

2013 Vigor Kayak Tour – Lake Dartmouth

The third episode of the annual Vigor kayak tour started with dinner at 'The Blazing Stump' in Wodonga. While Albury local Jen expressed serious concerns about the 'last supper' before three days of paddling being at a place renowned for bikies and other general riff raff, a certain someone might have left with a stomach ache more to do with how much they ate rather than any issues with the food. After dinner, Am took a carload on a mission to Bunnings to get some much needed tent pegs for her tent.

The late arrivals had spent ages waiting for dinner in Seymour but they were all there the next morning when we woke, ate muesli together then set off from Ebdon on the shores of the mighty Lake Hume for the shores of the much mightier Lake Dartmouth!

Accompanying us on this trip was Jen's husband Matt – and his best man friend Gus who had a small fishing boat and a hankering to catch some fish!

Once there the art of loading the boats commenced. Standout odd things to pack went to Rodrigo who again packed a pillow and Nicky the German packing a seat for his kayak. The sight of the boys in their fishing boat packing a small bbq, two stoves, deck chairs and the worlds biggest esky also provided some amusement as previously tough looking blokes were now clearly 'glamping'.

From there we were away for a 7km paddle to our lunch spot where we got stuck into tuna wraps and prepared for the next 8kms to our campsite.



After we arrived and set up camp we had some fruit cake and custard (never a wrong time of day for that) and then had a play in some tippler boats – always hilarious to watch!

The benefits of the boys bringing the worlds biggest esky were becoming clear - we were able to enjoy a cold beer before dinner, which was served with as much rice as you could eat courtesy of Waz and Rodrigo telling Rach they'd eat it all if she cooked it.



All that energy was needed for the next day ... paddling as far as you wanted to! Breakfast was sensational - porridge topped with cinnamon sugar, dried fruit and seeds and if we weren't full of energy from dinner the night before we were raring to go after that.

Off we went up towards the Mitta Mitta River with four of the faster paddlers aiming to paddle 15kms to make up a 30km round trip. After a stop off for a leg stretch and a bite to eat we pressed on past Lion Point and Italian Point finally reaching the 15km mark.

Off in the distance we could see more paddlers and were surprised some sprinters had come that far. Rodrigo & Megan turned around and Liam tried to convince Andy & Nicky to turn back too, however they both wanted to keep going and pretended not to understand Liam, so the group was split. After a stop we ended up heading back more or less together. Some of us had swapped boats and Rodrigo in a tipper boat after an already long paddle spelt disaster and he just managed to whisper to Liam, "I'm gone" before taking an unplanned swim. Excellent ironman training right there!

Am, Leonie and Rich got the sensible paddlers of the day award doing a very decent 20km or so and enjoying the sights on the way back, it was stunning paddling.

Eventually we all made it back where the others had lunch ready for us to inhale and there was a unanimous decision that everyone should have their second beer with lunch instead of dinner and it went down a treat! We then had a festival of eating to make up for the four hours of tough paddling we did.



After that we attempted a festival of snoozing but with temperatures over 34 degrees it was difficult to find a shady spot to sleep and Leonie found a tent sauna to not be all that relaxing. A cool off in the lake ended up being the best solution to the heat with Liam demonstrating his excellent balance skills by standing up on a surf ski – don't try this at home kids. Rich patented the Morrell Flop – a different way of getting back on a surf ski, then he showed us his balance was pretty good too as he surfed on a surf ski – again, don't try this at home kids.

A very cruisy afternoon was had and the fishing boys found out you don't need to catch fish to eat fish on a camping trip. Good networking skills with our fellow campers saw Matt and Gus receive two trout from our neighbours, which they cooked up on one of their many cooking devices. Yum!

As dinner was getting underway storm clouds came over quickly and it was a reminder of how quickly conditions can change in the outdoors. It was a rush to secure all the boats and for some to lament not bringing a rain jacket. We scooped down our dinner in case of a deluge but luckily it passed over us with not a drop of rain and we were able to consume tea and chocolate post dinner as per usual.

With a big day of paddling behind us bed was not far off and the next morning someone even reported having the best sleep they'd had in a year and a half! Amazing what good food, company and a LOT of paddling can do for you!



We awoke to a calm looking lake ready to paddle the 14kms back to the boat ramp. Once we were on the water we realised there was a bit of chop to make it more fun for the way back. Some people were quite competitive with Jen and Rodrigo stating the entire way back that they were definitely 'not racing'.

Again it was another fantastic trip with great Vigor people exploring another great part of Victoria! If you paddle consistently anyone can do this trip, so make the commitment and plan to join us next March long weekend!



Learnings:

- When Liam says turn around, turn around
- You can stand up in a sprinter ... with practice
- March flies bite hard. Better to slap them with your hand than your shoe.
- You don't have to catch fish to eat fish
- You don't need a degree to predict the weather, just positive thoughts
- Don't look up 'Fanky' in urban dictionary