

FAIRFIELD CANOE CLUB

Celebrating 88 years
1919 – 2007

Newsletter

MARCH 2007



- Murray Marathon ● Winter Series ● Club Profile
- Paddling at 40° South ● Club Reports

FAIRFIELD CANOE CLUB COOPERATIVE LTD

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Web site

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Newsletter dates 2007

Deadline for Submissions:
23 February 4 May 25 August 16 November

Printing dates

9 March 18 May 8 September 30 November

How to contribute

All contributions to the club newsletter welcome – photos, articles, letters to the editor, humour, advertisements. Contributions to be made by email.

Please submit material to the Editor

Email newsletter@fairfieldcanoecub.org.au

Postal address PO Box 253, Fairfield 3078

We gratefully welcome any articles or advertisements submitted for publication. However we cannot guarantee that any submission will be published in a particular issue of the Fairfield Canoe Club newsletter. The editorial team reserves the right to make minor editorial and layout changes to any submission while doing its best to preserve the intention of the original submission.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

CLUB NOTICE BOARDS

EVENTS FOR 2007

March

7-11	Australian Flatwater Championships	Penrith
24 & 25	Grand Prix Race 6	Geelong

April

1	5km & 10km Championships	Footscray
7 & 8	Australian Marathon Championships	Nagambie
22	Mars Challenge	Ballarat
29	Winter Series Race 1	Warrnambool

May

20	Winter Series Race 2	Bairnsdale
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June

3	Winter Series Race 3	Patterson Lakes
24	Winter Series Race 4	Lake Aurovale

July

22	Winter Series Race 5	Essendon
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August

12	Winter Series Race 6	Yarrowonga
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September

2	Winter Series Race 7	Wesley
16	Victorian Marathon Championships	Geelong

FREE INTERMEDIATE COACHING

Any club member interested in our next Level 2 Beginner coaching course, please ring Margaret Buck on 9489 0556. These four week courses are free for club members to assist and enhance their paddling skills.

What's more fun than paddling to Studley Park or Dights Falls? Looking at the club notice boards, of course! Kayaks for sale, races to go to, even the occasional social event, the notice boards are where it's all happening at Fairfield Canoe Club. Wondering how it all works – well read on:

If you would like something placed on one of the sub-committee sections of the notice boards, you will need to contact the relevant board member.

However, it is OK for members to place information on the members' section of the notice boards. Do you want to advertise a boat for sale or are you looking for that very special paddle? Why not put a flyer on the members' information section of the notice boards. As the boards are on an angle try to make sure each item is secure. Single A4 sheets are best secured in plastic sleeves. Ideally you should use Velcro to attach card and paper. Velcro and plastic sleeves are near the club phone. Typed and dated, the flyer will be removed after 3 months.

Please do not put ANY notices of any sort on walls or windows. We have just had the inside walls of the club repainted – sticky tape on walls and windows is hard to remove! Any flyer or notice on the walls inside or outside the club or on windows will be removed.



Andrea Smith signs up Ed Walta and Llew Morgan for Clean Up Australia Day. Ed and Llew will be reporting on the Albury race in the next newsletter where both paddlers finished the race and kept going! Photo Michael Loftus-Hills.



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Welcome to this edition of the Fairfield Canoe Club newsletter. Before I get into the body of this report, I would like to acknowledge on behalf of the board and all the members, the wonderful job Anna Wilson has done as editor of the newsletter over the last three years. We have been very fortunate to have had the use of her amazing organizational talents and passion in this position. Anna is departing the club (hopefully only in the short term) as she takes up a posting, for the summer, with a European cycling team; we wish her all the very best with this new venture.

Fortunately there is always someone willing to step up and so we welcome Amanda Fisher into the position of editor of this edition and hopefully many more.

I was reading an article in 'The Age' about Andrew McAuley and his incredible effort in attempting to paddle from Australia to New Zealand. Whether he was 'crazy' or the ultimate adventurer is not for me to judge, however I felt a huge sense of disappointment and loss when I heard a few weeks ago that Andrew was missing, and most probably would not be found. As a fellow paddler, who feels the pain of endurance after 15 kilometres in the boat, the epic journey of 30 days and 1500 kilometres in open water enhances my belief that more – maybe anything is possible.

R.I.P. Andrew McAuley

There's been lots happening around the club. Behind the scenes there is constant maintenance to the property and boats being carried out. Badly damaged boats are placed on cars and taken off for repairs, only to be returned a few weeks later for you to use. A team of volunteers prepare this brilliant quarterly publication and maintain the website making communication within the club and to prospective members possible. The generosity of our coaches is outstanding while the convener of social events injects the right amount of social balance into our paddling lives. Of course I do not forget our administrators who work tirelessly to ensure the governance of the club meets best practice.

Clean up Australia Day was held at the beginning of March and has long been supported by the Fairfield Canoe Club. Within a month we will be launching the 'Winter Series' for 2007. The aim for 2007 is participation, participation, participation and to win back the Winter Series from Patterson Lakes. So please...Your Club Needs You!

That's all from me for this edition.

Happy Paddling

Michael Kane

Chairman

CLUB PROFILE – AMANDA FISHER



In this issue of the FCC newsletter, we profile our new editor – Amanda Fisher. After a grueling interview and some great references Amanda has joined the Communications Committee.

When you joined FCC in 2006 (first participated in beginner lessons in September 2005) did you have any idea you would be paddling the Murray Relay in 2006?

I had a vague ambition to attempt the Murray River Marathon full distance because I grew up near the Murray River at Rutherglen, Victoria, and never really appreciated it at the time and thought it would be an interesting way to discover the area. I decided to try paddling a few months after I fractured my elbow and had some soft tissue damage from falling off my bike and realised that it was time to seize the day.

However, paddling seems to be a little bit more difficult than I imagined so it was probably best to try the relay first. Last year I intended to try the full distance in a double – until December when my friend became injured. I had never attempted an event before the Cobram 40 and another friend took part at the last minute and although we completed it – we fell in when the safety boat went past in the first leg of a very long day!

You paddled with Kevin on most days. Kev seems to work fairly hard at training. What was it like paddling with him on the Murray?

It was fantastic having the opportunity to paddle with someone so experienced and encouraging. I was really worried about sitting in the front – so because Kev and I were more evenly weighted, I was able to swap and just follow his paddling motion. I haven't learned to successfully paddle in the wake of other boats so it was much better for the team to have the experienced paddler cutting corners along the Murray and using tactics to sneak up on other boats.

What are your paddling plans for 2007?

I would love to learn to brace so when the unexpected happens on the river I am not automatically head-first into the water. I think I should probably try a K1 at least once before it gets cold (but am still not keen on falling in). Perhaps participate in club events if I can fit it in and make more time. What I am most keen to do is to paddle regularly. I would like to develop a routine where you don't have to make plans or think – but just paddle.

What do you do when you are not paddling – work and other hobbies or sport?

I work for the Optometrists Association Australia in the publications department of the national office as Assistant Editor of 'Australian Optometry.' It is the Association's monthly newspaper – where I have been for about three years. Previously I worked in suburban and rural newspapers. Whenever I can, I ride my bike to work which I find a great way to start the day. I have a range of interests but enjoy running and am on a committee for a fairly social running group the 'Gunn Runners' who run around Albert Park Lake every Tuesday evening. At the end of the run everyone has beer at the Gunn Island Hotel – so it has a fairly relaxed atmosphere. My role includes taking it in turns to register and time participants in the run and to organise a calendar of running events for the club.

In my spare time I have an interest in writing and attend a writing group on a monthly basis.

You were a successful applicant for the FCC newsletter editor position. Was this the main reason you joined FCC – so you could edit the famous club newsletter?

I think it is a great newsletter and have enjoyed reading about the club members – and sincerely hope that the great team of contributors will continue providing their wonderful support.

Have you any ideas for the newsletter over the next year – new directions and ideas?

The strength of any team project is in the commitment of the members. A publication benefits from a variety of voices. So hopefully with the continued commitment of experienced club members, mixed with the fresh perspective of new members we will provide a variety of stories. I am really aware that everyone contributing to the newsletter is extremely busy balancing work/life/sport and everything else that life demands so every bit of effort is much appreciated.

What has it been like paddling at FCC? Has the club met your expectations?

When I joined, I enjoyed meeting the people who began in the same beginners course (that was run by Julie Perriam) – but just wanted to enjoy quietly paddling along the river with no ambition to push myself. I enjoyed discovering a quiet place in the middle of the city. Joining the relay team over Christmas opened up a social aspect to the club which I have really enjoyed – so hopefully I can have a balance of enjoying the quiet of the river and joining in club activities.

WINTER SERIES

WINTER SERIES RACES 2007

Race 1 Sunday 29 April at Warrnambool

Race 2 Sunday 20 May at Bairnsdale

Race 3 Sunday 3 June at Patterson Lakes

Race 4 Sunday 24 June at Sherbrooke Knox

Race 5 Sunday 22 July at Essendon

Race 6 Sunday 12 August at Yarrawonga

Race 7 Sunday 2 September at Wesley (organised by FCC)

Victorian Marathon Championships Sunday 16 September Geelong

The eight events that make up the Winter Series marathon races will start at Warrnambool on Sunday 29 April, organised by Canoeing Victoria. The series will conclude with the Victorian Marathon Championships in Geelong on Sunday 16 September. All paddlers that compete win points for their club with additional points awarded for position. A perpetual Victorian Marathon trophy is awarded to the club with the most points at the end of the season. Fairfield Canoe Club finished in second place last year.

It is now time to rise to the challenge to regain the trophy. Our strength is in the character of our members, who will boldly go where they haven't gone before (or to Warrnambool anyway) soon for the first Winter Series race. It is nearly always a nice day for the start of the winter series racing on the picturesque Merri River. Remember too that the Warrnambool Canoe Club (the hosts of the race) was started with the enormous efforts of FCC's own Fred Washer (former Olympian) back in his youth when he moved from Melbourne to help with the building of the Nestle factory just up the river.

But what's it all about really – this Winter Series?

Picture testing yourself against past performances or just enjoying the company of like-minded others who prefer to do rather than just talk of stretching their abilities. This may be attempting your first race, safe in the knowledge that canoeists always look out for each other. You will be racing in a safe environment where the health and safety of competitors is the priority of the Canoeing Victoria organisers. Winter Series paddlers use the races to prepare for the Victorian and Australian championships and it's also a great way to get ready for the Murray River Marathon if that's your goal for the end of the year.

The club will supply everything you need to compete if required. You just need to be a financial member of the club (your fees have a racing/insurance component that goes to the CV). From here FCC offers beginner level coaching, boats, paddles and lifejackets to get you on your way – even a trailer or a friendly car pool to get you to that venue, whether local or country. All you need is a sense of adventure and about \$15 entry fee and don't forget a few dollars for a sausage in bread and a hot coffee after the race. What a great way

to see the country, get fit and swap a few yarns, let alone brag about your performance back in the office on Monday. I find that the wind was stronger, the temperature colder and the competition much more dramatic the next day but maybe that's just me.

Race distance and class depends on fitness and experience. Higher divisions race from 18 to 24kms – the rest of us mere mortals travel about 8 to 18kms. You will be started in a class reflective of your ability and satisfaction is guaranteed. For those a little more tentative than others, you can look forward to racing doubles and if you ask nicely a more experienced FCC member may partner you on your first doubles race.

I find having these races marked in your diary ensures that you end up on the river regularly through winter and don't end up waiting for a nice day.

Joe Alia was the master of ceremonies (FCC winter series director) last year ably assisted by Connie Todaro. The new season director is yet to be announced and if you would like to help out or want the big hat helping to guide Fairfield towards attempting to regain the trophy, then put your hand up. As mentioned earlier, its FCC's participation rate that brings us into contention every year and we are rarely far from the lead.

Still not sure about this racing caper?

Well then, get along to a 10am Sunday session. These fast, fun and furious training sessions were started by Zoli Szigeti more than 40 years ago and are still introducing FCC members to the great time that can be had while learning the skills and gaining the fitness needed to race successfully (or not). They are a great way to burn off the over indulgence of a Saturday night with still time for a small sleep in. Best of all, the sessions are led by an experienced crew from FCC (all Zoli graduates), they are free and you can work at your own pace – honestly.

I encourage all FCC members to have a crack at a Winter Series race this year – help us get that trophy back – every entry is a point and every point counts. Grab a Winter Series diary from the club and pencil in your dates for adventure.

There will be a large blue card before every race up on the Race Organising noticeboard where you can register your interest for entry and book a boat, a spot on the trailer and locate a doubles partner.

For further clarification on the details speak to any FCC member and check out the ROSD noticeboard for the new rules and points for participation in Winter Series races.

See you on the start line.

Alex James

MY MAGENTA ADVENTURE

Once a cyclist always a cyclist I guess. After four years of trying to mould myself into a paddler who can stay upright in a K1 and confidently paddle the Yarra in the dark of winter I have succumbed once again to the lure of racing on two wheels. In a previous life I was a professional cyclist with the Saturn team in the USA. This time around I won't be doing the pedalling, at least not on race day. I have accepted a position as Directeur Sportif with the women's T-Mobile cycling team so I'll be sitting behind the wheel of the team car following the races and communicating with the riders via radio. If anyone watched the Tour de France last year you might have noticed the boys in pink – Andreas Kloden ended up third overall. Well the colour is actually called magenta and my job is to make sure the women's team wins more races than they did last year. This is my dream job.

At the time of writing, the first race of the season is fast approaching. Conveniently for me, the first race is in Geelong. The season kicks off at the end of February with a three-day stage race. The riders will then have a rest day before contesting the first World Cup of the season in Geelong on 3 March. Although early in the season, a World Cup carries many points which contribute to a rider's and a team's international ranking and so it is always a race to take seriously. This year we will contest all nine World Cup races and hope to take glory in at least three, to equal the record from last year.

Following the Geelong race, we will contest races in New Zealand and California before travelling to Europe where I will be setting up my home away from home in Cologne, Germany. The season lasts almost seven months, with the World Championships providing the finale at the end of September. This year's 'Worlds' are in Germany so for our German sponsor it would be magnificent if a rider in magenta could take the world title.

There are 11 riders in the women's team and I need to work with them to co-ordinate a race schedule for each rider. At most races we are allowed six riders. We have a mix of experienced riders and youngsters with the ages ranging from 18 to 39. The younger riders will do fewer races and will have less pressure. However, they will always have a

job to do in the races, the most basic requirement being the collection of extra bottles of water/electrolyte from the team car for the other riders in the team.

The season is composed of a mix of one-day races and stage races. The longest stage races are 10 days in length – one of these is the Tour de l'Aude in the south of France in May and the other is the Giro d'Italia in Italy in July. There are many other smaller stage races. We have riders who are capable of winning each race but of course there's plenty of opposition to put a spanner in the works.

I hope to find a few fellow paddlers in Cologne – maybe a quick trip down the Rheine or the Mosel River will keep my paddling arms working. I'll send through some updates on the season – particularly if we win races. Please feel free to email me on a.wilson@t-online.de or to check out the website at www.t-mobile-team.com.

I can't truthfully say that I will miss the winter paddling on the Yarra but I will miss the great friends I have made at FCC. I am excited about my magenta adventure but I'm already excited about being back on the Yarra in October.

Anna Wilson



Anna (centre) with T-Mobile cycling team. Photo courtesy T-Mobile.

BUTTONS, BOWS AND THE MASTER'S APPRENTICE

Our paddling day started earlier than usual as we headed off to the clubhouse to collect our 'trusty steeds' in preparation for a doubles race at Footscray on Sunday 4 February. Kevin (Hannington) and Liz (Jenkins) paired up in one TK2 and Lisa (Newton) and I in another.

Boats on top, off we go in time to register for the Vet45 event. Twenty-seven boats were allocated to our particular start for the 18km event, only three of those in our actual class. We four had successfully paddled together during the competitive 2006 Murray River Marathon – so the 18 km was nothing to be concerned about, but betting on the place order at the finish was particularly heavy.

Naturally Liz/Kev started out hot favourites with the bookmakers but they had clearly not factored in the strategic cunning and the synergistic strength formed by the Lisa/Gary combination.

The weather was kind even though it was predicted to get into the mid-30s later in the day, it was nowhere near that when we started at about 11am; little to no wind but just enough to drift the boats into a pack towards the left hand side whilst jockeying for position or advantage at the start.



Trinity boys L-R James Campbell, Jake Weatherson, Will Norcoff and Angus Campbell at the start of the race.

From the clubhouse at Footscray, there is a left hand bend in the river after the start and it appears that there could be an advantage starting nearer the left bank. That advantage is, in my opinion, an illusion. From the starter's line, 80 to 100 yards down the river, particularly if you are right of the river centreline, you can actually see right down the course and you are actually 'past the bend.' To my mind, there is a distinct advantage in starting somewhere right of the river centre.



Kevin Hannington, Liz Jenkins, Lisa Newton and Gary Flanigan with their medals.

If you know the river at Footscray, twenty-seven boats are a pretty tight fit across that particular stretch so we rightly anticipated a rather exciting start with much clashing of paddles and the odd word suggesting that some boats should maybe, 'watch where you are going ol' chap'.

At the start, we were right of the centre and Liz/Kev were about four boats to our left; the third boat in our class was actually immediately to our right.

As predicted, the water at the start got pretty turbulent but we managed to stay in the boat and hit only one or two other boats. By the time that the boats started to string out into a packed but straightish line, we were somewhere in the middle. By continuing to work pretty hard, we managed to keep within contact of Liz/Kev and boat three.

If you have ever competed in a race (or even during friendly training sessions) against Kev (the Master), you will appreciate that you have to maintain the pressure just to keep him in sight. With 'the Master' paired up with Liz – we knew we were in for a testing time.

Lisa and I had to maintain the effort throughout the race (victory against Liz/Kev does not come easy). Boat three did better than Lisa and I for about two kilometres – I started to wonder whether they, not Liz/Kev, might be the threat.

Boat three dropped out of contention when they tired at the three kilometre mark. Liz/Kev maintained a cracking pace but we managed to hold their stern wash basically throughout the race. We did lose it a couple of times but with further effort, managed to regain it and were only about half a boat length behind them at the final turn in front of the Essendon clubhouse.

DO YOU KNOW . . .

It was actually that top turn where they 'lost the race.' They were doing well and were executing a very tight turn when two youngish girls in a K2 lost control (maybe my bribes were being rewarded) and crowded them right onto the buoy. Lisa made a 'hard right' with the rudder and we just managed to miss the back of the K2 thereby escaping the mêlée and we managed to draw level with Liz/Kev by the completion of the turn.

Thereafter it was still very hard but relatively speaking; it was 'a piece of cake.'

We had their measure. We had the better boat and we had ridden their wash throughout simply because the 'Master' always likes to lead. I also reckoned that the 'Master' (but not Liz) would be tiring.

I also knew that because we now had the advantage of being in front, at the exact spot where our pre-race planning had identified, we knew that in a sprint, our combination, particularly in front of (husband) Don and their two boys plus an excited and vocal pack of Trinity kids, we would be very hard to beat over that last four kilometres.

There was really only one stressful time during that final leg and that was when those wonderful girls in their K2 actually swerved dangerously close across our bow; (maybe they were levelling the score for the damage they did to Liz/Kev at the turn) but my suggestion that they 'rapidly move their boat up into the trees' seemed to do the trick.

We did win although it was a near run throughout that last dash. We did it. After six odd years of paddling, I have actually 'won a race.'

Thanks Lisa for training often and hard enough to develop the skill and stamina required to win the day. Thanks also to Liz/Kev for all that past collective training and instruction and – on the day – for a great race.

Winning is a challenge but even finishing at the rear of the field, as I normally do, sure beats watching TV.

Gary Flanigan

Photos Don Campbell

- You can usually find someone to paddle with on Tuesday and Thursday either between 6am and 6.30am or between 4pm and 6pm and on Saturday morning at 9.30am.
- *The Sunday 10am training sessions welcome ALL standards of paddlers.*
- The Club is cleaned every week.
- *Club consumables are supplied by a combination of cleaners, social committee members and other members on a re-imburement basis.*
- The coffee machine was a donation from a club member.
- *Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, milk and sugar are supplied at no additional cost to the members.*
- The fridge is stocked by the club and is run on an honesty system.
- *The red suggestion letter-box on the left hand side of the club is cleared weekly with issues discussed by the board at the next meeting.*
- Beginners boats and Intermediate boats are supplied and maintained by the club and are available for all members to use.
- *The Club newsletter is printed on a quarterly basis.*
- Weekly FCC update email posted to subscribers.
- *Annual Big Bash organised by the Social Committee.*
- The Board of seven meets on a monthly basis.
- *We are always on the look out for volunteers to help on sub-committees or even to mow the lawn or sweep out the boat racking area on a regular basis.*

MURRAY RIVER MARATHON 2006

What a team we were, actually, we were the 'No Name' team due simply to our 2IC (Gary Flanigan) omitting to fill in the required box during registration.

For anyone who has competed in the Murray River Marathon, you know that the main concern is about training and preparation, that is where our team had its focus until the 8.20am start of Day 1.

With a good start under our lifejackets (so to speak) by Kevin (Hannington) and Amanda (Fisher) on Day 1, the land team members dispersed to their various checkpoints, fully confident that we had our tactics in place to place us in a good position over the day. By the end of Day 1 we were in second place just three minutes ahead of Tocumwal Water Rats but eight minutes behind the Ivanhoe 'Blue Bells' number one team.

Camping for the first two nights was at Tocumwal then another two at Picnic Point and then one at Murrabit. Those youngish members of the team (including Kev Hannington) intent on partying late into the rain swept night on New Years Eve, motored onto Swan Hill but Gary (Flanigan) and his wife Helen, just one bit smarter than the mob, returned home for an early return to work on the 2nd of January.

Catering was, in the main, provided by our 2IC Gary with assistance from Helen and involved an exciting menu of home made soups, BBQ snags, stir fries, pasta and rice dishes. One observant member of our team noted that maybe Flanigan didn't like cooking as much as standing near the beer cooler.

As Lisa (Newton) and Graeme (Wiggins) were also part of the Trinity mob, we were able to organise our lunches through the chef at their camp. Our thanks to the Trinity mob for filling in, given that our own 'much loved chef' (Lt G) refused to cut lunches. Thankfully, the Trinity chef provided our needs in our hour of need.

The night on Day 1 was, so to speak, an eye opener. The chorus of our team's nightly, very loud rhythmic tunes of deep regular tones, resonating from each side of the camp didn't allow for much rest but did ensure that the offenders were banished to far flung reaches of any future camp. My goodness, what a God awful noise. On awakening for Day 2 it was noted that not everyone had enjoyed a peaceful night's sleep.

The start on Day 2 was, for the first time in a number of years, actually from Tocumwal with the day finishing at Picnic Point, the advertised Day 2 length.

Gary and I started out on Day 2 in my Compcraft boat, our team backup boat, due to a nice young member having a larger 'foothold on this earth' than others. It was noted by the 'Jockstrap Brigade' that



Team 'No Name' members Amanda Fisher, Kevin Hannington, Robyn Ward, Graeme Wiggins, Rhea Dempsey, Liz Jenkins and Lisa Newton.

the boat would be slower than our Unfairadvantage Kayak used on Day 1 but the 'Petticoat Brigade' were adamant that the tender feet concerned would be able to paddle faster with more room to swivel, and would make up any time that would be lost in a sleeker boat. Other team members reckon that it was the Petticoats fear of getting wet that forced the change and that the size 15 endings on Graeme's legs was a weak excuse for protecting much coffered hairdos.

Our start on Day 2 was one of the longest legs of the event and the only unusual thing about the paddle for me was I found myself singing Christmas Carols to anyone who was around me – not to mention the poor blighter in the back.



Lisa Newton and Geoff Hindle awaiting their boat.

MURRAY RIVER MARATHON 2006

Unfortunately the festive season vibes were not held all day as some members were not so happy with number 2 boat, the drivers seat had broken and was sliding along the base of the boat. I think the Jockstrap may have slipped too. Not happy Jan!

The result for the end of day was not looking so good, 25 minutes behind 'Bells' and 5 minutes in front of 'Rats'.

Day 3 for Rhea and I was spent in the comfort and loving arms of our parents home where we attended our Father's birthday; knocking back the odd glass of red, and dining with our family, not a care in the world about Bells and Rats; it was our day off! With 10 in the team it meant that some could not paddle all the time.

Given the comfort of my parent's home, I was prepared to forgo the camp orchestra and camp restaurant for a night, and to leave the 'Morning Has Broken' racket in exchange for a comfortable bed and a sleep-in, a long hot shower and comfortable chair in air-conditioned comfort while watching the cricket. To show a certain level of team spirit we did bother to ring later in the day to get the latest results. Due to the noise of the spa in which we were then relaxing, couldn't hear very well so, back to the glass of red in blissful ignorance of our position. By then we were 42 minutes behind 'Bells' and 8 minutes in front of 'Rats' – surely a sign that they were missing us.



Changeover at a checkpoint.

Day 4 was Red Day. We joined the team at the start at Echuca noting the lovely ensemble of clothing worn by our representatives. We also noted a subtle change in the team's attitude; they seem to be more focused; not so interested in our time away. I don't know why, they'd had sandwiches for lunch and Chow Mien for tea as against our



Graeme Wiggins and Lisa Newton at Echuca preparing to start Day Four in their red fishnets and cycling shirts for Red Day.

Porterhouse Steaks so, what was wrong with them? Maybe it was the sight of those Red Fishnet Tights worn by one of the team. Where do you buy Red Fishnet Tights? Myers? Adult what?

Don (Campbell, Lisa's husband) was a part of the Trinity school team but willingly gave his assistance to our 'No name' team. It was wonderful to see the Trinity Flag flying in the best location on the bank for boats to change at. Thank you for your choice of locations Don. Why is it we don't have a FCC flag to fly when we are paddling?

By the time I was to take to the water paired with Geoff (Hindle), it was the last leg into Torrumbarry, and as usual, where are the 'Rats'? We worked hard but maybe, in hindsight, could have done it just a bit better.

We stayed at Murrabit for the night where we had one of the most satisfying (not counting those prepared by our 2IC) meals and evenings you can have during the Marathon; the local football club open their clubhouse to 100 people for accommodation and food and wine/beer for minimal charge. The stars up there need to be seen to be believed and five members of the team wandered off to lay upon the football field 'star gazing' – a wonderful night.

Day 5 was the blessing of the boats by the Arch Bishop, who I'm sure would have liked to chat with our Amazon Woman, but it was not to be, she was, as always watching over us, by listening in on the 'Rats' team tactics.

The Rats had written on the boat what times each pair had to achieve to make a better time than ours. Well if that didn't get some of us fired up, 8 minutes in front with 76kms to go. We could not lose this on the last day.

MURRAY RIVER MARATHON 2006



Jonathan Eager at Echuca.

By the time our boat arrived for my turn which was the final leg with Gary, my long time paddling partner, we were fed and rested, eager to go, having slid down to the waters edge we were ready, only to hear from the land crew that our pair had tipped out and had lost 4 minutes approximately getting back in. The 'Rats' turned up and left without our boat in sight. I was distraught that we were going to lose our standing on the last leg on the last day, and I would be responsible.

When we finally took off I estimated we were 4 minutes behind on the day and that motivated me to paddle my heart out, and at least reduce that figure as best we could. Thanks to Gary for settling me down and refocusing my attention. It had to be paddled strong but carefully to stay afloat. Some of the turns were quite treacherous and required good skills to cope, quite a few boats were going in at the turns. We did very well throughout our leg and in fact managed to claw back the Rats time advantage. What a great race. Just as the Murray Marathon should be. Our official result 2nd place in a time of 32:37:47.

A great race and a great result. A most enjoyable time in enjoyable company.

Our team members were and in no particular order:

Kevin Hannington, Gary Flanigan, Geoff Hindle, Robyn Ward, Amanda Fisher, Liz Jenkins, Rhea Dempsey, Paul Main, Graeme Wiggins, Lisa Newton and husband Don as land crew.

We did have some other results along our Murray Journey and they were presented at the Team Presentation Night recently.

Lord Snowdon Award for Photography – Paul Main

'Don't lay down Sally' Award for keeping on paddling – Rhea Dempsey

'Bring it on' Award for Cheerleader – Amanda Fisher

Cary Grant Award for keeping his Mr Cool – Kevin Hannington

Naked Chef Award for interesting dishes – Gary Flanigan

Alexander Downer Award for Red Fishnet Stockings – Graeme Wiggins

Godot Award for waiting, waiting, waiting – Lisa Newton

David Attenborough Award for field naturalism – Geoff Hindle

Molly Brown Award for being unsinkable, my heart will go on – Robyn Ward

Red Uteress Award for perfect spinouts in dust – Liz Jenkins

Gillette Award closest a man can get – Don Campbell crew

Gallipoli Award being in the trenches – Helen Flanigan and Maria Main

Boot Camp Award just in the nick of time – Trinity Land Crew

Telstra Award Herograms – Judy Hindle

Patrick Swaze Award Dirty Dancing on NYE – John Lisic

Full Distance Award staying awake and driving everyone home after New Year's Eve – Steve Batancs

Liz Jenkins

Photos Don Campbell

Other Fairfield Canoe Club members participating in the Murray were as follows. Steve Batancs who was competing in the Men's 50+ K1 event completed the full distance and came second in a time of 33:39:59. Antony Miller paddling in the Men's Open K1, unfortunately withdrew on Day Five due to blisters; Neil Grierson paddling in the Men's 60+ K1 event had to retire after Day One due to illness; and Jonathan Eager completed the Men's Open 18 K1 finishing third in a time of 16:51:03.

INTERMEDIATE FLEET AND MAINTENANCE

FCC HISTORY PROJECT

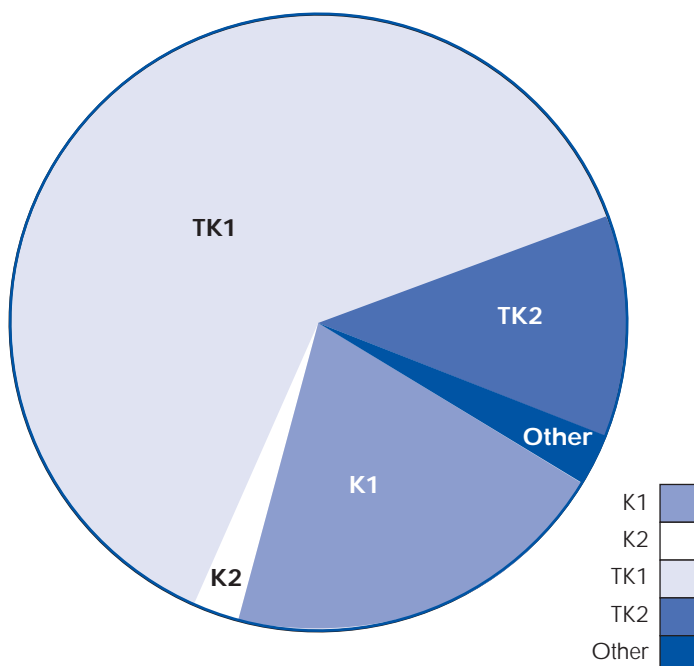
It is now several years since the club instigated the intermediate fleet so we have had a good chance to see whether the system is working. In general, club members are filling in the boat registration sheets each time and reporting damage or problems with the boats. If you see someone taking an intermediate boat out – a gentle reminder to them to fill in the sheets would be appreciated. Please also note that the intermediate fleet is not available for beginners and anyone in that category should only use the beginners boats stored on the far west racks in the club.

The actual usage of the intermediate fleet is considerable with our records showing that the boats from the fleet have been used over 1500 times since March 2006. The TK1s are by far the most popular with almost 63 per cent as indicated in the pie chart. Two of the TK1s have been used more than 250 times each. It is clear to us that the system is working pretty well.

The main issues for the committee members looking after the boats are that occasionally foot bars and seats go missing. It is very expensive to replace seats so even if they are damaged please ensure the seat goes back into the boat and the damage is recorded. We do our best to get the boats repaired but rely on members to look after the boats and components within.

Any suggestions for improvements with the intermediate fleet are welcome so please call Peter Thompson 0417 086 851 or Tony Payne 9380 2863.

Tony Payne and Peter Thompson



The process of sorting through boxes of newspaper articles and photographs has begun following the FCC History Day held late last year.

The Communication Committee collected boxes of archive material from members on the day. One of the most interesting finds was the first minutes books hand written in the early 1920s by John Cain Senior.

Overwhelmed with boxes of club documents and memorabilia we decided to consult with Dr June Seynard – from the History Department at Melbourne University. June's main area of interest is in Sports History, so her advice has been invaluable. June was impressed with Arthur Howard's article (see the last issue of the FCC newsletter) and suggested that we base the written history of the club on this document.

June also suggested that we begin a oral history project of past and present club members.

We will update members in the next FCC newsletter on the progress of both projects. If anyone has an interest in the club history project please contact Liz Jenkins.

Michael Loftus-Hills

RANDOM PADDLING AT 40° SOUTH

When Jim Anderson isn't paddling the Yarra with Fairfield Canoe Club, he'll try his paddle at anything. Jimbo tests his resolve on the menacing white water of Cataract Gorge in Tasmania, gets up close and personal with some curious seals on the East Coast of New Zealand and combats some mean sandflies while exploring the largest Fjords in New Zealand.

SEA KAYAKING IN NEW ZEALANDS FJORDLAND

For a paddler to spend a holiday in New Zealand without getting in a boat would be like visiting the Vatican and forgetting to see the Pope. While tramping was the main theme of the trip, I was holidaying with paddling friends so the group required little convincing to go on a sea kayaking expedition to Doubtful Sound.

Located in the South Islands Fjordland, Doubtful Sound is the largest of the New Zealand Fjords but not as accessible as the better known Milford Sound. We took the easy way out and went on a guided tour as hiring equipment and getting it there is difficult. There is no direct road access to Doubtful Sound, instead you have to catch a boat across Lake Manapouri, and then take the road link.



Cascades at Doubtful Sound New Zealand.

Starting the expedition from Te Anau, our guides drove us to Lake Manapouri where we reloaded all our gear into a powerboat. The weather at this stage was OK but we were advised that it was rapidly turning sour on the coast. The trip across the lake was bouncy and choppy due to the strengthening winds. At the power station we unloaded again for the short drive to the coast.

The weather quickly deteriorated to driving rain and a 40 knot head wind. Unable to paddle into such a wind we waited for it to ease and watched the rain feed the numerous waterfalls. As the main falls grew in volume, more waterfalls began to appear. The wind and rain also helped to keep the sandflies away.



Under sail on Doubtful Sound New Zealand.

The wind soon disappeared prompting us to shift into action and quickly pack our boats for the next few days. The rain had all but stopped, however the waterfalls that plunged into the depths of Doubtful Sound showed no signs of diminishing. As the sun came out the afternoon light illuminated the towering cliffs that line all sides of all arms of the Fjord. Heading up the South East arm looking for a campsite we paddled below cliffs 800 metres high. Small parts of the cliff overhang the ocean in places, allowing us to paddle under the Angel Falls that pour off the overhanging rock for a vigorous shower.

At the junction of a river we stopped for camp where the tour operators have facilities including a toilet and an industrial insect shelter. We were greeted by a swarm of sandflies back on land, with the weather now clear. Everything you did was an opportunity for these blood-sucking pests to have a go at you. Despite everyone quickly becoming door-Nazi's at the insect shelter, numerous blood-sucking pests still made it in to feast. No amounts of insect repellent, swatting or swearing would keep these pests away.

The following day the waterfalls were now a shadow of their former selves with most of the smaller ones nonexistent. The sandflies encouraged everyone to move quickly. With favourable winds, our guide showed us a few tricks by getting two kayaks to raft up and set up a sail. With only a light breeze we were not about to set any speed records but we enjoyed the lack of effort and took the opportunity to socialise and share copious quantities of chocolate.

RANDOM PADDLING AT 40° SOUTH

SEA KAYAKING AMONG SEALS

With a few days left of the trip in New Zealand we found ourselves on the east coast at Kaikoura, a popular coastal destination due to the abundance of sea life. A large seal colony exists on the headland and due to the absence of large sharks it is safe to get up close to the colony. Walking across exposed rocks at low tide gives access to the colony. For a close look to see them in the water, a boat is required. Sea kayaks are readily available for hire thus the opportunity to jump back in a kayak. Some of the cheeky younger seals come out to play by launching out of the water then diving under the kayaks. Meanwhile the older seals keep a watchful eye from their favourite rock, as we slowly paddled past.

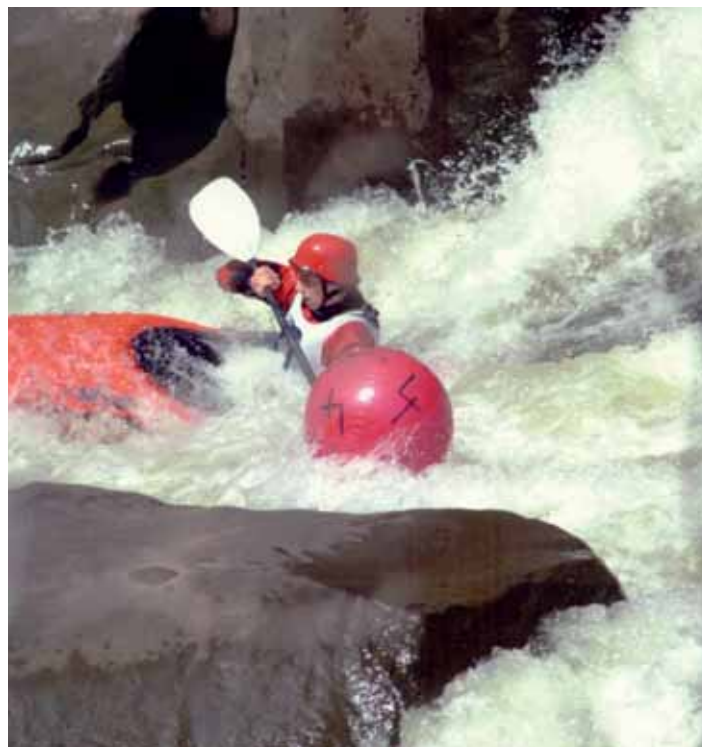


Sea kayaking at Kaikoura New Zealand.



Seals at Kaikoura New Zealand.

THE LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH WHITEWATER



Jim in the ball race Cataract Gorge Tasmania. Photo The Examiner.

While in New Zealand my plans to visit the Cataract Gorge Extreme Race in Tasmania on the way home had taken on new dimensions. Cautious of the river's reputation I had planned to only take photos. However, one of my white water paddling friends was in need of a partner for the race. Together we worked out a way for Grant to leave my kayak in storage at Melbourne airport, which I would collect between flights on route from Christchurch to Launceston. Somehow I was now going to participate in this event.

Cataract Gorge on the South Esk River is an exceptional stretch of white water with easy access to numerous significant rapids in close proximity. The finish is literally on the estuary of the Tamar River, in the heart of Launceston. However, there is a hydroelectric dam on the river upstream of the gorge. Water in the dam is diverted around the gorge to a power station on the estuary making use of the steep gradient of the gorge to generate electricity. Every two years, water is released back down the gorge for the Extreme Race for which the white water paddlers are very grateful especially considering the present drought.

RANDOM PADDLING AT 40° SOUTH



Kayakers in the knockout competition Cataract Gorge Tasmania.

Not exactly sure if it was the lack of white water practice this year due to the drought, or that the river was just challenging but I was feeling a little out of my league for the one and only warm up and river familiarization run prior to the race. I managed to accidentally find my way into and stuck in a hydraulic so deep that I couldn't see out of it. Somehow I found my way out after a few rolls and plenty of side surfing. Grant meanwhile had his own misadventures and discovered the meaning of the name behind a rapid called Ass Rape.

Now on the race section we had to study the lines more carefully so we could launch into each one without stopping for the race. Having had our confidence dented, chewed up and spat out we took these slowly. As a result of our caution, we soon found the river dropping on us, as there was only a two-hour water release for the practice run.

Race day we made our way back to the river. The Saturday event consisted of a time trial through the gorge where teams of two paddle together for safety purposes. Not knowing the river all that well I would have preferred to follow, but Grant my paddling partner was videoing the event with helmet cam. Therefore, I went first for the video despite having done only one previous run compared to Grant's three. If it were not for the race and the sunshine I probably would have opted to not paddle the river again. Not wanting to miss the event and knowing that there was numerous safety boats located on the river, I resigned myself to fate. Our numbers were called to the start line and we were off.

Heading off at a steady pace we negotiated the first rapids without issue. After a long pool we hit the more significant rapids, first up was The Toaster where I had a roll at the bottom. Then Sandwich Press,

which was easily negotiated. By not stopping between rapids, the anxiety levels did not have a chance to rise. Focusing on the task at hand I was able to relax and recall crucial details of Mix Master – the last significant rapid. Not remembering any lines of the successive rapids we blindly charged into them relying on our ability to find a way through as we went. With confidence rising and the hardest part over, the exhilaration of finding lines down rapids as we went was taking over. At the finish line the euphoria was setting in as we cheered other competitors and discussed the rapids, hydraulics and who was buying the beer for swimming.

The Sunday competition is a rare spectator event for kayaking in Australia, consisting of a knockout competition over the last rapid of the river. More than a thousand people lined the banks and other vantage points to watch the crazy boaters pit their mettle against each other and the river. Finding ourselves up against Olympic slalom paddlers and other elite competition, neither Grant nor myself were going to last long in this event.

For those of us eliminated early from the main competition we had the opportunity to compete in novelty events like the ball race. The ball race consisted of four kayakers each with a large fitness ball, racing to get their ball to the finish first. Guiding these balls through rapids using only the boat, paddle and no hands is an art. The balls high buoyancy and lack of weight meant they would get stuck in the smallest of hydraulics. Thus, the person who gets an early lead rarely wins as they are usually swept past their ball that has become stuck halfway down the rapid. Now at ease with the river, I was prepared to follow the ball into any hydraulic it went into and couldn't wait for the next novelty event to start.

The day came to an end and the water was turned off for the last time. Exhausted from paddling and portaging back to the start line, we dragged our weary bodies back to the airport. So it continues, the love/hate relationship with white water paddling. Only yesterday morning I was ready to never paddle serious white water again, but when it all comes together there is no substitute to the exhilaration and sense of achievement, and so it is that this love/hate saga will continue yet again.

Jim 'Jimbo' Anderson

Photos Jim Anderson

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE CLUB



Congratulations to Helen Neill who gave birth to a son Joel Christopher on Monday 12th February.



Kelly O'Shanassy back from her three month adventure. See Kelly's article on her rafting trip in Africa in the next issue of the newsletter. Photo Michael Loftus-Hills.



Livia Logiudice, left and Emma Martin collecting rubbish on Clean Up Australia Day. Photo Jim Anderson.



L-R Amanda Fisher, Stephen Beitz, Julie Perriam and Lucy Payne leaving the landing to collect rubbish on Clean Up Australia Day. Photo Michael Loftus-Hills.