



Snap Dragon member and cancer survivor Helen Bichel with husband Brian receives a guard of honour after her last paddle.

Tin Can Bay Dragon Boat Regatta

Dragon boat racing is an exciting and exhilarating sport which has been around for 3000 years.

Originating in China the sport has grown in to a worldwide, highly competitive sport. This is a team sport with twenty paddlers in the boat.

Dragon Boating is a great way to build fitness and make new friendships. It provides a low-impact sport to members from a wide range of ages, cultures, physical abilities and fitness levels.

There are many different levels of competition from juniors through to grand master, so as you can see there is a level for everyone. All shapes and sizes,

and fitness levels are accounted for.

A highlight of the annual Tin Can Bay Dragon boat regatta is the 'Pink Challenge'. Every year, these survivors of breast cancer or 'Pink Ladies' as they are known affectionately, bring their own special quality to the event. It is clear that having fun is high on their list of priorities, but by taking on the physical challenge of dragon boating, they are constantly promoting breast cancer awareness and demonstrating that there is life after a cancer diagnosis. With team spirit and camaraderie second to none, they are not only an inspiration to others faced with a diagnosis of breast cancer but to all mem-

bers of the dragon boating fraternity.

One of those inspirational 'Pink Ladies' is Helen Bichel who was well enough to attend the event to participate in her final paddle before retiring. A guard of honour was formed for the survivor of breast cancer who was supported by her husband Brian through the crowd of well wishes.

Five teams contested the Pink Challenge, with the Gold Coast Dragons Abreast 'Breast Mates' being the eventual winners over the Brisbane River Dragons 'Missabitattiti' crew.

Story and Pictures by Tanya Easterby