



Dragons Abreast Sydney
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Jenny Petterson

We were all saddened in July by the death of Jenny Petterson, who first joined Dragons Abreast in February 2003 with her twin sister Jo. Cynthia Kuiper shares some fond memories of Jenny.

Jenny is a shining light in the Dragons Abreast firmament because she was no ordinary survivor. Jen embodied the true spirit of Dragons Abreast, always smiling and really living life to the full despite her breast cancer. What an incredible inspiration she was as she stroked masterfully in our boat, together with her equally beautiful and vivacious twin Jo, lending our motley crew of beginners a totally undeserved veneer of paddling competence.

It was impossible to sit in the same boat as this amazing girl without being utterly humbled by her obvious and determined triumph over far greater odds than ours. We all loved the special sweetness and radiance the twins always brought into the boat and, sadly, in time we even learned the hard way to tell which was Jo and which was Jen, because not long after she started paddling with us Jen's cancer returned and the chemotherapy stole her beautiful long hair – but even then, when she hardly knew us, her indomitable spirit and sense of fun shone through as she suddenly spun around with a flourish to reveal a large, colourful dragon tattoo stuck on the back on her newly bald head.

But Jenny's influence reached far beyond Dragons Abreast Sydney. She was a willing and inspirational speaker who gave generously of her time to the breast cancer cause. Her story touched hearts of not just Dragons Abreast paddlers around the country, but also of many ordinary Australians via an episode of the ABC Television's *Australian Story*.

Complete strangers who'd seen the program or heard her speak at functions would often seek her out to thank her for inspiring them to greater things in their own medical journey.

Even though Jenny was a superb athlete who continued to achieve at the highest, elite level of dragon boating, she was always proud to paddle in our survivor teams regardless of their comparative lack of paddling expertise; and she and Jo remain loyal members of Dragons Abreast; always actively supporting our endeavours by helping us to reach out to more and more breast cancer survivors around the country.

The twins enjoyed the full range of Dragons Abreast activities, including the craft days where they made lots of gorgeous things like the sparkling commemorative pendants they gave everyone to inspire team spirit and performance at special regattas, or enjoyed any number of their fantastic cake creations – one was even a life-sized paddle cake.

Jo and Jenny used to train so hard we were in awe – and one day I heard them explaining their training regime for China. It went something like “paddling Tuesday evening, outrigger Wednesday, paddling Thursday, personal trainer Friday, paddling Saturday, paddling and outrigger Sundays. But what about Mondays we asked – gales of giggles ensued – “We have dinner with Geoff!”

Dragons Abreast Australia has lost very many good



Jenny, all sparkled up, at the Abreast in Australia Regatta at Caloundra in 2007

women over the years – but that is the reality of breast cancer and the reason we exist – to raise awareness and give hope; to offer a positive experience for those travelling the breast cancer journey and to be there for each other in time of need.

Let's rejoice in our memories of Jen and the certain knowledge that she is now at peace and free from pain – and no doubt in the excellent company of our other Angels Abreast.

May we all continue to paddle the waterways with Jen's uniquely inspirational spirit in our boats and in our hearts.

Welcome to the August 2009 edition of Paddles Up.

In this edition we remember Jenny Petterson, a much-loved member of Dragons Abreast Sydney.

There are reports on some enjoyable social events and all the regattas for 2009/2010 season are listed in the calendar – put them in your diary now!

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Are you smarter than a Fifth Grader?

Saturday, 11th July saw about 90 very brave souls attend our Trivia/End of Season Party at the Mustard Seed church in Ultimo. Organiser Jo Jeffcoat reports on a highly successful evening.

The theme of the night was PARTY and there were some very imaginative teams – Muriel's Party; Beach Parties; Pink tables; Formal tables; the UN was there; a very brightly coloured Pyjama Party; the Labour Party with some very pregnant girls AND guys. And who could forget the winners of the best dressed table – the Wedding Party. What a beautiful bride Neil made, so demure!!! The groom Tony, bashful as ever, Wendy Jensen was a blushing bridesmaid and and the very Reverend Di M officiated.

As with any Dragons Abreast Sydney event the food was spectacular, The UN and The Wedding tables in particular producing culinary feasts.

The half-time entertainment was provided by each team in the form of Charades. While some teams struggled, there were two teams that won the first round in an amazing two seconds each. The United Nations and Muriel's Party fought it out, with the UN winning the second round in nine seconds.

The Black Dragons won not only the Famous Faces section of the competition, but they also knew way too much about Hugh Jackman movies, naming 16 out of a possible 24.

All the questions were about Australia and most questions were from the Primary School syllabus. So there was no excuse for not knowing the answers ... or so I thought.

Here are some notable questions to which no-one knew the answers:

- Which state/territory does not have an area in the World Heritage list? Answer: Victoria.
- No-one knew that Turtles are part of the reptile family.



The Reverend Di Millgate and the blushing bride, Neil Millgate.

- The Aboriginal man who accompanied Matthew Flinders around Australia on the "Investigator" was, of course, Bungaree.
- NO. Pauline Hanson did not write "Please Explain". It was Dr Karl Kruszelnicki.
- And the longest word in the English language that does not repeat a letter? Uncopyrightable. Who would have thought it!

The winners were a very smart#### group of non-paddlers, who we won't mention. Second place went to the Black Dragons, with Team Aloha taking home the prize as the "Wooden Stirrers"

In all it was a great evening, huge fun, lots of fantastic food, and we raised \$1300 in the process.

A BIG thank-you to our MC John Bain and to Di Williams for their support and to all the helpers on the night.

PS: Can someone else run the next Trivia night... I want to PLAY.



I wonder why Vicki McLean and Sue McClelland couldn't convince Tracey Bowne to join the Labour Party.



Sue Tolhurst and Chris Kwong



Wendy & Jan Jensen toast the bride and groom, Tony Williams and Neil Millgate



This group obviously didn't want to be recognised, but some of them look familiar.



Team Aloha won the wooden spoon.



This must be the Christmas Party team.



There's no need to take to the bottle, Jo. We'll let you play next year



Dragons Abreast Sydney members at Bicentennial Park

Swapping paddle power for pedal power

Mary Sheldon swapped her paddle for pedals and joined in the Dragons Abreast annual bike ride in June.

"Twas Mulga Bill from Eaglehawk that caught the cycling craze..." as did 15 or so members who turned out for a most enjoyable morning cruising through Bicentennial Park at Homebush on Sunday 27th June.

We were a mixed bunch – some sleek and professionally attired with own bikes, and others less formal, with hired equipment. Riders and bikes were matched for size, given a 30 second lesson on gears and brakes, helmets on (ah –the peak goes to the front!!) and we were away.

Carolyn New was our "stroke" and set the pace (leisurely) and made sure we all followed the same path – Pam was our very quiet "sweep" – no shouted orders or drills from the rear of the line at

all! But a wealth of knowledge about cycling and the park and gave lots of help throughout the ride. We all enjoyed the opportunity to chat with other riders as we rode along boardwalks, the riverbank, past lakes with birdlife and through the mangroves, giving a view of the park and river not seen from the road.

When we stopped for a coffee break we were pleased to find that we'd ridden almost 20km – however finding that Yvonne had cycled from Camperdown to do the ride and was about to head back onto the M4 for the return journey for paddling – well, that silenced us!

Refreshed by a stop at Muffin Break, we did another few circuits and headed back to our starting point. From here, some lunched, some headed home and some went off to training – very impressive. So members, do come to the next ride – swapping paddles for pedals is fun!

Deb Read Award 2009

At the AGM every year an award is given in memory of Deb Read, who set an inspiring example to her fellow paddlers and the wider community

Deb Read was one of the original members of the Sydney Dragons Abreast team. She was a person who had an enormous and positive impact on the health and wellbeing of others. Through her work at the YWCA and at Dragons Abreast Sydney Deb taught many women who had dealt with life threatening experiences with cancer, to believe in their strengths and to enjoy an active and full life.

Her hard work, unique attitude and fun-loving approach lifted our spirits. Deb was a true leader. This award, in her name, will be presented to someone who has demonstrated similar qualities and influences through such selfless effort and hard work as our Deb.

The recipient of this award will be agreed upon by the Award sub-committee. This year that committee consists of Muriel Buckeridge and the two previous award winners, Cynthia Kuiper (2007) and Brenda Owen (2008).

Nominations can be made by any Dragons Abreast



Deb Read and Brenda Owen, winner of the 2008 Deb Read Award, in 2006

Sydney member, and should be submitted to Muriel Buckeridge by email (buckeridgem@yahoo.com) before 14 August.

Please name the person you wish to nominate and, using the criteria below, your reasons for nominating that person, including examples:

- Selfless effort
- Positive contribution
- Leadership
- Inspirational involvement.

Dragons Abreast Australia Corporate and Community Regatta October 25, 2009












Do you get more out of your involvement with Dragons Abreast than you put in? Here is your chance to make a real contribution to the Dragons Abreast movement.


Recruit a corporate or community team and introduce more people to the joys of dragon boating. Contact Cynthia Kuiper at cynthiakuiper@yahoo.com

Register as a volunteer to help organise and run the regatta on October 25. Contact the volunteer co-ordinator Ruth Turnell at ruthturnell@yahoo.com

For more information visit the website at www.dragonsabreast.com.au

DRAGONS ABREAST SYDNEY CALENDAR 2009/2010

Month	Date(s)	Event	Location	Details
August 2009	 Sunday 16th	Dobroyd 10s Regatta	Henley Marine Drive, Rodd Point	The first regatta of the season. Contact Rosie O'Donnell at rock8rod@yahoo.com.au
September 2009	Thursday 24th	Dragons Abreast Sydney AGM	DBNSW Headquarters, Homebush	Get involved with your club! Join a committee, vote for the constitutional changes. Details coming soon.
September 2009	Saturday 26th	Newbies Day	Bank Street	Contact Deb Hirst at mhirst bigpond.net.au
October 2009	 Sunday 11th	Roseville Regatta		Watch out for details from Rosie O'Donnell.
	 Sunday 25th	DAA Corporate and Community Regatta	Darling Harbour, Sydney	Time to start organising those corporate and hospital teams. Contact Cynthia Kuiper at cynthiagkuiper@yahoo.com
November 2009	 Sunday 8th	200m Club Regatta	SIRC Penrith	TBA
	 Sat 14th/Sun 15th	Orange Regatta	Orange	Plan a weekend away with paddling included. Orange is holding its first regatta and we're planning on attending. Details TBA.
December 2009	 Sunday 13th	500m Club Regatta	SIRC Penrith	TBA
	Saturday 19th	Christmas Paddle and Party from 4.00pm	Jacksons Landing, Pyrmont	Join us for a later afternoon paddle and then cocktails and barbecue in the park at Jacksons Landing.
January 2010	 Saturday 9th	Tacoma Regatta	Tacoma, Central Coast	TBA
	Saturday 16th	Newbies Day	Bank Street	Contact Deb Hirst at mhirst bigpond.net.au
February 2010	 Sat 27th/ Sun 28th	Chinese New Year	Darling Harbour	TBA
March 2010	 Sunday 28th	State Titles	SIRC Penrith	TBA
April 2010	 22nd-25th	National Titles	Adelaide	TBA
June 2010	 11th-13th	The International Breast Cancer Participatory Festival	Peterborough, Ontario, Canada	Start planning and saving now! Visit the website at www.survivorsabreast.com

 Regatta dates – put them in your diary now!

August birthdays

Margaret Tessarolo	1st	Kathy Dundas	24th
Yolande Presland	5th	Judy Dykes	24th
Eva Stern	7th	Geri Hill	30th
Jo Jeffcoat	18th		