



Newsletter of the Burley Griffin Canoe Club
Volume 22 Issue 1 September 2011

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Good luck to BGCC paddlers participating in the 2011 Hawkesbury Classic

 **SPORT & RECREATION ACT**

The ACT Government assists the BGCC through Sport and Recreation ACT


LEADING THE SPORT AND RECREATION INDUSTRY



President's report

On Monday night, 5 September '11 we convened BGCC's Annual General Meeting to elect a new Committee and Organiser/Convener group for the next 12 months.

It was heartening to see over 20 people in attendance with members keen to volunteer for all 20 vacant positions for Committee, conveners and general organisers – this was in contrast to last year's AGM when we had difficulty filling the basic Committee positions.

On this note, I would like to thank the outgoing Committee for the excellent job they have done over the past 12 months. In particular I would like to thank Russell Murphy who put his hand up for the position of President even though he had a pretty busy schedule in his work and private life. Another very busy man, Greg Wicks again saved our bacon by volunteering for another year as Treasurer and Public Officer (he then had to go home and tell Jacqueline what he had done!!) and thanks to his expertise, our finances are in good order to hand over to Scotty for this year. I am sure that prior to last year's AGM, Richard Fox had no idea that he would end up as Secretary or Craig Kentwell as Editor. Craig really got into this Editor caper with a truly mammoth last edition.

Our conveners and organisers again helped our Club to quite a memorable year in terms of achievements – our summer timer trials were extremely well attended, recreational touring became popular, our NSW Marathon race was again a success, the 24Hour Relay had a record number of entries and Helen presided over a record number of memberships for the Club in the last financial year – over 200! I believe that we also have 18 paddlers, in about 12 boats training for the 2011 Hawkesbury Classic on 22/23 Oct. '11, so we are starting this paddling season on a high note.

Financially we are in a good position and as a result, this year Russell Murphy will be overseeing a review of our fleet of boats and equipment – you may also notice that he is now our Sprint convener and has hinted that something interesting in this area may soon be offered to members. We have just increased our number of available boat spaces by removing the trailer and racking the area, and are hoping we may have some more good news to announce about our accommodation soon.

I have been assured by the Parks people at TAMS that the river will be fully open in time for the commencement of our Wed. evening time trials. We will then be able to resume our old time trial course. When the river is open,



you will notice that in an area between the first and second bridges there is now (or soon will be) a new pontoon-like structure. This is a water filtration unit that the NCA are trialling to attempt to improve the water quality of the river and lake. I understand another is being installed near the Yarralumla swim area.

As the weather is now improving and you can actually walk to the water in bare feet without them becoming 'snap frozen', I hope to see you all on the water.

Cheers

Bob Collins

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## From the editors' desk ...

As you may have noticed, Carolyn and I have taken on the role of *Blazing Paddles* editors for the next 12 months. We would like to acknowledge the great work of Craig Kentwell and previous BP editors. We hope that we can continue to make the newsletter an interesting and informative journal for club members.

How much we can publish, and how often, depends on what is provided by you, the club members. So please keep the copy and photos coming. We are starting three regular features: a "Paddler profile" series, a "What's

new on the river” segment and a section called “youthyak”, which focuses on junior kayaking—an activity that we would like to give a higher profile to. The first contribution for “youthyak” will appear in the next edition.

We will also include a “Photo of the month”; so if you have a great kayaking photo that you would like to see published, send it to us!

As *Blazing Paddles* is now exclusively an online publication, we have decided to publish it in single column format. We think this makes it easier to read progressively on screen and will allow better use of photographs.

We would appreciate your feedback and suggestions on how to ensure the newsletter contains what you want to know and is enjoyable to read.

*Russell Lutton and Carolyn Williams*

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Results of BGCC 5 September 2011 AGM elections:

Committee

President Bob Collins
Vice President Alan Clark
Secretary Patricia Ashton
Treasurer Scott Hunter
Editor Russell Lutton
Public Officer Russell Murphy

Conveners and Organisers

Boat Captain Russell Murphy
Membership Secretary Helen Tongway
Triathlon Organiser Darryl Coventry
Social Convener(s) Darryl Coventry/Paul Hartlipp
Coaches Rep. Alan Clark
Web Master David Baldwin
Publicity Craig Kentwell
Canoe Polo James Harmer
Marathon John Preston
Sprint Russell Murphy
Slalom/White water James Suthern
BG Bash Darryl Coventry
Canoe Polo Invitational James Harmer
24Hr Relay Justin Channells

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**Boat Captain’s report**

**Boat rack payments are now due!**

If you have your boat in the shed, and you have not yet paid for 2011/12, then it is now time to do so. You can pay by:

- Cash or cheque to a Committee Member
- EFT to Burley Griffin Canoe Club BSB: 062 912 Account No 0090 2380 including the code ME01.
- On-line via the BGCC Register Now membership/Extras

If you no longer want to store your boat in the shed then please get in touch with me on 0417859730 or [boatcaptain@bgcc.org.au](mailto:boatcaptain@bgcc.org.au)

*Russell Murphy*

## Canoe polo convenor's report

*No report was available at the time of publication.*

## Flatwater convenor's report

The 2011 Vajda Marathon 9 series is coming to a close with only the November race in Wagga Wagga to go. The scoring system has been complicated by paddlers being promoted into higher divisions and carrying various points with them. Double points at Wagga Wagga will sort things out. A number of our club members have a chance of finishing on the podium across the various divisions. PaddleNSW will have their presentation night in Wagga after the race.



John demonstrates how important tongue placement is to balance.

obvious that the Hawkesbury River was pretty much at its normal level. The tide was fairly low and still going out. A southerly was gusting up to make the conditions on the water difficult. The locals were thankful that the heavy rain had desisted but the breeze blew some misty rain across the course intermittently making it uncomfortable for the spectators. Having left Canberra in sub zero conditions the good contingent of BGCC members attending reasoned that the Sydneysiders couldn't really complain about the cool conditions. We quickly let them know that at this time of year we actually dream about conditions like those that we were experiencing on the banks of the Hawkesbury. Despite the positive attitude to training BGCC marathon paddlers generally have, the recent strong winds and below average temperatures endured in Canberra had reduced training schedules considerably. Thus most of us were concerned about the distance of the race and how well we would fare in these warmer conditions.

Justin Channels and Gary Rake entered Division 2 in their K2 and quickly broke away from most of their competition. They had a duel with a paddler from MWCC who had the wood on our boys on the turns but was caught again on the straights. On the last turn the Manly paddler made a break that couldn't be made up and Justin and Gary had to settle for 2<sup>nd</sup>. This was a great effort from our duo who, with more race experience, will be a real force in marathon races to come. It appears a protest about them competing in Div 2 was upheld and their time was recorded in amongst those who competed in Div 1. The protest only came to light once the results were published rather than within the ½ hour post race where protests are supposed to be lodged. The upshot is that this pair will race in Div 1 next time and a sheep station has

Results and short reports of the latest rounds of the, Vajda Marathon 9 Series, The Myall Classic and the Sri Chinmoy Googong Challenge can be found below.

Sunday time trials finish at the end of September and the Summer time trials get underway on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> of October. Time trial results can be found on our web page as can the Full Moon paddling program.

### Marathon 9

PaddleNSW VAJDA MARATHON Series 9  
Race 6 – WINDSOR

Sydney had been drenched with rain in the weeks leading up to this race and there had been some concerns that the river might be in flood. Upon arrival it was

### RESULTS

#### DIVISION 1 -20 km

Justin CHANNELLS / Gary RAKE 3rd in  
1:39:37

#### DIVISION 4 – 20km

Richard Fox 8<sup>th</sup> in 1:54:12

#### DIVISION 5 – 20 km

Alan Clark 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1:52:11

John Preston 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1:55:36

Paul Hartlipp 10<sup>th</sup> in 2:07:56

#### DIVISION 7 – 15 km

Russell Lutton 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1:24:33

Robin Robertson 8<sup>th</sup> in 1:52:31

#### DIVISION 9 – 10 km

Ben Rake 8<sup>th</sup> in 1:08:21

been won by the Central Coast.

Richard Fox paddled in an unfamiliar borrowed kayak because of problems he would have encountered bringing his kayak up the freeway in the strong wind. He was a bit off his usual pace. Nevertheless he paddled well in the sloppy conditions to finish 8<sup>th</sup> in 4<sup>th</sup> division. Richard's training has been focussed on preparation for the Hawkesbury Classic so a short, sharp 20 km on the Hawkesbury River would help develop his sense of a feel for the river.

Division 5 had 3 of our members competing in it. Alan Clark unfortunately had a huge hole on the deck of his K1 about 20cm back from the bow after it blew off the car roof in a squall. A load of gaffer tape stopped the water from getting in but the kayak will need extensive repairs. Alan was keen to put the thought of the damage behind him and his race plan was to paddle 'within himself' and to see what develops. Paul Hartlipp hadn't been on the water much in Canberra since his epic performance in Narrabeen 2 months previously which saw him promoted to division 4. The race organisers had obviously fallen for his explanation for staying in Division 5 and he coyly lined up with the rest of us. John Preston was hoping to consolidate his improved showing in Wyong and stay away from the wash which causes him some concern with his balance.

Alan and John got off to good starts on opposite sides of the river. Both were conservative in their drive towards the bridge but found themselves out in front of the pack. A double kayak started to make a move up Alan's side of the river. Alan was able to keep their lead down to about 20m at the first bend. John moved across towards the right and as the paddlers fell into single file he was 30m behind Alan. Behind him the pack including Paul was struggling to keep up. Alan made a great move to catch the double in the first 300m of the return leg into the wind. Once on their wash he had the skills and strength to stay there. They slowly pulled away from John who also pulled away from the rest of Division 5. Alan attacked on lap 3 but the double was too strong and pulled away slightly at the end. Alan was placed second. John consolidated 3<sup>rd</sup> place completing the race in his own water and thus avoiding a lot of concern in the wash. It seems Paul was justified in staying in Division 5 as he uncharacteristically tailed off very early and brought up the rear of the field in 10<sup>th</sup>.



Alan sticking close after sticking his boat back together

#### PaddleNSW VAJDA MARATHON Series 9 Race 7 – PORT HACKING

##### RESULTS

##### DIVISION 5 – 20 km

John Preston 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1:54:38

Paul Hartlipp 10<sup>th</sup> in 2:10:07

##### DIVISION 7 – 15 km

Russell Luton 6<sup>th</sup> in 1:26:41

Robin Robertson 15<sup>th</sup> in 2:00:14

being difficult. Since the course has been changed to 5 km loops in 'fear' associated with the race has dissipated a bit. Nevertheless long tides, big waves, speed boat hoons and oyster strewn rocks remember the good old days. With some trepidation a small group of the day. The doomsayers were right in one respect. The wind was the course in one area. The rest of the course it blew straight into

All of our competitors completed the course without too much drama. However Paul Hartlipp managed to take a dip out of his K1 early in the race and had to settle for playing catch up. Robin Robertson paddled well in the conditions and probably made a good decision to use her TK1 instead of her K1. No point having 2 people in the same car home suffering from salt water inhalation. Robin's

time in the TK1 was a lot slower than she would have done in her K1 but staying safe was a good idea. Russell Lutton handled the conditions very well, experienced campaigner that he is. Russell was able to compete strongly to get 6<sup>th</sup> place in Div 7. John Preston broke away from the field in Div 5 with a local K1 paddler in hot pursuit. They remained together until the last kilometre when the Sutherland paddler used his superior boat handling and better balance skills to pull away.

PaddleNSW VAJDA MARATHON Series 9 Race 8 – Lane Cove.

Once again a small contingent of BGCC paddlers ventured up the freeway to Sydney. The race course on the Lane Cove River is salty, tidal and narrow. On the day it was also windy. The combination of these features made the racing more difficult than had been the case in the previous races. Lots of close wash and rebound waves from bridge pillars and some walled areas made it a difficult race for those with less than excellent balance and boat skills.

The paddle of the day was performed by the newly promoted Alan Clark. Starting in Div 4 for the first time Alan gained in confidence as the race progressed. He was able to fight his way back onto the pack after being dropped by some 30 metres early on. Not only did he get back on but he was able to take control of the pack in the last kilometre and win the sprint to the line leaving the others in his wake. Unfortunately a small number of paddlers had got away off the front early in the race so Alan's sprint was for 7<sup>th</sup> place.

Russell was competitive in his race but has been outgunned lately by a group of younger paddlers in K1s. Nevertheless he remains very competitive over the 15km in Div 7. It is unfortunate that Div 7 is the only division for the 15 km paddlers. 20 km races are divided up into 6 divisions so improving paddlers can move up a division to compete with paddlers of a similar speed. The 10 km paddlers have a split which differentiates those who finish inside the hour from those who finish over the hour. Div 7 either face the same paddlers each race or have paddlers turn up for the one race who are quite capable of paddling in the 20 km races but choose to do the 15 km. This makes the race results somewhat predictable and spoils the essence of divisional racing where you are supposed to be competing with paddlers of a similar speed. At least the single event paddlers don't feature in the overall positions at year's end which leaves Russell in a potential podium position pending the double points on offer in Wagga Wagga. (Sorry about the unintended alliteration).

RESULTS

DIVISION 4 – 20 km

Alan Clark 7<sup>th</sup> in 1:52:14

DIVISION 5 – 20 km

John Preston 9<sup>th</sup> in 1:57:47

DIVISION 7 – 15 km

Russell Lutton 5<sup>th</sup> in 1:23:57

DIVISION 8 – 10 km

Margi Bohm 3<sup>rd</sup> in 0:55:18

DIVISION 9 – 10 km

Helen Tongway 10<sup>th</sup> in 1:10:01

Mackayla Clark 14<sup>th</sup> in 1:14:39



Margi Bohm made a comeback appearance in Div 8. As expected she wasn't daunted by the conditions and paddled well to get 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Helen Tongway also seemed oblivious to the conditions and appeared to comfortably manage her 10 km race coming 10<sup>th</sup> in Div 9. Fresh back from her trip to the USA Mickayla Clark had a good race in Div 9

but faded a bit towards the end of the race. More time on the water will soon have her back to her best.

John Preston struggled in the conditions. A numb foot caused him to lose control of his steering and as a result he side-swiped a fellow competitor and scared the living daylights out of some paddlers coming in the opposite direction as he veered across their path. He remained upright but lost touch with the pack when he had to land to loosen his footstrap which had caused the numbness. This was unfortunate as he'd been a front runner for the first lap.

The Myall Classic

The Myall Classic is conducted annually by Just Paddlers and is often used as a step up in distance for those considering the Hawkesbury Classic and the Murray Marathon. Conducted on the tidal Myall River, the race covers a course which begins in an estuary and then winds its way up through the river towards Myall Lake and then back. Conditions can vary. Some years have had floods and gale force winds other years have been perfect for racing. Paul Hartlipp and Robin Robertson were our only participants. Judging by the sunburn Paul displayed on the Sunday after the race the conditions were a bit harsher sunwise than we had been experiencing in Canberra. Both enjoyed the experience and finished the longer distance comfortably.

The Sri Chinmoy Googong Challenge

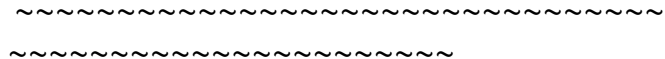
This race is conducted on beautiful Googong Dam and its surrounds. There are 2 options for competitors, compete in a team or go solo. There are 2 distances from which to choose. The short course consists of a 3.3 km run, 5 km paddle, 11 km mountain bike ride and a 3.3 km run to finish. The long course consists of a 5 km run, 10 km paddle, 31 km mountain bike ride and a 5 km run to finish.

A quick scan of the results shows a number of our club members competed well in both races as solo competitors or in teams. Full results and photos can be found on the Sri Chinmoy web page.

**Long Course Mixed Team:**  
*Brooke Rowlands* paddled for the Rainbow Team, winners of this category.  
*Ben Rattray* paddled for BRM which placed 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
*Vanessa Palmer* ran both legs and *Roslyn Hickson* paddled for the 4<sup>th</sup> placed ViRGo team (Virtual Racers of Googong).  
**Long Course Solo Women Under 50:**  
*Danielle Winslow* came 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
**Long Course Solo Men Under 50:**  
*Steve Hanley* 5<sup>th</sup>.  
*Aaron Coles* 7<sup>th</sup>.  
*Lee Rice* 9<sup>th</sup>.  
**Short Course All female Team:**  
*Sue Robb* paddled for the winning 'Googong Girls' team.  
**Short Course Solo female under 50:**  
*Rachelle Irving* came 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
**Short Course Solo Male under 50:**  
*Gary Rolfe* 5<sup>th</sup> overall.

**Important Dates**  
Summer Time Trials begin – 5<sup>th</sup> October.  
Australian Masters Games, Adelaide – 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> October.  
Full Moon Paddle – 14<sup>th</sup> October  
Hawkesbury Classic – 22 & 23 October.  
Race 9 M9 Series Wagga Wagga - Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> November.  
BGCC 24hour race – 19 & 20 November

*John  
Preston*



### Sprint convenor's report

*No report was available at the time of publication.*

### Slalom/white water convenor's report

*No report was available at the time of publication.*

### Paddler profile

*This Paddler Profile segment features a new BGCC member, Andrew Parkinson. Andrew and family are in the process of making the move to Canberra from the south coast of NSW. But that hasn't stopped him from promptly bringing his ocean racing ski to "freezing cold Canberra" to paddle and train regularly in our very different environment.*

*How long have you been paddling and who or what got you involved in paddling?*

I got a plastic sit-on-top about 10 years ago. It was not long after my son was born and I needed a way to get some quick time on the water because I could no longer go sailing all afternoon. In 2006, I brought a spec-ski to go faster and be more challenging and spent the next few months learning to stay on in both flat water and waves. My first race was in late 2006 and I think RussL may have beaten me.

*What boats have you paddled and what are you currently paddling?*

Plastic sit-on-tops, plastic sea kayaks, spec-skis, K1, ocean skis. At the moment there are 9 boats in the fleet but that include the kids kayaks, canoe & K1 and some plastic surf skis. I've only got 2 good boats, a Hayden spec-ski for surf and coastal paddling and a DD3 Albatross for ocean and lake racing.

*What type/size paddle do you use?*

An Epic Mid-Wing has been my paddle of choice for a few years. It's a great size for surf-ski sprints and ocean racing. I've been trialling a Mid-Large for the flat waters of LBG.



*Who is your paddling inspiration?*

Graeme Ison is older guy who paddles with BAK at the Bay. Despite having an artificial leg he always pushing to go faster and testing the limits of his stability. I know that if I slow down in a race that he'll be on my tail going for the wash ride. If I think it's, rough I know that Graeme is doing it harder and will not give up. It's amazing to watch him pulling himself back on to a ski after he's fallen off in the middle of the river.

*What is the current focus of your paddling?*

Keeping fit, shorter races (looking forward to summer time trials), enjoying the surf when I'm down on the coast

*What are your paddling goals (eg, PB's, competition, tours, having a good time, etc)?*

Do the paddle leg (23 km) of the Coolangatta Gold next year - I just need to find a team to do the other swim, run & board legs; set a PB around the BGCC time trial course (every race!); get a top 10 finish in my age group at the Bridge to Beach race on Sydney Harbour; and a new one - work out a way to beat Justin & Gary's K2 around the course - Can I give them a nudge at the last turn after taking the wash ride?

*Andrew Parkinson*

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New boats on the river

New boats on the river this month features the latest acquisition by club doyenne and paddling stalwart, Helen Tongway. Helen seems well pleased with her new kayak, which provides an excellent combination of speed, stability and practicality.

What is your new boat and what made you decide to change/upgrade?

My new boat is a Mirage 580 Sport. "The Lightweight 580 Sport is constructed of a Kevlar hull and deck, and using the latest sandwich construction with Nomex between Kevlar internal and external skins." (From the Mirage web-site). I decided to change to the new lightweight 580 because of the weight difference. It is 17.5 kg, as opposed to the regular 580's 22.5 kg. As a little old lady, the weight of my old boat was becoming a problem for me for getting it on and off the car, and carrying it to the water. While there were often nice people about to help me, I sometimes go paddling by myself and that is when I really noticed the difference.



How have you assimilated to the new boat and are you enjoying paddling it?

The new boat is just like the old boat to paddle. For me, that means comfortable, stable and that indefinable "nice". It may be a tiny bit less stable than the old boat, but perhaps that is just because it is new and slippery! I still feel very safe in my boat.

Is it fulfilling your expectations?

Yes. I don't know if there is any difference in my paddling speed in the new boat compared with the old as it was some time between paddling the old boat and my now feeling "paddling fit", after several months of forced non-paddling.

Who would you recommend this boat to and why?

I would recommend this boat to anyone who wants a very stable boat they can carry, with no worries about falling out, while still able to paddle it at a reasonable speed. It is good for touring, with plenty of hatches to stow things in and I think an excellent boat for races like the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic, where becoming tired and emotional can lower a person's ability to stay upright!

Helen Tongway

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## Photo of the month



Lots of clashing paddles in the combined TK2 classes start, 2011 Australian Marathon Championships, Geelong

## Boat Blog - the monthly goss on who's doing wot in wot

Falling into the *stranger than fiction* category is the rumour that **John Preston** is acquiring a new (i.e., previously unused; not second-hand, fresh; first owner) K1. John, who is renowned for paddling his (second-hand) kayaks until they develop fibreglass fatigue, has been tight-lipped on the prospective, acquisition. While he refused to return calls on the issue, his only publishable comment, "Watch out for me in 2012!" certainly indicates he has plans in mind.

An outstanding recent acquisition is the **Clark family's** beautiful wooden Struer K2. It was Trish, the family's kayaking manager, who took the bidding initiative so that the family could, as she put proudly it, "paddle in real style". Watch out for a feature on this kayak in a future edition of *Blazing Paddles*.

While on the subject of K-craft, the goss is that **Shane Lund** and **Andrew Parkinson** are searching web-sites for suitable K1s to add to their fleets.

It was good to see **Margi Bohm** make a return to competitive paddling at the most recent Lane Cove Marathon 9 race after an enforced layoff due to injury. And she won four BGCC club points by coming 3<sup>rd</sup> in division 8 to boot!

Spotted recently at Nelligen was **Mark Halpin** who, as you do, had paddled his Nelo K1 the 12 km from the Bateman's Bay bridge to Nelligen. Mark even threatened to stir up the locals soon by joining one of the BAK fortnightly time trials.

Two other recent acquisitions on the local paddling scene are **Louise Nicholls'** ultra light carbon Elliott Kayaks Ominous and **Costas Livanos'** Horizon Flyer. How many Flyers does that make it on the local paddling scene?

**As the only point of gossip is to spread it, let us know what you know at  
editor@bgcc.org.au**

## The Avon Descent

*A report by Nobby Clark on the family's odyssey to the west.*

After packing the trailer, setting up Trish's Kia Carnival with the Fluid Druid on top of it and ensuring that our eldest son and his car was ready to go it was time to commence our journey west.

I had been debating on whether to do the Avon Descent this year after last year's low water debacle and decided to enter the event and pay the registration. As it turned out because I was travelling from interstate and I was a member of a canoe club it was only going to cost me \$50 to enter. If the water was low again this year I wasn't going to compete and wasn't worried about losing \$50. I would go and watch the other race or maybe even spend some time at the beach.

The trip across was very quiet. Not much traffic at all. We had set the car up with the Waeco fridge, with lots of food and drinks so that we only had to rely on stopping for fuel. We could also sleep in the back of it and save some time and money. Fuel is expensive across the Nullabor but you don't have much choice. Towing the trailer and having a big plastic thing strapped to the roof racks doesn't help either.

Whilst travelling we had a fair amount of rain and were listening to the weather reports picking out that it was raining Perth. It didn't sound like it was raining in the Avon River catchment, but we would see how much water there was when we arrived. We put in some long days of driving and made it to Perth in record time without speeding.

We didn't get to check the water levels in the river whilst passing through Northam as we passed through there during the night. Although tired I was getting restless with no paddling for almost a week. The next day I called into Canoeing Down Under to pick up my race numbers and then the following day attended scrutineering at Ascot Kayak Club. Their clubhouse is next to the water and is a large two storey complex. Lush green lawns surround it. Maybe when we get as many members we could build something as elegant as it. I also got to look inside the boat storage area. Lots of boats of all shapes and sizes but predominately racing kayaks.

Still no paddling, as we had social commitments to attend, and sorting out our son into his new accommodation. My training day was to be the Friday before the race but we still had to sort out my lovely support crew to ensure that she knew where she was to meet me and also to check the river. So the day before the race Trish and I spent checking the river at the main rapids and also looking for a good place for Trish to refuel me. After checking out the river and finding the water level just right we headed up to the Northam to register and put the kayak at the start line ready for the next day.

On the way back to Perth we followed the river and checked more areas. It didn't look like there was going to be much portaging this year. Yippee! Back in Perth it was time to get a good night's rest and set up the gear ready for the next day.

We were up early and headed off in the dark for the start. We arrived at Northam and found a park, grabbed our things and headed off for the walk to where my kayak lay on the banks of the Avon ready to commence its journey down the valley. I was in one of the last grids and looking around there was a lot less craft from last year and most of them were skis.

The power boats took off at 8am in a blaze of noise and fumes. Then it was our turn to get on the water. There still seemed a lot of skis and not many kayaks. Oh well at least this year I shouldn't have to get out of my kayak at every rapid. My grid was away and the others took off like rockets in their long plastic skis. I knew that there was 57km to go today and another 77km tomorrow to contend with and so long as I kept up a steady pace I would make the cut-offs and enjoy the race.

The first obstacle is the Northam Weir Chute. There is enough room at the top for a few boats to hit it, but the water funnels at the bottom where there are some rocks and then the river separates into two channels. I let some of my grid go through and then I hit the chute. All good going down it and then at the bottom I headed to the left channel as there was more water flowing that way. I didn't reckon on the next grid which was the doubles

and triples catching up so quickly as just as I was pushed into some trees and got stuck there for a short time. A great start so I thought. Still no capsize and no water in the boat.

The river continues with some small rapids but not worthy of too much of a mention. Then we come to Glen Avon Rapid. Last year it was a mess of sharp rocks; however, this year there were two good drops. I paddled through them with no problems and got to watch a few ski paddlers swimming. Past Katrine Bridge the next obstacle was Extracts Weir. I have run this a couple of times but prefer to portage it and use it as time out of the seat. Trish met me here to refuel me as it was about the half way mark and after a lot of flat water paddling I was starting to feel sore and tired. I had a good break and then it was back onto the water to tackle a few more rapids and the dreaded Ti-trees.

The next rapids were easy and I was enjoying the lovely sunny day paddle. With the water level there was a good flow and I was moving along quite well for an old heavy plastic kayak. The Ti-trees loomed and once in them things changed dramatically. There were a lot of paddlers in front of me but they weren't paddling. They were holding onto trees or in the water trying to manoeuvre their skis around the trees. At one stage I had to grab hold of a tree to slow myself down and lost my paddle. It sped off down the river between trees and I had to let go of my tree and hand paddle about 50 metres to catch up to it before I lost it.

It was near the end of the Ti-trees that I finally came to grief. There was a tight right hander around some trees in a fast flowing section with skis littered everywhere when I thought that I might be able to squeeze through on the right. I got broached on a tree and was just about off when I got hit in the side of the kayak by a double kayak. As it hit me it broke the seal of my spray deck and my kayak filled with water. I clambered out of my kayak in thigh deep water and dragged my kayak to the bank to empty it out. Luckily the bank was only a couple of metres away in shallow water.

After emptying my kayak I was off and paddling, scrambling through more Ti-trees before finally coming out to the end of them and paddling another couple of kms to the finish line. Trish was there waiting for me and we carried my boat up to the compound to empty the gear out of it. The kayak had received very little damage on day one but the big rapids are in the valley on day two. Time to go and soak in a bath, fuel up with food and get some rest.

After a good night's sleep we had an even earlier start. The paddlers were off in grids from 7am this morning and I was off at 7:42am. Straight into more Ti-trees with more skis littered amongst them. I managed to get through them fairly cleanly and then there was Posselts Ford. This rapid has some big rocks at the bottom of it which I have taken out the front end of one of my old kayaks years ago. I ran it cleanly and then looked out for the next rapid. Super Shoot is an S bend with a lot of water churning though it. Another clean run saw me through it and dodging skis and paddlers again.

Through more rapids until I came to Emus Falls. This is a series of rapid culminating in the Washing Machine. Last year with the water level low there were people manhandling boats through it. This year you got to paddle it. There are a couple of lines to take but they are all quite tricky in a long boat. I chose the normal right hand route and once again got through it cleanly.



Photographie: Andy Rowland

I was in the valley now and there was no way back. The water level had been dropping over the past few days but it was still a good level to paddle. Lots of rapids through the valley of which Terry Bolland has named most. My paddling was going well and I was tackling the rapids well in a kayak I had only paddled once since the race last year. I think my paddling in a K1 had helped.

There were still some major rapids to go and I took a bad line at Ford Cruncher. I took my normal line and as I went over the ford I notice a big drop and a stopper in front of me. The bow of my kayak hit the bottom and scraped.

Back on the flat I had some spray coming off the bow. However, on checking it out it was only tape that had scraped off. The next bad line that I took was at Moondyne Rapid. It is usually another big S bend but today the water was going everywhere. I finished up going straight through it and over top of some large rocks where I hit the bow again tearing more tape off.

The rest of the valley was paddled quickly and took good lines through the rapids. Syds Rapid was awash and I had fun paddling down it. Through Walyunga park and its rapids before some more Ti-trees and then some flat water. Then it was time for the last rapid, Bells Rapid is one of the attractions for the spectators. It has a big drop and then a series of rapids for about 1km. I took the chicken chute on this one as it lead me into the next lot of rapids. My line was superb and I ran all the rapids cleanly and in good time.



That was the end of the rapids so I paddled on until I met Trish at Upper Swan Bridge. I emptied out my kayak trying to lighten it as much as possible for the run home on the flat water to Bayswater. I refuelled and then hit the water. More Ti-trees awaited me for the next 5km but not as bad as the end of day one or the start of today.

Finally through the Ti-trees and it was open water. The only problem is that the closer you get to Perth the less flow in the river. It gets tidal. I needed a double TK2 to follow but none came past. I kept overtaking other paddlers in skis and shorter kayaks. Then the power boats finally caught up to me. They passed me like I was standing still leaving a wake for me to flounder in

The flat water continued for about 25km before I finally made the finish line. I powered across it and received my medallion and a kiss from my support crew Trish. I said that I wanted to finish around 4pm and I came in at 3pm. I don't think that I was extremely competitive as all I wanted to do was finish it this year after last year.

With the race over it was time for more social calls. We still had a couple of days before heading back across the Nullabor.

Was it worth it? Of course.

Will I do it again? Probably yes but in a faster lighter boat and ensuring that there is a good water level. And I will probably train for it.

Let's get some teams in to do it next year.

*Nobby Clark*

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Full moon paddle 14th September



A strong NW wind had an icy chill to it reminding us that winter was still expected to drop at dusk and the sky was predicted to be fairly overcast. The temperature was almost balmy and things looked very good. We had up to a dozen paddlers turn up in much worse conditions. The conditions were probably not harsh enough to draw a decent crowd. The Rugby World Cup was a major TV distraction.

The sun slowly dipped behind the beautiful Brindabella Ranges as David Abela, Alan Clark and John Preston paddled down the

Molonglo into a light NW wind. Onto the lake there was still some wave action that had been stirred up by the last 2 days of strong winds. The rebound wash off the bridge pylons and walls in Central Basin proved to be no hindrance to the sea kayaks being paddled.

As we headed towards Commonwealth Avenue Bridge it was becoming dark and the various lights around the City became dominant. Floriade organisers were kind enough to be showing off some of the lights for their upcoming night shows and we appreciated their efforts. The National Museum had various coloured lights reflecting onto waves created by the Sailing Club's ferry. The ferry appeared off in the distance, well lit and no problem. Despite this some thoughts drifted back to the day some of our members witnessed this ferry plough right through an Olympic Sprint qualifier race on the rowing course. Was this the same rogue pilot in control? Fears were allayed when it turned towards the sailing club to dock. A crew of dragon boat enthusiasts paddled past being driven by some Nazi shouting out the paddling cadence. They appeared oblivious to our presence much like they are in daylight hours. One wondered if they'd even noticed it was now dark.

We had a quick drink at the dam wall and made a subtle move away from the bank in case the lion roaring in the distance had in fact escaped from the National zoo. The night was perfect. The wind had dropped to a zephyr and we paddled past Quentin's place and onto the rowing course in anticipation of a near full moon rising. Right on cue the moon rose between Mount Ainslie and the museum. No matter how many times one has witnessed this phenomenon one's eyes are drawn to it like a rugby league player to an error of judgement. It was a privilege to be on the water and made us reflect on how lucky we were that we were missing Scotland kick their way to a dour win in the Rugby World Cup. A slight tail wind had picked up and we allowed it to push us back under the bridges and onto the Molonglo. This was a very enjoyable night paddle which will take some beating.

John Preston

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## Happenings in the region and beyond

**1 October**—BAK fortnightly 5 km-10 km summer series time trial (9 a.m. Wharf Street, Nelligen)

**4 October**—monthly BGCC meeting at the club shed

**22-23 October**—Hawkesbury Canoe Classic (Go BGCC paddlers!!!)

**29 October**-Girls' Day Out Fundraising Paddle

Go to: <http://www.facebook.com/girlsdayoutnelligen>

**5 November**—Round 9 of 2011 Marathon 9 series, Murrumbidgee River, Wagga, Wagga (plus series presentations on Saturday night)

**12 November**—the inaugural Tuross Lake Paddling Classic

See <http://www.turosshead.org/KayakClassic/TurossPaddleClassic.htm> for details.

**19 November**-Burley Griffin 24 hour challenge

Go to: <http://bgcc24hourchallenge2011.gofundraise.com.au>

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The Ocean Series race dates

Dates kindly provided by Gordon Burns. Gordon is keen to make the trek up to Sydney for as many of these races as he can,



please let him know if you're interested in taking part in an ocean racing event.

- 8 October: Lion Island Challenge, from Pittwater, around Lion Island, down along Palm Beach, then back.
- 22 October: Bondi to Watsons Bay. (Would be very spectacular racing through the heads, but alas a clash with the Hawkesbury).
- 12 November: Narrabeen downwind, from Pittwater, out around Palm Beach and down to Long Reef.
- 26 November: King of the Harbour, from Long Reef down around north head and into the harbour side of Manly.
- 17 December: The 26km 'Twenty Beaches', from Palm Beach to Freshwater.

There are also some group coaching sessions with Tim Jacobs and Matt Blundell being run on Saturday afternoons the week before the races. Details are at online.oceanseries.com.

A Fenn Cup event (Long Reef) is scheduled for 14 January and the 2012 Bridge to Beach for 17 April. Details will be posted at oceanpaddler.com

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## For sale

*If you have any boats or items of kayaking equipment for sale, provide details to the Blazing Paddlers editors.*

**DD3 Envy**, Full Carbon, Less than 3 Months use! Immaculate condition  
Be on the water for your next race.



Contact Damo 0411 383 337 \$3500 ono. Will deliver from Northern Beaches to Ulladulla, but have contacts in Canberra and the Bay.

**Double sit-on top kayaks**, Mission Surge, \$750 (new value approximately \$1,1350). Includes two paddles and two PFDs. Contact Anthony, 0410 614 608

**Single sit-on top kayak**, Mission Flow, \$650 (new value approximately \$900) Includes paddle and PFD. Contact Anthony, 0410 614 608

**Omnious kayak** from the renowned Elliott Kayak range. Carbon/kevlar construction, 11.5 kg making it light, responsive, fast yet stable. Kayak is in good condition. Price \$1900 ono. Contact Roy Willis, Batemans Bay, Phone 0408 428 843



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*"Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing - absolutely nothing - half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats."*

*Kenneth Grahame, The Wind in the Willows*

# GIRLS DAY OUT



PADDLE FOR BREAST CANCER

29 OCTOBER 2011, Nelligen.

## WHAT:

Come on girls, all ages are welcome, no skill level required. Just come along, have a great day out & help raise money for cancer.

## WE'LL HAVE:

A BBQ lunch  
Dj OB Playing some tunes  
and an auction to raise money for the breast cancer foundation to conclude the day.

## WHERE:

The Nelligen Big 4 caravan park

## WHEN:

October 29th, 2011.  
Event rego-9 am  
Event briefing- 10 am  
Event starts-10:45 am  
PFDs/ life jackets must be worn

## ENTRY:

To enter yourself and your friends  
**EMAIL:** [girlsdayout@dodo.com.au](mailto:girlsdayout@dodo.com.au)  
displaying full names & contact numbers of entrants **or**  
**PHONE:** 0410 614 608

## ENTRY FEE:

\$30 per person  
Hire kayaks for a donation of \$5 per person  
ALL PROCEEDS GOTO FOUNDATION  
(be quick, only 40 double kayaks available)

**MORE INFO:** [facebook.com/girlsdayoutnelligen](http://facebook.com/girlsdayoutnelligen)

This Event is proudly supported by Batemans Bay Surf Life Saving Club