

PUNCHLINE

Dandenong Ranges Orienteering Club Inc

www.drocorienteering.com.au

Incorporated Association Registered Number A0003225B

ABN 76 002 329 218

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SUCCESS AT THE 2022 VICTORIAN RELAY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The first Relay Champs since 2020 were held on a fantastic new map at Argyle, near Heathcote in central Victoria. Thanks to our wet spring, the lower sections of the map were covered in velvety green grass, and the watercourses were flowing - leading to a new skill of Puddle Jumping. There were sections of intricate and unusual gold mining, and only a couple of relatively gentle hills.

We had a few “come from behind” results, with 4 of our 5 teams in the placings, seeing us place second in the overall Rockhopper contest.

Newbury Navigators defended their title on Course 4, completing all three legs without error. Our Course 1 team of Simon Rouse, Lanita Steer (back in DROC colours) and Ian Davies did an excellent job to place third, among top competition including the current Australian Relay champions.

Our Course 2 team of Ian Dodd, Janine Steer and Martin Steer just missed the podium, finishing 4th. We fielded two teams on Course 5 (Mixed), with Elijah Spencer, Damian Spencer and Mat Maunder finishing second, and Debbie Dodd, Ray Scaddan and Sally Barlow in third.



The 2023 Relays are on Sunday April 2nd, in the fast open forest of Woowookarung, near Ballarat, so save the date and be part of a DROC team!

And if you read on, not only will you find more fantastic photos from the 2022 Relays, but a great story of triumph as Peter Hobbs looks back on one his, and the club's, finest achievements. Enjoy!

DIARY DATES - 2023

Thursday February 23 - Park Street Championship, Springthorpe

This year's Champs will be held on the fantastic Springthorpe map - a true test of both Park and Street orienteering! Nominate yourself as a competitor online, by signing up from February 1. [Click here for more information.](#)

Sunday April 2 - Victorian Club Relays, Woowookarung

Be part of a DROC Relay team and enjoy the open forest on the edge of Ballarat. Look out for team nominations in March.

Sunday May 21 - Vic MTBO 2, Kurth Kiln, Gembrook. Course planner - Graham Wallis

DROC hosts a round of the Victorian Mountain Bike Orienteering series, on the tracks and among the tall timbers of and trails of this historic park on our doorstep.

Sunday June 11 (Kings Birthday Weekend) - Vic Series (Bush) 5, Gellibrand Hill. Course planner - ???

This is the second event in a double header weekend close to Melbourne. Gellibrand Hill is the western part of Woodlands Historic Park. It features mostly open land with scattered granite, and a network of watercourses in the southern section - perfect for Middle Distance orienteering.

Saturday July 22 - EndurO, Bellbird Dell, Vermont. Course planner - Debbie Dodd

The Healesville Freeway Reserve is finally being converted into a recreational trail, opening up new routes through the centre of the map. To celebrate, we'll hold an EndurO - a long distance Park Street event on a larger map with 40 controls.

Sunday October 22 - Summer Shorts 1, Jells Park. Course planner - ???

Short distance fun at one of our favourite parks; ideal for families and newcomers.

Sunday October 29 - Summer Shorts 2, Tattersson. Course planner - ???

Scramble your brain at this amazing park with its bamboozling tree maze!

Sunday November 12 - Summer Shorts 3, Waverley Stadium. Course planner - ???

A real crowd pleaser on its debut in 2022, this complex map with the famous oval as its centrepiece will test your sprint navigational skills, as we get closer to the 2023 Victorian Sprint Champs.

Saturday November 19 - Summer Shorts 4, Oxley College. Course planner - James Love

With several additions to this compact campus, get yourself into full Sprint mode and tune up for the Champs.

Sunday November 20 - Melbourne City Race, Docklands (tbc). Course planner - ???

Back to where it all began - the 2023 Melbourne City Race will revisit the Docklands, Southbank and the western CBD - the highlight of the urban orienteering calendar!

COURSE PLANNERS NEEDED!

We are looking for a course planner for our Vic Bush event in June, at Gellibrand Hill in Greenvale. Part of a "close to Melbourne" Kings Birthday weekend, the map is generally open land with scattered granite amongst some small patches of forest, with a network of small water channels in the south - as used for Melbourne Sprint Weekend 2022. Ideal opportunity for someone looking to learn how to plan a bush course.

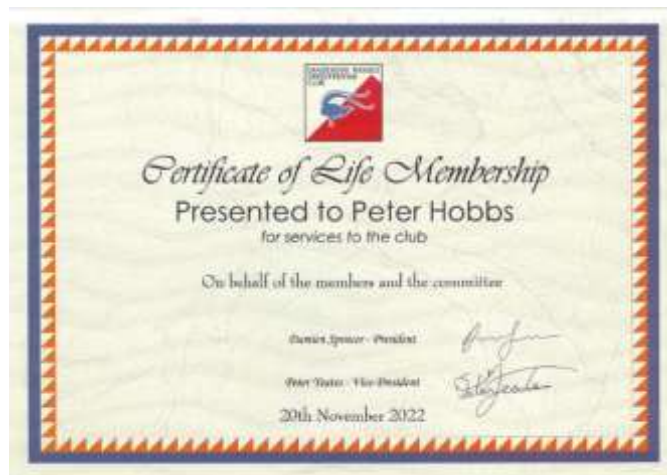
We will also need some planners for our series of SUMMER SHORTS, during October and November. Using colour maps of local parks and a school campus, these short distance events will be heaps of fun for everyone! Again, a great way to step up and plan something more complex and develop your skills.

The 2023 Melbourne City Race will go back to the beginning - Docklands and the CBD. The highlight of the urban racing calendar, this event needs a course planner who can make the most of the well known landmarks, multiple levels, and true City Racing that is offered by this map.

NEW PRESIDENT, NEW COMMITTEE

Our President, Peter Hobbs, stepped down at the November AGM, and we welcomed new President Damian Spencer. The Committee unanimously voted to award Life Membership of the club to Peter.

Damian joined the club in 2016, and since then has become a regular participant at park street, bush, and sprint events - often with son Elijah in tow. Damian has been along to a number of major carnivals - like many of us, enjoying the opportunity to combine orienteering with a family holiday. He has also become involved in mapping and course planning, notably preparing the map and course for Waverley Stadium.



The Committee also saw some changes. Whilst our Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer remain the same experienced trio of Peter Yeates, Sarah Love and Ian Dodd, two of our longstanding Committee members elected to step down, and we lose the highly capable duo of Peter Grover and Denise Pike. We thank them immensely for being such an important part of the club.

At the same time, we welcome Sally Barlow on board. Sally came to DROC through her school, and has been a keen member of the Victorian Schools Team for several years; recently she has been involved in some coaching and social media work for Orienteering Victoria. Sally also enjoys competing at all sorts of events large and small, and along with James Love, will provide the Committee with advice on how we can keep the club focused on supporting our junior members.

We are also very lucky to be able to retain our Past President on the Committee; Peter will assist Damian along the way, and provide invaluable ongoing support to the club.

INTRODUCING DAMIAN

As incoming president, I would like to thank Peter for his many years of service to Dandenong Ranges Orienteering Club, and wish him all the best for his time in New Zealand.

As a short introduction to myself, I developed a love for the sport during my high school years in Albury-Wodonga, participating in events organised by AWOC. In 2016, after many, many years of inactivity after moving to Melbourne, and many hours of working in confined laboratories as a scientist, I decided to look around for a club to join, hoping to reignite my passion for spending weekends running madly through bushland in search of little orange flags.

I wanted a club that was friendly, had a good media presence and had members with a range of abilities, and DROC fitted the bill nicely. I'm certainly no elite, but you will find me at 2-3 events every week, no matter the season, so please do come and say hi. My vision is to look at all possible ways to maintain and grow DROC's reputation as a strong, vibrant club catering to participants of all ages and abilities.



DROC SHOP

The DROC Shop is open for business, and ready to get you kitted out for 2023 and beyond! We sell Sportident sticks, including SI Air sticks for those who want to speed up their race. [Prices can be found here](#). Order by sending an email to droc@iinet.net.au. We also have a range of running tops and jackets, in various designs and sizes. Contact [Peter Yeates](#) to find out what's in stock.

In a couple of months, you'll start to see our brilliant new race shirts and lightweight jackets appearing. Designed for us by Bryzos, on their excellent fabric, DROC members will, as always, stand out from the crowd. ORDERS PLACED BY FRIDAY JANUARY 6 receive an introductory discount; we plan another order later in the year as demand warrants.



MEMBERSHIP

We are delighted to welcome a new family, all the way from France! Maelle Guiot and her two sons, Timeo and Marius, have relocated to Melbourne for the next three years. We first met them at the Melbourne City Race in Williamstown; since then they have had the new experience of Park Street orienteering, Melbourne style; and have travelled to NSW for the Christmas 5 Days. Please make them welcome to the club.

2023 Membership is now due. Your annual fee of \$30 includes Orienteering Victoria membership too, entitling you to a range of [discounts and benefits](#). And for juniors, membership is completely free! The easiest way to renew is via Eventor - look out for an email with a renewal and payment link. Otherwise you can pay by cash in person, or by bank transfer - email droc@iinet.net.au for details.

PARK STREET SUMMER SERIES

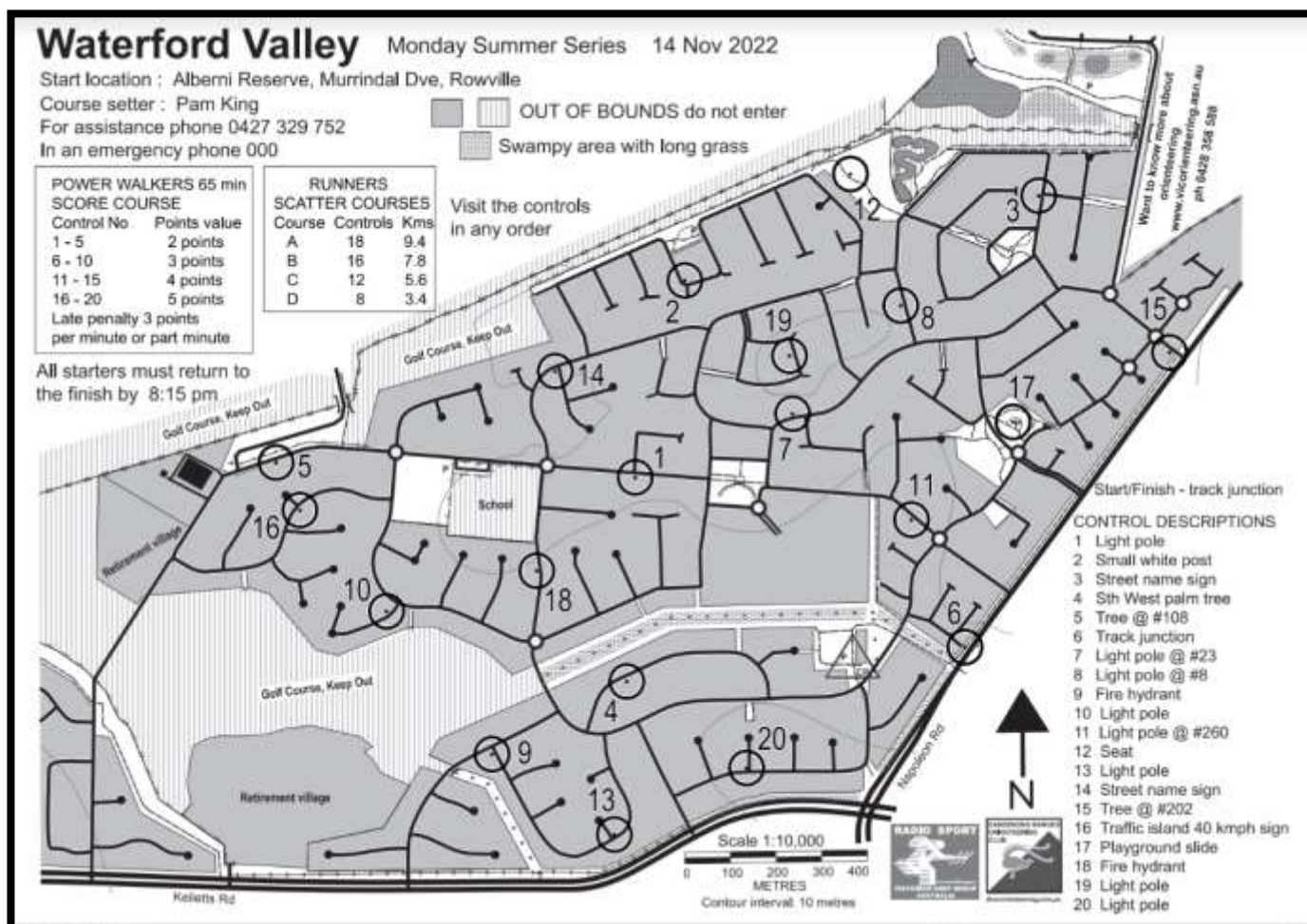
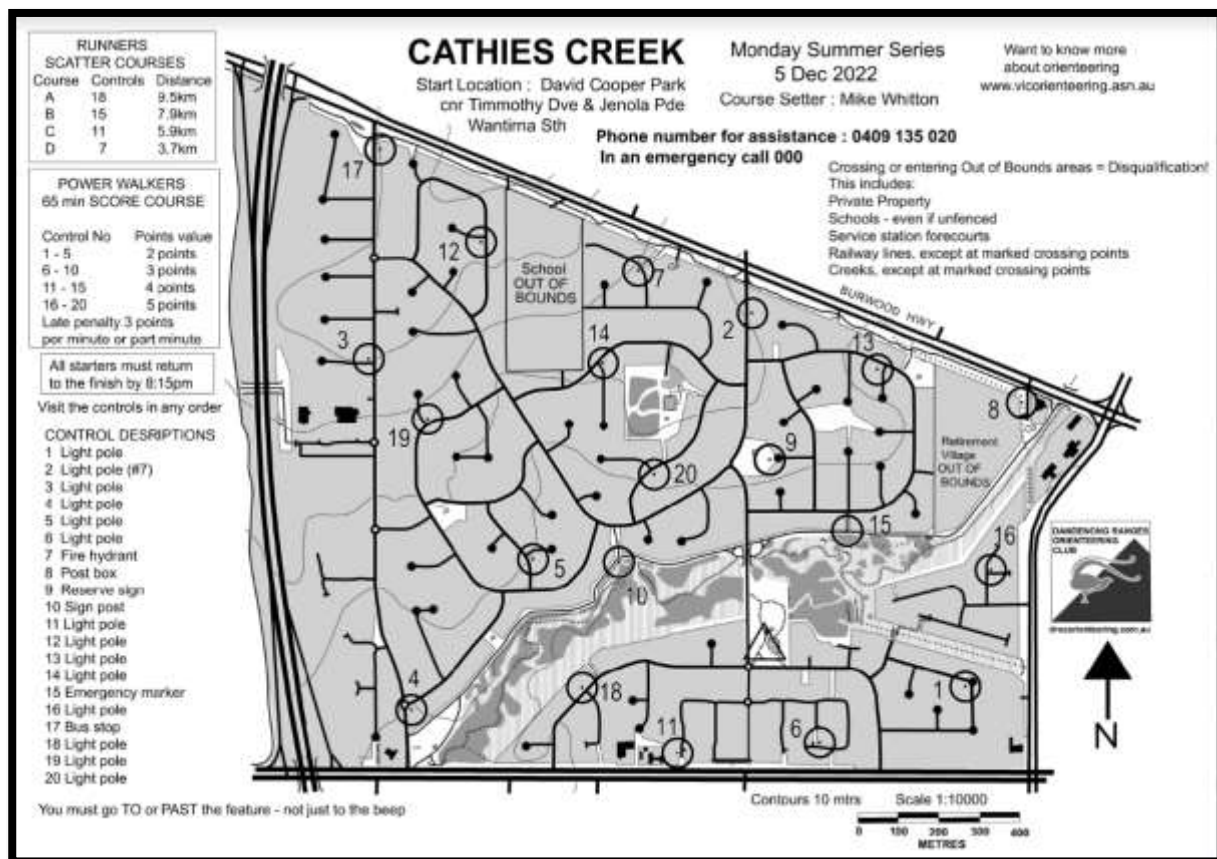
Can you believe we are already half way through this [Summer Series](#) - it seems like Summer has only just started! We have had some testing climactic conditions to deal with, but the weather seems to have finally returned to the Summer evenings that we know and love. It's been great to see some past regulars returning and enjoying the great competition and social atmosphere.

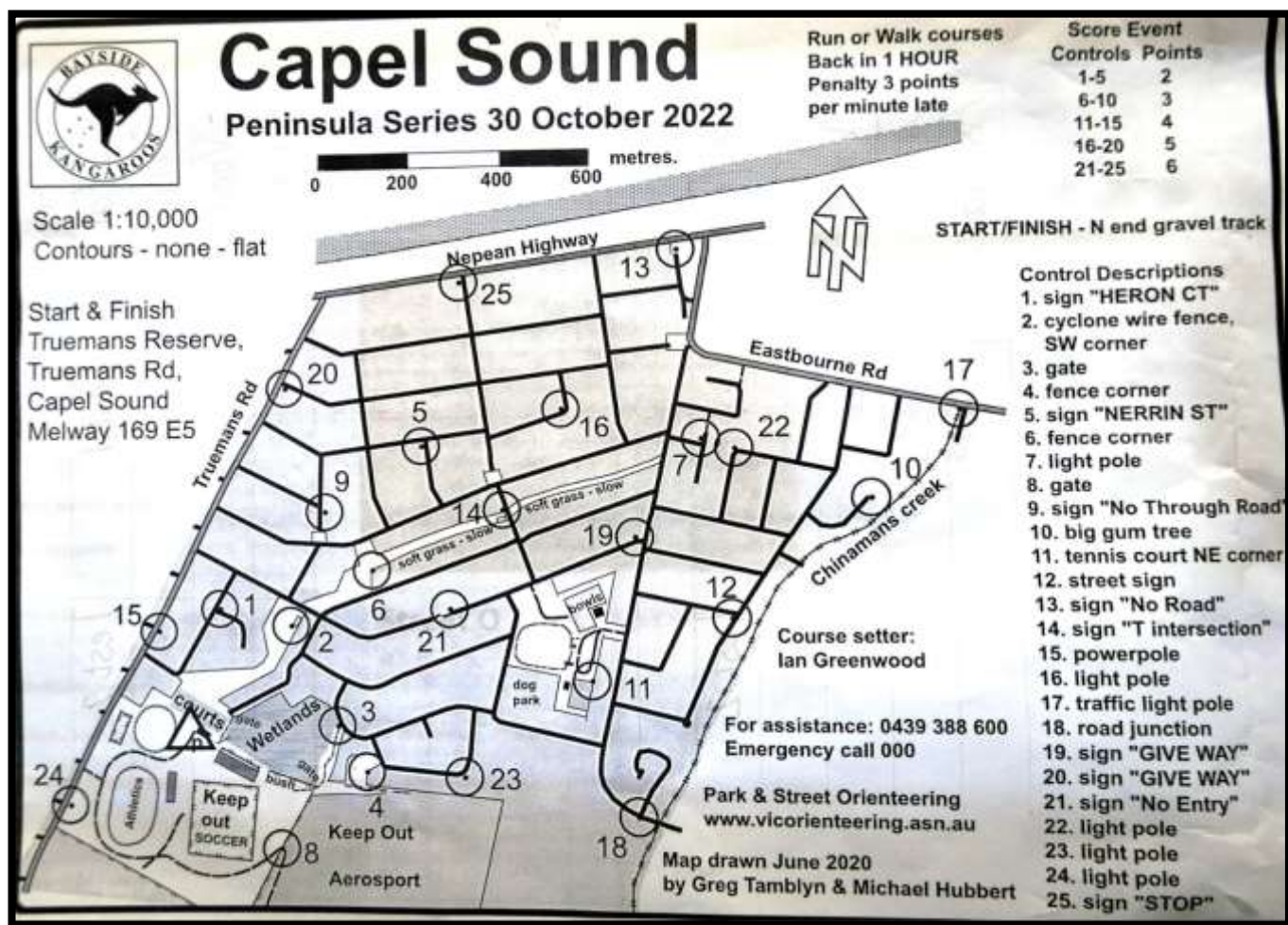
For those that haven't been for a while, why not take advantage of the holidays to come along, meet up with friends, and enjoy a Summer evening run or walk? Time flies by, and before you know it, your brain and body have both had a great workout, and you're feeling fired up and ready for the next event!

Got questions about MapRun? There's a web page full of information about how we use it in Melbourne. For instance, did you know that we always provide a paper map? Once you have pressed GO on your phone, you can put it away in a pouch or pocket, and let it work in the background, while you enjoy the outdoor challenge. [Head here to find out more about MapRun](#).

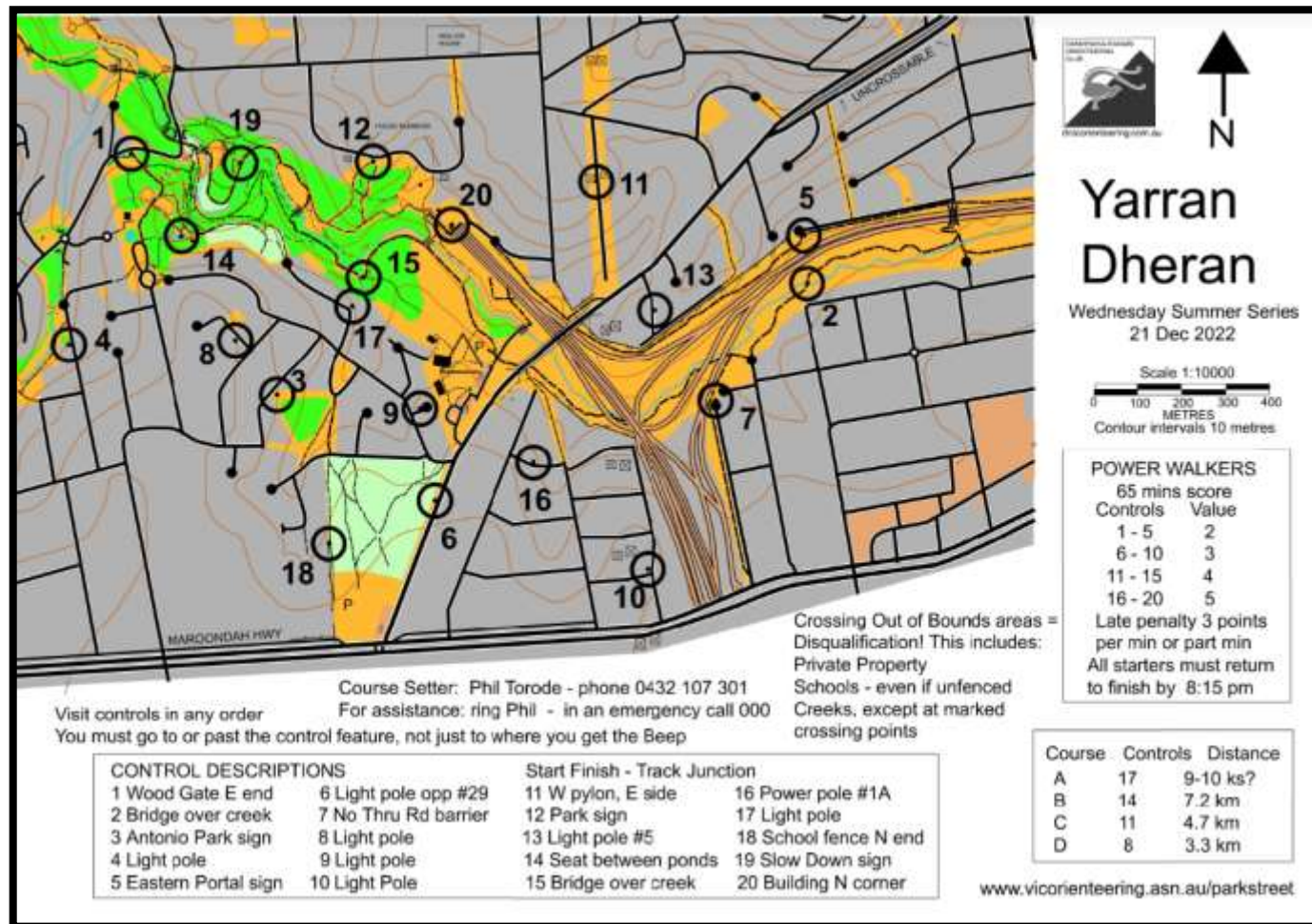
TOP COURSES

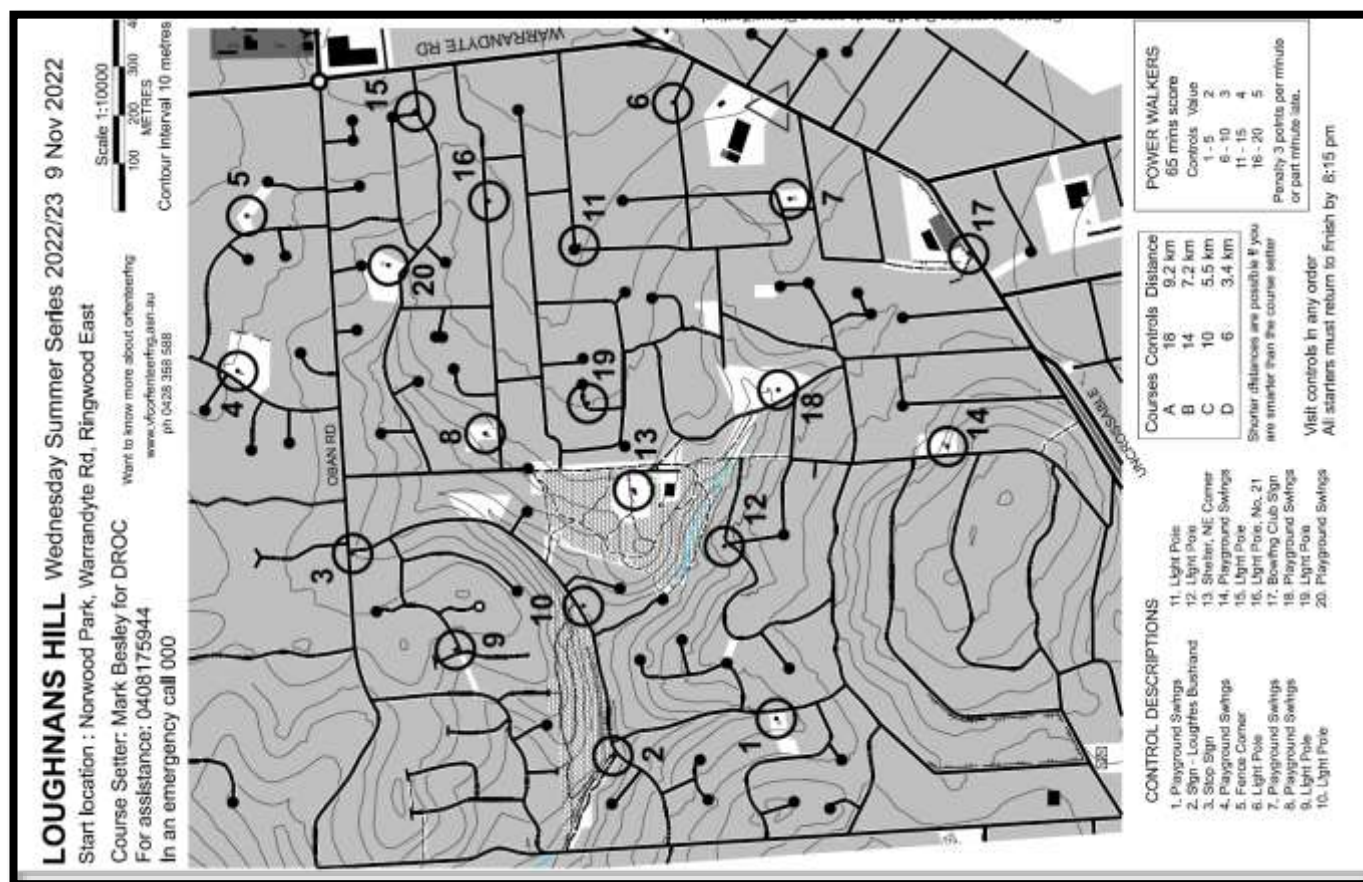
Here's a selection of courses by DROC members so far this Summer. Most Summer Series maps are available online to use any time, with MapRun6. [Download them from here](#).





Capel Sound, by Ian Greenwood; Yarran Dheran, by Phil Torode; Loughnans Hill, by Mark Besley





2023 VICTORIAN ORIENTEERING CALENDAR

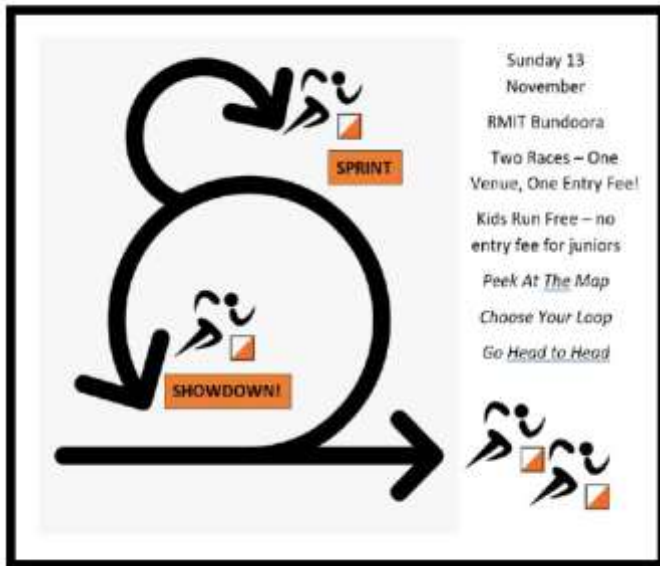
[Click here to see what's in store this year.](#) Three's something for everyone, with the MFR Sprints returning in February, as well as Summer Bike075 events on Saturday evenings. MelBushO begins in March, with regular events through to September. Vic Series and Vic MTBO Series get going after Easter - highlights are several double header NOL and Championship weekends. The year rounds out with DROC's Summer Shorts and City Race, leading into the Vic Sprint Champs. Throw in the Club Relays and the Maxi 3 hour, along with club events in Bendigo and Ballarat, and your calendar will fill up fast!



SUMMER SERIES AT DANDENONG CREEK



SPRINT SHOWDOWN! DOUBLE HEADER AT RMIT BUNDOORA



After several false starts due to covid lockdowns and the course planner, Peter Hobbs, being stuck in New Zealand, the long awaited Sprint Showdown was finally scheduled for November 2022. As water levels rose around the country, we held our collective breath, crossed all our fingers and toes, and hoped the weather would be kind. A week out, the forecast was dire, but as is often the way, as the day drew closer the situation improved; miraculously we woke to clear skies and were able to abandon plans to operate out of the Sports Centre.

Instead, we had a great arena on the futsal courts - lots of space for people to spread out, easy access to toilets, showers and food - and if the heavens did open, shelter was just a quick dash away.

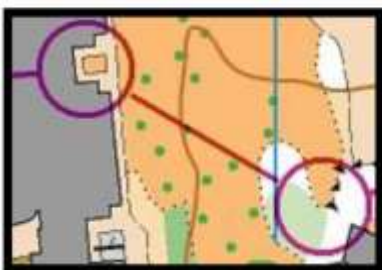
We got there bright and early; the crew from Melbourne Forest Racers were putting out the controls. We erected tents, signs and flags, booted the computers, and were patting ourselves on the back for being ready ahead of time. “I need the Clear, Check and Start controls” I said to Ian. He looked at me rather strangely. “Did you pack them?” “No - I thought you packed them”. Realisation dawned that no-one had packed them - and these essential pieces of equipment were sitting snugly at home in the garage, 90 minutes away.

Luckily, we had a saviour in the form of Kathy Liley from Yarra Valley Orienteers. She made a mercy dash home, reportedly running several amber lights (we offered to cover the cost of any tickets 😊), and returned shortly thereafter, brandishing the controls that we needed. We were good to go!

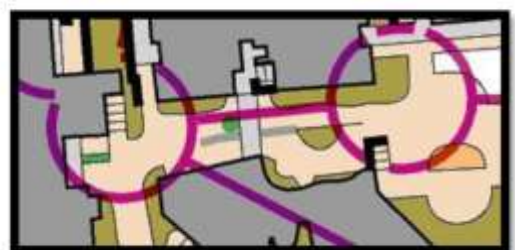
The event consisted of two races, with a short break in between. Race 1 was a classic sprint with individual start times. Race 2 was quite different, with butterfly loops and head to head starts at 30 second intervals, making for an action packed day. Competitors were able to see a “map snippet” online before entering, allowing them to choose Loop A or Loop B - although of course in reality, everyone completed the same course, the difference being the order in which you ran the loops. It did make for some interesting discussions and decisions!

Online map snippets, Race 2 Course 1: - which option would you choose?

Course 1 Option A



Course 1 Option B



By necessity, the first and last legs were relatively long, but soon everyone found themselves in the technical core of the campus, puzzling out the best route choices - not once, but twice! It was tons of fun, even if we did have a short shower part way through. By shortening the break, we kept things on track, and Race 2 started, and finished, on time. It was a great way to get back into Sprint mode before the Victorian Sprint Champs, held two weeks later. The Sports Centre team at RMIT Bundoora were a fantastic help and support, and we also thank Yarra Valley OC for use of the map, and the rescue mission!

Meanwhile, where was our absent course planner? Back in New Zealand, welcoming the latest addition to the family! Here's Mabel and her brand new sister Zahra.



VICTORIAN SPRINT CHAMPS, BEACONHILLS COLLEGE

As the last major event for the year - and NOT organised by DROC - it was a chance to relax and have fun, on a new Sprint map near Pakenham. It was a really interesting campus. The map was double sided, and the legs on the first side seemed rather straightforward. But then, we turned over our maps part way through, and - whoa! An absolute maze of controls, with a series of small classrooms around a central courtyard, that we had to criss cross through several times. Untangling that was great fun!

DROC emerged with two Sprint Champions - congratulations to Janine Steer and Peter Dalwood! There were plenty of placegetters on the podium too, namely Pamela King, Peter Yeates, Simon Rouse, Ilze Yeates, and Stuart McWilliam. Our thanks to Orienteering Victoria for putting on such a great day.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2022 - Peter Hobbs

It is with pleasure that I table the President's Report for the 44th year of operation of the Dandenong Ranges Orienteering Club (DROC).

After virtually two full years of Covid lockdowns and disruption, things have returned to a new-normal including a full orienteering fixture!

This year (13 November 2021 to 20 November 2022) we organised a full suite of events including:

- Park-Street events throughout the year
- Two MelbushO events
- A Vic Spring Series event (re-scheduled from 2020)
- Co-ordination of the Melbourne City Race weekend
- Co-ordination of the Australian Sprint Championship
- Two stand alone sprint events at Koomba Chaos and RMIT Bundoora West (re-scheduled from 2020)
- A Vic MTBO Series event

I would like to acknowledge the performances of club members who have competed in various local, state and national level events during 2022. DROC members travel widely and can be found at just about any event in Victoria and many other events and carnivals across the country. At least six members competed or were selected at State or National level including James Love who was selected in the Victorian Schools Team. DROC came second in this year's Rockhopper Trophy which is a great result.

DROC's efforts in major event co-ordination this year have been significant, taking leading roles in the Australian Orienteering Championships, the Melbourne Sprint Weekend and Melbourne City Race weekend. Possibly not since WOC 1985 has DROC been so heavily involved in major event co-ordination. DROC members volunteered in the following key positions at the Australian Orienteering Championships carnival:

- Stuart McWilliam - graphic design, website, bulletins, certificates and signage
- Sarah and Wayne Love - equipment managers
- Debbie Dodd - entry manager; organizer Day 7 (Australian Sprint Champs, Salesian Sunbury)
- Ian Dodd - finish tent manager
- Ilze Yeates - registration manager
- Simon Rouse - start draw manager
- Pam King - bibs and printing coordinator; prizes coordinator
- Peter Hobbs - Victorian schools team coach
- Peter Dalwood - mapper Day 1 (Lake Daylesford)
- Peter Yeates - builder of cricket stumps, maker of map weights, and moral support

DROC has always been very supportive of junior orienteers (I can attest to this having been a member since I was a junior - thanks Phil Torode!), and during 2022 this theme was extended and formalised including:

- Juniors able to run for free at some DROC events
- Sponsorship of the Lyrebird Award to the best junior girl as selected by Orienteering Victoria
- Financial support for the Victorian Junior Squad / Schools Team
- Continued financial support for any DROC selected team members
- Financial support to team members travelling to various international championship events, in return for support being provided to DROC such as coaching or helping with our events. (All subject to funds being available and an application process being followed.)

This is a great initiative whereby DROC is demonstrating good-will towards overall betterment of junior orienteering, rather than a narrower individual club focus.

Membership increased slightly this year to 100 (12 juniors, 88 adults) up from 96 last year. DROC's website continues to present the club positively and the electronic version of Punchline continues to be a high quality colour production. A bumper 200th edition hit in-boxes in April.

Financially, the club has continued to preserve a strong asset position and will make a small surplus this year although this will be more than offset by several major events and incomes in the latter part of the year that are yet to be accounted for. The traditional Christmas dinner returned in a BYO-no-share format, following a summer series event at Park Orchards, where Orienteering Australia Merit badges were also handed out.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members who have volunteered in one or more capacities this year. I can't possibly list the efforts of all volunteers however the following list gives an indication of efforts that members have put into the club and the sport in general:

- Debbie Dodd - Punchline and e-news editor, website curator, membership secretary and general organiser of many things. Debbie plays a huge role in the day to day operation of the club particularly through her efficient coordination of the events DROC organises - and this year taking on significant roles in the Melbourne Sprint Weekend, Australian Orienteering Championships and Melbourne City Race weekend. Co-chair of the Urban Orienteering Committee, Wednesday Park Street Coordinator, main OV liaison and a leading role in managing the OV website. As per the past two years, Debbie has taken on a leading role in coordinating OVs response to Covid-19 including devising (and forever updating!) return to sport plans and DIY orienteering (thankfully now archived).
- Ian Dodd - Treasurer, equipment management, SportIdent and SI-stick expert and always a helping hand. Ian regularly provides technical support for timing and SI systems at events including non-DROC events, including taking on the mammoth role of IT coordinator at the Australian Orienteering Championships. On behalf of the Committee I would like to acknowledge the outstanding contribution Debbie and Ian make to DROC and orienteering generally.
- Mark Besley - Park Street scoring throughout the year.
- Peter Yeates - Saturday Park Street coordinator, coordinating uniform sales, duties as Vice President, equipment management and always coming up with ideas.
- Vic Sedunary - assisting with park and street accounting.
- Lauren Jackson - MapRun setup for DROC events.
- Pam King/Peter Dalwood and Sarah Love - mapping and secretary duties.
- Ordinary Committee Members - assisting run the club.
- Members - making the club.

A strong core of dedicated members have continued devoting their efforts to the operation of the club, steering it in a 'northerly' direction. I encourage all members to become involved in the club and its activities. I also encourage any members, including juniors, who take a reasonable interest in the club and orienteering, to nominate as Committee Members. Things such as course setting, participation in club relays or simply offering to pick up a few controls after a club event are all easy ways to contribute.

After a bumper 2022, the year ahead shapes up as a quieter one, with the usual allocation of park-street and MelBushO events, plus a pilot "shorts" series of mid distance events on colour maps.

I would like to thank all club members and the Committee who have contributed to the operation of the club this year and I wish the President and Committee well for the upcoming year.

MERIT BADGES

The following members were awarded badges in recognition of their performances at National and State Championship events.

GOLD - Pamela King, Simon Rouse, Asha Steer, Janine Steer

SILVER - Peter Dalwood, Peter Grover

BRONZE - Sally Barlow, Chris Bendle, Merv Bendle, Mark Besley, Ian Davies, Debbie Dodd, Peter Hobbs, Wayne Love, Stuart McWilliam, Ray Scaddan, Damian Spencer, Martin Steer, Helen Walpole, Peter Yeates

VICTORIAN RELAY CHAMPIONSHIPS - DROC MEMBERS IN ACTION

Photos courtesy of Natasha Thackray, Bayside Kangaroos



Top: Simon Rouse, Ray Scaddan
Centre: Damian Spencer, Lanita Steer
Bottom: Debbie Dodd, Elijah Spencer



Top: Newbury Navigators - Chris and
Claude
Centre: Janine Steer
Bottom: Ian Dodd



LOOKING BACK: HIGHLIGHTS AND MEMORIES FROM MY TIME AS PRESIDENT - Peter Hobbs

When I began as DROC President it was the year of “Kevin 07” (when Kevin Rudd won the federal election) and Geelong had just trounced Port Adelaide in the Grand Final to finally put an end to a string of shattering losses. When will St Kilda do this?? Looking back over the last 15 years, I thought it worthwhile to reflect on highlights and little things that have stuck in my mind. In no particular order:

- **Large increase in membership and club “renaissance” 2007 to 2011.** Between these years there was a big increase in membership; from approximately 50 households to 84. I think there were multiple reasons for this including:
 - o Increased participation in and organisation of technical bush and sprint events, leading to recognition within the orienteering community that DROC is not “just a street O club”, but rather an adaptable club that embraces all forms of orienteering.
 - o The Steer girls! It was around this time that Asha and Lanita began as junior orienteers and began winning all manner of events, leading to many headlines, articles and publicity for the club.
- **Relatively large representation in state and national teams.** I recall discussing this topic with some of the DROC faithful and it was thought that DROC had not had any representation in state or national teams since Martin Steer in the 1980s (I am not 100% sure of this fact, but it did sound correct...) In recent times many DROC members have been in national or state teams including: Asha and Lanita Steer (plus Janine Steer on one occasion filling a very last minute gap in the Victorian Women’s Elite relay team), James Love, Sarah Davies, Amber Louw, Sally Barlow, Simon Rouse and myself. That equates to nearly 10% of the current membership!
- **Conversion of StreetO maps from Corel to OCAD.** All of the club’s street maps used to be in Corel Draw format (and before that they were hand drawn on transparent plastic sheets!) At some stage in the mid-noughties it became necessary to convert these to Ocad format. This huge task was completed over several years by many members. Very hard and time-consuming work, but a job well done which has stood the test of time.
- **Sprint orienteering!** My memory is that sprint orienteering wasn’t common until about 2006. Of course, now it is a major and permanent part of the orienteering scene. In 2007 DROC set the Victorian Sprint Championships at Monash University and the winners were awarded the Cavill Cup in honor of past club stalwart life member Wally Cavill.
- **Investment in a SportIdent set.** At a committee meeting in 2011 the committee discussed the merits of spending \$6600 to purchase a club SportIdent kit including controls and SI sticks. At about this time it had become blatantly obvious that this form of electronic control punching and results was the way of the future, however clubs were using a centralised set of Orienteering Victoria SI controls. Perhaps due to cost and some trepidation around the new technology, clubs had yet to purchase their own sets. In typical DROC spirit of getting on board with worthwhile ventures, the committee decided to proceed with the purchase and we’ve never looked back.
- **Dealing with Covid!** I don’t want to speak any more about Covid, but it is a rare thing that something can virtually wipe out two years of orienteering. Plus several events in early 2020 were also cancelled due to bushfire smoke. Crazy stuff.
- **THE DODDS!!** I’m a bit hesitant to single anyone out as there are so many club members who make such great contributions; however the Dodds are standouts; and I again want to publicly acknowledge them! Debbie takes on virtually a full-time job managing and coordinating all manner of orienteering things for DROC and for Orienteering Victoria. She is great to work with and is really good at getting things done efficiently in a friendly and professional way. Ian also puts in a mountain of work managing the club’s accounts but is also the quiet guy in the finish tent ensuring that all things SI are up and running, whether at DROC events or other clubs’ events. I know that on many many occasions Ian has been called upon by other clubs to help when a results tent IT crisis has occurred or, as I witnessed at Aus Champs this year, being asked to solve others’ problems at the drop of a hat. Those wonderful Eventor results or Winsplits tables would not exist if someone like Ian was not

working away in the background. Debbie and Ian's hard work makes the President's role so much easier and I feel that a lot of their work goes unnoticed, so just wanted to say thanks and acknowledge you two!

- **Great diversion from everyday life!** The club and its members are a great place to simply immerse oneself in orienteering amongst other similarly minded people. We are a decent sized club, with decent funds behind us and no matter what sort of orienteer one is, whether it be attending a couple of streetO events per year or coming to 100 events, one will be welcomed into the club and presented with an immediate social circle, with endless opportunities to become involved in the admin/course setting/technical side of orienteering. All at very minimal cost, formality or fuss.
- **Culture.** The club culture is one of making shared and logical decisions and there aren't factions or distracting politics (at least as far as I am aware). In terms of club direction, I think we do a great job at running a stable club with many experienced members all contributing, but also being open to new ideas and concepts and implementing them. Plus we have a knack of getting the job done when the chips are down. A really positive culture that I'm proud to be a part of.
- **Against All Odds; A Very Proud Day.** Lastly, Peter Yeates recently reminded me of a very proud day for the club; the Victorian Relays 2017 at Darebin Parklands. This was also a personal orienteering highlight for me. Some of you know the story, but for those that don't, I'd like to indulge on just this one occasion, and describe it to you. Apologies, it's a long story...

DROC had a large number of teams entered in the relays - at least 10. The team of Simon Rouse, Asha Steer and myself were entered into course 1, which included, in particular, three other teams (Bendigo A, Bendigo B and MFR) with current and former senior elite Australian competitors. If horse racing odds were assigned to our chance of winning, I would have put Rouse / Steer / Hobbs at around \$51, with the other teams ranging between \$3 and \$10. Seriously.

Fast forward to the graveyard at the third leg changeover. Simon and Asha both had really solid first and second leg runs, with Simon leading the pack after the first leg. I was running the third and final leg.

Whilst waiting in the graveyard for Asha to come through, I did not know what position we were in. I had paid little attention to the other teams or start lists. Only afterwards did I learn the details of other teams and finishing positions. At the final changeover we were in second position behind Bendigo B, not fourth as expected, because unbeknownst to me, one of the three fancied teams, MFR, had mispunched, whilst Bendigo A was simply having a "bad run".

When Asha completed the second leg, we were three minutes behind Bendigo B, but interestingly, 4m 36s ahead of Bendigo A; however the third runner for this team was a current Australian men's elite competitor, and over a 7km orienteering course my chances of defending this lead were virtually zero. Remembering that I had no idea of any of these facts at the time. So, when Asha came through, I set off on the third leg and gave it my all. Just before setting off, I remember hearing some friendly banter along the lines of which Bendigo team would take out the win... meanwhile the rank-outsider DROC team had different ideas...

I nailed the course! My strong run overhauled the leading Bendigo B team. Not only overtake them, but finish a whopping seven minutes ahead!

One by one, the fancied teams were dropping...

Back to the 4m 36s lead over Bendigo A, that I didn't even know we had.

I felt that I was running strongly but recall finding it odd not seeing anyone out on course that remotely looked like a course 1 competitor (I suppose this is what happens when you are in the lead!) It wasn't until the third last control, perhaps 500m from the finish, that I both heard and saw the fast-finishing Bendigo A team member about 30m behind me and closing the gap. The penny finally dropped that I was not in fourth place as expected, and that something quite exciting may be on the cusp of happening. I managed to keep my head for the final controls with no errors or hesitations, running quickly and directly. Exiting the final control I had perhaps a 10m lead. I gave

it everything along the final 200m stretch and to my surprise and delight I never saw the Bendigo A runner! The commentator, Warren Key, I don't think was aware that DROC had taken out first place. However, the result quickly became clear by all the excitement at the finish, followed by an interview with Warren. I recall Jim Russell, Australian Coach at the time, saying to me he thought it was my best run to date.

So, I did manage to defend the 4m 36 lead, finishing seven seconds ahead of Bendigo A. I was as proud as punch and this will always stick in my mind as one of my finest personal orienteering runs, but also a very memorable team result, against all odds.

To top the day off, DROC's combined relay results were very strong, resulting in a second overall place in the Rockhopper Trophy, our best result at the time. A great day all around that I won't ever forget.



MAP NERDS REJOICE! NORTH LINES CONVERGE IN THE UK, MAKING HISTORY

Early November 2022 saw geospatial history being made when true north, magnetic north and grid north combined at a single point in Great Britain for the first time ever. According to calculations made by Ordnance Survey (OS), Great Britain's national mapping service, the historic triple alignment made landfall at the little village of Langton Matravers just west of Swanage in early November and will stay converged on Great Britain for three and a half years as it slowly travels up the country.

The three 'norths'

As expert map readers will know, when you're navigating with a compass there is a difference between magnetic north (where the compass points) and grid north (the vertical blue grid lines shown on maps).

Grid north is the blue lines on an OS map that either points directly to, or near to the North Pole, whereas true north is the direction of the lines of longitude that all converge at the North Pole. Across OS maps true north varies from grid north since it reflects the curve of the earth, except on one grid north line, which aligns with longitude 2 degrees west of the zero Greenwich meridian line. Anywhere on this 'special line' grid north and true north align.

Magnetic north marks the northward line to the magnetic North Pole. The position of the magnetic North Pole and the direction of magnetic north moves continually due to natural changes in the Earth's magnetic field.

After always being to the west of grid north in Great Britain, the last few years have seen magnetic north move to the other side of grid north. The change started in 2014 at the very tip of Cornwall and is slowly moving west to east across the country. It is now reaching the 'special line' and will incredibly converge with the other two 'norths' for the first time in history.

After making landfall at Langton Matravers, the triple alignment will pass northwards through Poole by Christmas and then Chippenham and Birmingham before reaching Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire in August 2024. It will pass through the Pennines before leaving the English coast at Berwick-Upon-Tweed a year later in August 2025 and it does not hit land again until around May 2026 at Drums, just south of Newburgh in Scotland. After passing through Mintlaw its last stop in Scotland and the landmass of Great Britain is Fraserburgh, around July 2026.

Due to a number of factors these predictions are likely to change, but only by a few months. Factors include updated magnetic field observations from the British Geological Survey (BGS) due to changes in the flow of iron in the liquid outer core.

Mark Greaves, Earth Measurement Expert at Ordnance Survey, said: "It is no exaggeration to say that this is a one-off event that has never happened before. Magnetic north moves slowly so it is likely going to be several hundred years before this alignment comes around again. This triple alignment is an interesting quirk of our national mapping and the natural geophysical processes that drive the changing magnetic field.



But for navigators the same rules will apply whether they are simply on a trek or a walk, or flying planes or navigating ships at the other end of the spectrum. They will always have to take account of the variation between magnetic north from a compass and grid (or true) north on a map."

From <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/newsroom/news/three-norths-align-great-britain>