



# KAYAK KAPERS

## HAWKESBURY CANOE CLASSIC

December 2006

# Four Classics in a row for Lane Cove

Lane Cove has done it again – top club in the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic for the 4<sup>th</sup> straight year. LCRK won the coveted Commonwealth Bank Cup with 2195 points ahead of surprise runner-up The Armidale School whose armada of boats earned 2038 points (then Windsor 1883, Central Coast 1858, Just Paddlers 1724, Burley Griffin 1710 and Manly Warringah 1683).

This stunning victory was all the more meritorious with 6 of our class winners last year not racing this time, and a 7<sup>th</sup> switching clubs. With these stars missing, others stepped forward and took up the challenge. Incredibly, this year's winning total was 146 more than in 2005.

There is no doubt that when it comes to endurance flat-water racing, Lane Cove sits on the top perch. We had a stack of record busters, class winners and PBs, plus the battlers who paddled for personal pride rather than podium places.

The record breakers were:

➤ **Urs and Arni Mader** in the Mixed Rec2. Their time of 10.40.59 not only obliterated the existing record by 1.45.29, it also won them 2<sup>nd</sup> place on handicap, only 4m 39s behind the winners, Windsor's legendary Jill Sowerby and Judy Greenidge.

➤ **Marg Cook and Merridy Huxley** in the Ladies Open K4 (with Buzz Powell and Sandra Burwood from Manly Warringah). They splashed and sang their way to 9.29.40 and a 41m 12s margin over the previous best, and also took out the trophy for the fastest ladies on the course.

➤ **Julie Stanton** in the Ladies Open UN1. Her time of 10.13.30 took a whopping 1.01.06 off Buzz Powell's record and made her the fastest single lady on the river. It took four in a quad to beat her for the fastest ladies prize. There was some compensation in 13<sup>th</sup> on handicap.

➤ **Louise Dearnley**, 16, and **Georgia Peacock**, 17, in the Ladies Junior K2. Their time of 13.43.05 shattered the old record by an amazing 2h 20m as they shrugged off early problems with the cold.

➤ **Tom Simmat** in the Mens 50+ LRec. First calculations at the finishing line suggested he



Arni and Urs Mader pulverised a 9-year-old record

### LANE COVE PADDLERS IN THE HAWKESBURY CLASSIC 2006

Class	Competitor	Time	Place	No. of Boats	Handicap	Hcp Place
MOK1	Matt Blundell	8.32.59	1	8	9.35.03	7
MOLRec2	Craig Elliott/Derek Walker	9.12.35	1	12	9.51.16	17
MOUN2	Oliver Hookins/Tim Hookins	9.23.12	2	3	10.25.43	39
L OK4	Marg Cook/Merridy Huxley (with Sandra Burwood/Buzz Powell)	(R)9.29.40	1	1	10.32.20	45
MOUN1	Rob Vallis	9.44.21	1	7	10.43.22	51
M40+MRec	Roger Aspinall	10.09.47	1	6	9.41.44	14
LO UN1	Julie Stanton	(R)10.13.30	1	1	9.40.59	13
M 50+LRec	Tom Simmat	(R)10.14.43	1	17	9.37.50	10
M OLRec	Kyle Wilson	10.25.53	1	15	10.25.53	40
Mx 50+Rec2	Urs Mader/Arni Mader	(R)10.40.59	1	1	8.57.47	2
M 40+LRec2	Matthew Swann/James Mumme	10.41.39	3	7	11.05.23	64
M 50+MRec	Phil Newman	10.49.49	2	8	10.01.05	21
M 40+K1	Richard Barnes	11.03.40	4	7	12.02.04	122
M 40+TK1	Ian Purves	11.31.02	2	2	11.12.23	70
B-or-B2	Wade Rowston/Don Rowston	11.52.09				
M 50+LRec2	Trevor Williamson/Bert Lloyd	12.04.02	2	2	12.07.39	125
M 40+MRec	Jeremy Spear	12.20.58	3	6	11.46.53	107
M 40+MRec	Tony Hystek	12.23.19	4	6	11.49.07	111
M 50+MRec	Kenji Ogawa	12.48.26	4	8	11.50.48	113
M 50+LRec	Paul van Koesveld	13.24.10	11	17	12.35.55	142
M 50+SRec	Martin Davey	13.29.25	2	2	11.42.34	103
M 50+LRec	Graham Willis	13.32.30	13	17	12.43.45	147
L JK2	Louise Dearnley/Georgia Peacock	(R)13.43.05	1	1	12.00.26	121
B-or-B2	Michael Venter (with Steven Howcroft)	14.44.04				
B-or-B	Justin Paine	14.51.56				
B-or-B	Nick Ridgwell	15.21.10				
B-or-B	Alistair Green	15.25.51				
L OMRec	Barbara Weber	16.22.30	5	5	13.51.12	176
M 60+LRec	Jim Screen	14.35.00			(withdrew at Spencer)	
B-or-B2	Nicholas Salom (with Peter Lloyd)	6.55.00			(withdrew at Wisemans)	
M OMRec	Dean Wayne	7.04.00			(withdrew at Wisemans)	
M OK1	Matt Acheson	4.18.09			(withdrew at Dargle)	
M 50+MRec	Martin Dearnley	Disqualified				

(R) denotes class record

# HAWKESBURY CLASSIC 2006



**Tom Simmat ... a record by 59 seconds**

There were 5 other class winners, all of them sensational paddlers:

- ◆ **Matt Blundell**, Mens Open K1, 8.32.59 – the fastest paddler in the race
- ◆ **Craig Elliott/Derek Walker**, Mens Open LRec2, 9.12.35
- ◆ **Rob Vallis**, Mens Open UN, 9.44.21
- ◆ **Roger Aspinall**, Mens 40+ MRec, 10.09.47
- ◆ **Kyle Wilson**, Mens Open LRec, 10.25.53.

Add to that 5 seconds, 2 thirds and a swag of other great performances, including many PBs.

(The Ladies K4, with paddlers from two clubs, did not score Commonwealth Bank Cup points. Matt Blundell, a dual club member, paddled in Manly Warringah colors. Matt's drama-filled performance was one of the fastest ever by a single paddler and an unscheduled swim robbed him of a K1 record. He lost 6 minutes and missed out on the 10-year-old record by 3m 31s. He was philosophical about it after the race and said: "These things happen.")

At our post-race pontoon barbeque (not a post mortem, except for an unfortunate few) the following Wednesday, Classic President Kent Heazlett praised LCRK for offering "something special".

"It's just fantastic the camaraderie you have. The input into the Classic from Lane Cove is way in excess of any other club. The fun you guys have is what it's all about," he said.

Two father-and-son combinations epitomised our family club. Tim and Oliver Hookins carried their brilliant trial form into the race. Don and Wade Rowston took the family connection into another generation with grandson Miles landcrewing.

The contribution of the Barnes family was, as usual, staggering. While Richard paddled (and stayed at the finish until



**Merridy Huxley, Buzz Powell, Sandra Burwood and Marg Cook let 'er rip**

had fallen one second short of Don Andrews' record, but a recount had his 10.14.43 59 seconds ahead. He also took 10<sup>th</sup> on handicap.

midday to cheer in the latecomers), Mum Barbara landcrewed for the 26<sup>th</sup> straight time and Dad Eric and sister Linden for the 25<sup>th</sup>. Brother John led a cheerful band who breathed life back into exhausted paddlers at the ever popular Pit Stop.

It was great to have Buzz Powell and Sandra Burwood join Marg and Merridy and the rest of us at the BBQ. The fun those four have is contagious.

The weather for the race was close to perfect, even if the cold forced a few hypothermia withdrawals, with the mercury sliding down to 3½-4 degrees. Before the start Roger Deane (co-race controller) said the strong, gusty wind would drop at sunset. Others said the forecast was for a repeat of the fierce winds of the night before. Roger was right (no surprise there) and throughout the night the water was glasslike. After moonset at midnight the Milky Way twinkled with billions of stars and the silence was disturbed only by the occasional singer and the unrelenting "hut ... hut ... hut ..." of canoeists.



**Master meteorologist Roger Deane**

Martin Dearnley was booked for running a red light (actually a flashing orange ferry light) at Sackville and DQ'd. He confessed to a "stuff up" which may have been due in part to lingering tiredness following victory in the 24-hour Rogaine orienteering championship in Darwin with daughter Louise. Whatever the reason, it enables him to join one of sport's most select groups – the Hawkesbury Classic Ferry DQ Club (membership now 3).

Tom Simmat claimed he asked at the finish: "Anyone interested in paddling back?" He was joking, of course. Well, perhaps he was joking.

*Classic pictures by Derek Simmonds and Lloyd Armstrong*



**Class winners Roger And Julie share the moment**



**Year 11 Louise Dearnley and Georgia Peacock**



# Scones and coffee, gumboots and a DQ

Lane Cove paddlers had tales of fun, exhaustion, hypothermia, determination, triumph and disappointment in the Hawkesbury Classic. Here are their stories.

**Matt Acheson** (Open K1, landcrew Mike Snell, Ewan Holland): "About an hour in I came around a corner and lost it and went for a swim, I got to the shore and back in the boat. Then just past checkpoint B it was dark and I didn't realise I was so close to the shore and hit a metal fence. I was high and dry, about a metre and a half of the K1 was hanging over it. I reversed off but knew I had done some damage. The temperature dropped and I felt as if every breath I was taking was burning my lungs. I had had a cold and rather than get pneumonia I did the soft thing and bailed out at Dargle."

**Roger Aspinall** (MRec 40+, landcrew Graeme Jeffries, Ian Hofstetter, Michael Mueller, Nick Chai): "I'm really thrilled with my time (of 10.09.47), it beat my previous best when I was paddling TK1s by 2 hours. This time I was in a Flash. I was hoping to beat 10 hours but I was watching my speed against the tide and I knew from the GPS that I was slower than I had calculated, so I thought I might as well ease off. I lost about 20 minutes I could make up. I stopped at Sackville and Wisemans and also got out of the boat between Sackville and Wisemans and at Pit Stop to fix the seat and stretch. I was the first person to stop at Pit Stop, they all came down to the beach to meet me."



**Richard Barnes** (M40+ K1, landcrew parents Eric and Barbara, sister Linden): "I had no lows, all highs, and met all the good people on the river. The highlight for me was the lemon meringue pie with green and gold sprinkles on top at Dargle. It worked - I'm a cakeaholic! I got into Brooklyn at 5am and stayed till midday when the last of the boats came in. That's part of the fun, seeing the slow people come in, they're just so inspiring after doing 19 or 20 hours."



**Matt Blundell** (M Open K1, landcrew Mike Snell, Ewan Holland, Steve Gardner): "I had a swim an hour before Wisemans, I just lost concentration and nearly hit Dave Tudor-Jones who was paddling with me. I had to swim to shore and lost 6 minutes. That was the course record. I stopped at Wisemans beach for 2 minutes as planned and worked hard to catch up to Dave after 6½ hours. We took turns and then he fell in at Q (Bar Point, about 5km from the finish), I hit his paddle. I stopped and waited for 2 minutes but he couldn't get back in and said to go on. He did finally get back in and finished 2m 42s behind me. Without that it would have been a sprint to the finish line. We both got tendonitis in our wrists and were off paddling for a while."



**Marg Cook/Merridy Huxley** (with Sandra Burwood and Buzz Powell, L Open K4, landcrew Rob Cook, Warren Huxley, Joy West, Eric Burwood, Stuart McArthur): "We went really well as a team. We had 2 stops of 5 minutes each at Sackville and Wisemans. It was freezing cold and we kept adding clothes. In a K4 you get a shower every stroke. We sang songs - sometimes couldn't remember the words - and talked, said hullo to everyone we passed, it was very smooth all the way. Dallas Newman was in the 2000 crew whose K4 record we beat by 41 minutes and she and Lorraine Harper-Horak broke our 40+ K2 record, so it was an exchange of records."



**Martin Davey** (M50+ SRec, landcrew wife Mary, son Richard): "This was my 4th Classic and my best time, so I'm quite pleased. I found it very cold, I was underdressed for the first half, then changed at Wisemans and it was a bit warmer. I chatted for a while with another SRec, then had a comfort stop and he went off. He came into Wisemans a few seconds behind me but finished ahead. I had a coffee at Wisemans and enjoyed the fire in the café there."

**Martin Dearnley** (M50+ MRec, landcrew wife Robyn): "Paddling into Sackville I was looking for the passing gate at the ferry but didn't find it. I heard no call and I was at the point of crossing when the ferry left the shore and I saw the flashing light, and I kept going. The marshal's boat chased after me and took my number but no-



one said anything then or at Dargle or Wisemans about a DQ. I didn't find out I had been DQ'd until the finish. Had I known I would have waited and paddled with Louise and Georgia. I did 11½ hours, half an hour slower than I expected."

**Louise Dearnley/Georgia Peacock** (L Junior K2, landcrew Georgia's mother Jo and brother Lenny, Paul Campbell): "We got very cold at Dargle and took half an hour to warm up. We had a partial change of clothes and added layers. We felt good from there to Wisemans where we stopped for half an hour. The next 10k took us about 2 hours. Dad said not to stop at Pit Stop, we'd liked to have stopped - the fire was very tempting."



**Craig Elliott/Derek Walker** (Open LRec-2, landcrew Anne Walker, Christine Gordon, Ron Elliott): "We washrode the Bruce Goodall/Christine Lalor double all the way to Dargle, we just sat there and sat there and sat there. Our only stop was 3 minutes at Wisemans. We hit a tree 5km out of Wisemans and nearly came out. We are happy with the time."



**Alistair Green** (Brooklyn-or-Bust, landcrew Dan Burns, Ian Lilley): "I'm ecstatic to have finished. Last year I pulled out at Dargle. This year I hoped to finish in 16 hours and I beat that. I got really cold just out of Dargle. My wife had given me some hand warmers, a sort of chemical pad in a sealed packet which has an exothermic reaction to air and heats up. I threw one of those down my shirt and it warmed me up. I was really pumped to get to Wisemans, where I had a break of 1½ hours and had some dinner, and also stopped at Pit Stop for 20 minutes which I really enjoyed."



**Tim Hookins/Oliver Hookins** (M Open UN2, landcrew Judy Hookins, Frank and Marg McDonald): "We turned all our previous experiences upside down. We had got used to starting and staying in the middle. This time we were 6th from the start and stayed there, paddling with the gods. It was an amazing race as nobody overtook us. About 500m from the end another Supersonic came up just behind us but we gunned it and beat them by 10 seconds. Our time improved Tim's previous best, in a Flash, by 2 hours 3 minutes."



**Tony Hystek** (M40+ MRec, landcrew Alanna Ewin, Steve Russell): "I had an old sea kayak in the attic that I hadn't touched in 15 years and decided to break it out. I needed to set a goal and decided on the Hawkesbury. In one of the trials I met Frank McDonald and he suggested I have a paddle with Lane Cove, which I did. In the Classic I went out too hard, then was nodding off through tiredness between Sackville and Wisemans. After a short black coffee at Wisemans every-



Kenji Ogawa ... before donning his gumboots

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thing was just perfect and I powered in over the last 20k."

**Bert Lloyd/Trevor Williamson** (M50+ LRec-2, landcrew Robert Moller): "You can't do a good time and spend 1½ hours at check points. We stopped at Dargle, Wisemans and Pit Stop. We decided we were just doing it for fun and we had a good run, really. The scones, jam, cream and coffee at Pit Stop were excellent."



**Urs Mader/Arni Mader** (Mixed 50+ Rec-2, landcrew Denise and Henry Guggenbuhl): "We prepared well and it all fell into place, it's a good feeling when things are working for you. We had a no-stop strategy and the cold weather favored us because we had extra clothes on from the beginning. We planned to go to 10km/h and sit there but actually went to 10½ and when the tide turned to 11 and 11½, we were flying to Wisemans. Over the last 12k from Spencer when the tide changed we couldn't pick up speed, Arni was in the back and water was lapping into her seat, I think a spray skirt leaked and we picked up about 25 litres of water."



**James Mumme/Matt Swann** (M40+ LRec-2, landcrew Terry Lew, Robert Santosa): "We stopped 20 minutes ahead of our race plan at Dargle where the boys had a picnic laid out, then it was tough to Wisemans where we had another picnic. At Pit Stop the scones were



lovely. At Bars Point James got two fishing lines across his throat and after seeing a sinker and hooks fly past on the first one he bit through the second in case the owners thought they were hauling in a big jewie."

**Phil Newman** (M50+ MRec, landcrew Andrew Vilder): "I didn't feel good at the start and it was freezing, so I put another thermal on before Sackville. After Sackville I picked up and got better and better. I had a short stop at Windsor to eat 2 tins of creamed rice. At Pit Stop I got into some hot chocolate – the specialty of the house – and enjoyed the heat from the fire and lots of friendliness."



**Kenji Ogawa** (M50+ MRec, landcrew wife Gilda): "I wore gumboots on my sit-on-top but I didn't have the guts to put them on at the start, I put them on at checkpoint B. I saw Julie Stanton go past and looked at her long arms and thought if a paddler like her is supposed to take 40,000 strokes, I must be taking 45,000 with my short arms. My sit-on-top is very cold but a cup of coffee at Pit Stop with Richard Barnes and Trevor and Bert warmed me up. Next year will be my 15th Classic and I am going to get a new kayak – a sit-in."



**Justin Paine** (Brooklyn-or-Bust, landcrew Derek Simmonds): "I had a bad start to the day when my Mirage blew off the car at Windsor but there was no serious damage. After a slog to Cattai the wind eased and I settled into a slow, steady 8km/h rhythm, just trying to ease the boat along with the tide. My only stop was at



Wisemans where a back massage from Tim McNamara worked wonders. Derek insisted that I have a complete change of clothing – a smart move from a ringwise pad-

## Through the eyes of the landcrews

by Tim McNamara



Wiseman's ramp was a peaceful haven compared to Dargle. Gone was the Grand Final atmosphere, with paddlers shouting over each other to their landcrews and clambering up and down the river bank. Now all was quietly focused as the watchers stared out into the darkness, awaiting the arrival of their tired and grateful paddlers.

The arrivals were mostly greeted with heaps of praise from their landcrews, expressing a mixture of amazement that they had actually made it to Wisemans and relief that they were still in one piece. This was true for veterans as well as first-timers.

Landcrews were fascinating to watch as they went about their tasks – Richard Barnes and family completing their 26th pilgrimage on an intimate beachside beside the ramp while Supersonic Tim and Oliver Hookins were serviced on the rampside grassy knoll with Formula One efficiency, courtesy of the caring team of wife Jude, with Marg and Frank McDonald.

Some strange looking craft and even stranger looking occupants emerged from the mysterious gloom. An immaculately stitched, brown skin Baidarka double (downloaded from the Internet and longingly admired by Robert Grozier, "Nanuq of the South") arrived with a pair of aspiring Eskimos on board and duly departed, with some delicately executed re-entry manoeuvres, swishing their Greenland blades, back into the gloom. One landlubber called out "Hey, you guys, show us an Eskimo roll" – not a likely prospect, however.

The tangle of equipment, tubing etc hanging from some paddlers as they exited their kayaks appeared to express the state of their fears, with some incredibly complex examples verging on life-threatening. Fortunately, congestion at the ramp was again minimised due to good management by ex-Lane Cove paddler and volunteer stalwart John Rich who made sure all kayaks were moved back from the carpeted ramp edge. The number of arrivals seems to get less each year, with more paddlers (including several LCRK members) electing to stop at "Naughty Wisemans", beyond the ramp. Wobbly legs, aching backs and the effects of the cold were plentiful as paddlers faced the incoming tide in this, the "proving" section of the event.

Ian Purves (TK1) exhibited a case of the staggers and incoherent speech (quite normal, according to his wife) and was held by the medics for 40 minutes, but there was no way Ian was going to quit, despite not remembering the previous hour or so – he powered on.

Louise Dearnley and Georgia Peacock (K2) had by Wisemans recovered from their brush with hypothermia at Dargle and proceeded to load up with choc chip cookies – Louise demonstrating her recovery by swinging from a tree – both legends gritting it out for a great finish.

Ex-LCRK paddler Ian Cooper (Flyer) staggered up the ramp repeating the phrase "I've definitely lost the plot somewhere". His confusion turned to ecstasy as his knotted muscles were relieved by a Turkish massage, declaring "I'd kiss you, Tim, if I was facing the other way." The masseur replied: "My dog usually feels the same."

For some landcrews, like those attending to the large ramp-based School group, the night went by with a mini mum of angst, thanks to the Classic volunteers – their paddlers gaining valuable experience in self-reliance. For other landcrews, however, just waiting on shore would lead to excessive worry about their paddler who was actually coping admirably.

For example, first-time Classic paddler 72-year-old Justin Paine (Mirage 530) finally emerged into the light at the ramp, much to the relief of landcrew Derek Simmonds (and myself), having been missed at Dargle. We need not have worried as this stoic ex-triathlete calmly received his Turkish massage, donned dry thermals, nibbled his sandwich and, with 45 minutes rest, pushed methodically on. Justin may well now hold the record as the "Oldest Classic Virgin".

Yes, it was business as usual at another mesmerising Classic Wisemans ramp experience.



A swim denied Matt Blundell a record



Rob Vallis at the finish



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bler. It was fantastic to feel so warm again. I'd like a dollar for every boat that passed me, I could buy a new kayak. And, incredibly, no sore bum!"

**Ian Purves** (M40+ TK1, landcrew wife Lyn, daughter Nicole, sister-in-law Cheryl): "I got away with the lead pack of 6 who went off like a rocket. After Lower Portland I slowed down and got cold. At Wisemans I got mild hypothermia and the Red Cross wrapped me in space blankets, they wouldn't let me go until my body temperature improved and I lost about 30 minutes. I was shaking again at Pit Stop so stopped there and had a hot drink."



**Nick Ridgwell** (Brooklyn-or-Bust, landcrew wife Lisa): "I did what I set out to do, I aimed at 16 hours in my 28kg plastic sea kayak and beat that. The first leg to around checkpoint B was the hardest. By Sackville I was feeling cold so I stopped for 45 minutes there and had some soup. I rugged up and from then on nothing was going to stop me. I was at Wisemans for 15 minutes and Pit Stop was great, I fed up on scones and jam, the atmosphere was very hospitable. I enjoyed the race and am glad I did the training."

*But the majestic river floated on,  
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,  
Into the frosty starlight ...  
Under the solitary moon.  
Matthew Arnold, English poet, 1822.*

**Don Rowston/Wade Rowston** (Brooklyn-or-Bust-2, landcrew Leon Baker, Miles Rowston): "We pulled up after 9k when Wade got cold and put on a jacket. At Dargle Wade, who had to be helicoptered to hospital from Spencer suffering from hypothermia 7 years ago, had a complete change of clothes. Don's hands were so cold there he put them in the water to warm up. Altogether we stopped for an hour. All things considered, including Don's 6-bypass op last year, it was a bit of an achievement."



**Jim Screen** (M60+ LRec, landcrew Manfred Fiedler): "Between Dargle and Wisemans I got really bad cramps in my back muscles and at Wisemans I went to the physio tent where I had a once-over which sorted me out. I left Wisemans just before the tide turned and got to Spencer in just under 3½ hours. By then the sun was up and I couldn't see, I had a beanie but no peaked cap. I was in my wet weather gear and couldn't be bothered changing. Last year it took me 3½ hours to get from Spencer to Brooklyn against the tide. I had nothing to prove so I pulled out."



**Tom Simmat** (M50+ LRec, landcrew son Daen, David Vick): "I had to change from my short rec Moo to a Flyer because of a measurement conflict. I sat behind the main pack for the first 1½-2 hours but they were too slow so I went past. At Wisemans my landcrew put a spotlight on the front because my night sight is not good and I took on water. It was a Formula One stop - 15 seconds. Below Wisemans you have to get close to the bank, like one metre, because of the tide. Normally I can do 9km/h against the tide but it was so fierce I was down to 7½. I lost 5 minutes in the middle of the river near Pit Stop but eventually broke the record by 59 seconds."



**Jeremy Spear** (M40+ MRec, landcrew wife Ginny, Raf Chemke): "I did the first Classic 30 years ago at 14, I lied about my age. This was my second Classic, I do them every 30 years! I put in a new foam seat 3 days before the race and tried it out, it worked well. I used carbo gels

and they were fantastic. I'm grateful to Tim Hookins for his pre-race diet advice. At Wisemans I was 1½ hours ahead of my race plan and my landcrew wasn't there but someone gave me some food."



**Julie Stanton** (Open UN1, landcrew same as for Roger Aspinall): "Even though I broke the record with 10.13.30 I was a bit disappointed as I was aiming for under 10 hours. You aim high, achieve high. I beat Buzz Powell's record by an hour, she rang to congratulate me and said: 'Did you have to beat it by so much!' I trained for shorter distances so started aching from 45k. Between Wisemans and Spencer it was so dark I had difficulty navigating and waited for a double Mirage which seemed to know where it was going. I stayed with them for a while but they were going too slowly so I broke away."



**Rob Vallis** (Open UN1, landcrew same as Roger Aspinall): "I wanted to beat 9h 46m because that's what Graeme Jeffries' spreadsheet said. My previous best was 10h 59m in a Mirage 22S and I aimed to beat 10h. I pulled in to the bank at Wisemans and changed drinks but didn't get out of the boat. I had to stop at all 4 ferries and that cost me about 10 minutes - not that I'm bitter! I said hullo to everyone I passed, had an excellent night, and had a great landcrew. In the end I had a personal best by 1h 45m."



**Paul van Koesveld** (M50+ LRec, landcrew wife Angela, son Blake): "At Dargle I was starting to get cold and changed, I had too many layers and had to be treated like a baby to do it. About 2 hours after that my back started to go, the Raider X I have has no footbar and I have only got a makeshift bar. My son is a physio and he worked on my back and shoulders at Wisemans. My back was going again by Pit Stop so I stopped there and it was great to have a chat and some scones and coffee, it was good Samaritan stuff. I started slowing down again but finally wobbled into Brooklyn."



**Michael Venter** (Brooklyn-or-Bust-2 with Steven Howcroft, Windsor): "We stopped at Wisemans for 2½ hours. I had previously rented a cabin there for the night of the Classic. We had a hot shower and then I slept for about 45 minutes. I know Steven had a good sleep because he snored so much. The worst part was just after Wisemans. I had had a bowl of noodles and it was a mistake, I didn't feel too good. The best part was the last few kilos, we were feeling great."



**Dean Wayne** (Open MRec, landcrew Lee Labo, Rebecca Rees): "My right shoulder and wrist went, it was really bad. From 30k I was in pain. My shoulder muscles had been damaged and were not working properly. I have a screw in my wrist, I broke it 8 years ago, it's troubled me in the past. At Wisemans I went around to the beach and got out of the boat and changed. I waited until Matt Blundell came in for his stop, then we drove back to the checkpoint and I pulled out."



**Graham Willis** (M50+ LRec, landcrew son Brad, Bob Maddel): "I've water skied the course, driven it for a water skier, been an observer for water skiing, and now I've paddled it. I had a bit of fun at Wisemans, I took my life-jacket off and someone else whose crew was pulling out mistakenly took it to their car. It's a big car park but we eventually found them. I was hit by kidney pains from Wisemans to Pit Stop, the skirt was digging into my kidneys. When I released the skirt I came good. I got really cold in that section and stopped at Pit Stop where I fell into the water and got dripping wet."



**Kyle Wilson** (Open LRec, landcrew mother Mea, wife Amanda): "At the start my clothes were tight and my water line was pinched closed by my skirt, I loosened everything around Sackville and after that was all okay. Passing Spencer the check-in boat moved away and I chased it all the way to Spencer. But it was a great evening, although a bit cold towards the end."



Craig Elliott and Derek Walker relax at Brooklyn

For hundreds more Classic pictures, go to the Photo Gallery at [www.lcrk.org.au](http://www.lcrk.org.au). If you have any pictures which can go up on the website, of the Classic or anything else, email them to [admin@lcrk.org.au](mailto:admin@lcrk.org.au).

# Competition is fierce in the grand finale

by Tim Hookins

Marg and Frank McDonald make a weeklong expedition out of the Wagga Marathon. The rest of us, except for Tom and Christine Simmat, got up at 5 o'clock-ish on Saturday November 11, packed up and headed for Wagga, doing the trip via Goulburn, Gundagai etc in about 5 hours. It was hot on Wagga Beach where we all stood under the metal-roofed BBQ shed listening to the very detailed briefing about the snags, islands, where the red flags are and where the semi-submerged concrete stumps of long-forgotten bridges are. In spite of the worries of drought, the river level seemed to be exactly the same as last year and it was flowing quite strongly past the river-gums which meander along the river's edge.

Tom Simmat is nowhere in sight as the starts commence, but as the first lap unfolds he is there in the Club K1. He must have arrived at the river, jammed on the brakes and carried the boat straight into the water. As he paddles a strip of the cockpit breaks off, but this doesn't seem to slow him down. He said afterwards it just made it easier to get the water out of the boat!

Oli and I are in the second start in the Supersonic and we soon realise the competition is real fierce when by the end of the first downstream leg we are in last position out of 4 boats. Bruce Goodall and Christine Lalor are near us. We know what tough competitors they are and how much they would like to beat us. We beat them by a nose in the

last marathon and by 3 minutes in the Classic.

The lead boat In Division 2, powered by Olympian Margi Bohm and Mark Halpin, turns out to be easy winner in a time of 1:38:02. Coming up to the last sprint Bruce Goodall and Christine, another K2 and Oli and I are all neck and neck and I'm thinking "This finish is going to be ugly!" The lead changes about 300m from the end and it turns into a full-on sprint with Bruce taking the shortcut and us struggling behind the K2. Somehow Oli finds the big burst and we get ahead by a nose with Bruce slowing up a bit in the shallows. Bruce comes up to congratulate us with the advice that he's "in mourning". We came second in 1:42:42 with Bruce and Christine in third spot in 1:42:44.

Richard Barnes and Don Rowston, paddling Don's "rough traffic" TK2, obviously anticipate a bit of biff on the course in Division 3. They finish up with a competitive time of 1:59:42.

Next, in Division 4, are Margaret Cook and Merridy Huxley, paddling the K2. They come in at 1:56:12. Not far behind them are Warren Huxley and Frank McDonald in the bright sleek Supersonic in a time of 2:00:25. As usual for the Marathon series Division 5 is where the big battles are: Ian Purves (1.59.10), Bert Lloyd/Trevor Williamson (2.06.05), Tom Simmat (2.13.18) and Greg Appleyard (2.45.09) are our representatives in a field of 26 boats. Regulars John Greathead and Tony Walker make their customary appearance in the 15km Divi-



**A Le Mans start in the criterium sprints at Wagga Wagga for Richard Barnes and Don Rowston (above) and Tim and Oli Hookins**

sion 6 (1.39.23), while in the 10km Division 8 Rob Cook's appearance (1.15.59) shows paddling is a family sport.

Lane Cove came second in the 2006 series on club points with 78 against the winners, Manly Warringah, with 130 points. Merridy Huxley finished equal first on aggregate points for the series, a fitting reward for her consistent paddling.

Wagga Bidgee quickly conduct the results presentation and then we all get back to our campsite where Marg and Rob Cook take the honours for erecting the tent quickest. One moment it's a lawn, next moment it's a home! And to rub it in, while Oli and I are struggling with our tent poles, Rob is lounging back in his camp armchair reading the Saturday *Herald*! Pretty soon we're all scrubbed up and off to the Marathon series presentation at a local hotel with Roger Aspinall as MC. LCRK was fully represented by all the above paddlers at two rowdy tables, and many were awarded prizes for placing among the winners in their divisions. Merridy Huxley seemed to win just about everything she could, coming away with a new paddle and all sorts of prizes. Roger Aspinall and

the Marathon organisation have done a fantastic job this year, resulting in the presentation of a few new kayaks to developing paddlers. At the end of the presentation there was a standing ovation to Roger and his committee for their efforts over the year.

Next morning, after scouring the town for a solid breakfast, we are off to the criterium sprints hosted by the Wagga Bidgee club. This consists of three 2km sprints at about half-hour intervals. The first they use to develop the handicap and the second and third they award points for improving results. Once again Don Rowston and Richard Barnes paddled with distinction and Frank and Marg McDonald were right in the fray each race. The sprints are great fun but the Supersonic is hard to use because of all the cornering. What I'm saying is we didn't win anything!

Before you knew it, the series was over and we were all heading home. Except for Frank and Marg. Their holiday was just beginning. They invited us to a cuppa in their mobile home-stead and then they went off to explore the local countryside for a week! Life is wonderful isn't it?

## ***Ideas for Santa***

Still searching for that elusive idea for a Christmas gift? How about the new array of LCRK club clothing? A brightly colored lycra race singlet, a jacket or a cap will set your paddler up perfectly for next year's racing. Photos of these and other items are on the merchandising page at [www.lcrk.org.au](http://www.lcrk.org.au). Email orders to [d.simmonds@uws.edu.au](mailto:d.simmonds@uws.edu.au). Hurry ... it's not long to go.

## World record bid for 24-hour record

LCRK has thrown its support behind a proposal by Tom Simmat for an attempt on the world record for the distance paddled in a solo kayak in 24 hours. Currently this is held by American Carter Johnson at 241.95km (just over 10km/h). Penrith Regatta Centre is the proposed venue for the bid, starting at 10pm on Friday January 12.

Tom plans to have a shot at the record but says anyone else is welcome to have a go.

The only known record is for a solo kayak so maybe the way is open to set records in other classes such as womens solo, mens and womens and mixed doubles, perhaps even a K4. Tom is approaching the Guinness Book of Records to make sure all requirements are met and the plan is very much "work in progress".

## Three doubles for the Murray Marathon

Only three boats are expected to carry Lane Cove colors in this year's Murray Marathon, but it's a sure bet that all will figure prominently. First-timers Craig Elliott and James Mumme will paddle a 6.5m Vindicator in the UN2 class. Craig describes it as a "marathon K2" and says the 16-17kg kevlar-carbon craft is too narrow to qualify as an LRec2. Tim and Oliver Hookins will also be newcomers to the course in their Supersonic, although Tim has landcrewed it, and they will carry their outstanding form from the Classic south to the border. Marg Cook and Merridy Huxley, buoyed by their Classic quad triumph, toyed with the idea of trying to organise a K4 but dumped that in favor of using Frank McDonald's black UFO TK2.

## Are there any sharks out there?

Most of us have paddled in Sydney Harbour or Parramatta River and been asked by curious onlookers: "Are there any sharks out there?"

Well, here's a little shark story that may help you answer that question.

I was about to drop my kayak in the water at the Wharf Road boat ramp, West Ryde (in Parramatta River, about half way between Ryde rail bridge and Silverwater Road bridge).

A fisherman jumped down from the adjoining small jetty and picked up a fish about 50-60cm long which apparently was stranded just out of the water on the concrete ramp. (I have no idea how it got there.) He swung it by the tail out into the water, then called out to his mate: "It's okay, it's swimming away."

As I walked down the ramp I said to him: "That looked like a shark."

He said: "Yeah, it was a shark."

It was too small to cause any concern, and that's why this is a little shark story. But I did wonder where its mum and dad were. —JP

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nights near the back markers.  
If you have any printing, he's  
your man.

## The buzz words are *rotate* and *leg drive*

Olympic and World Championship paddler Chantal Meek conducted two coaching clinics for LCRK members on November 18 and 26. Both were outstanding successes, with a large number of our regulars attending and anxious to get a few tips from one of the nation's top exponents of the art. And the way she explained it, paddling is an art. Chantal made the interesting comment that women generally adapt to a correct technique more readily than men because they're not trying to smash through the water with bulging muscles! Each clinic began with a session on the grass where Chantal, assisted by her partner and coach Mark Minchin, demonstrated the fundamentals of a good technique. The idea was to get the basics right first rather than just go out and correct technique errors. That immediately sorted out a few mistaken thoughts that most of us had about what good technique entails. It was more than invaluable – it was eye-opening. Then out on to the water to put into practice what we had been shown, with Chantal and Mark providing corrective comments. LCRK paddlers there to learn ranged from some of our fastest (including a record breaker and class winners from the recent Hawkesbury Classic) to our slowest. Everyone came away smiling and satisfied. There were two overwhelming messages: **rotate** and **leg drive**. (Chantal is available for coaching and can be contacted on 0413-117-734.)



# Ching, ching, ching down the Avon Descent

by Dean (Kato) Wayne

I had been agonising for weeks which boat to use in the Avon Descent, the carbon KI Matt Blundell had kindly offered to lend me or a plastic kayak organised by Steve Cooper from Q Kayaks. After hearing of Matt's unfortunate mechanical failure the year before I decided to use the plastic Ocean Sprinter and hopefully rule out any mechanical withdrawals from the race. 134km – 58km the first day and 76km the second day – is a long way to paddle a plastic, but hey “this should be easier, it's down a flowing river, right?” Wrong, the lead-up to the race was a dry one. Everyone was praying for rain and it didn't come, the race had the lowest water level that the full distance course had ever been run over.

The power boats started an hour before the first paddlers and with outboards screaming they disappeared in seconds. Wave after wave of paddlers left the start every 2 minutes which was a great set-up, especially as the first weir was only 500m away.

My grid finally started at the back of the field and I began my battle, slogging past large numbers of plastic skis and boats. Small streams came after the first weir and I was really worried until they slowly became bigger and there were faster although shallow sections of water. The odd jump up and run through shallow water was needed to gain positions through the snaking line of plastics. The plastics slowly started dropping in number and I started catching fibre-glass boats and skis.

Varied rapids, obstacles and tea trees went by. Extracts weir which is normally covered with plastic pipes appeared right in front of me and with no choice but to portage I was launching my plastic boat down the 30m rock weir with only a couple of throws as the commentator called to the crowd “Here is 920 Dean Wayne from NSW and as you can see he is really taking advantage of his plastic boat.” I paddled off quite pumped up by the loudspeakers until I paddled down one of the numerous wrong streams into tea trees.

I was getting slightly cold due to

fatigue but eating and drinking sensibly, yet still probably went a little too hard on this first day. Enthusiasm kicked in when I caught 6 or 7 of the power boats that were either being repaired or pulled and pushed through shallow water.

Doing a race in a location you have never been to before is tough. Where am I? How much further? Finally a sign: 7km to go. Great. Not so great through the tea trees and rapids, it was the longest 7km of my life, it felt like 3 laps of the Lane Cove 12km course. I crossed the finish line on the first day 3<sup>rd</sup> in my class and hurting, and even

out of my transition in less than 1½ minutes. The transition had only let two paddlers in front of me but then I saw the sign: 38km to go. Oh no, a long way, very disheartening.

Once again I perked up as I realised we were actually paddling downhill – the brain did not compute this properly as it had never experienced this before but the eyes weren't lying: we were traveling through fast water and definitely downhill.

Paddling in a plastic was a safe bet through the rapids but now it was time to pay the penalty: a wide, heavy plastic boat and 30km of flat water.

A small group of 3 plastics crawled up to me from behind and sat on my wash – at least I had someone to chat with. A couple of us took turns at the front while others would not and I was asking the locals with several past scrutineering stickers on their helmets “How far to go?” No-one was forthcoming.

I felt better after food and two more Nurofen – my shoulders feeling like they were ground away from stroke after stroke of hitting sub-

merged rocks in shallow water for 100km – and I started paddling again after a short while.

A dropped paddler caught me as a power craft raced in front and turned a bend. I could hear its motor stop, this along with the increased stroke rate of the other paddler. “Shit!” I suddenly realised this was “The Finish”. The other plastic paddlers had got in front of me but after stopping to eat less than 3km from the finish I wasn't about to make another mistake, and with that I put in big time, gaining 50m between me and the other paddler as I crossed the finish. The local mayor put a finisher's medal over my head as I staggered from the water. I came 6<sup>th</sup> out of approximately 110 open men in the over 4m plastic class.

This race was great fun and a higher water level would make it an even better one. Next year I might try a down river K1.

*PS. It poured rain the night the race finished.*



got there in time for a quick massage before the physios were overwhelmed.

It was an early start the second day and I decided to paddle in long thin wetsuit pants I purchased from Pro Kayaks the week before leaving. The pants were a good choice a) for warmth and b) for protection from a lot more rapids and tea trees. Ching, ching, ching echoed through the valley as my rudder smashed over hidden rocks.

The double skis were an easy target as they suffered badly trying to negotiate the rapid bends, but every time I got to the next flat straight stretch they would get in front just as I reached the next rapid, and I had to try and pass them again.

Fatigue was starting to creep in as I paddled to my solo support member, Rebecca (my girlfriend), an excellent and well rehearsed race supporter. I spotted her and paddled over where she filled the bladder in my PFD in one giant squeeze from another container. I jammed gels and bars into my mesh pockets as I took two Nurofen and was