



KAYAK KAPERS

April 2011

Wet start for the 2011 Marathon Series

The 2011 marathon series began at Woronora on March 19, with Sutherland Shire Canoe Club hosting the first race in a 9-event program. Despite a menacing weather forecast and heavy rain falling on the day, the race attracted over a hundred competitors which was pretty respectable in the circumstances.

Lane Cove had 15 boats in the various divisions. Although this is a fair representation for any single club, many of our regulars were missing. The inclement weather and a harbour series race scheduled for the following day no doubt contributed to this.

Toby Hogbin was our star performer on the day, clearing out in division 2 and winning by a country kilometre, as they say in this metric age. His time of 1.37.43 was outstanding in the conditions and nearly 3 minutes ahead of the nearest competitor.

There were no portages due to the race starting at high tide and covering the beach, but Toby joked with others that if they could find a portage close to a suitable coffee shop he was prepared to pull in.

The best of our other paddlers were Bob Turner with a 3rd in division 5 and Derek Simmonds, series winner of division 6 last year, 6th in that division. It was good to see Craig Elliott down for the day from his new home in the Hunter Valley. He was a DNF in division 3.

The rain prevented timekeepers from using a computer to record results, but provisional hand-recorded results were up on the PNSW website in good time.

It was disappointing that again there was no division 1. Divisions 2 and 3 had only 5 and 4 competitors respectively.

Nearly half the total field were in divisions 5 and 6, while divisions 7, 8 and 9 with their shorter distances had over a third of the field. After the race a number of division 4, 5 and 6 paddlers were promoted to the next highest division, so that is a move in the right direction and may even the numbers out a bit.

The Marathon Committee hopes to put a series of controversies from the 2010 series behind it and return the series back to its previous high standing. It has Vajda as its prime sponsor and Vajda will supply some kayaks as major prizes for the series.

In the 9-division format, divisions 1-6 remain as 20km events. Division 7 is 15km. Division 8, over 10km, is intended for paddlers just starting out or for "those who think they can be more competitive over this distance", and division 9, also over 10km, is for "veterans who want to be competitive but not do the longer distances".

And some worthwhile and overdue promotion has come in the



Marathon regulars Tony Waker, Bert Lloyd and Liz Winn at Woronora

form of a mailing to last year's competitors of a certificate detailing their 2010 results and a colourful, professionally printed program for the 2011 series.

The Marathon Committee also announced that it has "revamped" the NSW Marathon championships and moved it back to July 2-3 at the Penrith Regatta Centre. Senior singles and junior doubles will be on the Saturday, and junior singles and senior doubles on the Sunday.

M9 Race 1 Woronora

Competitor	Div	Time	Plc
Toby Hogbin	2	1.37.42	1
Tony Hystek/ Liz Wilson	2	1.43.21	4
Craig Elliott	3	DNF	
Nigel Collis	4	1.54.22	11
Bob Turner	5	1.57.48	3
John Greathead/ Tony Walker	5	1.59.15	15
Wayne Wanders	5	2.06.53	17
Wade Rowston	5	2.13.13	19
Derek Simmonds	6	1.59.34	6
Bert Lloyd/ Don Rowston	6	1.59.37	7
Richard Lindsay	6	2.07.50	15
Liz Winn	6	2.07.58	16
Paul van Koesveld	6	2.10.15	19
Andrew Kucyper	6	2.18.00	23
Justin Paine	6	DNF	
Friederike Welter	9	DNF	



Derek Simmonds and Nigel Collis

Hawkesbury famils are in doubt

At this stage it seems unlikely that there will be any Hawkesbury Classic familiarisation paddles this year.

Windsor Canoe Club has withdrawn as organiser of the well-known and popular series, and its future is now in doubt.

The club is willing to hand over the reins to another organiser, and tentative dates have been set.

The 4-event series has become a major preparation tool for many kayakers planning to do the Classic – both veterans and first-timers.

It included separate paddles from Windsor to Sackville, from Sackville to Wisemans Ferry, from Wisemans Ferry to Spencer, and from Brooklyn-Spencer-Brooklyn. This covered the whole route of the Classic in sections of not much more than 30km. In addition to familiarising paddlers with the river it also gave them an opportunity to test their limits and provided good training.

Sprint titles

Results of the NSW sprint championships held at the SIRC on February 27 included:

1000m. 35+ K2 Jason Cooper/Steve Paget 1st 4.24. 35+ K1 Jason Cooper 2nd 4.45, John Thearle 3rd 5.05. 55+ K1 Tony Hystek 1st 4.20 John Greathead 4th 6.05.

500m. Open K1, heat 2 Tony Hystek 5th 2.06, Jason Cooper 7th 2.21; heat 3 John Thearle 9th 2.30, Nigel Colless 10th 2.35. Open K2 Jason Cooper/Steve Paget 6th 2.47.

200m. 35+ K1 Jason Cooper 1st 0.53, John Thearle 2nd 0.57. 55+ K1 Tony Hystek 1st 0.48, John Greathead 4th 1.10. 45+ K1 Nigel Colless 6th 0.57. 35+ K2 Jason Cooper/Steve Paget 1st 0.48.

Kayakers hit the mountains

Lane Cove paddlers-turned-cyclists did extremely well in the arduous 240km 3 Peaks bike race through Victoria's alpine region on March 13.

Times were around 2 hours faster than last year, partly due to the fact that there was no repeat of 2010's freezing conditions and the riders were not plagued by punctures in epic proportions.

"But we also trained better and we were better prepared," said Graeme Jeffries.

"Temperatures ranged from 25° down to 14°. There was rain and fog for about half the course, and there was also sunshine. And all this with spectacular alpine views."

The results for the LCRK riders were Dave Kavanagh 10.40.39 85th, Graeme Jeffries 11.32.02 198th, Steve Paget 11.40.30 214th, and Rob Vallis 12.35.24 446th. Simon Mann pulled out at the half way mark, Dinner Plain. Former LCRK member Jeff Bannerman did 12.24.44 and was 384th.

"It was a pretty fair effort for a bunch of kayakers," said Graeme. "It was a fantastic ride and we're all going back next year."

The Lane Covers were part of a group of 14 competing under the name Mid Life Cyclists. The race, a loop ride from Falls Creek ski lodge which included Mt Hotham, included 4060 metres of vertical climbing, and the same amount of descending. There were 1021 starters and 764 finishers – a pretty high attrition rate.

Harbour racing a great success

The Harbour Racing Series, now in its second year, is proving extremely popular and attracting big fields, including plenty of competitors from Lane Cove.

"When you get over 100 entries online for the first event of the year, and a total of 120 or 130 on the day, that tells you you're on to a good thing," said PNSW President Tony Hystek.

"It's a great success story. The race on Lake Macquarie, in particular, was an outstanding day."

Wayne Wanders likes it because it's different. "There's somewhere different to paddle, and you meet a different bunch of people. The paddling is different – bumpier. The only problem has been that's it's rained every day, and there was a lot of debris and weed at Northbridge, but it's been good fun."

In his series debut race at Northbridge, Richard Robinson put a small rudder on his ski and avoided the weed-collecting problems that most other skis – with large rudders – experienced. The result? He finished fastest of the LCRK team on the day.

Tom Simmat, who is more experienced in this sort of racing than some of the others, likes the series because it goes to "interesting places". "There's a bit of rough stuff but not too much," he said.

Most of the competitors turn up with skis, but there are some sea kayaks as well, and Len Hedges drives an outrigger. John Thearle joined the series for the first time at Northbridge with his Sonic and had no problems with the conditions. He wore a skirt, which was useful in keeping out the rain but he did not experience waves coming over the top.

Gold tradition lives on in NZ

by Derek Simmonds

Frank McDonald pioneered defeating the Kiwis when he crossed the ditch to bring home gold in tennis in 2007. Tony Carr won gold in the 60+ kayak sprint and marathon and silver on the rowing machine in 2010.

Following in their footsteps, yours truly medalled at Wanganui this year – gold in the kayak 60+ marathon and bronze in the 500 and 1000m sprints.

After a lot of emails, I organised the loan of a boat from the River Canoe Club. I got to try it with their dawn squad two days before the races. Called a TK1 (not to be confused with our TK1s), it turned out to be a tubby, flat-bottomed, slightly overweight K1. Matches the paddler you might be thinking. It proved to be stable, comfy and not too quick, but neither was I after not having been in a boat for a month. Oh well, you wouldn't expect them to lend their best boat to an Aussie, even if he was an ex-pat Kiwi.

The races were held on the beautiful Wanganui River, famous locally for being NZ's Rhine. Most paddlers were in impressive NZ multisports such as Sassoons and Ruahinis. My heart sank when the two expert-looking K1 paddlers in a new Vadja and Cleaver-X turned out to be in my class.

The sprints were a laneless free-for-all with a strong current. I've never sprinted so fast at Penrith! The "marathon" turned out to be a 10km sprint with 5½ laps, 2 fighting the current. After the sprints, 10km was enough. When I wobbled through the nasty eddies and a bit of wind chop on the turns, I was grateful for the tubby K1.

The Wanganui Club has about 30 members, most of whom rarely paddle. Nonetheless, they have a clubhouse we would envy, and they are extending it in the near future. They were bemused when they heard about our venue. They have two or three crack paddlers and their emphasis is on the development of competitive juniors.

Kayak politics appear to be uncannily similar to ours. I was told NZ Canoeing was almost bankrupt three years ago, but was bailed out by a one million dollar development grant from the government. Then the rivalry really broke out. Most of the money was soaked up by elite paddlers, including training coaches. Very little found its way to the average punter or recreational paddler, even though enjoying the waterways of Godzone is a very popular pastime.



Competitor	Plc	Time	Cat	plc
Race 1 Cronulla Challenge Feb 12				
Tony Hystek	14	1.19.12	2	
Roger Aspinall	39	1.25.14	4	
Tom Simmat	50	1.27.29	1	
Neil Carlyle	55	1.29.48	2	
Steve Paget	61	1.31.36	26	
Len Hedges	84	1.42.13	1	
Wayne Wanders	89	1.44.43	3	
James Mumme	96	1.55.38	19	
Evan Oppen	DNF			
Tom Holloway	DNF			

Race 2 Paddlefest Lake Macquarie March 6				
Long course				
Matt Blundell	1	1.35.24	1	
Tony Hystek	7	1.41.37	2	
Tom Simmat	23	1.52.12	1	
Craig Elliott	25	1.53.22	8	
Roger Aspinall	26	1.53.29	6	
Neil Carlyle	30	1.58.17	2	
Wayne Wanders	43	2.07.50	2	
Len Hedges	48	2.10.28	2	
Short course				
Jeff Tonazzi	9	1.04.19	3	
Andrew Kucyper	17	1.13.21	3	

Race 3 Northbridge Challenge March 20				
Richard Robinson	11	1.24.32	3	
Tony Hystek	13	1.26.15	1	
Tom Simmat	26	1.30.42	1	
John Thearle	33	1.32.53	2	
John-Paul McLoone	34	1.33.01	5	
Andrew Mathers	35	1.34.05	3	
Rod Stublej	39	1.34.49	21	
Trevor Distin	40	1.36.03	7	
Wayne Wanders	47	1.42.22	4	

Race 4 Sydney Harbour Challenge April 2				
Long course				
Matt Blundell	7	1.14.55	2	
Tony Hystek	13	1.17.20	2	
Tom Simmat	44	1.27.00	1	
Tim Hookins	45	1.27.01	7	
Evan Oppen	50	1.28.36	12	
Jeremy Spear	66	1.40.07	2	
Wayne Wanders	67	1.40.16	3	
Neil Carlyle	DNF			
Short course				
Jeffrey Tonazzi	6	52.29	1	

Open water champs

The NSW Open Water Championships at Coffs Harbour on Feb 19 had a disappointingly small field – how often has that happened with State championships – but it was an excellent course and a good race. The race started at Woolgoolga, 25km to the north, and finished at Coffs. Four LCRK paddlers made the trip, with the following results:

Competitor	Time	Plc	Cat	plc
Tony Hystek	1.57.45	16	5	
Roger Aspinall	2.03.30	20	7	
Tom Simmat	2.04.31	23	1	
Tim Hookins	2.11.38	30	2	
Results from a 15km race the following day were:				
Roger Aspinall	1.28.08	14	6	
Tony Hystek	1.30.20	15	7	
Tim Hookins	DNF			

Wednesday nights at the pontoon

with Tim Dodd



There's nothing like paddling on Wednesday nights in the three-month season sandwiched between Christmas and the end of daylight saving. Balmy evenings with lots of light, nobody's thinking about an imminent big race and the paddling is a sheer pleasure.

Quite a few members - Andrew Mathers, Nigel Colless, Tom Holloway, Jeremy Spear and Toby Hogbin come to mind - used the time to make the transition to K1s. Not that Toby needs a K1 to go any faster but he was out there in the Vajda entertaining onlookers with at least one capsized in full view of the pontoon.

No doubt there were a few other spills, not all of them publicly documented, but at least Andrew had a very good excuse. On the last Wednesday before daylight saving, a motor boat doing about 6 knots came up the river right through our fleet (where are you Maritime NSW?) going just fast enough to create giant waves which had all the K1s scrambling for cover.

It caught Andrew Mathers in a K1 at his time of maximum vulnerability making the turn at Figtree. He had no chance. In my four year's paddling with LCRK it's the first time I've seen a motor boat disturb the time trial. Let's hope it remains rare.

It's been great to see more junior paddling this year. Hayden Tonazzi has been out doing the 6km course most Wednesday nights and been rewarded with a huge improvement in his times. Alec Wilson has joined dad Ian in the 730 on the 6km course and has been really pushing hard from the back. Their times have also been plunging.

Justin Paine has also made a comeback in the 6km. He led the way in being the first to do a time around the 12km course which beat his age, we now are waiting on Justin to achieve a second "first" - recording a time for the 6km course which is half his age.*

Speaking of the 6km course, Toby Hogbin made a very rare foray on to the short course and posted a 6km time of 25.06. It's a record. So if you think you can knock that one off, line up here.

Other members have taken the opportunity to use the long Wednesday evenings for a non-competitive paddle. Marie Carr, Elke van Ewyk and Friederike Welter, among others, have been out there.

Nothing can stop the continual push for better times and a few people have made notable improvements in the last couple of months. Tom

Holloway and Nigel Colless are pushing each other down in their K1s, Paul van Koesveld broke the 70 barrier, John Duffy and Phil Geddes are steadily chiseling their times downward, and Jeffrey Tonazzi has unleashed his inner paddler in his new Epic V8.

Speaking of things changing, there are names in sport which belong together and just shouldn't be separated - Woodforde and Woodbridge, Torville and Dean, Ellis and Gilbert. Nonetheless it is true that Craig Ellis and Scott Gilbert have pried themselves out of the Supersonic and have been seen paddling solo. Can't we rely on anything these days?

Another unexpected event was the bushfire which swept through the Lane Cove National Park on February and reached the water's edge just upstream from the pontoon. We're lucky it wasn't a paddling night but we did have to use a modified course the week after to keep out of the way of the emergency services.

Now for something completely expected. Pedaling paddler Derek Simmonds is on the water again after a nasty incident on his bike in January. We knew you wouldn't be away long, Derek.

Welcome to three new members in recent months - Hayden Tonazzi, Rowley Alexander and Charles Colclough.

Finally we have two new immortals, members of that select band founded by Justin Paine who have paddled the 12km course in less than their age in minutes. Tim Hookins and Tom Simmat achieved this feat within a week of each other in February. The next member poised for greatness is Tony Hystek. If, after his birthday on May 23, he can shave 4 seconds off the 55.03 he recorded in February, he will be there. Many happy returns Tony.

By the way I always have thought the best month for breaking records is February. Something to do with seasonal biorhythms.

But now the darkness is upon us. So when you leave the glare of the athletic field lights, just plunge into the inky blackness, fend off the mangroves' ghostly tendrils and embrace the night.

Winter is a great season to go paddling.

* Note from the Editor: It's already happened, Tim - 37.40 on March 30, which is less than half of 76.

Beat Your Age

Two more paddlers have joined the exclusive Beat-Your-Age "club" by recording times (in minutes) for the LCRK Wednesday night time trial course which are less than their age (in years).

Tim Hookins, 61, was the first to do so, completing the course in 60.48 on Feb 9.

A week later Tom Simmat, 62, also joined the exclusive list with a time of 61.35. And to prove it was no fluke, he did a 61.57 two weeks later.

Tony Hystek, with a 54.07 on Feb 2, equalled his age but that was on a shortened course. He previously had a 55.03 and he's bound to crack the 54 minute barrier so we'll hold off for him.

The only others to have achieved this feat are Justin Paine, Don Andrews and Tony Carr.





Tom Simmat has been awarded the prestigious Andrew McAuley Trophy in recognition of his amazing feat last year in winning, with teammate Steve Pizzey, the world's longest canoe race, the Yukon 1000. The award is made by LCRK to a member who has undertaken an extraordinary kayaking task and is an ambassador to the spirit of kayaking. It was presented by Vicki McAuley, widow of the legendary kayaker after whom it is named, and young son Finlay at the club's March BBQ. Tom described aspects of the challenging 1600km race through northern Canada and Alaska. In particular he said he did not appreciate until later the dangers posed not only by wildlife like bear, moose and cougars but also the sheer desolation of the area where a smashed boat or an accident would leave competitors hundreds of kilometres from the nearest town. Before the BBQ Vicki and Finlay joined LCRK members on the water, Vicki looking very comfortable in a Flyer despite not having paddled for a long time (note the M in the number-holder), and Finlay joining Tim Hookins in his Supersonic. Finlay is very enthusiastic about kayaking and Vicki is looking for a suitable boat for him.

Dangers of kayaking in the wilderness

by Tom Simmat

There were four incidents that occurred on the Yukon 1000 that in hindsight have reinforced to me how quickly and unexpectedly things can go wrong.

On the second night, daylight was closing in on us and we knew that within the half hour we would need to find a camping spot. My partner, Steve Pizzey, was about 20 metres behind me and the river at this point was running particularly fast. I was approaching what appeared to be a small island, making sure I gave the gravel bank at its head plenty of room.

Steve yelled: "I am going right, the water is going faster."

I was already committed to going left and I thought I would pick him up just downstream. The "island" turned out to be not a small island and I found myself following what became a different branch of the river.

As soon as I found some fast water entering on my right, some 15 minutes later, I pulled into an eddy and waited for Steve. I waited another agonizing 15 minutes.

What had happened to him? Was he ahead of me? Had he fallen out? How was I going to paddle upstream to find him? And it was getting dark.

We had short-range, two-way radios for such a situation and I was just getting mine unwrapped when he appeared around the corner.

Not such a big deal, but I was determined not to let that happen again.

So a couple of days later, in similar circumstances, we had found some fast current, about 10km an hour. We were approaching an island. This was in the Yukon Flats where the river basin is more than 15km wide and each major channel is perhaps more than a kilometre wide and riddled with gravel banks and grounded tree stumps. We were more than 200km from the nearest village.

Steve yelled out "The way point is on the left of the island" and he took off. Not wanting to lose him again, I turned back, the river was fast and sprinting against the current I could just make headway. Exhausted, I got to the tip of the island and as I turned to go around it a very sharp tree root coming out from a broken stump appeared. I tried my best to get past it but crack! It hit me just behind the cockpit. If the back compartment had not been stuffed tight with gear I am

sure it would have holed the boat. I would have been pushed into the 3°C water – and Steve was long gone in this very remote part of Alaska. I would have been left with whatever else was overnighing on that particular island.

Many have heard the story about the cougar that swam across only a couple of metres ahead of my kayak. We laughed it off at the time as a great wildlife chance encounter, but in talking to a few people after the race they said that perhaps the cougar thought we were an easy meal and had smelt our approach and come out to take us on. It probably changed its mind only as we approached. It was a very big cat. I would have had no hope had it taken me on.

I read on the way home from Alaska the story of Timothy Treadwell, who made the mistake of becoming over-familiar with bears and camped in a bear path. He and his girlfriend were eaten.

That first night in, after crossing Lake Laberge, I camped in what I know now was a bear path. And on the path in the morning was fresh bear scat.

No matter how much you plan and minimise the risks, if a number of small incidents stack up against you the situation can quickly become life threatening.

I have had dozens of examples in my bush walking, ocean yacht racing and kayaking experiences.

I am sure that Andrew McAuley was well prepared for his Tasman crossing and had minimised the risk, but at the wrong time a series of small incidents, none of which on their own was a problem, stacked themselves against him, as they could have against Steve and me.

I admire Vicki and Finlay for their enormous ongoing support of Andrew.

As I also admire my wife Christine for hers. Encouragement is not the right word, but certainly support. I have dragged her now four times to Canada and Alaska. Once committed, Christine was with me all the way. As were Kobi and Fiona and in past years Daen.

It was Christine who arranged all the very difficult day-to-day logistics in this remote part of the world, and while in the Yukon I paddled only sixteen hundred kilometres she drove over four and a half thousand.

The Doctor – what a great event! The best!

by Tim Hookins

The Doctor, the 28km surfski championship event from Rottnest Island back to Perth, was held on Saturday January 22 in perfect conditions with 266 paddlers vying for honours and many thousands of dollars worth of prize money.

None of that came my way but we had a great paddle anyway. The race was won by Timmy Jacobs, our NSWIS paddling coach who came from 7th in 2010 and 9th in 2009 to win in a beach sprint finish against Bruce Taylor from Queensland. The Mocke brothers from Cape Town came in 3rd, and 4th, also in a sprint finish. Dawid Mocke won the event last year.

We took the 10.30 ferry from Hillarys Marina out to the island and prepared ourselves for the great event in hot sultry conditions. Pulled on my Unleash Compressions, full top and bottom. That keeps the West Australian sunburn to a minimum. I gulped down spaghetti I cooked up the night before. And a banana.

The start was a great sight (from the back) with all those paddlers forging away like a herd of buffaloes swerving between the moored yachts over turquoise blue water interspersed with dark patches of seaweed. Then out of the lee of the island, we set our course to the Fairway buoy.

The waves came up and we were all surfing along, fishtailing across the waves. I was going quite well when John-Paul McLoone came up alongside and started making encouraging positive noises. The effect was for me to lose concentration and in I went as JP disappeared over the horizon.

The much vaunted compulsory leg leash safety device was a damn nuisance and I untied it, but quickly noticed how the ski would have disappeared in the wind had I let it go. I eventually got back on, settled down and was back on my way. I was surprised how well you could see around under the water. Blue blue.

I soon had to veer over to get around the Fairway buoy which sits there 20 feet high out in the lonely ocean. After that we headed for



Beach.

Then we really got going. You'd catch a wave, skid ahead of the opposition and think "I've left him for dead now!" only to find he gets the next wave and comes flying past you. Heart rate a fairly constant 135 to 140. Plenty of time for rests whenever you get a wave. I had lost a bit of confidence in my wave-riding ability but it all came flooding back in those waves.

I'm wondering now if I could have gone harder, but at the time it was really enjoyable. You look over to the left and right and you see other paddlers maybe 100 or 200 metres away, also shooting across the waves.



Bruce Taylor and Tim Jacobs sprint for the finish at Sorrento Beach

Before you know it the end flags come into sight and I'm off the ski staggering up the beach. Next big thing is to look around and hope your mates aren't there because if they aren't, you've beaten them! Inevitably some are! JP comes up, congratulating me. Beat me by 13 minutes.

Winner Timmy Jacobs' time was 1 hour 39:43secs. I placed 188 in a time of 2 hours 38.00. There were 259 finishers out of 266 starters so I beat 71 others. Not too shabby.

The race attracted a world-beating field. Kenny Wallace who won gold in sprint kayaking at the Olympics came 22nd. Jeremy Cotter who has won many races came in 27th. Ben Allen who won the Dubai Shamaal, the world's richest surfski race, came in 15th. Dean Gardiner, who will always race when the conditions are good, came in 5th, winning the over 40s division.

Observation City tower, which stands out clearly through the haze on the mainland at Scarborough

LCRK paddlers in The Doctor

Competitor	Time	P/c	Cat	Cat/plc
Glen Orchard	2.13.43	119	Open ski	66
Jean-Paul McLoone	2.24.13	159	Open ski	80
Tim Hookins	2.38.00	188	50+ ski	20
Tom Simmat	2.55.00	203	Ski under 20ft	9
Neil Carlyle	3.13.00	222	50+ ski	23

Watch out for radar speed traps on Lane Cove River

Practical joker Jeremy Spear got up early on April 1 to go fishing – and didn't he finish up with a fine catch!

At 12.15am he emailed LCRK members a report that NSW Maritime had charged two of our members with speeding by exceeding the 4 knot (7.4km/h) limit on Lane Cove River above Figtree bridge. Some members had even tried to "make a run for it". Officials were said to feel LCRK could no longer endanger the lives of other river users, general public or even wildlife.

Jezza sought immediate responses to three options which included moving the club downstream or disbanding it.

The responses came rolling in. One thundered: "This is a call to action for all kayakers, paddlers and rowers wherever they may be. This is bureaucracy out of control. Don't we have grounds for a much more serious approach, like a class action against the NSW Maritime Authority for downright stupidity?"

Another wanted to form a task force to have the river above Figtree declared a

National Heritage area for "all endangered species".

"Were there questions raised when consulting and applying for a permit for the new jetty?" asked another. "To justify the strict enforcement of speed limits for human powered craft, on grounds that rowers and kayak speed and wakes endanger people and wildlife, is drawing a long bow. Is there any evidence to support it that members know of?"

A veteran who has paddled the river for the past 25 years responded: "I have never heard or seen a kayak colliding with boat, man or duck in approx 5000 hours of paddling."

Looking for a way out of the situation, one member proposed: "Surely we must be able to apply for a speed limit exemption? NSW Maritime is able to exempt vessels from compliance with a speed limit notice by order in writing under Clause 98 of the Maritime Safety (General) Regulation 2009. An exemption may also be given in connection with an Aquatic Licence

pursuant to Section 18(4) of the Maritime Safety Act 1998."

And if that failed, he said, we could all trade our kayaks for surf skis and amalgamate with Manly.

But for those who examined Jezza's report closely there were a couple of clues. First, there was the midday deadline for responses. Second, the name of the Maritime official quoted in the report was Ava Larch – suspiciously close to Have a Laugh.

Jezza put everyone out of their misery with an afternoon email reminding them that it was April Fools Day. He said he was amazed at how many serious responses there were. "I won't pass on just how many and who actually did come back with some pretty well thought out suggestions re future river use and our legal standing, not to mention our proposed alignment with rowers ... and class actions ... and exemptions, and offers to fund the fine, and comparisons with UK and Canada ... and a few more," he said with a chuckle.

Learn to read the river

by Tom Simmat

A lot can be gained in races like the Murray River Marathon if you can read the river and take advantage of the faster current.

While a GPS helps, it will tell you only how fast you are going now, or rather 3 seconds ago. So it is very important to be able to read the river.

Look for the signs. If there is a slight breeze against the current, the little wavelets will be bigger where the current is. Or if there is no breeze at all, the current moving will make it seem like there is a slight breeze down a path in the river, the rest will be glassy.

Conversely, if there is a breeze with the current, where the current is it will be glassy, so follow that line.

Flotsam, debris, leaves and twigs etc in the river are all bunched up together on the edge of the current. The faster current is always on the outside of a bend, but also fast on the inside just before the bend. There will be a back eddy on the inside just around the bend, the tighter the bend the bigger the back eddy. If you turn too quickly you can get your bow in the back eddy and it can spin you around.

But all corners are different and often it pays to cut the corner.

If you remember your early geometry, the circumference of a circle is pi times the diameter. Pi is 3.141. So there is a factor of over 3 that multiplies out the distance around the circumference (river bend) as the diameter increases.

For example, let's say there is a point or 90 degree bend in the



river that has a close inside track with a diameter of say 20 metres, that is a radius of 10 metres. To go around the bend on the inside track the kayak will travel about 3.14 by 20 metres divided by 4 as we are going around only a quarter of a circle. That track is 15.7 metres.

A kayak that is out only another 20 metres or three boat lengths - out in the fast water - will be on an arc with a diameter of 60 metres and travel 47.1 metres to get around the bend. That is three times the distance, so three times the speed is needed to stay equal.

So even if there is no current on the inside course and you can maintain a respectable 8km an hour, to get around the corner in the same time the outside kayak has to travel at an impossible 24km an hour.

So on sharp bends in the river, always cut the corner.

The differential diameter between the inside course and outside course on long wide corners is less significant and that is when it is better to stay in the fast current. Then, as you approach the corner look for the fast current just near the inside bank. As soon as you can see how sharp the corner is and what obstacles may prevent you from taking the short cut, let the current sweep you out wide, then head over toward the far bank. Aim for just before the next corner, the current will keep you on a straight line.

Paddling upwind

If there is a strong current pushing you from behind and wind in your face and a long wide stretch of river, chances are there is quite a bit of wave chop to battle through and a chance to catch those in front.

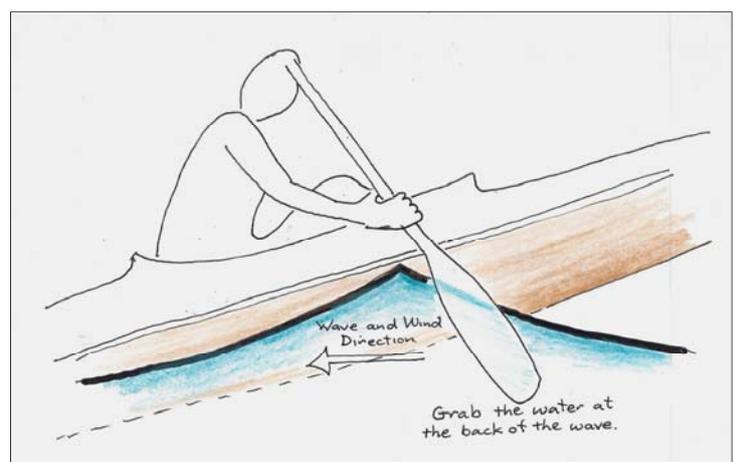
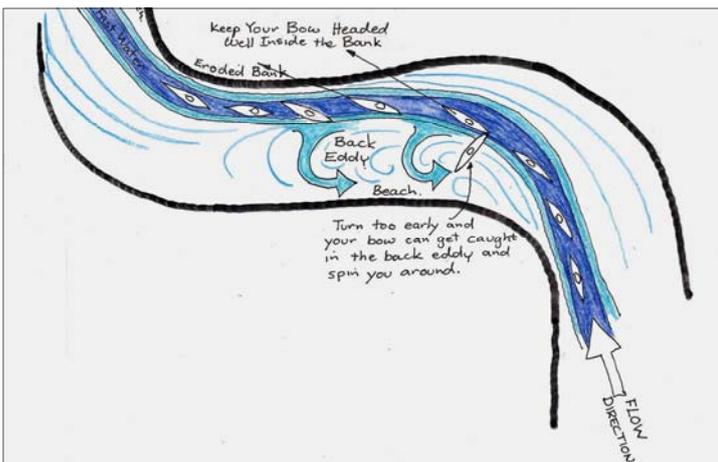
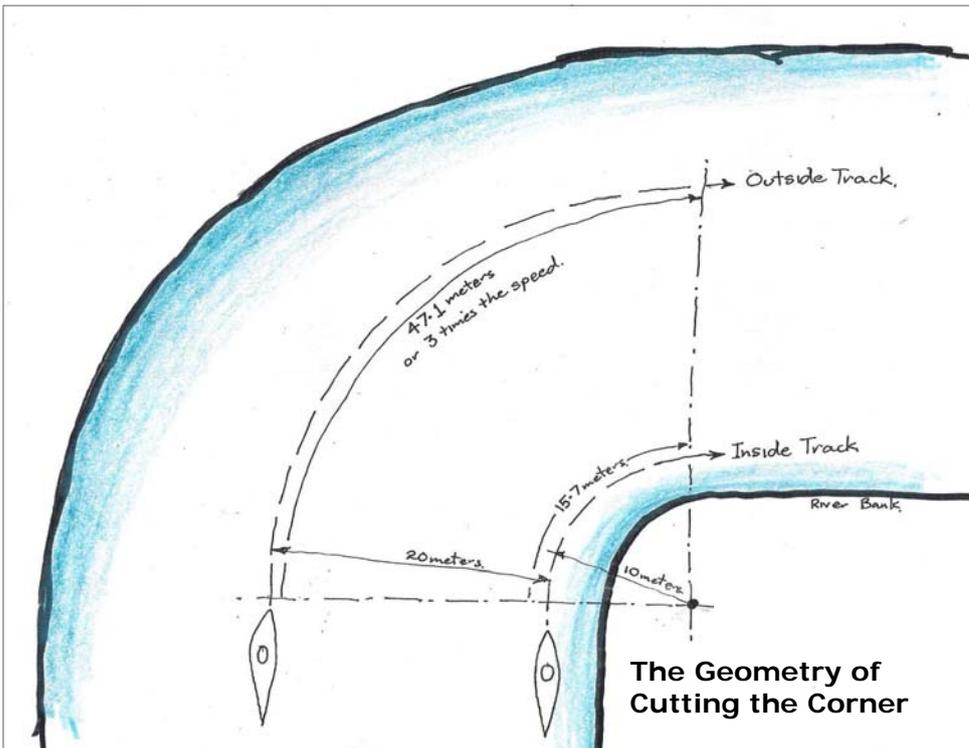
First, you must grab the water at the back of the wave so you get a full paddle blade. If you try and grab the trough between waves, or on the front of the wave, chances are you will pull the blade out too early and lose power and stability.

So this requires you to alter your paddle rating a bit to be in tune with the wave frequency.

Look for any assistance you can find, like the backwash off a rocky cliff. When you can, tuck yourself in behind someone else, preferably a double, for a bit of a rest, then pull yourself past them.

On bigger water like the harbour or in the ocean the same applies. There will be wind waves on the top of an ocean swell. As you come to the top of the swell, grab the back of the top of the wave and pull yourself through it, add an extra stroke and, for a fraction of a second, you can accelerate down the wave back.

The worst thing you can do when you come to top of a breaking wave if put your paddle in the air as you go through it. You will have no traction on the water, the wave will crash into your chest and stop you dead or push you backwards. Even if the water is broken, reach forward and grab the back of the wave and pull yourself through.





When putting his new carbon fibre Vajda K1 in the water for the first time at the pontoon on Feb 9, Toby Hogbin took sensible precautions to first check its flotation was satisfactory. As this sequence of pictures shows, only after satisfying himself that it was adequate did he venture out on to the time trial course.



BBQ dates

The LCRK monthly BBQs will be held on the second Wednesday of every month as usual in 2011 except for a couple of changes made to accommodate the Oct 22-23 Hawkesbury Classic.

In October the usual BBQ will be on Oct 12, and this will feature a gee-up session for competitors in the Classic. On Oct 26 there will be the customary post-Classic BBQ and there will be no time trial on this night.

The November BBQ has been pushed back a week to Nov 16 and the Christmas BBQ will be on Dec 14. The first BBQ in the new year will be on Jan 11.

The 2011 AGM and Annual Dinner have been set for Friday July 29.

Put these dates in your diary now.

Recreational paddles

Register online through www.paddlensw.org.au or with coordinator Tony Carr 0417-502-056 or tonycarr@ozemail.com.au for any of the upcoming recreational paddles:

April 22 Good Friday Towra Point estuarine wetlands, Botany Bay. Sea kayaks or stable tourers recommended. From Silver Beach boat ramp to Quibray Bay. Afternoon tea at Kurnell.

May 1 Sunday: Hawkesbury Classic taster, Wisemans Ferry to Gunderman (low tide pit stop). Car shuffle. The paddle is one way downstream, with the tide. There'll be stops for breaks. Once you've experienced this magnificent waterway you may want to enter the famous Hawkesbury Classic.

June 5 Sunday: Akuna Bay to Apple Tree Bay, via Cottage Point, Cotton Tree Bay and Smiths Creek.



Having trouble launching from the pontoon? Why not do it the Richard Barnes way — go for broke and launch from the top!



John Greathead's patented fold-up steps are back at the pontoon



Tim Dodd and family and Matt Swann were among half a million volunteers on Clean Up Australia Day



A working bee led by Jeremy Spear lays carpet on the step of the pontoon



Learn to race smarter, with improved race tactics

by Michael O'Keeffe

Any niggling concerns I might have experienced in signing up to attend the Marathon training camp were dispelled when Tony Hystek informed me that Matt Blundell had paid his money and was attending. I reckoned if Matt thought he could learn something then I'd definitely get value for money.

The camp was held on January 22-23 at Manly Warringah Kayak Club with 4 on-water sessions complemented by interactive lectures and discussions.

The presenters were:

- Mike Leverett, 11 times Australian champion and medallist at World Marathon Championships
- Matt Coulter, World Cup Medallist and coach of many Australian champions and international medal winners.
- Bennett Maxwell, Australian rep at World Championships and Master in Sports Science.
- Chantal Minchin, Olympic Bronze medallist and marathon Worlds medallist.

Learning to race smarter and improved race tactics were the main lessons from the weekend for both Matt and Tony. The practical sessions on the water with groups of 6-8 paddlers (if they could keep up with the guns) were particularly valuable. Tony commented that his skills in racing improved over the weekend. Matt said that his on-the-water exercise with Mick Leverett was the highlight of the weekend and reinforced the importance of race tactics and anticipation.

The secret according to the lecturers is to develop a better feel for how the pack configuration is likely to change and anticipate your next move. In Tony's words: "Don't just look at the front of your own



boat in wash conditions but improve your vision and look at the whole pack. Anticipate where the next opening will be".

They emphasised the benefits of washriding, with single wash-riding reducing effort by 18% and double wash V riding by a massive 30%. It is an exhilarating - but in my case all too fleeting - experience.

Modern marathon racing is more about continual changes in pace rather than settling into a fixed pace.

Tony said we have to learn to muck around in our boat more. A number of simple drills were suggested such as standing in your kayak, holding the paddle in the air in one hand, and bracing on your non-preferred side all designed to improve balance.

For me the main points were:

- Train to increase anaerobic threshold - over a 30-40 minute session might do 3x10 min or 4 by 8 min sessions where lactic acid is just starting to build up - where it hurts.
- Vary speed more in training within sets and drills with the aim of improving washriding skills when having to train on your own. Simulate race conditions more.
- Include practising sprint starts and sprinting.
- And of course very valuable tips in the ongoing quest of improving technique.

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