



BLAZING PADDLES

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**NEWSLETTER OF THE
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President's Report

Water

You think water would be a good thing for kayaking. But the past month has shown us that it is anything but. First we have had the comparatively minor storms in Canberra, and the damage they caused, then the subsequent closing of the river and lake due to bacteria, then debris. Thanks to Bob Collins excellent work in liaising with the ACT government we now have part of the river open, up to the first bridge. The amount of trees flung against the bridge by the storms is a sight to be seen.

Water followed us to the Murray Marathon, with a strong flowing river, but also one of the days requiring to be repeated, and the final day cancelled entirely due to the weather.

We should also spare a thought for those in Queensland and Victoria, dealing with their floods.

Possums

Possums are definitely not a good thing for kayaking, or at kayaking for that matter (they don't have the posture for it). Despite this, the possums continue to try out club boats, and make use of the shed, without completing the sign in book, or joining Paddle NSW. The possums have now been served an eviction notice. There is a possum trap in the shed, and a couple have been caught already. So if you see a possum in the possum trap, please let us know, and feel free to relocate the possum out of the shed.

In conjunction with the installation of the trap, a clean-up day was held. Thanks to all those who assisted with the clean up.



Shed Clean Up Day - All the boats (including a few private ones) enjoyed a good wash in readiness for some new deposits from our marsupial friends!



Busy helpers at the shed clean up

More Water

With the genuine appearance of Summer, there is no shortage of club activities to get involved in, whatever your focus. From our marathon nationals training group, to the Harbour Racing Series, to whitewater and recreational trips, to the ladies paddle group, to beginners courses (Feb and March), there is really no excuse not to get out on a boat and have a good time. My personal recommendation now that the weather is hot, and the water flat, why not try out a new (and challenging boat). The worst that can happen is a refreshing swim!

See you on the water

Russell

Boat Captain's Report

Very warm greetings to you all and I wish everyone the best in this new year.

Well what a hectic and busy time the last couple of months have been for all of us, especially around nature's events. The Queanbeyan floods gave us a bit of a scare at the boat shed. Fortunately we had Scotty, James, Nobby and Justin free to get down to the shed and secure it. The boys moved the expensive boats up and lifted valuable objects just in case the shed became a victim of the river. Fortunately it did not. The hangover from this is that a number of boats may not be in their normal spot – we'll be addressing this shortly. The river and the lake are now open so it's back to normal. This includes time trials and BBQs.

The fleet is currently getting a little tired and since I am about to have a lot more spare time I intend to look closely at our boats and see where we are able to make improvements. I seek feedback from members regarding where you would like to see improvements to our fleet. We also hope to attend to a number of repairs in the near future. If you take out a club boat and identify any maintenance issues please make a note on the whiteboard – it helps with ordering materials.



'Team BGCC' ready for the Murray!

The Murray Marathon has been run and won, albeit in a drastically shortened race. Big congrats to Nobby, Patricia and Bob for their solo efforts in a river that for the most part was in minor flood. Congrats go to my fellow team members Pete, Gary and Shane for dragging me down the river in the relay (even though we didn't do it nearly as tough as the individuals...) The weather during the event was astounding – from near frost conditions on the first morning at Yarrawonga to 43 degree plus temps including a total fire ban on the last day causing its cancellation. Apart from fighting airplane sized mosquitoes and floating debris the event proved to be a success with all involved having a lot of fun. A great club spirit was there with gifts generously presented. Special thanks needs to go to Rhonda, Trish, Michaela, Stephanie and Ben who followed all of the paddlers down the river and put up with hot temperatures and mosquito infestations without complaint – except when they couldn't find good a coffee!

See ya on the water!

Darryl



Canoe Polo

BGCC men's team competed in the second of the summer series competition held at Penrith on 4 December. Due to small team

numbers, two one-day competitions were held, with the BGCC team 'Kanusport' coming third on Saturday and fourth on Sunday.

The Wednesday canoe polo competition will recommence on 2nd February, details will be placed on the BGCC website shortly.

All regular players are asked to pay the annual polo levy on the first night of the weekly competition. The levy is \$10 per player and is paid to the Australian Canoe Polo Technical Committee. It contributes to the management of canoe polo in Australia and education of players.

New and returning players of all ages and canoeing backgrounds are welcome to play in the Wednesday competition. Please contact the canoe polo convener via the BGCC website if you would like to play.

Sue

Flat Water Convener's Report

Now that the river has returned to 'normal' it is great to see so many paddlers hitting the water. The various training groups are getting stuck in and the Wednesday evening time trials are proving to be popular. Thanks to Alan Clark for setting up the new time trial course and placing the buoys on Molonglo Reach. Thanks again to Patricia Clark who continues to do a great job with the timing of the time trials.

PaddleNSW have announced that we have been awarded Race 2 of the Marathon Series. This will occur on April 9th with the Burley Griffin Bash on the 10th. Stay tuned as we seek volunteer help to conduct these events. The full calendar for 2011 is reproduced after the Penrith wrap up. Note the State Marathon

Championships are incorporated in Race 3 at Narrabeen on May 22nd. The Marathon Nationals are on over Easter at Geelong Victoria April (20-22).

There has been ongoing discussion in various canoe club circles about an apparent decline in popularity of the Marathon Series. A number of articles in the December issue of Kayak Kapers, the newsletter of the Lane Cove River Kayakers, raised some interesting points. Tom Simmat and Richard Barnes, both well known by BGCC marathoners, contributed their points of view and Tony Hystek President of PaddleNSW responded. To view this discussion go to www.lcrk.org.au/KK%20December%20201

An abysmal attempt to present the divisional winners of the 'Marathon 10' series with their prizes was made in the boat shed at Penrith. Having changed the time and place of the presentation a number of times the proceedings were constantly disrupted by disgruntled rowers trying to get their equipment out of the shed. This was no way to acknowledge the efforts of our best marathoners. To make matters worse a number of the results were incorrect. PaddleNSW need to make public announcements about presentation times, venues, order of events etc and stick with them. Too often we travel all the way to Sydney for an event, often staying overnight, only to find the program 'as advertised' has changed because some participants have a one hour trip to the other side of Sydney and they have a whinge and the program changes. This happened at Penrith last year and at some of the State events. It's not good enough.

I think I'm correct in announcing the following as winners in 'Marathon 10' 2010 but since the results are not available on PaddleNSW website I could be wrong.

Margi Bohm: Div 5 1st place.

Russell Lutton: Div 8 1st place.

Rohan Evans: Div 9 1st place.

Helen Tongway: Div 6 2nd place.

We fell down the club overall point score a bit in 2010. Let's hope we can push back up a bit in 2011.

Code	Club Name	Points
MWKC	Manly Warringah Kayak Club	272
WCC	Windsor Canoe Club	184
LCRK	Lane Cove River Kayakers	154
CSKC	Cronulla Sutherland Kayak Club	104
CCCC	Central Coast Canoe Club	86
PVC	Penrith Valley Canoeing	74
BGCC	Burley Griffin Canoe Club	74
BAK	Bay Adventure Kayakers	72
ICC	Illawarra Canoe Club	40
WBCC	Wagga Bidgee Canoe Club	30
Dragons	Pacific Dragons	20
SSP	Southside Paddlers	8
SNBKC	Sydney Northern Beaches Kayak Club	8
StGKC	St George Kayak Club	6
SSCC	Sutherland Shire Canoe Club	4
JP	Just Paddlers	2

John

Marathon 10 - Penrith

The last race of the 2010 marathon series was held on the Nepean River at Penrith. The weather conditions were quite hot with increasing cloud and late showers. The course was the same one that was used for the world Masters Games in 2009. Unfortunately the weed in the river was a problem for a number of competitors. Most paddlers found themselves having to stop and back up to rid their kayaks of weed. Some became so frustrated that they pulled the pin on the race altogether. Some clubs have expressed the

opinion that the race was a farce and shouldn't have been held under such poor conditions. Others have said marathon racing is a sport whereby competitors have to compete in the conditions found on the day. Some like it choppy, others thrive in the heat etc.. Nevertheless, the heat and the weed didn't seem to have an adverse affect on Margi Bohm winner Div 5, Russell Lutton winner Div 8 or Rohan Evans second Div 9. Our 3 juniors, Mackayla Clark, Cara Sheldon and Nathan Sheldon raced with great determination coping well with the conditions on the day. Craig Kentwell placed well in Div 5 having missed the start of Div 6. Paul Hartlip performed well in Div 6 and Robin Robertson was steady in Div 8.



10 year old Nathan Sheldon completes his first big race, 10k at Penrith.



Russell getting some help on those legs that drove him to a class win at Penrith

RESULTS

Division 5 (20km)

Margi Bohm: 1st 1:54:03, Craig Kentwell: 8th 2:05:32, Alan Clark: 10th 2:14:26, John Preston: DNF

Division 6 (20km)

Paul Hartlipp: 5th 2:05:47.

Division 8 (15km)

Russell Lutton: 1st 1:26:20, Robin Robertson: 7th 2:08:36.

Division 9 (10km)

Rohan Evans: 2nd 0:56:27, Carolyn Williams/Ian Castell –Brown: 6th 0:01:11, Mackayla Clark (15yo): 11th 1:12:21, Cara Sheldon (13yo) 13th 1:12:34, Nathan Sheldon (U10yo) 17th 1:32:17.

'Marathon 9' 2011

Race 1: Sat 19th March - Woronora River, Sutherland.

Race 2: Sat 9th April – Molonglo River, Canberra.

Race 3: Sat 7th May – Nepean River, Penrith.

Race 4: Sun 22nd May - Narrabeen Lake, Narrabeen.

Race 5: Sun 19th June - Wyong River, Tacoma.

Race 6: Sat 23rd July - Hawkesbury River, Windsor.

Race 7: Sat 20th August – Port Hacking, Swallow Rock Reserve.

Race 8: Sun 11th September – Lane Cove River.

Race 9: 5th November – Murrumbidgee River – Wagga Wagga.

The State Marathon Championships: Penrith Regatta Centre 2-3 July.

The Australian National Championships: Geelong Victoria 22 -23 April.

Vajda 2011 NSW Sprint Championships: SIRC Penrith Sun 27th Feb. (1000m, 500m, 200m events.)

For more information about these events and how to enter them refer to the PaddleNSW website.

John

Beecroft Peninsula

On the first weekend in December, Jon, Craig K and Nobby were joined by Sandy, Lez and Craig W - three non BGCC members (yes they do exist) for a weekend of sea kayaking around the Beecroft Peninsula on the South Coast. The Peninsula forms the northern headland to Jervis Bay and offers some spectacular scenery for a sea kayak trip, and given that the isthmus is quite narrow, it's possible to do a circumnavigation of the Peninsula (about 25kms) with only a 10 min car shuttle.



Sandy underneath Point Perpendicular

There is a beautiful campsite at Honeymoon Bay on the western side of the peninsula, and some cabins and more up market accommodation at Currarong on the northern side.

On the Saturday we did a circumnavigation from Currarong to Honeymoon Bay. This is one of the best sea kayaking trips on the NSW coast and gives you fantastic views of the crumbling sandstone cliffs that gradually increase up to around 90m in height at Point Perpendicular which marks the northern point of the entrance to Jervis Bay.



Nobby disappearing behind a swell...



Exploring sea caves at Point Perpendicular



...and re-emerging to give John some advice on sea sickness remedies!



...more caves

There are a number of big sea caves and caverns to explore as you get closer to Point Perp, but the seas were a bit too bumpy for safety so we viewed the seaward caves from a bit of a distance. Once around the Point the seas dropped off and we were able to explore a few cave systems before joining up with a playful pod of dolphins who escorted us back to our campsite at Honeymoon Bay.

On Sunday we headed back to Point Perp for some more poking around in caves and then had a memorable sea kayak surfing session at a local beach with some fairly spectacular wipe-outs followed by heated debate about the applicability of surfing rules to sea kayaks!



A pod of dolphins leading us home

Honeymoon Bay really is a great camping area and there are a host of trip options to cater for all abilities and weather conditions.

Craig

I Forgot

One of the main problems with we humans is that we forget things. Normally this is no big deal – forget where your keys are and your partner will find them for you, forget someone's name and that is OK as they have probably forgotten yours. However, to forget just how gruelling racing the Murray Marathon can be is not OK. I forgot!

Day 1 this year brought all of memories rushing back. A 94km day with very strong head and side winds that did not let up all day is a terrible way to remember just why you vowed last time would be your last Murray. Head on gusts that would stop your paddle mid stroke and side gusts that slammed your paddle into the side of your boat meant everyone from the novice to the Murray veteran had a hard day. The only saving grace was that despite sometimes paddling into white caps, the current still moved us along at a pretty quick rate.



Patricia and Bob preparing for a few big days

It was a day where you could see how the Murray must have looked 100 years ago when it had good flows and flooded regularly –

quite impressive but a day better suited to a power boat.

For those who had to stop at checkpoints, steep muddy banks and hordes of mosquitoes waited (all the sandy beach areas were well under water). At one checkpoint, Stephanie Rake was in water up to her shoulders waiting to help our relay team change over.

At the end of Day 1 many of us were glad the 96km Day 2 had been cancelled due to checkpoints being inaccessible, another long day like that would have done many of us in (the revised schedule called for us to paddle Day 5 twice). Patricia had a particularly hard day as she succumbed to illness and did not think she could proceed past the last checkpoint, at the finish line she could barely lift her paddle. But she backed up and finished the marathon to again show why she is one of the toughest marathon paddlers in our Club.

Thankfully, Days 2, 3 & 4 were much better wind wise but the swirling water and unpredictable currents made paddling difficult, particularly in the bends. It was not uncommon to come around a bend and find a TK or TK2 upside down with paddlers desperately trying to hold on to paddles, hats etc as the current took hold of them. One TK2 crew went in and their boat became jammed under a houseboat.

Swirling water aside, the current and the height of the river made fast paddling possible and even the notoriously difficult 63km Day 4 was easy as the gates at the Torrumbarry weir were open.

It was therefore an extremely disappointed group of Murray paddlers that received a text message late in the evening prior to Day 5 to inform us that due to extreme fire danger (43 degree predicted temp. and strong winds) the final day had to be cancelled. We met

with the organisers at 10:00am next morning and I don't think I have ever seen a group of people so dejected.

Not very many of us went down for the Murray this year (myself, Patricia Ashton and Alan Clark – solo and our relay team of Darryl Coventry, Shane Lund, Pete Garbutt and Gary Rake), but there were standout performances from each one of them.

As mentioned earlier, Patricia would not give in and was actually paddling faster and stronger over the last 2 days.



Patricia showing young Bob where he can sit down

Alan, our white water specialist received a harsh introduction to the long hard slog of flat-water marathons. He handled it well and was quite quick, also the rougher the conditions became, the more he smiled.



Gary heading off to do his bit for the relay team

Gary Rake has been paddling for less than a year and despite falling out of his Epic all over

Lake Burley Griffin, did not fall out once and recorded fast times in his relay legs. Pete Garbutt, despite not having had the time to train as much as the others more than pulled his weight in his relay legs and as we've come to expect, Darryl and Shane paddled like maniacs on their legs.

The team came 1st in the open relay section and did our Club proud. They also haunted the media, ensuring they knew that BGCC ACT paddlers were on the river.



Shane and Darryl at a handover



No need for a hat for this bloke!

An added bonus was the boys waiting at the finish to help we solo paddlers - I know I came to rely on them to help me out of the boat as

my legs did not seem to work very well at the end of a days paddling.

However my standout performers were the land crews - my wife, Rhonda, who was land crew to both Patricia and myself and unofficial photographer, Trish and Mikki who land crewed for Alan, and Stephanie, who had the 4 relay boys to put up with! They made sure we had everything we needed at all times, helped us with our smelly, wet and muddy gear, put up with the hordes of mosquitoes and rose early to make sure we made the start each day.

I was planning to finish this article with more details about how hard the Murray can be – but I seem to have forgotten them!

Bob

Murray Marathon

The Murray Marathon – and it was a marathon.

Did I enjoy it? Very retrospectively, yes. Did it go well? Parts did – unfortunately my best day was going to be day 5! I thought I was prepared – did the Hawkesbury and thought I had my nausea (and vomiting) worked out, felt fit, had a lot of confidence in the boat, and remembered quite fondly, the assault on the Murray 2 years ago in the Mirage 730 with Bob.



Only another 400 kms to go!

The first 2 days I suffered, with day 1 nearly ending in tears and me almost pulling out. Would of, if I'd had the choice.

Nausea hit about 3 – 4 hours into the race and got steadily worse during the day till the last 4 kms, all I could do was throw up, the last 2kms I couldn't move my head or rotate and felt quite unstable. Trying to paddle 96km on 2 Gu's and some nuts which didn't stay down is not advisable! What was the cause? Day 2 started well, but again after 3 or so hours, bang. By the 2nd checkpoint I was ready to call it a day, but (luckily) my land crew wasn't at that stop, so after getting out, standing around, a long pep talk, lots of deep breathing, and unfortunately no Gu (wouldn't go down – only out), I decided I had to keep going. Luckily for me, I was then paddling with a young man, who'd only been paddling a couple of weeks. He was in a TK and very unstable, but quite inspiring. We chatted for many kilometres and he was very positive, so by the time I reached the 3rd checkpoint pulling out was no longer an issue and in fact the last 25km was quite a strong paddle. So what causes the heebie jeebies? I've put it down to, partly nerves, but mainly not taking Gu or other foods early enough, leaving it too late, then not being able to take anything. Day 3 & 4 I actually stopped before the 20km mark, got out of the boat, ate some bread and had a Gu, and then went on again, stopping around the checkpoints or 2 hour mark and while I did get some indigestion or reflux symptoms, I managed to feel quite strong and keep paddling.

Maybe long distance marathons aren't quite for me!

Will I do it again? Hmmm. It wasn't really a full Murray Marathon was it?.....(luckily Scott will be paddling this year so I can't!). Maybe a double.....2012.

Having said all that – the Hawkesbury itself was beautiful, very scenic, the other paddlers, land crew, volunteers and the general atmosphere were great!

Patricia



More Murray Marathon

Well what a year. Canberra had a short run of white water over winter; however, I concentrated mainly on flat water throughout the year as there were a few marathons and long distance races I wanted to compete in.

I didn't get a chance to do many of the Marathon 10 series so I attended the Berry race and the last Marathon 10 race at Penrith. I was disappointed in my result, but I put it down to the amount of weed in the river that kept attaching itself to the bow of my TK1 and rudder.

The first big event was the Avon descent. The race was covered in an earlier edition of Blazing Paddles but needless to say Tom and I were dejected in not completing the course.

Next was the Hawkesbury Classic. Paddling 111kms overnight is an experience. I decided to use the trusty TK1 with a neoprene spray deck. A good call as thunder heralded the start of the race at Windsor. We encountered rain throughout the night and in the morning in pitch black there were waves burying my little kayak and keeping me concentrating on staying upright and getting to the end. I made it through all the checkpoints and to the finish in one piece. My hands had multiple blisters

and my rear end hurt a lot from sitting in the saddle for too long. What was the Murray Marathon going to be like?

I had a couple of months to train and decide whether to compete.

With flooding in Canberra and down south the Murray was up. A good river flow meant an easy year, didn't it?

Well with registration done I was confirmed in the event. So I had to now paddle. The TK1 was to be used again. I still hadn't sorted out the seat so would just have to pad it up and hope for the best.

After having Christmas at home this year, Trish, Mikki and I headed south to Yarrowonga with the caravan in tow to set up camp and get the kayak scrutineered. Scrutineering was a lot easier than the last two events. No PFD check. A quick look at the TK1 and a sticker was in place. OK, now time to get ready for day one. A quick paddle on the river showed where the main flow was but I found the kayak faster going upstream against the current but with the wind and waves behind.



Ready..set..go.....

Day one start was at the caravan park and it was our longest day. I had packed loads of water and supplies for the trip in case Trish couldn't get into the checkpoints. The wind was already up so we knew that it would be a

long day. Patricia and Bob were in the grid ahead of me and headed off down the river. There are intervals of 15 minutes between grids but I almost missed mine. I got on the water and it was time to go. The gun went off and we head down river. 94km to go.



Open spillways meant lots of water and good currents

The day was cool so I wear an old thermal top, hat and loads of sunscreen. I catch Patricia somewhere along the river and then Bob. We stick together for a while and then I get ahead. I have to stop to relieve myself along the way and Bob keeps passing me. He is a machine. Throughout the day the wind and waves seem to push you back up the river. I pass many of the slower paddlers that actually seem to be stopped in the water.



Bob – solid as ever

The day wears on through the headwind and waves and finally I make it to Tocumwal. I had to stop five times throughout the day. What a relief. My hands are sore and I will need to retape them. Trish has dropped the caravan off nearby. The BGCC team are staying in

Echuca on a friend's property so we don't have to travel too far the next morning. Once everyone is in and we've gained enough strength we head out to the farm for dinner and rest.

The next day dawns and without having to pack up too much we head to the start of day two. We are paddling the old day three section from Picnic Point to Echuca. I'm not carrying so much today as Trish will be at some of the checkpoints to supply me with food, water and Sustagen. Again I take the start and power off leaving the other paddlers in the grid behind. I know that some of them will catch me later as they did the day before. My race plan is not perfect. The other two TK1s are working together and can keep up the pace for longer. The river was flowing well at the start and I thought that it would continue.

Not far into the day and the river slows down when we enter Moira Lake. The river seems to spread out through the trees for kilometres. There is no-where to stop even if you needed to. The water is black and very uninviting. There is green weed on the surface so no-one wants to fall in. The other TK1s catch me and pass me. I try to hold their wash but they are too strong together and their wash is so erratic I fall off. Once through the lake the river finally begins to move. We pass campsites that are under water with caravans sitting on little islands.

I get to checkpoint Bravo and make a dash for the toilet and first aid tent. Just need some Fixomul and bandage on the hand please. Then off onto the river for the next checkpoint. At checkpoint Charlie I only find Rhonda. Trish is missing and I am in need of Sustagen. The banks are slippery and I manage to get my kayak up the bank to have a rest and get some food into me. Rhonda supplies me with Bob's Sustagen and I tell her

to get my Sustagen from Trish at the finish for Bob. Then it is off again to the next checkpoint. I make it to checkpoint Delta and have a dash to the toilet and down some Sustagen. At least I have only had three stops today. Maybe I am starting to dehydrate. I take off my thermal top as it is too hot.

Nearing Echuca there are new boats on the river and paddle steamers coming up river. A pity they are not going downriver so we can wash ride them. One of them creates a big wash and as I pass it I get water into the cockpit. Not enough to worry about but a good change of pace. At the finish I am a little sunburnt but going well. More food and water.

Wait for everyone and then off to pack up the caravan and move to the Echuca campsite.

The campground is packed and not much room for us so we set up next door in the sports centre car park. No-one seems to mind. Did I mention that the mossies in this region feed on aeroguard and bite through clothing.

Day three has us paddling from Echuca to Torrumbarry. We head off to the start and are away not long after. Once again I take off but one of the TK1s is not far behind. He sits on my wash and then we take it in turns every 10 minutes alternating the lead. This works well until I need to go into my checkpoint to gain some supplies and have quick rest. The checkpoint stop has little black flies that bite. No fun on the bank for our ground crew. I find a toilet and munch down some food, water and Sustagen before heading off again.

This is a short day and I only have two stops before the finish. After watching our team come in we decide to stop for a beer at the local tavern before heading back to Echuca. We deserved it. On arrival I head to the shower and then go for a massage. A great five dollars worth. We rest up and then decide

to head to Swan Hill to a caravan park so that we can turn the air conditioner on as the weather is starting to heat up. Pack up the caravan and move was a great idea. The caravan park is on the river and not far from the next day's finish line.



The relay boys at yet another change over

Day four is from Murrabit to Swan Hill. Dry and dusty roads but the river is lush and flowing. The car park area at Murrabit is overgrown and a risk to our vehicles. There is only 15 kilometres between the first checkpoints so I am only stopping at checkpoint Bravo and then Charlie. Taking off I take the lead and the other TK1 sits in behind. We start our 10 minute exchange and on my next go we discuss making a portage as we can see other paddlers through the trees.

I knew there was a big horseshoe bend so this could be it. I see a lot of water going off to the right so instinctively I head towards it. I know I am not in my down river racer but I have finally found a rapid. It is only small and thankfully over some logs not rocks and I am out the other side chasing down an OC6. I have shaved off a little of the course and have left my companion behind. He took the chute as well but looks like I have a little more skills in white water than he. I make checkpoint Bravo and Trish informs me that I took five minutes off the TK1 record from the start to checkpoint Alpha.

I have slowed down a little and whilst there, my rivals pass me whilst I am attending the toilet and having something to eat and drink. I am off again and on to checkpoint Charlie. I reach this one and my rear end is so sore. On getting out of the kayak, I receive a shoulder massage from Shane and some drink and food from Trish. I rearrange my PFD so that I can sit on it and off I go. My concentration is centred on my rear and I slow down for the next 30 kilometres. I know that the finish is only a few kilometres away but do I stop? I kept saying no as a few more kayaks pass me. Eventually I make it to the finish and am glad to get out of the kayak. Only one day to go.

We head back to the caravan and Mikki paddles my kayak back for me. I head off to the spa in the park and sit in it for a long time. A few beers would be nice right now but I am putting water down my throat and soaking in water to hydrate the body. Only one day to go.

After dinner I am lying on the bed resting when one of the other Canberra paddlers come in and inform me that day five is cancelled. No way! There is an extreme fire danger for the region and noting the conditions that the support crews endured throughout the day a wise decision.

I am not sure whether to be thankful or not. I dropped a place today and my left hand is a bit of a mess but I wanted to finish the five days even though it is a little shorter than the 404kms. Well we will just have to do our own paddling during the day.

We attend the briefing and agree the organisers have made the right decision. Rhonda presents us all with medals and we congratulate each other including our support for the valiant efforts by all. Lunch and then the girls ride the paddle steamer and we surf behind it. The skis sit well on the wash. My

little TK1 had a bit of water in it and whilst riding the waves my bow was under water up to the coming with spray coming up from it. I stayed on and played with the big boats all the way.

Then it was off to town to get Trish some party clothes for the evening. It was New Years Eve and we were off to the festivities at the RSL. Dinner first at the RSL then to the Pioneer Village for the award ceremony and back to the RSL for partying. A good night out for all. A couple of winners on Keno and the juniors tried to empty the chocolate machine. Dancing and frolicking by all. Fireworks over the river and then back to the caravan park to catch some sleep before departing back to Canberra.

All in all a great time had on the Murray Marathon. I can tick it off for now but expect to be back again in a couple of years time to do the full original course. Thanks to Trish, Mikki, Rhonda, Bob, Patricia, Shane, Daryl, Gary, Pete, Stephanie and Ben for the time we spent together.

Let's do it again sometime.



Nobby

White Water

With all the excess water of late, the local rivers have been quite busy. Nobby and James have been on hand to guide a few white water novices who have now been 'bitten' by the white water bug.



Craig enjoying the recent high river levels



Nobby showing us how it's done



Gordon happy to be in a big wide boat (despite a broken paddle)



Marty – too fast to keep in the frame!



Following the floods, all sorts of stuff could be found wedged in trees along the river bank. Nobby came across this partially deflated raft which he dutifully scavenged!

Birthday Dinner



June seems like a long way away, but it'll be upon us sooner than you think – so now is a good time to start thinking about our annual awards. It's never too early to start digging up some dirt or recording some exaggerated snippets of your mates 😊

For Sale

Sladecraft UFO TK1 - very good condition, white with red pin stripes. \$1,200- Test paddles more than welcome (maybe even try it out at a time trial). Contact Patricia on patricia.ashton@gmail.com or phone (h) 6254 9399

Two TK2s - both in excellent condition best offer. Call Swampy Marsh on **0419 290 558**

For the Calendar

You could be a 2011 NSW Open Water Champ!!

The **BETTA ELECTRICAL NSW OPEN WATER CHAMPS 2011** are going off on 19th and 20th Feb at Coffs Harbour, a beautiful paddling location. 25km Downwind [race](#), 15km [Out and back race](#). Categories for Surfskis and Outriggers. You will have fun. Great Course, nice people.

Go to: <http://www.paddlensw.org.au/NSW%20Surfski%20Champs%202011%20Flyer.pdf>

The 2011 Harbour Series is on again, featuring 6 races for intermediate and experienced paddlers as well as beginners. Skis, outriggers, kayaks and plastics all welcome. **First race is at Cronulla, a great course, on the 12th Feb.**

Go to: <http://www.harbourracing.org.au/>

2011 COCKATOO CUP: Race around Cockatoo Island! Come on down and enjoy a fun filled **Australia Day, Wednesday 26th January, hosted by the Pacific Dragons** for the annual single craft event the Cockatoo Cup, BBQ, and Cupcake Bake-Off! All single craft of any type are welcome to participate in the race! Details: <http://www.paddlensw.org.au/pacificdragons.html>

Bridge to Beach, Sydney's iconic mass participation open water paddle event is slated for **Sunday 17th April 2011**. Starts at Blues Point, finishes at Manly Beach. Event details: www.bridgetobeach.com.au or <http://www.oceanpaddler.com/>

Any questions call Tim Hookins, Vice Pres. PaddleNSW, on 0408 109 607

ALBURY WODONGA

MITTA MITTA CANOE CLUB



Frank Harrison Memorial Race

26th and 27th FEBRUARY 2011

Course: Murray River, good, open, fast flowing water, with some snags starting at the Hume Weir Wall, finishing at Noreuil Park at the MMCC clubhouse.

Open Classes and Veteran 35, 26km:

Start below the Hume Weir wall

Junior and Veteran 45, 16 km:

Start at the Waterworks Bridge opposite Albury airport

Entry Fee: 1 day \$15, both days \$20

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Senior Singles
Junior Doubles

From Hume Weir wall
26 km race start 4pm
Briefing 3:30pm
Entries from 2pm

From Waterworks Bridge
6 km race start 5pm
Briefing 4:30pm
Entries from 3pm

SUNDAY MORNING

Senior Doubles
Junior Singles

From Hume Weir wall
26 km race start 10am
Briefing 9:30pm
Entries from 8am

From Waterworks Bridge
16 km race start 11am
Briefing 10:30pm
Entries from 9am

Course Conditions: Good open, fast flowing water with some snags. Most snags are clearly visible. There are some faster sections that make this an exciting race.

COURSE MAP WILL BE DISPLAYED BOTH DAYS

Spot prizes drawn at the end of each days racing. BBQ and refreshments available each day

Contact Kieran Babich 0419 299 156 or kieranbabich@gmail.com

Updates will be posted on the MMCC website www.mmcc.canoe.org.au



If you're looking for a new boat this season Wetspot can help you out.

We now have access to Fenn, Knysna, Epic, Sladecraft, Kayak Pro, Spirit and more with the Fenn XT & Fenn Elite, a range of Epics, the Kayak Pro 'Jet', Knysna Guppy, Sladecraft UFO mark2, all currently in stock.

Wetspot has just unloaded a range of Tahe sea kayaks too, to supplement our range of Prijons, Dagers and Perception. So if you're looking for a full on sea kayak that is fast, great to handle, can take a weeks' worth of gear (and Scotty guarantees that its faster than the Mirage) then look at the Tahe Wind 585.



We have also increased our range of wing blade paddles to include the Fenn, Orka and Kynsna paddles.

All that and more, pfd's, gloves, rash tops, white water boats, recreational boats of all sizes, fishing boats, Hobies with Mirage drive, SUP boards, surf boards, wind surfers and ski gear.

If we haven't got what you're after in the shop please ask, as we have access to much more.

Paddlers serving paddlers at 13/68 Wollongong Street, Fyshwick.