

Fairfield Canoe Club

Newsletter

Autumn Issue - April 2003

Winter Series Returns
K4 reports from the Murray
The K1 Revolution



The elegance of the winter series!
Fairfield Members show their fashionable winter wardrobes of long thermals and warm jumpers... layering and stripes always make a statement!

Fairfield Canoe Club Newsletter

The Fairfield Canoe Club newsletter is published five times per year.

Contribution deadline for next issue

30 May 2003

How to contribute

All contribution to the club newsletter are welcome – photos, articles, letters to the editor, humour, advertisements. Articles can be supplied on disk (Mac or PC). Disks and photos will be returned.

Please submit material to

Editor: Andrew McConnell
Ph: 9481 4741
Email: amcconnell@vtown.com.au
Assistant Editor: Michael Loftus-Hills
Communications Committee: Liz Eedle, Sarah Ewing, Sue Vaneslow
Photos: Helen Neill, Kelly O'Shanassy, Michael Loftus-Hill

Copyright

All material in this publication is copyright. Requests to reproduce any text and/or artwork must be directed to the editor.

Fairfield Canoe Club Co-operative Ltd

Chairman

Annette Kendall, Ph: . 9646 1506 (H)
Email: akendall@smorgonsteel.com.au

Treasurer and Membership Enquiries

Michael Kane, Ph: 9499 4782 (H)

Secretary

Pamela Lilburne, Ph: 0408 600 093
Mail: PO Box 253, Fairfield 3078

Building Maintenance

Melanie Watson

Website

www.fairfieldcanoecub.com.au

Editorial



The editor, having rejoined the workforce...!!

Mav will return with an editorial bigger and better in the next edition. In the meantime, a photo for our gentle readers to enjoy (not recommended to be read over dinner...!)

* * * * *

Lawn Mowing

*Inner City Living,
Can't get no satisfaction.*

Many club members live in the inner city in townhouses or units with very little outdoor space and miss out on the satisfaction of transforming huge areas of grass and weed into well manicured lawns. To help members who are missing out on this type of satisfaction the directors have, after much deliberation, opened up the opportunity to manicure the club lawns to ALL club members. The directors are expecting an overwhelming response to this special offer and in fairness to all members and reserve the right to ration out the lawn mowing. Please see Melanie Watson, now to reserve your place on the roster!!

* * * * *

Chairman's Report

Welcome everyone to the latest edition of the Fairfield newsletter,

There has been much happening at the club since our last edition – there has been the weddings of 2 of our Directors – so CONGRATULATIONS to Sarah Flanigan and Andrew McConnell on tying the knot with their respective “other halves” – we wish you all many years of happiness. We have also unfortunately lost Sarah to new challenges over in Singapore with Graham's job having given them the opportunity to spend a couple of years over there. We wish you all the best – you will be missed at the club!!!! The Board decided to try to find a volunteer to stand in as secretary until the next Board elections – and I am very please to say that Pamela Lilburne took on the challenge – and is doing an outstanding job!!

Another outstanding job – was that done by Jenny Hill in organising the clean-up Australia Day event at the club again this year – we managed to collect a disturbing amount of rubbish – and there was unfortunately still lots out there. Many thanks to all who turned up to help, and for those who couldn't make it that day we are considering organising one again next spring to give the river a spring clean. Thanks of course go to the BBQ organisers – and Jimbo for the cake!!!

I would like to say a big Thankyou to Stephen Beitz for organising our Friday night sprints again this year – although the numbers of participants were down on last year, it is a great event to have at the club – and we hope that those who took part enjoyed it, and will encourage others to get involved next summer. Sprinting, for some reason (that I don't understand) has a summer season. The Canoeing Victoria Sprint Committee is putting a huge effort in to increase the number of people that are involved in sprinting. As a club we have not participated in sprint events over the past few years, but we have members of the club who are excellent sprinters – and we are hoping to increase the emphasis on sprint so that next summer we

can have equal support for the sprint races as we see during the winter for the winter series. The ability to sprint is definitely a great skill to have – not only for sprinting purposes - but if you are doing starts in a marathon race, or trying to get up onto the wash of a boat for a bit of a ride. So come on guys – lets get out there and get those starts and that explosive power working!!!

I trust that you have all been out there on the water having fun enjoying the last of the light nights before the clocks change. Yes, we are already officially out of summer – and that means that we are very quickly heading towards the Winter Series – which was such a great success for Fairfield last year as we had a huge turn out to all of the events, and of course managed to win the Winter Series Points Trophy. Jo Alia and Connie Todaro have taken on the challenge of co-ordinating our efforts again this year – which commenced with the Winter Series Launch event at the club on Sunday 24th March. Hopefully we will see many of you out there and having fun on the days / weekends away. Good luck to all who get involved!!!

March 24th also saw the official launch of our excellent fleet of club canoe polo boats – and a superb boys vs girls game – who all present enjoyed – whether playing or watching. The boats are stored at the club and are there for members to use whenever they want to. So get out there with a few friends and give it a go – it is great fun. We would love to develop the sport at our club, and the more people we have interested the better it will be for practice games and potential coaching sessions at the club – if you are keen to give it a go then contact Brendan Kenna or any of the Racing and Skills Development Committee, and they will be happy to get you involved.

All that remains to say is
HAPPY PADDLING !!!!!

Annette

Member Profile...

Helen Neill

By Liz Eedle (erstwhile paddling partner of Helen's!)

Helen Neill received Zoli's Coaches Award at the 2002 Big Bash. In this exclusive interview I uncover her paddling story...!

That Helen took up boating of any kind is something of a family joke, as she preferred to stay on the beach whilst the rest of the family were keen sailors. A less than brilliant performance in school rowing was another unlikely pointer to a paddling future, although she did enjoy swimming (useful when learning the K1!).

Having flirted briefly with canoeing – traversing the Snowy river from McKillops Bridge to Buchan one summer in a canoe it was not until completing a rafting trip down the Franklin river in Tasmania over the Millennium New Year that Helen returned with the resolve to learn to kayak.

Enter Mav on the scene (just how many young ladies have been introduced to the joys of kayaking in a club double with the inestimable Mav?!) Helen graduated from Zoli's beginner sessions to a 10 o'clock training session, which must have been quite an experience as she didn't do her second Zoli session until the following summer, several months later!

After a summer of paddling and a couple of

months travelling in South America, Helen returned to the club just in time for a winter series race at Sale. She then quietly set her sights on the full distance Murray Marathon, covering many kilometres of river in training with Peter Thompson and Mav. That training brought its rewards with her win in the 2001 Murray Marathon, brilliantly assisted by Melanie as land crew, and with moral support from a squad of Fairfield paddlers on the river



Helen, Graham and Gary prepare the Blue Banana for another day on the Murray

Perhaps an even more notable achievement was Helen persuading Werner to sell her his 'spare' TK1 after the event!

Left with sore fingers and no overwhelming desire to get back in the boat, Helen took a brief rest before her next event a couple of months later - the Mars Challenge (competing in an all female team of Fairfield paddlers : Kirby O'Brien & Kelly O'shanassy), where she acquired her well-known affinity with lakes! Although Lake Connewarre is in some places only ankle deep, Helen nevertheless managed a swim!

Helen competed in all the winter series races in 2002, showing off her Franklin-acquired white-water rafting skills at the race at Lake Mulwala where she successfully extracted a double from a tree it had decided to climb after its rudder went AWOL, and reinforcing her non-love of lakes at the Hume Weir (check out October 2002 newsletter for the gory details!)

Undeterred, the World Masters Games loomed as the next challenge. Unfortunately Helen had first to find herself another doubles partner as her previous partner (the author of this article!)

had wimped out of winter training after an ill-fated and very unexpected collision with an underwater obstacle resulted in a July swim in the Yarra. Despite their best efforts at sneaking back to the club and into the showers before anyone noticed chattering teeth and frostbitten fingers, they were spotted and had some explaining to do! The unsuspecting Pamela (not then a club member and therefore unaware of Helen's driving reputation!) leapt into the empty back seat. Helen won a total of four Masters Games medals and showed a great turn of speed particularly in the sprint events.

The seeds of Helen's next paddling adventure were sown during the Masters Games after a conversation in a registration queue. Soon a K4 team – Helen, Kellie, Sarah and Kathryn Lee - was recruited and training began for the Cobram 40 miler.

Unfortunately KL's work commitments led to the need for a new K4 driver. Those of you familiar with the white club K4 will know the front seat is a tad slim on the hips so auditions were held to find someone who would fit, rather like Cinderella and the glass slipper! That's how Liz stepped into the boat for the Cobram 40.

The Cobram 40 was a learning experience – the first time on the Murray for some of the crew, and we tested just how far a K4 will lean without actually tipping in when steered parallel to a fishing boat's wash!

The 2002 Fairfield Murray Marathon Women's Open K4 team then began to assemble. With Liz unavailable, Kirby stepped into the 'Blue Banana' K4, and Helen moved into the driver's seat. Marg Buck came into the boat at the last moment after a frustrating injury forced Kellie into a land crew role (check elsewhere in this newsletter for Kellie's report on the joys of crewing!) The K4 blitzed the Murray setting a new course record (and letting Helen boast -

except she's too modest to do it, so I'll do it for her - of a perfect winning record in her two Murray starts!)

Helen is now training in a K1, taking the opportunity to learn while the Yarra water is still warm, and, for a little variety, will be walking 100 kilometres in under 24 hours (she hopes) in a team for the Oxfam Trailwalker event on the first weekend in April.

I asked Helen a few questions to conclude this member profile:

Future Murray ambitions:

- To do a rafting trip of the Murray gates
- To land crew for Melanie (it was a reciprocal arrangement)
- A mixed K2?.
- But most likely to take a Christmas holiday away from the Murray (but don't tell Zoli!!!)

Future paddling ambitions:

- To learn to paddle in the backseat
- To be competitive in a race for more than 1000m

Favourite race food:

- Sustagen & coffee
- Blinky Bills & killer pythons

Most memorable swim:

- The Yarra in July in the double, as mentioned earlier!

Most memorable characteristic:

- Language at race starts, particularly when navigating big wash – generally one or two words repeated several times, unfortunately unprintable in a family newsletter!

Winter Series Returns

Come and join the annual pilgrimage to Warrnambool for the first race of the 2003 Winter Series!



Smiles at the 2002 Winter Series

Old timers (and not-so-old-timers) know that the Warrnambool race is much more than just a kayak race. Fairfield Canoe Club members swarm into Port Fairy on the Saturday, and then take over the pub on Saturday night to undertake a somewhat less than serious preparation session. See Joe tackle the largest steak in the West. Talk race tactics / gossip...who's been training hard over summer? What category should each member register in? What's the best line to take at the start—and how to stay upright in the wash!

There's a range of accommodation available in for Saturday night . You'll find some of us staying at the Youth Hostel in Port Fairy—cheap but most definitely cheerful (and one year Rose brought a strawberry cheesecake just for the Youth Hostellers—yummy!) Other members will choose to stay in motels and B&Bs around the place, and a few will make the drive to Warrnambool after dinner in order to be on-the-spot for the next morning.

Whatever way you play it, it's a great weekend away. You'll meet lots of club members, pick up lots of advice about racing, and have a memorable weekend.

Convinced?! Check out the boards at the Club to find out more. There's information about boat transport and accommodation and who to talk to find out more details.



Cappuccino Run

So you have graduated from Zoli's beginners session and have just about perfected the first half of the Eskimo roll. (The second half, tipping the boat up the right way again is considerably harder) You are enjoying your paddling but do not want to go racing just yet. You would like to meet some other friendly club members and perhaps paddle with someone with a little more experienced.

If this is you, come along to the very sociable cappuccino run, every Saturday morning at 9.30 for a 10 o'clock departure. If you like bring along a couple of dollars for a coffee and a muffin at the Studley Park Boathouse while learning the finer points of kayaking from other paddlers. (actually, just a social chat) As the weather gets cooler it might be a good idea to bring along a jumper to put on while at the Boathouse. Just place the jumper inside a one or two plastic bags to keep it dry, and place it in the bottom of your kayak.

♀ K4 2002

Helen Neill

Rubba dub dub, four chicks in a tub...and who do you think they be?

Something we kept everyone guessing until that gun went at 8.30am on December 27th 2002 at Yarrowonga.

We discovered that perhaps the hardest thing about paddling the K4 is actually getting four paddlers in the boat at any one time. The same four? That's a completely new challenge.

What began as a release from the rigours of training for the World Masters Games and sold as the more sociable and easy option for the Cobram 40 miler became an epic of musical seats and changing boats.

There was the quest for a girl with no hips for the front of the white club K4- initially Kathryn Lee had that billing until work commitments forced her ashore. Liz Eedle stepped in and steered us to Cobram but with non-negotiable family commitments over Christmas the quest continued.

Rose Curtis took us for the ride of our lives one night proving that she can paddle as fast as she can talk. However, the hare and turtle scenario was not to be explored that Christmas.

In the dark days of late November we even went outside the club in search of a paddler without success. The prospect of a mixed K4 was tossed up too but failed to land us a driver.

Then Kirby O'Brien emerged from her winter paddling hibernation keen for a little Murray action. Our Mars Challenge team was reunited (Kirby, Kelly O'Shanassy



and Helen Neill) and with Sarah Flanigan the quest was on in earnest.

A change of tact and the blue banana boat was brought down from the rafters and found to be of ladies size and ultimate comfort if not speed. This vessel was to become our intimate friend for the tyranny of distance that summer. Its beautiful thick paint job was to save us from a nasty body slam with a submerged log on the first day of the Murray – good work Glenn Anderson.

Weekends and weeknights, we paddled and bush bashed our way back and forth along the Yarra from Dights Falls to the gates (well as far as the gates just once – enough to demonstrate that we could turn the boat around in fast flowing water). A few guest appearances at Zoli's, a twice broken rudder all part of the training. Coaching from Neil Grierson, Marg Buck, Alex James and plenty of encouragement and humour from all we saw on the river. It was never clear whether we were the joke or the pleasure of those smiles. For the record there was never a swim undertaken by the K4 in all those outings. A record we are most proud to say is intact although we did go close in the Cobram 40 miler.

Sponsors found, the vital land crew juggernaut engaged and unleashed, uniform sorted, boat stickered and the nerves building. With five days to go what left to do but Christmas shopping. ...we thought.

However, Kelly despite all the physio and cortisone could not beat the cruel fate of tendonitis. Suddenly we were back to the coxless three.

Enter Margaret Buck, debating a new record in the K1V60 for the 2002 Murray. Somehow, Marg was persuaded to forgo that challenge for a year and step into the vacant no 2 seat. She did make

us sweat on that decision for a day or so though! It was certainly worth the wait.

A brief festive respite and then the journey up the Hume. All too soon, we were stifling pre race nerves and baking in the Murray heat of the Red Cross registration queues. We did make Mohammed come to the mountain for scrutineering – enabling the K4 to enjoy a further day's rest atop the trailer.

Day 1 : The meeting of the K4s.

It had been a moot point that we might actually have to race another K4. None had shown at Cobram but rumours were out of another female team. What we ended up with was a fleet comprising, one men's, one women's and one mixed team. The men's crew had a slick boat with a modified rudder. We only ever saw them once a day – at the start! They went onto to win the handicap race I think. The mixed crew had a beautiful Kevlar boat. We spent much of the subsequent days passing and re-passing this crew – whilst they stopped to play musical seats, have a refreshing dip and to enjoy cucumber sandwiches & tea served from picnic table complete with table cloth thoughtfully placed under the shade of the umbrella (courtesy of parental land crew). *Note we had absolutely fantastic land crew but even they admit they were a poor second to that service. Still you would have to stop to enjoy those fringe benefits and that was not our aim.*

In glorious sunshine, we made a standing start and without too much front seat terror paddled away to the first of the journey's 32 checkpoints. Sorting out teething problems, drink systems, eating habits, establishing the I Spy rules and the like along the way, something that was to become a daily routine. We did make life a little harder by not emptying the boat until we'd done 76km by which time the boat had developed a decided lean and felt like we were pulling concrete. Still we paddled on surviving an early incident with a submerged tree to finish in Tocumwal 6 minutes under the existing record.

Day 2.

Battle weary we fronted up for the longest day of the event. Mind games were played out with those blue distance markers absent from much of the sections that day and checkpoints were hastily relocated to avoid bushfires. The surprise support of veteran Murray campaigners, Jenny Hill & Mandy Coillet from their river campsite was a huge moral boost. Picnic Place is just the best sight a paddler can have. Unfortunately, we could not emulate our feat of the previous day and went 5 minutes over the day record – but still a minute up overall.

Day 3

Presents promising hours of entertainment were in store for Kirby and Marg this day. Neil and Tony Meeks had been busy overnight and installed two foot pumps into the banana. So it was a sleeker banana that wound its way through the Barmah forest and along the endless kilometres of red cliffs to Echuca on Day 3. This is perhaps the day that the benefits of being in a K4 were beginning to be felt. A boat of its size was virtually unaffected by the turbulent waters of the forest and with four paddlers the distance to Echuca was just eaten up. Paddle steamers – not an issue. Our grip on a record was slipping away. We were now some 5 minutes down – not much was being said about that but it hovered.

Day 3 was also the beginning of the Murray quiz. One of those conversations that elicited much mirth and interest within the boat that we thought we should share with it with those on the river. It also became a nightly exercise to devise a new question for the day.

Day 4

We watched the spectacle of the Red Day start and then missed our own by half a minute or so (sorry guys). Scott Welsh towed us out of Echuca in his K1 that day. Slow going in the shallow waters. The skiers about here were edgy and blunt in their questions – are you the last boat?

It became a day for wash riding - K2 being the

preferred ride. We gave and we received. The final bend and the straight up to Torrumbarry Weir again playing mind games with us all. A hard paddle and again we missed the record.

Day 5

Rain, rain and more rain. What was the wettest day in the region for 3 years was to be a surreal experience. Right from traipsing through knee high wet grass with a 10m boat, to performing mid air 3 point turns and somehow landing our precious cargo in the river. The deluge continued. It might be only water to a paddler but for Marg's control it was disaster. No clock or map could be held in place. We were forced to go with the flow and the beep of a watch. Somehow it worked - we crossed the line in Swan Hill some 12 minutes up on the record. It was an achievement for us all to get there and more so to take a bit of Murray history with us.

404 km is a long way to paddle however, you approach it. Personally, I found it so much more sociable and entertaining than the single paddle. Thanks in no small part to the humour, wit and determination of my teammates to enjoy the journey. It is also physiologically much easier to be the bigger boat on the river.

Marg was our saviour, and she became our inspiration and *I spy wiz*. From that control centre – equipped with maps and clock, she showed us how to paddle nonstop. We taught her to eat and sing along the way.

Kirby with her gift of the understatement kept the smiles on our faces. Her search for *the tyre on a rope campsite* was enduring and finally rewarded just outside Swan Hill. The merits of counting cows were much debated in the interim. Kirby most diligently assumed the mantle of Posture Police for the boat for the duration.

For Sarah this paddle was a marathon Hens Night with her nuptials just 18 days away. Chatting up zinc encrusted paddlers from behind sunglasses whilst reading the paper in the back seat of a K4 ...is that not what all *brides-to-be* dream of? We crossed the line at Swan Hill to the strains of the Wedding March

(courtesy of Murray DJ, John Mayne – yes he has more than Morning has Broken in his tape deck)

Thanks to our sponsors Jobwatch – The Employment Rights Legal Centre and Jen Anderson and Sarah (the one in the back who was constantly reported as not paddling) for bringing them on board.

Most of all thanks, unqualified thanks to our chief land crew: Gary Flanigan (master of towing and logistics and for selecting the infamous room 38 in Swan Hill), Graham Sim (financial controller & chief catcher on the K4 nose – his calming pep talks each morning to each member as he waded the length of the boat were spot on), Deb Barringer (camp manager – we wanted for nothing that Debs and her van could not supply); and Kelly (how we wish she could have paddled with us but she made the journey with us from the banks – camera at the ready at every unsuspecting corner). Thanks to Helen Flanigan, Liz Eedle, Julie Camileri, Richy and Jane who were all there to lend support, fill drink bottles, sponge out boats, massage body parts and spirits, paint faces and transport the weary senseless crew.



*Preparation is the key to a happy day on the Murray...
Ready yet...?!*

The Piddlers And The Pandemonium

Landcrewing for a K4 on the Murray
Kelly O'Shanassy

They called Copernicus crazy because he proclaimed the world to be round and they locked him up when he said that the earth was not the centre of the Universe. One wonders what they might have done to him if he had decided to landcrew for a women's K4!

Well those of us that did landcrew for the Job-Watch Coxless 4 Murray Marathon team were not thrown in jail (on that occasion) but there were many times during those gruelling five days that we thought we were CRAZY for volunteering for the job.

Now you may be asking yourself, how many people does it take to landcrew for a women's K4. Well we rather foolishly thought one landcrew for each paddler should suffice and Simmy, Gary, Debbie and Kaos were recruited for the job with the fabulous Helen recruited as chief hugger and photographer. BUT the first time we had to lift that K4 off the trailer we knew we would need more help. I mean lifting this K4 (which incidentally was the first built in Australia in the 60's!?! and weighs somewhere in the vicinity of a tonne) was a feat that rivalled those of the ancient Egyptians and their pyramids – gees at least they had slaves. Although human slavery was banned a few centuries ago, we defied accepted practice and enlisted a few slaves of our own in the likes of Ritchie, Miss Jane, Julie, Liz and any hapless soul that happened to pass within spitting distance of the boat.

Aside from carrying around the bloody barge as it was rather unaffectionately known, let me tell you about some of the other trials of landcrewing for a women's K4 team. There were the gazillion jam sandwiches and 36 litres of Gatorade that one had to prepare on a daily basis, the long dusty day two and all its antics of bush fires and 40 degree heat, the erection of eight tents in gale force winds on your own while trying to not spill the beer in your free hand, the



K4 land crew cope with drenching rain and mud

mud and slush of the last day and the wraith of the hungry, exhausted paddler who just wanted to get out of that damn boat. And of course folks, there is always the torment of the landcrew uniform - white T-shirts that were regularly wet? At least the school-boys were happy!

But my friends, all these trials and tribulations paled in comparison to the one task that we landcrew could never forget, the task that would strike fear into the hearts of the most hardened of landcrew and I understand is illegal in some European countries – the task of cleaning the boat at the end of the day. Now I do not wish to elaborate for fear that reliving the horror may counteract the excellent progress I have made in all my counselling since the Murray, but let me just say that we didn't call our paddlers the piddlers for nothing!

But perhaps I give the impression that we landcrew did not enjoy our time. To the contrary, we all had an amazing adventure that we will not easily forget. The excitement and pride we all shared when our amazing girls came around the last sweeping bend and flew across the finish line in record time, the poems and songs, the rather silly and pointless discussions on cow tipping, the sexy shorts and the companionship of other landcrew made the experience truly exceptional. If you get the opportunity to landcrew then take it but also take a peg and a strong constitution, and have your therapist's number on speed dial for use after cleaning the boat!

Clean Up Australia Day

Emma Martin

If you were down at the Club on a Sunday morning early March, you could have been forgiven for thinking there was a Canadian boat rally taking place. But no it was Clean Up Australia Day.

Plastic bottles and cans filled with mud, algae and other enticing contents were enthusiastically pulled out of the Yarra and thrown in Canadians and canoe polo boats. Amazing amounts of foam, plastic bags and cigarette butts were also collected - raising the ugly question of what lurks on the river bed and also what can be done to prevent such items flowing into the river from storm water drains. A dead dog was also reportedly discovered (but not collected). Tony Payne's specially designed sticks proved very effective in retrieving items in those hard to get at places - a patent should be pending.

In all, 42 bags of rubbish were collected up stream towards Zoli's Straight. Rose and Kev in their "barge" did a very good job of off loading bags from the boats on the river. Thanks to Jenny Hill for organising the Club's Clean Up Australia Day. A small part of the Yarra is now looking its best, particularly important for those of us who have a tendency to tip - that is until the next deluge from the storm water drains.



*Natalie Sherlock, Emma Martin and Jenny Hill
clean up the Yarra*

Gladiators Thrilling Win With Four Players

Fairfield's Gladiators beat the B52s from Essendon 4-3 in a great game at the Richmond pool on Wednesday 19th March. After losing our first game to Canoes Plus we were keen to get a win on the board. Greg Blackman came back into the team with great effect netting 4 goals as B.O.G. We were able to cover the 5 players attacking us by disciplined defence and long sprints and shots.

Interested in playing next season??? The Fairfield Amazons team will be back next season in Novice grade and we are looking for new people to put up their hand to play from the end of July. Coaching and safety instruction will be provided in some training sessions in the near future. Games are fun and its amazing the skills you can learn. Games will be on Monday nights. Anyone interested please call. Brendan Kenna 92753764

Fairfield Canoe Club Uniforms

Full range is on display at the Club.
Purchase details also on the notice
board.

Dress to impress this winter series!!



*Mick Kane with a hard earned beer
after the Clean Up*

The K1 Revolution

Chris Sando and Pam Lilburne

It was a singles race late in last year's winter series...Footscray I think. I was chugging along in my ol' TK1 (single touring kayak), a trusty craft that had served me well for five or so years, and would have kept grinding on for many more. I think it was the sight of all the K1s gliding effortlessly past that made me think....right...its time !!

The decision to acquire a K1 was made...ok, so what sort? Having tried paddling them on a couple of occasions and failing to exceed more than 3 strokes before taking a swim, I thought a more stable model may be in order. Asking round the traps there were many different boats to choose from, Tigers, Cleavers, Stings, Hornets...funny names, the common thread being the ability to inflict pain on humans...curious ! The catch I was told, was the faster the design, the more tippy the boat. The Hornet seemed to fit the bill as the best compromise, a boat with a balance of both speed and stability, whilst being suitable for a lightweight (with a fair dose of unco genes!). Could this be the perfect beginners K1? Funnily enough, no sooner had I decided on the Hornet than one was advertised for sale on the club notice board....ahhh, serendipity, I was soon the proud owner of a near new (only paddled to church on Sundays) bur-gundy Hornet.

I'll admit, my first paddle I was slightly paranoid about falling in...it was October, and the water was still chilly....so I wore a wetsuit! Plenty of wobbles, but I made it down to Studley Park and back without falling in which was a big confidence booster. Next time it was sans wetsuit, and that's when things started going down hill rapidly. My biggest drama was getting moving. I found the K1 to be like a bike, very stable when moving, but extremely unstable when sitting still or barely moving. So my take offs and landings were my achilles heel, and I would generally stuff up one or the other...fortunately, never far from the jetty.

At one stage I had taken a couple of strokes

when suddenly, oh dear....mayday, mayday, I managed a last minute desperate lunge for the landing....somehow I ended up with feet in boat, hands on the landing and paddle in water.....mmm, bugger !

For a while I was keeping track of swims versus paddles, and the tally was looking like a Canadian world cup cricket score, like about 5 for 8. The run rate has now improved, but you never know when a batting collapse is around the corner.

You may have noticed a plethora of other like minded individuals (K1 Virgins ?) around the club, all taking advantage of the summer weather to master this art of K1 paddling. What drives these individuals to try and propel themselves down the river on these long, narrow fibreglass things. Roving reporters, Pamela Lilburne and me(Chris Sando) caught up with a cross section of these finely tuned athletes to find out what makes them tick. Here's what we found out.....

PS When does a K1 virgin lose their virginity ? (the answer is hidden in the article...read on !!)

Grant Clark

When did you first paddle a K1?

Mid-January 2002. I wouldn't call it paddling so much as praying.

What is the best way to learn to paddle a K1?

I would call it Saturation, pun intended. Saturation in that you should get into your boat as often as possible, and saturation in that you should not be afraid to fall in and get wet. Also, I think much can be learnt from just sitting in the boat. Sitting and feeling how it moves underneath you and your relationship with the craft.

What was your most spectacular fall?

I had a bet with Pete Thompson that I could make it to Studley Park and back within 4 weeks of buying the K1. One sunny Sunday we headed down stream, made it to Studley, got out, stretched the legs, had a coffee, got back in the boat to a chorus of little ids asking "mum, what's that man doing" ? "He's er...

swimming dear". You win Pete.

Tell us about your boat and why you chose it

I paddle a Sting (Competition Kayaks). It's multi-coloured and has a carbon/kevlar hull. I chose this boat because I came back from the Murray Marathon wanting to paddle a K1, and I wanted the fastest boat available, but I wanted it now! So I did some research, talking to people and ringing up manufacturers and found out what boats were available, the different material they could be made from and prices. A couple of weeks passed and I was fully informed (about the types of boats available, I still hadn't been in a K1 at that stage). Sadly my research also revealed that a new boat would take 4-6 weeks, I couldn't wait 4-6 weeks, that's an eternity and wanted to paddle a K1 now! As luck would have it, a mate's brother in Albury was selling his K1. It wasn't the latest and fastest beast going around, but it was available now, now and the 400km drive to Albury! So in late January I got my boat.

Why did you decide to get into K1s

They are the more difficult craft to learn to paddle, and so I guess I always felt that that was what I should be paddling if I really wanted to learn the sport. Also, because of the guys in the K1 Cup in the Murray Marathon. They just looked awesome! In my view there is no more awesome sight than seeing great K1 paddlers in full flight; no more awesome sight, and for me, no more enduring memory of the 2002 Murray Marathon.

Gary Flanagan

When did you first paddle a K1?

September 2002

What is the best way to learn K1?

Approx 20 hours in the pool at home, without a paddle. I fell out hundreds of times, but when you can lean over and grab a beer from the edge of the pool, take a swig and put it back without tipping in, you are ready to tackle the Yarra. It is cheating to carry the beer in the boat!

Most spectacular fall?

Only ever had one whilst executing a U turn (in front of the club of course)

Tell us about your boat

I Bought a 2nd hand Comkraft Hornet.

(burgundy, faded) together with an ex Seoul Olympic wooden K2 from a bloke who needed to raise some cash to buy an engagement ring. I recommend the Hornet, it's a stable boat with a good turn of speed.

Why are you doing it?

All my mates paddle K1s, also more challenging than Tks.

Kelly O'Shanassy

What's your K1 like?

Black and mean. A Hornet.

When did you first start paddling K1?

Since December last year. I still find it a challenge. I managed to paddle it in reverse the other day, that was a breakthrough.

Most spectacular fall?

I fell out of a tippy K1 I was trying 6 times in a row at the club landing. It was in front of 10 people and I couldn't get away! They all stuck around for the ongoing entertainment! I fell out so many times that day that my top broke!

Why are you doing this?

I'd like to paddle one winter series race this year in my new K1, I'm over paddling TK's !!
How long do you think it takes to get confident in a new K1?

Forever. I am assured that one day I'll feel comfortable in it.

Any advice for other people?

Go for a swim in the river first, then you won't be so worried about falling out (yes, she actually did that once!)

Helen Neill

What's your K1 like?

I am paddling Zoli's daughters' yellow K1

When did you first start paddling K1?

After the Murray marathon, I've hardly paddled my TK

Most spectacular fall?

I paddled all the way to the falls one day, then just as I was passing Studley Park coffee shop – in I went. At least there were heaps of people around to help!



Goals?

As soon as I think I'm confident enough to consider doing a race in my K1, then I fall in! We'll have to see.

How long do you think it takes to get confident in a new K1?

Just a lot of time in the boat (if Zoli is reading this, I'm paddling it five times a week!). Seriously, you probably need to be paddling it at least 3 times a week.

Any advice for other people?

Don't tell new K1 paddlers to "relax" when they're out on the water!

Liz Wells

What's your K1 like?

A white Tiger

When did you first start paddling K1?

I'm back paddling my K1 since January – two and a half months. I had my boat before that but didn't paddle it much on the Murray River around Albury- the current was a little daunting!

Most spectacular fall?

I fell out last Sunday at Zoli's session, there was no-one around either (but I am sure that Steve Beitz had something to do with it!)

Why are you doing this?

I'd like to paddle my K1 competitively in the Mars Challenge in 6 weeks time. You officially lose your K1 virginity when you do your first race !!

How long do you think it takes to get confident in a new K1?

After you've done lots of kilometers in it!

Any advice for other people?

Just keep at it

Pamela Lilburne

What's your K1 like?

Red Unfair Advantage Van Dueson style

When did you first start paddling K1?

Started paddling my White Woodpecker K1 regularly from October last year. Started paddling the new kayak from Feb this year – it is much more of a challenge!

Most spectacular fall?

Fell out after my first Zoli's session in it two weeks ago. I was reflecting at the time how happy I was to have gotten through the session without falling out and how good it was now that I could look around and feel relaxed in the

boat! Then in I went – to a squeal of NO! I haven't felt quite so confident or cocky since!

Why are you doing this?

To be more competitive in races. I have a stretch target of paddling the boat at the Gold Coast marathon at Easter.

How long do you think it takes to get confident in a new K1?

Probably several months to really master it.

Any advice for other people?

Take the boat somewhere other than Fairfield, where you can fall out a few times, easily get back in and then you can test the limits of the boat and improve your skills. I think K1 paddling is a challenge to your mind and self-confidence mostly. Most of us are actually quite stable in them.

Liz Eedle

What's your K1 like?

I am sharing Zoli's yellow one with Helen.

When did you first start paddling K1?

At the Murray (no- I didn't race it) Gary Flanigan had his on the trailer and we took it to a lake one evening to have a go.

Most spectacular fall?

One of Zoli's sessions I totally lost it, swerved alarmingly then went in. No chance of saving myself!

Why are you doing this?

I like the fact that you go faster for the same amount of muscle. You feel like more of a star, until you realise the people you are passing are still in TKs !

How long do you think it takes to get confident in a new K1?

It probably took 5 or 6 sessions to start to feel even a little bit comfortable.

Any advice for other people?

Learn in the summer! Don't be scared to leave the landing. Concentrate and don't be distracted by others on the water.



Who's next in the K1 revolution...??!!

Albury Race Report

Liz Wells

Weather conditions were almost perfect for the Albury Summer Series race which was held 22-23 February.

However, the same cannot be said for the river conditions. The race runs some 28kms from the Hume Dam Wall downstream to finish at the lovely Norieul Park in Albury. As such, the current usually flows fast and furious. The drought conditions obviously had an impact for 2003, with the river height much lower and slower than usual. We estimate the river dropped approximately 0.5m from the Saturday to the Sunday.

Singles raced on Saturday, and all classes had a good number of entrants. Both men's and women's K1 enjoying a good turnout, which was largely dominated by a local contingent of paddlers from Mitta Mitta. Likewise, the Open and Veterans TK1 start saw approximately fifteen competitors line up, including representative from Burley Griffin Canoe Club in the ACT. There was also a good turnout of juniors, many of whom paddled exceptionally quickly in the conditions.

Doubles raced on Sunday along the same course and this provided spectators with some exciting and quick racing. Chad Meek and Matt Flower securing the Open K2 win (again local Mitta Mitta Club member). From Fairfield, Andy Wright and Simon Sharrock teamed up in the K2 and came in fourth position, approximately nine minutes behind the winning pair. Andy and Simon maintain it took around twelve minutes to fix their bent rudder from altercation with some rocks!!

Overall the Mitta Mitta crew put on an exceptionally well run event, which all enjoyed very much.

Welcome back to Liz and Simon! After testing the waters of the Murray they have returned to the calm of the Yarra. We're looking forward to Liz and Simon racing the Winter Series for Fairfield!!

What's on at FCC...

Sunday 6 April

Winter Series Race 1 – Warrnambool

Sunday 13 April

Eildon Triathlon

Friday 18 – Sunday 20 April

Australian championships – Gold Coast

Wednesday 23 April

National Championships – 5 day event

Sunday 27 April

Mars Challenge – Ballarat to Geelong

Sunday 4 May

Winter Series Race 2 – Nagambie

Saturday 17 - Sunday 18 May

Inter Schools Championships – Essendon

Sunday 25 May

Winter Series Race 3 – Essendon

Sunday 8 June

Winter Series Race 4 – Yarrawonga

Saturday 14 – Sunday 15 June

Junior Development Camp – Bendigo

Sunday 22 June

Winter Series Race 5 – Patterson Lakes

Sunday 20 July

Winter Series Race 6 – Tarwin Lower

Saturday 26 – Sunday 27 July

Winter Classic

And of course every week...

Saturday 9.30am

The informal, sociable cappuccino run. Coffee around 10.30 am at Studley Park

Sunday 8.00am

Zoli's Beginners Sessions to get your friends paddling.

Sunday 10.00am

Zoli's Legendary Training session.

Canoe Polo

Contact Brendan Kenna, phone 9568 8876, for details.