

Sutherland Shire Canoe Club History 1972-1997

This historical record of the Sutherland Shire Canoe Club was prepared by the Club's Living Legend, Joan Morison OAM, for the Club's Silver Anniversary in 1997.

In the beginning ...

Our founders were members of another club who merged with a Sea Scout group to share a facility. Fantastic having a meeting hall near water but there was a problem. Strict regulations impinged on Canoeing freedom. Thus SSCC was born of frustration ... a meeting where even children were given a vote to contain the progress of canoeing activities.



After this meeting, under a shady tree in Prince Edward Park, they decided that the only solution was to form a new canoe club.

Since that historic day in 1972, more than 1,000 people have 'passed through' the club, all making a significant impact. Each joined for different and sometimes unusual reasons. All brought some special skill. Our thanks must go to everyone for contributing to the success of the club.

Whether it was competition, administration or recreations, members of SSCC were in there flying the flag. You may not be aware that SSCC has been a tremendous force in the running of Canoesport in NSW. Since our formation in 1972, club members have held positions in the NSW Canoeing Association (now New South Wales Canoeing). Twenty-five years of service to State Canoeing. A great Club record.

As for communication, the Club Newsletter provided that uniting link for the growing membership. It didn't really have a personality until June 1975 when a competition decided the name "CANEWS". It's still with us!

Apart from all this hype, the best thing the Club did was to provide great memories for some of its members. While learning the basic skills of canoeing we had tremendous FUN! Our meetings (in those balmy days when people went to meetings) were great social gatherings. Activities, no matter what boat you paddled, or what disciplines you preferred, were terrific. From Marathon to Sprint, Slalom to Polo, Wild water Racing to White Water Touring, Base Camps to Picnic Paddles ... We did it all!

Today? SSCC still provides the skills and enjoyment of Canoeing. Designs of canoes, kayaks and paddles may have changed; and competitors still take themselves seriously, but despite all that, SSCC is still doing OK. The pace of club life is more leisurely. These days social activities mostly take place at our Jannali Park (now Burnum Burnum Reserve) facility. Membership (like that of the vast majority of canoe clubs) is relatively small. Gone the "Big Band Era" when the clubs averaged 200 to 500 members ... Ah! Memories! Join us as we reminisce the Club's Twenty-Five Years

1972 to 1977 – The First Five Years of the Sutherland Shire Canoe Club

Founders in the Park ... Albert and Gwen Hopkins; Bob and Sue Lawton; Rod Jolliffe; Shirley and Ray Abrahall; Mary, Cam, Barbara and David Penton; Ron Bennett; Alan Willard; Rob and Elizabeth Hodsdon; Ron and Lyn Cannings.

*FIRST OFFICIAL MEETING WAS HELD ON 5 MAY 1972 AT THE ABRAHALL HOME AT MULYAN STREET, COMO WEST.
THOSE PRESENT WERE:
ALBERT HOPKINS; ROD JOLLIFFE; L. MURPHY; BOB LAWTON; ELIZABETH AND ROB HODSDON; MARY, CAM AND DAVID PENTON; SHIRLEY AND RAY ABRAHALL; GEORGE ELLEM; R. WILSON AND KEITH CARROLL.
APOLOGIES: GWEN HOPKINS; SUE LAWTON.
IN BETWEEN THAT DAY IN THE PARK AND THE FIRST OFFICIAL MEETING, SEVERAL OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS HAD BEEN HARD AT WORK PREPARING A CONSTITUTION AND RULES. AFTER AN ELECTION OF OFFICERS, THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION AND RULES WERE CIRCULATED, READ AND VOTED UPON, CLAUSE BY CLAUSE.
MEMBERS FEES WERE SET ...
JUNIOR (U/16) \$1.50
ORDINARY \$3.00
FAMILY \$5.00*

It was a busy night No detail of organisation was forgotten ...

The club would have a PO Box and a Newsletter. Any publicity would be given to the two newspapers regularly. They wanted to have a Patron. Badges and Club singlets would be approved at the next meeting. Canoe building was high on the agenda. ... One mould was already available (KW7) and a Down River Racer was in the pipeline. Experienced members would form a Building Committee. Delegates to the NSW Canoeing Association (NSWCA) and its Committees were elected. They would join immediately. The Club would open a bank account.

Well ... we can't open a bank account without money! The President, Albert Hopkins, donated \$5 to start the ball rolling. Not to be outdone assisting the Club, Bob Lawton donated stencils, paper and some fibreglass material. The Secretary, Elizabeth Hodsdon, won the day when she donated the first year cost of the PO Box. Bravo all!

So, by the time everyone paid their membership fees, there was a tidy sum to go in the bank. Tired but elated with the new venture, the meeting closed at 11.25 pm.

There was an enormous growth and enthusiasm in the first five years. After joining NSWCA, the Club members involved themselves in every activity available.

The Seventies were "boom" years for the Sport of Canoeing. SSCC was in there "boots and all" – which wasn't surprising, for several members were elected to official positions on the NSWCA Executive as well as the three disciplines then available (Sprint, Slalom, Touring). NSWCA positions held were ... Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Secretary, Vice President and Publicity Officer.

Was it any wonder that there were 113 members by the end of the first year?

In those first five years SSCC was like a well tended garden. Growth in all things was apparent. By the time the President handed the reins over at the 1977 AGM, The President Elect inherited an enthusiastic band of canoeists- over 200 strong, ready and eager for anything.

Meetings

The first year began with meetings in members' homes.

As more members joined a meeting place was sought. The first venue was the Bates Drive School. Eventually SSCC outgrew the venue and the Como School of Arts was suggested, checked and meetings began there in 1976.

The old School of Arts was an ideal meeting place for our purpose and it was filled to overflowing each month.

A variety of programs and activities was staged for members. This was considered an important task, and a Program Officer was elected to see a wide range of activities was held. The Program Officer position was maintained until 1979, when it became necessary for each of the active disciplines to present their own programs.

Social

SSCC were a very socially oriented lot. What was the use of a meeting without supper? And naturally ... entertainment?

1974/5 saw the introduction of a Social Committee ... no more just the few willing hands who provided sustenance at former meetings ...

The first Convenor was Bob Davis (alias the Sultan) who organised a "harem" of ladies to do his work for him!

A succession of excellent Social Committees has since followed in his footsteps.

THE CLUB NEWSLETTER (The Birth of "CANEWS")

It all began on a Fordigraph. The age of Duplicator, Photocopier and Computer were light years away. The purple ink wasn't easy to read and news had to be printed on hand stencils ... it was an Editor's "labour of love".

Bingo! The Club bought a duplicator and a typewriter, stencils and a stylus pen. Wow! We were getting professional!

By the end of the first five years, new Editor Joan Morison had secured two advertisers. The cover was now printed with club activity photos on the front.



Some Gems from "CANEWS"

*SEP '72: MEETING APPROVED T/SHIRTS AND RACING SINGLETS IN CLUB COLOURS.
OCT '72: QUOTE OF THE MONTH: "TO ENTERTAIN SOME PEOPLE ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS LISTEN".*

FEB '73: "HELL ... STINKING RESIN ... NOT MUCH MORE TO GO ... THAT'S THE HULL AND DECK LAID ... BLOODY CUTTER STUCK TO MY HAND ... ACETONE ... GET THE BRUSH CLEANED BEFORE IT GOES OFF! TOO LATE ... BAST!

MAR '73: SSCC'S FIRST MEDALS AT SATE RACING CHAMPS: 1 GOLD, 1 SILVER AND 3 BRONZE. WELL DONE!

*JUL '73: NEW CLUB RULES: LIFE JACKETS TO BE CARRIED ON ALL RIVER TRIPS
MEMBER SAFETY TESTS TO BE UPDATED
SET UP A CLUB LIBRARY*

SIX PAUCHET TROPHIES ALLOCATED – 4 FOR RACING, 1 MOST IMPROVED AND 1 FIVE YEAR AWARD ... WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

AUG '73: CLUB MEMBER, BARBARA PENTON, WAS THE NSW STUDENT OF THE YEAR.

SEP '73: AHOY BOAT BUILDERS! THE CLUB WILL SUPPLY 3 PARSLEY CUTTERS WITH CLUB EQUIPMENT.

FEB '75: ANYONE INTERESTED IN THE NEW DISCIPLINE OF CANOE POLO? CONTACT RAY ABRAHALL THE NSW CONVENOR.

JUL '75: CAKE AUCTION! \$20 WAS RAISED FOR A DELICIOUS LOOKING FRUIT CAKE WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE A CLEVERLY DISGUISED BLOCK OF WOOD!

OCT '75: MATCH RACE AT REID'S FLAT, AUDLEY. KEITH CARROLL CHALLENGES BOB DAVIS. (WHO TIED THAT BUCKET BEHIND KEITH'S KAYAK?)

NOV '75: GRAHAM ENGEL WON HIGH PRAISE AS OUR FIRST AIDER FOR THE FIRTS 100 MILER.

DEC '75: AN "ELDERLY" MEMBER OF SSCC CAUGHT SKATEBOARD RIDING AT JANNALI. (PSST! IT WAS RAY ABRAHALL).

DEC '75: SSCC COMPETES IN FIRST SURF CANOEING CHAMPS. ABC/TARGET WAS THERE TO FILM THE TWO CLASSES – SURFING KAYAKS AND SLALOM KAYAKS. THE COMPETITORS WERE KEITH CARROLL, ROSS MORGAN, ROBERT MORISON, DAVID PENTON, DAVID MARTIN AND RICHARD VAN PUTTEN. JOAN & BRUCE MORISON WERE AMONG THE JUDGES. (IT LOOKED GOOD ON TV!)

MAR '76: 200 PADDLERS FROM 9 CLUBS ATTEND OUR BRUINBUN RANKING SLALOM. DAROOK PARK FUN DAY ... 50 MEMBERS TRY NEW RACES! BACKWARDS, PIGGY BACK KAYAK, SIDEWAYS, KAYAK NO PADDLE, KAYAK WITH SINGLE PADDLE, C2 STANDING

THEATRE PARTY TO "MY FAIR LADY" ... ROBERT MORISON TREADS THE BOARDS WITH MIRANDA MUSICAL SOCIETY AND WINS COVETED CLUB AWARD.

JUL '76: 45 SSCC MEMBERS INVADE CANTERBURY ICE RINK. (SOME MEMBERS MAKE BETTER PADDLERS THAN SKATERS!)

SEP '76: WESTERN BBQ AT MORISONS ... 65 ASSORTED WILD WEST TYPES FROM SSCC, ILLAWARRA AND NEPEAN TURN UP. MUCH WAMPUM FROM INDIAN CHIEF CLARE!

OCT '76: POLO TEAM FOR SSCC. INAUGURAL COMPETITION STARTS SOON. SEE JOAN MORISON, NSW POLO CONVENOR.

NOV '76: UPPER KANGAROO VALLEY CANOE TRIP. LEADER ACCUSES THE FIRLES OF USING GLUE ON THE SEATS. THEY DIDN'T CAPSIZE ONCE! GEORGE BUTLER RECEIVES MERIT AWARD FOR HAVING THE BIGGEST BLISTERS IN THE 100 MILER. THEY WERE ON HIS ... REAR END!)

FEB '77: LOST: ONE LETTMAN OLYMP UNDER A TREE ON THE MURRUMBIDGEE. SLIGHTLY DAMAGED (?) ONE HAND LOOP MISSING. MAY BE NEAR 3 BUSH HATS BELONGING TO THE CAMPBELLS.

SAME TRIP SAW HUBERT FIRLE MORE IN THE WATER THAN OUT OF IT! MARK MORISON NO LONGER HAS A GOATEE BEARD. A PORTAGAS LAMP EXPLODED IN HIS FACE. HE HAD A RUSH TRIP TO LITHGOW HOSPITAL. HE TELLS US WHISKERS BURN WELL!

MAR '77: YOUNG MARK PAUCHET SHOULD MAKE A GOOD FATHER ONE DAY. HE PUTS HIS RACING KAYAKS "TO BED" IN BLUE NYLON COVERS ... TLC.

MAY '77: BOB LAWTON WAS FINED AT THE ANNUAL DINNER FOR PINCHING FOOD OFF THE KIDS' TABLE! "FINES" BECAME VERY POPULAR AT ANNUAL DINNERS. 112 ATTENDED THE FIFTH ANNUAL DINNER.

Revue

A modern Canoe Show with minimal cast

Canoeists displayed lots of talent around the Campfire. The five Revues held between 1972 and 1975 nurtured this talent.



The first Revue was held in the Sutherland School of Arts and was such a success, like Topsy, it just grew!

The Morisons and the Neenans were the Producers, Writers and Directors. Every club from Wollongong to Newcastle had an act! Some were so stagestruck that we had trouble getting them off the stage! We had a "tiger by the tail". After the second Revue, clubs begged for another. The third Revue staged at Caringbah High was an epic!

We needed a rehearsal to "weed out" the enthusiastic (but hopeless) actors. It was held at the old Menai Scout Hall. A huge Supermarket is there now. We THOUGHT we had solved the problems ... but ... we still ran overtime as some "stars" hogged the stage! However, it was well received by an audience of more than 500 (who thought we were professionals!)

SSCC was right into it for the fourth Revue at Upper Kangaroo Valley. It was combined with a Fun Weekend of Canoeing and Walking. SSCC's act of Whistling Stomachs had them rolling in the aisles. It was a great night.

We were foolish enough to be conned into running yet another one ... this time, the strain of production was so daunting we decided to have an OPEN AIR show at Coolendel. 200 canoeists came from everywhere to join the fun. We had the Musical Society Choir and under the 18' Marquee it was a fun night. We rounded Sunday off with a great Surf Carnival.

I can still see John Bell in an English Policeman's Hat singing (somewhat flat) about a Bloodhound ...

The Men's Ballet Group from Illawarra were the "stars" of all the shows.

They were great times ... I hope today's kids have as much fun as we did.

1977 to 1982

During this period the Club encompassed all disciplines of the sport. Members could "have a go" at anything. They did!

Polo and Surfing were established at a State level and members took to it like a duck to water. Joan and Bruce Morison were Judges.

Canoe Polo escalated at a rapid rate and SSCC were heavily involved. We had Referees of A, B and C ratings.

We fielded two Senior, three Junior and two Ladies Teams and our No.1 Junior Team were the State Champions. Polo was played at Gunnamatta Bay, NSW and University Pools and at various Gala Day venues.

Chris Love became a force in the game, designing the NSW State Badge and coaching our polo players to the top.

The first Australian Canoe Polo Championships were held in Tasmania in 1979, with Debbie Love as NSW Team Manager. Three of the seven Open Team Members were from SSCC – Chris Love, Jonathon Parfoot and Neil Lerve. Our Juniors, Luke Morison and Mark Pauchet were in the Under 18 Team.

Slalom was another event in which SSCC members excelled. We hosted events for the visiting USA Coach, Chuck Stanley, and one of our members (I think we can guess who, Joan!) organised his tour and designed the Tour Badge.

In 1981 Paul Campbell and Luke Morison became Australian Junior C2 Champions.

Racing, with a smaller following, saw Luke Morison win a few Junior medals and Veteran Paddlers like Bert Laurendet and the Morisons did OK in State Long Distance. Harley Clare did some C2 at State events.

Ultra Marathons were popular with members and the "100 Miler" had a contingent of paddlers, land crews and even their own First Aider, Graham Engel.

In 1977 the Hawkesbury Classic began and members began to etch their names into the races history from the start.

Two New State Committees were formed in 1980. Bert Laurendet was our first Marathon Convenor and Bruce Morison and Kevin Newton started the Board of Canoe Education rolling.

There is nothing worse than losing a friend ... Albert Hopkins, first President of SSCC, left us a great legacy in the Club but Hayden Stedman, only 21, was a tragic loss. One of four Volunteer Firefighters caught in the Waterfall Bushfire.

Canoeists are inventive people ... They began the "fines" and then the Craft Cup, a tradition somewhat similar to the 1997 TV show, "Who Dares Wins".

Here are some gems from "CANEWS".

LONE SSCC COMPETITOR DRIVES TO WA FOR THE NATIONAL SLALOM. HIS FORD PANEL VAN NEVER RECOVERED BUT MARK MORISON DID WELL. 300 RANGER GUIDES RECEIVED CANOE INSTRUCTION AT THEIR REGATTA FROM JOAN, BRUCE AND LUKE MORISON, NEIL AND HEATHER LERVE AND JONATHON PARFOOT.

42 MEMBERS TOURED THE MACQUARIE RIVER (IN FLOOD) IN 19 BOATS. SSCC WINS MEDALS AT NATIONAL SLALOM IN TASSIE. SILVER TO LUKE MORISON, U/16 K1 AND TO GAIL SONGBERG, U/18 GIRLS AND SELECTED IN NZ JUNIOR SQUAD.

JAMIE CAMPBELL AND LUKE MORISON WON THE JUNIOR C2 AT NEPEAN'S CANADIAN CLASSIC.

960 SCOUTS AT HUME AREA JAMBOREE. JIM AND PAM MURRAY AND JOAN MORISON INSTRUCTED THEM ON THE CANOE SITE.

SSCC MEMBERS PADDLE THE MURRAY ... RAY ABRAHALL AND ROBERT LITTLE IN 1978 AND JOAN MORISON (TC1) IN 1979. 250 MILES OR 404 KMS IS A BLOODY LONG WAY!

Membership is still growing ... almost 250 ... Can we make it 300?

Key Events

Canoe Building – 16 Club Foremen to help members build their craft.

Touring

Trips on many rivers including Cotter; Childowlah; Nepean; Colo; Fish; Manning; Shoalhaven; "Epic" Macquarie trips; mighty Franklin; Goobragandra; Tumut, O'Allens Crossing.

Boat Show Extravaganza – SSCC provides Musical Canoeing, Eskimo Rolls and plays Polo.

Sprints

SSCC paddlers compete in major events at all levels. Medals at 1980 and 1982 Nationals. John Newton selected in Junior Training Squad.

Slalom & Wildwater

SSCC compete at all major meets. Medals in 1979 Nationals in Tasmania and 1980 Barron River, Queensland.

Gold to Paul Campbell and Luke Morison at 1981 Nationals at Nymboida.

NZ Junior Team "reps".

Marathons and Long Distance Events

- Inaugural Twin Rivers 1979.
- Dungog to Clarence Town
- RCC & NCC 25 Milers
- NCC Canoes only Classic
- Port Hacking Classic
- ICC Gooseberry Island
- LPKC Winter Series
- NSWCA Series
- Colo River Classic
- LPKC Hopkins Memorial
- State DDR/Barrington
- Hawkesbury Classic
- Murray Marathon
- 100 Miler
- Club Races – Como to the Needles and new Midi Distance
- First Australian Marathon – Murray River 1981

Canoe Polo

First bat mould built

Club boats and vests in club colours

Gunnamatta Bay is SSCC "home" venue

SSCC players in NSW Teams for National Championships

U/18 Team wins Gold and Ladies Silver Medals at State Champs

Development of the SSCC Clubhouse

In 1979 SSCC decided to subscribe to a Sutherland Shire Council built amenity in the new Jannali Parl Recreation Area.

October 1979 – The Council supplied trees and the Club had a Tree Planting Working Bee.

December 1979 – Council began top dressing ground near the boat ramp and installed two BBQs.

July 1980 – The Amenities Block was finished, apart from power and racks to hold the Club moulds. The Club contributed \$1,500, Council \$9,000 and NSW Government \$6,000. Toilets and showers are for public use.

10 August 1980 – Grand Opening. SSCC President, Ross Morgan, presented with keys by the Shire President. Turf around the building cost \$1,500, soil underneath \$700, trees planted \$200.

1982 to 1987

There was no phase of Canoeing that SSCC, the Family Club, hadn't tried.

We even had an interest in Sea Canoeing which was fostered by Ray and Shirley Abrahall. They ran trips to Coogee, Shark Island and other Harbour Tours.

Margaret and Dennis Spring rafted the Waitut River.

Competitively we had won many medals in all disciplines except the Sprint which required extreme discipline if your goal was the Olympics.

Our adult members were always willing to back up as Officials, backing up our Champions in Slalom, Wildwater, Marathon and Polo.

Our Quartermaster's Store was doing great business and boat building was booming.

By 1987 Fees had caught up with inflation Family \$20, Single \$15 and Junior \$8.

Our hardworking duplicator was pensioned off and Graham Halford's photocopier (operated by his Secretary, Marlene) did our production.

Recreational activities included Big River Trips for Experienced Paddlers, Base camps to Tumut at Christmas, Bushwalks and Breakfast Hikes.

Greenpatch, Childowlah and the Needles remained favourites.

Members started to race in Dragon Boats and Harley Clare and Joan Morison won a gold medal at the State Titles. Harley went to Hong Kong to paddle.

In the USA the Morisons raced on the Deliverance River – Luke in a Kayak, Joan and Bruce on a Raft.

Luke Morison was the Club's sole rep in the King & Queen of Sport competition – 40 sports each to try. He came 12th overall from 52.

Innovative Fun Activities included Red Indian and Eskimo Days and Eskimo Rolling, Folk Dancing, Films, Games, First Aid, Jazz Fitness, Visiting Speakers, Slides.

Over 100 people attended the SSCC Open Day – Let's Try Canoeing.

In 1983 Joan Morison was elected Secretary/General of the Australian Canoeing Federation.

During this period the Sutherland Shire Canoe Club was very active in Competition Events.

A NSW Competition Registration and Sports Insurance were introduced.

Sprint Competitions

Ray Abrahall and Kevin Newton and his family – Liz, John and Tim were all very active, entering State and Australian Championships, but while they gained good experience they did not feature in the medal allocation. Some did the highkneeling paddling in the C1s and C2s.

Slalom and Wildwater

SSCC had strong representation, which was enhanced when Juniors from Endeavour High School joined the Club.

Luke Morison and Paul Campbell paddled for NSW in the National Titles. In 1983 at Harvey WA Paul won gold in the OC1 and C1 Team Events and Luke was 6th Overall. Paul Moses won the U/18 C1 and was selected in the NZ Junior Team.

Liz Newton was selected in the Australian Whitewater Team to Bala, Ireland, and placed fourth.

SSCC Paddlers attended a Coaching Clinic on the Nymboida with US Coach, Bill Endicott.

Medals were won by a number of SSCC Paddlers at State, National and International Competition.

Marathon and Long Distance

We became a strong Marathon Club and had members on State and National Committees.

Joan Morison became the National Marathon Coach.

Joan and Bruce Morison won a gold medal in the 20 Mile Marathon at the World Masters Games in Toronto, Canada.

Club Members won medals in all Marathons, including the Big Ones – 100 Miler/Murray/Hawkesbury.

By 1986, Joan Morison had completed 10 Hawkesbury Classics in a row!

The Leader Sports Star Awards were won by Luke Morison and Paul Moses who also took out the State TK2 Title.

The Coulthart Twins “won ’em all”, breaking Junior Records in the process.

SSCC won gold and silver medals at the National Marathon Championships in Geelong with Donna Auld and Brendan Faulkner and Joan and Robert Morison 1st and 2nd in the Mixed C2.

Out two Golden Oldies completed Multiple Murray River Marathons – Bruce 4 and Joan 7.

Canoe Polo

Former SSCC Teams were disbanded and new ones took their place, while the Juniors were now Seniors.

A and B Grade Teams had 4 wins from 4 games, with Polo featured on Simon Townsend’s Wonderworld.

Our Teams entered the Subaru Interstate and International Series and were competitive.

1987 to 1992

During this period membership of all Canoe Clubs reached a plateau. No one really took any notice because of the enthusiasm for the coming Bicentennial Year of 1988.

The “Paddle Past” on the Georges River was most successful. Sutherland Shire Canoe Club was the backbone of this activity.

Our Olympic Canoeing Team was magnificent. All members to Finals. A Bronze in K2 (Kelvin Graham/Peter Foster) and the sportsmanship of Grant Davies who had won Gold in K1, but lost it by a protest by USA, made the whole of Australia proud.

A “new guard” of members were running SSCC. It was true that some of the long time members were there to enthuse, but these five years saw the slow decline of large monthly meetings..

The Kids ... the Juniors had all grown up! They were getting married and having kids of their own. Their jobs, their lives moved them on into other areas. Mind you some of them never sold their boats (unless they needed the money) but generally kept at least one as a reminder of the great enjoyment Canoeing made in their years of growing up.

NSW Canoe Association

SSCC Members were still active on State Committees and Joan Morison became the Official Historian of NSW and Australian Canoeing.

Slalom

Our Club like many others ceased to be a force in Slalom. In fact, Slalom itself was in decline. Racing had always been elitist, with the usual influx of interest after every Olympics.

Canoe Polo

Canoe Polo also dwindled in our Club, but continued to grow nationally and was accepted by the International Canoeing Federation..

Marathon

Marathon was the one discipline which maintained a great depth of competitors. The big races. however, felt the pinch, especially the 100 miler, which became a Relay, then sadly, disappeared forever.

The Hawkesbury went from strength to strength – perhaps because it maintained its original aims.

Why the change? One of the main reasons was the money that athletes now received.

SSCC participated actively in Series Races, State and National Marathons.

The World Marathon Championships were organised by Graham Halford. SSCC Members travelled to help as Officials - ... Ray and Shirley Abrahall, Joan and Bruce Morison and Mark Honor.

Our Marathon Paddlers competed in the Twin Rivers, Dungog to Clarence Town, Hawkesbury and Murray Marathon and races at Bulahdelah, Tamworth, Grafton, Wauchope, Wagga Wagga, Berowra, Cabarita and the K4 Harbour Challenge.

As for Clubs, many of whom were filled with “veteran” paddlers, it was the changing lifestyle of the Nineties.. the individuals who preferred to “do their own thing” rather than join a group. There was a noticeable lack of Juniors who come and go with Open Days and group organisations. Joan and Bruce Morison find themselves teaching Basic Skills to schools, Scouting and Guiding and other outside groups such as the local Boys’ Town.

New numbers were still joining but in lesser numbers than before. Since the dangers of resin have been made known, less and less boats have been built. The trend was now to Buy a Boat and Gear. The latest most popular craft is the Estuary or Sea Kayak.

1992 to 1997

This was a period of consolidation and now meetings were held where the action was – at our Club Facility! Membership was slowly growing again.

David Armytage amazed us all with his Murray Challenge. He became the new Guinness Book of Records Record Holder, breaking the old Record by almost 38 hours. He paddled the 2,440 km in 16 days, 6 hours and 58 minutes.

In the short time that Vice President John Morgan has been in the Club, he has paddled a thousand kilometres or more in Marathons and worked on Committees to further the aims of Canoeing.

Secretary, Graham Mundy, liked Marathons too, but preferred the challenge of his sea kayak.

Luke Morison ran a “Memorial Slalom” in 1993 and old SSCC Slalom Paddlers came out of the woodwork to participate.

We were once again a force in Canoe Polo. It's now an International Sport and Australia are the World Champions. Sutherland Leisure Centre was recently the venue for the Australian Championships.

There was great excitement at Sutherland Shire Canoe Club because of the forthcoming Canoeing Events in the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

SSCC had Officials for State Sprint and Marathon Events.

SSCC Paddlers won Medals at the Australian Masters Games in Brisbane.

Marathon

There was constant activity with Time Trials on the Woronora, Night Training for the Hawkesbury, Off Shore Racing and the Lachlan Classic.

We conducted the Twin Rivers Classic and the National Marathon Selection Race for which there was a big roll up of Interstate Paddlers.

Because the Como Pub burnt down, we had the “Burnt Pub to Park Race”.

Members contested State and National Marathon Events and Graham Halford won a Bronze Medal at Nationals.

Members contested the Murray Marathon and the Hawkesbury Classic and Joan Morison completed her 20th Hawkesbury.

Other Activities

There was occasional Canoe Building from 1992 to 1994, nil in 1995/96 and some Junior Boats were constructed in 1997.

The Club bought a Canoe and two Polo Bats, paddles etc and a new BBQ and gas.

Touring included Tumut, Fossickers, Colo, Cowra, Cabarita, Honeymoon Bay, Gloucester, Bendeela, Kangaroo Valley, Shoalhaven, Illaroo Farm and Dora Creek and bushwalks locally and in the Blue Mountains.

Other activities included Water Safety Paddles, Mini Triathlon, Scots Dance, Open Days for the Public, Bike Rides, Kites, Twilight and Moonlight Paddles.

Special Things

Greg Bell (an Ambo) received a Bravery Award at Government House.

On the same day, also at Government House, Joan Morison received an OAM for Canoesport.

David Armytage is in the Guinness Book of Records.

The Como Bushfires devastated homes ... Members were evacuated, some lost everything ... Bolers lost two homes, John Hall his garage and canoes. Bert and Kay Laurendet's home was saved.