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Blue in a Sea of Pink

DASydney recently gained a landmark member – Bob Lawton. What's so special about him, you might ask? Well, he's one of just 400 men a year in Australia who get breast cancer.

It's so easy to forget, in the aggressively pink world of breast cancer, that men with this affliction face a particularly lonely, isolated path that is almost entirely geared towards women. Not only do many men initially tend to discount the possibility of a problem themselves ("real men don't get sick"), when they do finally raise concerns with their doctors they are quite commonly given the brush-off, with a casual, "it's nothing to worry about".

For this reason, late diagnosis of male breast cancer is disturbingly prevalent. To add insult to injury, their emotional life can be distressingly assailed with snide remarks from ignorant acquaintances. Hopefully Bob's story will go some way to redress the situation for our male breast cancer counterparts.



New recruit to Dragons Abreast Sydney, Bob Lawton, at Bank Street

Men can get breast cancer

Until recently this was off the horizon in terms of awareness. My experience began in May 2001 when my wife, Sue, noticed a change in the shape of my nipple on the right breast. I thought nothing of it because I was certain that breast cancer was a female thing. How wrong was I?

At Sue's urging I went to my regular GP and, despite his comment that it wasn't necessary, I insisted on a referral to a specialist. Neither the GP nor the specialist sent me for a mammogram which would

be standard practice for a woman. Instead the specialist, who couldn't see me until four months later, approached the issue as a possible dietary problem advising that many chicken products were notorious for having steroids in them causing hormonal problems. He suggested I give up coffee, chocolate and chicken meat amongst other things.

When I reported the details of my visit to Sue she accepted what I said but was not happy and was quite puzzled why a man was treated so differently

to a woman, but thought the specialist should know best.

In January 2002 Sue and I collided going through a doorway in opposite directions. Her shoulder met my right breast just where the nasty little cancer was hiding. To say it hurt is an under-statement – I visibly winced. This time, at Sue's insistence, we were off to her (female) GP. This doctor was quite concerned and she referred me to Dr Trevor Currier at the Sydney Adventist Hospital. He acted with

Welcome to Paddles Up,
the new look newsletter for
Dragons Abreast Sydney.
Click on the links below to go
straight to what interests you or
email enemark@ozemail.com.au
to give us your feedback.

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speed to verify that I had a problem. Imaging and a mammogram revealed that there was something there and it was decided that I should have a fine needle biopsy. They tried three times to get tissue from the cancer but couldn't succeed because the growth was so hard. The third try at the biopsy nearly lifted me off the couch. It hurt!

The staff asked Sue (she supported me through-out my battles) to let me rest in the waiting room "We have been a bit brutal with him" were the words. As I rested I could feel the right pectoral muscle throbbing. It felt like my heart had changed sides. "Don't be silly" was Sue's response. I opened my shirt and sure enough the muscle throbbed and was black and blue. I now measure pain against that day.

Surgery followed to ascertain whether the growth was benign or malignant. Unfortunately the news was bad – it was a very aggressive little cancer.

I was shaken and a little angry that my earlier concerns had been brushed aside so that cancer had not been picked up earlier. I am convinced to this day that, had I been a woman, I would have been treated very differently and would have been sent for a mammogram at the first consultation.

A mastectomy soon followed with 13 affected lymph glands removed. Then I commenced very aggressive chemotherapy where I lost all my body hair, this was followed by an equally aggressive regime of radiotherapy.

My new medical team was very supportive and gave me plenty of encouragement, which helped me feel I was in good hands. They were sensitive to gender issues particularly with any literature,

diagrams etc which all related breast cancer as a female problem.

Most of my friends accepted my cancer problem, but almost all were under the impression that it was a female disease. Likewise, my colleagues at work were disconcerted that I had what they perceived to be "a female problem". I feel sure that in some environments my diagnosis and treatment would have isolated me.

During the chemo I experienced my first little bit of humour. I was getting my second dose when a character came in to the room for chemo.

"My name is John – what's yours?"

"Bob", I answered.

"What are you here for?" (From John)

"Breast cancer."

"Bloody hell, so am I. But thank god I got it on the left side because I am right handed".

My response was equally forthright. "Thank god I got it on the right side – I'm left handed." We both shared a laugh.

A number of really good things have come out of my experiences. I retired from Macquarie University where I had run the Sports Association for 33 years. This meant much more time for family and a new hobby of digital photography.

Sue and I have six wonderful grandchildren who have arrived over the past three years. And to cap it all we have recently joined Dragons Abreast Sydney and have met a lovely group of people.



I understand that there are races for breast cancer survivors. I hope to take my place in a crew alongside a few all female rival crews. When I am challenged I will rip off my tee shirt and proudly point to my scar – my badge of honour.

I also hope to provide publicity for the little known fact, that "Men can get breast cancer".

In fact, there are about 400 males a year in Australia dealing with breast cancer and the number is apparently increasing with no real understanding of why. We need to spread the word so males seek and receive the same adequate and prompt attention as women. There is also a need to ensure that men receive proper counselling and psychological support so that self doubts about the legitimacy of their problem are minimised.

*Bob Lawton
Breast Cancer Survivor*

"Most of my friends accepted my cancer problem, but almost all were under the impression that it was a female disease. Likewise, my colleagues at work were disconcerted that I had what they perceived to be 'a female problem'."



Your new committee

DASydney AGM

After one of the coldest paddles on record, Saturday August 4th saw DASydney members gather for the Annual General Meeting. Thanks to Margaret Cantwell, we were able to use the facilities at Sydney Secondary College's Blackwattle campus.

After the confirmation of 2006 AGM Minutes, Treasurer Claire Hendy presented the financial report, which shows DASydney to be in good shape for the year ahead.

This was quickly followed by a Motion on Notice – Amendment to Rule 14 (3) in the Constitution as follows:

14 (3) (a): The Coordinator must have previously served at least one year on the DASydney committee and will serve a maximum of three years within a six year period in this position.

This amendment was carried by the meeting.

Outgoing Co-Ordinator Cynthia Kuiper then gave a comprehensive round-up of the club's activities and triumphs during the past year, paying tribute to the "many hands who make light work" on the committee and from the general membership.

For details of the Financial Report and the Club

Report, go online at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DASydney/> and log in.

The business of the day continued with the election of the new committee. As 15 nominations were received for the 15 vacancies, no vote was necessary. Your committee for the year ahead is:

Co-Ordinator	Wilma Kippers
Asst. Co-Ordinator	Deb Hirst
Treasurer	Claire Hendy
Secretary	Judith Dykes
Committee Members	
Pam Bell	Vicki Farmer
Carol Fentoullis	Joanne Jeffcoat
Sue McLelland	Vicki McLean
Carolyn New	Rosie O'Donnell
Brenda Owen	Kathryn Pineiro
Dianne Williams	

Individual responsibilities for committee members will be decided during the next week or so and will be published in the September newsletter.

DAS Club Awards

Head Coach Carol Fentoullis was next up with the 2007 DAS Club Awards. Proud winners included:

Most Improved	Liz Trenam
Most Consistent	Eugenia Raftos

Star Stroke	Angie Aston
Super Sweep	Claire Hendy
Most Promising New Sweep	Vicki McLean
Drummer with the Best Beat	Helen Westwood
Coach's Encouragement Award	Deb Hirst Carolyn New
Paddler with Most Potential	Judy Dykes
Outstanding Senior Award	Margaret Cantwell
Special Recognition Award	Deb Story
Team Captain's Award	Sue Tolhurst
Impressive Newcomers	Jane Stevenson Martin Hastings
Everyready Bunny Award	Sue McLelland
Gift of the Gab Award	Pam Bell
Happy to be in the Boat Award	Margot Case

Details of the all nominees and winners can be found by logging on to the group site at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DASydney/>

Deb Read Award

The final business of the day was the announcement of the Inaugural Deb Read Award.

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 DASydney 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.

Criteria for the award included selfless effort, positive contribution, leadership and inspirational involvement.

Nominees for the award included Carol Fentoullis, Neil Millgate and Brenda Owen, but the overwhelming choice was outgoing Club Co-Ordinator Cynthia Kuiper.



Deb Read

Margot Case summed up her reasons for nominating Cynthia for this award: "Since taking over from me (as Co-Ordinator) a few years ago Cynthia has given herself tirelessly to DASydney and also the breast cancer community at large. She has shown pivotal strength within the club, leadership, friendship and a genuine passion, oh what a passion, for paddling and anything associated with breast cancer."

Cynthia was a bit shy about being the first name on the commemorative plaque, which will be up-dated each year with the name of the recipient.

Kerry Enemark



Cynthia Kuiper was presented with the Inaugural Deb Read Award by Muriel Buckeridge and Deb Hirst



Have Sue McClelland's glasses iced up? Huddling together to keep warm on Taronga ferry wharf

DASydney goes walkabout

A small group of Eskimos huddled on the wharf at the Zoo, ready to take the DASydney walking challenge. By golly it was cold, but not too cold for those who had shaved their legs for the occasion to compare legs. The coffee shop was not open and lost what would have been a huge order. Were we deterred? Not a bit! Off we went for what turned out to be a great walk.

Wilma had provided maps – and how she got them is another story!

We set off in a group, but it was not long before those with more energy, or less warm clothing, cranked up to a brisk walk. In fact, we never saw the Puddick group again! As we switched up and down the line we each chatted to a different group and strengthened our team bonds.

It is always so amazing to walk around the harbour and catch sight of views that take your breath away. (At least, I think it was the views, not the cold weather or the pace). We were even lucky enough to wave at Martin Hastings who was on the harbour in something a tiny bit bigger than a dragon boat!

Coffee break was most welcome – possibly the

slowest service in Sydney, but not a concern for us as we sat and enjoyed the scenery at Clifton Gardens.

The sun was out and the wind died down, and we were laughing. Clambering over the battlements at Middle Head revived childhood memories for many of our walkers.

As we walked past the Naval Establishments we again marvelled at the views available to those who lived there, but not as much as we marvelled at the boardwalk downhill to Balmoral.

We finished the day with most of us having fish and chips on the foreshore at Balmoral. Robert Ene-mark had driven to collect Kerry and was planning an intimate meal for two at the Awaba Café – not to be on this occasion as sitting on the grass with our happy group was much more fun.

It really was a lovely day. Not too far, pleasant weather eventually and, as usual when we get together, happy times. Thanks to Wilma for organising the walk and to everyone for enjoying the spirit of the day.

Vicki McLean



Coffee break at Clifton Gardens: Fairlie Stanish and her husband Paul, with Vicki McLean and her friend, another Vicky.



Sue Williamson, Liz Trenam, Wendy Jensen, Di Williams and Kath O'Connell enjoy the break.



Claire Hendy and family at Clifton Gardens.



He's out there somewhere – Wilma and the walkers trying to find Martin on the harbour.



Lost? We're not lost – we're just taking the scenic route, says Pam Bell.



Recovering at Balmoral.

A Very Trivial Night of Fun

On a very cold Friday night 90 or so hardy souls braved the weather and parking to battle it out for the honour of winning the Inaugural DASydney Trivia Night. With 12 teams of members, friends and family the competition was fierce, and that was only for the award for the best food!

Most teams managed to stay near the top of the points ladder for most of the evening, but the Flags question (worth 20 points) separated the leaders from the "almost won" teams. The winning table was a bunch of non-members (not worth mentioning their names) but the second most sought-after prize went to the team of Kath O'Connell, Chris Egan, Wendy Mann, Claire Hendy, Katrina Hendy, Yolande Franklin and Judy Dykes. That prize was of course was the Wooden Spoon. Way to go ladies!

There was yummy food, funny answers, nice champagne, fantastic chocolates and did I mention the prizes? Lots of Jewellery donated by Ros Rush-Mackay and many bottles of wine and beer, most of which ended up on the table occupied by Serge, Kathryn & Liz. There were many prizes donated by local businesses and individuals, including the gift of using the Mustard Seed church as the venue.

My Hubby John did a great job as MC and looked the part with his silver vest and bowtie and bright pink hair!

With only four weeks lead time the energetic team of Liz Trenam, Gael Ellis, Stephanie Barrett and myself managed to plan this fun and rewarding night. Next year the winning team should be full of DASydney members, so you had better start studying!

*Yours in trivia,
Jo Jeffcoat*



**The Master and Mistress of Trivia:
John & Jo Jeffcoat**



Cynthia Kuiper is sure Lyn Tyson knows the answer to the question.



**Winners of the Wooden Spoon Award –
we may not know a lot about trivia, but we are experts on paddling.**



**More DASzlers enjoying the Triva Night –
Chris Kwong and Sue Tolhurst, Vicki McLean, Liz Trenam and Katherine Pineiro**



Pink Pennies

Wow – don't those pennies add up! Huge thanks to the girls who persuaded their cafes, pharmacies, newsagents etc to put the DAA coin collection tins on their counters. Some of you apologized that your tins weren't full, but that's not the point – it's the cumulative total that counts and, boy, did they all add up – to an amazing \$726 and still counting a few late tins. What a painfree contribution to DAA you've made – many thanks!

It's Regatta Season Again!

Sure hope you've copied all the regatta dates for the season into your diaries (see the Calendar in this newsletter). **Dobroyd** is first up on Sunday 26th August and it's a lovely relaxed little regatta with a great picnic atmosphere. The racing is only about 200-250metres (they're not sure – that's how relaxed it is) so it's a perfect first opportunity for newbies to experience the thrill of the chase! Don't miss it!

Ryde follows shortly after, on 9th September, so maybe now we start to get the payoff for all that exercise over the winter – hopefully. Whatever – it will be fun, so don't forget to put your name down pronto! Usual deal – money in an envelope with your name plus the name of the regatta on it.

One other thing – they changed the date for the Tacoma regatta, so you might need to change that in your diary, if you've been super-efficient diary-wise already. It's now Saturday, 12th January – a great way to shake off pudding-pudge.

In and Out of the Wars

Best news in ages – Debbie Story is back after her amazing back surgery. You may remember when we were at the Nationals in April we heard she was in hospital in agony from a secondary in her back. Well in true Deb style, she told her doctor that simply wasn't good enough and he'd better fix it. Now,

some excavation, rods and screws later, she's pain-free and paddling like a fiend again. Congratulations, Deb! It's great to have you back in the boat again, as feisty as ever!

Our Magic Mistress of Merchandising, Brenda Owen, is back from her languid Medi-



Brenda Owen

terranean idyll – which is the good news. Her less good news is that the subsequent operation on her feet (one of which ran into post-op trouble) plus going back to work has temporarily taken the wind out of her sails. We have more hope for the early improvement of her wounds and dicky balance than we have for any improvement in the Blackwattle Bay water quality or the ramp safety – so it's still too risky for her to paddle just yet.

Stephanie Barrett is still sporting a splint after tearing a tendon in her wrist earlier in the year – but even though we haven't seen her at paddling for months that didn't stop her working like a demon to help Jo Jeffcoat, Liz Trenam and Gael Ellis make the recent trivia night a huge success. Stephanie is desperately hoping she'll be paddling again by the time we all go to Caloundra.

Cripes! That was a grisly one! There we were, looking forward to having Sergio Pineiro back in the boat to boost our paddler-poor numbers on these cold winter evenings (he's been busy building a lovely, new kitchen for Kathryn) when a sheepish



Deb Story in party mode

phone call came through saying he wasn't coming that night after all. Seems, in a macabre accident with a band saw, poor Sergio managed to slice longitudinally through his little finger (makes my blood curdle just thinking about it).

Let the Bargains Begin

The Entertainment Book sale is over! Thanks to everyone who pitched in and helped selling the books. I know that it gets harder every year as so many organisations are trying to raise funds. Anyway – our results are not too bad! 29 people sold a total of 73 books. 16 people sold more than one book. Top seller was Vicki Farmer with 10 books closely followed by Angie Aston on eight. Congratulations to our Booksellers of the Year! The bottom line is that we will now be able to send \$870 to DAA.

Vicki McLean

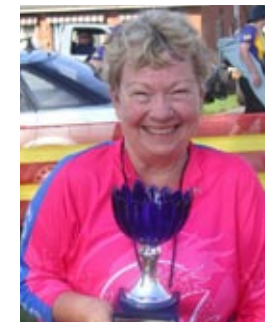
You've Seen the Paddling – Now Read the Book!

What better gift for yourself with Christmas looming (do you really need an excuse?) than this specially commissioned history of Dragons Abreast. Are the kids looking for something more affordable to give you for Christmas? Do you have friends who would enjoy receiving a copy? Wanna give one to your doctor, even? We hope to have stock of the book later this month and are taking orders now already – usual method – just give me (Cynthia) the money in an envelope with your name and "A Dragon's Tale" written on the outside. This fascinating tome will be selling at Caloundra and at bookshops for \$35, but you can get copies from us at just \$27, if you are quick.



Cacophony in Caloundra

Hear ye! Hear ye! We are blessed with a bard in our boat! Di Millgate has bestowed upon us the following adaptive team 'song' to take to regattas (as DASzlers) and to Caloundra (as DASydney). We just need to belt it out to the tune of *Down By The Station* – we can all manage that, right? Set yourselves, are you ready, attention:



Di Millgate deserves a trophy for her songwriting abilities.



Down at Bank Street, early in the morning
DASzlers paddlers, warming up done.
Butts to the gunwales, all of us together,
Gliding through the water, working as one.

DASzlers paddlers, supporting one another
On the gleaming water or out on the land.
DASzlers paddlers care for one another
And know we have someone to give us a hand.

DASzlers paddlers, stretch it out together
Get the boat moving like a dynamo
It's all about team work and
that's what we're good at
DASzlers paddlers, here we go!



A Novice's Sweeping Statement

We simply can't paddle without sweeps – pretty obvious statement, eh? But always remember, as you sit in the boat, that as well as nerve, it requires considerable generosity of spirit to forego so much paddling (and the associated fitness opportunity) and take on sweeping. Our latest sweeping recruit, the tap-dancing Vicki Farmer, tells of her learning experiences:

It was with some trepidation that I volunteered for sweeping. The first day came around far too quickly and there I was, perched on the back of the boat with Fairlie Stanish, trying desperately to keep my balance. After envisaging myself swimming to shore several times, Fairlie finally took pity on me and brought the boat home. Coffee that morning was, oh soooooo sweeeeet!!!

On my second try Vicki McLean was my teacher and it was very cold, windy, grotty weather. There seemed to be boats everywhere I looked! My feet kept going numb I was so tense but, slowly, slowly, I began to relax a bit and enjoy (!?!) it all. When it was time to come home and I prepared for Vicki to take over, she had other ideas and, to my great amazement, I actually took the boat in to the ramp alone.....WOW.



Novice Sweep, Vicki Farmer

Next time was with Cynthia on a much nicer day and I'm beginning to think I might like this sweeping business!! My toes still curled over and my feet went to sleep, but with a little tap dance they loosened up. I still felt as though I'd be swimming home soon, but much less often and it was the BEST feeling when everyone gave their all and the boat flew. It's a wonderful experience and my teachers have all been fantastic, giving me the confidence to keep going.

I would highly recommend having a go at sweeping. The Club really needs more people to volunteer, so please consider it – you'll be surprised at how great it feels.

Vicki Farmer

BCI's Free Public Forum

The NSW Breast Cancer Institute is the biggest and best public Breast Cancer forum of the year. It's a great free update on key issues for survivors and a good opportunity for questions. To give you an idea of how professional it is, it is broadcast live from Westmead Hospital NSW to 60 locations across Australia. Professor John Boyages (Exec Director of BCI and a key supporter of our DA Hospital Challenge Race at Chinese New Year) will host the forum out at Westmead on Saturday, 25th August 1pm – 3.50pm (so you don't even need to miss paddling). Among the topics they'll be covering are:

- Sexuality after breast cancer,
- Exercise after treatment,
- The medical issues
- Living with uncertainty,
- Special issues for rural women,

Phone BCI on (02) 9845 6728 for more information.

Happy Birthday to You!!

Quite a few milestones to celebrate in August.

1st	Anne Tibbitts
2nd	Michele Straight
5th	Yolande Franklin
18th	Jo Jeffcoat
24th	Judy Dykes and Kathy Dundas
25th	Cathy Seddon
28th	Christine Fitzgerald (haven't seen you for ages – where are you?)
30th	Geri Hill



Finally ...

As most of you know, I'm stepping down as Co-ordinator of DASydney at the AGM as, after three years, I think it is important for new people to become involved and an injection of fresh ideas never goes astray. So this is also my 34th and last edition of the DASydney newsletter. Kerry Enemark, who has been making my mess of words and pictures look beautiful, has already started work on the September edition. Thanks, Kerry.

But before I go, I'd just like to reinforce, for those of you who haven't been heard it before, the one issue that is very dear to my heart, and I hope to yours: four and a half years ago I came to Dragons Abreast Sydney in a complete mess both physically and emotionally. I found friendship, fun, fitness, laughs, opportunities to achieve things I never dreamed of and I met some fabulous people I never would have met. I have gained all of these things in abundance from Dragons Abreast and they have made a huge difference in my life. I know others feel the same. However, I am acutely aware that in soaking up the benefits of Dragons Abreast in this

way, we each also incur a significant personal debt – it is a debt that can only be discharged by helping to create that same wondrous adventure for others. We all know now that Dragons












Abreast is not just about paddling – it is much, much more than that. So if you only remember one thing I've said, I hope it will be this – that we ALL owe it to those who follow us (and we know there will be many) to take an active role in continuing to make the magic happen for them.

Thank you for the support and friendship you've given me and thank you for being the magic that is Dragons Abreast. Let's all make sure that magic keeps on happening!



Paddles Up

Cynth

Month	Date(s)	Event	Location	Details
August 2007	Sat 11th	Field of Women Live	Telstra Stadium, Homebush	Organised by BCNA: Details www.bcna.org.au
	Mon 13th	DASydney Craft Group – scrapbooking	Pymble	Everyone welcome. Email Robin Shoebridge: rsho3799@bigpond.net.au
	 Sun 26th	Dobroyd Aquatic Club Regatta	Dobroyd Point	Relaxed 200m racing, lovely picnic atmosphere. Contact Team Capt Di Williams and register now.
September 2007	 Sun 9th	Ryde Aquatic Festival Regatta	Ryde	200m racing again. Contact Team Capt Di Williams and register now.
	19th – 23rd	IDBF: World Dragon Boat Championships	Penrith SIRC	Be there to cheer on Angie and Neil.
	 27th – 30th	Abreast in Australia Dragon Boat Festival	Kawana Lakes, Sunshine Coast, QLD	You'll kick yourself if you miss it! Remember to register family too.
October 2007	Sat 6th -Sun 7th	First Aid Course	Homebush, Sydney	Official certification course run by Surf Lifesaving Assoon – course subsidized by DBNSW – take advantage of it.
	 Sun 21st	Roseville Regatta	Davidson Park, Roseville	500m racing – lovely picnic day
	Fri 26th	Fashion Extravaganza	Canada Bay Club, William Street, Five Dock	Great Show, then try and buy– incredible bargains. Contact Gael Ellis: gale@bigpond.com
November 2007	 Sun 4th	Penrith Regatta	Penrith SIRC	500m racing
	 Sat 17th	Twilight Regatta	Blackwattle Bay	Lovely informal evening
	Sat 24th	DASydney Christmas Party	TBA	Well, you wanted to know well ahead of time!
December 2007	 Sun 2nd	Penrith Regatta	SIRC	200m racing
January 2008	 Sat 12th	Tacoma Regatta	Wyong River, Tacoma	Great day out on the river bank
	 Sat 19th	Skins Event	Blackwattle Bay	
February 2008	 16th/17th	Chinese New Year Regatta	Darling Harbour	Mad to miss this!
April 2008	 Sat 5th/ Sun 6th	NSW State Titles	Penrith SIRC	Vastly exciting!
August 2008	1st – 5th	IDBF Club Crew World Championships	Penang, Malaysia	DASydney Women's Grand Masters crew qualified to compete – who's interested?

 Don't miss this!



Regatta dates – put them in your diary now!