

Tama...So all involved understand, 4th sucks. That dealt with, here's what happened at the Wellington Regatta. We came, we saw, we got fourth. Again. In summary, the regatta itself was the usual warm up, sit down, paddle around, cool down, munch on bird food, and join Derek in his new found ability to count to ten, and do ones best to exert the energy of a collapsing nebula into 1min 30sec's of frenetic thrashing. Throw in some porta-loo's that stand abused and reeking in the corner, listen to pep talks from our enthusiastically absent coach and Wah-Lah peanut butter sandwiches...we're on the booze again!

Dragon Boating, as those who know will tell, probably to their grandchildren, has nothing to do with paddling or prizes. No no no, Dragon Boating is about regatta's, going away, exerting one's self beyond mere mortal capacity, spending more than we have, drinking more than we can, eating more than we need, and sleeping in small clammy backpackers, breathing the effluent gases that only exhausted intoxicated people can produce while sleeping. Sure we're all athletes, prime specimens of physical sculpture, but underneath all the buffy exteriors, designer labelled damp smelly underwear and cheap scratchy linen, we're animals, party animals, prowling like hippopotamus's don't through the bombastic beats of seedy nightclubs and foreign restaurants, all on the off chance that in the morning we might remember something.

The social side of Dragon Boating (in which we came last, which is first, because the last team standing wins) is of course the major motivating factor we all put ourselves through so much torment to attend (sorry Keith, if you were there more often you would of realised this).

Elite athletes that we are, much preparation was put into conditioning ourselves for the rigours of after-match functions, not as much preparation however, as most of the feline athletes put into getting ready for a night on the town. Which is somewhat confusing considering the condition they get themselves into after the shooters start kicking in?!? Rachel - roads are for buses too.

The special moment I shared on the footpath with Cirina and Charlotte on Saturday night was great. For such a quick trick, I was Fantastic.

Sunday

Erin...Sunday was a day of recovery and we all split up to go and do our thing. Some shopped, went to Te Papa, and visited friends. Those of us that could stomach it ate and those that were most certainly well practiced drinkers headed back to the pub and drank...again. Martin claims to have been "at Church most of the day." But drinking at the pub, although its regularity makes it religious in nature, does not count as a religion or the pub a Church!

Tama...5 years ago when last I paddled the EW canoe, our last night out in Wellington was at the Blue Note Cafe, an evening also rating itself as a highly memorable moment. This year, there was still four of the original Last Night Blue Note Crew remaining, and perhaps testifying to their true virility and substantial staying power, they were all men. It could also pertain to their circus freakishness, but, however, touché and well done to Pixie Balls Paul, Muzza, Martin, and myself. Yes we do rock. No, none of us are gay.

Martin...yes the Karaoke night was another memorable moment. It was great as most of the team sang and being so impromptu seemed to make it better. Big Al's version of Lola was probably quite apt considering some of the clientele in the joint and I noticed that they all seemed to have eyes for Big Al after that. Walking back to the backpackers that night seemed surreal due to the lack of people around, mind you I guess it was 2 o'clock on a Monday morning. Alice seemed fascinated by the strange looking guy sleeping under a blanket on the footpath and for a moment it looked like she might snuggle up to him but changed her mind as some of the team was still hanging around. All in all it was a great night.