



HEAD OF THE YARRA @ MELBOURNE! A PICTORIAL REVIEW



Men's Open 2012 Champions



Women's Open 2012 Champions



Men's B Grade 2012 Champions



Masters F-G Grade a
credible third

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Welcome to our final news letter for 2012.

The Head is the final "coming out" for the new season. 170 eights set out in the heat to

negotiate the famous corners, and to play cat and mouse with the chasing crew. The unnoticed goings on in the dark days of winter are revealed corner by corner, straight by straight. Our Women Senior A, Men's Senior A and B won their event and it was an impressive display of conditioned power, expertly coached and steered throughout.

My 5 year old son and I followed the racing on the path, with Tommy having the second best seat of the day. I figured a little early indoctrination would not go amiss, and I was vindicated with Tommy declaring on the way home that our Mercantile crews were **Invincible!** The end to a perfect day.

Following the return of the crews and of equal social importance was the spontaneous opening of the bar, with attendees from up and down the river bank, including many interstate rowers. A great night followed with reaffirmed friendships and respect to all rowers: The Mercantile way to win.

Mercantile will start first once more in 2013 - well done to all our competing crews.

In November we celebrated in fine style the return of our London Olympians with a 200 person black tie "Evening of Excellence", with Mr. John Coates Head of the Australian Olympic Committee being our guest speaker. John started off his address very well with the affirmation of our proud record and un-matched contribution to Australian rowing.

It was an honor to listen first hand to Robyn Selby-Smith's comments on the Women's Olympic VIII, dubbed the "Motley Crew". The Q&A with Sarah Tait was inspiring as we got to understand more of the physical setbacks and mental fortitude she and Kate demonstrated. Of note was the acknowledgement and transition of the highest honor: The most successful Australian Olympic rower from James Tomkins to Drew Ginn.

Thanks once more to our wonderful coaches and volunteer members for a great past year, best wishes for a peaceful Christmas followed by a successful New Year.

CONGRATULATIONS DREW!



Well done Drew Ginn on being appointed as National Head Coach – Integration of Rowing Australia. In his role of National Head Coach – Integration, Drew Ginn will be responsible for the consistent delivery of the national training and technical model across all Australian performance rowing programs. As part of this, he will work closely with domestic program partners and provide national technical leadership to the lead category coaches across the country. He will be part of the wider high performance management team of the National Rowing Centre of Excellence and work under the leadership of National High Performance Director Chris O'Brien. The National Rowing Centre of Excellence is a partnership program between the Australian Institute of Sport and Rowing Australia.

CLUB DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

First Thursday Of the Month - Big boat row and BBQ

Thursdays 6th February, 7th March, 4th April, 2nd May 6pm row for 7.00pm BBQ

Friends and family welcome for BBQ

BARRELL'S BASH –Sunday 24th February

Lunch with a full program including unveiling the new Olympic Honour Board, fund raising for a new boat, and boat christenings.

COACH'S CORNER



It has been a very busy few months and many of you have been part of the busy schedule. The club is always a thriving centre of training excellence whether it be our

returning Olympians, our future Olympians, club athletes or Learn to Row and Masters alike. And let's not forget the ever-present Kayakers.

For those under my daily charge there is little respite. We are now very much into the phase rather ironically called Pre Competition. I say ironically as there seems to be competition galore from weekend to weekend but we are not losing focus of the real competition phase that will start at the end of January and continue through to the Nationals, World Cup and then the Final National Trials. One thing is certain this season - we will be very familiar with Penrith and the course there.

The elite group has shrunk slightly since I last reported. Sean Lake and Redmond Matthews have been offered a year's scholarship at the AIS and whilst we are all hugely proud of them and wish them all the very best, they will be missed. We do have some good news though in that Lachie McKinnon, Clare Canty and Brit Steele have all returned to full training after long absences through injury. All three have kept up training where possible and will no doubt feature in the racing to come.

The focus for the Pre-Competition phase was of course the Head of the Yarra. Prior to that was the November State Trial on the Wednesday as well as Melbourne Head the previous Saturday - all within seven days! Melbourne Head was used as a training competition where most doubled up in their small boat in preparation for the Time Trial, and then immediately jumped into the eight as

a dress rehearsal for the Head of the Yarra. This was a heavy loading but it worked out well. The girls won their events by a good distance and the guys came unstuck due to a very late start compared to their main rivals, who also enjoyed better stream.

The real event that week was of course Head of the Yarra. It was one of the first genuinely hot days of Spring and no doubt had a few concerned. All the Mercantile crews however went on the attack early and dominated their events. It was a fantastic sight to see at such close proximity our red and white crews rowing away in style and with power! Of course this promises much for the coming regatta season and training will certainly be aimed at keeping our crews in such fantastic form.

Mark Fangen-Hall

MASTERS' REPORT

Spring Offensive – much to applaud; Summer – much to consolidate

With the Melbourne Head and Head of the Yarra campaigns now concluded, congratulations to all masters who trained hard in the weeks leading up to their race-day battles. Especially:

- the men's VIII who were the fastest crew in their category (F) in the Melbourne Head, and who came an honourable third in the Head of the Yarra, only about a minute and a half off the winning MUBC crew.
- to Colin Kimpton and his Caulfield Grammarian partner, Mike Dakic, for their medal-winning pair in the Melbourne Head.
- to the Mercantile women's IV who established a healthy precedent in their first outing in a Melbourne Head with a personal best
- to the mixed VIII which, likewise, trialled itself for the first time and came away with encouraging performances.

All in all, our crews consisted of 20 masters' rowers and three coxswains, a pretty good turnout and something substantially achieved through this year's influx of female members. The gender mix has also significantly benefitted Mercantile's social dimension and planned activities, one of which was a social row on the Goulburn. Perfect weather conditions prevailed as we took off from the Nagambie RC in a borrowed VIII, and paddled up to Chateau Tahbilk for lunch. Non rowing partners joined us for lunch and then we set a good pace on the return.

A special thanks, too, of course, goes to Jordan Champness who was brought on board by Mark Fangen-Hall to assist the masters in their preparation for the November regattas. Regrettably for the Masters Jordan leaves to take up studies in the US in January, but takes with him our best wishes.

With Christmas and the summer break now upon us, many masters will be refining the skills they've collectively shared in preparation for the competitive season in early 2013

- Greg Hansen

DID YOU KNOW?



In 1986, one of the most famous members of the Club, Jim Sprigg, donated \$25,000 which was placed into an Endowment Fund. With careful fiscal stewardship, this fund has grown



to \$600,000 and will form the basis of the Club's contribution to the renovations. His offspring were guests at the Christmas lunch and pictured in front of his portrait, representing 4 generations, are great grandson Nathan Caithness, daughter Lois Campbell, and granddaughters Rachel Caithness and Louise Campbell.

GOOD LUCK RED & SEAN!

We're very excited for Red Matthews and Sean Lake who are packing their bags and heading off to Canberra and the AIS. We hope you wear green and gold many times, but don't forget that red and white really look good on both of you!



KAYAK UPDATE

From 24-Nov till 2-Dec I was one of eight under-23 girls who participated in the women's National Elite Development Program invitational training camp. Held at the AIS canoe/kayak facility on the Gold Coast, we experienced a great variety of climates from the sunny beaches to the chilly recovery facilities – sitting in 12°C water is always a challenge but really works wonders. Although the camp was aimed at developing our strengths in team boats (K2 & K4), a lot of the work was still done in singles (K1's). A normal training day consisted of two on-the-water sessions, morning and afternoon, with a run and gym session in between. The forty-minute hill sprints in the 36 degree Queensland heat were definitely a killer. Then to really finish on a hard note, we had time trials on Saturday morning. We were all so exhausted that night that by 7:30 there was nothing to be heard in our apartment, but lucid dreams evoked the phantasmagorical memories of the week.

Marlena Ahrens



LIGHT AND BRIGHT

A Sign of Things to Come?

Seen at the gym were two up and coming young athletes getting into the rhythm of the ergos! Leila Tait and Luc Fangen-Hall were hammering away at the session so fast the camera became blurred with the speed!



And....From the "On Golden Ponds" Brigade

We are pleased to advise that news from our revered Octogenarians include updates that Ted Sorani's hip replacement is working well, so no more squeaking from the 4 seat! Garth Manton is progressing well; the Hewitts are very pleased with their latest medical reports, and whilst Melvina gave James Harvey a 6 hour fright in Cabrini, all is well. It is a great honour that we have such a brigade continually interested in the activities of our Club some 50 years after they stopped competitively rowing, and it sets a great example for our current youth to aspire to the same. - *James Harvey and Susie Phillips*

Christmas Lunch and Pudding IVs!

A grey day didn't daunt the 15 rowers and coxes who participated in the Annual Christmas Pudding Vllls and Lunch at the Club. Numbers were down due to the time trials taking place at Penrith, so Pudding Vllls became Pudding IVs, but a good time was had by all. The winning crew was Olympian Robyn Selby-Smith, Master Jeff Thompson, newcomer Martin and U23 Tyson Sholl.



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Mercantile extends a warm welcome to all new Members who have joined this financial year, and look forward to a long and happy association with the Club.

Senior - Sam Hayton / Siobhan Moran - Welcome back!

Senior Competitive - Fiona Albert / Cara Davidson / Jess Hooper / Bridget McDonald / Amber Norrish / Jack Sandow / Alexandra Theile

Junior - Christopher Reynolds / Tom Sanders / Alexander Stefanac

Associate - David McGrath - Welcome back/never left!

Australian Youth Olympic Festival January 2013

Congrats to our Mercantilians who have been named in the shadow team for the Australian Youth Olympic Festival. The Australian Youth Olympic Festival (AYOF) is an established multi-sport event on the youth international sporting calendar with 1,700 athletes expected to travel to Sydney in January from 30 nations to participate in the event.



L-R Sarah Banting Women's Coxswain, Jen Cleary (W1x) Adriana Marulli W2-, Conor Grace LM2x, Kat Werry W2-, Geoff Creber LM2x

FOR SALE

Those who didn't attend the Evening of Excellence, but would like a memento, the table centre pieces are for sale. Miniature trophy oars, each individually signed by one of our Oarsome Mercantilians. What a great keepsake or gift and well priced at \$30 per oar, or \$50 for two plus postage. To place your order, please contact Susie Phillips at events@mercantile.org.au or phone 0408 468 904.



SOCIAL ROUNDUP

An Evening of Excellence

It is always a delight to see our young, fit rowers switch the zootie for a black suit and tie or a flowing cocktail dress and the Evening of Excellence on Saturday 16th November did not fail to impress. Credit goes to Tyson Sholl for pulling off the three piece suit and Bek Hooper for teaching us all a lesson in dress length with style.

But the Evening of Excellence is about more than fashion, and nothing makes my red and white heart swell with pride like seeing our 8 athletes take to the stage to celebrate their Olympic success. There is no greater sporting honour than to represent your country at the Olympics and since the 1956 Olympics, Mercantilians have featured in droves representing Australia.

Highlights of the night included the on-tune David Crawshay leading us in the national anthem - he came prepared with dinner spoon to pick the chord, but the music beat us all. Drew Ginn and Robyn Selby-Smith gave us a close up perspective of racing at the Olympics (and the battle to get there), and the auctioning off of boat seats with Olympians means we'll be seeing some interesting crews out on the river over the next few weeks.



Thanks all to those who helped make the night such a success – Julie, Jenny, Jan, Monica, Susie, Andy, Clara, and all. We often forget the amount of work that goes in behind the scenes and in the weeks, indeed months, leading up to such a grand event (those mini oars didn't sign themselves and neither did those huge silver fruit bowls engrave themselves). And a big thank you to St. Catherine's string quarter "Highly Strung" adding a touch of class to the evening whilst competing with the loud volume of chatter from our animated guests.

Thanks also to our MC, James Tomkins, who knows how to control a crowd, and guest speaker, John Coates, for giving us the low down on the next "sport" (I think I heard ballroom dancing?) to feature at Rio 2016 – I'll stick to the rowing, thanks!

Dee Bosler

HOUSE MATTERS

A Note from the Treasurer

Did you know that all payments to the club can be made via the website using your credit card (just enter the invoice number or a description of the charge in the "Invoice Number" field). Alternatively, the club's bank account details are on the website under "Payments", too. Just make sure you identify who you are & what you're paying!

A Note from Maintenance

To help us help you, we need prompt and correct identification of anything you might think needs fixing. Has a light bulb blown? Is a toilet making noises? Is a tap dripping? Just send an email to a very easy address to remember - mercs.property@gmail.com - and things will get fixed!! Similarly, more supplies such as dish detergent, bin liners, loo paper, can all be kept in stock if we know it's needed.

VENUE NEWS

A big thank you must go out which is clearly and ringingly endorsed by all athletes for the dedication of the breakfast Mums and Dads who come in to prepare and cook food, and clean up each and every Saturday training without fail. They are Jill Brighthope, Marie and Gerry Canty, Connie Cukurins, Kate Farrar, Monica Frawley, Jennifer Maitland, Julie Orr, Annie Scharp and Jan Tennant.

It's also great to see the Brighton Grammar boys join in breakfasts after their training on Saturday mornings and we look forward to seeing more of them when they return to training next year.



CLUB CONTACTS

President - Mal Batten

0418 488 135
president@mercantile.org.au

Captain - Nick Baker

0439 317 060
captain@mercantile.org.au

Head Coach - Mark Fangen-Hall

0437 361 140
headcoach@mercantile.org.au

Secretary - Cameron O'Neill

secretary@mercantile.org.au

Treasurer - Duncan MacKinnon

treasurer@mercantile.org.au

Member Relations - Andy Phillips

info@mercantile.org.au

Property Maintenance -

Andrew Phillips + Mark Groves

0414 747 500
mercs.property@gmail.com

Venue Hire - Susie Phillips

events@mercantile.org.au

Exec Committee - Philippe Batters

0418 992 103
pbatters@willbatt.com.au

Exec Committee - Jenny Fraumano

0438 324 307
jennyf@fraumanoandassociates.com



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Publication

mercs.editor@gmail.com