

PUNCHLINE

Dandenong Ranges Orienteering Club Inc

www.drocorienteering.com.au

Incorporated Association Registered Number A0003225B

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Issue 196

April 2021

PARK STREET CHAMPIONSHIPS 2021



DROC hosted the 2021 Park Street Championship on our Cavills Corner map in Wantirna - long overdue as a Champs venue! Course setter Pam King was assisted by Peter Dalwood (pictured). Our thanks to Warwick Davis and David Knight for their help with MapRun, and to Mark Besley for his deep reserves of patience and good humour with the scoring!

A sudden 5-day lockdown and tightened restrictions threw up some challenges; we needed all Finalists to start en masse at 7pm, but we also needed Schools competitors and non-Finalists to start separately earlier. This meant taking care that MapRun maps, results and GPS tracks remained locked from view until Finalists started - the logistics were still being worked out just a couple of hours before the event.

The Victorian lockdown meant we had to abandon the lead-in Qualifying events, and Finalists had to

nominate themselves online. It was fantastic to have almost 60 people put their hands up to compete, and we had very strong fields. In covid times, we were so fortunate to hold an event like this.

Pam's excellent course threw up its own challenges, most notably the "in-out" control which meant passing another control twice. Analysis of routes on MapRun clearly demonstrated the huge number and variety of route choices; the winners were both fast AND smart!

Congratulations to DROC's newest Park Street Champions and Gold Medallists Helen Walpole (Womens Open); Ian Dodd (Mens Supervet) and Ian Greenwood (Mens Supervet PW); Silver Medallists Peter Hobbs (Mens Open), Sarah Love (Womens Open), Denise Pike (Womens Supervet) and Rosalind King (Womens Supervet PW); and Bronze Medallist Ian Davies (Mens Senior). Also contesting the Final were Andrew Hester, Damian Spencer, Andrew Perkins, Debbie Dodd, Mark Besley, and Peter Grover.

Map and more photos inside.

MELBOURNE CITY RACE WEEKEND

The second Melbourne City Race Weekend will be on April 17 and 18. The Saturday Prologue features the quirks and intrigues of riverside Cremorne, full of industrial history and funky street art. We've "borrowed" Bill Borrie from Eureka Orienteers as course planner, and Bayside Kangaroos have very generously provided their map. Choose any of the 3 Line courses - 5 km, 4 km or 2.4 km; start any time between 2pm and 3pm, from Barkly Gardens in Richmond. Entry fee \$8 adults, \$4 juniors. [Information and Online Entry](#)

The Sunday Main Event is at Port Melbourne, a highly complex area of tiny streets, pocket parks, seaside scenery, multi-million dollar real estate, and maritime history. Course planner is Stuart McWilliam, on another beautifully prepared map by Peter Dalwood. There are five courses to select from - 7.3 km, 6.2 km, 4.7 km, 3.9 km, or 3.1 km. Each course will take you on a fascinating exploration of Port Melbourne, Garden City and Beacon Cove. Start any time between 11am and 12 noon, from Garden City Reserve in Port Melbourne. Entry fee \$12 adults, \$6 juniors. [Information and Online Entry](#)

We would STRONGLY PREFER online pre-entry and pre-payment via Eventor, for both events. Online entries close on Tuesday April 13 (11:59pm). Very limited enter on the day is possible, subject to spare maps - AND you will miss out on being in the Random Prize Draw!

Make sure you read Peter's fascinating article about mapping the City Race.

OTHER DIARY DATES

Sunday June 13 - Vic Autumn Series, Eppalock (part of Queens Birthday 3-Day weekend)

DROC will combine forces with Bendigo and Melbourne Forest Racers to present a three day feast of bush orienteering, in everyone's favourite forest. Course planner: Ian Davies.

Sunday July 4 - MelbushO, Wellington Chase

A return to granite in this beautiful outer eastern bushland reserve. Course planner: Peter Dalwood.

Sunday November 7 - Vic MTBO Series, Mt Robertson

Get your wheels ready for some mountain bike action as we return to the hills and pine forest of Mt Robertson. Course planner: Graham Wallis.

Sunday November 21 - RMIT Sprint Double

Two events in one! This campus is large and varied enough to hold two different sprint races in one action-packed day. Course planner: Peter Hobbs.

MEMBER NEWS

Haven't renewed for 2021 yet? This will be your last issue of Punchline. A final reminder will be sent to all non-financial members.

A big welcome to new members Brian Pittard and Stephen Denness, who joined the club in March; and a welcome back to Jenny Mitchell.

The biggest welcome of all goes to Finley Ryan (pictured right), Alicia and Simon's brand new son!

From Alicia:

Introducing Finley Ryan born on 15/3/21. Mum, Dad and Finley all well and enjoying being home in the newborn bubble. It's been a whirlwind of sleep deprivation, feeding and nappy changes. It might be a while before we're back at orienteering (getting out of the house at a scheduled time is a challenge right now!) but we'll be sure not to be strangers for too long.



Alicia was a regular participant at Summer Series right up until a few weeks before Finley's birth. We look forward to the day when Mabel and Finley are anchoring the DROC no 1 Relay Team - but it might be a while before they get a chance to meet, with Peter, Kristy and Mabel about to head to New Zealand for several months, to spend some quality family time. Mabel will finally be introduced to her Kiwi grandparents, while Pete hopes to fit in some Kiwi orienteering. With perfect timing, their flights are booked just a couple of days after the 2-way travel bubble opens up, meaning they can skip hotel quarantine, and launch straight into their extended holiday.

PARK STREET ORIENTEERING

SUMMER SERIES ran continuously from the start of November until the end of March, with only a brief interruption in February when 3 events were cancelled. Online pre-entry was no longer necessary after January 1, and the start window was reduced to 30 minutes, reducing the time volunteers needed to spend at events. MapRun was used successfully in all series. We completed four Melbourne based series, and another four regional series. We held the Championship Final, the Schools Competition, and an informal version of the Awards Night. All in all, a successful Summer!

DROC Series Winners:

Monday Series

A1 - Andrew Hester 2nd, Ian Davies 3rd
C1 - Rhys Eddy 1st, Andrew Perkins 2nd
C2 - Stuart McWilliam 3rd
D1 - Debbie Dodd 1st, Peter Yeates 2nd, Joel Crothers 3rd
PW2 - Ainslie Cummins 2nd, Pam King 3rd
PW3 - Peter Chen 2nd

Tuesday Series

C1 - Stuart McWilliam 3rd

Wednesday Series

C1 - Ian Dodd 1st, Andrew Perkins 2nd
C2 - Graham Wallis 3rd
C3 - Mark Besley 2nd, Stuart McWilliam 3rd
D1 - Debbie Dodd =1st, Ray Howe =1st
D2 - Dale Howe 2nd, Peter Yeates 3rd
PW2 - Peter Grover 1st, Pam King 2nd
PW3 - Ilze Yeates 1st

You can find all the event maps from Summer Series [here](#) - these are freely available for anytime use, and are all set up in MapRun.

Pictured: Ros King at Summer Series.

WINTER SERIES got underway in April, with a full program of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Geelong and Mornington Peninsula events planned. Those things that have become familiar to us all - QR code check-in, MapRun, Season and MultiPasses, and staggered start times - will all continue throughout winter, under the Park Street covid safe guidelines.

With over 130 courses submitted for MapLink last year, we decided to make use of a number of them; all Monday events will feature a 2020 MapLink course, as will some Wednesday and a few Saturday events. We're delighted to bring these maps to a wider audience, earn some recognition for the course setters, and give some of our volunteers a break!





Saturday Series features 10 Park events on colour maps, 3 EndurOs, and 9 regular street events. DROC is hosting Park events at Jells Park (31 July) and Lillydale Lake (14 August), and an EndurO on new map High Hampton (26 June). Other new DROC maps featuring in the winter fixture are Three Ways (17 July, in Noble Park), Tarralla (4 September, in Ringwood East), and Oakleigh (15 September). Our thanks to mappers Peter Grover, Peter Dalwood and Pam King, and Ian Davies.

Season Passes are on sale for the first 3 weeks; these will cover events during April-June, with a second sales period to come, but only in the series they are purchased for. For regulars, they are a huge saving of up to 30%. Our incredibly popular MultiPass10 tickets are also still on sale; while there is no discount, they are highly convenient and can be used at any Park Street event, any time of the year.

Pictured: Ian Greenwood enjoying the convenience of his MultiPass.

The MORNINGTON PENINSULA MAPRUN CHALLENGE is an extension of the new Mornington Peninsula Summer Series. Events will be held one Sunday each month:

Sun April 25, Sorrento
Sun June 27, Tootgarook
Sun August 29, Dromana
Sun October 24, Blairgowrie
Sun December 12, Martha Cove

Sun May 30, Rye
Sun July 25, Waterfall Gully (Rosebud)
Sun September 19, Rye
Sun November 21, Rosebud

All events offer a 60 minute Score event using MapRun, for Runners and Power Walkers. Starts are at 10am. Check start locations at the [Mornington Peninsula MapRun Challenge web page](#).

POLICE PADDOCKS MELBUSHO

DROC hosted the second MelBushO for 2021, at Police Paddocks in Melbourne's south east. Previously used only for schools competitions and training, this was its debut as a MelBushO venue. Carl Stemp had set the courses in 2020; a last minute discovery that softball finals would be in full swing necessitated changes, so that participants wouldn't risk being clunked on the head as they headed to the finish!

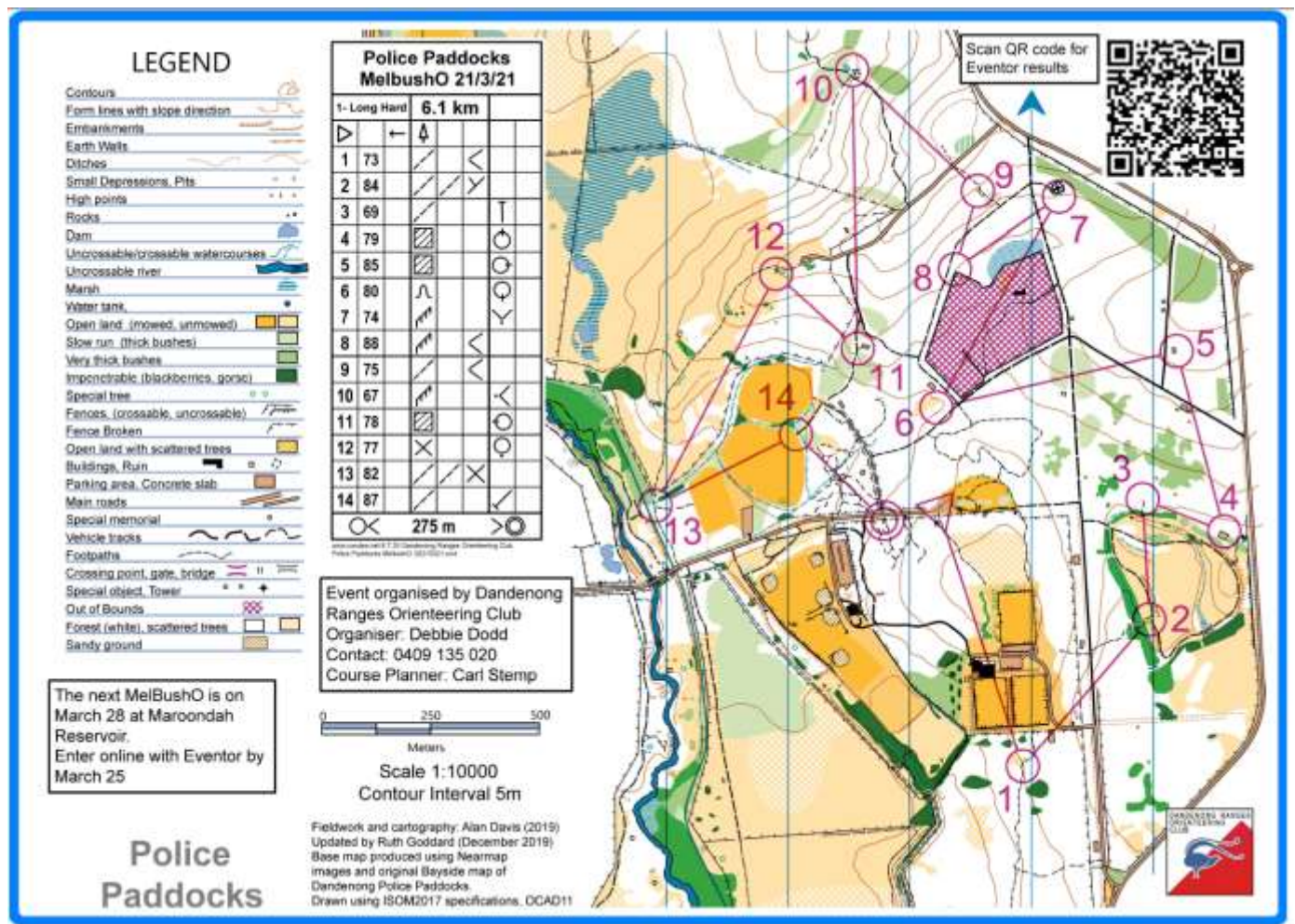
It was a drizzly day, and other weekend events saw numbers lower than hoped, but the 100 or so participants enjoyed themselves on a variety of terrain. Much of the undergrowth had dried out and died off, but consensus was still that track options were faster than going cross country. A RadiO event was held in tandem with the five bush courses.

DROC plans to use the map for future MelBushOs, training days, and possibly relays or multi format events. The first task is to update the mapping and provide more accurate vegetation boundaries - we'll do this as a club mapping training exercise later in the year.

Meanwhile, the MelBushO courses are all on MapRun; you can print off a map and use it any time. Give it a go on foot or by bike! [Look for the maps here](#)

*Pictured: Wayne Love at Police Paddocks
Next page: Course 1*





MAPPING THE 2nd MELBOURNE CITY RACE - Peter Dalwood

Following the success of the first Melbourne City Race at Docklands in 2019, DROC quickly set about working out where we could go to do it all again in 2020. After a bit of searching Port Melbourne was selected and the wheels set in motion. I agreed to look after the mapping, Stuart McWilliam volunteered to set the courses and Debbie Dodd once again took on the overall event administration role.

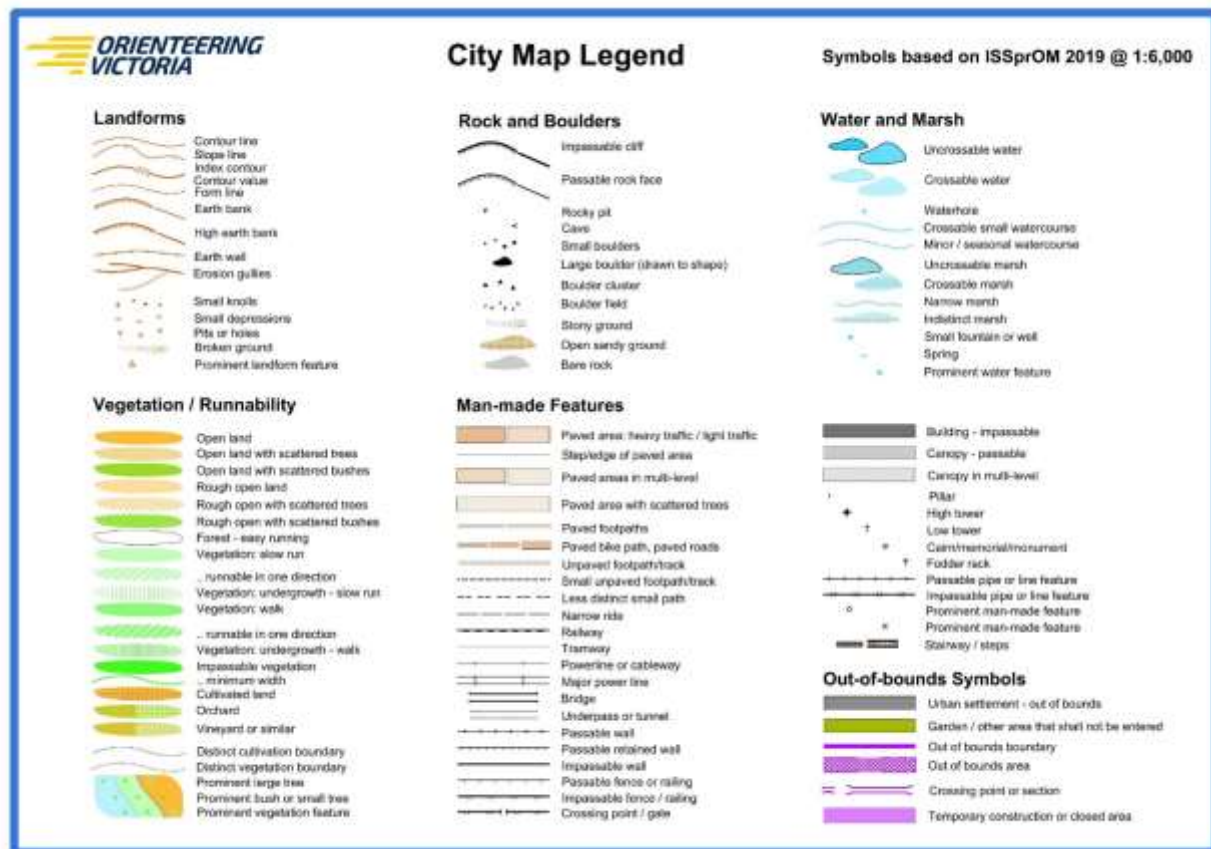
Scale and Symbols

The City Race format uses a full-colour map in sprint style, but at a scale somewhere between standard sprints (1:4000) and street orienteering (1:10,000). We played around for a while with the boundaries and how the map looked at various scales before deciding on an area that would fit on an A3 sheet at 1:6000. Once we had made that decision, I built a symbol set based on the ISSprOM 2019 (sprint) standard rescaled to 1:6000, with a few variations. The most obvious of these is the local Melbourne Street-O standard using grey for urban settlement areas.

The Tools and Base Data

We arranged through OV to get a set of NearMap geo-referenced high-resolution aerial images of the area and I extracted contour data from the MapShareVic [website](#). Bayside Kangaroos kindly gave us a copy of their existing street-O map (at 1:10,000 scale) and I also extracted data for the area from Open Street Map. With all this material in hand, I could finally get started on drawing the map.

The principal tools I use for drawing orienteering maps are OCAD v9 and whatever is the current version of Open Orienteering Mapper (OOM) at the time. For this map, the version used was 0.9.4. I swap between OCAD and OOM as I find each one has its strengths and weaknesses. Overall, I tend to use OOM most of the time while editing and go to OCAD for the things it does better. I keep the files in OCAD 9 format so they can be opened by anybody. Later versions of OCAD have different formats that not everyone is able to read.



The Map Development Process

I started by creating a map at the 1:6000 scale from the Open Street Map extract. The data is exported in a format that preserves the attributes of features like highways, urban streets, fences, sports ovals, forest, etc. OOM and Ocad both support a translation tool called a Cross Reference Table (CRT) to import this data and turn it into orienteering symbols. I've developed a CRT for OOM that turns the OSM data into a fairly good first-draft orienteering map. Note: the latest versions of OCAD have developed this process further into a 'wizard' that imports the data directly from the Open Street Map database.

Once I had the base OCAD map, I pulled in as background files all the geo-referenced Nearmap photos and the contour data. For this map the contours are nearly non-existent (if you look closely, you'll find one or two) so that process did not take long! The next task was to methodically work my way across the whole map, looking at the photos and trying to interpret what I could see into orienteering symbols. This took about 20-30 hours of work over a number of weeks.

Normally, the next task would be to visit the area and walk around on the ground, making map corrections. When I had some of the map in a reasonable state, Stuart and I did manage to visit the area once to see if our guesses were correct or not and to find other things that were not visible from the photos (ie under trees and canopies). Unfortunately, we only had one opportunity to fieldwork a part of the map before the various COVID lockdowns got in the way! So it all went on hold until we were able to get back out there.

My usual field-working process is manual. I print a copy of the map broken up into A4 pages, at twice the final map scale (in this case 1:3000), at reduced intensity - about 60% and with a 50m grid superimposed on the map. I draw my fieldwork changes on these maps, using coloured Artline 0.2mm pens and fine-pointed coloured highlighter pens. Once back home, I transfer the fieldwork changes onto the base map. The reason for double scale is simple - it stops you drawing too much detail! What you can't draw legibly will be too small to be read on the final map.

I have experimented with using Open Orienteering Mapper on an Android tablet to make the changes directly onto a copy of the map, but I find my manual process is quicker. Perhaps I'm just getting old! One advantage of using OOM in the field is that it shows you exactly where you are on the map at all times. For this reason, while I draw by hand, I still carry the Android tablet with me and refer to it when needed.

The other tool I sometimes use on the tablet is [Oribooklet](#). This useful piece of software has a pallet of O mapping symbols. You tell it which symbol you want and either record it as a point where you are currently standing or as a line as you walk around. When you get home you can upload the recorded traces into OCAD or OOM. I use this mostly in parkland areas to record vegetation boundaries, tracks through bush, significant trees and other objects, fence-lines, etc.

Setting the Courses

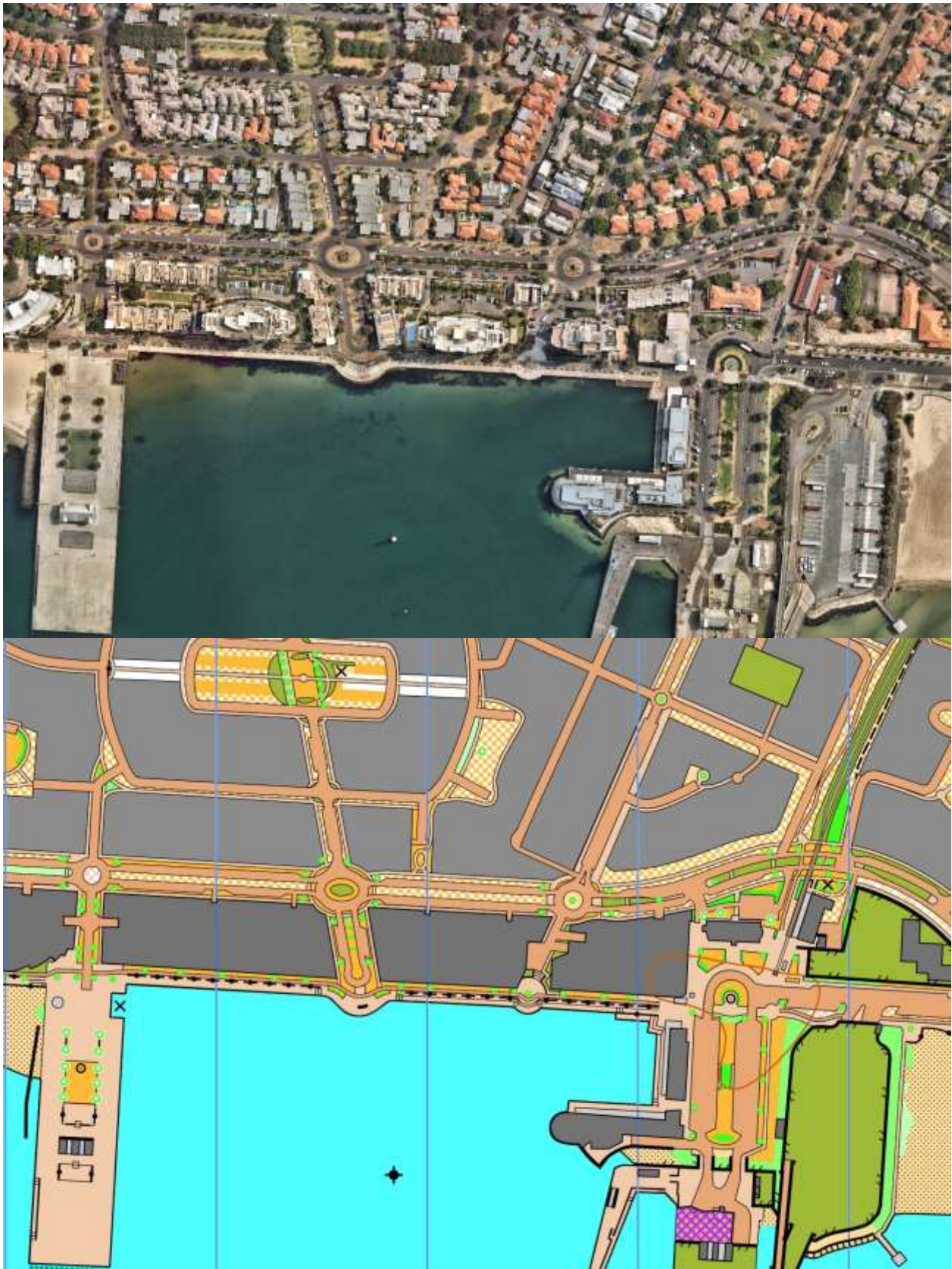
By early 2021 the map was in a reasonable enough state for Stuart to decide on control locations and work out the courses. Then, with knowledge of where the controls and the likely routes between them would be, we visited the area again and fine-tuned the map features in those areas, to ensure accuracy.

Some examples of the aerial photos and the equivalent map areas:

Public Housing Estate



Port Melbourne Foreshore



A full wrap of the 2021 Melbourne City Race will appear in the July issue of Punchline.

PARK STREET CHAMPS - MAP AND PHOTOS

Cavills Corner Wednesday 24 Feb 2021 2021 Park Street Championships FINAL

Start location: Car park corner Harold and Templeton Streets, Wantirna

Course setter: Pam King Event adviser: Peter Dalwood

Phone number for assistance: 0427 329 752 or 0428 661 1117

In an emergency, call 000

RUNNERS		POWER WALKERS 65 min	
SCATTER COURSES		SCORE COURSE	
Course	Controls	Control No	Value
A	18	1 - 5	2 points
B	16	6 - 10	3 points
C	12	11 - 15	4 points
D	8	16 - 20	5 points
E	6		

All starters must return to the finish by 8:15 pm

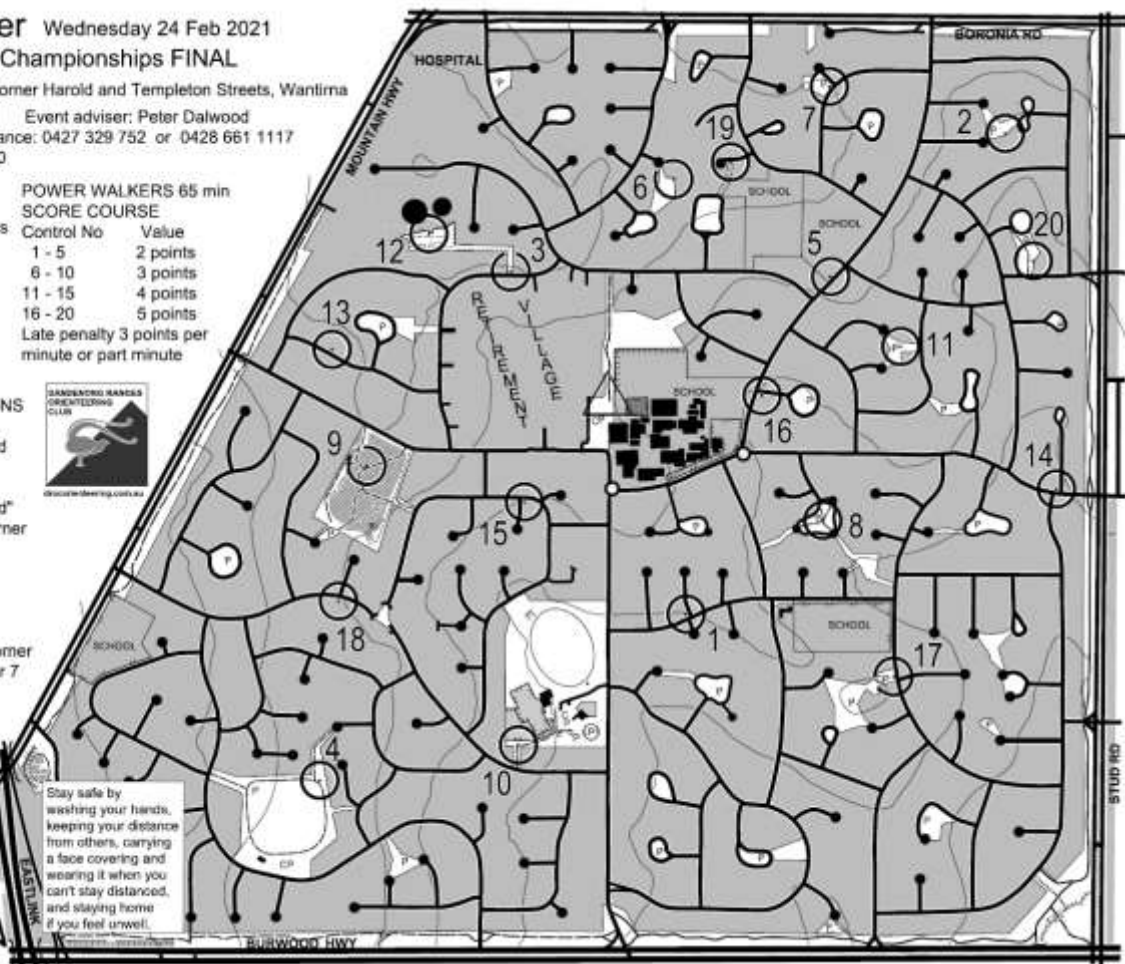
CONTROL DESCRIPTIONS

- 1 Lamp post
- 2 Fence, southern bend
- 3 Street tree
- 4 Seat
- 5 Sign "Crossing Ahead"
- 6 Fence, north east corner
- 7 Park sign
- 8 Track junction
- 9 Track junction
- 10 Track bend
- 11 Bench seat
- 12 Fence, south west corner
- 13 Lamp post @ number 7
- 14 Lamp post
- 15 Lamp post
- 16 Give Way sign
- 17 Gate, south end
- 18 Lamp post
- 19 Track end
- 20 Fence south west bend



Stay safe by washing your hands, keeping your distance from others, carrying a face covering and wearing it when you can't stay distanced, and staying home if you feel unwell.

Scale 1:10000
0 100 200 300 METRES
Contours 10 mtrs
www.vicorienteering.asn.au







PREZ SEZ - PETER HOBBS

Finally, at least for the time being, we are out of lockdown with life and orienteering returning to a new-normal. It's been great to be able to participate in proper orienteering events and ditch those masks! I trust that everyone emerged from the lockdown okay and has enjoyed the smorgasbord of orienteering on offer.

It has been a few years since we've seen much of Lanita Steer. It only seems like a year ago that we saw her shine at JWOC and regularly attending events in Victoria. Many of you may recall Lanita left Victoria to pursue an exciting opportunity in South Australia. But where in South Australia? And what was the opportunity? What is she up to orienteering-wise? Lanita kindly agreed to a question-and-answer session to tell us a bit about what she has been up to.

PH: It's been a few years since you moved to SA, which area are you in and what are you up to?

LS: Yes, it's been 3 years in April since I moved to SA - time has flown! I originally moved as part of the Elders Graduate Agronomy program and since then I have landed a full-time role with the Elders Barmera branch January 2020. My first 6 months were at Roseworthy and my second at Barmera, which is where I have stayed since. The Barmera township is part of the region called the Riverland, surrounded by the River Murray, upon which all the agriculture is based. We're very close to the area where Aus Champs 2018 was at Murtho.

Life is going well too. My partner Mat and I live on an old stonefruit orchard in Glossop with our cat Maisie. He also works as an agronomist on a citrus orchard - so yes, our conversations are mostly about plants! 😊

PH: You work in the agriculture field, specifically agronomy, what does that involve?

LS: Agronomy is the study of crop production so as an agronomist I advise farmers on soil management, plant nutrition and pest and disease management. There are two areas for agronomy in agriculture- one is broad-acre (annual crops of wheat, barley, canola etc) and the other is horticulture (vegetables, apples, citrus, nut crops etc). I work with the horticultural crops of wine grapes, citrus and almonds here in the Riverland. Wine grapes straight off the vine are delicious! Cab Sav and Gordos would be my favourites.

PH: How does the SA orienteering scene compare to VIC?

LS: The number of events are far fewer here, especially living where we do. It's about 2.5 hours to most of the orienteering maps in Adelaide so we go probably once a month. There are fewer members in OSA overall however they have a great junior/schools program. So far I think my favourite SA orienteering map would have to be Crooked Straight (luckily it's pretty much in our backyard!)

PH: What does your typical weekly fitness training program look like?

LS: When the weather is cooler I try and get out 5 days a week, however in summer that is a bit different (on the treadmill with the air con cranked up). Hills are few and far between so we make the most of the hill in the Berri township and also get out to Parkrun along the riverfront in Renmark on Saturday mornings. During the week we run from home with our 'lap of the block' being an exact 5km.

There's not a big running fraternity in the Riverland but the camaraderie of Parkrun is great for keeping motivation up. Social tennis is a good bit of alternative training, although my backhand still needs some work!

PH: Did Covid19 restrictions extend to where you live/work?

LS: Yes and no. The agricultural industry was seen as an essential service so Mat and I both kept working through the whole thing. The practices in-store at work definitely changed with less face to face meetings and a lot more deliveries. Funnily, March last year was the busiest ever as everyone was panic buying fertiliser and chemicals! Even though we weren't locked down I still managed to find my COVID hobby - indoor plants! Our house has very good oxygen now at least.

PH: What do you miss about home?

LS: Family! Both my immediate and my orienteering family. Not being able to travel back home during the Victorian lockdown was especially hard, but there were many families in the same boat. Thank goodness for FaceTime!

I also miss street orienteering - the racing, the people and the banter. It was great having a big group to train with despite all running different courses and different directions.

If anyone is interested in having another go at the maps from Aus Champs 2018, the ANZAC day long weekend is your chance! Weila, Crooked Straight and the Renmark schools maps will all be used. Please come and visit! ☺

We also caught up with Lanita at the Easter 3-Day, running in SA Arrows colours as part of their NOL team, where she finished 5th in the Prologue Sprint, less than 50 seconds behind the winner. Lanita is the course planner for the Renmark Schools Sprint on April 26, and a contingent of DROC members will be heading across the border for the three Anzac weekend races.

CATCHING UP WITH SARAH - by Ian Davies

Some of you may realise that Sarah has been absent from events recently. This is because she has joined the army. She is currently at Kapooka near Wagga doing her basic training, which is a 12 week course that army, navy and air force personnel go through. The training is 'full on' drill, obstacle courses, military history & law, first aid, field exercises, navigation (I'll bet she's looking forward to that), marksmanship, using radios & night vision, being tear gassed, and how to throw grenades (no kidding). Her days run from dawn till after dusk and she gets to use her phone (whilst standing at attention) for a few minutes after church on Sundays and just occasionally during the week if things go well. As her dad it is my job to write weekly, and to keep up interest I occasionally do something a bit unusual.

Those of you who were at the recent Committee meeting may remember me organising a group photograph. The concept behind this was that Sarah has had a habit of 'borrowing' my orienteering gear and it was an opportunity to return the complement by wearing her 'Vic' shirt.



Her reply arrived yesterday, to paraphrase:

Dear Dad,

As soon as I arrived back to our lines (my room) I saw I had a letter from you. I knew what was up as soon as I saw the photo.

THAT'S MY SHIRT

Honestly the photo made me smile so much and I had a great time telling the girls in my room the context. My friend said you look great in the shirt by the way. Please keep the letters coming and photos too, they give me a big boost and help me get through these long days. Love Sarah

Thanks to everyone for your help, I'm already planning the next one.

AUSTRALIAN EASTER 3 DAY CHAMPIONSHIP, ORANGE, NSW

A year ago, the Easter 3-Day orienteering carnival was cancelled, along with all other orienteering events, due to Covid. Organisers rolled over everyone's entries, and shifted the dates to 2021. After that, they (and we) spent months living in optimistic hope.

Despite lockdowns, border closures, restrictions, floods, rampant vegetation growth and last minute changes to parking areas, they pulled it off. Almost 1000 orienteers from all over Australia were able to travel to Orange (including Queenslanders, who were on tenterhooks right up until the day before), and compete in perfect Autumn weather.

DROC was represented by Debbie Dodd, Peter and Ilze Yeates, Simon Rouse, Asha Steer (running for the Victorian NOL team), Mark Besley, the Meyer family, Stuart McWilliam, and the Love family. We were joined by 100 other Victorians, hoping we'd be permitted to stay in NSW for the duration of the Carnival, which included additional events over the following week. We were ready to dash for the border at any time if we had to.

Good Friday was the Sprint, at the CSU Campus in Orange. We were all so busy catching up with long-lost friends and rivals, that we almost forgot to race! The conversation flowed as we watched the Elite Prologue, then lined up for our turn. The midafternoon sun beat down, and we faced a hillside campus. The courses weren't particularly hard, with straightforward legs and not much route choice, but they tested our fitness, and it was good to be back out there in a national competition for the first time in over a year. We were very excited to see our Victorian teams doing so well, with Aston, Patrick and Brodie dominating the Mens Elite, and juniors Callum, Milla and Sophie really stepping up onto the big stage. Best placed DROC members were Simon Rouse (3rd) and James Love (4th); most of us finished our courses in respectable midfield positions.

On to the first of three days of bush competition, held on highly technical terrain (ie tons of rocks) near Molong. The first day was a small area along a spur, where the rock ran in very defined narrow lines. The DROC flag was ceremonially raised beside the finish chute for the first time since early 2020. There was a scramble up into the rocks at the start, and down out of them at the finish, while the courses zigzagged their way frenetically amongst a tumble of cliffs and boulders. In my first go at technical terrain in well over 2 years, I spent 14 minutes hunting in desperate circles for my first control; by no 3 I'd figured out the rock lines, and things fell into place after that. The hardest thing was disentangling the red lines on the map, as we constantly changed direction on a multitude of short legs. This was true Middle Distance style orienteering, and something of a wake-up call for those of us whose navigation skills had become rather rusty. While Sarah Love was the only club member in the placings (2nd), most of us were quietly satisfied with our personal performances, given the difficulty of the event.



Little did we know what lay in store ...

Usually in a 3 day, distances are shorter than for a single day event, and expected winning times are faster. Someone failed to tell that to the course planner and event advisor, who based the winning kilometre rate on a time from 15 years ago, when there was a lot less vegetation. The map for the final two days, called The Gumble Pinnacles, has never been used for a major competition. We know why ... the contours are indistinct, the rock is seriously undermapped, and the vegetation is horrible. There was little else to go on but bearings, and I clung to mine like a limpet, refusing to be pushed off my line by anything, no matter how green. You couldn't identify individual rocks, or navigate by the contours except in a very general sense. Line features like watercourses and fences helped, but tracks were very

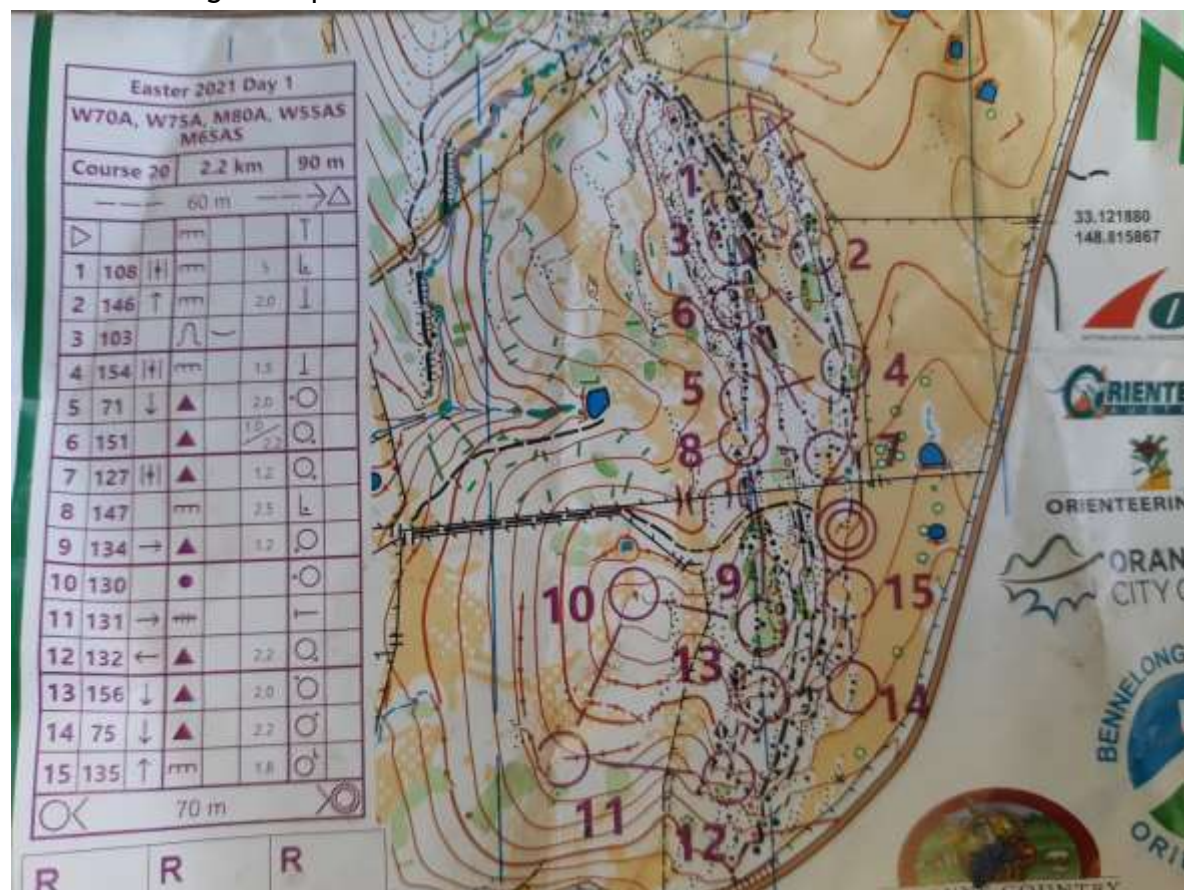
indistinct and prone to disappearing without warning. As a result, winning times blew out well beyond expectations, and with water not being provided on most courses, competitors were unprepared for such a tough day out. The attrition rate was high, meaning the 3 day competition was now over for many. Just finishing was an achievement in itself - and I was pretty happy with my midfield place, after minimal errors. My technique - painfully slow and steady - worked. Others had horror stories of taking up to an hour on a single control. First controls on most courses were particularly difficult with no attack points or catching features to speak of. It was later billed as the toughest Easter event in memory, to be spoken of in hushed tones and with shudders.

DROC survivors were Will, Ava and Glenn; Simon (in a very strong 4th in a field full of former elites); Wayne and Sarah; Stuart, Pete, and me. Asha toughed out the incredibly long, hard Womens Elite course for 5th, where a third did not finish, and only one competitor managed a time of under 2 hours.

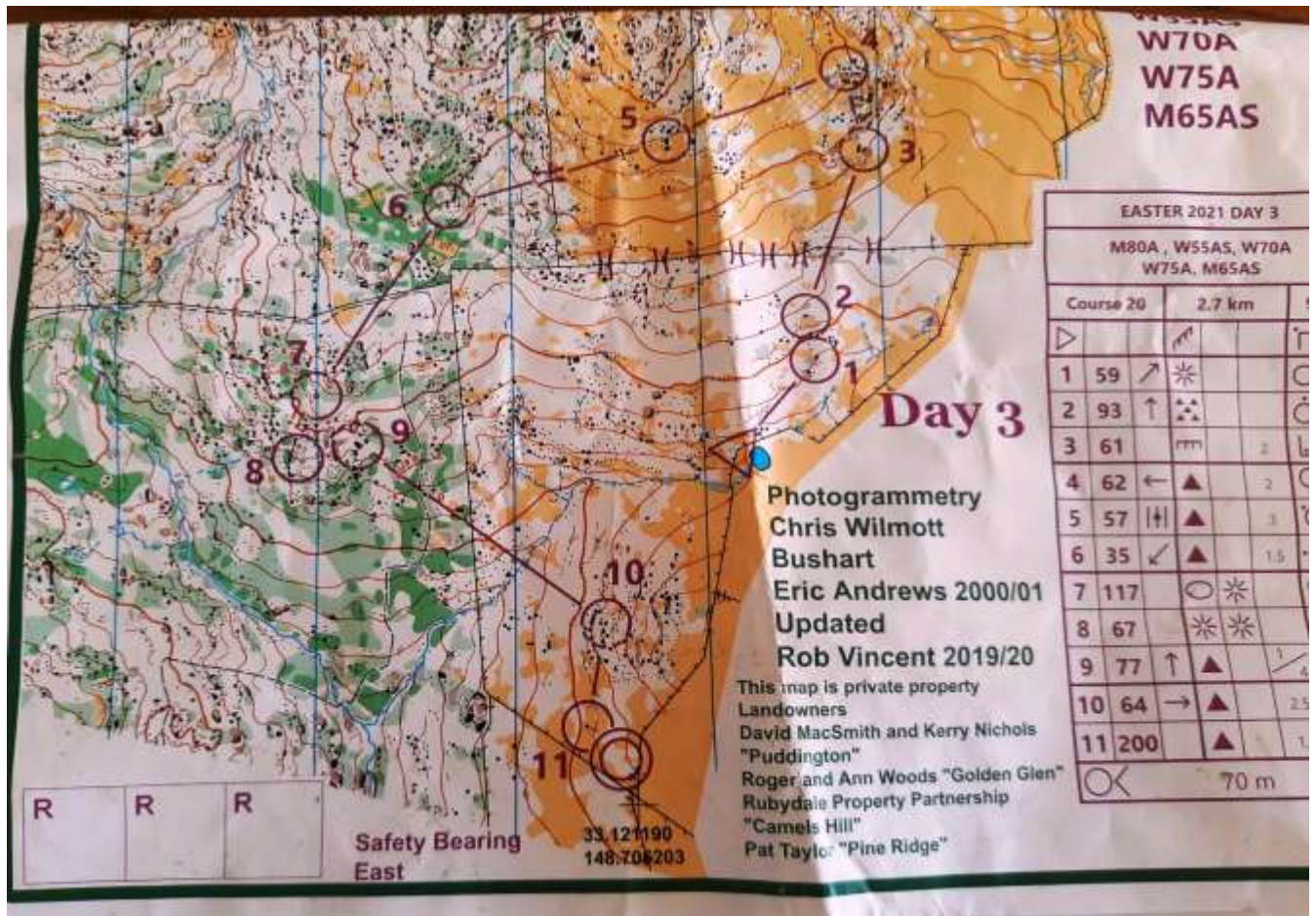
On to the final day and back to the Gumbles. We sat in the arena shaking in fear and trepidation. Word came back that the first half was in open farmland with scattered forest and rocky outcrops. Much more pleasant! After enjoying ourselves on this much more fun terrain, at some point we all had to cross over a fence, and plunge back into the Forest of Doom. Everyone's pace plummeted back to a crawl as we dealt with more unreadable rocks, more impenetrable vegetation, and more gigantic spider webs. It was arduous going once again, and such a relief to finally emerge back into the open, scramble up the final hill, and into the finish, knowing that you'd survived intact! Asha had a fantastic result for third in Womens Elite, her best result for the competition. Wayne also had his best performance of the week with third, and Simon remained strong and consistent in 4th. Seven of us crossed the line without a mispunch or DNF over the three days - Sarah (4th overall), Simon (5th overall), Ava (5th overall), Glenn (6th overall), Debbie (13th overall), Pete (14th overall), and Stuart (22nd overall). Everyone could be proud of their achievements regardless of where, or whether, they finished. There have never been so many DNFs at an Easter 3-Day, so those who scored on were in good company.

Some of us stayed on for the additional events in and around Orange and Eugowra. We had a wonderful time socializing over dinners and drinks, celebrating birthdays, sightseeing, discussing maps and courses endlessly, watching newborn lambs from our verandah, which overlooked orchards and vineyards; and just Being There. Despite the hardship out on the course, I thoroughly enjoyed myself and was really pleased with my ability to cope in such tough conditions.

Easter 2022? Sign me up!



Day 1 map at Noahs Ark Ridge. My head was spinning reading this map.



Above: The Gumbles, final day - the first half was fun; the second half not so much
Below: Newborn twins; Daaaarth Vader bidding us farewell





Top: Ilze, Pete
Middle: Asha at the Sprint
Bottom: Debbie finishing





Top: Ava completes all three days
 Middle: Sammy, James
 Bottom: Noahs Ark Ridge. So good to be back amongst it!



DROC SHOP

The DROC Shop is open for business, and ready to get you kitted out for 2021 and beyond! We sell Sportident sticks (including SI Air sticks for those who want to speed up their race), Pro-Tech gaiters, fingerbands, and Silva headbands. [Prices can be found here](mailto:droc@iinet.net.au). 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.

DROC OUT AND ABOUT - club members enjoying the chance to compete at Sprint and Bush events during 2021



