

BRXCC “Briars Rapid Ten Canoe Club”

In the 1970s, a few Briars members paddled from Ian Richard’s parents farm down the Kangaroo & Shoalhaven Rivers to Nowra. They found this challenging and fun and it sparked an off-season leisure sport for the winter rugby enthusiasts.

Bruce Ferguson was employed by B-Line canoes and moved to Gloucester, the hub of many rivers, which canoeists liked.

More Briars became paddlers and the BRXCC (*Briars Rapid Ten Canoe Club*) was born. Within a couple of years equipment was purchased, which included a few canoes and all the camping paraphernalia for weekend sojourns.

There were four Canoes named.....Kentwell, Burke, Whiddon and Judd and a single canoe named Sutherland. Only about nine members became financial, namely: Richard, Ferguson, Mitchell, Lewis, McPhee, Wozniak, Boyle, Phiefke, Howell.

Each trip was organised by a different team leader who determined everything to do with the paddle, including the rivers to be traversed, transport, gear, food and drink. Many casual paddlers enjoyed these weekends and many eventful canoeing experiences ensued. Guest paddlers were always placed in hired canoes, Legends were created, and many fool hearty attempts made. Luckily no serious incidents occurred, however there were many close shaves to discuss at the campfire each night, while eating the obligatory “Rapid Ten Stew”. Which always needed to be washed down with plenty of the amber liquid. Except for Mitchell, who got just as silly as the others on Coca Cola.

There is an internationally accepted measurement used by canoeists for the degree of danger associated with rapids which starts at level 1 which is a gravel race up to level 8 where mortality is imminent. The BRXCC developed a measuring system for the lengths of the river between rapids which was the number of tinnies consumed between the rapids. Longer stretches inevitably ended up with water wars and paddle fights. Of course, some of the better paddlers like Kimbo and Kodak refused to get wet. The test for all potential members was to successfully master “the steps” rapid section of the Barrington River at Gloucester. Many of the party earned appropriate nicknames, like Porcelain Pete (Kimbo), but the Zig Zag brothers became the most infamous. Noted for their total inability to co-ordinate their paddling, they zig zagged down every river. Ian (Beast) Richard and David (Harry) Jamieson may just have been the culprits.

Two trophies were dug up for presentation at the end of each trip. A recycled old trophy was resurrected and somewhat refurbished for the “Best and Fairest Paddler” and an old dismountable cake stand for the “Best New Talent”. Both were permanently stored in the waterproof barrels taken on each trip.

These weekends became legendary and was popular for “Bucks parties”. Many enjoyed the BRXCC Bucks weekends, notably: Harry’s Haddit, Lucky’s Last, Greg’s Gone, Mitch’s Mishap, Fred’s Finale, Woz’s Windup to name a few. No buck was lost; however, some came off worse for wear. Fred developed hypothermia and Harry just survived his night at the Nerriga pub, where another buck’s party was also being held. Harry easily won the chug-a-lug, and we easily won the boat race, but Harry was never going to win the Goanna wrestle.

One of the more infamous trips was to Bathurst, where EJ, complete with his own canoe made his debut. Unfortunately, there was absolutely no water, undaunted he and Steelie attempted to traverse a pebble race! This trip was also noteworthy for Steelie, who arrived far too early, and ended up waiting for the rest of the gang to arrive at the local Cop Shop. With the wisdom of experience, it was the Beast who knew where exactly to find him. On the same trip "Lucky Phil" entertained the drinkers at The Royal in Sofala doing hand stands for beer money.

Just shows you that these trips didn't need water in the river to be eventful! Well, all survived and today can still recount these wonderful adventures.

Note below some of the Focus entries for upcoming Canoeing weekends.

Focus Nov 90....

BRIARS- RAPID X CANOE CLUB - CANOEING PROGRAMME 1990/91 SEASON

December 8-9 Wollondilly River, Goulburn. TL: JB Paddy's River Bridge to Goodmans Ford

January 19-20 Murrumbidgee River, Canberra TL: Lucky Phil Uriarra Crossing to Esdale Bridge

February 16-17 Williams River, Dungog TL: Beast Bandon Grove to Glen William Bridge

March 16-17 Shoalhaven River, Kangaroo Valley GL: Ferg Badgeries Crossing to Barron Flat

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Focus Dec 91.....

RAPID X CANOE CLUB

December 14-15 Murrumbidgee River. Canberra

T L Birdcage; Uriarra Crossing to Esdale Bridge January 18-19 Bungonia Gorge, Bungonia S R

T L Ferguson Family Camping Friends February 15-16 Bamard River, Gloucester

T L Guest Corroboree Flat to Peach Tree Cutting March 14-15 Shoalhaven River, Braidwood

T L Beasty Ferringdon Crossing to Warri bridge April 10-13 South Alligator River. Jabiru

T L L Siddons (To be finalised)

Focus Oct 92.....

Adventure Program 1992/93 Season

October 17-18 Mitch's Mishap/Greg's Gone

T.L. Ferg, Surprise Special Adventure Weekend November 7-8 Goobarragandra River, Tumut

T.L. Lucky, Hume & Hovell campsite to Little River Bridge December Murrumbidgee River, Canberra

T.L. Birdcage, Uriarra Crossing to Esdale Bridge January 23-24 Barrington

T.L. Beast, Black Rock to the Crossing steps February 20-21 Bamard River, Gloucester

T.L. Mitch, Corroboree Flat to Peach Tree Cutting March 20-21 Shoalhaven River, Braidwood

T.L. Ferg, Ferringdon Crossing to Wam Bridge

General Information

- All dates shown are weekends, leaving Friday evening
- All bookings by the Wednesday prior to the trip date. Please phone the tour leader (T.L.)
- Alternate rivers will be paddled according to water levels.

- Other activities will be organised if water levels are too low, i.e. fishing, boating, caving, pub crawling.
- Official training sessions are held on Thursdays from 7 -9pm in the Briars Clubrooms.
- For information and bookings contact the respective T.L.
- Paddling standards vary from the novice to the veteran. First time novices are well looked after, only 'having to attempt rapids to their ability. So organise a friend and book in for a weekend with a difference.
- See you on the river.
- The BRXCC Committee



STANDING

David (Fred's finale) Lewis, Kim Phiefke, Gordon Pegler, Tony (Woz's Windup) Wozniac, Greg (Mitch's Mishap) Mitchell, Bruce Ferguson, David Blair, John Boyle

SITTING

Junior Beast, Ian Richard, Greg McPhee, Milton Howell, Phil England, David (Harry's Haddit) Jamieson

*Ian Richard; Greg McPhee, Bruce Ferguson
April 2018*