat as our eyes devour the new information.

Finally we have turned enough pages and we arrive at the pontoon in third place, with the South Africans about 20 minutes ahead. I realise we have been paddling for 23 hours, and for the first time I allow my mind to roll

up the shutter and consider that there is more to this race than stage one. After all, we have covered 340km but are less than half way.

Strong arms lift me from the boat. My hands have become claws and at first I can't walk. Later I'm unable to lift my arms, but for now Steve and I are lost in our own fogs and don't look at each other, while Lynton and Mark, our support crew, take care of everything.

A couple of anti-inflammatories and five hours sleep later; I'm amazed at how good I feel. I demolish two bowls of pasta and still can't feel any food in my stomach, as though it's been instantly vaporized. Steve and I can now look at each other without fear of what we might see or reveal, and we make jokes. Our exit time arrives too quickly, our mandatory survival equipment is checked again and we are off.

The river starts running faster and I work hard on our racing lines, using the instantaneous speed on the GPS Urs has lent us to find the fastest parts of the river. I'm not thinking about the finish line, just our opportunity to make good boat speed right now, in this moment. I'm pleased to see that we average 17km/h for the next three hours, before we pass quickly and smoothly through Five Finger and Rink Rapids, tracing the fast green water and barely wetting our deck.

Within four hours we are rewarded with a sighting of a single kayak and the South African tandem ahead. Later we see them pull in to the bank and we surge past them into second place. I am determined that they won't see us again, and without saying anything I know from his body language that Steve is thinking the same thing.

It seems only a few hours before we overhaul the two Texan singles who passed us in the mist of the night be-

fore, but my back still tingles with the thought of the South Africans catching up behind us. I control my mounting frustration as one of the Texans insists on riding our side wash, with the sucking and boiling of the river's surface causing an inevitable paddle clash every few hundred metres. Later I am rewarded when he points out a bald eagle roosting just above the water line, and then eventually they fall away. Catch release... catch release... speed check... racing line... drink... catch release...

Between 2am and 4am on the second night the sun just dips below the horizon, and I work hard to overcome my body's natural pre-dawn weakness. A moose glares at us balefully from the riverbank as we slip past.

A Voyager canoe comes into view on one of the long straights, and we have another "hare". It takes nearly an hour of sustained effort, and then suddenly we are right on top of them, slipping on to their wake with our bow just a foot off their stern. We discover that with just one of us paddling firm we can hold our station, so for 20 minutes we coast, taking turns to eat, medicate, pee, and refill our water bladders, tossing in Gatorade and Puritabs. We respond to the Voyager crew's request for caffeine tablets before pulling away



Urs Mader in full flight, as usual, in his Reflection

for the final push into the Kirkman Creek 3-hour rest stop.

About 7km out from Kirkman Creek we see a single kayak in the distance ahead of us, then we make different choices on the river and it is lost from view behind a string of islands. Some time later our two boats arrive at Kirkman Creek simultaneously, and I recognise Tom. We have chased down his 1½-hour lead, leaving me both pleased with our own progress but also disappointed when I realise our friend must be slightly behind his target pace. On the bank we see Urs, who admits he has moved into first place by a few minutes.

After attending to our boat and wolfing down hot soup, turkey sandwich and cake, we organise a 2-hour wake-up call. Just after I lay my head on the grass a voice says: "Team 31? It's 12:15. You've got 20 minutes." As we are preparing to leave, one of the UK tandems arrives. It's a couple of ex-Marines. The river flows fast at the landing area and they're "bluing" about the best way to get the boat in. I like these guys, but at the moment I am less than helpful. "Welcome to the quickest three hours of your lives, guys!"

We are due to start with Tom, but I know he won't wash ride so we make no effort to wait for him. Back on the river again, we have put two hours on the South African team, but first place in our race is still an hour in front. If they paddle strongly we will be unable to catch them in the 10 hours or so that remain, but we also know that we are heading into the most difficult part of the river, and so we resolve to punish them if they make mistakes.

By now we have lost one set of maps overboard, so Steve is paddling in a mental vacuum with no GPS and no maps. He asks for regular updates on our speed and position, and in response my voice becomes so automatic I forget I'm listening to myself talking. "16 (km/h). Heading left of this island. 17, good. Map 39 ends at that ridgeline on your left. 16.5. 280km down since Carmacks."



Getting ready ... Peter and Steve with their boat, the Wobby Wallabies



Tom Simmat at the finish in Dawson, looking as fresh as at the start 2½ days earlier

Our next goal is the confluence of the Yukon with the White River, but shortly before we reach it I can no longer ignore the purple thunderclouds squatting directly in our path. Despite the race marshall's words about margins of safety echoing in my head, we decide to sacrifice some of our safety margin for speed.

We are still paddling in T-shirts, but since we can see sun on the other side of the storm cell, we agree not stop to put on warm gear (a slow process with our hands becoming increasingly useless). Before long we collide with the storm.

The wind frosts our bare skin and drives hard rain directly into our faces, as we batter through the whitecaps formed by the opposition of wind and current. While it feels like we are making no progress at all into the wind, I'm surprised to see we are still doing 10km/h.

Half an hour later we are through the storm cell and the sun begins to warm us. The White River enters on our left, making the water opaque with volcanic ash. Catch release... catch release... speed check... racing line... drink... catch release...

Racing and sleeping out

If there's anything Richard Barnes likes more than paddling it's adventure racing. He's not long back from an XPD team multisport adventure race in the Whitsundays which lasts for 6 to 10 days, depending on how fast you are.

The 15 legs included 3 paddles (2 offshore 8-hour paddles around Whitsunday islands and 1 of 4 hours in the Pioneer River), 6 mountain bike legs and 6 hiking legs. Teams stay together throughout the race.

Other members of Richard's team were Mardi Barnes, Buzz Powell and Andrew Slood. They took 9½ days and

By now we have been paddling for around 40 hours, and I can no longer ignore sharp pains in my right shoulder and bicep, so I add maximum doses of codeine to my now regular anti-inflammatory intake.

The influx of White River sediment has made the river channels more complicated; there are sandbars everywhere and we can't see them in the opaque water.

I'm concerned that codeine will make me drowsy at this crucial stage, so I keep caffeine tablets ready. Later Steve tells me to stop slurring my words, but strangely I have no trouble staying alert. I'm paddling hard and our racing lines are good, so I leave the caffeine alone.

At some point Steve's rhythm becomes erratic. I have watched Steve paddle perhaps a hundred thousand strokes since the start, and he has been a Swiss watch, so for five minutes I bite my tongue. When I'm sure something is wrong, I gently probe him. "Steve, what the f\$%k is going on with this rhythm?" He wakes up with a start and reaches for the caffeine while I keep paddling.

Sediment makes the river water undrinkable for the 130km between White River and the finish, but we have taken on a good supply of water, it's not too hot and we press on. For the next few hours I check our speed ten times a minute on the GPS.

I have run out of mental games to pass the time. Somewhere we go through another storm cell, but we paddle hard in T-shirts and are soon warmed again by the sun.

During the final 50km we pass through a network of exposed rocky bluffs and canyons, and I can amuse

myself seeing the faces of people and animals in the cliffs. The visions come easily, without mental effort.

At 10:15pm on Friday we cross the finish line as the second placed tandem kayak, in a time of 47 hours and 45 minutes.

Once we've landed our support crew greets us with beers and hamburgers. We are 22 minutes behind first place, and for the first time I can remember there is no longer any urgency.

We realise that the single we spotted shortly before the finish was Urs, who has also finished second in his class, while Tom slips over the line 27 minutes behind us and finishes third among the men's singles.

Hearing that Liz Winn has a commanding lead in the women's single, we celebrate a top three finish for every Aussie! To borrow an expression from Lance Armstrong, we are all good at suffering, and by now there is an easy camaraderie within the team.

Urs lets fly with his new catch cry, "Yu-Kon Do It".

Many friends have contributed to our race, but most of all we would like to thank Richard Barnes for welcoming



Central Coast's Liz Winn won the women's single kayak

us into paddling, Tom and Christine Simmat for freely sharing their invaluable experience, Urs and Arni Mader, Liz Winn and Katrina Harding for advice, equipment and encouragement, and our incredible support crew Lynton Jamieson and Mark Pizzey who worked tirelessly (whenever they weren't at the pub with Arni and Katrina).

came 23rd out of 60 in the mixed premier teams division.

"We had sleeping bags and you sleep when you can," said Richard. "It was just so much fun to be adventure racing in a beautiful place, meeting like-minded people and seeing whether you are up to the challenge."

He has had a pretty full racing calendar recently. As usual, he ran the City-to-Surf. Another regular event was the Gloucester Mountain Man bike/paddle/run where the paddle was dropped this year because heavy rains had made the river a bit too wild (being Richard, he paddled it anyhow).

City to Surf

Several Lane Cove paddlers turned to the bitumen in August join the teeming thousands in the City-to-Surf.

Alan Whiteman finished in the fast time of 56 minutes 2 seconds, a few seconds ahead of Richard Barnes. Richard was disappointed with his time, despite having his training interrupted by spending most of two months in a kayak on his way around Tasmania.

Rob Vallis, Craig Elliott and James Mumme started near the rear of the massive field and had more sedate runs.



Rec paddle into pelican territory

LCRK's new program of recreational paddles got off to a good start on Sept 9 with an outing from Ettalong on the Central Coast. A couple of late withdrawals (they probably looked out the window and didn't like the dark clouds) reduced the field to 7 boats but that didn't dent the enthusiasm of those who turned up. From Ettalong it was out into Booker Bay, under the Rip Bridge to Woy Woy and a meandering wander into Woy Woy Bay. The route through Brisbane Water went past a sand island inhabited by well over 100 pelicans. Lunch was on a beach at Saratoga. On the way back down the eastern side of the waterway the driving rain finally arrived and it was a wet return. Those joining organiser Tony Carr were Nick Chai, Jason Cooper, Justin Paine, Chris Kent and daughter Julia and friend William Frew. The next rec paddle is on the Georges River on Nov 4. Contact Tony Carr for details tonycarr@ozemail.com.au.

Left: Julia gets up close and personal. Below: Chris, Nick (obscured) and Tony put their feet up while passing the island of pelicans.



There's a limit to the courtesies when racing kayaks, even with friends

by Tim Hookins



Tom and Christine Simmat, Jude and I, Alanna Ewin, Tony Hystek and Steve Russell went up to Myall Lake on the Friday, having APECed off at mid afternoon. We stayed at the Myall Eco-resort at Bombah Point. Highly recommended. Tom displayed his culinary genius with a great pasta for all just as the rain started coming down, preventing Tony and me from making those vital adjustments to the Supersonic.

The weather was good for the Myall River Classic this year, not too hot, not too cold. There was the usual frantic start and I thought Tony Hystek and I in the Supersonic would be struggling to keep up with the Rob Vallises, Michael Muellers and Bruce Goodalls of the world.

Somehow we got past them and had to put up with a rescue boat making a huge wash. That problem was solved when the rescue boat unfortunately ran aground. On we forged, with those tough competitors Bruce Goodall and Christine Lalor foxing with us all the way – short cuts, through

the weeds, anything to keep us guessing! Rob and Michael were putting up a big fight not far behind.

Round the buoy at the top mark we just had to stop to stretch and Bruce and Christine swept past. As we passed the others coming up to the mark they must have been thinking "Bruce has done them again!" But we could see them there in the distance and gradually we reeled them in.

It's actually quite hard to keep going knowing that a boat is behind on your tail. Eventually they exploded slightly and we caught up. They then showed great sportsmanship and stopped alongside us to help us plug our hatch cover which had disappeared. Good on them!

Off we went again and nearing the end I thought "Let's offer Bruce and Christine the tied time." Tony had other ideas. One kilometre before the end he turned into a werewolf and started goading me on to superhuman efforts and we sprinted to the end, dropping them by half a minute.

Tom Simmat, Julie Stanton and Roger Aspinall had been battling it out all the way and Julie actually waited for Roger. But the kindness was not returned as Rog sprinted away at the end alongside Tom. Tom won that one by a whisker, but all three put in great efforts, as did Rob and Michael.

Christie Brown was still out there paddling a while later, and she put in a great effort to finish the 47km

Our little crew had the greatest BBQ that night, everyone bringing a few things to eat. Yummy. Good weekend.

LCRK times for the 47km Myall River Classic included Tony Hystek/Tim Hookins 4.06.52, Rob Vallis/Michael Mueller 4.17.48, Tom Simmat 4.26.47, Roger Aspinall 4.26.47, Julie Stanton 4.35.59, Urs Mader/Arni Mader 4.50.17, Bert Lloyd/Trevor Williamson 4.53.48, Merridy Huxley/Warren Huxley 5.01.24, Stephen Russell 5.03.35, Don Rowston/Wade Rowston 5.06.31, Jeremy Spear 5.09.57, Stephen Paget 5.22.52, Wayne Wanders 5.44.50, Christie Brown 6.12.28, Ian Wilson 6.12.51, Nick Ridgwell 6.55.30, Ian Hofstetter DNF. Tim Sindle won the associated 24km race in 2.17.27. Michael Venter was 7th in the 12k with 1.26.20.

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Turkey — a paddler's paradise by Tony Carr



Al Bakker runs an outfit called Southern Sea Ventures. You may have seen his presentation at Pro-Kayaks a while back. He organises group trips for kayakers to some of the most exotic spots on the globe, including Norway, Greenland, Panama, South Georgia, Fiji, the Amazon, Croatia – and Turkey.

I signed up for one of his trips to the Mediterranean coast of Turkey – and it was a great decision. Lolling back on a beach for a couple of weeks is **not** my idea of a good holiday – I like to be busy and I particularly look for interaction with people when I'm overseas.

Active Turkey, as the trip was called, involved a week of walking the Lycian Way, which stretches 500km along the coast and is recognised as one of the world's top long distance walks, followed by a week of kayaking. We carried supplies in our brand new Prijons for the 7 days, camped on remote beaches each night, paddled beneath ancient tombs carved into sheer rock faces, did lots of swimming, visited hot springs and drank gallons of Turkish tea (served in glasses and tasting like a mix of rosehip and raspberry. Delicious!).

Our group consisted of five Australians, a Kiwi, two Americans and two guides (another Kiwi and a lady from the UK who was fluent in Turkish). All were outgoing adventurous types with a good sense of humour. We ribbed each other relentlessly and as one of the older guys present, I was on the receiving end of many of the jibes – "Tony, I'm just going to clean my teeth. If you give me yours I'll do them for you!"

One concern I had before signing up was that I'd end up with a bunch of people who'd never kayaked before. I was assured by Al that only experienced kayakers would be allowed on the trip, but remained sceptical. As it turned out all were competent. Three of us were into racing and we organised three races over the week – and Lane Cove River triumphed, which triggered more cracks about false teeth, hair pieces, penis transplants and hearing aids, all of which

they maintained gave me an unfair advantage!

We paddled from Gocek to Koycegiz and completed 20 to 25km over about six hours each day; total 170 or so for the week. The Mediterranean coastline is indented and very pretty, and whenever we stopped there were helpful and interesting locals on hand to involve us in their history and culture.

Mind you, the trip was not without its dramatic moments. We experienced heavy swells one day with several of the group suffering sea sickness. We also got caught in a



Ancient tombs are carved into the rock faces. Tony is in the foreground.

hailstorm when there were no convenient landing spots. And I don't think any of us will forget an attack by a swarm of bees! Particularly unpleasant for the ladies as the bees got caught in their hair and they were stung badly. Our trip leader was stung on the eyebrow and lost the sight of one eye for three days.

The trip was very well priced at \$2,295, including all food and accommodation. Of course you've got to get to Turkey, but I did the Sydney to Hong Kong sector on frequent flyer points, which helped a bit.

So, anyone interested in Panama?

Akuna Bay multisport

Alan Whiteman capped an outstanding day for Lane Cove competitors in the recent Go Natural multisport race from Akuna Bay to Apple Tree Bay, winning the men's veteran class.

Alan's overall time of 3.14.39 included 55.00 (2nd in his class) for the 31km cycle leg, 1.05.11 (3rd) for the 12km paddle and 1.14.26 (3rd) for the 14km cross-country run.

He finished 6th outright, just behind Matt Acheson whose 3.14.27 (54.31, 1.03.44, 1.16.11) earned him 5th spot in the open event.

Neil Meade was 31st in the open with a time of 4.22.51 (1.12.49, 1.19.54, 1.50.06).

Matt Blundell was in the winning open team (which also included Mike

Snell).

Other Lane Cove personnel in teams included Jeremy Spear, Tim Hookins, Jeff Bannerman, Tony Hystek and Grahame Horne.

Timekeepers

Oct 17 Chris Kent, Justin Paine
Oct 24 Wayne Mulder, Tim Dodd
Oct 31 No paddle (post-Classic BBQ)
Nov 7 Roger Aspinall, Julie Stanton
Nov 14 Simon Mann, Nick Chai
Nov 21 Frank & Marg McDonald, Ian Hofstetter (BBQ)
Nov 28 Wayne Wanders, Rob Grozier
Dec 5 Alan Whiteman, Derek Walker
Dec 12 Rob Vallis, Peter Giesbuhl
Dec 19 Tom Simmat, Cameron Schraner (BBQ)
Dec 26 No paddle

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