



August 2013

## The big No-No becomes a Yukon triumph

LCRK's Tom Simmat and Urs Mader, a last-minute combination who had never paddled together before, produced an extraordinary performance in Canada's 2013 Yukon River Quest to lead for much of the gruelling race and finish third, only 24m 27s behind the much younger winners. Tom, 65, replaced injured American Bruce Dailey to join long-time mate Urs, 60, and leave most of the field of 62 starters in their wake. Their race time was 42h 26m 27s (the GPS gave their average speed with flow assistance at 15.6km/h, which means the actual distance covered after cutting corners was considerably shorter than the advertised 715km). Tom describes the race in this article.

The Yukon River Quest is the longest annual canoe and kayak race in the world at over 700 kilometres. The Yukon 1000 at 1600 kilometres is the longest canoe and kayak race in the world, but it is not held annually. They can't find enough people mad enough to run it every year.

Both races are on the Yukon in Northwest Canada. Both start at Whitehorse. The Yukon River Quest finishes at Dawson, the Yukon 1000 continues down the river more than double that distance. I have now competed in the Yukon River Quest four times and once in the Yukon 1000.

The format of the Yukon River Quest involves a midday start at Whitehorse, a 40km sprint down the river where you meet Lake Laberge, a 50km drag down the lake then a 210km fast river run through the *night* (it does not get quite dark) into a small town called Carmacks. There you rest, restock and recover with a 7-hour compulsory stop.

Back on the river and a 250km paddle to Kirkman's Creek, a mining log cabin, a 3-hour compulsory stop, then on to the finish at Dawson.

This year all craft had a spot satellite tracker on the boat, so



you at home could watch the race progress.

I was all trained up for the Murray 200, but because of some dramas with our German homestay student, was unable to go and feeling very down.

Urs Mader, an old Lane Cove buddy and rival now living in Queensland, had teamed up for the Quest with American Bruce Dailey; he's the guy that summited Mt Everest last year. Urs was about to fly out and the kayak was on its way.

But in a run over the Blue Mountains Bruce tripped and broke four ribs and simply could not paddle.

Urs sent the word out and The Current Wife suggested I should fly over and partner Urs.

Who was I to say no?

Over I flew, hired a car at Whitehorse and drove down to Skagway to pick up the boat, Urs, his wife Arni and what appeared to be a whole German entourage. They had travelled



Tom Simmat and Urs Mader with their race certificates

by ferry up from Vancouver with the kayak.

This was June 23, the day before scrutineering. We arrived back at Whitehorse after 11pm.

When we took the kayak, an Elliott Tomaree double, out of its yoga mat packing we discovered it had some minor damage to the hull at the stern. The hull was kevlar and it had been cracked but not broken through.

An early trip to the hardware store and I had it repaired before breakfast.

To me the Tomaree looked a strange shape and Urs explained that Ron Elliott had bent the hull, giving it more rocker to meet the Yukon race measurement requirements.

They measure the kayaks by placing them on a flat floor, then bring a piece of 4-inch timber up to each side and each end until they touch the hull. This gives a measured beam and length. The beam to length ratio must be less than 10.2.

Ron had flattened the floor and bent the back of the kayak



**Above: The eventual winners, Tim Lynch and Dave Lewis, washride Tom and Urs. Left: Urs and Tom glide into the Carmacks checkpoint. Below left: Big smiles from the Lane Cove pair as they cross the finish line.**

up to meet these requirements. On measuring at scrutineering the length measurement was about a metre inside the stern, giving the boat an extreme rocker. It measured at 10.1. Well done, Ron.

I padded the seat a little and we had only about an hour paddle before we had to take the boat to scrutineering.

I rarely paddle doubles and had never paddled with Urs before. This was a high risk and a big No-No for an event such as this.

Surprisingly the boat sat well in the water, my seat turned out to be perfect and Urs and I seemed to gel in the boat.

We led the race into Lake Laberge. We had hoped it would be rough to put the canoes a bit behind us, but the lake was like glass. We were still ahead re-entering the river.

2 kilometres away the canoes look like dots and it is difficult to see them when they are behind you. About 20km before Carmacks, Urs was cramping up and the lead canoe passed us.

The top paddlers in Canada paddle canoes. This team was from Novo Scotia, a couple of young pup champions. These canoes are very fast and because the paddlers sit higher above the water, they are in a better position to see the faster water.

This race is all about finding the fast water and getting into it quickly. We averaged about 15.6 kilometres per hour. On many occasions our speed exceeded 22km/h. This means the bends, islands and gravel banks come up to you very fast and you must keep your wits about you or you end up in a back eddy or over a shallow bank and lose precious minutes.

They beat us into Carmacks by about 10 minutes. In the fast current that is more than two kilometres and out of sight.

They were just about the same 10 minutes ahead of us at the Kirkman's Creek stop. After that we never saw them again. We did not have the benefit of the spectators watching the passage of the spot trackers on the internet. I tried all the short cuts and tricks I knew to catch them.

Apparently at one point, unknown to us, we were ahead again, but I think perhaps one of my short cuts put us in slow water and they got past again along with a second canoe.

We were happy with third outright and hours ahead of the next double kayak.

have also had their share of the spoils in category results. Tim Hookins, Tom Simmat, Jeremy Spear, Phil Geddes and Chris Quirk keep popping up with podium finishes.

The second race, Stroke the Lion on July 13, saw Bob Turner and Jason Cooper reunited, and Meg Thornton and Anjie Lees, fresh from endurance racing in the Murray 200, trying their hand at some rougher water.

## Tony and Tony make a cool Iceberg pair

Tony Hystek and Tony Haines have formed a winning team in the Iceberg 2013 series, with victory in both races one and two. In the Stroke the Lion event, they came in 5 minutes ahead of the rest of the field.

Tony seems to have been paddling with a different partner

every time he gets into a double – “spread the joy,” he says – but maybe the Iceberg pairing will stay together in search of further glory.

A look at the results tables shows that other Lane Covers

| Iceberg Series                 |         |         |     |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|-----|---------|
| Race 2 Stroke the Lion July 13 |         |         |     |         |
| Long course                    |         |         |     |         |
| Competitor                     | Categ   | Time    | Plc | Cat plc |
| Tony Hystek/<br>Tony Haines    | Dbl ski | 1.08.25 | 1   | 1       |
| Matt Blundell                  | 40+     | 1.10.24 | 4   | 1       |
| Bob Turner/<br>Jason Cooper    | Dbl ski | 1.18.37 | 16  | 5       |
| Tom Simmat                     | 60+     | 1.24.09 | 29  | 1       |
| Jeff Tonazzi                   | 40+     | 1.26.25 | 39  | 17      |
| Jeremy Spear                   | 50+     | 1.29.29 | 45  | 7       |
| Phil Geddes                    | Seayk   | 1.29.53 | 49  | 1       |
| Paul van Koesveld              | 60+     | 1.35.12 | 65  | 7       |
| Meg Thornton                   | WSeayk  | 1.49.04 | 77  | 4       |
| Anjie Lees                     | WSeayk  | 1.49.15 | 78  | 1       |

| Iceberg Series              |         |         |     |         |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|-----|---------|
| Race 1 Swallow Rock June 22 |         |         |     |         |
| Long course                 |         |         |     |         |
| Competitor                  | Categ   | Time    | Plc | Cat plc |
| Tony Hystek/<br>Tony Haines | Dbl ski | 1.18.20 | 1   | 1       |
| Chris Quirk/<br>John Dick   | Dbl ski | 1.25.08 | 5   | 2       |
| Tim Hookins                 | 60+     | 1.40.40 | 24  | 2       |
| Jeremy Spear                | 50+     | 1.40.46 | 26  | 2       |
| Kristy Benjamin             | W20+    | 1.41.50 | 29  | 1       |
| Jeff Tonazzi                | 401+    | 1.47.33 | 32  | 12      |
| Phil Geddes                 | Seayk   | 1.47.53 | 33  | 2       |
| Paul van Koesveld           | 60+     | 1.49.24 | 36  | 6       |

| Iceberg Series                       |         |         |     |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|-----|---------|
| Race 3 Tingira Open Rose Bay July 28 |         |         |     |         |
| Long course                          |         |         |     |         |
| Competitor                           | Categ   | Time    | Plc | Cat plc |
| Matt Bundell/<br>Stu Innes           | Dbl ski | 1.02.58 | 2   | 2       |
| Glen Orchard                         | 40+     | 1.10.54 | 15  | 5       |
| Jeff Tonazzi                         | 40+     | 1.28.05 | 50  | 16      |

# Lots of wins in M10 racing

A good-sized contingent from Lane Cove made the trip south to Burrill Lake on July 20 for the Marathon 10 series and came back with a fair slice of the pie – three wins, three seconds and four thirds, plus a list of very respectable performances by everyone else.

Tony Hystek is in the best form of his life and showed it by taking out the new 25km Open division (see box), with Bob Turner and Kristy Benjamin third (but, as dual members, paddling for Cronulla Sutherland).

Matt Swann, on the comeback trail after his recent bout with the surgeon, won division 6 with Richard Lindsay runner-up.

In the competitive 15km division 8 the super-heavyweight combo of Craig Ellis and Steve Newsome had a comfortable winning margin over second-placed Jason Cooper.

In division 4 we had second and third with Tim McNamara and Jeremy Spear, while Wade Rowston had a third in division 5 and Anjie Lees a third in division 7.

The shorter distances are becoming very popular at the M10 series and this was most noticeable at Burrill Lake where 54 out of 125 craft – 43% – opted for the 15km and 10km races. Over a quarter of the field entered the two 10km events.

At Woronora on June 8 LCRK paddlers had 4 wins, but unfortunately for our club points score 2 were by dual members flying someone

else's flag. Tim Holloway had a fine win in division 4 and consistent Richard Lindsay won division 6. Matt Blundell (paddling for Manly Warringah) had a 2-second win over Darren Lee in division 1, and Bob Turner/Kristy Benjamin were first in division 8.

Race 6 in the series, scheduled for Penrith on June 29, had to be cancelled because of flooded conditions in the river following heavy rain.

*Paddle NSW has introduced a new "open" division to the Marathon 10 series format "in the interests of our elite and developing paddlers" to help them prepare for state, national and world championships.*

*"We've also taken on board some feedback we've received in relation to these faster paddlers having to pass through the entire field, often causing significant wash and unsettling some paddlers," it said.*

*The new division races over 25km (5 laps) with portaging on each lap. It is open to any single or double able to complete the distance in less than 2h 15m. Paddlers can revert to their previous division at any time.*

*A revised starting order sees division 7 (slower 20km paddlers) go off first, followed by the open division, then 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 together, 8, 9, 10.*

## M10 Race 5 Woronora

June 8

| Competitor                        | Div | Time    | Ptc |
|-----------------------------------|-----|---------|-----|
| Matt Blundell                     | 1   | 1.31.16 | 1   |
| Tim Hookins/<br>Steve Newsome     | 2   | 1.44.05 | 6   |
| Michael Day                       | 3   | 1.46.48 | 5   |
| Phil Geddes/<br>Paul van Koesveld | 3   | 1.48.01 | 7   |
| Tom Holloway                      | 4   | 1.47.27 | 1   |
| Jeremy Spear                      | 4   | 1.49.44 | 6   |
| Tim McNamara                      | 4   | 1.52.53 | 9   |
| Wade Rowston                      | 5   | 1.55.48 | 3   |
| Richard Lindsay                   | 6   | 1.59.55 | 1   |
| Paul Seaberg                      | 6   | 2.04.34 | 7   |
| Andrew Kucyper                    | 7   | DNF     |     |
| Bob Turner/<br>Kristy Benjamin    | 8   | 1.18.13 | 1   |
| Ann Lloyd-Green                   | 8   | 1.41.11 | 9   |
| Tony Walker/<br>Justin Paine      | 9   | 1.01.48 | 12  |
| Dru Spork                         | 9   | 1.03.35 | Rnk |
| Don Rowston                       | 10  | 1.07.24 | 4   |

Divs1-7=20k, div 8=15k, divs9-10=10k

## M10 Race 7 Burrill Lake

July 20

| Competitor                        | Div  | Time    | Ptc |
|-----------------------------------|------|---------|-----|
| Tony Hystek                       | Open | 2.12.11 | 1   |
| Bob Turner/<br>Kristy Benjamin    | Open | 2.16.14 | 3   |
| Phil Geddes/<br>Paul van Koesveld | 3    | 1.49.46 | 5   |
| Dave Hammond/<br>D'Andretti       | 3    | 1.52.47 | 10  |
| Tim McNamara                      | 4    | 1.53.05 | 2   |
| Jeremy Spear                      | 4    | 1.53.20 | 3   |
| Wade Rowston                      | 5    | 2.01.21 | 3   |
| Matt Swann                        | 6    | 2.04.14 | 1   |
| Richard Lindsay                   | 6    | 2.05.57 | 2   |
| Bert Lloyd/<br>Don Rowston        | 6    | 2.15.29 | 5   |
| Anjie Lees                        | 7    | 2.19.15 | 3   |
| Meg Thornton                      | 7    | 2.22.22 | 4   |
| Craig Ellis/<br>Steve Newsome     | 8    | 1.19.58 | 1   |
| Jason Cooper                      | 8    | 1.24.48 | 2   |
| Alanna Ewin/<br>Danielle Seisun   | 9    | 1.06.57 | 8   |

Open=25k, 1-7=20k, 8=15k, 9-10=10k



Above: Tom Holloway splashes his way across the finish line to win at Woronora. Below: Tim Hookins and Steve Newsome made a successful combination.



## Back to the future

Tony Hystek quote after the time trial on June 19: "There has been no advance in kayak design in the past 20 years. Last week Richard Robinson and I did 50.04 in the latest, state-of-the-art K2 (Legacy). This week we paddled a 20-year-old K2 (Grey Nurse) – and we did 50.06!"

## 8th in world for Tim

Tim Hookins – 8<sup>th</sup> in the world. Sounds pretty impressive, doesn't it? And it is.

Tim was a member of the Australian team at the world surf ski championships in Portugal and sent back an interesting blog about his experiences. Most of it was about wining and dining, but there was a little bit about the racing too.

"The world champs were an absolute hoot. We had such fun. I have to report however that I came in 9<sup>th</sup> out of 12 paddlers in the 60 to 64 age group. That puts me 9<sup>th</sup> in the world," he said.

Jeremy Spear followed the race closely from the other side of the world and immediately issued a correction. "Tim sells himself a little short. In his blog he suggested he came 9<sup>th</sup>, results show 8<sup>th</sup>. Great result," he said.



Wade Rowston receives his certificate for 3rd place.



Jeremy Spear and Tim McNamara catch up with former member Trish Hamilton.

# MULTI-DAY RACING ON THE LOWER MURRAY

A contingent of Lane Covers travelled to South Australia over the June long weekend for the annual Riverland Paddling Marathon (RPM) festival, which includes the Murray 200 and Murray 100. They comprised a third of the small field of 15 for the M200 – just as well they went! Tony Hystek had the fastest time, marginally ahead of Toby Hogbin, but said they were really equal first because Toby stopped to help him mend a bent rudder. They were nearly 2¾ hours ahead of the next best. Anjie Lees took a wrong turn and got lost, which cost her a finishing time. Read all the race reports below.

**Tony Hystek:** Toby Hogbin travelled with Alanna and me to the event, and Alanna landcrewed us both. The weather was relatively warm and windless, making the early morning starts quite palatable. At around one-third distance each day, paddlers must pass through a lock. An incident in the first lock on day one nearly had me swimming, as I missed the mark when reaching for a handhold. Fortunately a small underwater ledge provided something to push off with my paddle and, heart in mouth, a potentially very embarrassing swim was avoided. Toby and I paddled the race together, but due to his earlier efforts trying to catch some M100 paddlers, he hit the wall a few k's from the finish, and I went on to a 5-minute lead. Next day our start was adjusted an hour later so we didn't have to wait at the second lock. I hit a submerged log on the way to the lock and bent the rudder. 10 minutes lost, which Toby could have claimed back as he helped me get back on the water. He didn't worry about it; we weren't racing for sheep stations! However, he did make amends by sprinting with 10km to go, leaving me 3 minutes adrift at the finish. Last day presented a beautiful pre-dawn start to the

boats and flying to the event), is well worth doing as a major club event like the HCC and Murray Marathon.

**Toby Hogbin:** First multi-day kayak race I have done and it was a good learning experience. The weather was better than I expected. I was preparing myself for some very cold mornings



Tony Hystek, Anjie Lees, Craig Ellis, Toby Hogbin



Finish signalled with a World War I rifle

event so we could finish early. We settled down to some sightseeing, camera in hand, but missed a great opportunity when the leading C2 decided that where there were pelicans in the middle of the river, there must be water. The pelicans were standing, and the paddlers soon joined them. Now third day race-fit, and with Toby's encouragement, we belted the last section in to the finish. Gotta love multi-day events! Alanna was always giving encouragement and as we didn't stop she spent much of her time looking after other crews with advice and assistance. The secret for me this year was hydration. I really concentrated on hydrating properly a couple of weeks prior to the event with supplementary doses of electrolyte. It worked a treat. I'd suggest the RPM is within the capability of nearly all club members, and with a little organisation (such as trailering the

and cold days. Turned out it was no different to a winter morning on the lake at Narrabeen. Think we were lucky. Heard stories of chipping ice off the kayaks before the start of the day. Being in a ski (Epic V12) I was glad it was on the mild side this year. The first day started off well but by the end I had treated it a bit like a single-day race and overcooked myself by making a few errors. As a result I died about 10km from the finish. The second day, after a good sleep, I felt a lot better and enjoyed the paddle right to the end. The third day, well that was just a great way to finish off my first multi-day event. Spent pretty much most of the time paddling with the big man, Tony Hystek, except for the last 10km of the first day where I was looking at his back disappear. Learned a lot from Tony over the three days. Landcrew was Tony's partner Alanna, who was fantastic. The scenery is superb but only if you do the 200km. In the 100 and 50km races you miss all the great scenery as the best part of it is in the first half of each day. The 200 is a hard and can be lonely race. River flow is often not a lot and with the headwind you often get you can easily float back upstream if you stop. But it is well organised (apart from a few safety issues) and if you enjoy the longer races I would highly recommend doing it. I will be back again next year.

**Anjie Lees:** On day 1 everything was going to plan until after lunch. I stuck to the right after numerous warnings about being booked, apparently news had travelled that somebody had already been booked. I got to what seemed to be a bend, it even had a sign that said Murray River (I later realised I read out of context). I was feeling quite exhausted and thought the checkpoint was only 2km away and it would be a struggle to paddle further than that. The sun was setting and it was beginning to get cool. I kept paddling and noticed the beautiful scenery and birds and no sign of civilisation until I got to these fence posts sticking up in the water. My aches and pains seemed to disappear instantly as I worked out where I had gone wrong from my phone and my map. I turned around and paddled with all my energy as the sun disappeared and it was getting dark right before my eyes. As I paddled out of what I now know as Pyap Lagoon, several offers of beer and a bonfire were very enticing from the campers on the river. I promised to come back if I couldn't find the checkpoint. I arrived at the checkpoint and the first familiar face I saw was Meg, then the communications guy said they has sent

## LCRK competitors in the Riverland Paddling Marathon

| Competitor        | Category  | Day 1<br>76km | Day 2<br>69km | Day 3<br>63km | Total<br>time | Plc | Cat<br>plc |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----|------------|
| <b>Murray 200</b> |           |               |               |               |               |     |            |
| Tony Hystek       | 55+ UR1   | 6.59.28       | 6.37.53       | 6.02.35       | 18.32.48      | 1   | 1          |
| Toby Hogbin       | O OR1     | 7.04.12       | 6.34.36       | 6.02.35       | 18.34.15      | 2   | 1          |
| Anjie Lees        | W35+ RKL1 | DNF           | 9.32.48       | 9.10.11       |               |     |            |
| Andrew Mathers    | 45+ RKL1  | 8.24.39       | DNS           | DNS           |               |     |            |
| Meg Thornton      | W55+ OR1  | DNF           | DNF           | 8.49.36       |               |     |            |
| <b>Murray 100</b> |           |               |               |               |               |     |            |
| Craig Ellis       | 35+ OR1   | 3.24.40       | 2.22.33       | 2.42.01       | 8.29.14       | 8   | 2          |

UR1=unrestricted single, OR1= ocean racing ski single, RKL1=recreational kayak long



**Tony Hystek (333) and Toby Hogbin (332) paddled together**

a rescue boat to the finish line to look for me (let's just say I was glad to find my way) and the search was called off. On day 2 I was a little nervous of my navigation skills but here I was again paddling on own. I got to the last checkpoint and they said I was the last one through and the rescue boat followed me basically for the last 12km. The 5:45 start on day 3 was cold and dark, the duct tape wouldn't stick even after you wiped the boat. I can't believe how quickly I got cold after getting my feet wet. I have to say I really enjoyed the race. The scenery is beautiful and the opportunity to paddle with some really lovely people and their landcrews, not to mention how great it was to see the familiar faces of Lane Covers. I can't thank Elke enough for making it possible for me to participate and special thank you to Alanna for her Challenger. I'm planning to go back next year and hopefully get the record I missed out on from my adventure on the first day.

**Andrew Mathers:** This was not a good event for me this year. I let the voices in my head convince me that there was no point continuing after the first day because I wasn't going fast enough, wasn't ready etc, even though, according to my landcrew, I pulled up better at the end of day 1 than I had in other years on my way to the finish. As it turned out I probably could have finished 3<sup>rd</sup> behind Toby and Tony had I continued. All I can put it down to is that I had a lot of other stuff going on in my head and it all got too much. I couldn't find anything to encourage me to continue. I needed to know that I was doing ok. I needed to be convinced that tomorrow was another day and after a decent feed and a good night's sleep I'd feel better.



**Paddlers leave one of the three locks in the race**

I wasn't able to stand back and put things into perspective. This goes to show how events like these require as much mental strength as physical strength. There may be times where landcrews need to persevere to get inside their paddler's head to work out what the issue really is.

**Meg Thornton:** My race objective was to make the checkpoint cut-off times and get to the end and have a bloody good time. Doesn't always happen! I found this 200 tougher than the Murray 400. The X factor is the cold. It is REALLY COLD! I'd been experimenting with clothing in a Sydney sort of way and had a range of gear with me ... Sharkskin, Adrenalin, Icebreaker, Sealskinz. Tops and bottoms, gloves and booties. The trick on a ski is that you don't have a spray deck. Half your body is not in a hermetically-sealed oven to warm your blood. Instead it is exposed and vulnerable. Your feet, shins + bum are



**Landcrew Elke van Ewyk with Anjie Lees**

all exposed to windchill. Result: I got hypothermic on day 1 in my Sharkskin: sleeves way too thin = core temp plunged. I pulled over and put on a Gore-Tex shell. It was quite scary because the small field of paddlers soon spreads out so far you are often completely on your own. Good idea to buddy up with someone like Toby and Tony did. Day 2 I changed to an Adrenalin long-sleeved top which was infinitely better (feet still extremely cold.) It's all about windchill. I missed the last checkpoint cut-off time again - I slow down and lose stroke form when I get cold! Day 3 I missed the start by about ½ hour and played catch-up the rest of the day - the only other paddlers I saw were Tony and Toby cruising past. There was no way I was going to get caught by cut-off times, it was a great feeling to come in to the finish to be greeted with a blast of the WW1 cavalry rifle

and a wonderful hurrah from Anjie. Thank you's go to Tony Carr for introducing me to the Garmin 62S, to Toby and Tony for their happy hellos, to Anjie who is so upbeat all the time and so damn consistent, to Jeremy for a really detailed weather forecast, to Andrew for looking so flash in Tom's long rec re-invention. This one is the recce for doing it properly next year. Bananas gaffa-taped to the ski hull have proved to be the best and only performance food for me on these longer distances. Magnesium sorts out my fingers cramping and Voltarin fixes everything else.



**Andrew Mathers with protection up front**

**Craig Ellis:** The plan was to do the 200, but with a pregnant wife suffering severe morning sickness 24 hours a day I had to relent to the 100, 10.30 starts were acceptable. I calculated that the race record was breakable for OR1 V35-45 at 8h 18m, with the slightest river flow I thought I could break this. Day 1 started with a 37km race, no flow and a slight headwind, all went really well up to the 30km mark then I hit the wall and fell over the line, only just. I started day 2 (28km) 3 mins behind the leader in OR1 and pulled back a minute. Another day of no flow, very shallow and a slight headwind. On day 3 (30km) I felt fit and went out hard to try and break the pack. It didn't work, they ran me down after about 8k's, another day of no flow and slight headwind, shallow spots but not as bad as day 2. I finished few mins behind the double, the ones I wanted to beat over the line, and gained 1.5 mins in my class but not enough, so I finished 30s behind the leader of the three days. Lesson learned: get fit before racing over 100km. I really enjoyed the company of the LCRKs we saw and dined with. Sally and Matilda were fantastic landcrew with support from Alanna, thank you. I highly recommend this event, fantastic scenery, awesome race and very nice people.

*Pictures: Alanna Ewin, Anjie Lees, Craig Ellis, Andrew Mathers*

## New club facilities at the pontoon go before Council

LCRK's plan to build an extension on an existing building at Chatswood oval to provide enlarged facilities for storing kayaks and other club equipment is to come before Willoughby Council during August, the Annual General Meeting was told on July 26.

President Wade Rowston said preparation of the plan has been a slow process, with Jeremy Spear and Tom Simmat putting a lot of work into the proposal. The enlarged area created by the extension will open up opportunities for people who have no space at home to store a kayak to participate in the sport and keep their kayak in the new shed. This has the potential to introduce a new type of member to the club.

Jeremy gave details of the proposed addition, which will be along the river side of the storage shed opposite the small shed which the club currently uses. He said the Council has been very supportive of the club's plans.

In his President's report, Wade said the club experienced "another great year" with highlights including a new website, introduction of a reverse direction time trial and the Bogan Chandler Cup for doubles in the time trial, four of our members paddling across Bass Strait, Tom Simmat and Urs Mader coming 3<sup>rd</sup> in Canada's Yukon River Quest, Rae Duffy having a "fabulous double" in winning both the Hawkesbury Classic and Murray Marathon on handicap, and a superb Hawkesbury Classic with LCRK again winning the Commonwealth Bank Cup

as the most successful club, Toby Hogbin becoming the fastest single paddler in the race's history, and Chris Thompson raising the most money for charity.

Retiring Treasurer Nigel Colless noted there has been a steady increase in membership, from 102 in 2009/10 to 118 in 2012/13 and this, together with consistently high numbers participating in the Wednesday night time trials, has been a major factor in our reserves increasing by \$11,000.

Nigel has stepped down but will continue to be active in further developing the highly successful computer system now used in recording times of Wednesday night paddles (see picture page 12). He is succeeded as Treasurer by Phil Geddes, who has been an enthusiastic member of the club committee.

Re-elected were Wade Rowston as President, Tom Holloway as Vice President, Paul van Koesveld as Secretary and Jon Harris and Derek Simmonds as committee members. Newly elected members of the committee are Anjie Lees and Duncan Johnstone.

The AGM was followed by the Annual Dinner, features of which were the presentation of the Frank McDonald Memorial Prize to John Duffy for the best contributed article to *Kayak Kapers*, a trivia quiz and a raffle (in which Phil Newman won so many prizes people were asking if they could share a lottery ticket with him).



Tony Hystek draws the winning ticket for the main prize in the raffle, a \$100 voucher from Pro-Kayaks donated by Matt Blundell. Appropriately there is a picture of Tony on the screen in the background. With him are Wade Rowston and Alanna Ewin.



Anjie Lees, Kate Lord, Jeremy Spear, John Thearle and Tony Carr



Tom Simmat and his "current wife" Christine share the camera flashlight with James Mumme



John Duffy (right), winner of the Frank McDonald Memorial Prize for the best article in *Kayak Kapers*, with *KK* editor Justin Paine. Other finalists in the competition were Jason Cooper, Tom Simmat, Tom Holloway and Matt Blundell. Judges were Tim McNamara, Paul Gilbert, Jen Broadbent, Duncan Johnstone and John Greathead.



The new club committee: Paul van Koesveld (Secretary), Anjie Lees, Duncan Johnstone, Wade Rowston (President), Tom Holloway (Vice President), Jon Harris, Derek Simmonds. Inset: Phil Geddes (Treasurer).



LCRK WAGs (wives and girl friends) at the Annual Dinner included Carly Rowston, Robyn Fearnley, Angela van Koesveld and Trish Couch



This was the winning team in the Annual Diner trivia quiz. Rear: Tim Dodd, Alanna Ewin, Phil Newman, Tony Hystek, Don Rowston. Front: Duncan Johnstone, Paul van Koesveld, Angela van Koesveld.



Danielle Seisun reaches into the bag held by Wade Rowston for a ticket in the raffle draw while Tony Carr watches on



Checking out the new club caps were Danielle Seisun, Tony Carr and Derek Simmonds

# A handy kayak for overseas exploring

by Andrew Benoit



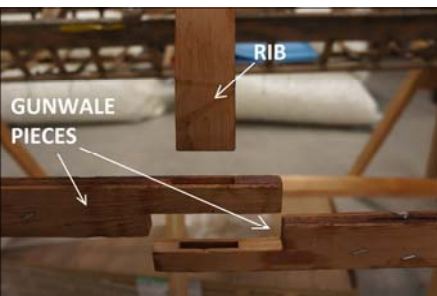
A few years ago during a visit to Myanmar I spent a couple of days in Nyaungshwe in Shan state. The town is one of the gateways to Inle Lake, famous for floating gardens, aquatic villages and the unusual leg-rowing technique used by the local fishermen. It was an interesting place but the transport options were limited to either being shuttled around the tourist circuit in a powered timber boat or paddling in a heavy canoe with a local or two lending a hand. A kayak would have come in handy to do some exploring.

The country has undergone a few changes in the last year or so and it seemed like now would be a good time to go back (with a kayak of course). I looked into buying a commercially available folding boat but all the ones I could find weighed upwards of 30kg packed. This is a bit more than I like to travel with.

I decided a homemade folder would be the way to go. There are a few designs on the internet, most notably Tom Yost's creations, but in the end I decided to come up with my own design.

I spent a few months thinking about how I would make the boat but left the construction side of things until 3 weeks before my flight out of Sydney. The goal was to have something in western red cedar that would weigh around 10kg. 5.8 metres seemed like a good length and a 600mm beam would make a nice stable platform for taking photos. The size of the individual pieces would come down to how big a bag I could take on the plane.

China Southern Airlines has a maximum luggage dimension of 158cm (length + width + height). I found a reasonable rolling bag on the internet that came in at 156cm with a length of 80cm. This would mean I need gunwales & stringers that broke down into 7 pieces. I settled on a half lap joint for the laminated gunwales with the ribs locking these pieces together in a mortised joint.



Gunwale joint

The rest of the construction would be fairly standard for a Greenlander. The whole frame would be held together with artificial sinew

using the traditional knots found in the original Greenland kayaks and the skin would be 0.2mm PVC stapled to the full length of the gunwales as in my previous boats.

The construction phase went faster than I expected and I ended up having to cut a few corners in order finish the thing. Some of the joints had 3 or 4mm gaps in them which I planned to clean up but ran out of time. I also abandoned plans for a rudder. Once I had tied the frame together it seem like it might be ok. There was a lot of flex but I was only planning to use it on flat water.



I wrapped the finished frame in stretch wrap and took it for a quick shakedown paddle on the Lane Cove River two days before my flight. It all went well until the temporary covering started to leak. It took about 5 minutes to completely fill up. I ended up swimming the semi-submerged boat around 800 metres back to the pontoon. Trying to lift the boat filled with water was impossible and I had to punch a few holes in the skin to drain the boat. The frame had worked ok, I just wasn't sure if I had cracked any of the pieces when I tried to lift it out of the water. I noticed it had a lot more sag sitting on my roof racks after the paddle.

The plan was to assemble the boat in 3 hours. Nyaung Shwe is a fairly quiet place and it seemed like it would be a good way to spend the first evening. Unfortunately a combination of poor lighting and a lack of proper tools made assembly at night impractical so I put off assembly until the following day.

The hotel staff watched with curiosity as I put the boat together on the balcony of my room. I ended up spending almost the whole day on assembly. The next morning I took it for a test paddle on the pond next to the hotel. One of the housemaids saw me getting ready to launch and a few



The assembled frame



Packing the parts into the bag



Pre-trip test paddle on Lane Cove River



minutes later a bunch of the hotel staff had gathered by the pond to watch. I wasn't expecting an audience for my first paddle.

It would be pretty embarrassing if the framework folded and sank with me in the middle. Sitting in the cockpit it seemed to have a lot more flex than my test paddle on Lane Cove River. Anyway, it all turned out fine and the staff all clapped as I paddled past them.

My hotel was located at the start of a 5km-long canal which led to the lake. It was another 5km to get anywhere interesting, so rather than paddle from my hotel I loaded the kayak on to one of the powered boats and motored down to one of the floating villages. One of the hotel staff, Mr Chi, had told me he knew some good places for canoeing and offered to be my guide for the day. This would come in handy as I wasn't expecting many people would speak English outside of the tourist stops.

April is at the tail end of the dry season and the lake was fairly low. I chose this time as it was well outside the tourist season. I read somewhere the average depth is 2 metres during the dry season. What I didn't realise until I got out of the boat was that although the depth may only be half a metre near the shore there is another half metre of silt your legs will sink into. This was something to keep in mind if I needed to wet exit.

The west side of the lake is being taken over by floating vegetable gardens. Narrow canals criss-cross the gardens,



**Unusual leg-rowing technique used by the local fishermen.**

dividing them up into individual lots. These are beautiful to paddle through but unfortunately the gardens are causing serious environmental

damage. The government has been running an education program to make farmers reduce their use of fertilisers but so far it hasn't had much effect. A lot of the older local people I met complained that there are not as many fish as there used to be and the lake is getting shallower every year.

The villages of the west side are connected by larger canals that pass through the floating gardens. Traffic along these is more concentrated than on the open lake and they have a similar feel to a major suburban road. There are two noticeable peak hours. Boats travelling up and down the canals were all more or less the same design – timber plank construction sealed with bitumen, about 18 metres long and just over 1 metre wide with a diesel on a gimbal at the back. It was interesting seeing how many different uses they were put to, everything from transporting produce, to school bus, to ambulance.

My folding kayak was quite different to my other boats. It felt more like a sit-on-top to paddle. With my weight in the boat, it became kind of banana-shaped which made steering very easy, just an extra stroke of the paddle on one side was enough to make it turn about 90 degrees.



This was really handy navigating the smaller waterways of the lake. The freeboard at the cockpit was around 20mm which was a bit marginal.

One interesting aspect of paddling a skin boat is that there is not much between you and the water. This means you notice some things immediately, like the change in water temperature as depth decreases. The only real problem I had was when I paddled backwards, occasionally water would get into the cockpit.

I didn't take a GPS with me so I'm not sure how fast it was. I did get into a few mini races with the locals and my kayak won every time. Given the excessive weight of the local boats this was not much of an achievement. It would have been interesting to see how a local went paddling the kayak. They were all amazed how light my carbon fibre paddle was.

Overall the lake was an enjoyable place to paddle. Most of the local people seemed eager to talk with me but my lack of Burmese really let me down. All I could manage was to say *mingalabar* (hello) and smile. After the about the tenth time of doing this I felt foolish for not having learned a few basic phrases.

The scenery is completely different to anywhere I have kayaked before. Paddling through the villages in the early morning and late afternoon was breathtaking with amazing colours and reflections. There were a lot of places I didn't make it to and Mr Chi told me about another lake nearby that is less developed. Shan state is I place I think I will go back to, most likely with a new and improved folding kayak.



# What Boat to paddle?

## or How I look at the mathematics of the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic.

I seem to do the HCC in about 10 hours plus or minus 10 or 15 minutes, no matter what Rec boat I do it in. **by Tom Simmat**



Firstly I look at the tide chart and relate to what classes start when. It is important to minimise the time you are padding against the tide.

The tide at Windsor, though, is not travelling quite as fast as the tide at Spencer, so if you paddle against the tide it is better to do it at the Windsor end of the race. This year at Windsor the high tide is a few minutes after 6pm.

The Unrestricted and K boats start at 6pm on the turn of the tide. If I were to paddle an Unrestricted I would put a target race time, including stops, of say 9 hours 20 minutes – a finishing time of 3.20 in the morning. That would be a PB for the race and a lot faster than I have previously done. I would have the tide with me until just after Wisemans and against me until Bar Point.

I have a basic computer spreadsheet that takes into account the tide flow and reasonably accurately estimated times at Sackville and Wisemans for the landcrew.

I then look at the handicap factors to see what are my chances of a place on handicap.

The winning handicap time most years tends to be about 8 hours 50 minutes or 530 minutes.

If I look at the Vet 60 handicap factor for Unrestricted (1.013) my handicap time at 9 hours 20 minutes (560 min) race time would be extended out to 9 hours 27 minutes, about

37 minutes off the winning handicap time, and I would be way down the list.

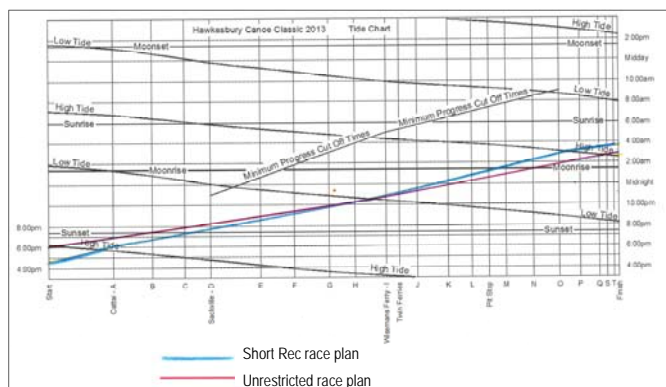
So if I look at again paddling the other end in a Short Rec, my start time is 5pm and I have an hour of tide against me at the start, turning at about checkpoint A. If I have a target race time of say 10 hours 15 minutes I will finish at 3.15am. I will finish just after high tide at Brooklyn and have to battle against the tide from just after Wisemans to the finish. However, with a handicap factor of 0.849 my handicap time will be about 8 hours 42 minutes, I am in with a shot.

But I would very much like to do a very quick time in an Unrestricted. So with a handicap factor of 1.013, what race time do I have to do to get near the 8 hours 50 minutes handicap time?

Answer, 8 hours 43 minutes, averaging about 11.25 km/h.

If I am to have a chance on handicap in an Unrestricted Vet 60 I need to break what was the Unrestricted open record before Toby Hogbin smashed it last year.

Now there is a challenge.



Tom's race tracks for Short Rec and Unrestricted

| CHECKPOINT    | INT D | DIST | TIDE | BASE S | SPEED | TIME     | CLOCK    | E.T.A    |
|---------------|-------|------|------|--------|-------|----------|----------|----------|
| Middle Head   | km    | km   | km/h | km/h   | km/h  | Decimal  | Decimal  | h:m      |
| START         |       |      |      | 11.1   | 11.1  | 0        | 18       | 6:00 PM  |
| A CATTAI      | 11.9  | 11.9 | 1.3  | 11.1   | 12.4  | 0.959677 | 18.95968 | 6:57 PM  |
| B             | 6.9   | 18.8 | 1.3  | 11.1   | 12.4  | 0.556452 | 19.51613 | 7:30 PM  |
| C             | 5.5   | 24.3 | 1.3  | 11.1   | 12.4  | 0.443548 | 19.95968 | 7:57 PM  |
| D SACKVILLE   | 5     | 29.3 | 1.3  | 11.1   | 12.4  | 0.403226 | 20.3629  | 8:21 PM  |
| E             | 0     |      |      | 11.1   |       | 0        | 20.3629  | 8:21 PM  |
| F LOWER POINT | 8.7   | 38   | 1.3  | 11.1   | 12.4  | 0.370161 | 21.08452 | 9:03 PM  |
| G             | 6.5   | 44.5 | 1.3  | 11.1   | 12.4  | 0.324194 | 21.58671 | 9:35 PM  |
| H             | 5.6   | 50.1 | 1.3  | 11.1   | 12.4  | 0.481815 | 22.04032 | 10:02 PM |
| I             | 5     | 55.1 | 1.3  | 11.1   | 12.4  | 0.403226 | 22.44355 | 10:26 PM |
| J WISEMANS    | 5.2   | 60.3 | 1.3  | 11.1   | 12.4  | 0.419333 | 23.0029  | 10:51 PM |
| K             | 2.5   | 62.8 | 1.3  | 11.1   | 12.4  | 0.201813 | 23.06452 | 11:03 PM |
| L             |       |      |      | 11.1   |       | 0        | 23.06452 | 11:03 PM |
| M             | 2.6   | 65.4 | 1.3  | 11.1   | 12.4  | 0.209677 | 23.27419 | 11:16 PM |
| N             | 5.8   | 71.2 | 1.3  | 11.1   | 12.4  | 0.487742 | 23.74194 | 11:44 PM |
| O             | 3.0   | 75.1 | 0    | 11.1   | 11.1  | 0.361351 | 24.0029  | 12:05 AM |
| PIT STOP      | 3.3   | 78.4 | -1.3 | 11.1   | 9.8   | 0.336735 | 24.43002 | 12:25 AM |
| Q             |       |      |      | 11.1   |       | 0        | 24.43002 | 12:25 AM |
| R             | 2.6   | 81   | -1.3 | 11.1   | 9.8   | 0.285205 | 24.69533 | 12:41 AM |
| S             | 4.8   | 85.8 | -1.3 | 11.1   | 9.8   | 0.489795 | 25.18513 | 1:11 AM  |
| T             | 4.3   | 90.1 | -1.3 | 11.1   | 9.8   | 0.438718 | 25.5239  | 1:27 AM  |
| U             | 3     | 93.1 | -1.3 | 11.1   | 9.8   | 0.306122 | 25.93002 | 1:55 AM  |
| V             | 3.8   | 96.0 | -1.3 | 11.1   | 9.8   | 0.387143 | 26.2876  | 2:17 AM  |
| W             | 1.3   | 97.9 | -1.3 | 11.1   | 9.8   | 0.132853 | 26.41942 | 2:25 AM  |
| X             | 1.1   | 99   | -1.3 | 11.1   | 9.8   | 0.112245 | 26.53296 | 2:31 AM  |
| FINISH        | 2     | 101  | -1.3 | 11.1   | 9.8   | 0.204083 | 26.73614 | 2:44 AM  |
|               |       |      |      |        |       | 8.736144 |          |          |

The challenge: the race schedule needed for Tom to win the Hawkesbury Classic on handicap in the Unrestricted Vet 60

## Strategies with the tide

by Tom Simmat

In the HCC 2013 high tide at Windsor will be at about 6.15pm. Low tide at Wisemans will be at about 10.20pm. High tide at Pit Stop will be at about 3.50am. High tide at Brooklyn will be at about 2.40am.

The outgoing tide runs at an average of 1.3 kilometres per hour, the incoming tide a little less at 1.25km/h. The tidal flow speed increases as you travel down the river and of course varies depending on your position across the river.

What is important is the difference. Tide run-in to tide run-out is a whopping 2.55km/h. It does not matter so much if you are a fast paddler say averaging 11km/h but if you can hold only say 7km/h the difference tide-in to tide-out is nearly 30%.

This year following a short run-in tide, the tide will be with those com-

petitors who expect to get to Wisemans before 10.20pm.

It is not advisable to stop for too long if the tide is going out, take your breaks when the tide is against you.

Everyone will be going past Sackville when the tide is going out so postpone your break till Wisemans.

My race plan gets me to Wisemans before the tide starts running in, so I will keep my stop there to an absolute minimum. That is less than 2 minutes.

If I need to stretch I will stop at Low Tide Pit Stop when the tide is ripping against me.

### Wind against tide

It is very unusual at that time of year for there to be a strong northerly wind overnight, so if there is going to be any significant wind it will be a southerly or south-easterly.

The wind against the tide will create a significant wave. This is most noticeable after Spencer down that long south reach. If you are finishing this year between 3am and 8am and there is a southerly blowing, the best place to be for the outgoing tide is the middle of the river, but expect a bumpy ride, especially after Spencer (checkpoint O).

If it is too much for you, set yourself a line that will tuck yourself behind the western point just after checkpoint P. After Bar Point head under the cliffs south of checkpoint S. The tide will drag you down to Milsons Passage. Stay in Milsons Passage well after the last of the channel markers on your left side, then cross to the river heading a little upstream of the finish.

With an outgoing tide this is the fastest route anyway.

## Start preparing for the Classic

This is the time of the year when we turn our sights to the Hawkesbury Classic and gear up for another united effort to retain the Commonwealth Bank Cup as the best club in this great endurance event.

Once again [Paul van Koesveld](#) is coordinating the LCRK challenge, a job he has done with distinction for the past couple of years. Already he has a profile of the Classic up on the club website and it's up to all members to do their bit and respond to calls for assistance.

Check into "2013 Hawkesbury Classic" on the right side of the home page and you'll find a comprehensive list of information to help you prepare.

It includes a training manual and advice on stretching, nutrition and injury prevention, route maps and an excellent landcrew guide map. You can download on to your Garmin a track for the race. There is a list of club members planning to compete, so add your name now.

If you're not competing you can help as a volunteer for jobs such as "spotters" who give early warning to landcrews of LCRK paddlers arriving at Sackville.

And there is lots of other interesting information, eg a list of LCRK record-holders in the Classic.

LCRK is offering members three "famils" on the Hawkesbury, plus an extended night paddle on Lane Cove River, to prepare for the Hawkesbury Classic. They will be out-and-back paddles, so you don't need to car-shuffle and you get to paddle both with and against the tide (yes, a fair bit of the Classic will be against the tide).

These famils are for members only and have no charge. The first was Mooney Mooney to Spencer on July 27, the others will be for around 3 hours, so distance will vary with your speed. Just paddle for 1 hour 30 minutes (a bit more if against the tide) at no more than the pace you would hope to achieve in the Classic, then turn around. Dates are Sun Aug 18: Wisemans upstream; Sat Oct 12: Pit Stop ramp to Spencer. Plus

Wed Sep 25: 2 x 12km night paddle.

Paddle the Myall Classic (47km, 23km or 12km) on Sat Sept 14. Many members leave their final HCC decision until they have completed the Myall.

Tides in this year's Classic will favour slower paddlers, with a Sunday 7.58am low tide at Mooney Mooney meaning a long ebbing tide to the finish for them. High tide at the finish is at 2.23am, meaning faster paddlers will have to battle an incoming tide most of the way from Wisemans. Moonrise is not until 1.18am. Sunset is at 7.18pm, sunrise at 5.59am.

The 2013 Classic race book is out and contains details of changes to race start times which will affect many Lane Covers. There will be no more starts at 4.45pm, 5.15pm and 5.45pm. Classes that used to start at those times will now start 15 minutes later, eg medium recs who used to go off at 4.45pm will now leave at 5pm.

After Tony Hystek was denied re-dress – and a record – last year (after stopping to help a capsized boat) because he failed to apply within 3 hours of finishing, there was talk of that rule being relaxed. However the 3-hour limit has been retained in the race book.

The race book also states: "The Ocean Racing Ski Class is now here to stay, and can be entered in any age or sex category. Records in all categories will be recorded."

Some other HCC news:

- ❖ [Toby Hogbin](#), who last year smashed the record for the fastest time by a single paddler, is expecting an addition to his family shortly before the race and will not be in the field this year.
- ❖ [Richard Barnes](#), who last year did the Classic with (then) 81½-year-old [Joan Morison](#), is trying to persuade her and husband [Bruce](#) to join him in a canoe for this year's race. Bruce has knee problems and can't sit in a kayak, but a canoe is a possibility.
- ❖ [Tony Hystek](#) says he "will not be competing in the Classic but if

### Man-eaters in the river

I've paddled in the ocean for more than 20 years and have never ever seen a shark. So it was with some surprise that my first kayak sighting of jaws was in Lane Cove River. Ian Wilson and I were doing a lap of the 12km course together and both saw it in the muddy waters between the two red buoys just downstream from the old Wirong entrance.

It was a weekend after 2-3 days of rain so visibility in the water was shocking and could be measured in centimetres. Perhaps the poor visibility had disoriented it and that accounted for it being where it was? Both the tail and dorsal fins broke the surface and the unmistakable wiggle of that species left both of us in absolutely no doubt what type of fish we had spotted.

I am not sure if it was the shark or Frank's *Flash*, but I managed a self-timed PB that morning. And the fact it was only about a foot long misses the point ... where there are babies, there are usually mummies. I would love to hear about any other encounters.   
– *John Duffy*

### Darwin revisited

History was made at the Narrabeen Marathon, when Richard Barnes was spotted using a wing paddle. You can compose your own theory about the evolution of the species.   
– *Tony Hystek*



possible I will be at Wisemans to support our paddlers".

- ❖ [Rae Duffy](#) will be in a K4 with [Merridy Huxley](#) and two women from NSW Sea Kayakers. Husband [Neil](#) is planning to do the race in the Flash Rae paddled to win last year's Classic on handicap.

## LCRK Is headed for the Thames and the UK Houses of Parliament

If you see Tony Hystek and Richard Robinson galloping around carrying a K2 on their shoulders some Wednesday night down at the pontoon, don't panic. They haven't been kicked off the water and they haven't lost their marbles.

They're in training for one of the great canoe races in the world, the Devizes to Westminster in England, held every Easter. It's 125 miles long (about 200km) and goes for 52 miles down the Kennet and Avon Canal, then the rest down the River Thames, finishing in London downstream of Westminster Bridge and opposite the Houses of Parliament.

It's a non-stop race and the senior doubles was won last year in 16h 44m 23s.

The course is blockaded with locks and weirs everywhere and has 77 portages! (Maybe they have lost their marbles.) It has been called "the canoeists' Everest".

So you can see why Tony and Richard are getting in some portage practice. They plan to add a portage to their Wednesday night time trials each week. They are also doing paddling and portaging practice on Parramatta River at night. "We are going to England to win the Devizes race," said Tony.

Go to [www.dwrace.org.uk](http://www.dwrace.org.uk) for details of the event. There are good videos if you want to Google.



**Jon Harris heads off for a 12km time trial**

## Wednesday nights at the pontoon with Wade Rowston



The colder weather has arrived but still most nights there are 30+ kayaks out on the water. As I always say, the coldest part of a Wednesday night time trial is getting ready, once you are on the water and paddling you warm up very quickly.

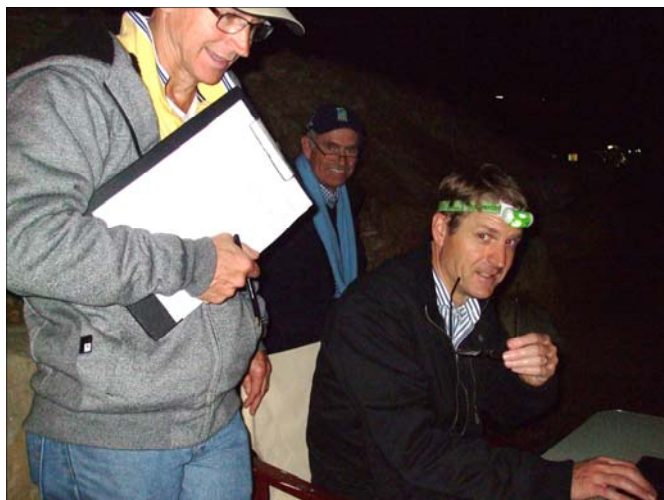
Maybe the colder weather is more conducive to faster times, except for the whole darkness thing. Paddlers hitting PBs recently include [John Duffy](#), [Jeremy Spear](#) and [Christian Cox](#). Well done! [Tony Hystek](#) and [Richard Robinson](#) have been knocking on the door of the 50-minute barrier in a double in recent months, missing out by 4 seconds one week and then 6

a break in the points score on the rest of the field. Can they be pegged back by the end of the year? Of course they can, as there are still 5 rounds to go. Illness has meant that current holder of the Coffee Cup [Tracey Hansford](#) has dropped down the ladder and [George von Martini](#) now has a two point lead over [Ruby Gamble](#). Just keep in mind that there is a long way to go and the Cups are usually decided in the last month of the year.

Just a quick reminder on lights again, particularly if you paddle a seakayak (or sea-kayak hybrid) or a ski. Please ensure you attach your lights to the highest points on the bow and stern of your craft, otherwise you cannot be seen by oncoming craft, particularly on a dark night. In the interest of safety please address any equipment issues should a committee member ask you to.

Finally, a very warm welcome to new members [Kate Lord](#) and [David Young](#). Kate comes to us with representative honours in canoe polo and David is an experienced surf and harbour racer.

Happy paddling!



**Nigel Colless, mastermind behind the new computerised timing system for Wednesday night time trials, in action with Chris Quirk and Stuart Myers**

seconds the next week. Tony teamed up with [Toby Hogbin](#) at the last Doubles Night and both cracked the 50 for the first time for them by just 5 seconds. ([Matt Blundell](#) has cracked 50 previously too.) Congratulations. The rest of us can only look on in awe of what impressive paddling that is.

The Crudslime and Coffee Cups are reaching interesting stages. [Phil Geddes](#) and [Paul van Koesveld](#) have made a bit of

**Martin Dearnley**

## Nature Notes by Jon Harris

The White-breasted sea eagle (*Haliaeetus Leucogaster*) is one of our most majestic birds. I haven't seen any around Lane Cove recently, but a few years ago I would see them occasionally in the vicinity of Blackman Park. I even saw one there on an overhanging branch eating a fish it had caught.

There are eight species in the *Haliaeetus* genus, spread through the coastal areas of Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and Australia. Only one species inhabits the Australian coast (and surprisingly far inland), mostly seen soaring on thermals or swooping down to catch surface fish in its very sharp talons.



Juveniles are brownish grey with white patches on the under-wings, progressing to all grey above and white leading edge, black trailing edge under-wing and white head and body on the adults. A fully grown adult weighs around 3.5kg with a wingspan of 190cm.

Like all birds, particularly the larger predators, the population is in decline but it is not yet endangered in Australia. They are solitary birds but form monogamous pairs that mate for life, breeding first at around 6 years and living to around 30 years. Nests are large constructions of sticks and lined with leaves, grass and seaweed, built almost anywhere such as trees, remote buildings, rocky outcrops, mangroves, etc.

Usually 2 eggs are laid, hatching after 6 weeks. They are fed by both parents for another 10 weeks before leaving the nest but are still fed by the parents for another month or so, before being chased away from the area to stake out their own territories and lead their own lives.



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