

Dragons Abreast Sydney

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Hi all,

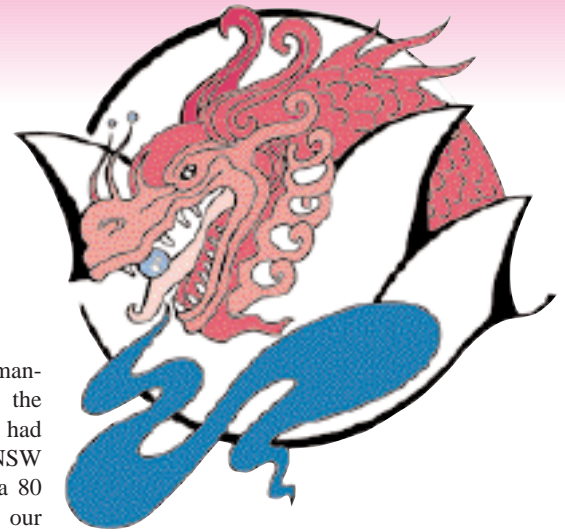
What a hugely busy month it's been! In most of our paddle practices leading up to Chinese New Year we ended up taking out a handful of medical supernumeraries (who couldn't make the official DA Hospital Challenge practice day) – throwing our training sessions into disarray in the lead-up to our own CNY races. Poor Coach Carol coped admirably with the chaos but, as you saw on the big day, we all rose above it in grand style!

That first weekend of March, after our paddle, we had been asked by DAA to organise the training for the Sydney-based entrants in the Mum-in-a-Boat race. We weren't too sure how many would show up, but fortunately only two boatloads of them arrived. So we popped them into the wooden boats for the land training component of the morning and that worked a treat, subsequently producing great novice performances on the water. Thanks to all those who stayed back to help with this session.

As well as showing the Mum-in-a-Boat paddlers how to paddle, we gave them a wonderfully graphic demonstration of why it always makes sense to bring dry clothes for going home in when both Akal Khalsa and Robin Shoebridge unceremoniously disembarked from the back of the boat. It was a horrid, windy morning and Akal was coaching novice sweep, Robin, when a strong undercurrent whipped the sweep oar around suddenly, taking them both with it! Fortunately neither was hurt, although Robin was still sporting a rather impressive bruise a week later.

The Sunday was much more daunting with 11 crews of medical professionals arriving for their DA Hospital Challenge practice paddle (special thanks to Pam Bell and Margo-Lynne Lee for their assistance with the recruiting). Finding the parking lot filled with cars was incredibly dismaying as other clubs had overstayed their morning practice, plus we'd not realised that a number of corporate teams were being trained that morning as well (they don't show on the boat roster). Somehow all these potential paddlers managed to get rid of their cars and still turn up in good spirits.

It was a truly wonderful effort by close to 50 of our girls managing so very many novice paddlers – we had team managers marking off names, finalising paperwork and assembling crews; a coach for each team; our own four sweeps plus our ever-willing guest sweep,



Akal Khalsa, and several loan paddle managers – with Sue McClelland cracking the whip over them all. As well, Anne Steng had kindly made the trek in her ute to the DBNSW offices in Homebush to borrow the extra 80 loan paddles we needed, in addition to our own 20, for the weekend. Our girls had also brought tables and, importantly, lots of home-baked yummys to share with everyone after their exertions.

And what an enthusiastic bunch of DA Hospital Challengers they were! The inter-hospital rivalries were building and already we could feel the quite tangible promise of some great racing to come. Some of the young men threw themselves into paddling with such enormous gusto and high spirits that quite a riotous time ensued in several of the boats. Out on the water our own girls were having so much fun telling their doctors what to do that we had trouble getting them to come back in on time to hand over the boats for the second shift of crews to go out. Fortunately everyone was very good-natured about the wait.



One of the crews from the SAN backing out for their first paddle



Carol Fentoullis on the "paddle simulator"



Paddling to nowhere



Kris Sawyer giving the word to the RNSH crew

Would-be Sports Crews

But that was only the rehearsal – it was the following weekend that was truly awesome! It kicked off with the sports crews on the Saturday. Our girls, racing as Mel’s Belles, held their own against the young and immortal (there were no Masters category races) with some very creditable times and were pretty chuffed to pull 4th place in the B Final despite the up to 40-year age gap between us and our competition.



Oh what a night!

Saturday night was the big DASydney Chinese New Year Banquet, so ably organised by Margo-Lynne Lee. Some 120 paddlers and their partners packed the Regal Restaurant in Chinatown for a super Chinese banquet, with lots of laughs, fun and games. They came from far and wide – our National Director, Michelle Hanton from Darwin was guest of honour, as was Melanie Cantwell, President of DBNSW; there were the arrestingly outfitted gals from Townsville DA’s Twin Titties and some from Coffs Harbour DA’s Tivivators; a handful from the new Redcliffe DA; several girls from Port Lincoln DA; the new Outback Dragons from Dubbo were there too, plus paddlers from all places between.

Margo-Lynne’s elves had made natty little place-card tote bags for everyone and packaged up a plethora of raffle prizes to tempt the party-goers. First task in the evening was drawing the major raffle when a lovely lady, Marjorie McGuinness, from Jenny Petterson’s support group won the fabulous 18ct gold, amethyst and diamond earrings donated by Phil and Sue Gibson. Not surprisingly, Martin

Hirst was besieged with newfound, instant “best friends” after he won the weekend for four at the luxury 4-star Elm Cottage in the Snowy Mountains.

Our guests of honour at the banquet: DAA National Coordinator, Michelle Hanton and President of DBNSW, Melanie Cantwell



Then there was the banquet raffle, with heaps more prizes to be won – even if it did seem like Elaine Burrow was winning most of them! Ever a stickler for detail, Brenda Owen wanted an ASIC enquiry held into the quiz management when it looked like their table might not have won, but that idea was quickly dropped once the "right" decision was made and each person at the table was bought off with a bottle of wine!



All their own work – the Twin Titties gals all tarted up for a night on the town



Pam Bell with Robin Shoebridge (who made all the place-card totes)

Jacque Robinson, sitting between the Gibsons and Karen Wyers, will be taking three lucky friends to Sydney's newest eatery, the swanky Fino



Deb and Martin Hirst will soon be lapping up the luxury at Elm Cottage on the banks of the Goobarragandra River



Cathy Seddon and Dennis Burrow couldn't believe Elaine Burrow kept winning prizes



Brenda, Owen, Muriel Buckeridge and Jo Peterson hold the proof that their table took out the quiz.

Prizes from DAsydney Raffle drawn February 11th, 2006

- 1st prize 18ct gold, diamond and amethyst earrings, value \$2,500
- 2nd prize Jurlique gift basket, value \$500
- 3rd prize Weekend for four at luxury Elm Cottage in Snowy Mtns, value \$400
- 4th prize Sydney by Sail for 2 people valued at \$260
- 5th prize Dinner for four at Sydney's newest eatery, Fino, value \$250
- 6th prize BridgeClimb for one, value \$165
- 7th prize Dinner for two at La Cita – value \$100
- 8th prize Book voucher at gleebooks, value \$100
- 9th prize Family pass to Taronga/Western Plains Zoo valued at \$79
- 10th prize Harbour Cruise with Majistic Cruises for 2 adults and 2 children, value \$69
- 11th prize Family pass to Sydney Tower, value \$59
- 12th prize Coffee Cruise for 2 on Sydney Harbour w Matilda Cruises, value \$59
- 13th prize Petrol voucher, value \$50
- 14th prize Dinner voucher at Wagamama, value \$50

- Marjorie McGuinness
- Heather Pearce
- Martin Hirst
- Helen Miles
- Jacque Robinson
- Yorn Liow
- Sally Lynch
- Elvira Rheub
- L Jurd
- Wendy Jensen
- B & J Beech
- Elaine Burrow
- Ann Jones
- Helen Durkis

One Determined Paddler

But parties, wonderful as they are, can't match dragon boat racing for excitement – so, at Coach Carol's urging, most revellers snuck off before the pumpkin hour to catch some shut-eye in preparation for Sunday's racing. What a memorable day that was for all concerned! Deb Story, one of our newer paddlers and a desperately keen one at that, had been really looking forward to Chinese New Year when her health took a disconcerting turn, threatening her chances of paddling. This is how it turned out for her:

This was my first Chinese New Year (CNY) and what an unforgettable weekend at Darling Harbour. After two days and one night of a packed, fun-filled program, CNY 2006 is one I won't forget!

Over the past couple of months I have been diagnosed with secondary cancer in the spine. This meant that I have been in tremendous pain with limited movement in my back. After a course of radiation it eased the pain and gave me the opportunity to participate and paddle in CNY 2006. I am extremely proud to be associated with such a magnificent and inspiring group of women. All your support, kind words and encouragement have helped me through my treatment. In the short time I have been with DASydney, every week is filled with enjoyment as I am able to be on the water – one of my loves – as well as paddle with my friends! To be a part of CNY meant a great deal to me and to be well enough to paddle, not just in the Dragons Abreast Flowers on the Water Ceremony but for Dragons Abreast

The DA Hospital Challenge

Possibly the biggest challenge on the Sunday was organising the hospital crews – the potential for total chaos was awesomely daunting and yet all you wonderful volunteers made it a resounding success. Thank you very much, everyone, for throwing yourselves into it with such gusto! Judging by the happy faces and the positive feedback it seems the medical professionals enjoyed it every bit as much as we did. We all owe them a huge debt of gratitude for so enthusiastically supporting Dragons Abreast Australia in this way and I hope they feel good knowing that their donations will provide insurance to enable more survivors around the country to enjoy the magic that is Dragons Abreast.

Some of the hospital crews had lots of big, strong men which gave them a natural advantage over others with mostly girls, so it's not altogether fair to compare the results, but there were some impressive times nevertheless.



Sue McClelland, our Volunteers Supervisor for the DA Hospital Challenge, together with Deb Story and Di Millgate at the Banquet

Sydney (DASydney) also.

On Saturday I was a spectator and cheered Mel's Belles along to a fine effort! Congratulations and well done girls!!

Saturday night was the CNY dinner at The Regal Restaurant in Chinatown and what a memorable night with eating, drinking, games and not to mention the great company. Friendships were strengthened by fun and laughter throughout the evening. Congratulations to everyone who made the evening such a success!

It was Race Day for DASydney so an early rise for the paddlers on Sunday. The two DASydney boats– Pink Power and Pink Passion – were each in two heats, and both made the Final Challenge. I was paddling in Pink Power – with an amazing and dedicated group of women. It made me feel extremely

fortunate and proud to be part of all the excitement. Pink Passion showed the way, taking out the DA Challenge trophy.

The supporter's boat, 'Mum in a boat' and the hospital boats made a tremendous effort in the water. Congratulations!!

The Ceremony for the 'Flowers on the Water' was extremely special for me and, for those not in the boats, you were all in our hearts and thoughts. Another love of mine is gardening and I was able to bring lots of beautiful rose petals from my garden for the Ceremony.

Words are difficult to find to express my admiration for all who contributed and participated in a superb, action-packed weekend. CNY 2006 is one I will never forget. Bring on CNY 2007!!

Deb Story

DA Hospital Challenge Results

1st	Mater Radiation	1:08.00	6th	Nthn Cancer Inst	1:13.47
2nd	SAN 1	1:09.22	7th	College of Nursing	1:16.09
3rd	RNSH	1:09.28	8th	Mater	1:17.85
4th	POW	1:11.39	9th	SAN 2	1:18.03
5th	St George/Br Screen	1:11.96	10th	Westmead	1:20.41
			11th	RPAH	1:22.03



Deb Read got the Prince of Wales crew well and truly revved up

Feedback from the Hospitals

We will certainly be back next year. Great fun as usual and a great gig by you guys.

Cheers, Pip Middleton, SAN



Some of the SAN docs

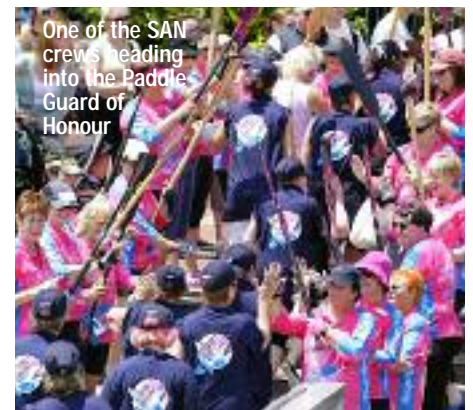
Thanks – the team at POWH had great fun, both at the practice and on Sunday. And we will certainly be returning next year – we are out to improve on our 4th place!! Thanks to Dragons Abreast for giving us the opportunity to participate.

Craig Lewis, POW



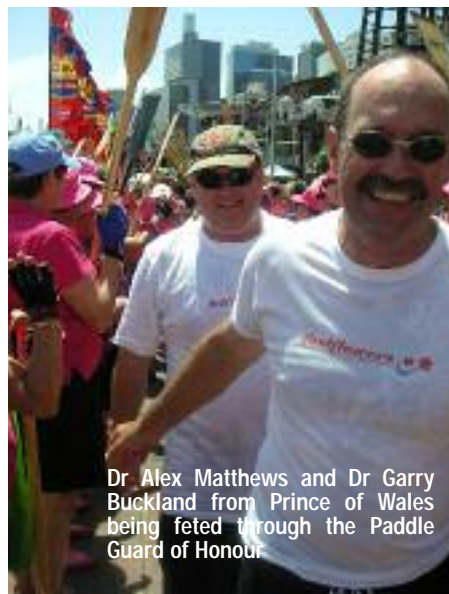
I had such a good time on Sunday and felt privileged to be able to be involved. Thanks to you and the whole team for making us welcome and including us, to those who spent time last week on training and to the sweeps and drummers to try to keep us together!!

Dragons Abreast must be about the best thing about breast cancer!! Keep up the good work. Good health and happiness to you all. *Regards, Nerolie Gate, SAN*



What an absolutely fabulous day. I know that everyone from the Mater had a ball, but the three of us from pathology are so delighted to have been a part of it, it was just great fun. We are already planning an assault on all those teams that beat us this year and plan to train a lot more before next year's race. That of course is in theory, trying to get all those people together to train will be a challenge and a half. We will however be there with wings on.

I must comment on the "guard of honour" that was awaiting us as we came back from the race. It was just the icing on the cake to have all those ladies so enthusiastic at our woeful effort!!!!. Thanks once again for including us and I hope you raised lots of money. *Sally Johnston, Mater*



Dr Alex Matthews and Dr Garry Buckland from Prince of Wales being feted through the Paddle Guard of Honour.

We all had a fantastic day and hope to be able to defend our first place next year! Thank's very much for the great organisation and enthusiasm shown from all at Dragons Abreast. It was an inspiration to us all on the Mater Rad team and a joy to see you and the ladies having a fun time. We don't tend to see our patients after their radiotherapy treatment ends and Dragons Abreast is something we will now certainly recommend to our patients. Also, a special thank you to yourself, the sweep and the drummer from all of us here at Mater Rad. See you all next year...

Brian Porter, Mater Rad



I had a lot of fun and next year St George are going to breathe fire (excuse the pun) at the other boats. *Ese Enari, St George*



Sydney College of Nursing paddlers discuss tactics



Passion and Power on the water

The Nitty Gritty – the DA Challenge

Totally obliterating all our plans for ceremonial distribution of trophy and medals to the hospital crews, DBNSW unexpectedly cancelled the lunch break and we suddenly had to scramble into the boats for the DA Challenge. This dismay was somewhat mitigated, however, by our excitement at having both Power and Passion qualify for the final! Read more about all that in Carol’s article following.

Coach’s Comments!!

The 2006 Chinese New Year Weekend/Racing provided our club with many special moments and highlights to cherish. Everyone gave it their all and paddled at their absolute best! What more can a coach ask for?

- Some spectacular achievements include:
- Mel’s Belles: 1.06.38 and 4th place in the B Final.
- Pink Passion: 1.07.63 and 1st in the DA Challenge Final
- Pink Power: 1.16.45 and 6th in the DA Challenge Final
- DASydney Supporters: 1:08.65 and 2nd place in the Social Final
- DASydney Mum-in-a-Boat crews came 1st and 2nd in the MIB Challenge.

A great weekend for all with lots of hard paddling and lots of smiles.

I want to say how proud I was to be part of such a dedicated and courageous bunch of people. Thank you!



Power in Action



Lyn Alcock and Sue McClelland proudly showing off the 2nd place trophy won by our Supporters in the Social Final



Passion – did we win?



Passion blitzes the field in the final



Caro Fentoullis – one happy coach

Dragon Boating from a coach's point of view:

Pink Ladies and DAS gather to race for Chinese New Year. Their love for dragon boating on the Harbour is clear.

One team, one boat winning medals.
One team, one boat spreading petals.

Leading doctors and nurses in hospital teams.
To achieve the times only made in dreams.

Working as one to forget the past.
Paddling like mad "we're not coming last!"

3,20,20. Bring it up, reach it out. Is that Carol or Akal? Boy can she shout.
Keep in time, use your legs, dig it in.
Even those coming last can't help but grin.

Strokes, drummers, paddlers and sweeps.
We've caught the bug, this sport is for keeps.

At Banks St. we'll train week after week.
Soaked and exhausted till we reach our peak.

Regattas and Twilights we'll be in it to race.
State championship Erg trials once more to face.

More teams, more boats. Making friends, getting fit, having fun.
More teams, more boats.
Survivors, supporters our goal is one.

Caro Fentoullis, 15/2/06

Sweeps' corner

Late last year, DASydney realised the urgency of putting a sweep training program together. We had been relying since our inception on the goodwill of sweeps from outside our club – most notably Zeus and Akal. As well, Jo Petterson has given up countless training sessions to sweep our boats since DASydney began and Carol Fentoullis, who became an accredited sweep last year, has given up a great deal of training time so we can practise.

So.... It's been a busy time over the past couple of months for getting our sweeps trained well so they can be confident on the water! Many thanks to those who have given up their paddling time between December and Chinese New Year to sweep the boats and to train the sweeps. Over this period Cynthia and Fairlie became fully certified DBNSW Accredited Sweeps, while Brenda Owen, Fran O'Brien and Claire Hendy have qualified as DBNSW Provisional Sweeps – with luck all three should complete the required number of races swept by the end of this month. Whew! There certainly has been a lot of activity from a lot of sweeping people since December!

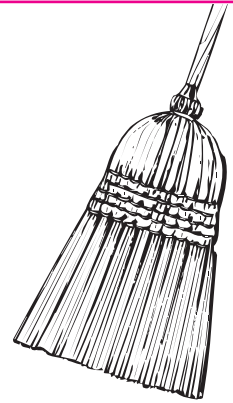
During this time we have also been really indebted to Akal Khalsa who has been instrumental, with Jo and Carol, in training Robin Shoebridge. Robin is a natural and can testify to the challenges and rewards of becoming a sweep! She is now ready to go for provisional accreditation as soon as she can do the written exam and practical test. Sue McClelland has taken up the challenge of becoming the newest DASydney novice sweep.

Here's the training session tally for sweeps between December 2005 to 10 January 2006::

- Cynthia – 6
- Brenda – 3
- Claire – 5
- Fairlie – 3
- Jo – 4
- Carol – 2
- Fran - 1

Please give all our sweeps plenty of thanks and encouragement and consider training as a sweep yourself - the more sweeps we have, the lighter the sweep load for everyone!

Fairlie Stanish, Sweep Coordinator



Newbies 25th Feb

Our first Newbies day for the year drew 21 brave souls, of whom 18 were breast cancer survivors and three were supporters. For the first time we put them all in the same boat with a sweep and a coach and it seems they must have enjoyed it because already 12 of them (plus a partner – good news, guys!) have requested to paddle again this Saturday.

Happily it was a lovely sunny day so we were all able to enjoy morning tea together afterwards. Thanks to those who helped with the Newbies and to everyone who brought yummy goodies to share with them.

Roll out the Welcome Mat

There's a brand new Dragons Abreast group way up north in Mackay, where Kim Collier started paddling just before moving to live in Sydney. What a come-down for her to arrive at our grotty parking lot in Pyrmont with its one horrid port-a-loo. The Yacht Club up there

in Mackay lets them store boats and gear, use the toilet, shower and restaurant facilities and hold their meetings on the deck overlooking the Harbour Beach and Marina. Here in Sydney we can only dream of facilities like that – but while our facilities might be woeful, our welcome is warm, Kim.

Milestones

Seems March is a big month for shared birthdays.

First there's Diana Plater on 4th; but on the 10th we have Bonny Cheliski, Christine Martin and Carolyn New; then on the 12th it's Irena Rodgers; and on the 24th they'll need fire engines for Jenny and Jo Petterson, Ann Poppelwell and Sue Williamson. Happy Birthday all!

Thanks to those who contributed to the newsletter this month and especially to Evan Seeto, of ACCA, for kindly taking such super photos. That's all for now!

Paddles up!
Cynth

DAS WINTER CALENDAR 2006.2007

Date(s)	Event	Location	Details
March 2006 Wed 15th	Hornsby Zonta	Hornsby	Guest speaker: Cynthia Kuiper
Thu 16th	Hunters Hill Quilters Guild	Hunters Hill	Guest speakers: Brenda Owen Cynthia Kuiper, Jo and Jenny Petterson
Sat 25th	2006 NSW State Dragon Boat Titles	Penrith, SIRC	EVERYONE on the club should paddle at this regatta. Contact Team Captain Fairlie Stanish (stanish@optusnet.com.au)
Fri 31st	BOOBS Exchange DASydney Craft Group		Scrapbooking again – fully booked
April 2006 Wed 12th	Wahroonga Rotary Club	Wahroonga	Guest speaker: Cynthia Kuiper
Fri 14th – Sun 16th	National DB Titles	Nagambie Lakes, Victoria	Contact Team Captain Fairlie Stanish (stanish@optusnet.com.au)
May 2006 Thu 4th	Westmead Hospital Breast Friends Mtg	Westmead	Guest speaker: Cynthia Kuiper
August 2006 11th – 13th	World Club Crew Championships	Toronto, Canada	Training Squad selection after the Nationals
September 2006 29th Sept - 1st Oct	International Pink Dragon Boat Council's Breast Cancer World Dragon Boat Championships	Singapore	More info: www.bcf.org.sg
September 2007 20th – 23rd	World Dragon Boat Championships	Penrith SIRC	We'll need lots of competitors and lots of volunteers
28th - 31st	Internationally Abreast Dragon Boat Festival	Kawana Lakes, Sunshine Coast, QLD	Small place – not too soon to book accommodation now. Survivors and supporters welcome