

**FAIRFIELD CANOE CLUB**

*Celebrating 85 years  
1919 – 2004*

# Newsletter

SPRING ISSUE – SEPTEMBER 2004



*Zoli Szigeti (top right) and his K4 team receiving their gold medals, after winning the K4 1000m at the World Cup in Macon, France 1954.*

**Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Zoli Szigeti's  
World Cup win in Macon, France**

# FAIRFIELD CANOE CLUB COOPERATIVE LTD

## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT



**Annette Kendall**

President

Phone 9646 1506 (H)

Email [akendall@smorgonsteel.com.au](mailto:akendall@smorgonsteel.com.au)



**Liz Wells**

Secretary and Social committee

Phone 0414 560 477

Email [ewells@mshf.com.au](mailto:ewells@mshf.com.au)



**Michael Kane**

Treasurer and Membership

Phone 9499 4782 (H) 0439 301 521

Email [michaelk@windana.com.au](mailto:michaelk@windana.com.au)



**Kevin Hannington**

Club Maintenance

Phone 9819 1753



**Rose Curtis**

Communications Committee

Phone 9484 3929 (H)

Email [rcurtis@alphalink.com.au](mailto:rcurtis@alphalink.com.au)



**Pamela Lilburne**

Race Organising and Skills

Development Committee

Phone 0408 600 093

Email [pamelalilburne@ausweav.com.au](mailto:pamelalilburne@ausweav.com.au)



**Peter Thompson**

Boat Maintenance and Rack allocation

Phone 0417 086 851

Email [pwt@kooka.com.au](mailto:pwt@kooka.com.au)

## CONTENTS

Upcoming Event	3
Buy, Sell, Swap	3
President's Report	4
Social Committee	5
50th Anniversary Canoe Kayak World Cup	6
Club Interview with Ivan Gaal	7
Communications Committee	8
Under the Yarra	9
Race Organising & Skills Development Committee	10
Winter Races pics	11
Maintenance Committee	12
Canoe Polo D Grade report	13
Australian Marathon Championships	14

### Website

<http://www.fairfieldcanooclub.org.au/>

### Mail

PO Box 253, Fairfield 3078

### Newsletter Dates 2004

Deadline for Submissions:

15 November

### Printing dates

26 November

### How to contribute

All contribution to the club newsletter are welcome – photos, articles, letters to the editor, humour, advertisements.

Contributions can be made by email or by post to the editor.

Articles can be supplied on disk (Mac or PC). Disks and photos will be returned.

### Please submit material to the Editor

Anna Millward, Phone 9432 6842

Email [newsletter@fairfieldcanooclub.org.au](mailto:newsletter@fairfieldcanooclub.org.au)

Postal address 44 Porter Road, Heidelberg Heights 3081

Copyright: All material in this publication is copyright.

Requests to reproduce any text and/or artwork must be directed to the editor.

All photos by Michael Loftus-Hills unless otherwise stated.

---

## UPCOMING EVENTS

---

### TEN BIG KAYAKING EVENTS

1. Victorian Champs Marathon Race – City  
*11 & 12 September 2004*
2. State 5km (women) 10km (men) Champs – Essendon  
(singles & doubles) *3 & 4th October 2004*
3. World Cup Marathon – Perth (national reps only)  
*October 16 & 17th 2004*
4. State Sprint Championships – *March 2005*
5. National Sprint Championships (open & vet touring classes)  
*April 2005*
6. Murray River Marathon – 5 day 404km solo or team event  
*December 27 to 31st 2004*
7. Australian Marathon Champs – Sydney (junior, open and vet,  
racing & touring boats) *Easter 2005*
8. World Masters Marathon Championships – Perth  
*October 2005 (vet racing classes only)*  
World Open Marathon Championships – Perth  
*October 2005, straight after the Masters.*
9. World Masters Games – *Canada 2005*
10. World Masters Games Sydney 2009 (vets over 30 years,  
sprint & marathon, touring & racing)

### BUY, SELL, SWAP BOATS, PARTNERS, PADDLES

Has anyone noticed the ads dotted around the clubhouse about boats for sale, or boats needed, partners for sale or partners required? Many of these ads make very interesting reading. The newsletter committee has decided to dedicate a new page of the newsletter for these ads to make it into print.

Please email the editor if you have an ad you would like to place in the newsletter for any piece of paddling related equipment. If you can come up with a good argument about how something relates to paddling, we'll run the ad!

### RACKING AND RENEWAL

*Please renew your club membership or remove your boats before the end of September.*



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### **YOUR CLUB NEEDS YOU! YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO HELP SUPPORT OUR EXCELLENT CLUB**

Over the last 85 years there have been a large number of people who have dedicated a huge amount of time to develop the location and facilities that we are lucky enough to enjoy today.

Now is your opportunity to help maintain/develop your club further...

What can I do? I hear you ask.

Well – as with all good requests for help/donations – there are a number of ways you can get involved:-

Come along to the AGM to vote in new Directors and representatives for Canoeing Victoria disciplines – ask questions/offer ideas for improvements.

Put up your hand to be a Canoeing Victoria delegate for a discipline.

Talk to a Director and offer to help on one of our sub-committees – social, racing and skills development, maintenance, communication or club boats and racking; there is something there for everyone.

Put up your hand to be a Director of the club – we need 4 new ones this year – so please don't leave the remaining 3 in the lurch – put up a hand and help them out.

How much time do I need to have available?

AGM – just one evening on 20th September to show your support and enthusiasm for the club.

CV delegate – varies depending upon the discipline, but between 2 and 6 meetings per year with delegates from other clubs.

A brief report/summary of meeting is to be provided to the FCC Board advising of relevant details.

FCC Sub-committees – you can join a committee for the year – or offer your time for specific events or activities. Again time varies depending upon the committee – perhaps 4 to 8 standard meetings a year – with maybe a few special ones for specific activities. There will of course be some time required outside the meetings to make the things happen that have been discussed!

FCC Director – we need 4 new ones this year – as there are 3 of us that have been on the Board for 4 years – and have decided that it is time to let someone else have a go!!!! There are normally 12 meetings a year – and then a certain amount of time required between meetings to make things happen ie secretary needs to write up notes and organize club letters, chairman handles most of the communication with CV/AC or VicSport, treasurer obviously handles all accounts, cheques and membership listings. Most Board members are the “communication point” for a sub-committee – this can mean attending the meetings, or can mean acting as the spokesperson for the sub-committee at the Board meetings. All Board members do a renewal/sign-up duty approx 6 times a year between 9.30 and 10am on a Sunday morning. I am wondering what the time commitment averages out to – perhaps a couple of hours a week.

Hopefully you will be able to join in helping running the club – in whatever way you can!

*Annette Kendall*  
*President*

## THE BIG BASH

You are invited to attend Fairfield Canoe Club's

### "BIGger than ever BASH"

**Saturday 2nd October 2004**

Abruzzo Club, 377 Lygon Street, East Brunswick

Here are 10 Reasons Why You Should Be There!

1. Re-unite with paddlers from days gone by
2. A chance to tell tales of strength and determination to people who care
3. To reflect on times when you could drink all night, dance on the bar and still get up and paddle a record leg
4. Meet new people
5. Meet old people
6. Dance to cheesy music and don't care who sees you
7. Frock up and wear your thermals at the same time (Theme is Formal with a Flash of Thermal) – now that's different!
8. Be inspired by people who do amazing things on the water
9. Great auction items
10. It's only \$45 for a 3 course meal including predinner drinks and hot nibbles and ALL YOU CAN DRINK for seniors and \$30 for juniors (no alcohol)

Everybody is welcome. The formalities have been minimised so it won't drag on (promise) so paddlers and non-paddlers are all welcome.

Tickets can be purchased by either contacting the people listed below or write your details on the list at the club and drop your money or cheque in the locked suggestion box at the club. Or if you prefer to direct debit into the Fairfield Canoe Club bank account as per details below

Bank Bank of Melbourne  
BSB 033057  
Account 360438  
Account Name Fairfield Canoe Club Co-Operative Society Ltd

Connie Todaro 0418 142 137 bark2@alphalink.com.au  
Liz Wells 0414 560 477 ewells@mshf.com.au  
Glenn Anderson 9376 9080 andersgs@azl,bp.com  
Kathryn Lee kathrynlee@bigpond.com

So who's in?

## SOCIAL COMMITTEE



Chair **Liz Wells**

Secretary and Social committee

Phone 0414 560 477 or 9596 2860

Email ewells@mshf.com.au

Committee Members: To be determined for each event

### MISSION STATEMENT

To organize exhilarating social events for all club members  
To increase member participation in social events

### UPCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS

20 September AGM  
2 October Big Bash  
19 December Christmas BBQ

Committee Members required – please contact Liz Wells if you can assist with any of these events.

# 50TH ANNIVERSARY CANOE KAYAK WORLD CUP MACON FRANCE



Zoli Szigeti and Adrian Powell. Adrian is a ex FCC member and five time Olympian. Zoli was his coach and Adrian features in the video on Zoli to be shown at the Big Bash.

At the club fee renewal day on the 24 August Zoli Szigeti was presented with a certificate honouring the 50th Anniversary of his K4 win at the Canoe Kayak World Cup in Macon France on the 25 August 1954. Video interviews from two of Zoli's K4 partners were shown on the day and Zoli was also presented with a bottle of his favourite Hungarian brandy.

Zoli considers this race as one of the highlights of his life. The K4 win has had a huge impact on Hungarian canoeing and is seen as signalling the beginning of Hungary's dominance in canoeing.

Zoli was recently featured on George Negus Tonight on the ABC. GNT reviewed the Melbourne the Melbourne Olympics and Zoli's defection to Australia from Hungary.



## CLUB INTERVIEW WITH IVAN GAAL

Ivan Gaal at the Olympic torch relay. Photo courtesy Herald-Sun.



Ivan Gaal rejoined FCC in 2002 after leaving the club in the 1960s. A junior wrestling champion in Hungary and selected to represent Australia in C2 with Adrian Powell at the 1960 Olympics, Ivan is back at FCC paddling TC1.

FCC newsletter asked Ivan a few questions about his life and paddling – via email!

### **When did you first join FCC?**

I first joined the FCC in 1959.

### **You paddled in C1 and C2. What are your memories of that time at FCC?**

I was well accepted as a newcomer to Australia and made friends quickly in the club. Tom Omen comes to my mind as the person who was helping me to feel at home. There were many Hungarians in the Club at the time, so I had my feet in “both worlds,” so to speak. I enjoyed the hot summer night communal swims in the Yarra from the landing. The Club had a real community life, as I remember. Not having a real home at that time, the club provided me a substitute home until I settled in Melbourne.

### **You paddled with Adrian Powell. You were selected to go to the Olympics.**

In 1950s the single C1 was also the C2 boat. Adrian was looking for a partner before a C2 race, so Zoli suggested to him to take me on board in his C1 to paddle that race. We instantly became a pair and later won the Olympic selection trail in February 1960. Because we won in a very good time over the 1000 metres, we were selected for the 1960 Olympic Team for Rome.

### **You left the club – why?**

For not being able to go to the Olympics for financial reasons, obviously I was very disappointed. But, I had other issues in my life at the time. Such as studying at RMIT, working shift work at the ABC Radio Studios, learning the language, getting a flat, so I could leave the boarding house I was living in, establishing a life outside the club, etc. So, canoeing and the club life fell behind these activities and eventually I disappeared.

### **You rejoined the club recently – can you tell us about that?**

I went to the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and attended the canoe races and with the help of my current canoe partner, Jonathan

Mayne who was an official, I was able to go behind the scene and see the new boats and meet the canoeists. The “old feelings” came back and I started to think about paddling again. It wasn’t until I saw the poster for the 2002 Masters Games in Melbourne, when I decided to come back and participate in these Games. The rest is history...

### **How have things changed at FCC**

There is beautiful new building for a start, but the landing still looks the same. The Yarra River is a lot more polluted and the houses along the river are more affluent. The people are still friendly, and there are still many old faces around I once knew over 40 years ago, which tells you that it is hard to leave this club. But, sad to say that community spirit is not as evident as it was in the 50s.

### **You participated in the torch relay – why?**

I was nominated for promoting schools sport in Victoria and for being active in sports in my whole life. After I left canoeing I played pennant tennis, skied, swam and played various sports with my children. But the main reason Samsung, who sponsored me, selected me for not being able to attend the Rome Olympics in 1960 for financial reasons.

### **Can you tell us about your wrestling in Hungary.**

At the age of 14 I joined a wrestling club in Hungary and by the age of 16 I won the junior Budapest championship and was the member of the junior champion team of Hungary. A serious elbow injury forced me to take up canoeing to strengthen my elbow. I got hooked on that sport and was third in the junior C2 championship in my first season. The 1956 revolution in Hungary changed my life, I became a refugee and as a result I didn’t canoe again until I joined the FCC in 1959.

### **Any other things you would like to mention?**

I would like to see canoeing becoming a popular part of paddling again. Young people are only interested in kayaking and as a result there are no canoeing class at the Australian Championships. We have only one serious canoe paddler in the whole country in Martin Marinov, which is an indication of the lack of interest in this sport. I think that clubs and associations should do a better job in promoting this hard, interesting and classical side of paddling.



Chair **Rose Curtis**

rcurtis@alphalink.com.au

Phone 9484 3929

0425 75 9126

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS



**Anna Millward**

*Newsletter editor*

Phone 9457 1400

anna.millward@deacons.com.au



**Michael Loftus-Hills**

*Photographer/Website*

Michael@loft.com.au

**Liz Eedle** *Layout*

eedle@swin.edu.au

Occasional layout Julie Perriam

### MISSION STATEMENT

3Communicate to members of the Fairfield Canoe Club

3Communicate to potential members of Fairfield Canoe Club

3Communicate to Board of FCC

3Facilitate communication between members

### THE WEBSITE [www.fairfieldcanoecub.org.au](http://www.fairfieldcanoecub.org.au)

The club website was established in the mid-nineties and FCC was one of the first canoe clubs online! Three years ago we registered our own domain name. The aim of the site is to provide general information about the club to prospective and existing club members. While the site does not provide daily news items you can find photographs of club events including members at the winter series races, and some selected news stories from previous newsletters. Newsletters are available for download as PDF files.

### LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

#### VACANCY ON THE BOARD OF FCC!

The club is about to lose over half of its Board members. This is a huge opportunity for new people to step up and contribute to the club. At the next AGM on 20 September 2004, four Board members will be retiring. One of them is our president, Annette Kendall. Annette has done a marvellous job leading the club forward. It's a very exciting time with membership expanding and many projects on foot. Nominations are needed for someone with enthusiasm to take over the role.

In addition, three other Board members are retiring. Rose Curtis, chairperson of the Communications Committee, Pamela Lilburne, board representative for the racing and skills development committee and Peter Thompson, chairperson of the Boat Maintenance and Rack Allocation Committee are stepping down from their roles.

The chairperson of each of the committees of Fairfield Canoe Club (Racing and Skills Development, Maintenance, Communications, Social and Boat Maintenance and Rack Allocation) sits on the Board of Fairfield Canoe Club. This involves attending a Board meeting once a month, with some extraordinary meetings called. The Chairperson of the Communications Committee must also chair meetings of the Communications Committee, oversee the production of the newsletter and facilitate communication between the Board, the Communications Committee and the members of the club. The chairperson of the Boat Maintenance and Rack Allocation committee is responsible for rack allocation and organizing of the racks as well as coordinating boat maintenance, particularly of club boats. The Chairperson of the Racing and Skills Development Committee is responsible for the development of coaching facilities at the club, organizing the Fairfield Winter Series race each year and encouraging and assisting all club members to race.

If you can contribute in any of these areas, please contact a committee or Board member.

## UNDER THE YARRA

### NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER NEEDED

Sarah Ewing is retiring from the communications committee due to impending motherhood. The committee can function with three members but the more the merrier! Please contact a committee member if you are interested in contributing to the Communications Committee.

### SUGGESTION BOX

The Suggestion Box has been installed at the club and it is a great way to funnel information and ideas to the Board. The next Board meeting is 6 September 2004 so if you have any ideas for the club, please post a suggestion by 1 September.

The Suggestion Box can be used for any type of communication from club members to the Board but we prefer that the person posting each suggestion puts their name on the suggestion so that feedback can be provided. The board meets 12 times per year so if you have any ideas for the club please post a suggestion!



Kerryn and David Jerram have had a baby boy. Matthew Stephen was born on 21 July 2004 and weighed 3.35kg (7 pounds 6 ounces).

The Cappuccino Run, held on most Saturday mornings, is a legendary, weekly event brought about by FCC club member, Rose Curtis, in a quest to quench her appetite for paddling and great cappuccinos.

Those interested gather at the club on Saturday, from 9.30am onwards, get into their boats and onto the river at 10am, and make their way downstream to the Studley Park Boathouse.

Cappuccino's are ordered all round, and muffins too for those who perhaps skipped breakfast, and club members catch up on all the gossip and generally relax and enjoy a social chat amongst great Yarra scenery.

Participating in a Cappuccino Run is an event not to be missed!



Chair **Connie Todaro**  
Board of Directors Rep  
Phone 0418 142 137  
Email bark2@alphalink.com.au



## RACE ORGANISING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS



**Pamela Lilburne**  
Representing Sprint



**Joe Alia**  
Representing  
Marathon and Sprint



**Liz Wells**  
Representing Marathon  
**Brendan Kenna**  
Representing Canoe Polo

### MISSION STATEMENT

- 3To develop members' skills in the various disciplines
- 3To introduce members to attend the various organised discipline competition

Wherever possible to ensure that FCC participates in all organised competitions at any level and to achieve the best result for the members and the club.

### UNDER THE YARRA AWARD

**Don't forget to vote! The ballot box is at the club. Voting closes on the night of the Big Bash.**

**See voting criteria on the club's notice board.**

### COACHING NEWS

#### **Zoli**

There were some scares over the past few weeks as it was unsure whether Zoli would get his driver's licence renewed, due to eyesight issues.

However we are very glad to report that he has now been given a 12 month licence, so he'll be able to continue his famous Zoli's sessions and beginners courses unhindered.

#### **Marg Buck**

By the time this newsletter is published Marg should have started running the first 4 week intermediate skills course. Marg is an excellent coach who also offers private or group coaching. Contact Marg on 9489 0556, or Pamela Lilburne to book into the intermediate course on 0408 600 093.

#### **Dasha Kopecek**

Dasha was in discussions with Singapore regarding a possible national coaching position, however it is our good fortune that this overseas move did not come to fruition. Dasha has just returned from the Athens Olympics – where she rushed over with friends to see two of her past kayaking students get a late berth in the ladies K2 500m – Susan Tegg and Paula Harvey.

#### **Canoe Polo**

Brendan Kenna and Jim Anderson have had excellent success in the last year coaching the canoe polo teams. Brendan will continue on as coach for the Amazons and Piranhas until June next year.



Members of Dasha's coaching squad after the Geelong winter series race.

# WINTER RACES – TARWIN LOWER & GEELONG



Fairfield Canoe Club paddlers at Tarwin Lower.



Veronika Nemes after her first race at Geelong.



Kelly O'Shanasey getting ready before her race at Tarwin Lower.



Anna Millward and Alex James before the race at Tarwin Lower.



Jenny Mayne number and boat ready to go. Tarwin Lower before the race.



Helen Neil grounded before her race at Tarwin Lower.

## WINTER SERIES UPDATE – STOP PRESS

***Congratulations to all FCC members who participated in this year's winter series. The final results are still being calculated and at this stage are too close to call.***



Chair **Kevin Hannington**  
Club Maintenance  
Phone 0405 120 821

## MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

*Committee Members desperately required! Gary Flanigan and Werner Bolz (pictured right) are pseudo committee members. However there is a desperate need for more skilled and unskilled labour to assist Kev in the massive project of upkeep of the clubhouse. Please call Kev if you can assist.*

### MISSION STATEMENT

- 3To maintain the club-house
- 3To carry out or assist with finding contractors for proposed alterations/maintenance to club-house
- 3To co-ordinate working bees for all club members

### CURRENT "TO-DO" LIST

- 3Projects still to be completed are the repainting of the front and back of club, the landscaping project and repainting the women's bathroom along with the ongoing maintenance of the club.
- 3Mow lawns as required.
- 3Repaint front door and touch up other paint work inside the club.
- 3Prevent birds from changing the back wooden decking to being white in colour.
- 3Clean/repaint ceilings (and perhaps walls) in bathrooms
- 3Keep gutters and club boat area free of autumn leaves.

Anyone with a spare 30 minutes any time, please feel free to assist with any general jobs or give Kev a call to offer help with a specific job.



### JOB VACANCY

Ever wondered where the loo paper in the club comes from? The club needs someone to take care of keeping club supplied with coffee, tea, milk, sugar and toilet paper, particularly for Sunday mornings. The club will supply the money, we just need someone to take responsibility for purchasing the goods. This is currently done by Neil Grierson. A big thanks to Neil for his efforts over the years.

Neil can assist with job training for the successful applicant. Please apply in person to Kev Hannington on the number above.

### PLEASE KEEP THE SIDE GATE LOCKED

*If you open the side gate please remember to lock it for security and safety.*

# CANOE POLO D GRADE REPORT

## **GLADIATORS FINISH SECOND BUT THUMBS DOWN IN SEMI-FINAL AGAIN**

After a solid season chalking up some huge wins amongst the 8 win 4 losses, the Gladiators had a grand final in their sights. Playing FTroop has never been fruitful as we are yet to beat them. However with some big improvements from Scott Welch and Brentin McRae in attack, Fred Hughes skills and with improved teamwork towards the end of season we had our biggest chance.

After dominating the pool and missing many shots we managed to draw FTroop 2-2. Scott Welch scored and Fred Hughes was released for another break away goal after some tough defending from Paul, Rohan and Brendan.

Extra time 3 minutes one way then 3 minutes the other way was a tense affair – particularly as FTroop scored early. Shortly after, a penalty gave them the chance to wrap up the match. Their man missed the penalty but the refs gave him a second chance as the whistle wasn't blown. This time no mistake. Time ran out for a comeback. Only consolation was that FTroop went on to beat Hotshots in the final.

Two big positives – We have asked Victorian Masters and B grade player Ian Beasley to help with match day coaching for next season to help Gladiators develop a new style which will take the Fairfield teams forward in the future.

*Brendan Kenna*

## **N-Grade Report VCP Novice Grade Premiers!**

I recall not that long ago being hit by a jet of cold water rushing out of an upside down boat whilst being unloaded outside the club at 11pm on a cold winters night. I wondered at the time why I play canoe polo. I got my answer when the FCC Amazons won the Novice Grade Grand Final in only our second season of polo in June.

The season has seen a dramatic growth in our skills and ability to play as a team. The result was a convincing 5-2 victory over the Orange Roughies to secure a berth in the Grand Final against the fancied OXO. Geoff Mentink opened the account with a shot from WAAAYYYY outside. He found an un-prepared goalie and the back of the net. Considering it was only about 40 seconds into the game,

it was a great start. The rest of the game was all a bit hazy for me as all I thought about was staying in front. I do recall that it was probably our most consistent performance across the team with everyone contributing. When the final whistle went, the scoreline was 3-1 in our favour.

After the game, a couple of mysteries puzzled me. Was Simon Terrill's swim (with no-one within 8 metres of him) an attempt at the season record for most swims? And is it true that captain Kate Kenna's instructions, yelled (screamed) to her team at Richmond Pool, can also be heard in Collingwood, Kew and Hawthorn? I am attempting to discover answers to these questions in the Spring Season – stay tuned.

Some thanks are in order. I know I speak for the team in expressing our appreciation of the support that the club has shown for canoe polo. Also, the team's thanks for the work Kate Kenna has done in leading and organising us this season. Special mention has to go to Brendan Kenna for the huge amount of coaching, supporting, encouraging and organising that he has done to create and foster the current generation of Amazonians. I am certain that he would spend an hour eskimo rolling in the Yarra in June if he thought it would help the team. Come to think of it...

*Shawn Ramraj*

## **Spring Season 2004**

The Spring Season started in July and sees three (yes 3!) FCC Polo teams entered in the competition. Gladiators (D Grade) and Amazons (promoted to E Grade), have been joined by our newest team, the FCC Pirahnas (Novice Grade).

In addition, Fairfield now has possession of a set of polo goals on loan from Canoe Polo Competition Director John Clune. With these facilities, training games are now being run every other weekend.

We are also expecting to establish an information board at the club in the near future to keep polo and non-polo playing members of the club abreast of polo happenings. Part of this will be opportunities for anyone who wants to try out polo as the weather gets warmer.



## AUSTRALIAN MARATHON CHAMPIONSHIPS PERTH

I went over to the National Marathon Titles in Perth over Easter this year. It was a picturesque race course, and Perth was surprisingly pretty.

Although the event documents said there would be some Easter traffic on the river, I had been somewhat nonchalant about it as they mentioned they would limit their speed over the race days. When you're paddling 35km in reasonably unstable elite craft, you'd assume that the race organisers would be courteous enough to provide unchurned water to race in! The fact that the course was left open to ocean-going outboard motorboats was a shocking revelation – one I discovered the day before the race!

The lesson learnt here: when you're paddling in a major event make sure you try the course out at the same time as the actual race. I had paddled on the course at 4pm on the Thursday before Easter (work day) – you have never seen such a beautiful still course. The next morning I slept in and didn't get to the course till 11am on the Friday public holiday (approximate race time) which turned out to be a blessing. The tide was high, the wind had picked up and the holiday ocean cruisers were out in force!

As I went round the course, I had to lie almost flat across the front of my K1 to get under one of the bridges – they advised that the tide should not be quite so high the next day! I hoped not! I imagined a lot of our beginner K1 paddlers at the club coming adrift under that bridge.

I was literally shaking in my boat as multiple outboard washes would converge just outside the start/finish line. I thought, "I haven't come this far to not be able to paddle" – so I spent several hours putting my boat into the worst part of the washes so I would at least have a "plan of attack" for race day.

My strategy for the race was to take out the first 1000m hard, hopefully take the lead then try to hold as big a lead as I could for the race, as I knew the WA paddlers would be more accustomed to handling the conditions and therefore lose less ground in any turbulence.

So apart from the start of the race, I did paddle parts of the course quite conservatively, as there was nowhere easy to get back in if you fell out of your boat. But luckily I made up some of the lost time by being able to paddle faster in the flatter sections, and

held onto my lead to win my section (35 years and over ladies full distance marathon). I was left full of admiration for how some of the open paddlers paddled on undeterred. I guess it's all about skills in the boat & experience, isn't it? I'll just have to keep practicing, I guess.

My partner and fellow club-member Marty Fripp was an excellent cheer party – he cycled at least 20km around the course cheering me on and making me laugh at each of the turn buoys. This made the 3 and a half hour race much more enjoyable!

They also had a recreational race on Sunday – but you could only paddle a plastic boat. They seem to love plastic boats in WA. I think it's due to the Swan River being so tidal and frequented by boats with big washes! Anyway Marty did well, came third in the "over 40s short plastics" and won a \$90 shirt and \$10 cash. He said that he did better than me – I only got a small medal – and that I should have entered his race!

I paddled doubles day with a guy from NSW I'd never met. We suited each other and were lucky to be able to paddle well together. We did Mixed Vet35 TK2 in an excellent and very closely contended race. We came third 40 seconds behind the first placed crew, after 24km. So we did well and fought hard to try to win but didn't quite there. The other two crews were QLD crews who helped each other out and tried to make sure that we couldn't stay on their wash as they narrowly missed trees around corners etc!

Marty and I then had a fabulous week holidaying in Albany and Margaret River, before heading back to Melbourne a week later.

I'd like to thank Dasha, Zoli and Marg for their assistance over the past year with coaching and training, and fellow club members for their support.

I strongly recommend that more club members take the challenge – you never know what you can do until you have a go. Next year the nationals will be in Sydney – lets plan a Fairfield weekend away of socialising and great racing! The Victorians do dominate the national marathon races, so if you do OK down here, you'd probably do OK in Sydney too.

*Pamela Lilburne*