

# PUNCHLINE

Dandenong Ranges Orienteering Club Inc

[www.drocorienteering.com.au](http://www.drocorienteering.com.au)

Incorporated Association Registered Number A0003225B

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## PUNCHLINE GOES DIGITAL

While we know it's not exactly ground-breaking to publish electronically, we held off for a long time because we felt that members liked to have a physical copy of their favourite orienteering newsletter. Thanks to the recent hefty increases in postage, we ran a member survey, and you voted overwhelmingly to go digital - so we have!

We look forward to being able to bring you the same great stories, embellished with colour photos and maps that you can enlarge. And of course if you want to curl up in bed with a good read, you can still print your own copy - we will keep Punchline to the same length of approx. 12 pages per issue.

The other change is to our publishing schedule. Each issue will be one month later than before, so now you'll receive Punchline in January, April, July and October.



## SPRINT CHAMPIONS

Congratulations to our club members who are now Victorian Sprint Champions! After a fantastic weekend of Sprint racing in Bendigo, we were once again one of the most successful clubs with 5 Champions and 5 Runners Up. The Champs were held in the heart of Bendigo city, in a unique area that included a Chinese temple and garden, a former prison, and a fern maze. We "tuned up" at the final 2 Sprint Into Spring races the day before, on two very contrasting terrain types - first a classic college campus, then a heavily eroded area of gold mining terrain.

Champions: Sarah Davies, Lanita Steer, Carola Ray, Denise Pike, Ian Dodd  
Runners Up: Asha Steer, Debbie Dodd, Pam King, Simon Rouse, Peter Dalwood

Congratulations also to Daniel Kaman (pictured) who won a Sprint Into Spring green jersey and was second overall, and to Luca Bogdanovits, who was third overall. Great job by our juniors!

## *DIARY DATES 2017*

- ▽ Park and Street Championships, Wednesday March 1, Bellbird Dell (organisers NE)
- ▽ Victorian Club Relays, Sunday March 5, Darebin Parklands (organisers MFR)
- ▽ Park and Street Awards Night, Wednesday March 15, Ringwood East
- ▽ MelbushO, Sunday March 26, Wellington Chase (Lysterfield) - course setter Ian Davies
- ▽ Sprint Double Header, Sunday May 21, venue tba (Melbourne suburbs) - course setters Peter Hobbs and Sarah Davies
- ▽ MelbushO, Sunday July 23, Plenty South - course setter ?? it could be YOU!
- ▽ EndurO, Saturday August 12, Park Orchards/Loughnans Hill
- ▽ Victorian Sprint Distance Championships, Sunday November 25, Monash University

## *PRIMARY SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS*

Our juniors took to Westerfolds Park for the Eastern Zone Primary Schools Orienteering Champs. We had four competitors, all in year 6 - Amber and Luca in Girls 6A, and Angus and James in Boys 6A. Amber won her class and Luca came 4th in a tight finish. James was 2nd, while Angus mispunched but was happy with his run. James's sister Sammy competed in her first orienteering event in Girls 3B - and won! Well done to all of you, and we hope to see you all orienteering this year.

## *AUSTRALIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS*

In her final year as a Junior, Lanita Steer has made a clean sweep of the Australian Orienteering Championship titles in southern Queensland, winning the Sprint, Middle, and Long Distance titles. The forest maps featured plenty of green, grey and black, and required constant contact to avoid coming unstuck, while the Sprint map was incredibly technical. Lanita's wins confirm her as the 2016 Junior NOL title holder.

Ian Davies had a fantastic run to take third in the Sprint, in his best national result to date. The Relays featured that iconic Queensland vegetation feature - lantana. Asha Steer was the second fastest runner on W20E; Simon Rouse was fastest Victorian on M21E and helped his team onto the podium in third, while Ian had another good run to move his team up several places into third and another podium place.

Asha ran well to finish 6th in Junior Women in both the Long and Middle distance. Sarah Davies also had a strong performance, finishing in the top 10 in the highly competitive W16 class in the Long, while Martin Steer had a top 10 finish in the Middle distance, and Merv Bendle was second in Open B.

Next year's Australian Champs will be based in Bathurst, NSW. It sounds like a fantastic week of orienteering - and you don't have to be an elite runner to enjoy the 9-day Carnival. There are classes for moderate and novice orienteers, and plenty of social activities to enjoy as well. Start planning your 2017 holiday by visiting <http://onsw.asn.au/ozchamps2017/>. Join the DROC contingent!

## *PARK AND STREET CHAMPS AND AWARDS NIGHT*

The 2017 Champs will be held on Wednesday March 1, at Bellbird Dell. The course setter is Ron Fredrick (NE). Qualifying events begin in mid February and you have plenty of opportunities to make the cut - check the [Champs website](#) for details. Our current champions will be looking to defend their titles, and I'm sure there will be plenty of others hoping to earn a coveted medallion.

Presentations will be made at the Awards Night on Wednesday March 15, after the event at Maroondah Triangle. As always, the scouts will put on a fantastic BBQ dinner. We'll award prizes for Monday and Wednesday series, recognise our Millennium Club Legends, and present the Championship winners and placegetters with their medallions. A night not to be missed!

## MEMBER NEWS

REMINDER: Membership renewals were due on January 1. If you haven't renewed yet, please do so as soon as possible. Look out for reminder emails with a convenient link to your membership information in Eventor - this is the easiest way to pay. Payments can otherwise be made by cash, cheque, or bank transfer. If using these methods, please complete a Membership Renewal form and include it with your payment: <http://www.drocorienteering.com.au/wordpress/membership/>

If you have kids under 21 who would like to compete, there is no membership fee - simply add their names to the membership form, or let me know and I will register them as DROC members in Eventor.

A big welcome to our newest members Stuart McWilliam, Damian Spencer, and Daniel Kaman. Stuart (pictured) has relocated from NSW, where he has orienteered for many years as a member of Garingal Orienteers. Stuart is already a well known face at park and street, sprint, and bush events, and we are delighted to have him bring his experience and enthusiasm to DROC.

Damian enjoyed MelbushO this winter, and decided he would like to continue orienteering over summer. He's been to several northern and eastern series events so far. Daniel is a junior who started with Sprint Into Spring. He picked up orienteering remarkably quickly, and finished the SIS series as the proud wearer of a Green Jersey for best sprinter! Daniel was also second overall on the Usain Bolt course, and we look forward to seeing him progress in 2017.

We've also been delighted to have several international orienteers join DROC this year. DROC welcomes guest members, and offers a special membership rate for interstate or overseas visitors who are looking for a club to join whilst staying in Melbourne.

Carola and Jonathon Ray joined us from Finland. Carola came to Melbourne for several months' work at Deakin University, and was keen to fit in as much orienteering as possible. Her son Jonathon flew out for a shorter visit at the end of November. Carola competed in Sprint Into Spring, placing third in the Yellow Jersey competition, and winning her age class in the Victorian Sprint Champs. She also came to some park and street events, and travelled to Bendigo for a taste of Aussie bush orienteering. Jonathon arrived in time for the Sprint Champs, and ran very strongly for 4<sup>th</sup> in M20. He spent a week in NZ at a junior training camp with Lanita and Asha. The family travelled to Newcastle for the Christmas 5 Days, squeezing in some sightseeing before flying home to the Finnish winter. Carola has written an article about her experiences in Melbourne, and if any DROC members find themselves in southern Finland, please feel free to get in touch and pay a visit!

We were also lucky enough to have Paul Czioska join us from Germany. Paul was only in Melbourne for a month, but he was keen to compete in the Relays, and we were very happy to have him in one of our two "A" teams, where he ran very strongly indeed. Paul hails from Hanover, and orienteers as much as he can when at home.

It was great to see Peter Kovassy coming along to streetO during December. Peter was on a holiday from Switzerland where he now lives. Despite claiming his running was "rusty", he ran pretty well and gave us some good competition on D course - and he purchased some new DROC tops to take home. Our club tops can now be seen in several countries!



## JUNIOR ENCOURAGEMENT AWARDS

The DROC Committee was delighted to give out two Junior Encouragement Awards at the recent Christmas party. The recipients were Arika and Luca Bogdanovits. We've been very impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment shown by both girls, who have competed at all levels, from Championships to street events, and everything in between, including Schools champs, MelbushO, and Sprint Into Spring. The girls were each presented with a gift card from Rebel Sport.



## MEFTY AWARD - DROC TAKES TOP FOUR

For the second time Debbie Dodd has won the MEFTY trophy. Attending 135 Melbourne StreetO events in the 2016 StreetO year (start of Summer Season to end of the Spring Season) Debbie won the award from Peter Yeates and Dale Howe, who both attended 131 events. Peter was also second last year. Debbie previously won the MEFTY in 2014. Sixteen orienteers (6 from DROC) attended 100 or more events, while 77 orienteers attended 50 or more events in 2016. Here's our Top 30 park and street participants in 2016.

## POSITION VACANT

After several years as the Saturday Series Coordinator, Allan Miller is ready to step down. Allan has carried out the task with aplomb and flair, and we thank him for filling the role so well. The job entails bringing along a couple of pieces of equipment (nothing bulky), making the announcements before each event, and liaising with organising clubs to ensure that there is a course setter. If you are interested, please have a chat to Debbie. The Saturday Series starts in late March and runs until early October.

DODD	DEBBIE	135
YEATES	PETER	131
HOWE	DALE	131
HOWE	RAY	128
YEATES	ILZE	120
DAVIES	IAN	107
BESLEY	MARK	92
MILLER	PAT	87
MILLER	ALLAN	87
DODD	IAN	86
BIRD	TONY	80
SAUNDERS	REG	76
PALMER	CHRISTINE	75
NAVIGATORS	NEWBURY	74
KERLEY	HELEN	74
TORODE	PHIL	72
KING	ROSALIND	67
GREENWOOD	IAN	62
KING	PAM	60
PIKE	DENISE	55
GROVER	PETER	52
HESTER	ANDREW	49
DALWOOD	PETER	47
WALLIS	GRAHAM	47
PEARCE	COLIN	44
SMITH	TINA	42
ROUSE	SIMON	41
KERLEY	JAY	36
HOBBS	PETER	34
HARDY	ANDREW	31

## ORIENTEERING AUSTRALIA MERIT BADGES

A record 19 DROC members received Merit badges this year, and a record number of those were Gold! Badges are awarded for an individual's performance relative to the winner of the relevant age class, at designated events such as National and State Championships.

Here's our very long list of Badge winners - congratulations to all!

MARK	BESLEY	M60	GOLD
PETER	DALWOOD	M65	GOLD
IAN	DAVIES	M55	GOLD
SARAH	DAVIES	W16	GOLD
PETER	HOBBS	M21	GOLD
PAMELA	KING	W65	GOLD
SIMON	ROUSE	M21	GOLD
ASHA	STEER	W20	GOLD
JANINE	STEER	W50	GOLD
LANITA	STEER	W20	GOLD
MARTIN	STEER	M50	GOLD
DEBBIE	DODD	W55	SILVER
ILZE	YEATES	W65	SILVER
PETER	YEATES	M70	SILVER
CHRIS	BENDLE	W21	BRONZE
MERV	BENDLE	M21	BRONZE
IAN	DODD	M55	BRONZE
CASSANDRA	DUTTON	W21	BRONZE
STUART	MCWILLIAM	M60	BRONZE

## MILLENNIUM CLUB

On Wednesday 9th November 2016, Ros King became an Associate Member of The Millennium Club when she completed her 500th StreetO event on the Ringwood Wilds map. Congratulations to Ros on reaching this milestone - the 29<sup>th</sup> member of DROC to do so.



## ***SIZZLING SPRINT SERIES!***

Spring was all about Sprinting! With a 7-race series, followed by the Victorian Sprint Champs, and including a Bendigo triple header, our spring Saturdays were sizzling with sprint action - even if the weather didn't quite get there.

For Race 1, we headed back to one of 2015's favourites, Eltham College - a great way to kick off the series, with a very technical map. I know I wasn't the only one who was fine on the short, tricky legs, but who fell apart on the relatively straightforward sections across car parks, simply by switching off when I thought I could relax and just run hard. Sprint orienteering is definitely not about speed. There was a pivot control in full view of spectators, always a daunting prospect. Our live results added to the exciting atmosphere, and we had a huge turnout including lots of kids.

DROC got off to a great start, with two runners featured in the top 10 on the highly competitive Mo Farah course - Peter Hobbs and Simon Rouse. Sarah Davies was second fastest female on the Sally Pearson, followed closely by Carola Ray who was still adjusting to Melbourne terrain, and a southern hemisphere compass. Meanwhile new junior Daniel Kaman placed 10<sup>th</sup> in his first ever event on the Usain Bolt course, a portent of great results to come.



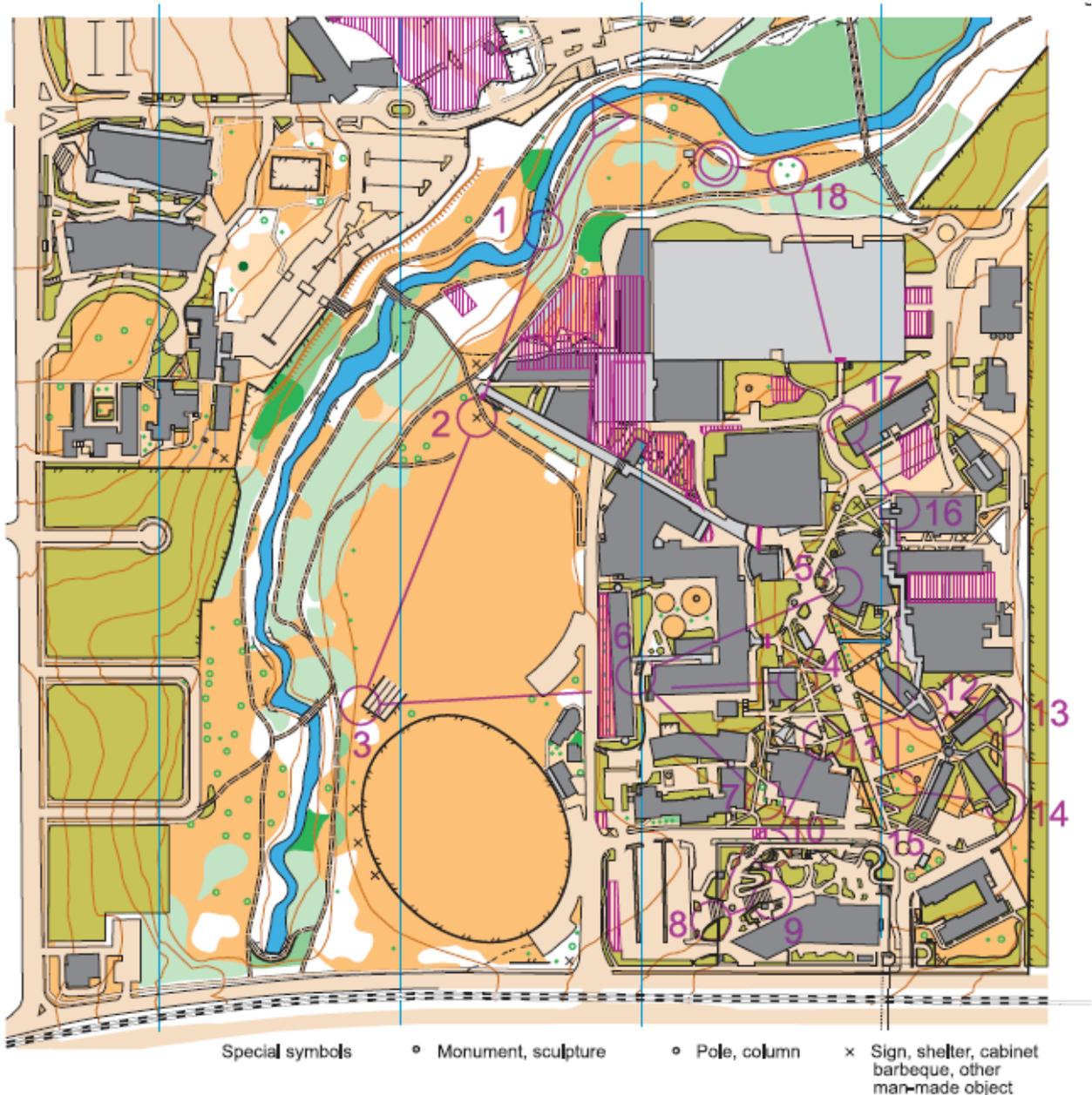
Race 2 was eagerly anticipated, on a brand new map in Keilor Downs - two schools separated by a small park. The weather was atrocious! Gale force winds, torrential downpours, thunder and hail. Thank goodness we found a large covered area to use for the arena. No-one out on the course escaped getting soaked, and the low lying grassy areas soon turned into muddy lakes. This event was also notable for the smallest "hill climb" ever - which nobody minded in the least. Despite all this we had 120 competitors, who had a ball. Both schools turned out to be very complex - I for one can't wait to return and redeem myself for some moments where I just stood still in bewilderment for far too long! Pete again made the top 10, despite winning the Drowned Rat award (pictured). Carola did well again to be third female, while juniors Luca and Arika Bogdanovits were second and fourth.

On to Race 3, at Ruffey Lake. This was a pure park sprint with very well set courses making the most of the creek crossings and vegetation boundaries to offer route choice. The strong runners and hill climbers were at home here, while some were caught out by not checking their control numbers and mispunching, particularly right at the end of the course. Simon had his best result to finish third. Andras Bogdanovits and Jenny Mitchell claimed top 10 placings, while Daniel leapt into fourth, and Jersey contention.

Race 4 was organised by DROC, and the courses were set by Simon. I never knew he was so mean! He found every little niche, nook and cranny to place the controls, and set up some really tough legs. Again, many came unstuck right at the end in the simple leg through the underground car park - a matter of switching off too early. Sprints are intense, requiring full concentration from start to finish. I lost count of my small errors (though I did navigate the car park correctly!)

Pete was 5<sup>th</sup>, on an upward trajectory. Jenny and Carola were once again top 10, and Daniel was 6<sup>th</sup>, in another good showing for the club. More importantly, we ran a smooth-as-silk event with several key volunteers missing in action, but plenty of other members willing to step up - great job team!

Below: Simon's "Sally Pearson" course at Deakin Burwood



The final Melbourne race was at Newport Lakes, famed for said lakes at the bottom of a former quarry. This was another really well set course with route choices right from the beginning, some major decisions about the lakes, then a series of very short zig-zag legs into the finish. Today's trap was the sprint leg - there was a control in full view of the start of the leg, and you'd be surprised at how many people assumed it was their target - even though it was 100 metres south of the correct control. The lesson - never assume, and always check the map! This simple error cost valuable minutes.

Pete was 8<sup>th</sup>, and Lanita had her best run to be 4<sup>th</sup> female. Ian Davies and Ian Dodd tied for 19<sup>th</sup>, to scrape into the top 20. Andras had another top 10 finish, while Sarah was fastest female. Daniel, Luca and Arika were all in the top 10 of a big field on the Usain course.

And so we were off to Bendigo - two races on the Saturday, then the Victorian Champs on the Sunday. Three very different terrains and course setting styles were a great test of versatility and stamina, as the weather finally warmed up. First up was Bendigo South East College, a school quite similar to Eltham with a lot of odd-shaped buildings, stairs, fences and levels. The courses featured a lot of short complex legs, and over-running controls was a problem for many. Best DROC performers were Simon, Carola, Andras, Sarah and Daniel.

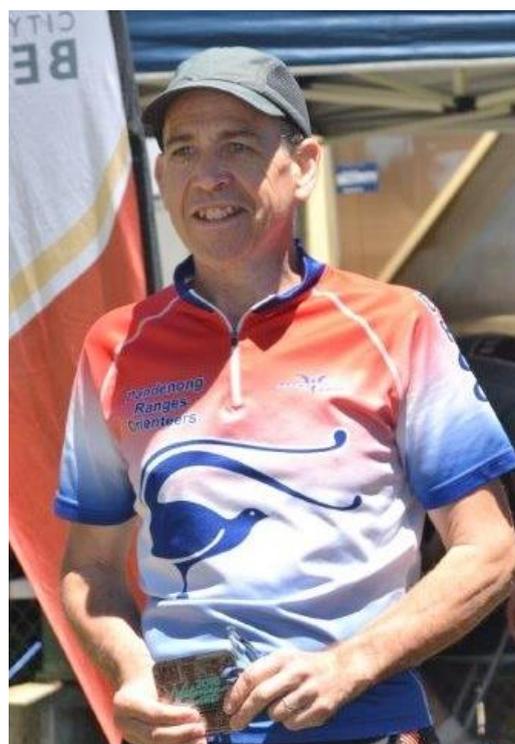
They promised the afternoon race would be unlike any other sprint - and so it proved. The terrain was heavily eroded, full of mounds, small gullies, watercourses, and criss crossing tracks. For the first few legs I wondered what on earth was going on - was this really a sprint? Then it clicked that I needed to use the tracks and not go cross country, and it all fell into place. It was great fun, and an excellent way to sort out the all round talent from the urban specialists. Carola, Andras and Daniel all held their own, and Daniel sealed his green Sprint jersey.

The Grand Finale and feature event of the weekend was the Champs. These were held in the centre of Bendigo, at Camp Hill and Rosalind Park. They included a Chinese temple, a fern garden maze, a prison, and a school campus. It was a unique opportunity to run in such a showcase venue. The fern maze was where most errors were made, along with the school campus with its many uncrossable fences. Congratulations to our winners and placegetters, already listed on the first page. All agreed it was one of the best weekends of the year!

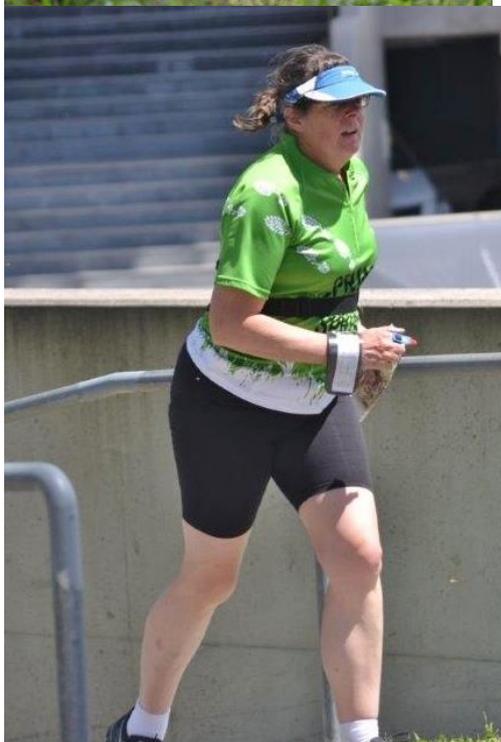
In 2017, Sprint Into Spring returns with the usual mix of favourite venues (some not used since the first series back in 2013) and new locations. It's DROC's turn to host the Championship, and this will be at Monash University's Clayton campus, where sprint orienteering in Victoria really came of age. There have been so many changes that remapping is virtually being done from scratch, so if you think you know the map, forget it!

*Top: Peter Yeates, Ian Dodd*

*Bottom: Asha Steer, Ian Davies*



**SPRINT INTO SPRING PHOTOS**



Top: Simon, Andras,  
Kimberley and Jenny

Middle: Debbie, Peter,  
Pete

Bottom: Ainslie



Top: Graham, Sarah

Middle: Peter, Dale

Bottom: Ryan

## *ORIENTEERING IN FINLAND - IS IT DIFFERENT FROM AUSTRALIA?* Carola Ray

During spring I had the opportunity to be a member of DROC. Firstly, I would like to thank you all in the club for being so nice to me during the months and taking the best care of me! Debbie asked me to write about orienteering in Finland and if it differs from Australia. My spontaneous answer is no. There were many similarities with activities in Finland which made it familiar to come to the events. You had the feeling that you were at home.

As there are more orienteers in Finland and shorter distances it is easier to arrange events. Many are eager to run relays. The Jukola relay every year in mid June is one of the highlights of the year. Both the women's Venla relay, four legs on Saturday afternoon, and the Jukola relay, seven legs starting on Saturday evening, is something which no orienteer older than 15 years will miss. For one weekend 30,000 people, about 1800 teams in both the Venla and the Jukola relay, compete against each other. The participating teams are on all levels, since the relay is open for anyone who wants to form a team and participate. So the world elite is competing on the same courses as all other participants. On Sunday morning when the winners are reaching the finish there are still a lot of teams who might have progressed only to the third or fourth leg. Big screens at the event arena following the top teams through the night, people laying in their sleeping bags, GPS tracking with maps on the screens makes this the orienteering event with the big O. Clubs not only send their best orienteers to the relay, usually most of the club is there for the Jukola weekend.



The seven legs in Jukola and the four legs in Venla date back to the Finnish national poet Aleksis Kivi's roman about the seven brothers and the four sisters in the neighborhood, and the hard farm work in Finland in the 1700s. Each year at the finish the winning team of the Jukola relay read a small section from the roman, and usually the message is applicable to the present time.

My club in Espoo, OK77, is a middle size club which has a focus on arranging training for young orienteers, and the older ones take part either as coaches or running by themselves. The orienteering season starts in mid April and last until late October, with a pause from mid June until early August. During spring and autumn different clubs arrange competitions each weekend. It is a way of financing club activities. Nowadays, the weekend competitions also have 2-3 courses which are open for other than competitors. In the Helsinki region, you are practically able to compete each weekend if you want to.

During weekday evenings there are events which are open to anyone. They are much like the Melbourne street orienteering events, except that they are in the bush. Our club has arranged events on Thursday evening west of Helsinki since 1977. These events usually have about 4 courses at different length. Much of the income for our club comes from these events. They also attract people who do not compete in orienteering. Many employers in Finland nowadays provide their employees with vouchers that they can use for physical activity. We accept these vouchers at our Thursday events. The Thursday events are also an official training session for our club members. In addition, we arrange one more orienteering event each week which is for club members.

In winter our club activities are concentrated around the two indoor training that we have in school gymnastics halls. The three hours we have per week is basically strength training (such as circuit

training), a lot of training where we do different kinds of jumping to strengthen the legs, some coordination and movement training, and sometimes something which relates to orienteering technique. Before indoor training we usually go for 45 minutes running together.

On Sunday mornings we meet up and do about 1.5-3 hours cross-country skiing or bushwalking together. These Sunday trainings are usually done at low tempo in different groups so everyone can participate. One long low tempo training is something that I would say every Finnish orienteer learns to do from the very beginning when you start to train as a young orienteer. It is also something that most aim to do in the forest, in order to simultaneously develop your running technique. To have a good running technique in different terrain as well as strength is necessary for being fast in the Finnish forests. In our club the Sunday long runs are also the chance to socialize with other club members. During winter our club also arranges some bush orienteering if there is no or little snow. In the Helsinki region some clubs also arrange street orienteering events open to all during winter weekends.

As I wrote much is like orienteering in Australia. Many clubs do the work as voluntary work and orienteers in Finland enjoy orienteering as much as you do over here!

## ***PREZ SEZ - PRESIDENT'S REPORT, by Peter Hobbs***

It is with pleasure that I table the President's Report for the 38th year of operation of the Dandenong Ranges Orienteering Club (DROC). This year (23 November 2015 to 20 November 2016) the club has organised 40 orienteering events, covering a wide range of formats comprising:

- ▽ 18 summer series street-o events
- ▽ 9 night street-o events
- ▽ 7 Saturday afternoon events including an EndurO
- ▽ 3 Sunday events including the Victorian Relays
- ▽ 3 Sprint events

Park and Street orienteering continues to be the club's core activity in terms of participation. After organising the Australian Sprint Championships and a state series event in 2015, the club opted for a 'quieter' 2016, organising 40 events which is still a fantastic contribution to orienteering in Victoria. In bush orienteering we've retained a notable presence including setting the Victorian Relays and two MelbushOs.

As in past years, DROC continues to retain a notable presence in mountain bike orienteering and rogaining. DROC continues to play an active role in sprint orienteering. We continue the use of SportIdent and event registration technology and continue to set/co-ordinate sprint orienteering events. Our SportIdent system is still used frequently and the club's O-Lynx registration software and tablet, which was purchased by Orienteering Victoria (OV) in 2014 with DROC retaining custodianship, is also used regularly.

I would like to acknowledge the outstanding performances of club members who have competed in various local, state and national level events during 2015-16. Unheard of in past years but now commonplace, DROC members regularly compete in the Girls Junior Elite and Men's Open Elite National Orienteering League. In particular, generous acknowledgement must again go to the Steer family, especially Lanita and Asha's fine performances representing Australia in the Junior World Orienteering Championships and Australia v New Zealand Tests, and Lanita's clean sweep of W20E at the Australian Orienteering Championships. The achievements of both girls this year have been significant and are too long to list here. Meanwhile, Sarah Davies continues emerging as a strong junior in the W16 class, competing for Victoria in the Australian Schools Individual Championships, among other events. The President and Committee applaud these achievements and will continue

supporting the club's junior members. We wish Lanita all the best as she transitions into the Senior Elite class.

The club's membership base grew by approximately 10 per cent this year from 75 households (old count system) last year to 110 individual members (new count system) this year (86 Adult, 17 Junior, 7 Social). It is notable that the club has a record 17 juniors. The new OV membership structure introduced two years ago appears not to have had any negative impact on DROC's membership numbers or administration. Anecdotal evidence suggests that DROC's new website has been well received and has even attracted new members.

Financially, the club has continued to preserve a strong asset position and will make a small profit this year. Several successful fundraising ventures have again raised funds to support the club's juniors and will likely be required again in 2017. Former DROC President Ian Greenwood continues as the DROC representative on the Urban Orienteering Subcommittee, which is co-chaired by Debbie Dodd. The traditional Christmas dinner was again a popular festivity with approximately 50 people in attendance after a summer series event at Koonung Heights. The night was particularly memorable as three long serving members, Peter Grover, Carl Stemp and Pam King - to their great surprise - were awarded life membership.

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 co-ordination of the events DROC organises.
- *Ian Dodd* - Treasurer, Wednesday street-o coordinator, equipment management, SportIdent and SI-stick expert and always a helping hand. On behalf of the Committee I would like to acknowledge the outstanding contribution Debbie and Ian make to DROC and orienteering generally.
- *Allan Miller, Ray Howe, Mark Besley and Ian Davies* - series coordination, scoring and control cards.
- *Peter Yeates* - co-ordinating uniform sales, duties as Vice President, equipment management and always coming up with ideas.
- *Ilze Yeates and Tina Smith* for match-day coordination of DROC's relay teams.
- *Christine Palmer* - fixtures.
- *Peter Dalwood* - designing the new DROC membership form
- *Pam King and Peter Grover* - mapping and secretary duties.
- *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. However as each year passes, it becomes more notable that we've had only three new people on the DROC committee since 2003. We would love some new faces on the committee to bring new ideas and share duties more widely around the membership base. I encourage all members to become involved in the club and its activities. 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 do this.

The year ahead is shaping up to be a busy one, with the usual allocation of park-street, MelbushO and sprint events, plus we've put our hand up to coordinate the first ever State Series sprint double header and the Victorian Sprint Championships.

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.

## *VICTORIAN RELAYS - BLOWN AWAY AT BRIMBANK*

Relays are our one opportunity to be part of a team, and they are fantastic for club camaraderie. After becoming something of a specialist club at organising them (including the Australian Schools Relay Championships), DROC took a back seat for a few years and let other clubs take a turn. When we put our hands up for 2016, we'd already decided to use a venue that was central to both Melbourne and regional orienteers, with a little bit of technical terrain but plenty of open spaces for fast running and great spectating, and something that everyone could enjoy no matter how much or how little experience they had. Add easy parking and toilets, and Brimbank Park was an obvious choice. Ian was opted in to set the courses while I undertook the organising; Jim Russell came on board as event advisor.

After an initial visit early in the year to choose an arena and submit a permit application, nothing much happened until after we all returned from Europe. Then it was a frantic flurry for a few weeks - getting the map right, setting and checking courses, opening up entries and publicising the event, sorting out the logistics etc. Entries began with a trickle which soon became a flood, and we had just under 60 teams by the cutoff date. We were delighted when DROC had the highest number of teams of any club - a record 10 teams and 30 club members!

The biggest challenge was always going to be getting the controls out on time on Sunday morning. Ian and I arrived at the main gate of Brimbank before 7am, two cars loaded to the brim with stands, flags, cables and control units, and a vague plan. Gale force winds were predicted but we were hoping they wouldn't pick up until late morning. Numerous phone calls the previous day to the ranger, and to our meteorological advisor Blair, had reassured us that we could press ahead. But as we stepped out of the cars, the wind was already very strong, and we knew we were in for an interesting and challenging day!

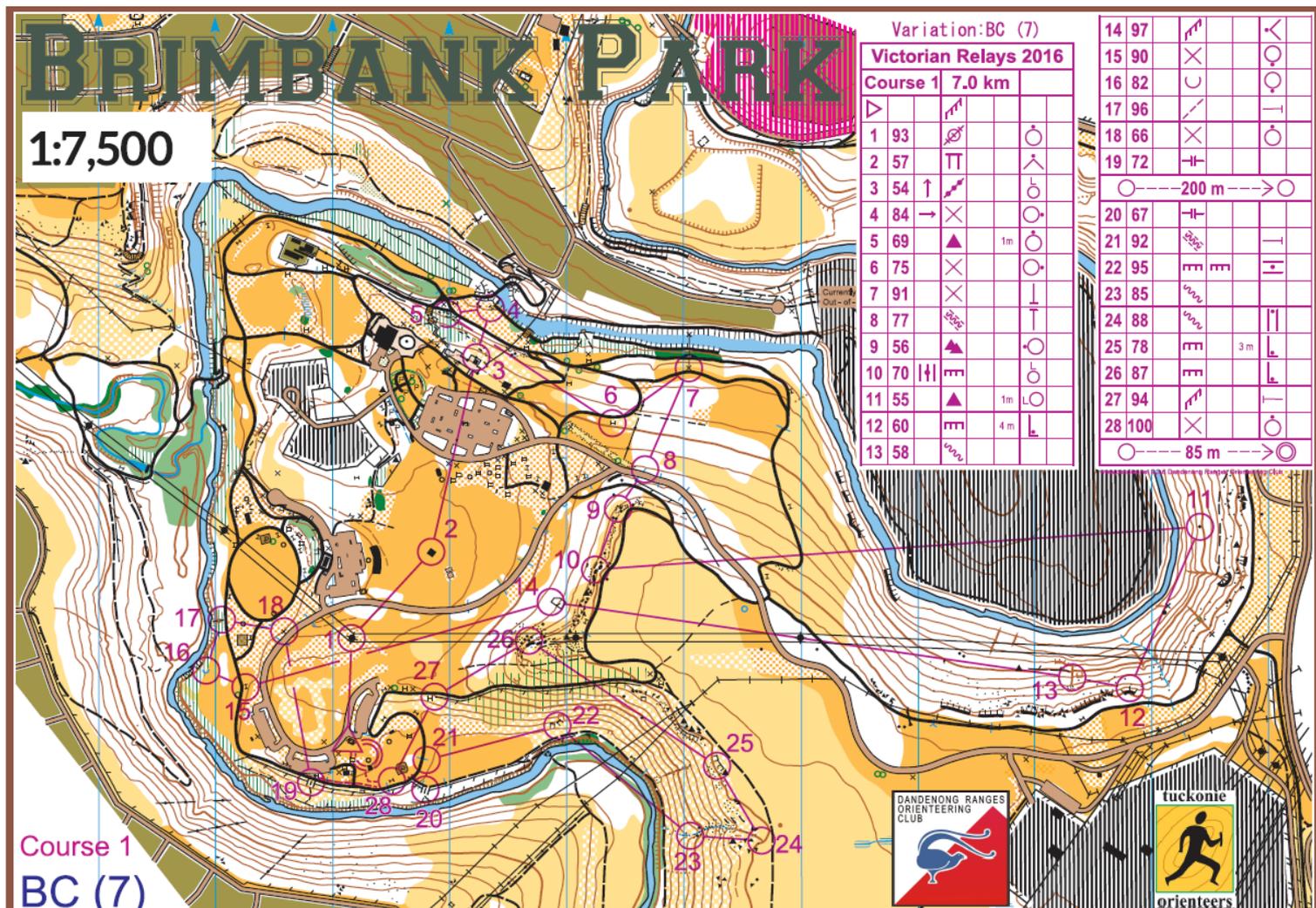
We set about getting the controls out, finding it very difficult to keep hold of everything as the wind played havoc with anything not secured by a firm grasp. Reinforcements arrived in the form of Pete and Ilze at about 8.30am, followed by other club members. I immediately threw rolls of safety tape and a sketchy diagram of how the arena should look to Pete, and commandeered Ilze to help me with the controls on the easy courses, leaving Ian to scramble about on the steep rocky cliffs (he chose the locations so he only had himself to blame!) An hour later, I was very happy to see the arena all laid out exactly to plan - the team had worked miracles without any direction/interference from me.

Competitors started arriving, and we directed them not to put up their tents under any trees. The arena soon had a festive air as the buzz started to build, with people speculating about their courses. We were kept busy with all the last minute things. Mark Besley manned the database and dealt calmly with team changes. Ian and Jim appeared, declaring courses ready (phew!) The last job was pegging out the maps in order on a large wire cage - one of the main factors in choosing our arena was the availability of a ready made fence. I handed out the carefully labelled and sorted maps, and the specially-purchased plastic pegs in colourful DROC red and blue. "The maps are blowing off the fence!" Pam shouted above the wind. "There are tons of pegs - put them top and bottom" I suggested. Five minutes later - "the maps are tearing - they are being ripped out of the pegs!" This was turning into something of a disaster.

Quick thinking resulted in a good solution - we would put the maps in trays, and hand them individually to each runner as they came into the tagging area. Each map had a label that matched runners' bib numbers, so it was simple to allocate the right map to the right person. After explaining the new procedure to the waiting runners, it worked like a charm - in fact I would use this method at any future Relay as it was easy to manage and error-free.

At exactly 11am the first leg runners were off - swarming up the slope out of the arena, to fan out in all directions. Second leg runners watched anxiously for the first signs of their team mates through the spectator control - a long run in full view of the arena. Ian and Jim had done a great job of

planning this leg, and there was also a great view of several controls before the run into the chute. Courses were designed with variations to prevent runners following each other, but the short final loop brought everyone together through the same last controls, to set up head to head sprints into the finish. Jim's TV screens ensured everyone could see the results immediately, and people were clustered around them anxiously awaiting the outcomes.



Course 1 map - one of 9 variations. All runners had the same final loop to set up head to head finishes.

All the while the wind howled, and reports came back of runners having difficulty staying upright when on higher ground. Nevertheless, everyone enjoyed the courses. Course 1 was suitably difficult with several steep technical areas to negotiate, and winning times were perhaps a little longer than we expected. The kids loved Course 4, which had plenty of controls to keep them interested and challenged without being too difficult. Everyone returned safely and happily, and it was time to hand back the maps. For a while we contemplated simply releasing them like confetti into the gale, but we figured they'd end up somewhere in the Bay!

Melbourne Forest Racers narrowly beat Bendigo Orienteers for best club overall. Yarra Valley were third, and DROC fourth - a great effort considering most of our runners were also helping out in some capacity. Huge thanks to Tina and Ilze for coordinating our teams on the day, and to everyone who pitched in so willingly in such difficult conditions.

As we collected controls afterwards and drove out of the park, we could see large branches had fallen all over the place, including across the roof of a shelter. Most of the damage was on the far north side, well away from our arena. Even so, we realised how lucky we had been. Let's hope the 2017 Relays, to be held in Darebin Parklands in March, are held in calmer conditions, and DROC members can run at their best, then sit back and relax!

## FROM THE RACV: WHY PRINTED MAPS ARE BETTER

Neil James, RACV general manager of member service delivery, says: “Significant numbers of people are still using printed maps as a planning tool. People are still attached to mapping. The tactile experience of handling a map, knowing where they are and what’s around them is something they appreciate that they don’t get from a screen.”

Where the internet option holds clear sway is in navigating metropolitan areas. GPS and mobile phone mapping have diminished sales of street directories markedly. For 50 years buying your first Melway was a rite of passage equal to fixing P-plates to your car, but not for the most recent generation of drivers.

Today Melway sells mostly to people over 40 and emergency services (and orienteers?) The latest printed Melway is two years ahead of Google maps and holds detailed information about the outer suburbs. Melway has developed its own mobile app as an alternative to the printed format, but teachers complain that those who rely exclusively on phone navigation lack spatial awareness, i.e. a sense of their surroundings and their place in it.

Neil James knows this from personal experience. Since moving to Melbourne 12 years ago and relying on a GPS to find his way, he struggles with its geography. “I don’t know where any of the suburbs are. When someone tells me they live in Ashburton I have as much idea as if they said Bullamakanka.”

Internet mapping is about finding the most direct, and usually quickest route, but for those who enjoy the journey in its own right, printed maps still lay out the alternatives. And they never run out of battery.

*Orienteers help keep Melway maps up to date by reporting corrections. If you spot an error in your Melway, advise Ian Greenwood who will pass it on. Melway provides directories to Orienteering Victoria at a significant discount. These are given to key volunteers such as series coordinators and scorers to say Thanks for their ongoing efforts throughout the year.*

## DROC TOPS - A GREAT LOOK ALL AROUND

We have plenty of stocks left of DROC running tops and singlets, as well as fleece jackets for those who like to plan ahead. See Peter Yeates to try out sizes.

