



HISTORY OF THE BLACK MOUNTAIN ROWING CLUB

*IN THE CONTEXT OF THE
ACT ROWING COMMUNITY*

26 January 2011

(with some minor subsequent corrections)



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Author's note

I started this project in 2006 because of a real risk that the oral history of the Club would be lost as longstanding Club members retired from rowing. I soon found out that while there was a wealth of memories being shared, no one had a complete view of the Club's history and memories had, understandably, dimmed with the passage of time. While this account does much to fill the gaps, documentation was patchy so it does not claim to be definitive.

The Black Mountain Rowing Club has a complex lineage. It has undergone significant structural and institutional change since its genesis as a school rowing club run in conjunction with the Burns Rowing Club. It is the relationship between teachers and students, and fairly quickly with past students, that provided continuity that to some extent lies at the heart of the Club, notwithstanding that it has long since become part of the wider community. This is reflected in a number of key members who started as school boy rowers in Telopea Park High School or Narrabundah College, in aging trophies and photos adorning the Club, the names of boats and, at times, financial contributions.

I wrote the first draft of this document in a matter of weeks towards the end of 2007 after I realised that I was unlikely to unearth much more documentation. Since that time, I have left it open as a consultation document including to allow errors and omissions to be identified and to provide anyone mentioned in the document the opportunity to provide feedback. It would have been nice to have published it in 2014 to help celebrate 50 years of rowing but that was too distant a target – I chose Australia Day 2011 instead.

I would like to thank all those who contributed, including some significant contributors from outside of the Club.

Vincent McMahon

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Beginnings...

In mid April 1964 the eagerly anticipated Australian National Rowing Championships, and the associated Olympic selections, were in jeopardy. Less than a fortnight before the event, the Lake was 15 feet short of its planned level.

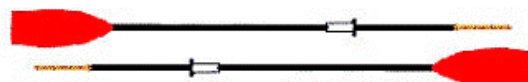
Then it rained ... and rained.

A week later, the Lake level had risen 12 feet and the expectation was that the Lake would fill over that weekend. It happened even quicker with Saturday 24 April 1964 dawning on a Lake that was all but full, both realising a dream and delivering a fairy tale start to the first organised sporting event on Lake Burley Griffin.

However, like all great achievements, the formation of the Lake and the development of Rowing as a sport in Canberra owed more to planning and perseverance than to a dream.

The Black Mountain Rowing Club history is inextricably interwoven with the development of the sport of rowing in Canberra. Accordingly, to understand the history of the Club, it is necessary to first look briefly at the creation of Lake Burley Griffin and the associated development of rowing in Canberra.

Black Mountain Rowing Club



CREATION OF LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN

Concept and construction

The concept of a Lake in Canberra dates back to 1909. It formed the basis to the design of Canberra, which was ultimately won by Walter Burley Griffin. Making the Lake a reality was not an insignificant engineering feat.



Molonglo River with the War Memorial in the background



The Molonglo River was prone to flooding, as can be seen from this photo taken from the old Canberra Bridge. So severe was the flooding that the first Commonwealth Bridge was washed away in 1925 and Canberra was frequently divided, not just along party political lines, but North and South.

Work started on the construction of the Lake in 1960. It was ironic that Scrivener Dam and the other engineering components were completed ahead of schedule because of the drought, which was then cursed as hopes of the Lake quickly filling faded and complaints arose against stagnant, mosquito-filled pools.

The extent of the changes is evident from the two photographs below. The first shows an aerial view of the earthworks focused around the Acton Peninsula. The second shows the earthworks required to construct the well known rowing and sailing landmark, Spinnaker Island.

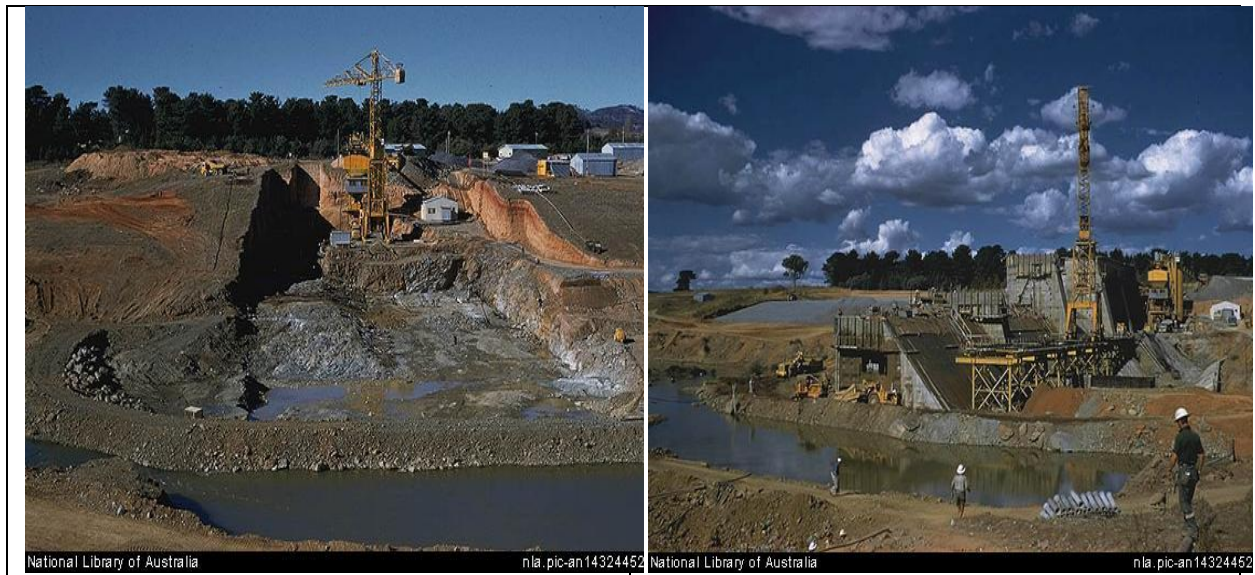


Acton Peninsula



Creation of Spinnaker Island

The Lake exists, of course, only because of the building of Scrivener Dam. This dam was named after the surveyor who made the recommendations on the placement of the dam and its height. It rises 33 metres, fronting the deepest part of the Lake, and is 319 metres long. The dam has a maximum thickness of nearly 20 metres. The Lake that it creates has a shoreline of over 40 kms, is 11 kilometres long and up to 1.2 kilometres wide.



The other two obvious engineering landmarks were the Kings Avenue and Commonwealth Bridges. The first photo is of Kings Avenue Bridge from Central Basin. The second is the construction of Commonwealth Bridge.



The work required on the foreshore was less obvious but nonetheless extensive. Shown below is the foreshore construction, adjacent to Lennox Gardens, and work in Yarralumla Bay, showing the Yarralumla jetty.



The development of the Lake was not without some loss of identity as some old Canberra landmarks were sacrificed including the old Royal Canberra Golf course and the Acton Racecourse. Below is the last view of one of the more historic landmarks.



Old farm house - near Yarralumla Bay

The filling of the lake

On 20 September 1963, the Minister for the Interior, Mr Freeth, shut the Scrivener Dam valves. This restricted the flow of the Molonglo river and started filling a Lake which had cost some £ 2.5 million, a substantial investment at the time in the future of Canberra.

Minister Freeth indicated that it was a dream made into a reality. The National Capital Commissioner of the day, J W Overall, claimed it would bring '*life, gaiety, vigour and identification to the centre of the capital*'. While this claim was somewhat overstated, it nonetheless has withstood the test of time. He also noted that it marked the 50th anniversary of the creation of Canberra.

What followed almost immediately was a Canberra obsession with rain and water levels and claimed 'firsts'. Within days the water had been banked up as far as Sullivan's Creek but it was only a few feet wide at that point. The *Canberra Times* made some play of the fact that the valves had to be reopened to slow the rise of water levels because the sluice gates had not in fact been completed. It also reported that two sailing enthusiasts from the YMCA had found enough water to be the *first* to sail on the Lake. By April 1964, after frustrations over the water levels and the ascendancy of critics of the project, the excitement was palpable.

Canberra experienced in 1964 its heaviest April rains since 1952. By mid-April, the water flow of the Molonglo River had increased nearly 200 fold to 5,000 cubic feet a second. (When the old Commonwealth Bridge was washed away in 1925 the flow reached a record 126,000 cubic feet a second.) This resulted in water levels rising by nearly a foot a day but it was still 7 feet below the levels needed to fill the Lake. Hopes were that the Lake would be within 5 feet of its level by the weekend of the 26-27 April. However, that Saturday morning greeted Canberra with a Lake that was effectively full, being a few inches below its final level.

At the same time, concerns were emerging over the level of debris and the swirling currents. In fact, use of the Lake was prohibited by the Lake Burley Griffin Control Ordinance. Although this was lifted on Monday 27 April, workers were kept busy extracting floating logs, branches and debris from the Lake some time after that.

The Lake looked like one great big playground to a land-locked community. There was little understanding of the danger it posed, both in terms of the potential for hypothermia and the potential for calm Lake conditions to turn ugly quickly. On the weekend the Lake was opened to the public, police and others were kept busy. There were rescues of two children from a submerged canoe, three adults and a child from a capsized sailing boat, two youths in a rowing boat, the crew of a de-masted sailing boat; and of children on wooden rafts, leaking tin canoes and tin drums. In other words it was bedlam.

This led quickly to a curious but well-meaning response, which lacked a grasp of the risks of the Lake. Students from the Canberra Grammar School spent weekends during the May vacation helping the ACT Water Police patrol the Lake in canoes and kayaks.

The *first* water skiers appeared on the Lake on May 16. They had to overcome one minor obstacle – they could not use a power boat on the Lake. Improvising, two 40 foot ropes were tied to the back of utility which then accelerated to around 30 miles per hour, following the lake wall for about a mile and ending in the boat harbour before starting the process again. Despite their thick rubber suits, the skiers articulated what was becoming evident to all – the water was ‘freezing’.



Some of the debris littering the Lake basin before the Lake filled

FORMATION OF ACT ROWING

Planning for rowing in the ACT

Richard Luker and Bill O'Brien were a driving force in starting rowing started in the ACT.

On 26 May 1961, under the letterhead of the 'Interim Committee of the ACT Rowing Association', they invited clubs and schools to a meeting in June of that year aimed at developing a firm proposal to put to the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) for the provision of sites for rowing clubs and other facilities. The letter noted that in 1960 *"a group of oarsmen interested in fostering rowing in Canberra, formed themselves into the makings of a rowing association"*.

In response, the NCDC invited representatives from *The Australian Rowing Council* and the NSW Rowing Associations to Canberra to discuss rowing on the Lake. This resulted in promised support from the NSW Rowing Association. They also noted that the main interest of *The Australian Rowing Council* was the *"provision of a properly designed 2000 metre Olympic distance rowing course"*. They went on to say, enthusiastically and with some optimism, that *"Such a course in the middle of a City would be unique in Australia and equal to any in the world. The course has now become more than a possibility. Steps are being taken to make it a reality"*.

In 1963 the NSW Rowing Association requested Messrs Luker and O'Brien to convene a meeting in Canberra with a view to forming a Canberra rowing association.

On 15 November that year, an ACT Rowing Authority Steering Committee, formed the previous month, produced *"A Brief Summary Of Rowing In Canberra Up To The Present"*. It reported that:

- The NCDC had made provision for a full Olympic standard rowing course on the Lake, to start on the eastern side of King Avenue Bridge and to finish short of Regatta Point (which was named to reflect where such regattas were expected to finish);
- A general purpose Aquatics Building with toilet and shower facilities was to be completed by March 1964 for use by organisations associated with the Lake. It was expected that the facility would be hired for short periods during regattas held by rowers, canoeists and others. The building was not designed for specific use by 'oarsmen' but could house around 12 eights.
- The rowing association should have two broad functions – encouraging the formation of rowing clubs in Canberra and the provision of coaches and facilities and assisting *The Australian Rowing Council* and the NSW Rowing Association in the preparation and running of regattas on the Lake.

The meeting took place on 16 November 1963 at the Canberra Yacht Club, involving an official from the NSW Rowing Association, local dignitaries and 43 “*local gentlemen*”. It resulted in a decision to form the ACT Rowing Association and, to facilitate the drawing up of a constitution, the appointment of R. J. Luker as President, J. P. Weldon as Treasurer, W. E. O’Brien as Secretary, along with W. Refshauge, I. Edwards (Private Schools), A. R. Thornhill (Public Schools), C. J. Schmitzer, D. R. Mackie, J. E. Foley, A. Pugh and Dr A. Robson.

The Constitution of the Association was adopted at a meeting held at the Land Trust Building in the City on 16 March 1964.

First Days of Rowing

ACT rowers were given permission to use the Lake from 18 April 1964 and immediately grasped the opportunity. The *Canberra Times* reported that on that Saturday “*potential oarsmen*” were queuing all day to “*demonstrate their prowess*” in the only ‘shell’ available in Canberra (a Four), owned by the newly formed ACT Rowing Association. The President Richard Luker, was shown waist deep in water, with beached pontoons in the background, assisting a combined crew from the Forestry School and *The Australian* National University.

On Friday 24 April *The Australian* National University Boat Club rowed on the Lake for the *first* time, with reports of the Club having only been formed the preceding Tuesday. The ANU 4 was one of three crews which had borrowed equipment from the ACTRA and were rowing in the National Championships on Saturday the following week, demonstrating how fine the timing was. The first President of the Club, Dr Peter Arriens, had rowed for Cambridge.

These three crews were reported on Wednesday 29 April as likely to be rowing alongside another 5 crews to be entered by a Club to be formed on that Friday and likely to be called the Canberra Rowing Club – the rest is, as they say, history.

Australian Rowing Championships and Olympic Selection

The filling of the Lake on Saturday 25 April came not a second too soon for rowing.

The Australian Rowing Championships, and the Olympic selections, had been scheduled for Thursday 30 April to Saturday 2 May but *The Australian* Amateur Rowing Council was putting in place plans to run an emergency course. As it was, the course did not need to be altered, with the event beginning around the old power station and ending ‘250 yards’ short of Regatta Point. The organiser of the event, Kevin Webb, said “*It seems funny though, that we will be rowing on Thursday where rabbits were running around less than two weeks ago*”.

The event was significant for Canberra in a number of ways. Not only was it the first sporting event on the Lake, it was the first Olympic trial of any sport held in the ACT. Interest was also enormous with an estimated 25,000 people expected to watch the regatta and, although thousands turned out, its actual size may not have been confirmed.

It did not take long for the rowers' nemesis to be felt. The week preceding the competition saw complaints over the impact of wind and the realisation that avoiding it required early morning starts. The *Canberra Times* reported on 29 April that the lighter boats "*were almost unable to cope with the waves whipped up by the winds*". The winds were probably far worse than now experienced because of the lack of vegetation around the foreshores. Hopes abounded that the wind would abate, which it did for the first day of competition which was reported as having been run under ideal conditions. However, on the second day winds made racing conditions difficult and it was, by the end of the day, feared that the Olympic trials would need to be abandoned.

The earliest plans of the Lake were said to have stepped walls but the consequent adoption of the sheer walls, which may have been a savings measure, added greatly to turbulence.

Continued growth

The 1964-65 rowing season resulted from a report by a Regatta Committee which was ratified on 12 August 1964. Committee members were R Barnett, Dr P Arriens, I Edwards, A Thornhill and P Humphries. The program was set shown as

"1964

<i>9th August</i>	<i>ANU BC Sprint Regatta</i>
<i>19th September</i>	<i>Canberra RC Regatta</i>
<i>24th October</i>	<i>ACTRA Regatta</i>
<i>5th December</i>	<i>ACTRA Lake Burley Griffin Marathon.</i>

1965

<i>6th February</i>	<i>Canberra RC Regatta</i>
<i>13th February</i>	<i>NSWRA Championship Regatta</i>
<i>13th March</i>	<i>ACTRA Regatta Championship</i>
<i>27th March</i>	<i>ANU BC Regatta</i>
<i>10th April</i>	<i>Schools "Head of the Lake" Regatta</i>
<i>24th April</i>	<i>ACT RA Distance Time Trials"</i>

The Courier reported on 6 August 1964 that there were three adult clubs - the ANU, the Canberra Rowing Club and the Burns Club – and two school clubs – Telopea and Canberra Grammar.



First CRC Committee - Russ Barnett, Ken Cowley, Bruce Webb, John Gardner, Ian Anderson, Cliff Pugh, Alwyn Druce, Clarry Archer, Reg Libbis, Dick Luker, Bill O'Brien and Tom Monaghan

The Distance Time Trial was planned for 24 April 1965 over a distance of around 3 miles.

The regatta program was announced by R J Luker on 20 August, noting that it involved monthly regattas, with a break in January, and that it would culminate in the Canberra Day celebrations regatta. This was to include teams from Sydney and Melbourne.

The ANU regatta was held on 9 August as planned. It was restricted to two races, a novice four and a time trial for open eights. Only the three adult clubs competed. Conditions were described as 'vile', with the CRC first annual report noting that the temperature did not rise above 42.8 F (around 6 C) with rowers forced to bail out their 'shells' at the end of each race. Canberra Rowing Club won the fours defeating the ANU No 2 crew in the finals. ANU won the Eights time trial. This crew of this first win in the ACT competition was stroked by Alex Leitch, who remains active in ACT rowing, with Lindsay O'Brien in bow, Neale Macfarlane (2), Zel Heimburger (3) and Robert Johns as cox.

While not all of these events went to plan during the first rowing season, it nonetheless laid down much of the pattern of competitive rowing in Canberra.

Interestingly, by this time ACTRA had purchased seven boats and had been donated an eighth one. It was decided that since six clubs had been formed in Canberra the Association no longer needed to own boats. Accordingly, given the variable quality of the boats, the distribution was determined by ballot. A regulation four went each to the ANU and Canberra Grammar, a clinker four to Telopea, a tub four to CRC and a club tub pair to the Burns Rowing Club. A further four was held by the club for tender from any newly-formed clubs. This meant that ACTRA had rapidly evolved into a purely administrative body. The Telopea clinker four is still being stored by the Black Mountain Rowing Club.

The growth of rowing as a sport was reflected in a report in the *Courier* on 17 September 1964, which referred to possibly five Canberra schools taking up the sport in 1965. In addition to Grammar and Telopea which had taken the lead, Canberra High School, Lyneham High and St Edmund's had expressed interest, all of which came to fruition over time.

The regatta of 19 September was also another *first* – single sculls raced for the first time. The course was a half mile, starting near the East Basin pavilion and ending in the northern approach to Kings Avenue.

There was considerable interest at the time in the acquisition of boats, which was probably seen as a proxy for the growth of the sport in Canberra. It now seems quaint that nearly every boat purchase was reported in the news. *The Australian* announced on 19 November 1964 that the Canberra and Burns Rowing clubs had each received a new boat taking the total number of boats in Canberra to 14. It was planned that both of these boats would race in the marathon race on 29 November 1964 around Lake Burley Griffin. Again, as late as 30 September 1965, the *Courier* ran a brief article on the launching and christening of a new shell by the Burns Rowing Club.

For this first rowing season in the ACT, ANU won the senior pennant and CRC won the Maiden Pennant. CRC also won all the perpetual trophies presented during the season - the ANU Boat Club's President's Cup, NCDC Trophies, Uriarra Cup, Banjo Cup and the ANU Boat Club Trophy.

Women's Rowing

An issue, which in many respects was a barometer of wider issues facing women at the time, was the very public resignation in July 1964 of twelve women from the Canberra Rowing Club over an argument on voting rights. Their representative, Miss Nola Knox, lyrically referred to 'taxation without representation'. She was reported on 18 July 1964 as saying that, although the women's club dues were welcomed in the Club, and women made up about a sixth of the membership, the male members had "*apparently thought they needed no help to run its affairs*".

This led to the formation of the Canberra Women's Rowing Club, whose committee met for the first time on 24 August. It had 30 rowers registered, which was a substantial number of rowers compared to other clubs. This had grown to 60 by January 1965. They rowed in their first regatta on 19 September of that year, entering two experienced fours. In November the club was advised that it had been affiliated with *The Australian Women's Rowing Council*.

Canberra was represented for the first time women in the 1965 Australian Women's Championship in Melbourne. It achieved a 4th place in the open fours.

However, controversy was to dog them.

The Australian reported on 20 January that they were unable to lift their fours over the wall at the new site in Griffith [*presumably Kingston*], which was four feet high and they could not lift or lever the boats up, which they claimed would ruin their training for *The Australian Nationals*.

On 10 December 1970 the *Canberra Times* reported a by-law passed by the ACTRA preventing women from rowing in events unless they were specially designated female ones. The Secretary/Treasurer of the ACT Women's Rowing Association, M Clark, indicated that there were not enough women rowers in Canberra to provide any real competition. It is interesting that the women's association was not represented because it was not affiliated with the ACTRA and its case had to be put by ANU delegates. The report suggested many oarsmen, both active and retired, viewed rowing as an all male sport.

The ACT Woman's Rowing Association had largely folded into the wider rowing associations by 1970, given the difficulty of continuing with dual administrations on such a small scale.

Women's rowing in the ACT has since gone from strength to strength, with many Australian representatives developed within the ACT.

Schoolboy competition - Head of the Lake

Almost immediately after *The Australian* championships in May 1964 plans were being made for an annual Head of the Lake between rowing crews from Canberra secondary schools. It was decided that a full season of rowing would be required before such an event could take place.

It was not until Saturday 16 April 1966 that the first Head of the Lake was held, with five schools competing. It was held by the ACT Secondary Schools Sports Association under the rules of the ACTRA. There were 9 events revolving around tub pairs, tub fours, a regulation 4 and the Eights. The Chairman of the Association was E. Atkinson and the Convenor of Rowing Alan Thornhill. Daramalan College rowed under Red and Black with Telopea rowing under its registered colours of Red, Blue and Gold.

The regatta was delayed by winds but, for the eights race on which the Head of the Lake Trophy was based, conditions were said to have been good.

The course was 1500 metres. Grammar led in the first eights event and after 300 metres had established a 3-boat length lead over Telopea and Daramalan, with St. Edmunds and Canberra High a length behind them. With about 1,000 metres to go Telopea increased its rating and caught the Grammar boat. Grammar started to weaken some 300 metres from the finish line and Telopea took the lead. However, Grammar hit back and both fought a gruelling finish to the line with the Telopea winning by a quarter of a length. The Telopea eight comprised J. Owens (bow), L. Plumb, C. Slater, G. de Jong, F. Burns, S. Bisset, P. Bowen, P. Cusbert (stroke) and R. Cooper (cox).

The boat was coached by Nigel Murray-Harvey, described as an 'active oarsman with the Burns Rowing Club', who indicated that he had concentrated on a style to give the boat a great deal of run while stroking at a relatively low rating.

Tragedy – the Col Panton Story

The 1964 Marathon race never took place as tragedy intervened.

37 year old Colin Panton, and his 9 year old son Stuart, drowned on 26 November 1964. Col had been in Canberra for less than a year while his family, including Stuart, had been in Australia for only about a month. Stuart could not swim and life jackets were not worn.

Col Panton had been rowing a tub pair with 35 year old Bruce Shields, coxed by his son Stuart. They were members of the Burns Rowing Club. Bruce Shields account of the event was published in *The Australian* on 27 November.

“Mr Shields said they had been rowing for about six miles, and were nearing King’s Avenue Bridge when a sudden squall caught the craft. They tried to beach the boat on the rocky shore of a nearby island, but then decided to head for calm water under the bridge. Only 100 yards from shore the boat capsized. Mr Shields said that the boy panicked and Mr Panton went to help him.”

At the Coroner’s hearing In December he gave a more detailed account of the day. The tub apparently had been ‘shipping water’ for some time and they had stopped at Spinnaker Island to empty it. It continued to ship water on the return and Stuart Panton was asked to bail out the boat using a can but this was lost overboard. They went under Commonwealth Bridge and fatefully decided that it was too rough to attempt another landing to empty the boat. The result was that the boat eventually sunk beneath them and overturned.

When the boat overturned Col and Stuart Panton were separated from it. Bruce Shields released one of the oars and used this to pull the Pantons back to the boat. There was then a tug of war as Col Panton desperately hung onto the rudder and his son while Bruce tried

to pull Stuart onto the upturned boat. However, the Pantons could not hold on and they drifted away from the boat.

A bus driver, Bill Beadman, was driving over the bridge and saw the crew in difficulty. He stripped down and rescued Bruce Shields. Apparently, on reaching Shields, Shields simply said 'I've had it', exhausted as he was from the rowing and in trying to save the Pantons. Beadman, however, managed to bring him to shore. A woman, Mrs Vanlent, also dived in to help but was driven back by the waves.

An appeal was started by the Burns Club for Mary Panton and her two surviving children. It topped over £1300 which was a considerable sum in those days, when a 3 bedroom house in Curtin could be purchased for around £6,000.

The event showed the best and worst of human nature. While Bill Beadman was risking his life to save the crew, someone stole his watch, a Christmas present from this wife. Beadman's said the thief had missed £60 in notes in his pocket and *"I'll bet he'll be sorry when he hears that"*.

There was a bizarre epilogue to this event reported by the *Canberra Times*. On 5 February 1965 Bill Beadman was driving his bus in the City when he witnessed a smash between two cars. He said *"I saw a man get slewed about and finish up hanging out of one of the cars"*. He stopped his bus and ran around to help him only to find that again it was Bruce Shields. In fact, there had been an announcement that very morning that Bill Beadman was to be awarded the British Empire Medal for gallantry for his rescue of Bruce Shields although he did not know that at the time.

The drowning brought home the realisation as to just how dangerous the Lake was – the *Sydney Morning Herald* in April 1965 referred to this ornamental lake as being an icy death trap. The event also spawned considerable discussion around Lake safety. There was an immediate announcement of the extension of Canberra police patrols and installation of emergency telephones. Editorials and letters to the editors varied but there was an underlying recognition that safety had to start with those using the Lake.

It was ironic that in March 1965 the only rowing eight owned by the ANU was wrecked when a police patrol, heading into the sun, 'ran across the shell'.

The marathon that was cancelled was run in subsequent years and is called the Col Panton Memorial Marathon. It was initially a 5 ½ mile (8.8 km) race starting at the Scrivener Dam and ending in East Basin.

This tragedy was nearly repeated on Saturday 3 March 1979.

The *Canberra Times* on the following Monday indicated that the ACT Water Police, yacht club and other power boats were involved in a mass rescue of about 80 rowers. *“All but eight of the 64 boats in the marathon were swamped as they encountered winds near the High Court site. Grant Walker, 17, a boarder at Canberra Grammar School, was taken, blue and unconscious from the water and given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation while a Water Police Boat took him to Canberra Hospital.”*

The then Vice President of ACTRA, Dr Bob Porra, said that conditions had been *“choppy but not dangerous”* when the race started at 10am but when the crews passed the second of two pontoons opposite Parliament House *“the wind came straight at the”*. He indicated that the previous year’s race had been deferred because of high winds and that serious consideration would have to be given to an alternative course and it was subsequently run in reverse and earlier.

David Bagnall, of the Black Mountain Rowing Club, said *“I vividly remember that race as I was rowing in a coxed four and the crew were surprised on the day that it was not cancelled given the conditions”*. He noted that, because of the interstate popularity of the event, there was considerable pressure on the organisers to proceed. David said *“our ANU 4 had real prospects of winning the race that year and we had worked our way through the field, including past an Easts 4 where I noticed an unhappy Peter Wright in the water. However, we were passed by a Scots College Eight well into the race which went on to win”*. David’s crew subsequently found themselves in the water in East Basin, reasonably close to the finish line.

The East’s crew to which David referred comprised, from the bow, Peter Wright, John Gamble, John Gasson and Steve Sutton. They were rowing in the ‘Black Boat’, an S&B boat bought second-hand by Easts, whose striking paint stood out against the natural timber finishes. Peter said *“we were in fact leading the field as we came under Kings Avenue Bridge and then had to face huge waves bouncing off the pylons and the lake wall. They became so erratic that we had half the boat in the water and the other half sitting a metre above it when the boat simply snapped in two”*. John Gasson said *“the problem was that the boat had filled in the middle while the canvass sections kept the boat buoyant at both ends, putting enormous strain in the middle”*. Peter said they found themselves floundering in the water trying to stop the remains of the boat from sinking and at the same time trying to keep themselves afloat. He said the 13 year old cox, Robert Service, was having serious trouble staying afloat because he had on several layers of clothes. *“We somehow got him close to the shore where he was finally pulled out by Angus Reid who was watching our progress under the bridge.”* Robert Service went on to cox the Newington first eight for a record 4 years *“and to this day when ever any of us see Robert we remind him of the day we saved his life”*.

Alex Leitch, who was at the time rowing for the Canberra Rowing Club, was behind a Grammar four and it sunk as it passed King's Avenue Bridge. Alex's four sank alongside it a few moments later. *"I held onto the Grammar cox who was wearing a great coat which was weighing him down. By the time he was rescued I was near the point of having to let him go because of exhaustion."*

Rod Goodall did not race enter that race but observed the ferocious conditions just past Kings Avenue Bridge. *"I saw a RMC four go by nearly full of water. I warned them that they were in danger of breaking the boat in two but they rowed on. I assume they would have soon sunk"*.

Rosemary Barwick, a 22 year old student teacher, was given a Bronze Medal for bravery for the part that she played on the day. Her citation read as follows.

"Sixty-four crews were taking part in a rowing race but because of heavy rain and wind gusts up to 56 k.m.h., all but eight were swamped, most of them in the central basin. The Canberra Grammar First Eight was swamped, and the crew left the boat and swam around it. It was noticed that their coxswain was only semiconscious and turning blue and the rest of the crew started to panic and call for help. Another Canberra Crew of a Four went across and the drowning youth was placed on their craft. Resuscitation was attempted but they could not open his mouth and they thought he was dead or very close to it. Rosemary Barwick was with an A.N.U. swamped boat when she saw their panic and could see the youth turning blue. She dived from her boat and swam 50-60 yards in cold difficult conditions with waves 2-3 feet high to reach them. She tried mouth to nose resuscitation while she was still in the water, but was then helped into the four and they managed to force open the lad's mouth. She proceeded with mouth to mouth resuscitation for several minutes until a Water Police launch was attracted to the scene and the lad was taken ashore and to hospital, by the Police. Rosemary Barwick stayed with the crew which appeared to be in a state of semi-shock and organised them and helped them get ashore with their boat. "

Finding rowing a home

Rowing in Canberra started at a National Capital Development Commission facility near Duntroon called the East Basin pavilion, which is now the Boatshed Restaurant. ANU was the only club which at that time had its own facilities.

Pat Davoren, a well known Canberra rowing identity who has been a longstanding member of the Canberra Rowing Club, described the East Basin pavilion as a first-class facility, having change rooms and shower facilities. *"Its position had the advantage of allowing rowers to row along Molonglo River when weather conditions were poor"* he said.

While rowing from the East Basin pavilion had the advantages of location and amenities, it was not to last. The Rowing Clubs were evicted on 23 December 1964 and the Department of the Interior moved them to a Nissan hut at the Kingston Boat Harbour. Pat Davoren said

“this was done needlessly, as the boat-house facility was largely unused for the next decade”.

Conditions were primitive, without power, change facilities, showers and electricity. More disturbingly, it meant that rowers were exposed to the worst of the Lake’s rowing conditions. The first Club to move out, to Yarralumla Bay, was Grammar around 1965. Gradually, Clubs moved out of the Nissan Hut until only the then Narrabundah Rowing Club remained. The CRC Third Annual Report gives some inkling of the difficulties in a number of Clubs using this limited facility. It stated that “... *the occupants of this club seem to have been able to live together ‘better this year than ever before’.* Security in the shed is non-existent but of course at \$2 a month the rent is cheap”.



The problems of rough rowing conditions in East Basin were evident from the beginning and alternatives were soon being considered. Pat Davoren noted that the 2 km course met international standards when it was established. However, he indicated that FISA changed the parameters governing such courses including that it could not run under bridges, which meant that it no longer recognised as an international course.

**The Nissan Hut which was demolished
in 2002**

Early regattas were from around lunchtime which meant that conditions were often windy, exacerbated by the location in East Basin. Pat indicated that regattas often involved extensive sinkings which was demoralising for rowers and raised concerns in the minds of parents.

The first regatta on Yarramundi Reach was hosted by ANU Boat Club on 2 April 1966. However, it was not until the 1969-70 season, which was characterised by cancellation of regattas and swampings, that the ACTRA decided to move regattas to Yarramundi Reach permanently.

EVOLUTION OF THE BLACK MOUNTAIN ROWING CLUB

Overview

The evolution of the Black Mountain Rowing Club is best described rather than defined by a strict lineage. This is because for the first 30 years of its history members operated under a confederation of interest, having at its heart an association with Telopea Park High School and Narrabundah College, operating under club names that reflected in part the differentiation of school and adult rowing. Accordingly, while club names changed, members were united by the sharing of rowers and equipment, overlapping coaches and joint management, as club names faded and melded.

Alan Thornhill had started planning for schoolboy rowing well before the filling of the Lake. He was a member of the Burns Club and a teacher at Telopea Park High School. This meant that as he and others were seeking to develop the sport in Canberra, there was a commonality of interest and shared resources. Consequently, teachers would row as part of the Burns Rowing Club but also coach Telopea Park High School students. In this, Pat Davoren noted that the relationship between the Burns Club and Telopea Park High School was paralleled by the relationship between the Canberra Rowing Club and Lyneham High School.

Club rowing was significantly affected by the restructuring of the school system after Narrabundah took over both the year 11 and 12 students in 1976 and students started rowing under the name of the Telopea Narrabundah Students Rowing Club. In early 1977 some of the graduating students, who wanted to continue to row and be associated with the Club, formed the Eastern Suburbs Rowing Club. It also provided the capacity to allow broader adult participation from the community.

In the initial stages Easts used the Telopea/Narrabundah fleet but provided administrative and coaching support. The school and adult clubs co-existed, inextricably linked with by the fleets, friendships and history. Around 1983, following limited parent participation in rowing at Narrabundah, Easts took over management of the fleet. Easts, in terms of its constitution and incorporation, is a direct predecessor to the Black Mountain Rowing Club. However, in terms of membership and history, there was a folding of the Telopea/Narrabundah rowing interests into Easts. In this regard, Easts incorporated itself in 1984 and changed its name four years later to the Narrabundah Rowing Club. This in turn was renamed to the Black Mountain Rowing Club in December 1999 to reflect its changed composition and location.

Set out below is a more detailed look at the 'family' of clubs that forms the basis to the Black Mountain Rowing Club

Burns Rowing Club

The Burns Rowing Club, which was founded by the well known Burns Club, is an important part of the history of the Club notwithstanding that it is not strictly a direct ancestor to the Black Mountain Rowing Club. It raced under a St Andrew's colours, blue with a white cross.

It was one of the foundation Clubs of ACT rowing and had a prominent place in early Canberra rowing and, of course, is linked directly to the tragedy of the Pantons.

The Australian reported on 28 August 1964 that four novice rowers from the Burns Rowing Club would "become the first Canberra oarsmen ever to represent the ACT in outside competition". It explained that the four planned to row at the Mosman regatta on October 17. To say that it was a family affair would not be an overstatement. The team included R. Bodman as stroke, R. Rogers at number three, J. Bodman at number two and L. Broderick at bow. The coach, of course, was A. J. Bodman. He was described as a former King's Cup oarsman who had represented NSW in both fours and eights.

Pat Davoren believes that the first boat purchased by the Burns Rowing Club was called the 'Robbie Burns'. He indicated that it regularly raced against the CRC boat, 'The Pioneers'.

The Burns Club performed strongly in the third ACT season. In 1966-67 it easily outscored other Clubs, achieving 365 points with CRC second at 234 points and ANU with 70 points.

In the summer holidays of 1969, in conjunction with ANU in a IV coached by Peter Arriens, Nigel Murray-Harvey and others enjoyed some brief fame as the 'Motley Crew from Canberra' after winning the 'junior' championship. This arose after participating in a televised Sydney race where they beat a strong Haberfield crew. They had borrowed a disused ANU Club IV, which was thought to be a 'dog' of a boat, cannibalised parts from other boats and won donned in white singlets.

In the early years in particular, Telopea depended on access to the boats of the Burns Rowing Club. However, the Burns Rowing Club also benefited because some of the older and better Telopea rowers filled out some of their crews.

The Burns Rowing Club faded fairly early from the Canberra Rowing scene.

On 20 October 1971 Alan Thornhill wrote to the ACTRA as President of the Burns Rowing Club, but bracketing it as non-active, asking it to waive any outstanding claimed affiliation fees. He indicated that:

"Under the present circumstances it is impossible for the Burns Club Rowing Club (sic) to consider re-starting although I have had a number of inquiries from boys and men wishing to

row. People who have shown interest are not at R.M.C. nor are they eligible as undergraduates or graduates to row with ANU, and for various individual personal reasons will not row with Canberra Rowing Club. They are thus denied any opportunity to row in a regatta in Canberra although they are rowing at present using Burns or Telopea Boats”.

The response from Bill O’Brien on 16 November 1971, as Secretary of the ACTRA, was not a particularly sympathetic one. The ACTRA resolved that *“If the Burns Rowing Club can show evidence of the Club becoming operative the matter would be reconsidered but, pointing out the Association has its own financial obligations and obligations to the other Constituent Clubs. A deposit of 25% of the outstanding arrears ie \$31 – would be regarded as an earnest of the Clubs intentions”*. He went on to say that *“Members thought that if the Burns Club had the Rowing Clubs property vested in it then it should accept some responsibility for the debt at least proportionate to the asset”*. The last season that the Burns Rowing Club participated in regattas was probably 1972-73.

Pat Davoren noted that all Clubs were at the time experiencing significant difficulties because of the lack of government support and the appalling conditions in East Basin and the Nissan Hut. He argued that Clubs were expected to go from small community-based ones to well administered financially self sufficient ones very rapidly, which was just not practicable. *“Even the Canberra Rowing Club, the largest ACT Rowing Club, came close to folding with only 17 members and at one time it put sheets across its boats’*. This compared with 84 members in the first year of the Club, of whom 29 raced for the Club. These comments are particularly poignant in the context of bureaucratic indifference and obstinacy with which Canberra rowing clubs have expressed frustration over in ensuing years.

Nigel Murray-Harvey was one of the key rowers for the Burns Rowing Club and he suggested that one of the reasons for the Club’s decline was that more and more of its focus was on developing the Telopea Park High School Rowing Club rather than racing in its own right. Patrick Davoren said there was little evidence during this time of rowers, having completed their school years in Telopea, wanting to row on in the Burns Rowing Club. This would have meant that the Burns Rowing Club was not getting interest from its natural feeder group limiting its development.

Nigel Murray-Harvey was born in Rio de Janeiro, the son of a diplomat. He did not row at school but took it up in Norwich, England.

In 1961, at the age of around 22, he and a friend sailed to Australia in a 30 foot gaff-rigged cutter via the Panama Canal. The boat was not designed for cross ocean travel and its motor, when operating, was more suitable for moving in harbour.

On arriving in Telopea, teachers were asked by Alan Thornhill to list their sporting interests. This was when Alan was trying to develop rowing within the school. On learning that Nigel was a rower, Alan immediately assigned him a major coaching role as Alan was not a rower himself.

The Nissan Hut in Griffith had for some time after signposting showing the Canberra Rowing Club and the Burns Boat Club as occupants, although all clubs were under permissive occupancy. The Canberra Club moved to its premises on Yarralumla Bay for the 1975/76 season.

Telopea Park High School Rowing Club

Alan Thornhill, as sports master of the Telopea Park High School, registered the rowing colours of the School with the ACTRA on 12 August 1964 – Red, Blue (Royal) and Gold.



Alan ('Prickles') Thornhill was not a rower but was passionately involved in the development of schoolboy rowing both within Telopea and more widely. He was a founding member of the ACTRA, heading the Telopea rowing and was president of the Burns Rowing Club.

While a number of teachers played a significant role, he could reasonably claim the title of the grand father of the Black Mountain Rowing Club.

The *Canberra Times* reported on 5 August 1964 that 30 boys from the Telopea Park High School would be the *first* organised crew of Canberra schoolboy rowers to use Lake Burley Griffin that afternoon. This was to be based entirely on a four bought from the ACTRA (Canberra Grammar had two fours and an eight) and was seen as the first stage of a plan to establish Canberra's own Head of the Lake. Alan Thornhill had clearly seen a future for schoolboy rowing. *"Five years ago he asked the NCDC for a boat house site on the projected lake at the foot of Telopea Park. He contacted Haberfield and Mosman clubs in Sydney during the May school holidays and both clubs have contributed oars and equipment to the school club".* He went on to say *"that he was sure that other schools in Canberra would follow Telopea Park's lead and this would ensure the running of the Head of the Lake perhaps next April"*. He also indicated that eight would arrive from Melbourne as soon as transport could be arranged.

Such was the hype at the time, or perhaps the public affairs skills of Alan Thornhill, that even the failure of this training exercise, because the conditions proved too choppy, was spun as a positive the following day with the paper showing teacher Michael March providing indoor training.

Alan continued to plug away at the concept of rowing as a school sport in Canberra. His frustrations were aired in the *Canberra Times* on 11 August 1965 where he indicated that he had received no response from other schools but would try to introduce a house competition within the school.

This was followed by a *Canberra Times* article on 19 August announcing that Telopea High School rowers started training the previous day in a four for the NSW Regatta to be held on Lake Burley Griffin on October 21.

Schoolboys competed in the Canberra Rowing Club Regatta on 19 September 1964. Grammar beat Canberra High in the final of the eights after Telopea and another Grammar crew were eliminated. The Burns Rowing Club scored a 'two foot' win over University in the final of the novice fours events, crewed by two of the Bodmans, Lange and Rogers.

This was followed by a Burns Club Regatta on the 18 October.

Telopea Park High School went through a golden period from around 1966 to 1970 when it was the dominant schoolboys club in Canberra. During this period, its eight won the Head of the Lake. In 1969, Telopea won the NSW combined High School Championships. It also won the premiership for the 1969-70 season scoring 202 points, with Daramalan second with 139 and Grammar with 88 points. For this year, 11 clubs competed including CRC, RMC, ANU, St Edmunds College, Burns Rowing Club and Lyneham High School.

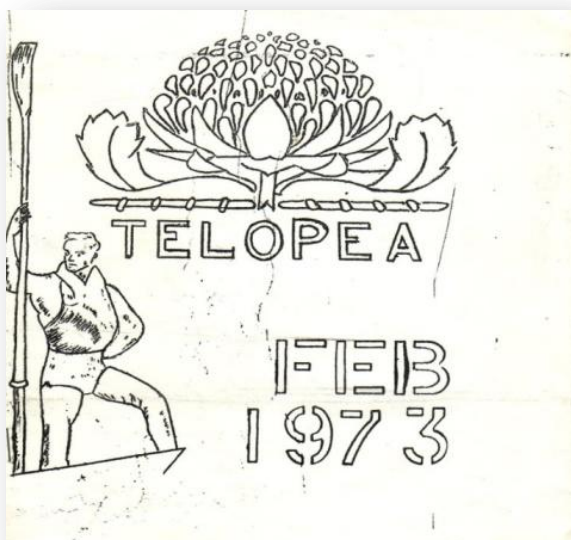
Telopea's fortunes waned for a time after that. On 18 April 1973 the *Canberra Times* carried an article entitled 'Telopea unlucky in Lake title'. It pointed out that the Telopea Park High School had been placed second in both 1972 and 1973 after having come third in 1971. It stated that "*Telopea's efforts have been creditable, but this year it can be acclaimed even more so, because the crew's coach is a former member of the first eight and a sixth former at the school. Peter Wright took over after last year's coach, Mr Peter Hirsch, left Canberra*".

Telopea shared its fleet with the Burns Club and when it finished up Telopea inherited their boats, although they were not generally of good quality. The Burns was said to have been an excellent S&B IV and relatively new. Many of other boats had been second hand when the Burns Club acquired them, some were rotten and a few were finally burned.



Peter Wright and his eight crew at the Nissan Hut. The hats were started by Peter Harris in the VIII that won the first NSW Combined School Eights competition over 2000 metres. Peter was the second president of the Eastern Suburb Rowing Club and the President of the Black Mountain Rowing Club from 2002 to 2007.

This spectacular bonfire in Kingston saw the end of the 'George Ashley', a CRC Eight and a single scull. The fire brigade came to investigate.



Telopea ran a regatta in 1973. At that time it described its Club colours only as Red. Other participants were ANU, Burns Rowing Club, CRC, Grammar, Royal Military College and Watson High School

Telopea Narrabundah Student Rowing Club



Narrabundah College started operations in 1975, which was a transitional year. The 1974 year 11 students completed Year 12 at Telopea in 1975 but all other year 11 and 12 students went straight to Narrabundah. Once the Class of 75 Telopea students graduated a serious issue arose. Narrabundah College did not immediately take up rowing and, while Telopea had the fleet and staff who had fostered rowing, they had few rowers.

The formation of Easts assisted the Narrabundah rowing program. While it arose informally, students were soon rowing as the Telopea Narrabundah Student's Rowing Club. Angus Reid recalled that the schoolboy Telopea Narrabundah Rowing IV was second only to the Canberra Rowing Club in Australia in 1978. *"Students produced their own rowing shirts. They bought Bond t-shirts from J B Youngs and stencilled them with TPNRC. While the school colours were red, the t-shirts they dyed turned out to be more orange than red"* he said.

Angus Reid has formerly been president of Easts, Narrabundah and Black mountain Rowing Clubs.

Angus started rowing for Narrabundah College in 1977 as Year 11 student.

Angus lost interest in active competition in 1984 after attending the selections for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics but with the pair not performing to expectations. However, he kept a scull in the shed and would occasionally row and regained interest in the potential for the Club around 1991 when an offer for a site on Black Mountain was made.

“Rivalry was intense in the early 1970s between Telopea and Canberra Grammar rowing teams. For competitions at the Central Basin Rowing course, supporters from the two schools would turn up with coloured streamers across their cars. It was a tradition that the opposing supporters could drive their cars in convoy through the ‘enemy’ school grounds”.

The Shields (a S&B Regulation IV), was purchased by the Telopea Narrabundah Student Rowing Club and named in honour of yet another Shields who had rowed at Telopea. Mark Shields finished school at Telopea Park in 1975 and unfortunately died shortly afterwards as a result of a motorcycle accident in Darwin. The money was raised through raffles and lamington drives. The boat was passed onto the Radford College Rowing Club in 2009.

In 1981, Peter Shakespear arrived at Narrabundah College. His wife Wilma had taken a netball coaching position at the newly formed Australian Institute of Sport. He was a former Australian and Olympic rower.

Fred Flanagan said that *“Peter transformed the approach to rowing coaching, tending to focus on smaller boats for training upwards rather than on bigger boats training downwards”*. He was lucky in that two single sculls had been built in December 1980. At this time, Howard Croker was building both sculls and oars and he suggested that it was the *first* time that a school for making boats had ever been attempted on a commercial scale. Six Telopea students and their coach, Rik Allan, spent a fortnight at Oxley Island in Taree building four boats. They included Ted Hall, Reuben Bettel, Paul Thompson, James Galloway, Justin Freeman and Robbie Service. Ted commented that *“the students did not quite finish building the boats and two of them were later finished by Rik. Fred Flanagan finished off the other two a few years later”*.

In 1982 Peter Shakespeare organised the making of a further 6 kit sculls, thus enabling his small boat training programs. These training sculls were the first plastic or fibreglass boats in the shed. The same students were again involved in their construction but also helping were Erica and Ellen Randall.

Peter at this time also changed the focus from all out participation in many local regattas to selective participation in a few. His crews were strategically placed to compete at NSW and national titles. Rowing at national titles meant the crews had to row under the school name, which of course was Narrabundah, despite the very close association with Easts and/or the Telopea/Narrabundah Student Rowing Club. This was the first time anyone rowed as Narrabundah.

In his short time at Narrabundah College, Peter coached a number of outstanding rowers, including: Paul Thompson, James Galloway, Reuben Bettel, all the Randall’s – Andy, Erica and Ellen. There were several outstanding results for these athletes including several Australian Championships victories and for James in 1986 a World Championship Gold

Medal as a member of The Australian VIII, alongside the enduring James Tomkins of 'Awesome Foursome' fame.

Peter Shakespear subsequently left for Grammar and after that to take a coaching position at the AIS.

Ex-Telopea Park student Fred Flanagan arrived at Narrabundah College as a PE teacher after Peter Shakespear's departure in 1983. Fred was appointed to the position by the Narrabundah College Principal, Mick March, who had been an important member of the Burns Club RC back in the 60's. Fred was also actively rowing with Easts (and on their organising committee) and had a thorough knowledge of the local rowing scene and particularly the boats in the Nissan Hut.

Leading up to this time a group of parents had been the organising committee for the Telopea Narrabundah Student Rowing Club while their children rowed at Telopea and then at Narrabundah. John Thomson – father of Paul - was the chairman. Once their children finished school replacement parents could not be found to carry on their work. With no parents to call on for help, Fred called on the old boys at Easts and some of the Narrabundah students and kept the club moving forward.

A strong rowing program followed. Fred said that *"in 1987 there were more Australian rowing representatives with their roots in the Telopea/Narrabundah/Easts club than any club in Australia"*. The Narrabundah students helped Easts win the ACTRA rowing premiership in 1987. In that year there were rowers at the school such as Balanda Sack, who later went on to represent Australia.

However, it was the last year of significant success by the school. The AIS then introduced junior programs and made it very difficult to compete at the national level for mere school based crews

The school based arm of the Club ceased with the departure of Fred Flanagan in June 1993.

Eastern Suburbs Rowing Club (Easts)

An early Eastern Suburbs Rowing Club minute to members noted that it was formed in December 1976 *"by a group of rowers who had just finished school at Telopea Park ... [so they] could continue with the sport. Initially all needed facilities were provided by the school including oars and boats"*.

Fred Flanagan had finished in 1975 his final school year at Telopea Park High School, which was the transitional year with Narrabundah College. *"I was, at that time, playing first grade cricket with the Eastern Suburbs Rugby Union and Amateur Sport Club and was a member of its Board. The Club was seeking to extend its sporting coverage and I suggested that it consider rowing"*. Fred indicated that as a result, the Club's President, Bob Walker, chaired

a meeting of interested people in early 1977. Fred said *"I had hoped Bob Walker would take on the presidency of this new Club but he talked me into that role myself"*. However, he observed that he was *"only President for a matter of months as he went to Sydney for his university studies"*.

The Eastern Suburbs Rugby Club journal of Feb-March 1977 provides a more detailed account. John Gamble wrote:

"As you may have heard Easts have formed themselves a competitive rowing club. At a meeting held in the Clubhouse in early February, office bearers and a committee were elected and the feeling expressed by those present was that rowing within Easts should be extremely successful. The rowing club is now affiliated with the Club Incorporated and we were all pleased to hear from the Clubhouse President, Bob Walker, that the club was behind us with the idea."

Since the break up of Telopea Park High School into a senior college at Narrabundah and the junior college in New South Wales Crescent rowing had almost ceased, but over the last few regattas interest has renewed. The school rowing club, i.e. Telopea -Narrabundah Student Rowing Club has generously loaned us equipment which is rarely used. Easts Rowing Club plans to get interest higher at the school level in the hope that once the students leave school, they will continue rowing as Easts."

Telopea - Narrabundah conducted its annual regatta in mid-February at the base of Black Mountain. It turned out to be quite profitable and ran smoothly under the direction of Telopea -Narrabundah teachers. Thanks must go to the students who helped run food and refreshment stalls along with the boys from Easts."

At present there is an eight, a four and a womens crew rowing in the Easts colours with the strong possibility of another womens crew being formed shortly. The VIII had its first win on 12 March after being on the water for only four weeks. Credit must go to Peter Wright, the coach, for the time and effort put into training a crew and we hope that a few more ex-rowers like Peter could take an interest in coaching."

Rowing, I'm sure, will grow within Easts and the local competition will feel our presence in the next season, that is, if they don't in the present season, which is almost finished. As a summer sport and especially an off-season sport for rugby and hockey players rowing is extremely competitive with the emphasis placed on winning."

Anyone interested in rowing for the Beasties should enquire at the Club where there is a list of contacts available."

Much of the impetus for the Eastern Suburbs Rowing Club was the desire of past students of Telopea and Narrabundah to continue rowing together and the stalling of rowing at the two schools. At that time many rowers who graduated had continued to row from the shed, without any formal authority. If the Burns Rowing Club had managed to survive, it may have well have become the recipient of this feeder group obviating the formation of Easts. However, by this time it was long gone.



Easts rowed under the colours of blue, white and gold

Some of the early stalwarts of the Club were Chris Jones, Bruce Pettitt, Norm Constance, John Gamble, Bruce Shields and Rik Allan. Bruce, possibly the oldest person in the Club at around 30, was not the person subject to the dramatic lake rescue but had arrived in Canberra from the Haberfield Rowing Club. Rod Goodall said Bruce had a dramatic impact on the Club. *"He was enthusiastic about building up a quality squad and brought new coaching methods, ceasing the long lean back and slow hands away which had dominated at that time."* He set up a very competitive four comprising Rod Goodall, Norm Constance, John Gamble and himself. Rik Allan had rowed with Peter Wright and took on a substantial coaching role for Easts and Telopea/Narrabundah.

ACTRA held a regatta at Yarramundi Reach on 22 October 1977 which was dominated by Sydney crews. Telopea/Narrabundah and Easts participated in only two events - 4th Grade Fours and the 3rd grade eights. In the first event Telopea/Narrabundah (including John Gasson, Angus Reid, Alex Reid and Steve Sutton) competed against an Easts combination (Gregory, M. Molloy, G Dean, R. Bourkes). In the Eights, an Easts crew was entered that included Peter Wright and Rod Goodall. David Bagnall was rowing for ANU.

When Angus Reid joined Easts in 1979, he indicated that the Club was flourishing, with around 50 members, mainly in the 20 to 25 age group, with actively competing membership of men and women.

Angus Reid suggested there were two reasons why the liaison had formed with the Eastern Suburbs Rugby Club. The first was a matter of expediency – it was the closest drinking hole. The second was that there was a strong link between some rowers and rugby. Angus, Bruce Pettitt, Chris Jones played with Royals and Rod Goodall, a former Telopea student who had a long association with the Black Mountain Rowing Club, played for Eastern Suburbs Rugby Club.

In the early 1980s membership plummeted and the Club came close to folding, with very limited regatta participation by the Telopea Narrabundah Rowing Club.

In 1983-84 Angus Reid was President, John Gasson Vice President, Jeanette Hall(/Gasson) Club and boat Captain, S Sutton Treasurer, B Wood Secretary, and B Geir was a Committee member. The Treasurer's report of 5 December 1983 showed nil income, outlays of \$480, leaving a balance of \$68.70.

It became clear that the club could not grow without access to community grants and to do this the Club needed to be incorporated. Consequently, on 23 March 1984 Vice President John Gasson made an application for incorporation as an association, setting out four goals:

- To promote the sport of rowing
- To participate in the rowing competition
- To provide members with access to equipment and training
- To organise social gatherings for club members

This duly happened on 27 November 1984.

Easts and Telopea/Narrabundah had long been exploring how to get out of the Nissan Hut. The Canberra Yacht club had been experiencing some lean times and had offered up some of their unused boat storage. Easts quickly moved in a few boats and relished the licensed premises on offer. At this time, the AIS introduced rowing to its Canberra sports program but initially had no shed for a fleet. A deal was struck up for the AIS to move into the Yacht Club with Easts receiving some remuneration for brokering this deal.

In December 1984 Peter Shakespeare, who was then with the AIS, raised the possibility of AIS assistance for the construction of a new boatshed in return for temporary accommodation for AIS Boats. Members inspected sites in the same month. A request was made of the National Capital Development Corporation in the same month with an offer to the AIS to supply 200 square metres of boat storage in return for \$15,000 over two years. In January 1985 the NCDC advised that the request should be made to the Department of Territories. Sketch plans were received and an application was made to the Department of Territories for a grant of \$45,000.

It was around this time that a call was made to former members to return and the response was sufficient to make the proposal viable. The Club had to contend with a dilapidated and decrepit fleet but decided to focus on the building and worry later about how to build up a fleet.

On 15 Jan 1985 the Club discussed the possibility of land grant with Territories but proof of funds was requested. A loan was sought from the National Bank Manuka for \$22,500 in January 1985 and approved in March.

Another scheme was explored in June 1985: the Easts Club met with Royals Rugby Club on a possible joint venture. In July the proposal was refined for Royals to put up \$250,000 for construction in return for use of the upper level of the boatshed. This was accepted. However, in August 1985 initial advice from the NCDC was that while they were in favour of the Club's design they were not in favour of the licence, which killed the concept.

In March 1986 the Club submitted a proposal to build on Black Mountain.

Fred Flanagan graduated from Telopea Park High School in 1975. He started his University studies in Sydney in 1977, returning to Canberra in 1981. Fred started teaching at Watson High and started rowing with Easts again. In 1983 he was invited by Mick March to join the teaching staff at Narrabundah College and to take on the Rowing Master role. Mick March had been involved from the beginnings of Telopea rowing as a teacher but had since become principal of Narrabundah College. Fred performed the role of Rowing Master for the next decade, at the same time he was an active member of the Easts Rowing Club. In his time at Narrabundah College he said there was no discernable difference to rowing for the school or the adult club, and many of the school rowers competed as Easts and Telopea at the same regattas.



The Kingston boat harbour was subject, from time to time, to car dumping. A more macabre drama unfolded towards the end of the club's Kingston days when one of its Eights bumped into the body of Mrs Pavic. She had been murdered by her son, weighed down and dumped. However, like many bodies, internal gasses bought her to the surface.



These photos showed the wider family of rowing. The first photo is of Easts' James Baker (graduated from Narrabundah the previous year) with Michelle Collins of Narrabundah. The second shows a group of East and Narrabundah rowers near the old Nissan Hut.

Narrabundah Rowing Club and the move to Black Mountain

On 23 May 1988, the Eastern Suburbs Rowing Club name was formally changed to the Narrabundah Rowing Club Incorporated, which was in keeping with its rowing club roots.

Its coexistence with the Telopea Narrabundah Student Rowing Club was reflected in correspondence with Fred Flanagan on 24 March 1988, as President, from Ray Brown, Public Accountant, seeking improvements in record keeping whilst qualifying the accounts.

In 1989 the Narrabundah club had assets of some \$35,000. However, notwithstanding its limited asset base, plans continued for the construction of a new shed on the Black Mountain Peninsula under the stewardship of Angus Reid (President), John Gasson (Treasurer) and David Bagnall (Secretary). In 1992-93 the membership list showed only 22 senior members. In addition to the three above, there were Fred Flanagan, T. Hedley, B. Foskett, R. Cook, Michael Peedom, R. Gibson, L. Cahill, K. Mathais, J. Tucker, D. Boughton, J. Stuart, T. Chadwick, M. Springolo, Graham Humpries, Ted Hall, Robert Cook, John Daley, Sue Smith and Carrol Crossman. Michael Peedom and John Daley subsequently became members of the Canberra Rowing Club.

John Gasson first rowed with Telopea Narrabundah in 1973. He rowed in the lightweight pair for the ACT at the 1983 national championships and continued to compete at that level for about 3 years. He held a range of positions in the Club including Boat Captain and Treasurer.

John has been the Club's biggest benefactor. He put up capital to initiate the building of the shed, project managed both the construction of the shed and its subsequent extension with Angus Reid, donated the bitumen tarmac, paid for the new racking system in 2006 and subsequently, in conjunction with Peter Wright, donated an Eight.

There were considerable problems in seeking to progress the construction of club facilities on the Black Mountain Peninsula given the low asset base of the Club. A proposal put to increase membership fees was rejected by Club members. The consequence of this was that a group of three – John Gasson, Angus Reid and David Bagnall – was formed with the authority to take all possible steps to ensure that the viability of the proposal. David Bagnall successfully led the development of an application for a sports grant from the Commonwealth Government. The \$60,000 grant was on a dollar-for-dollar matching basis. The main means of matching this was through the value of voluntary project management (undertaken by John Gasson and Angus Reid) and labour from Club members.

At the same time, both as a money drive and to increase the participation in rowing, major learn-to-row programs were initiated which fed fairly quickly into membership.

A submission was made for a new lease for the Club in June 1989. It was approved on 28 May 1991.



Surveying the scene - from the left Ted Hall in the background, Peter Wright in the foreground, Fred Flanagan, John Gasson and David Bagnall.



Earthworks - Black Mountain



New shed - metal framing



The shed was completed in December 1991. However, while the Club now had a long-term home in a key position, it still lacked basic amenities being without water, sewerage and electricity. The Club had dual operations between Black Mountain and Kingston, with some rowers preferring initially to continue to row out of the Nissan Hut. The Nissan Hut remained a storage area for BMRC.



A contemporary photo showing the location of the Club on Black Mountain Peninsula.

At the time this photo was taken, it shared the site with Radford and Daramalan. Radford subsequently moved to its own clubhouse.

1992-93 was a significant year for the Club. It was the first time first time in the Club's history that paid-up membership exceeded 100. Amazingly, of the 108 members only 28 were adults, with 12 of these being competing members. This partly reflected the Club's role in fostering women's rowing in Canberra. An 'Active Girls Rowing Campaign' was initiated, within the context of the ACT Government's efforts to increase the participation of school-age girls. In that year, 71 girls paid for participation in the program that was backed by a \$3,000 grant. This program continued for a number of years. David Bagnall noted that *"this program at that time effectively allowed the ACT to meet its target for female participation in rowing"*. The strong association of the Club with female rowing can be glimpsed by looking at the premierships results between in 1998-99. The Club was first in both the Women's and girls events, amassing more than 30% more points than the nearest rivals.

In addition, the Club adopting a new constitution, with the drafting assistance of Tony Hall, so as to comply with the Association Incorporations Act.

Importantly, the then Minister for Planning, Bill Wood, following representations from the then President of the ACTRA, Robin Poke, agreed to the servicing of the block.

In 1993, Daramalan concreted the floor of the eastern bay and installed boat racks in return of the exclusive, rent-free use of that bay.

The dual use of facilities was reflected in the March 1995 minutes which indicated that 7 paid-up members were rowing from Kingston, with the blue pair located there.

The August 1996 newsletter described the club wardrobe:

- a red corduroy cap with Narrabundah Rowing Club logo embroidered in white on the front;
- a unisuit with a black bottom half and a red top half with red and 3 white stripes down the side with the club logo embroidered on the left side of the top;
- a long sleeve, high collared long sleeve t-shirt in red with ACT Rowing embroidered on the collar in yellow and the club logo in white on the front left side of the top.

The 1996 AGM meeting was held on 11 September at the Canberra Yacht Club. It was chaired by Ballanda Sack, President, and also present were Ron Dempsey, Belinda Olejniczak, David Bagnall, Worth, O'Neill, Tyan, Peedom, Humphries and Moss. The Club Development Plan was discussed and it could have been a discussion held today. Priorities included purchase of coxless four, replacement of older learn-to-row training sculls with trainer racers sculls, purchase of coxless quad scull, conversion of coxed four to coxed quad and replacement of all timber oars with carbon fibre oars. Importantly, there was discussion on the extension of the shed with building approval expected in the near future. Office bearers elected were Dempsey (President); Worth (Vice President); Olejniczak (Captain); Bagnall (Boat Captain); Peedom (Secretary); Treasurer (Daley) and O'Neill and Hall as committee members.

David Bagnall was President of the Black Mountain Rowing Club as well holding a number of other executive positions. He coached number of ACT representative crews. He was earlier closely associated with the ANU boat club, serving as President. He was elected President of Rowing ACT in 2010 after serving earlier terms. He was awarded an Australian Sports Medal in 2000

John Daley's Treasurer's Report for 1996-97 of 3 October 1997 showed a surplus of \$15,517 following a loss of \$2,303 in the previous year. Total income was \$34,769 and expenses \$20,215.

There were 33 financial members in November 1997 including Kate McLoughlin and Greg Williams and three others who have had boats named after them - Donna Martin, Maarten Stapper and David Bagnall. The then 17 year old Donna Martin went on to become an Olympic competitor and world champion quad sculler and rejoined the Club after completing her international career.

The 16 December 1997 Committee meeting at Black Mountain Boat Shed included President J. Simmons, David Bagnall, Michael Peedom, K Dyer and Julie Ellett. Discussion including costing of shelf slides, an issue which is still being debated.

The 22 April 1998 Committee meeting at Black Mountain set the Club uniform as red top and black shorts, zootie suits were not made compulsory; side stripes optional, some variation permitted within these limits but each crew to be uniformly outfitted. Consideration to be given at a future meeting to a new 3 year development plan including use of the Kingston shed.

February 1998 Narrabundah Rowing Club News reflected a key milestone in the extension of the shed. The 1996 AGM had passed a motion to the effect that John Gasson and/or Angus Reid be offered honorary life memberships if they would supervise the extension of the Club.

It enthusiastically stated that:

"The shed is now bathed in light both inside and out for the first time in its life either at Kingston or Black Mountain. The toilets and showers are now complete, so the long walk up the hill is no longer needed. Thanks to life member, John Gasson, for his management of the building work.

We also have an excellent barbecue, thanks to the generous donation of masters rower Kevin Woods.

The club has boats, lights, the chance for a cooked breakfast, and the longed for toilets and showers. All that's needed now is you!"

The Committee meeting of 17 March 1998 saw concerns expressed that effective decision-making was being impeded by non-attendance of some members of the Executive Committee. For the protection of the innocent, the list of apologies for that meeting will not be published. However, it reflects the timeless problems of running any community club.

The President's report of 18 September 1999 also indicated that "The Nissan Hut had been given a new lease of life through its use (on loan) by Capital Lakes Rowing Club.

One interesting facet of the Clubs early operations in Black Mountain was that the shed played host to other Clubs and activities. For a number of years, kayakers used the shed as storage. The Dragon Boat Association did likewise until it went bankrupt and its assets were sold off. Radford College rented space for a period of time but left during the course of 1994-95. In leaving the Club's annual report indicated that the loss of revenue was "creating a major challenge for the survival of the club".

Subsequently, an agreement was entered into in 1996 for the Daramalan Rowing Club to lease one bay and, technically, Daramalan students became members of the Club. However, there was some friction in their use of Club equipment and in the relationship between the Club and the students which generated a desire by Daramalan to construct their own shed, which happened around 1997.

The kayakers were in effect forced out by increasing storage fees as rack space declined and the need for more such space for club members.

Black Mountain Rowing Club

There was an emerging consensus within the Club that it had outgrown the name Narrabundah Rowing Club given that it was no longer in Narrabundah and that the direct links with Narrabundah High and Telopea Park High School had withered. Accordingly, a new name was canvassed and the Club was incorporated as the Black Mountain Rowing Club on 30 December 1999. Its colours were designated as red and black.



Club gathering - December 2003

Club performances have varied over time. In 2005-06, it was the overall winner as well as the winner of the Masters and Women's components. The success in 2005-06 was in no small part due to the strength of the junior woman program which was driven by Rod Goodall. The picture shows Rod with some of his very successful juniors.

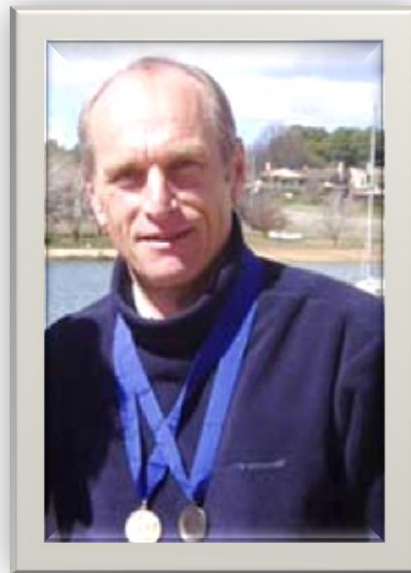


At the Black Mountain December 2006 Regatta the Club introduced for the first time in Regatta history, through the good offices of Construction Control, a \$2,000 prize for the women's' single scull. The field included 6 Australian representatives and was won by AIS' Sally Kehoe. This event was repeated in 2007 for both men and women. The photo shows John Gasson presenting the cheque.



Club tent set up at Regatta - June 2007 – Wendy Pang, Judy McMahon, Peter Wright and John Kinsella are engaging the camera.

One very sad event in 2007, which affected the Club deeply, was the death of Steve Fairfax. Steve was a very capable rower who won the winter time trial event in 2006. He devoted an enormous amount of his time to maintaining, at that time, quite an old singles fleet. Steve left a legacy to the Club both as a person and financially. The interest from his gift is sufficient to fund a trainer single every year or so. A top Sykes heavyweight men's double was named after him on 30 August 2008.



Steve Fairfax

2008 saw the Club, through its links with the Canberra Rowing Club, try its hand at Corporate Rowing for the first time. Pictured here are the crew from the booz&co.



2009 started off poorly for the Club in what looked like a New Year's prank gone wrong, which left the Charles Throsby fatally damaged. The Sargent & Burton boat was built in late 1968 and delivered early in 1969. The money was raised through fundraising by Telopea Park High School which ran a competition between school houses to raise the most money. The Throsby House won. It was rowed by the 1969 1st VIII which won the Head of the Lake defeating the Canberra Grammar School. The 1969 crew was coached by Theo Hirsch and stroked by Phil Ayrton. The crew went on to come second at the 1969 NSW Combined High Schools (CHS) Rowing Championships.



Vince McMahon in the Canberra Times photo of 5 January 2009

The Constitution was rewritten by Vince McMahon and Edwina Menzies in early 2009 to make it a more relevant, flexible and modern document, along the lines of the constitutions adopted by the Canberra Rowing Club and Rowing ACT. This was approved by members on 8 July 2009 but a technical amendment was required by the ACT Government. The current constitution was agreed on the ninth day, of the ninth month of the ninth year of the new millennium.

2010 – the Most Recent History

In 2010 the Club averaged around 110 members. Nearly 70 per cent of members competed in regattas, with over 60 per cent being accounted for by competing adults. Around a quarter of the Club were adults who did not compete in regattas although some competed in the Winter Time trials series. There were four people registered as Club coaches or coxswains. Overall, there were slightly more females than males.

2010 saw BMRC holding an end-of-rowing season celebration to thank the hard working Boat Racing Officials, who work tirelessly for the rowing community with any real expectation of thanks.



BROs Roger Grylls; Geoff Northam; Edwin Bien; Catherine; Claudia Botterill and Martin Sessions

Solar panels were fitted to the roof of the shed following a grant by the ACT Government. The 12 panels and inverter can generate around 2.kW of power. The panels could eliminate electricity bills and allow the Club to generate income through contributing to the grid.



There was a bitter-sweet footnote on the fate of the Charles Throsby. The bow of the boat was removed and mounted and now resides in the shed as a permanent reminder that the boat served the Club for over four decades, with some Club members having rowed it as schoolboys. However, the opportunity was taken to renew a long-running rowing tradition by burning its remains at the August 2010 Annual Black Mountain Rowing Club Dinner at the Clubhouse.



December 2010 was a dramatic time for the Canberra region. Queanbeyan was seriously flooded. Huge amounts of debris travelled at speed through Lake Burley Griffin before most of it was flung over the Dam wall – trees held captive by the force of the water appeared little more than matchsticks. The debris left behind made rowing dangerous. The buoyed course was all but destroyed resulting in the need to hold regattas without a fully-buoyed course for the first time in decades. However, no sooner was it over than the rowing community started clean up and reconstruction ahead of the work by government agencies. By mid-January most of the debris had been cleared from the Lake.



In conclusion

It is ironic that this story ends in similar circumstances to which it started – a flooded Molonglo River. While the 1964 flood kick-started rowing, the December 2010 flood caused a stutter. However, it came at the time of a larger, more mature and well resourced rowing community. Between these two floods, the Canberra rowing community has had its triumphs and tragedies. Some rowers have gone from schoolboy novices to retired veterans on Lake Burley Griffin. For many others, rowing has been picked up or resumed later in life. Canberra rowers have overwhelmingly been more unified by their love and commitment to the sport than divided by any Club loyalties or individual differences. The spontaneous effort by the rowing community in responding to the setbacks caused by the December 2010 floods stands as a testament to its resilience and sense of community.

I will leave the final word to others.

David Bagnall, the current Rowing ACT President, in his submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories Inquiry into the National Capital, argued:

“During the tenure of our boathouse we have taught thousands of Canberrans to row, produced National Champions and Representatives, won ACT Premierships, fostered the birth of three other rowing clubs, as well as contributing significantly to the ACT Sports including kayaking, dragon boating and surf life saving”.

Patrick Davoren, an active member of the rowing community from its inception and Secretary of Rowing ACT, in referring to the hardships of early rowing in Canberra, commented on just how much poorer Australian rowing would have been if rowing in Canberra had foundered.

The *Canberra Times*, in its celebratory spread on Sunday May 2 1964, got it right in proclaiming the Lake a *“Liquid Asset for a Nation and its Capital”*.

About the author

Vince McMahon was, at the time of publication of this document, President of the Black Mountain Rowing Club and Treasurer of Rowing ACT. He was formerly a senior public servant and was awarded in 2000 the Public Service Medal following his work in evacuating the Kosovars to Australia. He resigned in 2007 to take up consultancy work and an Adjunct Professorship at the University of Canberra. He has rowed since 2003.

History of Main Office Bearers						
Year	President	Vice President	Treasurer	Secretary	Club Captain	Boat Captain
	Teloepa Rowing Club and Teloepa Narrabundah Student Rowing Club					
1964 – June 1993	The positions were filled by various teachers including Alan Thornhill, Mick March and Nigel Murray-Harvey. The Teloepa Narrabundah Rowing Club started after 1975 with the formation of the College from where most of the rowing took place. While not shown separately in the timeline below, the school club existed alongside Eastern Suburbs Rowing Club until at least 1990. When Fred Flanagan took over responsibility for the College rowing in 1983 from Peter Shakespear, John Thomson, – father of the Olympian Paul Thomson, was the chairman. Eastern Suburbs and the Teloepa Narrabundah Student Rowing Club were seen as the same unit, having common administration, shared facilities and cross rowing.					
	Eastern Suburbs Rowing Club					
Dec 1976	Fred Flanagan					
1977	Peter Wright		Robert Burke	Trish Della Vedoka	John Gamble	Garry Dean
1978	Peter Wright					
1979 - 1982	Position information not available					
1983	Angus Reid	John Gasson		S Sutton	John Gasson	John Gasson
	Narrabundah Rowing Club					
1984 - 1988	Position information not available					
1989			David Bagnall			
1990	Fred Flanagan					
1991	Angus Reid		John Gasson	David Bagnall		
1992						
1993	Angus Reid	Celia Stott	John Daley	David Bagnall		Michael Peedom
1994	Celia Stott	Angus Reid	John Daley	David Bagnall	Ballanda Sack	Ted Hall
1995	Ballanda Sack			Michael Peedom		Ted Hall
1996	Ron Dempsey	Alison Worth	John Daley	Michael Peedom	Belinda Olejniczak	David Bagnall
1997	John Simmons	Rodney Moss	John Daley	Michael Peedom	David Bagnall	Julie Ellet
1998	John Simmons	David Nash	Geoff Perman	James Blackley	David Bagnall	Julie Ellet
1999						
	Black Mountain Rowing Club (1999 was a transition year)					
2000		Vice President position ceased.	Geoff Perman			
2001	David Bagnall		Linda Delaney	Virginia Oborn	Sarah Green	
2002	Peter Wright		Duncan MacKinnon	Wendy Pang	Position Ceased	Rod Goodall
2003	Peter Wright		Margot Bell			Rod Goodall
2004	Peter Wright		Margot Bell			Rod Goodall
2005	Peter Wright		Margot Bell			Rod Goodall
2006	Peter Wright		Margot Bell	Lorraine Champness		Suzanne Nermutova
2007	Angus Reid		Margot Bell	Lorraine Champness		David Nash
2008	Vincent McMahon		Lorraine Champness	Kerri Hughes		Alex Leitch
2009	Vincent McMahon		Lorraine Champness/Andrew Bailey	Kathy Howard		Stephen Trowell
2010	Vincent McMahon		Andrew Bailey	Kate McLoughlin		Alex Leitch

Club members who have represented Australia

Paul Thompson

Paul is a former Australian squad rower. In 1996 he coached the women's pair to an Olympic gold medal, Australia's first for a women's boat. He followed this with silver in the class at the Sydney Olympics.

He graduated from the University of Canberra and worked at *The Australian Institute for Sport* until 2000 as senior rowing coach. He is also the recipient of an Australian Sports Medal.

Paul joined the British Rowing coaching staff in 2001 and was the lead coach for women at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, which produced three medal winning boats. Paul in 2010 was the Chief Coach of the Women and Lightweight Squads.

He acquired British citizenship in 2007.

James Galloway

James was in the Gold medal team rowing in the 1986 Olympics. He rowed bow. Other team members were Malcolm Batten; Andrew Cooper; Michael McKay; Mark Doyle; James Tomkins; Ion Popa; Stephen Evans.

Ballanda Sack

Ballanda Sack was a Narrabundah College member within *The Australian Institute of Sport's* Junior IV winning the World Junior Championships.

She was a member of *The Australian Champion Women's Eight* in the 1980s and rowed in *The Australian Women's Four* at the World Championships, which came fourth.

She was reserve for the Australian VIII at the 1996 Olympics

Kate McLoughlin

Kate started rowing early in 1980 for *The Australian National University Boat Club (ANUBC)*. She rowed in the ANU intervarsity four and eight in May 1980, where they came second in the four. She was selected in 1981 in the ACT squad, coached jointly by David Bagnall and

Joe Wolfe, along with team members Sue Donogoe (CRC), Lesley Paton and Jeanette Gasson.

In 1982 she rowed a lightweight women's pair with Julie Ellett and the two of them rowed in a four along with Lesley Paton and Jeanette Gasson. Kate and Julie won Australian selection at the Adelaide selection regatta and were the first ACT rowers to be selected in *The Australian* team, as previously ACT rowers came under the NSW selection system. They joined a squad with Barb Griffiths and Barb Phelan from Melbourne University Boat Club, and Gai Alan and Leanne Turner from Mosman Rowing club, who formed *The Australian* lightweight women's four. They trained on the Yarra in Melbourne out of the Melbourne University Boat Club shed. The pair and four competed at the Canadian Henley Regatta in August 1982 at St Catherine's, which was considered the world titles for lightweight women. Kate and Julie came second in the pair and the four won a gold medal.

Kate was subsequently awarded a University Blue and won ANU Sportsman of the Year for 1982. Kate joined Narrabundah/Black Mountain Rowing Club in about 1995.

Evelyn Sommer

Evelyn starting rowing as a 15 year old at the Sydney Women's Rowing Club at Abbotsford, Sydney.

In 1974 she was selected in the first women's team to be sent to a World Rowing Championships, at Lucerne. She rowed in a pair, with a women sculler also selected. Such was the state of women's rowing at the time that they competed without their coach, who remained in Australia given the lack of any sponsorship.

Evelyn subsequently represented Australia at the world championships in a single scull in New Zealand in 1978. This was followed by a Trans-Tasman regatta series. Evelyn continued rowing with Abbotsford until 1982 and arrived in Canberra in 1986. She rowed only occasionally until she resumed local competition after joining the Black Mountain Rowing Club around 1995. She has only been in the two rowing Clubs in the over 40 years of rowing.

Jeanette Hall (/Gasson)

Jeanette learnt to row with coach Gary Deane at Easts Rowing Club in 1979 in a women's Eight, which included Brigid Cassells (future pair partner) in the crew.

The following year Peter Wright recommended she join coach David Bagnall's squad of lightweight women at ANU Boat Club. She rowed with Lesley Paton in a Lightweight Women's Pair and combined with Kate McLoughlin and Sue Donoghoe in the four. The pair came second at the Aust Champs, and the four came fourth. The 1982 Aust Champs were less successful, finishing fourth in the semi-finals of the pair, and making the final in the four (Jeanette, Lesley, Kate and Julie Ellett, coach David Bagnall).

In the 1982/83 season she rowed with a new pair's partner, Brigid Cassells, and combined with Denise Rennex and Julie Ellett for her most successful Nationals campaign in Perth, where Jeanette and Brigid came first in the pair with Denise and Julie in second place. The four came second behind Melbourne University Boat Club.

1984 was Jeanette, with Brigid, was selected to represent Australia in the Lightweight Women's Eight at the FISA World Lightweight Championships in Montreal, Canada. At the Nationals at Lake Barrington, Tasmania, the pair finished in second place and the four was sixth. This was her last and most successful season with coach David Bagnall.

Jeanette didn't compete in 1984/85 but attempted an uneventful comeback the following season, making the final at Nationals in the four. In about 1995 Jeanette joined Black Mountain Rowing Club when Evelyn Sommer formed a Masters Women's Squad to compete at *The Australian* Masters Games in Canberra in 1997.

Donna Martin

Donna was part of the gold medal crew at the 2001 under 23 world championships in Linz, Austria.

She stroked with crew members Sally Robbins, Amber Bradley and Kelly Mathews.

Donna was in the fourth placed women's quad at the 2002 World Rowing Championship in Seville Spain, along with Dana Faletic, Sally Robbins and Amber Bradley. She rowed in the heats a double scull at the Athens Olympics in 2004.



1981 NSW State Championships at Penrith – Jane Westawood, Julie Ellet, coach Joe Wolfe, Lesley Paton, co-coach David Bagnall, Jeanette Hall and Kate McLoughlin. The gold medals worn by Lesley and Jeanette Hall were for the light women's pair.

Indicative Record of Cup Wins in the ACT

Cup	Winning Team
Molonglo Cup – Men's Four	1975 and 1977– Telopea/Narrabundah
Fraser Cup (Head of the Lake For competition between school Vllls in the ACT)	Telopea Park High School – 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970
Banjo Cup (Fours)	Burns Rowing Club – 1966 and 1968 Easts – 1979 (with ANU), 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983
Donoghoe Family Shield (Schoolgirls Fours)	Narrabundah College – 1982, 1988
NCDC Rose Bowl (Novice Fours)	Burns Rowing Club - 1965
President's Shovel (Champion 2nd Grade Vlll of the ACT)	Easts – 1979
Lyn Cirulis Shield (WINTER SCULLING SERIES)	Black Mountain – 2004, 2005
Sculler's Cup (Champion Woman Sculler)	Narrabundah – 1994
Col Panton Memorial Marathon	First across line AIS/Easts - 1987 Fastest ANU/CRC/Narrabundah – 1997 CRC/ANU/Radford/Narrabundah – 1999 CRC/ANU/BMRC/Daramalan – 2000
Skipper Cup (Fastest Marathon Crew)	Telopea Narrabundah 1980 and 1981
Yarramundi Medal	BMRC - 2004

Performance at Australian National Championships - 1975 to 1990

Year	Event	Team	Result	Race
1975	Schoolgirl four	Telopea	2nd	
1976	Women's Junior 4	Telopea	3rd	E1
1976	Schoolgirl 4	Telopea	4th	E2
1982	Women's U23 pair	Narrabundah College	1st	
1982	Men's U23 Coxed pair	Narra (/UBQ)	1st	
1982	Women's Eight	Narra/Easts (/ANU)	2nd	
1982	Men's U19 Scull	Narrabundah	Unplaced	
1982	Men's U19 pair	Narrabundah College	1st	
1982	Men's U19 Coxed 4	Narra(/Glebe)	3rd	
1982	Women's U23 4	Narra (/ANU)	3rd	
1983	Schoolgirl scull	Telopea	2nd	
1983	Schoolgirl scull	Telopea	2nd	
1983	Schoolgirl scull	Telopea	Unplaced	
1983	Men's U23 Coxed 4	Narra/Qld Uni	1st	
1983	Woman's pair	Narrabundah	Unplaced	
1983	Women's Lightweight pair	Easts (ANU)	1st	
1984	Men's U23 4	Narrabundah	6th	R
1985	Schoolgirl scull	Telopea	6th	
1985	Women's U23 Pair	Telopea/Narra	1st	
1985	Schoolgirl Scull	Telopea/Narra	5th	E1
1985	Women's U23 Four	Telopea	4th	
1985	Schoolgirl Scull	Telopea/Narra	2nd	R2
1985	Men's U19 Coxed 4	Telopea/Narra	4th	E2
1985	Men's U19 Coxed 4	Telopea/Narra	4th	E2
1986	Women's Eight	Narra (/Monash/Banks)	4th	
1986	Women's Junior Coxed 4	Narra/Adelaide Uni	1st	
1986	Schoolboy scull	Narrabundah	5th	E1
1986	Schoolboy scull	Narrabundah	3rd	E2
1986	Men's U23 Scull	Narra/Easts	1st	
1987	Women's U23 pair	Narrabundah	1st	
1987	Men's U23 Scull	Narra/Easts	1st	
1990	Women's 4	Narra(Bendigo; CRC/Nepean)	1st	