



Dragons Abreast Sydney
Sydney Coordinator – Rosie O'Donnell
Email: sydney@dragonsabreast.com.au
PO Box 133, Pyrmont NSW 2009
Editor: Kerry Enemark

Chinese New Year 2011

Claire Hendy reports on one of the highlights of the paddling year – Chinese New Year at Darling Harbour

What a great Chinese New Year regatta weekend we had.

On Saturday the Grand Masters Mixed were up first as usual, and while we didn't make it into the winners' circle, we came 5th overall, with a time of 1'08.79. The fastest boat in the three heats was Nowra, in 1'04.27. (Whatever those Nowra people are on, I want some, or maybe they just train really hard.)

We had two boats in the Masters Women races, up against some stiff competition from around the state. (Who probably had more women in their boats who were actually Masters age)



Lining up for the traditional "dotting of the eyes" at Chinese New Year



This year Dragons Abreast Sydney had a record number of "virgins" paddling at their first CNY

Power came 4th in both their heats, knocking three seconds off their time in the second round – that gust of wind from the side in the first round almost taking us sideways just before the finish line – but still not good enough to get into the finals. We were six seconds behind the fastest boat in the first round and three seconds behind in the second round, so we have some work to do before the next competition.

Passion did really well too, although they came 6th in both rounds, they did it in style and looked good. Their best time was 1'21.49

Our Masters Mixed team probably had one of their most successful regattas, coming 3rd in both heats, in times of 1'11.03 and 1'12.62. Mind you, the fastest time was 1'02.99 – Nowra again! As there were so many entries in this group this year, this was not good enough to get into the finals.

So this is one of the few regattas that we did not get

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Our trusty (and talented) photographer Elizabeth Ban was again on duty at Darling Harbour. For lots more photos of Chinese New Year 2011 visit the Dragons Abreast Sydney Picasa site at



<https://picasaweb.google.com/dragonsabreastsydney>

into any finals, but it did make for a nice short day, early bath and a nap to get ready for the really fun day on Sunday.

This year, we had a very large group of virgin paddlers taking part in their first Chinese New Year. Judging from all the smiling faces I think they enjoyed themselves, whatever boat they found themselves in, and I think we had representatives in quite a few.

Passion was determined to take back the DAA Challenge this year, and we did it in style.

Power, which was a real development boat this year, did a great job. Paddlers found out why it is important to keep in time in a dragon boat race, and when they got into the minor final, they looked just great from the bank, and with timing finally coming together nicely, they made it to the end looking and feeling good.

As always, the Flowers on the Water ceremony was touching and full of emotion, but also a celebration of life, especially during the extremely long paddle guard of honour at the end! I think Miroshlava gets the medal for most times through a guard of honour!

With all those corporate and social teams there, and all their supporters, hopefully we will have had some positive effects on someone, as far as awareness of Breast cancer goes.

Thanks to everyone for fitting in with all the rearrangements of crews that had to go on to help the other teams from around the country to be able to fill their boats, especially those who had been affected by the floods and cyclone, who had dwindling numbers of paddlers able to come along this year. It was certainly a challenge, but Dragons Abreast Australia as a whole banded together to put on a good demonstration showing the face of breast cancer, and life after the disease.



**Above left: Dragons Abreast Sydney Passion team reclaimed the DAA Challenge trophy this year. Above right: Flowers on the Water
Below left: Power and (right) Passion**



Tacoma 2011

The first regatta of 2011 was, as usual, held at Tacoma on the Central Coast. The early start was a challenge, but well worth it with perfect summer weather, including a cooling breeze off the river, competitive racing, good company and, as always, lots of yummy food.

DASzlers' day started well with our Grand Masters Mixed team coming in a close third behind Central Coast and Bei Loon in the Grand Masters final. Another trophy for the cabinet – this time a collectors item as the trophies from Tacoma were all engraved "Penrith" instead of "Tacoma" – oops!

In the Masters Womens competition our Passion boat came 2nd in their first heat, with only 18 paddlers in the boat, in a time of 2'01.03, but were 5th fastest among all the entrants. In the second round we came 5th, in 2'02.13, but were in the fastest heat, so we actually were faster than the winner of the other heat, so still came 5th fastest overall. That got us into the final, when we could race with 20 paddlers using our reserves from the other boat, and we came a close 4th in the final.

Our Power boat came a very creditable 5th in their first heat and 4th in their second heat, with only 16 then 17 paddlers. DASzlers Masters Mixed team came 4th in both their heats in 1'57.98, and then 1'55.32 and looked very strong doing it.



Who broke the dragon head? The slippery mud proved a hazard for one DASzler (who shall remain nameless). While trying to maintain her balance (and dignity), she managed to fall sideways on to the head of the dragon.



"I didn't stop, I kept going to the end, that's all I wanted." Margarita Spence was one happy paddler after completing her first regatta race at Tacoma. There'll be no stopping her now!



Have we acquired a mascot? Donna Paredes dog joined in the celebrations with the Passion team, who came in 4th in the Masters Womens final at Tacoma.

I feel a thong coming on ...

As usual after a regatta, the weekend after Tacoma we enjoyed a bit of silliness at the Saturday morning paddle – this time experimenting with a new style of paddle.

You might be surprised to learn that you can get up a fair speed paddling with thongs, but we don't want to give ourselves an unfair advantage so we have decided to stick with more a more traditional style of paddle.



NSW STATE TEAM

Dragons Abreast Sydney will be well represented at the Nationals in Canberra with 22 members representing NSW in the State vs State competition – the largest contingent of paddlers yet from our club to wear the Blue NSW uniform. They are:

Grand Masters Women:

Deb Hirst, Christine Mitchell and Carol Taylor

Grand Masters Open:

Martin Hastings, Martin Hirst, Chris Kwong, Bob Smith and Tony Williams

Great Grand Masters:

Angie Aston, Muriel Buckeridge, Judith Dykes, Gael Ellis, Vicki Farmer, Wendy Jensen, Cynthia Kuiper, Carolyn New, Eugenia Raftos, Robin Shoebridge, Fairlie Stanish and Ruth Turnell. Coach: Sue McClelland. Drummer: Rosie O'Donnell

Masters: Carol Fentoullis

Keeping the beat

In the first of a series highlighting the different positions in the boat, our head coach Claire Hendy talks about the all-important position of the drummer.

We are going to be putting short articles in Paddles Up over the year to hopefully inform our members about different positions and responsibilities in the boat, particularly during racing.

We are starting with the Drummer.

A good drummer will make a big contribution to the success of a boat in a race, and elite teams use their drummers, rather than their sweeps, to motivate the crew and put into practice the race plan during a race. In this case the drummer will be a very experienced paddler, possibly also a sweep or coach.

In a recreational team, such as ours, (yes, I know we are competitive!), the drummer works with the sweep to help keep the boat focused and in time, and to call and encourage during the race.

The drummer can have a multitude of responsibilities, depending on their experience and abilities, and which boat they are drumming for.

The main ones are:

- Keeping the paddlers focused in their boat during the lining up at the start.
- Assisting the sweep in lining up, raising a hand to indicate to the starter that the boat is not ready, on the "are you ready" call, if the sweep tells them to.
- Visibly drumming the drum, either from the start of the race, or after the start at the 'reach it out' phase (depending on race rules). The crew can be disqualified if the drummer is not drumming.
- Keeping time with the stroke on their right remembering that the strokes set the rate, not the drummer.

- Passing on commands from the sweep, which paddlers near the front may not have heard, before, during and after the race.
- Encouraging the paddlers, following the sweep's lead if possible, but if the sweep is busy keeping control, the drummer may have to take over and give commands themselves. The drummer really needs plenty of experience to be able to do this confidently, and needs to know the race plan and discuss the calls with the sweep.
- Passing on emergency stop calls with confidence if there is a need to stop during the race.

The drummer can also lead the warm up before a race, and may need to hold the boat during loading.

A good drummer helps to instil confidence in the paddlers that the crew is in good hands, so they can focus on their task of paddling hard and winning the race.

Desirable drummer attributes are:

- A low body weight (in our boats we are probably looking ideally at below 65kgs)
- A good, carrying voice.
- A confident manner and ability to adapt their style to the crew they are with.
- Rhythm. The ability to keep time with the strokes, and not get overexcited during the race and lose timing.

Drumming can be great fun, a different way to experience dragon boat racing, a different view of the race, and certainly a less strenuous way to win a race than paddling!

In our boats we often have to adapt our selection of



drummers to who is available, which races we are entering, and to things like using people with short term injuries who cannot paddle, using paddlers who are under the paddling age for a crew etc. You can drum for a crew even if you are under the paddling age for that crew.

The club needs some more experienced drummers,

so if any of you are interested in being a drummer, and would therefore like to have more experience of the role, please let me know, or have a chat with one of the coaches about it.

You never know, you might one day end up drumming for the State or Australian teams!

Entertainment Book 2011

The new edition of the Entertainment Book is now available. Find out how you, and your family and friends, can enjoy discounts on all sorts of entertainment options – dining out, theatre, movies, holidays...

This is a major fundraiser for Dragons Abreast Sydney. For every \$65 book sold, \$13 goes to Dragons Abreast.



To order your books contact:

Mariann Evans Phone: 9875 3839 email: mariann@evansfin.com.au

DRAGONS ABREAST SYDNEY CALENDAR 2011

Month	Date(s)	Event	Location	Details
March 2011	Saturday 19th	NSW State Championships	SIRC Penrith	Register with Christine Mitchell at chris_m@hotmail.com
	30th - 3rd April	National Dragon Boating Titles	Canberra	Register with Christine Mitchell at chris_m@hotmail.com
June 2011	12th-13th	Port Macquarie Regatta and Marathon	Port Macquarie	Register with Christine Mitchell at chris_m@hotmail.com
October 2011	Sunday 30th	Dragons Abreast Festival	Darling Harbour	TBA



Regatta dates – put them in your diary now!

Pink Connections

If you are a breast cancer survivor or currently undergoing treatment, Pink Connections invites you to join them for morning tea on the first Tuesday of each month, 10am until 12 noon, at Mona Vale Golf Club, Golf Avenue, Mona Vale.

Pink Connections aims to provide inspiration, strength and support along your breast cancer journey.
Contact: Fran (9982 4396) or Judee (9451 8427)

Thank you

You will remember that this Christmas Dragons Abreast Sydney donated gifts to the Bonnie Women's Refuge. Their general manager, Nirma Lee, recently sent a certificate of appreciation for our club's generosity.



Media Star

DA Sydney Club member Carol Taylor recently featured in an article in the February edition of the NSW Nurses Association magazine "The Lamp".



ICBCP Festival

Following the successful BC Festival in Peterborough in 2010, the International Breast Cancer Paddler Commission (IBCP) is now seeking expressions of interest for hosting the next ICBCP Participatory Festival in 2014.

The winning bid will be announced in March 2012.

Visiting paddlers

As our members are such inveterate travellers, it pays to bear in mind that Dragons Abreast is a national and international organisation and, if you are in need of a paddling "fix" while away from home, other DA clubs are often happy to welcome you to training sessions. Eva Stern caught up with the Merimbula paddlers over Christmas:

"Over Christmas and the New Year, I was at my son's place on Myrtle Mountain. I had heard that there was a Dragons Abreast group in Merimbula, which is not too far from Myrtle Mountain. I got their address from the website and emailed them.

Some friendly person phoned me, and I managed to go for a paddle with them, one wednesday afternoon. It was a beautiful calm day on Top Lake, and I was made to feel very welcome."



Birthdays

Happy Birthday to all those born in March:

- Josephine Abrahams 2nd
- Colleen Smith 4th
- Caroline New 10th
- Kerry Surace 12th
- Bob Capes 24th
- Jo Pettersen 24th
- Susan Williamson 24th
- Julie Grantham 27th
- Carol Taylor 30th

And in April

- Maria-Luisa Gleria 1st
- Kathleen O'Connell 2nd
- Geraldine Bourne 3rd
- Hazel Blend 8th
- Janine Leonard 14th
- Anne Parfitt 15th