

# INTERNATIONAL BREAST CANCER PADDLERS' COMMISSION

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## Florence, Italy It's To Be



**The historic city of Florence will welcome** breast cancer paddlers to the fifth international participatory dragon boat festival to be held between the months of June and September, 2018. The decision was a difficult one for the five judges from four countries as each of the submitted proposals from various bidding countries was comprehensive, well-developed and enticing. The successful bid was submitted by the *Florence Dragon Lady* team and supported by many other Italian breast cancer teams.

This International Breast Cancer Paddlers' Commission Festival will take place in both the City of Florence and on Lake Bilancino in the Township

of Barberino di Mugello. Pictured above is the city of Florence with the Arno River flowing under the famous Ponte Vecchio. Festival dates and registration information will be available in 2016.

*The IBCPC Steering Committee is pleased to announce the appointment of Cecilia Picchi, a member of Florence Dragon Lady team, as the IBCPC European Representative responsible for locating already existing breast cancer teams as well as encouraging the establishment of new ones on this continent. This past year Cecilia has been in contact with European teams from England, France, Germany, and Poland. She has just begun work with a potential group in Vienna, Austria.*  
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# WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?



## ARGENTINA: LA PLATA & CIPOLLETTI

### Showing patience, strength and spirit

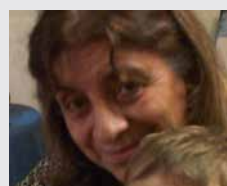
From **Adriana Bartoli**

Remember the women from La Plata, Argentina, *Remeras Rosas* who were featured in the December 2014 IBCPC newsletter? Well they continue growing as a group, paddling in triple canoes and raising awareness. Their boat is on its way to them but unfortunately it has run into problems clearing customs so our paddling friends are troubleshooting to get their boat. Importation has been denied for many months. They are philosophical; sometimes things are not easy they report but they are showing their strength and spirit and hopefully will be on the water soon.

They were recently featured in the largest newspaper in Argentina, *Diario Clarin*.

[http://www.clarin.com/sociedad/cancer-tratamiento-prevencion-remeras\\_rosas-botes\\_dragon-remo-salud-historias\\_de\\_vida\\_0\\_1376862322.html#](http://www.clarin.com/sociedad/cancer-tratamiento-prevencion-remeras_rosas-botes_dragon-remo-salud-historias_de_vida_0_1376862322.html#)

There is very recent news about a second team forming in Argentina. They are calling themselves *PodeRosa* and are located in Cipolletti, Río Negro. There are five so far and they are working hard with their supporters to find more paddlers. Visit *PodeRosa* on Facebook



Left to right: Elsa Alonso, Fabiana Paola Pino, Marcela Martínez, Susana Fernández and Marcela Mancini.



## AUSTRIA: VIENNA

### New team seeking paddlers to fill their boat

By **Svenja Franke-Bruhn** *Vienna Pink Dragons*

*Vienna Pink Dragons* was established in the spring of this year by **Svenja Franke-Bruhn**, a breast cancer paddler who has moved from Sydney Australia, where she paddled with *Dragons Abreast Sydney* until she arrived to live in Vienna. Currently there are two breast cancer paddlers, Svenja and **Andrea Mattes**.

Several “newbies” are already interested and Svenja reports they are now organising monthly sessions and continue to advertise and spread the word in Vienna. Until they can fill a whole boat, the breast cancer paddlers are training three times a week with the *Vienna Dragons*.



Empoli, Italy's *ASTRO Dragon Lady* team member, **Franca Criseo**, left, is pictured here with Austria's *Vienna Pink Ladies* team member **Svenja Franke-Bruhn**. Both women were instrumental in beginning their respective teams; Erica in 2012 and Svenja in 2015. They paddled together in Empoli on June 13.

Svenja went to Empoli, Italy to join the celebrations organized by the *Astro Dragon Ladies* on June 13, 2015. Svenja reports: “The visit was a wonderful experience, a great way to connect with the Italian teams and to gather many useful tips in regards to establishing our new team in Vienna.”

**Contact:** [info@pinkpaddling.at](mailto:info@pinkpaddling.at) **Website:** [www.pinkpaddling.at](http://www.pinkpaddling.at)  
**Facebook:** Vienna Pink Dragons

## BRAZIL: SANTOS An opportunity to develop paddling: Help needed



From **Adriana Bartoli**

Until recently there was little interest in a dragon boat festival in Brazil but one may be taking shape now, in fact there is interest from a dragon boat owner in the city of Santos, which is on the east coast just south of Rio de Janeiro. The IBCPC has been asked to canvass our member teams to see if any of their paddlers or crews might like to attend the first dragon boat festival in Brazil. The event would likely take place between October and December of 2016.

This is a unique opportunity for our members to help develop ‘our sport’ in a country that is beginning to understand the benefits of breast cancer paddling and to support the individuals there who are working hard to raise awareness about life after a diagnosis of breast cancer.

If you or your team would consider participating in this possible event please contact [remosenrosa@gmail.com](mailto:remosenrosa@gmail.com). Please title your email: Interest in Brazil Festival.

## CANADA: VANCOUVER 20th Anniversary celebrated Worldwide



By **Carol Dale** President,  
*Abreast In A Boat*

“If you build it, he will come.”

As I send this thank you, I am reminded of the above phrase from *Field of Dreams*, a film based on *Shoeless Joe*, W.P Kinsella’s book about baseball in the early 20th century...

*Abreast In A Boat* sent a message to the world asking teams to celebrate with us on June 13th, 2015, in their own venues, as we celebrated 20 years of breast cancer dragon boat paddling, which began in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1996.

The world did not disappoint! Wonderful responses have arrived from our “sisters” around the globe telling of celebrations they enjoyed on June 13.

Thank you one and all for joining us in this adventure. Twenty years have gone by in a flash for us, and to quote *Los Angeles Pink Dragons*:

“The *Los Angeles Pink Dragons* join *Abreast In A Boat* in celebrating two decades of strength, determination, and inspiration that brought thousands of us the wonderful sport of dragon boat racing. Bring on the next twenty!”

We are overwhelmed with gratitude.



## European Representative Appointed Cecilia Picchi *Florence Dragon Lady*

**Cecilia Picchi** was diagnosed with breast cancer on February 14, 2006. On that exact same day her future teammates paddled for the first time along the Arno River in Florence. It was the initial practice for the team *Florence Dragon Lady*.

When she joined *Florence Dragon Lady* she was able to combine her two major interests: practicing sports in the fresh air and her skills in communication. Cecilia is a scholar in foreign European languages, linguistics and communication. She is also a teacher and editor. She created the media communications for her team: website, photo gallery and facebook group. Her camera is always present, ever ready to visually tell “stories of the team”. She started as a paddler and later discovered her aptitude for steering. She feels comfortable, stable and confident while standing at the back of the boat steering her teammates.

The IBCPC Festival 2014 offered Cecilia the possibility to realize another interest: “internationalization” which entails meeting sisters from five continents. In Sarasota she became aware the ‘Old Continent’ needs to create a network of teams among countries, so she came home and began discovering and contacting breast cancer paddling teams in Europe. Cecilia

has found many teams new to the IBCPC and is establishing friendships and promoting membership with these newly identified European teams.



**Cecilia Picchi** is pictured here at the stern of an Italian dragon boat she expertly steers for her teammates. She never misses an opportunity to use her camera thus ensuring *Florence Dragon Lady*'s website and facebook page are always up to date.

# WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?



## FRENCH WEST INDIES: GUADELOUPE

### Dragon boats new to Atlantic Ocean paddlers

From **Cecilia Picchi** IBCPC European Representative

You never know which breast cancer paddlers are going to turn up at Venice, Italy's famous Vogalonga, an event that attracts a thousand rowed vessels and thousands of paddlers each year in either late May or early June. This year seven breast cancer paddlers from Guadeloupe in the French West Indies enjoyed their first experience in a dragon boat. This was a new experience because they paddle kayaks on the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean. They have been working hard for the past year to find new members.

They call themselves the *Dragon Ladies of Guadeloupe* and have two brave slogans which capture their spirit: *Vivre après le cancer* (Life after cancer) and *Moi et mon corp, mon corp et Moi.* (Me and my body, my body and Me) Visit: <https://weniwine.wordpress.com>



## GREAT BRITAIN: LONDON

### British Wave Walkers getting faster

From **Cecilia Picchi** IBCPC European Representative

London *Wave Walkers* are a relatively new (2012) mixed cancer team including supporters. This year was the second time they have paddled in the Vogalonga, a famous Venetian event which attracts paddlers from all around the world to Italy in the late spring each year. *The Wave Walkers* were very pleased to have finished the 35 kilometre course with a faster time than their previous year.

*Wave Walkers* have also paddled with the breast cancer team, *Pink Champagne* from Bournemouth, Great Britain in the Henley Winter Series 2014 and with Rowbust from London, Ontario, Canada also in 2014 when they hosted an "Open Day" which the *Wave Walkers* do regularly in their efforts to raise awareness about cancer journeys and to recruit new members for their team. Visit: [www.wavewalkers.co.uk](http://www.wavewalkers.co.uk)



British Wave Walkers raising their paddles as they come out from under the Rialto Bridge in Venice, Italy during the 2015 Vogalonga.



## GERMANY: WIESBADEN AND LUNEN

### German teams on the map

From **Cecilia Picchi** IBCPC European Representative

Recently **Cecilia Picchi** received this map from **Patricia Frank**, a German woman who has started several German teams and is now busy putting Cecilia in touch with them. She recently sent this map. The stars identify locations of the known-to-date German teams: a fully coloured pink star indicates a complete breast cancer team and white-pink stars are teams in the process of forming an all breast cancer team.

Cecilia reports she has had contact with the first German breast cancer dragon boat team, *Pink Ladies* which is from Wiesbaden in central western Germany in the Frankfurt Rhine Main Region. This team was started after **Hannelore Braselmann** visited Canada in 2009 and met Canadian paddlers. Hanne now coaches about thirty women who paddle twice a week in the beautiful Schiersteiner Harbour. Visit <http://www.paddeln-gegen-brustkrebs.de/>  
A second German team, *The Ladybugs* from Lunen in the same region as the *Pink Ladies* came to the Florence Pink Meeting held in May this year.



## IRELAND: DUBLIN, BELFAST AND DONEGAL

### Memorial bench marks fifth anniversary

By **Susan Rowe** Irish National Representative

Now, more than six months after Sarasota, summer is here and all Irish clubs are back on the water. It's hard to believe the first club in Ireland, *Plurabelle Paddlers*, celebrated their fifth birthday in Dublin on 18th April 2015 - marking the occasion with a party in their clubhouse and unveiling a memorial bench for those members who sadly died in the last five years - including founder **Fiona Tiernan**.

Fiona was an inspirational woman who had the vision to put together an all Ireland team for Sarasota, hoping to spread breast cancer dragon boating to the four corners of Ireland - and it's working!

Two other inspirational women, *Team Ireland* members **Joanne Rock** and **Deborah Bonner**, who did not have a club in their hometowns before going to Sarasota, have formed new clubs. Joanne's club - *The Lagan Dragons* - is based in Belfast. Deborah's club - *The Donegal Dragons* - is situated in Donegal town. Both are in the province of Ulster in the northern part of Ireland. This was all done within months of returning home and we look forward to seeing their clubs grow from strength to strength. We still have not reached the West of Ireland but watch this space.

Finally, the 5th International Dublin Dragon Boat Regatta takes place on the weekend of the 12/13 September 2015. It is hosted by the Irish Dragon Boat Association and *Plurabelle Paddlers*. We have welcomed many breast cancer paddling teams over the last few years and they are always assured of a friendly and fun event. More information is available at the Ireland Dragon Boat Association website <http://www.dragonboat.ie/events/>



# WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?



## NEW ZEALAND: CHRISTCHURCH

### A Paddling Twist on a Car Race

By Meri Gibson IBCPC Vice President

This fun New Zealand Dragon Boat race takes its name from the famous motor race where the drivers line up on the opposite side of the race track to where their car is parked. On the starters signal, they run across the track, jump into their car, start their engines and begin to race.

**Noel Anderton**, chairman of the New Zealand Dragon Boat Association and secretary of *Aoraki Dragons* devised this dragon boat version. The paddler who sits in the rear seat on the right side of the boat runs down the beach and leaps into the boat.

**Hartley** was the runner for the Avonside Red team. She is in the middle of the shot with the white knee pad on. This photograph was taken by the team's manager, **Andy Jones**.

The boat is positioned close to the waters edge and the team can start paddling any time after the starters signal. The danger here is that the boat gets out into water that is too deep for the runner to plow easily through. If the runner can not get into the boat, the crew may need to stop paddling to allow the runner to climb aboard.

The runner's job is to get into the boat quickly and cleanly as we hold their paddle until they are seated in the boat.

A flag is positioned one hundred and twenty-five metres off shore. The team paddles out to this flag, turning around it as tightly as possible. (Each of the boats has their own flag to go around.) Then they race back to the shore.

The caller, turns to face forward as the boat gets close to the shore



line. She perches on the very nose of the boat and prepares to leap off the bow as the boat gets close to the beach.

Once the boat is into reasonably shallow water and before it grounds itself on the beach, the caller leaps off the bow and runs up the beach to the finish line. A fast runner can make a difference if the boats are close together as they approach the beach. Each team has just one race (heat) to post a time. The three fastest boats race off in a final to decide the winner of the Le Mans Race.

The Avonside team has won this race twice out of the last three years, 2013 and 2015. Competing against adult crews, the girls have proven this race requires more than just brute strength: a fast nimble runner, an experienced sweep and another fast runner to cross the finish line. Certainly an interesting variation on the traditional dragon boat race.



## ITALY: EMPOLI

### Active volunteers are a driving force

By Franca Criseo *Le Donne di ASTRO*

The *ASTRO Dragon Ladies* is a team of twelve women who got together in June 2012 to form a dragon boat team with the support of ASTRO (Associazione Sostegno Terapeutico Riabilitativo in Oncologia), a cancer support and rehabilitation association in Empoli, about thirty-five kilometers from Florence, Italy. The *ASTRO Dragon Ladies* are active volunteers and are the driving force behind the association's projects which promote initiatives to support cancer patients and their families.

Among ASTRO's services are at-home medical and psychological care for cancer patients, aqua therapy, music therapy and exercise and dragon boat programs.

ASTRO relies on funds from the community, and in turn, makes a substantial financial contribution to the health network of the area. Once a week ASTRO members go to the newly established Women Centre to offer active listening as well as advice on how to navigate the bureaucracy of cancer care.

The *ASTRO Dragon Ladies* paddle on the Arno River out of the Canoe Club which stores their boat, trains and promotes the team and helps to secure for them the support of both the municipal authorities and the population as a whole. Besides participating in dragon boat events organized by other breast cancer teams or by local organizers, the *ASTRO Dragon Ladies* put on their own events to underline their message of prevention, a healthy life-style and the psycho-physical benefits of paddling.

This year the team celebrated its third anniversary with a two-day program that coincided with the twentieth anniversary of the global dragon boat movement. They were joined by teams: *Dragonettes* from Torino, *Florence Dragon Ladies*, and *Il Rosa che Osa* and *Pink Butterfly* both from Rome.

Also joining the Italian paddlers were five mayors from the surrounding communities. These gentlemen celebrated with the Italian women by wearing their official regalia and joining them in the dragon boats for the Flower Ceremony on June 13th. Together all the participants sent big Italian hugs to breast cancer dragon boat paddlers around the world.



## POLAND: POZNAN

### Brave women do not surrender

From Cecilia Picchi  
IBCPC European Representative

A lively team of twenty-seven breast cancer survivors and their supporters came to the Florence Pink Meeting the last weekend in May 2015. Their team of forty five women is called *Amazons HPOLITA Kościański* Association and this year they are celebrating their 15th anniversary. They are affiliated with the Federation of the Amazons, based in Poznan, which includes clubs from all over Poland.

Besides their paddling together they gather once a month to celebrate birthdays, invite interesting guests and discuss their plans and dreams. They also do gymnastics and music for rehabilitation and relaxation.

A team member, **Iwona Borowska** living in Kościan, about fifty kilometres from Poznan writes: "We call ourselves 'Amazons', as in the mythology of women without breasts, the queen of whom was Hippolyta, hence the name of our club. These were brave women, like us. They did not surrender and neither will we."



The Polish paddlers celebrated their 15th season wearing rose garlands in their hair when they joined their Italian sisters in Empoli on June 13, 2015. Their male supporters wore traditional Polish costumes and together the Polish men and women added an elegant touch to the happy occasion.

## Here is how we keep you informed

Contacts and Communication to and from the International Breast Cancer Paddlers' Commission

The IBCPC currently operates two email lists.

- 1 The Newsletter list is used solely to send out the IBCPC quarterly newsletter. People must subscribe to the Newsletter to receive it. That is easy to do. Go to [www.ibcpc.com](http://www.ibcpc.com) and click on the newsletter subscribe icon on the right side of the home page. The newsletter is free and you will get it automatically 4 times a year. Please encourage your fellow team mates to sign up for their own subscription and not leave it to one member of your team to distribute this fun to read newsletter. Be sure to get your own copy so you will not miss anything!

- 2 The Member Team Contact list is used to send out all other IBCPC notices and information for member teams. Please ensure your team has at least one current subscription to the Member Team Contact list (preferably two or three) and update new team contact if ever a primary contact leaves the list. This is your responsibility. You can subscribe to either the [Newsletter list](#) or the [IBCPC member team contact list](#) at [www.ibcpc.com](http://www.ibcpc.com)

Thanks for helping the IBCPC to remain connected to our membership!



# CANADA: VANCOUVER

## Canoeing is Medicine

By Dr Don McKenzie

“Exercise is Medicine” has returned to the front pages of contemporary health care and there are formal programs addressing the role physical activity plays in contributing to a healthy life-style. *Exercise is Medicine* in Canada and the USA is described as a *Health Care Call to Action*, acknowledging that physical activity is an integral part of prevention and treatment of chronic disease. They provide guidelines for exercise prescription and tools to use to monitor changes as well as recognition programs for individuals who are qualified to help individuals reach their activity goals. There are similar programs in other parts of the world.

This tune has been played before and I have an old ‘*Exercise is Medicine*’ t-shirt and poster from the early 1980’s. At that time these programs did not get any traction in society; exercise was never valued as a serious intervention in the medical model. For a number of reasons that has changed; the prevalence of smoking is significantly decreased, people are more active but now poor eating habits are contributing to alarming levels of obesity and the conditions that follow. In many parts of the world access to health care is rationed, expensive or non-existent and people are forced to consider their options for promoting their own health. These are limited-once you stop unhealthy habits (smoking, excessive alcohol) you are left with nutrition and exercise.

If you are reading this Newsletter you are aware of all this. I am biased, but think the breast cancer dragon boat movement has played an important role in validating exercise as an important variable in health care. In 1995 a search of the literature on breast cancer and exercise yielded very few useful recommendations-ones that were supported by good science. Indeed, it was data from the original team that was



**Dr Don McKenzie**, founder and coach of the first breast cancer dragon boat team, *Abreast In A Boat*, is pictured here at the 20 Years Abreast Celebration. Don spoke to 300 paddlers and supporters who came together on June 13, 2015 to celebrate twenty years of breast cancer paddling where it all began, in Vancouver, Canada in 1996. From that first boat load of 24 brave women, many of whom were in attendance at the Celebration, Don reported there are breast cancer dragon boat teams on five continents and the International Breast Cancer Paddlers’ Commission member teams now number over 150 from 14 countries. The Commission is currently working with teams in another eight countries.

published and raised the notion that perhaps some of these patient recommendations were incorrect and should merit more research. As the number of breast cancer dragon boat teams increased, the media became interested in this story, as the idea of challenging cancer with exercise was noteworthy and unique enough to attract attention. It was about this time the traditional medical profession slowly began to recognize there was a link between physical activity and health, and that exercise had merit as a form of treatment as well as prevention.

Breast cancer dragon boat paddling is visible; it is hard physical work in a natural environment that is attractive to paddlers and spectators alike. Individuals that I’ve met at a regatta are surprised and inspired by the intensity and demands of the sport. At the Annual Alcan Dragon Boat Festival in Vancouver there are many groups with medical conditions that compete: visually impaired (*Eye of the Dragon*), transplant patients (*The Gift of Life*), multiple sclerosis (*Off Balance*), kids with CNS disease (*The Strength Within*), kidney disease (*O2P*) and others - all following in the wake of the breast cancer teams and demonstrating the role that exercise plays in promoting health. *Exercise is Medicine is a Call to Action; paddling as medicine* has answered the call. You are an impressive group of women and tremendous role models that encourage changes in behaviors that value habitual physical activity.

## Calendar of World Events



**September 12-13, 2015** Dublin, Ireland

Join the *Plurabelles* for their fun event

[www.plurabellepaddlers.com](http://www.plurabellepaddlers.com)



**September 13, 2015** Windermere, Cumbria, United Kingdom *Paddlers for Life* UK’s second community festival in partnership with English Lakes Hotels

[www.paddlersforlife.co.uk](http://www.paddlersforlife.co.uk)



**October 10 & 11, 2015** Maui to Lanai

Voyage, Hawaii, USA Pacific Cancer Foundation

[www.pacificcancerfoundation.org](http://www.pacificcancerfoundation.org)



**October 24, 2015** Sydney, Australia

Cockle Bay, Darling Harbour

*Dragons Abreast Australia’s* annual regatta

[festival@dragonsabreast.org.au](mailto:festival@dragonsabreast.org.au)

The IBCPC invites teams to post events of interest to paddlers on the above Bulletin Board. To do so email the information to [newsletter@ibcpc.com](mailto:newsletter@ibcpc.com). The IBCPC takes no responsibility for events by reason of the posting. Where travel to another country is involved, teams are advised to consult their respective Government’s Travel Advisory.

### Proviso

The information published in this newsletter is provided to us by the named authors, sources and other third parties and while we believe the information to be reliable we have not fully investigated all such information and we can not accept responsibility for the truth or accuracy of the same.

Accordingly, International Breast Cancer Paddlers’ Commission and those associated with the Commission and Jane Frost, IBCPC President, disclaim responsibility for the truth and accuracy of the information in this newsletter.



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IBCPC is a commission of the International Dragon Boat Federation