



June 2014

## 'We've come a long way, feeling pretty good'

On Easter Saturday and Sunday, on the other side of the world, Richard Robinson and Tony Hystek added another memorable chapter to amazing feats by LCRK members. They paddled most of the way across England, 202km from Devizes to London, in one of the toughest of all kayak races. The route twists and winds down the narrow Kennet and Avon Canal into the River Thames. There were 77 portages, some of chest high and with nothing to hang on to as you lever yourself out of the boat. They lost their way in the darkness and capsized twice. Imagine the buzz of finishing in the mighty Thames opposite the Houses of Parliament! After 19h 43m 21s they came fifth out of nearly 200 entrants vastly more experienced and seasoned in endurance portaging events like this. What a magnificent achievement! In the following article, Richard reviews the race and describes the high points and the low points.

I spoke to Justin Paine about whether we really needed *another* DW article, given the updates on the website and the BBQ talk Tony had arranged, but he unrelentingly insisted "YES!, tell us what you were thinking, what really happened out there". So here it is, a brief collection of my impressions and recollections.

Suffice to say this race wasn't really anything like I expected. Sure it involved a boat, some water, a few portages and a bit of darkness, but that is about where any similarities to my mental picture end.

It is a significant event. I take my hat off to the really fast crews, and I gather this would be one of the more difficult kayak events worldwide to perform well in. Given the number of variables involved, I suppose we performed reasonably close to our expectations going in, that is somewhere around the 19-hour mark.

We had hoped to be a bit quicker if things went our way, but for a number of reasons, not all our own, it wasn't a perfect race. Having said that, I'm sure most of the competitors would be saying the same thing. If you're on the water that long, there are sure to be things that don't go your way.

### The boat

The mighty Zedtech AA K2 proved to be a great boat. It was surprisingly quick, in fact unbeknown to us at the time, we dropped one of the fast crews on the lower part of the Thames, only to have them catch us through a few portages and washride us for around 12km. Eventually they pulled away as we were just out of Teddington. So our boat speed through the river section was great.

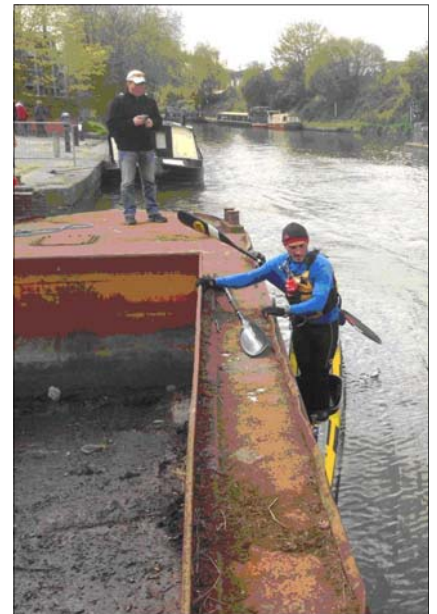
The quality of the fittings was very good, and the tillerbar trim system was a real work of art once we had figured it out. It was strong, which is an important attribute in this race, as the boats take a pounding up against all the lock walls. Often it was quickest to pull the boat out against the brickwork just prior to the lock cut (more often than not it is lower there), rather than the designated portage walls, which were often timber-lined.

The only criticism was the weight - 18-19kg - especially once our 3kg mandatory survival gear was added. And those absolute rubbish K2 rudders Marsport sell.

### Portages

Not really the big problem we thought they were going to be. Waterside D was a great learning event for us (35 portages in 34 miles) and allowed us to be really quite competitive through the daylight section of the canal.





Rather than losing ground to Newbury we actually either held our own or made ground against some of the faster boats, something that came as quite a surprise.

Some were quite high (shoulder height), but the really tricky ones weren't too bad on the night as the river flow had abated significantly and things were much smoother than we expected.

By the time we made the Thames, I was quite happy to be hopping out every 8-10km and stretching the legs, although they did become a choke point the closer we got to Teddington ... more on that later.

### The darkness

An interesting little exchange with a mixed crew just outside Newbury should have been our warning that things weren't going to go perfectly once darkness set in. It went something like this.

*Them: "You guys from Australia?"*

*Us: "Yep, we've come a long way, feeling pretty good, how about you guys?"*

*Them: "Yeah, feeling good too ... what light have you guys got organised for your boat?" (suckers)*

*Us: "Erm ... the one we've got on now ..." (picture pathetic little bike light from Wednesday night paddle)*

*Them: "Oh ... (inordinate, uncomfortable pause) ... you might want something a little more powerful like ours"*

They were right. It left me with that uncomfortable feeling as we paddled on to our eventual, certain confusion.

The night time section below Newbury was as dark as the inside of ..... I mean it was pitch black. Often you didn't actually see the upcoming lock/bridge/tree/bank but rather *sensed* something was there. Needless to say our speed suffered as we fumbled about in the dark, at one stage performing a tight-rope act as we crept across some lock doors with the kayak on our shoulders, having disembarked on the wrong side of the lock.

Then came our navigational error. We saw the sign, we discussed what it *might* say and what we should do. We tried to turn our head torches on, but to no avail, our hands were too cold. DAMN those double-press switches and DAMN that head torch I left behind in Sydney which worked great with a great big easy single push.

In the end we resolved to continue straight ahead, on the channel that looked the biggest on our dark sign and looked the biggest on the GPS (in fact we were in a sea of waterways and islands on the GPS). It didn't end well and thank goodness we back-tracked, we would have disappeared into oblivion had we persevered. That cost us quite a bit of time.

### Swing bridges

These seemingly harmless little creatures came in all shapes and sizes. No-one really talks much about these, but trying to size up whether you are going to squeeze under one in the aforementioned darkness is a bit tricky. To this day I'm not quite sure how Tony managed to fit under some of them, evidently he is more disciplined in his hamstring exercises than I am, but at the time I thought if I lent forward

any further I was going to break my nose on the deck.

It was about this time that you realise why the organisers mandate those really annoying cyalume sticks strapped to your shoulders ... to provide just enough illumination to see that half-inch bolt protruding 8 inches below the bridge as it passes about six inches from your face! Why they haven't been cut down I don't know, but we saw this at least 3 times and they get people every year.

### The wind

Really we can't complain about the weather, in the big picture of things it was very mild. That doesn't mean it was pleasant though. Overnight temperatures would have been around the 3-5°C mark, depending how far west of London you were, which would have been all right but for the wind.

The canal section was for the most part reasonably sheltered, especially the section where we became lost. However once we rounded the corner that marked the intersection of the canal and the Thames, the wind became immediately apparent. It wasn't blowing a gale, but a constant 4-5 knots on the nose, dropping temps to somewhere close to zero.

For the most part our gear was pretty good, but after around 6 hours my hands started to suffer from the cold and remained a problem all the way to the finish. On the tideway, just when you needed to rely on having a good grip on the paddle for the odd brace, we were finding it very difficult.

By the time we hit the tideway, the easterly was working against the tide, producing some very choppy sections. Our friends John and Tracey commented that their speed (by GPS) differed between 5 mph and almost 9 mph, due solely to the wind and chop. It was a long last 17 miles. Our GPS batteries had just given up at the start of the tideway, so I have no idea what speed we were doing on the various reaches.



**In the dark the boys missed the turnoff at top left and lost 20 minutes paddling in the wrong direction past a point where they heard banjos playing**

## Choke points

We really should have seen this coming. Given there were just under 200 boats all converging on an optimal time window at Teddington, it should have occurred to us that there were going to be queues. Not that we could have done much about it, and frankly I'd be interested to see how the really fast crew handle this part of the race.

At the very least we should have made a greater allowance for losing time as we progressed down the river. At some of the larger popular locks, there would have been 7 to 10 boats in various states of transit, with some crews feeding and chatting at the put-ins, blocking progress altogether.

## River flow and levels

This still remains a bit of a mystery to me, and I gather to most competitors. The weir gates at the various locks are adjustable in height, so high-water levels don't necessarily mean high flow, or vice versa for that matter. Judging by the "online chatter" before the race, it is still quite an art. There were formulas for doubling your time on the canal to get your time to Teddington, right down to an analysis of historical finish times vs flow.

At the end of the day none of the sources was very consistent, so we really only went with a small tweak of our proven time down the river in training, which on the day appeared to be overly optimistic. ➤

# The emotions and drama of landcrewing for the DW

by Alanna Ewin



Landcrewing the DW was a bit of an emotional rollercoaster for me and I believe Joy Robinson too as our menfolk faced their greatest paddling challenge yet. We both had our concerns and wanted so badly to do everything we could to ensure a successful race that actually crossed the finish line.

My greatest concern up to a few weeks out was Tony's back. It's distressing to see paddlers in pain and having to cheer them on pretending they are going great. Thankfully Tony and Rich devised an excellent portaging method which protected Tony's back and it was clear things we're going to be ok.

In the two weeks prior to the race we organised logistics, food and fluid intake. You can plan all you like, but it all comes down to what your paddler can stomach at the time. I concentrated on trying to get balance right, to maximize intake within the limits of capacity. If there were too little or inappropriate food, Tony would be sick. A few HCC failures attest to that.

I had some panic attacks in the nights leading up to the race. I would send Tony text messages he would never receive, often at 2.30am, wondering if I had covered all the bases, and asking "what if this or that happens?"

We needed to meet the lads about 15 times over what we expected to be 18 to 20 hrs paddling, and this didn't leave any time for error. Luckily we had a local friend and driver, Wiggy, who really took the pressure off. Added to that, Geoff and Jan, two ex-DW compatriots we didn't even know beforehand, volunteered to help and so joined us to see the lads the through the night and to the finish line.

The camaraderie we experienced from other landcrew was just like home. Everyone was helpful all along the course and things fell into place almost perfectly on the night. Our GPS got us to all our checkpoints except one where we knew we'd get a bum steer so we used our heads instead. A quick decision had to be made to trust the GPS to find another route one time when the train signals failed and all landcrew were completely cut off from entering or leaving the lock!

Our driver, Wiggy, was invaluable. He got us everywhere in time, took photos along the

way, gave me confidence, and was always watching our backs with a spare set of hands at the ready.

As dark fell the whole exercise all got a bit trickier. But along with our well organised kits, and Geoff and Jan turning up to assist, we managed fairly well. Geoff would mostly lead the lads off the water and through the locks to Joy, Wiggy, Guy, Jan and me where we would wait at the put-in with buckets of food and backpacks of clothes and a tool kit for just in case. The boys' life jackets had quick-change drink-bottle systems in their fronts, and water bladders in the backs, as well as a pocket for emergency gels. So we would quickly swap liquids, check pockets, then stuff appropriate solid food in their mouths before they paddled away. A choice of Endura



Optimiser or Torq carb drink was the main energy source, supplemented by Pumpkin Soup, Joy's yummy Fruit Cake, Diced Fruit or Jan's famous Chocolate Brownies. Kendal Mint Cake didn't get a look in!

As the night went on the boys took longer than expected and this did become a bit concerning for Joy and me. It was very dark out there and I waited alone for their arrival at Tyne Mill, while Joy, Guy and Wiggy waited at

the put-in for me to lead the boys to them through the lock. 40 minutes passed and concern set in. Just as I was about to leave my post and seek counsel from Joy, another team turned up and checked the tracker for me. They weren't far away now and that was a relief. As it turned out, it was their scenic detour that delayed their arrival.

Dreadnaught Reach, the beginning of the Thames river section, was the major service point, and a bit stressful as a quick full change of clothes and feed was needed. I forgot to do my idiot check before Tony set off, and as he paddled away I found what I thought were the crucial slippery boardies to go over his neoprene strides in the bottom of my otherwise practically empty clothes bag. Damn, that made me mad! In the end, they were unsuitable anyway as they needed to be tied up, and were falling down around his knees during portages.

Short of time, we raced to Teddington only to see them smile and say they were going straight through. They looked good so we headed for Westminster to meet them, anticipating they would pick up time on the Thames as planned. However this was not to be.

We hurried to the finish line and I found I had left my real camera and paddler food in the car! AUGH. Did I have time to race back to get it? Turns out I had plenty but I just couldn't remove myself from waterside for fear I would miss them, despite this being an impossibility in the circumstances. We bought coffee and Danishes for them and awaited their triumphant finish when, oh-oh ... they capsized just before the steps!

Joy had a panic attack as she thought they had to be in the boat to finish, and I was just bitterly disappointed for them as they floated down to the steps. Our emotions were palpable. But all these emotions quickly faded as they wobbled up the steps grinning and received their finishing medal and refreshments! We guided them to DW support tents with hot showers and food and then down came the rain! It put a little dampener on the finish but overall it was such a spectacular event that it wasn't possible to spoil it.

The long drive home was followed by an afternoon nap and a cheery evening over an Indian feast at the local. It all seemed like a dream and our relief that we finished (with honours!) was tremendous.

The daily average flow in the week leading up the event was around 60-65 cubic metres per second. The morning we went through Teddington it had dropped to 35 cubic metres per second, significantly below any daily flow we had seen since arriving in the UK and well down on the flood levels of almost 400 cumsecs. The next day it was back up to the 60 cumsec mark and stayed that way the rest of the week, damn it!

### Landcrew

This event is a landcrew's (the DW term is supporter) worst nightmare. We had 15 meeting points (compared to the main three we have in the HCC) and they were spread out all over the place, ranging from remote and dark locks a significant walk from the nearest car park, to busy main locks close to London.

At some of the portages, the organisers have been forced by residents to employ parking inspectors to fine supporters who park incorrectly, and paddlers can receive time penalties for infringements. Time penalties also apply should organisers not be able to make contact with landcrew for whatever reason.



The GPS, while invaluable, still provided the odd bum steer, and with all that meeting and driving, there's no time to have a rest.

We are both extremely grateful to our landcrew who are really the unsung heroes in all of this. It must have been a busy, tense and uncomfortable night. I know it was especially challenging for Joy, who not only

481 Hystak : Robinson	
Last tracked	20 Apr @ 10:16
Location Time (Estimate)	
Devises	19 Apr @13:54
Pewsey	19 Apr @16:20
Hungerford	19 Apr @18:39
Newbury	19 Apr @20:00
Aldermaston	19 Apr @21:49
Reading	19 Apr @23:46
Marsh	20 Apr @00:58
Marlow	20 Apr @02:19
Bray	20 Apr @03:41
Windsor	20 Apr @04:14
Shepperton	20 Apr @06:23
Teddington	20 Apr @07:59
Westminster	20 Apr @10:20

Sectional times, and the LCRK boat's race number, 481, as shown on the race tracking computer screen at the finish

had to look after me but make sure Guy (our 9-year-old) made it through the night in one piece and in reasonable humour.

### My final take

So in summary, it is a great event, but not one to be taken lightly. Plus it will cost you!

Logistically it is extremely complex and requires a lot of effort and thought to get right. Paddling the course is almost like paddling 4 races: a narrow shallow canal section full of locks, a faster-flowing complex canal network after dark, a wide and open river section with the odd nasty portage during the bulk of the night, culminating in an exposed and sometimes rough tidal section just when you are at your worst.

It's a race that really keeps throwing challenges at you all night. It was nice to finish, and I still haven't felt the urge to do it again. But don't let that stop you, have a go.

## Success and controversy at Ballarat

by Tom Simmat

Only five Lane Cove paddlers made their way down to very cold Ballarat for the Australian National Marathon Championships on April 19-20. Matt Blundell, Anjie Lees, Ann Lloyd-Green, Tim Hookins and I. This was a little disappointing given that we are no doubt the strongest marathon paddling club in NSW.

Matt opted to paddle in the K1 open rather than as a veteran and still got a podium place. Ann achieved a very credible first against formidable competition as did Anjie. Tim was bumped down in his ski to Vet 50 but still also managed a third. I was less successful than I hoped, when at the last crowded portage, I found myself looking at the underside of the pontoon, but was able to pull back the competition and get a third.

Matt, paddling with Brett Greenwood, achieved a credible 9<sup>th</sup> in the open K2 where there were a number of specialist K2 teams.

Tim and I, paddling the club Grey Nurse, had a swim on the second last lap (of course Tim's fault) but still managed a controversial 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

Under ICF and Australian Canoeing rules set down for this event all paddlers up to vet 70 were required to portage. A number of veteran competitors turned up and competed unaware of this requirement.

The course and portages shown on the website for the event showed a portage in and out on the right side of the boat. My preference is to portage on the left, so in training I had to rethink and really focus on that right portage.

On arriving at the venue at Ballarat, brand new pontoons had been installed. This capped off an absolutely brilliant venue, but it meant that the portage in and out was now on the left. Very confusing for my one-sided brain but manageable.

There was a freezing fresh breeze, very cold water and the hard walls on the lake shore next to the course had a nasty bounce-back wave to contend with. To her credit Ann in the women's vet 65 survived all that and three portages, winning by several minutes.

Tim and I were less skilled when going through a particular nasty patch. Tim said to me, "don't worry about bracing just keep paddling, leave the balance to me" and in we went. Having recovered, we pulled back the competition and followed what I thought was our competition into the last portage. They veered away, rounding the non-portage buoys just in front of us. We thought they were another division and continued through the portage.

On the podium with them taking the silver we learned that they were in fact our competition but they thought that a portage for the vets was not required.

Apparently there is no reconciliation between the marshals noting who goes through the portage and who is required to do just that. A protest was required. Protesting is not our thing.

But great event and great venue, there was a real buzz about the place. Hope we can encourage more Lane Cove participants next year. Perhaps Lane Cove can give out exclusive embroidered shirts to the team as an encouragement, as did Manly Warringah.



Tom Simmat, Anjie Lees and Tim Hookins rug up against the cold

Competitor	Class	Dist.	Time	Ptc
Matt Blundell	K1 Open	31.4k	2:29.51	3
Tom Simmat	K1 65+	18.8k	1:53.57	3
Ann Lloyd-Green	K1 W65+	18.8k	2:07.40	1
Anjie Lees	SS1 W40+	18.8k	1:56.51	1
Tim Hookins	SS1 50+	18.8k	1:51.32	3
Tom Simmat	K2 65+	18.8k	1:52.33	3
Matt Blundell/ Brett Greenwood	K2 Open	4k	2:35.49	9

# The big improvers in marathon racing

The Marathon 10 race at Wyong was rough and windy, with times generally 5 minutes or so slower, and the one at Woronora was like a mill pond. Lane Cove came up with its usual solid performance at both, which just goes to show we're a club for all conditions.

Our paddlers are also turning out in force in what is obviously a very popular series this year, with 27 Lane Covers at Wyong out of a field of 138, and 25 out of 162 at Woronora.

**Matt Blundell** won the 25km + portages division 1 in both races - "as usual", noted race announcer **Bob Turner** at Woronora. That's three out of three this year.

In division 3, **David Hammond** and **Tony D'Andreti** are consistently showing that even if your boat is low in the water with the load it's carrying, it's the power:to:weight ratio that counts, and they're always among the leaders.

**Wade Rowston** has continued on his good form from last year and hasn't been lower than 5<sup>th</sup> this year.

But there are three paddlers who have been carving lumps off their times and who deserve special mention.

**David Young** began the year with a 3<sup>rd</sup> in division 6. He moved up to division 5 which he promptly won, so another elevation to division 4 was ordered and answered that challenge by taking out 2<sup>nd</sup> at Woronora, and knocking 10 minutes off his earlier times in the process. Watch out, you guys in division 3.

**John Duffy's** days of meandering down the river in a Mirage are long behind him. Now in a Sonic, he won division 6 at Canberra, paced himself to 5<sup>th</sup> in division 5 at Wyong, then won division 5 at Woronora. Another promotion looks to be in order.

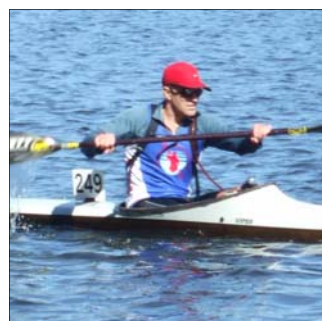
**Ruby Gamble** has made the most amazing progress of all. Not content with PB after PB on Wednesday nights, she's gone from 2.29.19 for 20km at Canberra to 2.14.55 at Wyong and 2.01.25 at Woronora! Let's round it out at an improvement of almost 20%. Way to go!



All smiles at Wyong were Duncan Johnstone, Don Rowston, Derek Simmonds, Tim Hookins, Wade Rowston, Tony Walker, John Greathead, John Duffy and Tim McNamara.



Above: Phil Newman returns to the M10 fray. Right: Alanna Ewin and Danielle Seisun in harmony.



Matt Acheson at Wyong

Left: David Young, John Duffy and Ruby Gamble have cut chunks off their times in the M10 races

## M10 Race 2 Wyong May 4

Competitor	Div	Time	Plc
Matt Blundell	1	2.01.35	1
Toby Hogbin	1	2.06.22	4
Tony Hystek	1	2.21.48	6
Matt Acheson	2	1.50.10	10
David Hammond/ Tony D'Andreti	3	1.52.30	6
Phil Geddes/ Paul van Koesveld	3	1.53.44	7
Tom Simmat	3	1.56.33	10
Bob Manning	4	1.58.44	6
Tim McNamara	4	2.05.55	10
David Young	5	1.56.20	1
Wade Rowston	5	2.00.44	4
Tim Hookins	5	2.00.56	5
John Duffy	5	2.04.40	9
Duncan Johnstone	5	2.04.59	10
Phil Newman	6	2.02.06	3
Derek Simmonds	6	2.07.23	6
Bert Lloyd/ Don Rowston	6	2.07.23	7
Anjie Lees	6	2.08.47	9
Ann Lloyd-Green/ Diane Chellew	7	2.14.54	2
Ruby Gamble	7	2.14.55	3
Meg Thornton	7	2.19.35	5
Alanna Ewin/ Danielle Seisun	7	2.28.54	6
Andrew Kucyper	7	3.00.00	8
Nicholas Salom	7	2.20.25	Rnk
Tony Walker/ John Greathead	10	1.01.53	3
Ian Wilson	10	1.01.53	4
Justin Paine	11	1.21.18	16

## M10 Race 3 Woronora May 17

Competitor	Div	Time	Plc
Matt Blundell	1	1.57.35	1
Toby Hogbin	1	2.02.01	3
Tony Hystek	1	2.14.54	5
David Hammond/ Tony D'Andreti	3	1.46.11	3
Phil Geddes/ Paul van Koesveld	3	1.50.04	11
Richard Barnes	3	1.56.20	15
Tom Simmat	3	2.14.32	16
David Young	4	1.46.40	2
Tim McNamara	4	2.01.25	10
Bob Manning	4	DNF	
John Duffy	5	1.53.29	1
Tim Hookins	5	1.55.38	3
Wade Rowston	5	1.55.43	5
Duncan Johnstone	5	1.55.45	6
Bert Lloyd/ Don Rowston	6	2.00.12	5
Derek Simmonds	6	2.01.15	6
Anjie Lees	6	2.03.53	11
Ruby Gamble	7	2.01.25	2
Alanna Ewin/ Danielle Seisun	7	2.11.12	7
Nicholas Salom	7	2.14.51	10
Meg Thornton	7	DNF	
Andrew Kucyper	8	1.48.15	18
Tony Walker/ John Greathead	10	58.46	6
Justin Paine	11	1.12.49	18

Div 1=25k, divs 2-7=20k, div 8=15k, divs 9-11=10k



# Lane Cove organises Middle Harbour race

LCRK has broken new ground by organising the Harbour Series Middle Harbour Challenge at Clontarf on May 10 for Paddle NSW. In doing so it raised about \$870 for the club.

This is an excellent reward for the team of volunteers led by Phil Geddes who gave up their Saturday, and in several cases also gave up racing in the event that day.

Phil put in a huge effort behind the scenes in organising council approval and an aquatic licence, plus a host of other requirements.

He was well supported by Wade Rowston, Duncan Johnstone, Paul Gibson, John Duffy, Derek Simmonds, Tom Simmat, David Young, Paul van Koesveld, Jon Harris, Oscar Cahill,

Alanna Ewin, Tony Hystek, Tim Hookins and Justin Paine who carried out a variety of jobs ranging from registering competitors to patrolling in rescue boats.

Matt Blundell and Toby Hogbin combined in a double to win the long course event in 1.11.28. Tim Hookins was 51<sup>st</sup> overall and 6<sup>th</sup> in the 60+ category in 1.37.52. Former Lane Cover Craig Elliott was 32<sup>nd</sup> overall and 9<sup>th</sup> in the 30+ category in 1.29.06. Derek Simmonds won the 60+ category in the short course race in 1.00.29, finishing 32<sup>nd</sup> overall, and Bob Manning was 13<sup>th</sup> overall and 4<sup>th</sup> in the 30+ category in 52.55.

Harbour Series				
Competitor	Categ	Time	Plc	Cat plc
<b>Rose Bay Challenge April 13</b>				
Long course				
Tim Hookins/ Steve Newsome	dbl ski	1.26.36	30	4
Robert Manning	30+	1.31.26	37	8
Jeremy Spear	50+	DNF		
Short course				
Meg Thornton	W40+	1.04.53	10	3
<b>Middle Harbour Challenge May 10</b>				
Long course				
Matt Blundell/ Toby Hogbin	dbl ski	1.11.28	1	1
Tim Hookins	60+	1.37.50	51	6
Short course				
Bob Manning	30+	52.55	13	4
Derek Simmonds	60+	1.00.09	32	1
<b>South West Arm Challenge May 24</b>				
Long course				
Tim Hookins	60+	1.25.42	31	5
Anjie Lees	W40+	1.31.59	37	2
Meg Thornton	W40+	1.37.54	43	4



Matt Blundell receives the winner's certificate from Phil Geddes



Tim Hookins and Derek Simmonds organise the registration desk



Derek Simmonds, Christine Simmat, Paddle NSW CEO Peter Tate, Paul van Koesveld, Tom Simmat



Duncan Johnstone and Wade Rowston seem to be telling Tony Hystek where to go ... in the nicest possible way, of course



Matt Blundell teamed up with Richard Armstrong, with whom he had never paddled before, to place second in the Open K2 in the New Zealand Canoe Marathon Championships at Lake Karapiro on April 5-6. They covered the 32km, 7-lap course in 2.26.10. Matt placed third, over the same course, in the Open K1 in 2.31.15.

**Michael Charles Snell**  
22.6.1977 – 29.4.2014



Popular northern beaches paddler Mike Snell, who was a frequent visitor to LCRK time trials a few years back, died on June 22, aged 36.

Only 14 months earlier, in April last year, he and Matt Blundell won the inaugural 4-day Wild Descent kayak race, following the Clutha River in New Zealand from the Southern Alps down to the Pacific Ocean.

Matt had this to say about his good mate: "Michael Charles Snell passed away after a short battle with cancer. Mike was a regular at Lane Cove over the years from the time I introduced him to training and racing, with a best time of 51min 13sec and sub 48min in the K2.

"One Hawkesbury Classic was enough but he was always on support crew for many more.

"Mike had a fighting spirit and will to compete. And always loved a challenge, whether it be in a kayak, on a ski or running up a mountain.

"No challenge was too great. He always had a cheeky remark and a smile."

## LCRK Photo Gallery

Have you checked out the Photo Gallery on the club website lately? There are hundreds and hundreds of great action shots there, taken at a variety of events. Nigel Colless says the majority of hits on the site are within a day or so of an event. Sometimes photos are not available until several days later, so go back in and have another look. If you've been racing recently, you'll probably find some fine action shots of yourself.

## Renew your membership

Membership fees are due for renewal on July 1 and can be done online through the club website, [www.lcrk.org.au](http://www.lcrk.org.au). When renewing your membership you will have the option of prepaying for your Wednesday night time trials. This not only saves you the trouble of searching for small change every time you paddle, it also enables you to preregister for the time trial online, and you can go straight on to the water without having to queue up at the registration table.

Don't forget that you must also renew your membership of PaddleNSW. When you do this, make sure you enter LCRK as your club.

The next issue of *Kayak Kapers*, due at the beginning of August, will go only to those who are current members. If you haven't renewed your membership by then, you won't get it.

## Best article in KK

Finalists for the competition to find the best contributed article in *Kayak Kapers* in the past year are:

- ❖ "A handy kayak for overseas exploring", by Andrew Benoit (*KK* August 2013)
- ❖ "Chutes, weirs and rapids in the Fish Marathon", by Tim Hookins (*KK* December 2013)
- ❖ "The trick was getting the joins right", by Chris Quirk (*KK* December 2013)
- ❖ "Rudders: what they are and how to use them", by Phil Geddes (*KK* February 2014)
- ❖ "We've come a long way, feeling pretty good", by Richard Robinson, (*KK* June 2014).

The winner will be chosen by an independent panel and announced at the 2014 Annual Dinner.



Janet Oldham has moved to New Zealand and taken up a position managing the operations side of things for a cycling and hiking company (tramping, as they say in Kiwiland) in Christchurch. She says: "Very exciting albeit all a little crazy at the moment. Not much flat water in these parts and I get seasick in an ocean kayak, so I either need to take to the rapids or take to the land and re-invent myself as a trail runner!" She's promised to visit us at the pontoon any time she's back in Oz. We wish her good luck in her new life.

WARM UP  
AFTER  
PADDLING  
WITH A  
COFFEE OR  
HOT  
CHOC'LATE  
AT CAFÉ DE  
JUSTIN

## THE NEXT GENERATION HAS ARRIVED!



First baby for Paul and Maria Seaberg. Alanna was born on March 29. Paul says she has "nice long paddler's legs and arms"!



Megan and Tony D'Andreti with their first child, a daughter named Jessica Isla, born at 1.31am on March 30, weighing 3.535kg

## Wednesday nights at the pontoon with Wade Rowston



So it seems we are all starting to get used to paddling in the dark now that daylight saving is well and truly over. Some people seem to have no trouble at all adjusting to the darkness while others, like myself, take a while to get used to it once more.

The conditions have been mild so far and there appear to have been alternating slow and fast nights on the water. There has been some excellent paddling and PBs by the following paddlers: **Ruby Gamble, John Duffy, Peter Millard, Oscar Cahill, Jeffry Tonazzi** and **Ella Beere**. Well done!

The Crudslime Cup and Coffee Cup are being hotly contested as usual. **John Duffy** has jumped out to a handy lead in Crudlime Cup points score but it is still early days. John is being chased by four paddlers who are only a few points apart. They are **Tim Hookins, Ruby Gamble, Duncan Johnstone** and **Tom Holloway**. **Oscar Cahill** has paddled consistently well to stay in front in the Coffee Cup. In second place is **John Greathead** and **Justin Paine** is third.

**Nigel Colless** has continued to refine the timing system and has now included the calculation of Crudslime and Coffee Cup handicaps which includes the allocation of Cup points. This is brilliant because it saves me several hours per month. That means of course that HAL the Handicapper is fully automated but hopefully not as evil as his namesake

from 2001 A Space Odyssey.

Nigel has also provided the results in various formats which are available via links in an email that is sent to paddlers, and via our website. The system tracks your PB overall and for the year as well as identifying if someone has paddled

have now been added to our Honour Board on our website. Congratulations.

In regard to the shed, we had an on-site meeting with Willoughby Council and the two athletics clubs to discuss the construction process. The Little A's club currently occupies the shed we will be taking over, but need to relocate their trollies of high jump bags and hurdles to our shed before construction starts.

This means we have to vacate our shed (and find temporary alternative storage) and modify it to cater for the large trolley access (Little A's will share the cost). Quotes are being gathered now for this extra piece of construction but we hope to finalise this and commence construction by the end of June.

A new club event, the Sunday sprints, has been introduced. It is held on the last Sunday of the month in the afternoon and takes about an hour to complete. You will get to paddle a straight 200m, starting upstream and finishing at the pontoon.

Everyone enjoyed themselves at the first one and the second one was called off due to poor weather. It's early days for the event so let's see how much interest there is in the months ahead. It's a nice variation on the longer paddles we are all used to and just good fun.

Happy paddling!



**Tim McNamara ... a place on the Honour Board**



**Duncan Johnstone ... a contender in the Crudslime Cup**

faster than their age. Thanks Nigel!

Upon loading all the historical time trial data that we have available it was discovered that **Tim McNamara** achieved a club mile-stone last year by paddling faster than his age. Tim, you

## Nature Notes by Jon Harris

### Jumping Mullet – mugil cephalus

The questions I am most often asked on Wednesday nights are, what are the fish that jump, and why do they jump? Well I know that they are mullet, but I don't know why they jump and it seems no-one else does either.

Having consulted the net and my books, apart from the obvious "to escape from predators", the only other theory put forward is that they jump to take a gulp of air to fill the pharyngobranchial organ at the rear of the throat, which would allow them to remain active for an extra few minutes in the low-oxygenated bottom layers where they feed. But why would they not just gulp air at the surface the way goldfish do instead of spending energy jumping, and if every mullet jumped we would have trouble paddling!

Maybe they jump just for the sheer joy of living another day. They jump mostly in mornings and evenings and almost never at night. I have noticed them schooling in the early mornings, and also they seem to jump when a thunderstorm is imminent, maybe they sense the change in atmospheric pressure. The Australian Museum has actually done a study on why mullet jump, with no clear results.

There are other fish in Lane Cove river such as



leatherjacket, bream, puffer fish and rays in the shallows, but mullet are the known jumpers. About 80 different species are found world-wide of which about 18 are in Australian waters. Our LCR mullet are silver-grey in colour, with flattened head and rayed fins, two separate dorsal fins and no lateral line organ. Their food is any detritus lying on the bottom. They are edible, but their flavour reflects their environment – ie mullet from a clean area can be quite tasty especially when smoked, those from polluted and muddy areas are inedible.

Nevertheless they have been an important food source for thousands of years and are mentioned in Roman writings, and at different times have been cultivated in the Nile River, Hawaii and the Philippines. They are large-scaled, average around 1-2kg and are found in all coastal and estuarine areas.

There have recently been 2 possible sightings by club members of small sharks (unknown type) in the river – maybe that's why mullet jump.

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