

# Dragons Abreast Sydney

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Hi all,

Well, considering that the paddling season is officially over, DASydney girls are certainly proving to be uncommonly keen paddlers this winter! Maybe we have the drought to thank, in part, and the fact that we've had such lovely sunny days but I think we owe much to the latest influx of new members who are such a fun and enthusiastic gang of girls!

That big article in the Sydney Morning Herald in April resulted in an unprecedented number of enquiries and a huge Newbies Day. By some miracle it went off really well despite the overwhelming numbers and torturous sweep issues, thanks to massive efforts from Sally Lynch, Claire Hendy and Brenda Owen in particular, with Carolyn New, Deb Read and others also playing a major part in its success. Then there was the wonderfully welcoming array of nibbles cooked up by all our clever cooks. Very many thanks to everyone for making it such a happy day. There were too many lovely emails from the grateful newbies to reprint but they were filled with words like "hooked", "generosity of spirit", "friendly", "helpful", "excellent instruction" and "yummy".

Since the last newsletter I'm delighted to report that a record-smashing 19 new members have joined DASydney. So it is a big welcome to Elaine Beggs, Muriel Buckeridge (who has already thrown her hat in the ring and started helping the committee, bless her generous heart!), Bonny Cheleski, Gael Ellis, Brenda Hoffman, Lisa Hogan-Slowey, Barbara Lane, Fotoula Magoulas, Sue McClelland, Vicki McLean, Sharon Mitchell, Jennifer Moxham, Lana and Irena Rodgers, Julie Royle-Srinivasan, Vicki Sfinas, Lisa Sugar, Michelle Streight, and Sue Williamson. Isn't that awesome?

Our sweep-deprivation headaches will unfortunately continue to give us grief for the rest of the winter, but we are taking every conceivable opportunity to train potential sweeps. We are hoping that by the spring we'll have at least four girls ready to undertake provisional



Some very enthusiastic and happy newbies return from their first paddle, with Cynthia sweeping and some more experience paddlers giving tips.



A post-paddle morning tea was enjoyed by all.

sweep accreditation and that will at least qualify them to sweep for us at club practices. Hopefully once the regattas start we can then swing some girls through to full certification.

We've never managed it before in winter so not surprisingly the Thursday evening pad-

dle had to be discontinued due to insufficient numbers but, never fear, we will start it up again in the spring. So if you think Saturday morning paddling is fun then just wait till you get out there on a balmy summer evening – you'll think you've died and gone to heaven!



### Congratulations to Mel

We always knew she was something special, but now the NSW Government has put money on it. Our much-loved coach, Melanie Cantwell, was one of three women recently awarded a NSW International Travel Scholarship to further her "skills and knowledge in international best practices in sports administration and management". The goal is to help her to "continue creating equal opportunities for women and girls" in her sport of dragon boating. You only have to look at Dragons Abreast groups around the country to see how successful she's been already in fostering dragon boating just with us! The ever-modest Mel says it will help pay her way to the world championships Berlin in August.

### How to Recognise a Stroke

Store this info in the back of your head – you never know when it will come in useful.

Doctors say a bystander can recognize when a person is having a stroke by asking three simple questions:

- Ask the person to smile
- Ask him or her to raise both arms.
- Ask the person to speak a simple sentence.

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call emergency hotline (000) immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

### Making a Good Club Great

Please don't faint at this and make excuses before you read on. We will soon be asking all of you to take a more active role in helping to run the club, so maybe you can all start to think about which area you will want to help out in. Because it is only if we all participate that we can ever have a well-run and happy club.

We realise some people have more time available than others but surely nobody can, with conscience, just paddle and do nothing else to contribute.

It may just be a few minutes helping out here and there or perhaps you can do more than that. Even just once you might help with a particular function; phone up some volunteers for a regatta; collect up race entries; help at newbies days; make a few phone calls; dig up some raffle prizes; organise a raffle; public speaking; whatever you're comfortable doing. There are dozens of little things (we'll make up a list you can choose from) that can be done to help and there is something insufficiently arduous for even the very busiest person. The great reward from participating in the club in this way is that you will get to know your fellow paddlers better. After all, what you get out of DASydney depends largely on what you put into it.

### Entertainment Book Fundraiser for DAA

We're nearly ready to let our national body, DAA, in on the secret of what DASydney girls have been doing towards the May fundraiser for DAA. You see, all pink efforts are not necessarily parties! Knowing everyone was "partied and raffled out", we hit on the Entertainment Book idea for fundraising. It may not be pink, but the proceeds will pay bills for DAA.

Brenda Owen moved heaven and earth to organise the whole project and to motivate everyone and we all owe her a huge debt of thanks because it was a massive effort. Wilma Kippers was one of a number who were initially dismayed at the concept but she has since sent me this note about her experience:

*When I first heard about Brenda's suggestion we sell Entertainment books to fundraise for DAA my first thought was despair. \$60 for a book of coupons— who was going to pay that? And I'm not very good at approaching people to sell raffle tickets let alone an expensive restaurant book.*

*The following week after paddling Brenda spoke to us all about why we were being asked to sell the Entertainment books. The committee (rightly) thought we were "fundraised out" and that DAA's suggestion of Pink Parties might not be the answer to raising funds by DASydney. Brenda also spoke about her own initial antipathy to Entertainment books when she came across them a couple of years ago but that subsequently after purchasing one had gone out of her way to locate them in following years. She said they virtually sold themselves. I decided to put my scepticism on hold and actually have a look at a book.*

*Brenda was right. When I looked through the Sydney North Entertainment book I could see that over the course of a year I would easily recoup the \$60 outlay and more. And in the process \$12 was going to DAA. Martin took the book to work and put up a notice saying it*

*was available to anyone who wanted. I contacted a few people who I knew liked to eat out, and between us we sold 11 copies (including one for us). At no time did I have to persuade anyone to buy a copy. Anyone interested saw the value in it immediately and in fact most of the books we sold were the Sydney ones and I didn't have a copy of that to show anyone.*

*The best thing about selling the Entertainment books was that it required so little effort. Brenda was the one who did all the work – collecting and allocating the books, collecting the order forms, filling in the details in all the books, generally making it very easy for all of us. Brenda should be congratulated for her enormous efforts. Selling Entertainment books was much easier than selling raffle tickets because with these everyone is a winner.*

Just a thought – anyone who goes to an eatery or other discounted place in the book that they find is great, please let me know and I'll put all your recommendations in the newsletter – tell us how much you saved on the experience too.



Wilma Kippers



Mothers' Day 05: Brenda, Cynthia, Sue, Kris, Jenny and Jo took up half the path carrying the banner at the Mothers' Day Classic

## Hitting the Hustings

May was a somewhat quieter month with just a few happenings on the PR front. First up was the Mothers' Day Classic – a hugely popular annual walk around the Domain, Mrs Macquarie's Chair and the Botanic Gardens in Sydney. It's organised by Women in Super to raise funds for Breast Cancer research. Joanne Petterson put out the word for DASydney girls to join the walk and on the day our little band comprised the twins, Jo and Jenny Petterson, Kristene Sawyer, Sue Gibson, Brenda Owen and her family plus me (Geoff Eldridge had ricked his neck at training and was unexpectedly home, immobile, poor thing). It was a lovely warm sunny day with a great buzz in the crowd as everyone hung around waiting to start. We

were quite chuffed when we managed to have an announcement about DAA made at the beginning of the walk, although who knows if anyone heard it over all the hubbub?

In May, Jenny Petterson was guest speaker at the Australia's Biggest Morning Tea at Hazelhurst Gallery in Gymea, making sure she told them all about Dragons Abreast. Also in May I was fortunate to be invited to speak at the Young Women with Breast Cancer Forum at St George Hospital – so I talked about Dragons Abreast, naturally. Radio 2UE announcer, John Stanley, jumped on the Kylie/BC awareness bandwagon and interviewed me one morning. It was great to be able to highlight some breast cancer good news by telling him all about our antics.

## Postcards from the Ether

This from Margaret Puddick who went paddling with the NZ DA girls when she was there on vacation – next time you see her, give her a hug and see if some of her luck rubs off:

*Its been a long time since I've seen you all, a lot has happened since last I spoke to you. I did go to NZ for a few weeks and caught up with the paddlers over there. Since then I got back and within a week I won a competition for Kylie Minogue Tickets, which put me in a draw to win tickets for 2 to Los Angeles, well I won the major prize. So I flew to LA last week for 5 days, it was a fantastic trip. I have been back less than a week, and I have been in contact with the radio station who I won the prize off Today FM. They have now asked me for an interview about my experience with breast cancer, due to the fact that Kylie is going thru the same. So this afternoon I will be in the Studio. I hope to mention Dragons Abreast and all the wonderful ladies involved. Hope to see you all soon.*

Also this Chinese New Year feedback from Robin Shoebridge:

*Just a quick note re the CNY raffle Prize for the Little Snail restaurant won by Lisa, a work colleague of mine. She went on Saturday night and had nothing but bouquets for the evening. Said they had a great night – staff were prompt, food was really, really good and well presented and the restaurant itself was really 'cool'. She'd have no hesitation in going back for another visit. How's that?*

By the way, for those with the Entertainment Book – there's a discount in it for the Little Snail.

## Winter Paddling Gear

Just a few thoughts about winter paddling for those who haven't done it before – which is most of you. We've never paddled all winter before as a club, although some of us did it last year in the Australian Team



training for Shanghai. So, not wanting anyone to catch pneumonia, we thought it's timely to pass on a few tips.

We've been really lucky with the weather so far, from a paddling point of view, in that it's been warm in the sun and there's been no rain. We can only hope, for Sydney's sake, that it doesn't continue like this and the rains will come. Rain and cold don't deter really keen paddlers because when you are suitably clothed it is just as exhilarating as ever.

The most important thing to remember is that cotton clothing is NOT good in cold and wet conditions. Polypropylene thermals are essential as they keep your skin relatively dry, despite splashing. You can get them from mountain gear suppliers like Kathmandu, Mountain Designs etc – get a pair of long johns and also a long sleeved T. They are generally pretty gruesome looking, with gaudy horizontal stripes, although careful shopping can unearth plain coloured ones. Don't worry – it's not a fashion parade and nobody sees you once you are in the boat. Over those you can put a variety of things to keep out the wind but remember you may want to be able to whip things off quickly once you've been paddling a little while – a rainproof, windstop, zip-front vest is ideal. Neoprene paddle pants over your long johns provide extra warmth to your nether regions and keep out the wind – they also provide a wee bit of padding for your butt.

A warm beanie can be good too, as you lose a lot of heat via your head. If you suffer from freezing hands and feet then head off to a dive shop and get some neoprene gloves and paddle shoes – but check around for prices as some are more expensive than others. You may also want to get some polypropylene socks as they can help too.

Most important of all, you must remember to bring a change of warm dry clothing and change quickly after you come off the water. A towel is handy too.

## Not Such Scrappy Efforts

The DASydney Craft Group gathering in May was right up my alley – no needles and thread involved! Robin Shoebridge was teacher for the day, helping us to make the most gorgeous little memory books. Students were the twins, Jo and Jenny Petterson, Margot Case, Kathryn Davis and yourstruly. There we were, up to our ears in scissors, glue, chopped up photos and all sorts of unidentified fiddly bits. We were just like a bunch of kindie kids (only we didn't get a nap in the afternoon) with lots of happy chatter and squeals of delight as our efforts took shape. When I first thought about it, I wondered what in heck I could possibly want one of these things for, but then I realised it could make a perfect and unique gift for a wee grandniece who has absolutely everything – her own tiny book of special memories. Well, I like it, anyhow, and it was fantastic fun making it!

With some of our group disappearing to Vancouver soon and others tied up building houses we're having trouble setting a date for the June meeting of the BOOBS Exchange (DASydney Craft Group), so the next one will probably be in July – stay tuned.

## Wishing Well!

So many birthday girls in June, it's just as well all the candles won't be lit on the same day or we'd need to call in the fireys. Best wishes to Sue McClelland and Jennifer Moxham on the 1st, Fran O'Brien on the 6th, Robin Shoebridge on the 7th, Lisa Sugar on the 9th, Susan Naylor on the 18th, Kay Gailey on the 19th, Carol Fentoullis on the 22nd, Sue Gibson on the 24th, Claire Hendy on the 25th, Helen Westwood on the 29th and Deb Cooper on the 30th.

It's also time to wish our DASydney ambassadors to Canada a safe and happy trip as they head off to Vancouver for Abreast in a Boat's 10th anniversary celebrations of BC survivor paddling. As far as I know, our contingent comprises Pam Bell, Brenda Owen, Pam Telfer, Robin Shoebridge, Kaye Gailey and Jenny and Jo Petterson. Deb Read will be there too although she's not planning on paddling. Hopefully they'll keep us in the loop, sending back pictures and descriptions of their adventures there.

Thanks to everyone who contributed photos and stories to the newsletter this month – all helps to make it more interesting! Keep 'em coming!

Paddles up!  
Cynth



## Lament for what was

Warning – this silly little ditty is rated M for Mature Audiences only

For years and years they told me,  
Be careful of your breasts.  
Don't ever squeeze or bruise them.  
And give them monthly tests.

So I heeded all their warnings,  
And protected them by law.  
Watched them very carefully,  
And always wore my bra.

After 30 years of extra care,  
My gyno, Dr. Pruitt,  
Said I should get a Mammogram  
O.K," I said, "let's do it."

Stand up here real close" she said,  
(She got my boob in line),  
"And tell me when it hurts," she said,  
"Ah yes! Right there, that's fine."

She stepped upon a pedal,  
I could not believe my eyes!  
A plastic plate came slamming down,  
My hooter's in a vise!

My skin was stretched and mangled,  
From underneath my chin.  
My poor boob was being squashed,  
To Swedish Pancake thin.

Excruciating pain I felt,  
Within it's vise-like grip.  
A prisoner in this vicious thing,  
My poor defenseless tit!

"Take a deep breath" she said to me,  
Who does she think she's kidding?!?  
My chest is mashed in her machine,  
And woozy I am getting.

"There, that's good," I heard her say,  
(The room was slowly swaying.)  
"Now, let's do the other one."  
Have mercy, I was praying.

It squeezed me from both up and down,  
It squeezed me from both sides.  
I'll bet SHE'S never had this done,  
To HER tender little hide.

Next time that they make me do this,  
I will request a blindfold.  
I have no wish to see again,  
My knockers getting steam rolled.

If I had no gripe when I came in,  
I surely have one now.  
If there had been a cyst in there,  
It would have gone "ker-pow!"

A man invented this machine,  
Of this, I have no doubt.  
I'd like to stick his balls in there,  
And see how THEY come out!

# DAS CALENDAR 2005

Month	Date(s)	Event	Location	Details
June	Fri 9th	Private BC Fundraiser	Bellevue Hill	Guest Speaker: Cynthia Kuiper
	Sun 12th	Ord River Dragon Boat Marathon	Kununurra, NT	<a href="http://members.westnet.com.au/billh/kdbc/marathon.htm">http://members.westnet.com.au/billh/kdbc/marathon.htm</a> Surely there has to be one of these in every dragon boater's life? Maybe '06?
	Fri 24th-Sun 26th	Abreast in a Boat 10 Year Anniversary	Vancouver, Canada	Contact Michelle Hanton on <a href="mailto:hanton@ozemail.com.au">hanton@ozemail.com.au</a>
August	Sat 6th- Sun 7th	IDBF 6th World DB Racing Championships	Berlin/Hamburg, Germany	TBA
	Sun 28th	DASydney Social Bike Ride	Homebush Bay	Of course you can still do it after all these years! It's all on the flat – lotsa fun! Contact Carolyn New on <a href="mailto:carolynn@iinet.net.au">carolynn@iinet.net.au</a>
October	Fri 7th-Sun 16th	10th Australian Masters Games	Adelaide	<a href="http://www.AustralianMastersGames.com">www.AustralianMastersGames.com</a>
	Wed 12th	Hornsby Zonta	Hornsby	Guest speaker: Cynthia Kuiper