Tales from the SHOcKers

Trevor Nichols BoB 1 Time: 11:10:30

This was my third Hawkesbury and although had been paddling very well of late I was fairly anxious about how the race would go. Turn back the clock three weeks and I strained a back muscle in paddling the Lane Cove time trial. Surprisingly the injury didn't respond to my treatment of a week of peak training! Big thanks to the SHOcKers for



advice on what to do, and for inviting me to the pre-arranged 4pm 'bus' of Darren, Craig and Graham. Within 10 minutes of the start were leading the whole race and had John Duffy from Lane Cove join us for an hour or so. When we did drop him he turned on his music and we could hear him singing at the top of his lungs. I think he was enjoying the race!

There is always something that does not go to plan in the Hawkesbury. For me it was not properly closing the clamp on the tube from my water bottle with 2l of Tailwind in it and finding out that it all drained into my boat after my first sip. Luckily, I had ample water in my backpack.

This was the first year that I had to contend with wind and the resulting waves. I don't find this easy in daylight yet alone the pitch dark. We had a long downwinder into Wiseman's, where after a short stop to refuel and stretch, I got tossed into the water as I was leaving and had the swell side on to me. I only had about 50 spectators, so not too embarrassing. I found the last leg of the race the most enjoyable as we finally had a bit of moonlight and knew this part of the river from all our training. I did my third PB and was hugely relieved my shoulder did not blow up. The company of the lads through the night made it a more enjoyable experience. Glad I got my cousin along as landcrew. His wife told me he really enjoyed the event and meeting everyone.



Craig Salkeld BoB 1 Time: 11:10:30

After achieving a DNF in 2017 it was redemption time for me. The mistakes of the previous year needed to be overcome. It was a more stable ski, a whole lot more training, and a better plan of how to attack the race. The race plan was delivered by Darren in a milder effort to conserve energy for all four of us. Whilst,

sadly, Darren was not able to benefit, his plan delivered me to Wisemans feeling better than I ever have in previous races.

The HCC always provides experiences along the way, this year clear sky with stars and then later patches of very bright moonlight. But the wind was consistent the whole way. We managed to beat the worst of the quickly rising southerly which created a bumpy ride for the last 10km from Spencer, and even managed to have almost no holdups from car ferries.

After Wiseman's it was Graham (training via overseas holidays!) and Trevor (dodgy shoulder) who should have faced problems, yet we powered into the incoming tide. With 5km to go I was really starting to feel the pinch and when the finish line appeared we were ecstatic. I think the three of us probably didn't fully expect to finish when we started, so pulling up on the boat ramp was a celebration.

You can't have the Hawksbury experience without the help of others – my daughter Mimi and friend Daniel were there for me at Wiseman's. My wife Beth got up and drove down to the finish at 3am. My friends of LCRK providing immense support to us all, and not to forget all the volunteers for this race, particularly after the SES rescued me last year. Lastly the social yet punishing training runs with the SHOcKers. Never been happier to finish the HCC!!

Graham Cleland BoB 1 Time: 11:10:30

After not competing in the 2017 HCC, as I was trekking in Nepal, I was keen to give the 2018 event a go. My 5-week preparation was not ideal having spent the previous four weeks travelling in USA. All the predictions were for record times down the Hawkesbury this year, with favorable tides, near full



moon, clear skies and gentle winds. Well mother nature always throws in a few curved balls and this year was no exception.

The SHOcKers four – Craig, Darren, Trevor and I – headed off at 4pm in the first wave in hot balmy calm conditions. We quickly got into our rhythm and tow line formation, each having a go in front for one km then dropping back for the next to take over. It was a good feeling to be in the lead as we pulled away from the field at a comfortable pace.

We maintained our lead and formation into the first stop at Sackville at 35 km, just in front of a couple of women's doubles. A quick stretch, snack and water top up with our ground crew and we were off again bound for Wisemans with the sun setting in the west. With an incoming tide we hugged the edge still in tight formation. My lower back was feeling the pinch so as I swung off the front one time I leaned back for a stretch and all of a sudden I rolled and was in the drink. Foolishly I had put a small shark fin weedless rudder on my V10Sport the day before the event, so it was a little more tippy than usual. Note for next year: always test new equipment in training.

As day turned into night the river turned really dark as there was no moon and a cloud cover. It was an eerie feeling and made navigation and paddling all that more difficult. I was beginning to feel cold having had an earlier swim so was keen to get to the next stop. About an hour out of Wiseman's Darren was not feeling the best so we eased the pace a little. All of a sudden out of the darkness we heard Fitz and Brendan approaching in the double from behind "nice formation guys". Not a word from Brendan. With that they were gone and disappearing into the darkness ahead. They were absolutely flying.

We turned another bend and could see the light of Wiseman's way in the distance. But the wind had picked up from behind us and created a rolling chop against the incoming tide so it was quite a challenging paddle battling the swell, particularly with the small rudder for me, but at least it was pushing us along nicely. It was a relief to meet up with the ground crew again at Wiseman's. A welcome hand from one of the Lane Cove guys helped me up out of the ski - getting too old for this.

It was a challenging departure out of Wiseman's with the wind still gusting down the river creating a side slop. A few anxious moments getting out into the river as I didn't want to have another swim. I look around to see Trevor in the water bouncing around in the slop. Craig, Trevor and I managed to round the next corner in the slop, clear the two Wiseman's ferries without further incident and a relief to get into our rhythm and formation again in flat conditions out of the wind. After a few hours the clouds cleared allowing the moon to light up the river - great paddling conditions finally.

We pushed on to Spencer with a few stops for a gu and a snack. Always a great feeling to reach Spencer with the knowledge that the finish line is only 10km away. But still there were challenges ahead. We rounded the green marker out of Spencer into a stiff wind and rolling swell, which smashed into us all the way to Bar Point. We managed to keep some semblance of formation tow line but it was a real slog. I was thinking that the crossing at Bar Point could be really ugly! There were the usual strong eddies, but fortunately the crossing was calm – a pleasant surprise. Into the final channel and we could see the lights of Brooklyn Bridge and the finish line ahead. We had made it – what a great feeling.

The 111km conquered once again in a little over 11 hours, which is a little slower than expected but the conditions were tough. The 5th time for me. A big thank you to our SHOcKers team, ground crew - couldn't have done it without you guys working together all the way down the river as a team. A special thanks to Sal for coming out to Wiseman's to support me.



Darren Williams BoB 1 Made it to Wiseman's

2018 saw me fight the river and the river won – this year. After a solid build up with a respectable number of Ks under my paddle, I was looking forward to the night on the water, particularly as I would be racing with a core group of training partners that are also great friends, as well as with the LCRK club.

The first 40km went to plan with 4 of us leading an Epic tow line and holding a healthy pace but it wouldn't be a HCC if everything stayed that way. First the back, then the stomach fired up, I pushed through the first few waves as everyone does but with 10km to go before Wiseman's my old nemesis of dizzy spells started appearing. The guys stayed with me through to Wiseman's and I knew would stay beside me through to Mooney Mooney, but with increasing winds and memories of the swims I had two years before, I made the decision to DNF. It was one of the most gut-wrenching decisions and I had trouble talking as I called for a ride out whilst watching our group pull out and head off into the darkness. I tell myself it was the right decision. But no one likes the river winning.

Peter Fitzgerald & Brendan Trewartha

Men's Vet 40+ UN2 Time: 8:54:10

Fitzy: For me it's all about the training with the guys. It starts in earnest in August and plans begin to evolve. It's cold at 5 am in August at Apple Tree Bay, but everyone shows up. Then it builds to solid 30-40 km paddles in varying locations and often without coffee stops by September – so it's always disappointing when one of the team has a tough



night. I feel for Darren, he trained so well with all the guys – we all got fit over the winter months and the event to me marks the start of relaxing summer paddles and coffee at the harbour and beaches!

The pre-race drama was which craft to use, whether the Bull (Brendan) and I do it in the Red 7 or in singles. The Red 7 took its toll on us at Myall and was sold the week after, and we only paddled the second-hand Epic three times. But it's an Epic so all good! For the night itself I made it easy on myself: I found the best paddler I know up front so my job was easy, enjoy the night! And I did...

I was more of a broken record than usual in the last two hours from midnight onwards. I knew exactly where we were and I wanted the tide to turn, and Brendan had the dashboard of 3 Garmins. So I repeatedly asked "what's the speed", waiting for the above 12 reading to barrel home. It took till Spencer, and I started asking after Gunderman. It was a great night with the Bull, who is as hard as nails – see his hands. "You Ok Brendan? " – "Yeah I'm hurting everywhere" – "Me too," and we kept going full tilt. Disappointed we had worked so hard I couldn't eat my jam sandwich at Wiseman's. And yes No. 22 next year!!

Brendan: Third time for me, first time in a double, great to do it with Fitzy a 21st time veteran, top mate and absolute trouper when it came to keeping up a cracking pace in pretty tough conditions. We finished under nine hours, which is always an achievement and only 10min off the race leader. So no trophy, but I know there was nothing more either of us could give to the race. A real mental and physical challenge only matched by the warm reception by officials, mates and a well-earned glass of scotch to warm up at the end. Special mention to LCRK, race volunteers and our ground crew Adrian who was there for us start to finish. Hawkesbury 2019...still too sore to think about it!



Unknown blister, assumed to be Brendan's. Photo: SHOcKers

Surfing a K1

Ruby Ardren Ladies Vet 40+ K1 Time: 11:08:15

I bagged a wash ride with the girls in the K4 right from the start – they were in great spirits and paddling well. We had bogan children throwing rocks at us between Cattai and Sackville, with one rock hitting the K4 and fortunately none of us. I was happy to get a wash ride, but they were intent on enjoying their race, so I left them at Sackville and spent the rest of the race on my own. The bends were fairly uneventful, but they spat me out onto a long windy stretch into Wiseman's for some night surfing that got my heart beating. I didn't swear (unusual for me) so I must have felt in control



Ruby, with a disappearing boat!

despite the nose of the K1 diving into the waves and broaching constantly.

I was still wound up when I arrived at Wiseman's but had a quick stop and was back on the water to tackle the waves again. The ferry was playing up and light signals were a bit confusing, causing me to decide to turn a circle at the last minute. I could have done without having to go side-on to the waves but by the time I had finished my circle, the lights were off, the ferry wasn't moving and I set off downriver.

The long slog against the tide lasted until Checkpoint N, where I picked up speed again and decided I could still get back in time to get the record. I hit more waves on several sections between Checkpoint O and the finish, but nothing more than what I had experienced in the final Famil, so I was all set and knew I could handle it. I finished with a bigger total time than I had hoped for, but still beat the Women's 40+ K1 record by ten minutes, one that's been around for about ten years.

Thanks to Lane Cove for the Familiarisation Paddle from Wiseman's to the finish, and the amazing service at the checkpoints. My husband excelled as land crew this year, keeping my stops to the planned five and ten minutes. I was happy when I finished, and that's all you can hope for!



An exaltation of mudlarks waiting at Wiseman's

The Saga of Boat 183

Richard Yates & Duncan Johnstone Men's Vet 40+ UN2 Time: 10:03:25

Rich on the club: Among a race fleet of 285 paddlers in 210 boats, Lane Cove recorded 38 paddlers in about 28 boats, roughly 13 percent of the race fleet. As chief whip for the club this year (with a lot of help from Paul and others) it was my job to piece together the club tilt at the race. This proved to be a very easy task



The dynamic duo smiling through Pitt Town

because everyone was keen to help in any way they could.

Tony Carr, do you mind being Mr BBQ this year? Sure, I'd love to, here is a menu, what do you think?

Oscar, can you drive Tony's van from the dawn pickup and return it after the last Wisemans paddler? *Sure, happy to, but what else can I do in the middle of the day?*

Alanna and Tony, do you mind supplying the van for transport, the PA and the catering? Sure, we can also paddle the race and be your landcrew if you can't find someone.

Adrian, can you crew for Fitzy and Brendan please? Sure, my back is buggered and I'm jet lagged but where and when do you need me?

Keg, will you paddle the race with me? Keg? ...Keg?

On the saga of boat 183: Duncan and I were a late pairing with Keg and Matt pulling out through family commitments and injury. (No truth to the rumour that Matt was pushed down some stairs by a mystery assailant driving a Subaru with boat racks). Duncan and I managed at least four outings together in the Supersonic over the last month, a boat familiar to me but prior to this year, Duncan had paddled it only once. Poor Duncan was mortified when I told him that unfortunately we didn't qualify for Vet 50, but were in the more hotly contested V40. Still, our super landcrew, Dave Veivers and Liz applied antiflammatories and dispensed Nurofen at Windsor, took our bags of supplies and off we went.

We had a pyramid of goals, first was to finish, second was to be sub-10 and third was to beat Matt and Duncan's PB of 9:43.

We didn't speak much during the hotly contested Sackville leg, but when Duncan's first comment after 15km was "My shoulders are so sore" I thought we were in for a long night. We were following the massive pack of faster boats and wanting to keep the gap from stretching, but the pace increased. I think we went out a bit hot and early fatigue started to take its toll. Duncan started to have serious stomach issues and fluctuating energy levels. We pulled into Sackville on time but Duncan was very pale and needed something but we weren't sure what. David Veivers 'Mr Windsor' was on hand with more Nurofen, food and a quick change of top. A superb F1 turnaround from a submerged Keg saw us back in the water, but Duncan was feeling awful and not confident of a finish at all. We had that discussion of goal readjustment and decided that the PB was off, sub-10 was off and to finish was the goal (or hope)...then Duncan started vomiting.



"But I thought you said there was a sauna too?"

Now after my last year's adventure finished at Wisemans with an ill partner, and Duncan crook in the back, I was beginning to think that maybe Keg had the right idea as paddling the Classic with me makes people sick to their stomach...Anyway, leaving an aquatic equivalent of Hansel and Gretel's burley trail behind us we pressed on. Then the tide turned against us.

That, however seemed to galvanise Duncan and he went into Simmat mode, directing me from side to side, hugging the bank, watching out for jetties and buoys. He missed a couple of trees

but I didn't, and I was lucky not to decapitate myself in the dark on a couple of occasions. We pressed on through the terrible swell into Wiseman's into the waiting arms of the Qantas Lounge (paddling equivalent). Backrubs, food, drink, drugs and an enforced break. Fancy being told you had to rest a bit longer!

As Duncan's colour returned we discussed the next part of the race. Duncan was keen to finish. He was confident he could, so off we went to the customary (and always uplifting) cheers of the LCRK squad. Straight through the first ferry then another rest at the ferry around the corner, which let Duncan take off his extra layer. He was now too hot. We didn't need the GPS as Duncan was like Rain Man with his recollection of where we were and where the river went.

Fatigue was becoming a big factor for me. It was dark without the moon, and the boat was a little tippier than it normally is with a little less...ahem...weight on board. My cadence was all over the place and when the chop was up past Spencer I went into survival mode bracing against side swell. Remarkably, Duncan had found his second wind and just kept powering on behind. The thought of Bar Point played with my psyche but it turned out to be flat for us. The last 2kms of yucky side swell was just a final kick in the already sore bum.

We finished with a great sigh of relief and were again looked after by the LCRK finish crew. Someone helped me up the ramp, someone else took Duncan and others took the boat, it was like magic. Whoever you all were, thank you (I remember Allison in her big red hat.) As I sat in a director's chair wrapped in a blanket, surrounded by faces gaunt and pale, also cosseted in blankets, I was reminded of a retirement village on a cold evening.

I've always thought that the HCC is like a time machine. Have a look at yourself at the finish of the race and I reckon that's what you will look like in 10-15 years time. Luckily, that process reverses itself over the next 24-48 hours.

I think we came in after 10 and a half hours unadjusted, so we achieved only one of our goals, but it was the most important one, to finish. I take some comfort in finishing third in the V40 unrestricted doubles class. Sharing that specific podium with Fitz and Brendan, and those other two blokes who won the race is some serious reflected glory. Obviously Duncan and I were such a threat to those two crews that they blasted out of the start, too scared to look over their shoulders until they finished.

Duncan paddles with a heart monitor. I don't know why, seeing (and listening) to what he suffered through on Saturday night has me convinced he has plenty of ticker.

Low Tide and Lamingtons

John Duffy BoB 1 Time: 12:22:50

My HCC objective this year was to enjoy it, something that I felt was missing over the last two years. After successful Hawkesburys in the past, I didn't feel I had anything to prove in terms of performance, so I set out to do the best I could but



take some extended breaks. The extended Wiseman's layover was welcome but I had fully intended to stay that long anyway. I was welcomed into Low Tide Pitstop like an 18th-century sailor coming into Tahiti, and I wish all paddlers would find the time to do that at some point. Alanna's lamingtons at Wiseman's were fantastic. I ate more at Low Tide than I should have, and I weighed as much at the finish as I did at the start, which must be pretty rare. I have never been as close to falling out in the Sonic as I was downstream from Bar Point towards the finish and I was pleased with myself that I still had the alertness to manage that quite dangerous situation in the dark. I wasn't surprised when the race was called off just after that as I believe that was the right thing to do.

Objective achieved. Tick. And simply awesome Lane Cove management and support. Too many people to thank. I gather all of these people got a huge kick out of helping out.



Kenji Ogawa & Luke Keenan Brown BoB 2 98.5kms in 15:30:00

From Justin Payne: This was Kenji Ogawa's 24th Hawkesbury Classic, more than anyone else in Lane Cove colours (Richard Barnes has done more Classics, but not for Lane Cove). He didn't do any training and paddled in BoB2 with his daughter's boyfriend, Luke Keanan-Brown, *who hadn't paddled before*, but not to worry. Their Pitterak double steers

from the rear seat, which was Kenji, so Luke found himself in the front seat setting the tempo. Kenji gave him good advice at the start: "We're going to be slow and lots of boats will pass us. Watch the paddlers as they go past and try to do what they're doing." The Pittarak was overweight with provisions, and no stops were planned, or taken. It was a slow, lonely race at the back of the field but they were still smiling when they were stopped at Spencer because the race had been called off. By this time, Kenji said, Luke had accumulated fifteen and a half hours experience and his paddling technique had improved considerably. Kenji's final words to Luke were: "If we had caught a plane instead of a kayak we would be in Dubai now." *Merridy Huxley* BoB 1 98.5kms in 12:08:00

Interesting night. Took forever to get to Wiseman's but left and ended up following a bloke up McDonalds Creek, finally turned around but he wouldn't come back - never done that before! Found the second ferry and let them know there was a kayak up there. It took me a while to readjust to the fact that I was by myself for the majority of the race, as I thought I was going to paddle with Warren.



I was almost to checkpoint P and going much better than earlier in the race. Then got knocked over by a wave and was swimming until Mardi Barnes and Bob came along and helped me back in. Around the same time the race was called off at Spencer and we were told to turn around and paddle back. By then I was getting really cold and a boat took me back after I confirmed I wouldn't get a DNF. We were about 8kms past Spencer I think. So I will always wonder what the next 10kms would have been like? I was highly motivated to finish but I'll never know if I would have??!!

(I love seeing the bridge at Brooklyn.)

We lived at Fisherman's Point, opposite Bar Point for 12 years so I know that stretch of water like the back of my hand! There is absolutely nowhere to get out on land where I went in so I was very grateful when Mardi and Bob came along.

Warren very sick and pulled out at Sackville, he was very disappointed again.



Valet parking for your Mirage? Wiseman's has it all!

Short Tales of a Long Night

Tony Hystek

Men's Vet 60+ UN1 Time: 10:12:40

"Just after the ferry I nuzzled up to James and promptly tipped myself in, then I had a 17 minute swim. I couldn't get back in because I had all my food in my lifejacket. Thankfully Peter towed me the whole way, about two thirds of the river, which is pretty wide at that point, to the bank and helped me get back in.



Pete and James then modified their pace, which meant we weren't going to break any records, but we just finished nicely. We had a really enjoyable last bit of the race from Wiseman's down to the finish. We all supported each other, so when some people were struggling in the rough we would find a way around it. It's just one of those really great experiences."



Richard Barnes & Chris Stanley BoB 2 98.5kms in 12:32:00

"So, Chris and I did our second year in Kermit, and we definitely weren't going to be setting any records. But there are two records that I could mention. One of them is that Tony Carr, the chef down at Wiseman's, still had food when we arrived! So that was one record, which was really nice. Second record: my dad is

definitely the person that has done the most landcrewing out of anyone here. Thirty-seven years this year!

I had a strategy this year, lead-up training! I did training. I went to Ecuador, and did two weeks of wildwater paddling over there. So when we got to just past Spencer and were told 'it's too rough, you can't go on', it was such a waste of that Ecuador training.

I'd like to tell you a quick story about two other people that I saw on the day up at the start. Some of you might've seen them – they had really short, really fat plastic boats. Did any of you hear what they did on the night? One of them had paddled five times before in his life. The other one had never been in a canoe before. So this was setting out to do the Dash. They made it from the start to Sackville. They were told there they weren't going to make it any further, they were too slow. They'd arranged to have their car down at Wiseman's. So they thought 'how are we going to get from Sackville to Wiseman's? We can't paddle, we're too slow.' So those guys ran the whole way! 27kms after they'd done 32kms to Wiseman's. I think that's a great adventure."

Rumours that Tony and Richard are planning a 2019 Hawkesbury Triathlon yet to be confirmed ...

Rob Llewellyn-Jones

Men's Vet 60+ ORS1 Time: 13:03:58

Rob decided he needed a rest after Checkpoint O:

"Found a convenient jetty – luckily there were no inhabitants nearby with shotguns – and I lay flat on my back with my eyes closed. I'm sure people that have done the HCC before many times can identify with that feeling that you just want a nice long rest.



There was suddenly a voice: "Oi", and I cocked one eye open "Oi", and I thought 'here we go, we've got the little green men again'. I had the little green men dancing in the water, the disco band, all that stuff was happening. And I suddenly thought yes, this is about to happen again. I got the fright of my bloody life, got back in the boat and paddled for my life until the finish. And at the last checkpoint they said to me 'didn't you know they'd stopped the race'. And I didn't. Probably because I was hiding on the side of the bank having my little siesta. And I kept thinking as I half-opened my eyes, 'why is that power boat going up and down the river at this time of night with its lights flashing?' Causing wake, making the chop worse!

Anyway, I'm very glad that I finished. The absolute best part was seeing my daughter rushing into my arms just as I finished, and seeing me finish. I can't say that I'll definitely be back next year, but I hope to be."



David Young Men's Vet 50+ ORS1 Time: 9:33:39

"My plan was to bludge, and that's what I did. I was lucky enough to jump on the back of this pack of ten boats, headed by the doubles of the Hobbits, Mark and Caroline, and also with us were James, Pete and Tony. And I was third wave, and I basically surfed all the way from the start to Sackville.

I enjoyed the surf so much that I told myself the only way to get to Wiseman's was to find another double. I left, I think, before everybody else and paddled the first 6kms on my own, and then

thankfully Mark and Caroline came past again, and I bummed another ride. My only contribution was to guide them down the river. They had the speed, and I had the navigation. Struggled a bit getting into Wiseman's with the chop. I had a good stop at Wiseman's, my longest ever I think.

The heart rate went up after the chop at Wiseman's I struggled to get the heart rate down from there to the finish. Then I had a lonesome paddle to the finish. Like everybody else cursed the last 12kms with a headwind. Came in at 9 hours 34. Very happy with that under the circumstances."

Mark Hempel & Caroline Marschner

Mixed Open UN2 Time: 9:27:00

Mark: "That was four under my belt, and Caroline's first one. She's done the Dash before, but never the *real* race. When we first talked about it, it was going to be a twelve-hour mosey, we were just going to take our time and cruise down the river. I had my doubts about that, I know the competitive nature here. Then that in the end



turned into a record-chasing debacle. We were really pleased, we had a good race plan. We had a time schedule that we told others, and then a time schedule that we kept to ourselves. We beat the one that we told everyone else, but we didn't get the one that we really wanted."

Caroline: "I had to eat 15 gels to maintain my energy. That equals pretty much 15 coffees along the way! The Optimizer helped, four and a half litres of Optimizer along the way. I was just on a constant sugar high the whole way. I just enjoyed it! I didn't feel any pain!"



Gareth Stokes & Peter Faherty Men's Open UN2 Time: 9:13:55

Gareth: "Off the start, to have that group that we had. There was Mark and Caroline, James and Peter, Tony. Other people behind. David. Just to have that crew going across the river was just something special, we were all laughing and giggling and having a great time.

We had a race plan that we only wanted to stop at Wiseman's due to the tide. While it was on we wanted to keep going, and I think that worked really well. We got going again after Wiseman's, and then got caught up in a fishing line, there's a big pontoon on the right. It was a thick fishing line, so I don't know what the hell he was fishing for, but it must've been a pretty big fish! So we got clear of that, then everything becomes a bit hazy. I had a few gels as well, I think I beat Caroline, I had about 18 for the trip. I thought I was going troppo, but it was the bioluminescence. It was magic, I'd never seen it before. We actually beat most of the wind, and so we saw the bioluminescence twice.

From then on it was taking leads with Suzie and Mitch. Credit to them, they got us on the line about 200 metres from the end. It was a hard race. We'll be back next year, and hope to see you a lot more in the training sessions leading up."

And if the HCC wasn't enough excitement, Peter's son Heath came into the world the following Monday night! Nawwww.

Cathy Miller Ladies Vet 50+ LREC1 98.5kms in 12:47:00

"After I did the first HCC, I asked my sister-inlaw who's a psychologist 'how do I do a marathon?' And straight off the top of her head she said 'small milestones, frequent rewards.' So that's it, you're only ever going to the next corner, the next bend. Checkpoint A, down! Scrutineering, down! I really revved myself up with all those milestones.



I don't have any gels, because in a Mirage 580 I have a little glove box, and I have a choice of bars. I have different flavours, peanut ones, choc-chip ones. I have rice cream, and banana wraps with peanut butter, and a thermos of tea. You know, that's just what you do. A change of clothes. Clearly I'm not after speed."

Views from Behinds the Lens

Ian Wrenford

2018 was my fourth HCC, none paddled mind you, all landside – so not sure if that counts towards anything...

My main priority this year was getting photographic coverage of paddlers as they passed through Pitt Town (Percy's Place). Percy's is some 9km downstream on a hairpin bend with the paddlers invariably coming in tight on the bend, still fresh, and with smiles still on their faces. The lighting was good (behind the photographer) and the backdrop is great (landscaped Wilberforce river frontages). Great conditions for taking piccies.

With high tide at Windsor scheduled for 3:55pm, I took particular interest in the tide (and current) at Pitt Town. When I arrived at 4:15pm there was evidence the water levels had indeed dropped (say 2-3 cm) however twigs and debris were still flowing upstream. It took another 20 minutes or so for the

current to work out the tide had changed (and this fits very nicely with what we've modelled in the HCC calculator).



Tony Carr the 'BBQ Boy' at Wiseman's

The first paddlers were expected a little after 4:50pm – given their 4pm start and a say 10km/h pace. Whilst patiently waiting, an errant speed boat (beers in hand) sped upstream around 4:30pm, followed a little later by a SES boat, and a few minutes later by a Maritime boat. Shortly after – the speed boat returned, and the Maritime boat, and then the first batch of 4pm BOB1 paddlers.

I'd positioned myself waist deep in the water with the aim of a) getting up close and b) getting the camera at the same height as the paddler. And good tips from LCRK's camerista including Tom Holloway and James Pralija.

A few highlights:

- The K4. I'd pre-warned them to keep an eye out for me. But that wasn't coded in the GPS track. Nevertheless, Wendy still executed a handbrake turn for the photo opportunity.
- The 4:15pm Women's start in particular the LCRK tag team of Naomi/Sophie Johnson and Rae Duffy/Alison Curtin in the early stages of their paddling partnership to Wiseman's and beyond.
- The 5:15pm had a flotilla of washriders out in front MOST of them LCRKers and a real challenge to get happy snaps of ALL of them as they flew past. Nearly caused whiplash...
- The Canoes the HCC had attracted a good number of Canoes including visitors from Victoria and overseas great camaraderie and some serious competition evident.
- The Armidale crew (combo of University and School contingents) invariably happy, invariably equipped with music (loud), invariably serious.
- The happy campers ashore 100m downstream of me with colour-matched wakeboat, esky and 4WD ute playing music, LOUDLY. The music? Some Country AND some Western! Johnny Cash! John Denver. John Duffy lingered then realised this was not yet the Low Tide Pitstop....
- The 'last two' paddlers in sit-on-top boats and with little experience. Happy as. (Apparently they ran from Sackville to Wisemans after missing the cut-off)

From there it was onto Wiseman's to be greeted by the LCRK facilities with Oscar, Wade, Tony Carr, Alanna, Alex evidently having been busy for a while. The tide was low – very low, with the infamous Wiseman's mud on show. Over the next few hours, the tide came in and so too did the doubles pairings of Naomi/Sophie and Rae/Alison, and Fitzy/Brendan then it started to get busy! Tony Carr was in his element playing host and manning the BBQ. The rising tide allowed the mudlarks to utilise the reeds for multi-stack parking which came in particularly handy when the river was closed for ferry towing. A late night for me – but not as those who stayed back for final Wiseman's boats and final Wiseman's pack-up (Oscar last out at what must have been 2am rounding out his 21-hour day?). Well done everyone – paddlers, volunteers and the organisers!



Ian and other landcrew taking advantage of the BBQ at Wiseman's

Wonderful Volunteers

What would the race be without our wonderful Lane Cove volunteers? From those who picked up vans at the crack of dawn to those who spent the evening boat spotting at Sackville. Those who kept us warm and dry at Wiseman's while the ferry was being sorted, and then set us on our way again once the river was open. Who laughed and cheered, forced us to eat the food we said we'd eat, and didn't once question our sanity in undertaking such a crazy event.

Paddling the Classic is hard work, but you made it a fantastic and much easier night. Thank you!

HCC Organising Committee: Roger Deane, Richard Barnes
Equipment and transport: Oscar Cahill, Tony Hystek
HCC direct volunteers: James Farrell, Elke van Ewyk and more
HCC starting officials: Paul van Koesveld, Matt Swann
Photos and video: Ian Wrenford, Oscar Cahill and Tim Hookins
Windsor set-up, sales and decamp: Oscar Cahill, Paul van Koesveld, Matt Swann, Alanna Ewin, Wade
Rowston, Alex Brown, Lesley Manley, Allison Bilbow and more
Sackville checkpoint team: Peter Harris (coordinator), Nettie Harris, Tim MacNamara, David Veivers,
Adrian Clayton, David Hammond AND Tony D'Andreti (deep in the water)
Wisemans checkpoint team: Wade Rowston (coordinator), Oscar Cahill (again), Alex Brown, Chris
Johnson, Paul van Koesveld, Adrian Clayton, Ian Wrenford (still taking photos)
Mudlarks: Alex Brown (chief lark), Jeff Tonazzi, Chris Johnson
Wisemans masseur extraordinaire: Don Rowston
Finish line welcome, support and video: Tim Hookins, Phil Geddes, Kevin Mulally, Alanna Ewin and lots more smiling faces

Hawkesbury Famils: Duncan Johnstone River guru, tactician and dark arts: Tom Simmat General coordination, hassling and systems: Rich Yates, Paul van Koesveld and Ian Wrenford Report author and editor: Naomi Johnson



Oscar and Paul capture the energy of the HCC at Windsor