



07/08 – a season of changes

As you may have noticed, Dragon Boating has been under new management this year, after Robyn and Jane retired last August.

The two key changes have been in the fees, and the venues of Kerr's Reach and Owles Terrace.

Chinese New Year launch for Aoraki



Aoraki's "Chinese New Year" regatta on 9th February was our Early Bird. Unfortunately this was too early in the year for most schools, but was a very enjoyable event,

providing valuable experience at the new venue.

Of course this was the very first regatta to be run on Kerr's Reach, and the first event to be staged by Aoraki, so there was plenty to learn from the day. Formalities began with ceremonial blessings of the boats and venue; first local Maori performed a stirring *Whakawaatea*. Then Pastor Graham Reid spoke of the fine spirit joining all Dragon Boaters. And finally a Lion Dance Troupe performed a colourful launching ritual for the boats.

Then to the racing; twenty heats over 500m decided on the positions for the five finals races. Then from about 3pm, once everyone was nicely exhausted, each team had a taste of the 'splash and dash' 200m race length.



City Council Cruisers posted the fastest time from all the adult crews for the day, with Ridge Riders having the fastest time from the Open teams. But Shirley Boys were a full 6 seconds faster than the grown-ups.

Teams then had 3 weeks to take what they had learnt and apply it at the season's main event...

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Christchurch Dragon Boat Regatta

Local teams were joined by a newly-formed BCS team from Blenheim for the Christchurch Dragon Boat Regatta. Corporate and Open teams had racing on Saturday 1st March, then Schools teams were on the water on Sunday 2nd.

Saturday's weather was not ideal, but racing was intense. CIAL Flying Dragons posted the best time in the heats, but their average was not good enough for the 'A Final'. However Flying Dragons did manage to take out the inaugural "Hell for Leather Cup" in the 200m sprints.

"Screws Loose" were rewarded for consistent times, eventually winning the Corporate Final (despite a finish-line nudge from Paddlateers!)

"CPC Canterbury Dragons" won an *extremely* tight finish in the Open final. Last race of the day was the Partington Cup, with CPC edging out Screws who put together back-to-back finals.

Sunday morning's weather looked much better for the Schools. Shirley Boys and St Bedes fired things up with brilliant hakas. Their racing was fierce all day, with Shirley Gold taking the honours.

And Girls High made their coach "Iceman" very proud by winning the "Johnson Challenge Cup" for the best Christchurch Girls team.

Tell us what you think...

Please take a moment to fill in our survey – tell us what worked well for you last season. It's your chance to give us clues about what needs to be done better next year. For example, tell us which training and race venues will suit you. Click [here to do the survey](#) – just 10 questions...

Time to tell tales

You've told us the good and the bad - what about the ugly? Maybe you'd like to tell some tales that are worth sharing. The website would be a bit more interesting with a few paddlers' stories on what goes on at training sessions, or how the team blows off steam after the season. Or maybe share some ideas about fundraising.

Development of Owles Terrace

In their "The Long Term Council Community Plan", CCC have announced they are keen to look at developing Henderson Basin (between Halswell and Cashmere) as a Flat Water Facility. We expect this might be along the lines of Lake Hood, but in an urban setting. But we also note that Lake Hood took 14 years to open, so we need to look at other options in the meantime.

Council see this too, and recognise in their LTCCP that they will need to keep existing venues up to scratch - the first that springs to mind is the weed problem along Kerr's Reach!



Meanwhile Council has started on Owles Terrace. They have laid an asphalt path between the compound and the boat ramp - so no

more potholes! And they plan to clean up the compound area and make the buildings habitable.

Aoraki has been talking to Council about the plans, and will meet with the representatives of the Waka Ama clubs on Monday 16-June to talk about developing Owles Terrace.

Australian race calendar

Our Aussie counterparts have sent us the NSW race calendar. They run quite a few events from late September through to the start of December, then start up on 7-Jan and go through to the end of March, much like us. If you're interested in crossing the ditch, contact us...

World Champs in Europe

Breaking news - it looks like Poland may not be the venue for next year's World Dragon Boat Championship. Shirley Boys are due to travel to "Malta Regatta Course" Poznań in August 2009. But NZDBA has just been warned that a scheduling clash with canoeing regatta may mean the event moves to Prague.

New boats

As you know, the dragon boats that have been kindly lent to us by NZDBA have done a few miles. The hard yards, in fact...

Well Christchurch teams had a big turnout at the Nationals in Auckland at the end of March. They all performed with distinction, despite it being the first time in the new boats. We were all impressed with the new Champion Boats they have been training and competing in.



And we are thrilled to announce that Canterbury Community Trust has given us a very generous grant toward the cost of building a fleet of IDBF certified boats!

Dave Elliott flew up to Macau, China on Sunday 8-June to attend the International Dragon Boat Races. Champion have invited him to visit their Dragon Boat factory in north China to discuss boat design and future orders. So Aoraki hopes to place an order shortly after Dave reports back to us.

Meanwhile Aoraki is applying for funding of other improvements such as a safety/chase boat (IRB) and trailer, new paddles, secure shelter for the boats and so on.



Lake Hood as a future venue

Aoraki needs to look at new race venues if we are to host major events. So we started by looking at some of the 'old' venues.

Many of you will recall that Christchurch has run Festivals from a couple of lakes to our south – namely Lake Crighton and Lake Dunstan.

The Wright family built Lake Crighton in about 1996 on farm land about 6km SE of Dunsandel, making it 30 minutes from Christchurch. It is a good facility for spectators but at 1.5m at the deepest, it is really too shallow, and only 75m wide. It is also a bit short, at 550m.

Interestingly, Lake Hood's Water ski lane was modelled on Lake Crighton.



But the prime contender is Lake Hood, a man-made lake east of Ashburton, developed by the Ashburton

Aquatic Park Charitable Trust. Turnoff to the lake (in Tinwald) is about 50 minutes drive from Christchurch.

The main section of Lake Hood is about 2.3km long, and includes a spectacular 2,000m rowing course, eight lanes wide!

But of interest to us is the separate Water Ski Course, measuring about 750m long and 100m wide. It is enclosed by an embankment about 15m wide, which makes it a spectacular and



'intimate' venue. There is an outlet at the northern end to the main lake, so boats can easily come and go, but wake wash is contained.

This section is a consistent 2.5m deep although the lake outlet end is more like 4.5 to 5m. The banks are sloped to minimise

reflected waves from powerboats, skis and (presumably) Dragon Boats – locals say this works well in practice.

There is a small island at each end of the course, but there is still ample room for a 500m race course. The width would make it ideal for setting up five or even six lanes.

Permanent loading docks accommodate up to nine boats at a time (without 'double parking').



Canterbury Paddling Club have already used the main stretch of Lake Hood for Waka Ama regatta, so are keen on the idea of Aoraki running Dragon Boat racing on the lake.

Go to www.aoraki-dragons.co.nz for more [aerial photos](#).

Lake Hood has superb restaurant and bar facilities are set up for boaties and yachties so would be great for our post-regatta prize givings.



Lake Hood Chairman/Director David West was extremely enthusiastic when Aoraki visited him earlier this year. He is very keen to set up a local team from the lakeside community, and we are sure the Ashburton High School will be keen to use the local facilities too.

NZDBA meeting.

Aoraki are keen to see this year's improvements develop beyond our own region, so we want to add our voice to the National governing body. To that end, Christchurch will host their AGM later this month. Agenda items so far include...

- Eligibility for medals in Breast Cancer division races, esp the National BC Trophy.
- Support for a bid for the BC worlds to be held in either March or October 2010

Do you have other issues you want to raise? Email us on aoraki.dragons@gmail.com.

You may have heard that at the World Champs in Sydney NZDBA and AusDBF held talks to discuss the formation of an Oceania Dragon Boat Federation (ODBF) so that the sport can be introduced to New Caledonia, Fiji, Tonga etc.

So there will be discussion about a new Constitution, Articles of Association and bylaws that will fit with a new ODBF.

Aoraki AGM – get on board

An even better way to make things happen is to get involved. The Aoraki team have had a *great* time getting this show off the ground – it's been a blast!

Our first Annual General Meeting will be in September, so please come along and have your say. In fact let's have some more nominations to the board. The incumbents are keen to continue and will probably stand again, but our constitution only allows us to stay on the board for two years at a time. So let's get some fresh faces around the table - anyone interested in joining the team is welcome to "throw their names into the hat".

NZer to train as IDBF Race Official

NZDBA wants to have some local DB enthusiasts sit the International Dragon Boat Federation's officials exam, NROC.

This is a key step toward gaining race officials in NZ, and would involve bringing an IDBF race official to NZ in the near future. Primarily it would be someone on NZDBA Exec Committee, with other members of NZDBA in the near future.

Race Dates for next season

Provisional dates for next year are:

- Tip day and Open Day: 14, 15-Feb
- Early Bird: 21, 22-Feb-09
- Christchurch regatta: 21, 22-March-09

And internationally:

- Third World Corporate Community Champs in Miami Florida 24-26 July 2009
- Worlds in Ponzan (or Prague?) 26th-30th August 2009
- Fourth World Corporate Community Champs in Paris, France 2010 (probably in July- August)
- Tenth Worlds Tampa Bay , Florida 2011 (probably July).

