

# Bendigo Orienteers

Newsletter July / 2023



Above: Assembly at Virginia Hill 1<sup>st</sup> July.

Photo: Jenny Ball

A number of events have been held since the last newsletter. On 17<sup>th</sup> June, Ted van Geldermalsen set some terrific courses on the Kangaroo Gully map. Ted used the typical bushland with eroded gullies and old gold mining features to make a great day for all. Lorraine Leversha and Nola Juniper set the One Tree Hill event on 24<sup>th</sup> June and although it rained for some of the time everyone enjoyed the challenging courses. On 1<sup>st</sup> July Ricky Thackery produced long sprint type courses on Virginia Hill (near Eaglehawk). Ricky had a lot of controls set in a tight area comprising old gold mining areas mixed with new housing areas to make excellent orienteering courses (see above photo). On 8<sup>th</sup> July the Mahers Bar Cup returned and was set by Neil Barr. This event was a one hour score type and with everyone finishing close to each other, the day provided the opportunity for competitors to have a social chat with cakes etc. Thank you to those people who set the courses, helped to collect controls and/or organised the above events.

*NOTE: Helpers are always required at club events, especially at the end when controls have to be collected (if each member helps out at 4 events for the year it makes life much easy).*

## Coming events

Our events for this year are listed on Eventor. Please also enter via Eventor.

15 July ... Fiddlers Green (Whipstick NW). Setter: Julie Flynn

24 June ... Smiths Reef (near Maldon). Setter: Daryl Fleay.

1 July ... Lyell forest. Setter: Colin Walker

8 July ... Diamond Hill Sth. Setter: Heather Jones

15 July ... Diamond Hill Nth. Setter: Michael Loughnan

## Membership for 2023

Your 2023 membership fee can be paid via Eventor. This year 2023 our membership fee has been reduced to \$35 to encourage more people to join.

Please [update your contact details when re-joining](#). Currently we have 88 members.

## Labour Day Weekend Orienteering Event – Flinders Ranges

By Peter and Dianne Searle

Three days of competition in the Flinders Ranges attracted around 150 orienteers mainly from Victoria and South Australia. Dianne and Peter Searle, together with Bendigo event devotees Ted van Geldermalsen (YV), Dale, Wendy and Sophie Taverna (CHOC), Rod Gray (EU) and Warwick Davis (NE) made up the bulk of the Victorian contingent. The Flinders Ranges suffered heavy rain in the week prior to the event, causing some roads within the National Park to be closed. Luckily the weekend weather was fine and almost warm!



The Saturday event consisted of eight courses on the Rawnsley map conveniently located adjacent to the Rawnsley Park Caravan Park where most people were staying. The mostly spur/gully map was covered in sparse tree cover of native pine with magnificent ancient red gums in the broad creek gullies. Most successful on the day

was Sophie Taverna with first placing in the Women 2 course. For those on the longer courses who needed a convenience stop, a unique, but somewhat odorous control – ‘Dump Point, North Side’ - was located in the caravan park. See photo below.

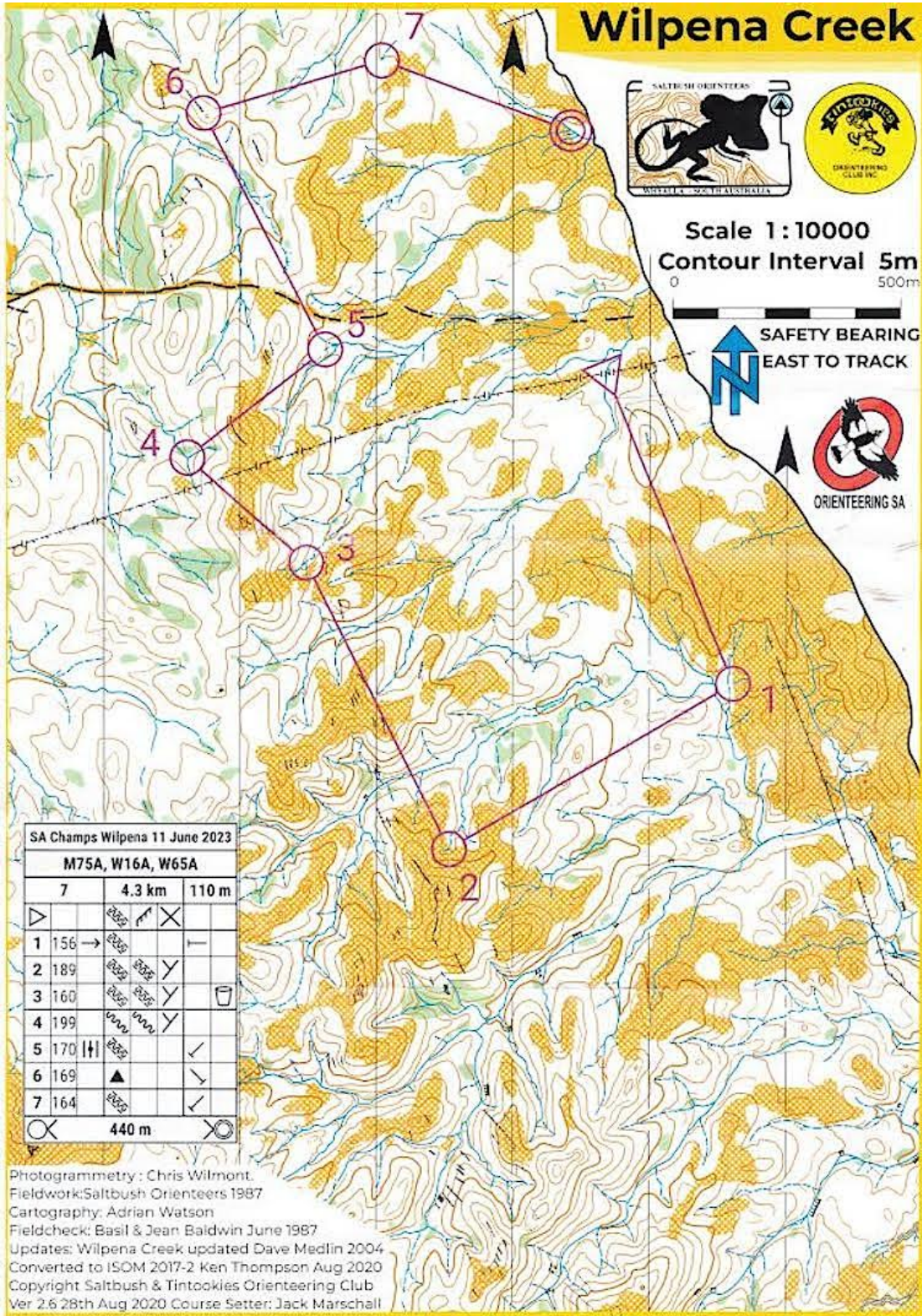


Day 2 was the 2023 South Australian Long Championships using the complex Wilpena Spurs/Creek map. A feature of the mapped area is the complex network of small gullies and watercourses, with light tree cover and very little undergrowth to slow progress. Ted van Geldermalsen was the most successful with 1<sup>st</sup> in M65A, with Rod Gray (3<sup>rd</sup>) and Warwick Davis (9<sup>th</sup>). Sophie Taverna placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in W20A. Unfortunately, 6 courses had to be cancelled on the day owing to a control error – correctly placed but with the incorrect code number. Organizers decided to retrieve the situation by using courses in the Monday event as Championship courses for those affected.

The final event of the long weekend used the Manawarra map that had similar features to the day before, but with shorter course lengths. Of those affected by the cancelled courses the previous day, Dianne Searle placed first in W75A and Peter Searle 4<sup>th</sup> in M75A. Other placings were Ted van Geldermalsen (2<sup>nd</sup> M65A), Warwick Davis (5<sup>th</sup> M65A) and Rod Gray (2<sup>nd</sup> M65A). A significant feature of the day was the use of an EV (electric vehicle) to power the computers used on site. Perhaps a first in Australian orienteering and a portent of things to come?



# Wilpena Creek



SA Champs Wilpena 11 June 2023  
M75A, W16A, W65A

	7	4.3 km	110 m
1	156 →	2000 ↗	—
2	189 ↘	2000 ↘	—
3	160 ↘	2000 ↘	—
4	199 ↘	www ↘	—
5	170 ↘	2000 ↘	—
6	169 ↘	▲	—
7	164 ↘	2000 ↘	—

440 m

Photogrammetry: Chris Wilmont  
 Fieldwork: Saltbush Orienteers 1987  
 Cartography: Adrian Watson  
 Fieldcheck: Basil & Jean Baldwin June 1987  
 Updates: Wilpena Creek updated Dave Medlin 2004  
 Converted to ISOM 2017-2 Ken Thompson Aug 2020  
 Copyright Saltbush & Tintookies Orienteering Club  
 Ver 2.6 28th Aug 2020 Course Setter: Jack Marschall



Start for Day 2 Flinders Ranges.

## Bendigo 2023 committee:

President: Neil Barr    Vice President: Julie Flynn    Treasurer: Craig Feuerherdt  
Secretary: Ross Slater    Members: John Wilkinson, Nola Juniper.

### **From the Accidental President - Organising simpler events. By Neil Barr.**

When you have been around for quite a few years you have the benefit of history to understand the present, but more often one is likely to forget the past. I was reminded of the history of our local events whilst organizing the Mahers Barr Cup last weekend. I first organised an orienteering event in the early 1990s. The event was on Wildflower Drive, one of the five maps owned by the club. There were four courses. Controls were punches and kites hung on trees. These were all placed in the forest on Saturday morning. Runners marked up their own maps, timed themselves using the clock on the event table and checked their own punch marks on their control cards. Unsurprisingly there were very few mispunches. Results were typed up afterwards by the organiser and sent to the newsletter editor. This was one of about 20 local events organised per year – four on each map.

The event format looks simple in retrospect, but I still remember feeling stressed and a little confused by the experience. The map I was given to use had two map changes marked on it with little crosses – called John Chellev's Graves. Who was this "John Chellev" and why was he buried in two places? I dared not ask as the answer was probably too gruesome. Only later did I realise that these were markers placed in the forest by John to provide additional control sites for an earlier event.

Over the intervening three decades the local event structure has changed significantly.

- At my urging the club purchased a copy of OCAD5 which was used to create our first digital orienteering maps. The first two were Whites Ruins and Longlea. It was wonderful how the software allowed us to add more and more maps to the local catalogue (well over 40 today). But this also meant we were now using ConDes to course set, rather than hand drawing courses on master maps.
- I ran the first local event using SI technology. The map chosen was Ironstone Hill. It wasn't an auspicious choice as two control boxes and stands were stolen. Despite the theft, the club soon adopted electronic timing for our local events. Digital time keeping did away with the manual timekeeping complexities at large events, but for our local events it meant another software tool for organisers to learn (OE) and required the placement of stands and locks together with the usual kites. This meant it took longer to put out and to collect and pack the controls. Computers need shelter, so we purchased a larger more solid tent. And next we needed a trailer to carry the gear.
- In our enthusiasm for local orienteering, the club increased the number of courses from 4 to 5 and extended the event season to a peak of 36 or so events – every week.

These changes to our local events meant we had possibly the premier event fixture in the country, with lots of events, a stable of high-quality maps, quite a few experienced course setters and full electronic timing. In the years immediately before the pandemic three out of every four bush orienteering events in Victoria were organised by Bendigo Orienteers. In response we found ourselves catering to a much wider market than in the 1990s. Last year entries by orienteers living in the Bendigo and Castlemaine region were outnumbered by entrants living further afield. Whilst we had been expanding our bush orienteering program, Melbourne clubs had been contracting the bush orienteering fixture in favour of street and sprint orienteering.

So far it all sounds rosy, but two matters have become more pressing in the last couple of years. The evolution of our events has increased the complexity of organizing them. Only the most skilled, fit and organised can manage to put out controls on Saturday morning. Only a few people are willing to learn how to set up and run the software. Not everyone has a tow bar and can pull the trailer. Some innovations have helped reduce the workload – the most notable being the introduction of Eventor at the instigation of Craig Feurherdt, and Jim Russell's map printing service. But running a full event remains more complex than it once was. In an effort to reduce workload for event organisers, we started trying to roster an extra person to set up and run the computer. This only partially solved the problem as the pressure shifted to finding a computer volunteer. There are only three regular volunteers for this role, and in the lead up to some events none has been available. Some have also started to exhibit frustration at being tied to the machine.

The second trend is the inexorable demographic transition. In the 1990s the regular club organisers were mostly aged between 40 and 60. Today, most are

aged over 60. The rate of recruitment to active volunteering has not matched age-related exit from these roles. This is not a situation unique to Bendigo Orienteers. Many sporting clubs and voluntary organisations are struggling with the same challenge, and it has been exacerbated by the covid lockdowns. There is an old saying that the definition of stupid is to keep doing the same thing when you know it has stopped working. For the past 20 years the club has operated a demand-driven fixture. We have set the fixture based on how many events we think our members want to enter, and then set about trying to find the volunteers to run the events. Next year we will shift to a supply-driven fixture – how many events do the club members wish to organise (supply)? There will be three levels of event:

- Feature events with experienced setters, full electronic timing, live results. There will only be one next year – The Bendigo To-Day, hopefully using a new map of world class granite terrain.
- Bendigo Series events. These will look like the current Bendigo Bush events, with experienced organiser/course setters, SI and computer timing, and Livelox. These will be on the best maps available (technical, up-to-date and mostly compliant with the latest mapping specification). These will be of an equivalent standard to State Series events, but will be on Saturday and without a toilet. The target market is both Bendigo and Melbourne orienteers. There will be between 8 and 10 in the season.
- Bendigo Basic events. These events are much more flexible. Organisers (who also course set) can choose the level of complexity- just kites in the field, SI boxes and SIME timing (no computer), MapRun timing by phone, or even upgrading to a Bendigo Series standard if the organiser wants that to happen. There may not be results on eventor. One person should be able to organise these events without the need for a computer or trailer to tow. There will be 10-12 slots in the fixture. If there is no organiser, the club will cancel the event rather than try to talk someone into taking on the job. These events will still be Pre-entry via Eventor with a flat entry fee of \$5.

The empirically-minded will have noticed that these events total in the low 20s rather than the recent peak of 36. The committee has decided to constrain the events on the fixture by avoiding scheduling on weekends where there is a nearby Vic Series event or rogaine. We will encourage members to attend those events run by other clubs. We will also not be putting up our hand to organise a Vic Series event in 2024, though we won't object if one of a Saturday Bendigo Series events is designated as also a Vic Series.

All this leads back to my reflections on the Mahers Barr Cup last weekend. As the organiser I found the experience to be stress-free. There was no computer or trailer. Most controls (only 15) were placed Saturday morning with lots of time left over. Most attendees were Bendigo locals, so the numbers were low, but because the event was a mass start, we also had a mass finish. This meant most runners hung around for a while to chat and to eat Mars Bars and biscuits. It also meant the event was over much earlier and there were volunteers to collect controls. Sadly, few got to attack the cake delivered by the Jones household, but we can do better on that next time. I get a lot of satisfaction organizing higher

quality Bendigo Series events, but I really enjoyed the lower stress option. So if you have been wondering if you could organise an event for the club but were too intimidated by the complexity, next year you will have a chance to choose the level of complexity with which you feel comfortable. Give it a go. And think about making your event a mass start. It is a much more convivial experience.

**Send in reports / articles.**

Please forward any articles for the newsletter to John Wilkinson, [johnwbmw@gmail.com](mailto:johnwbmw@gmail.com) as Word documents, and photos separate as JPG's.

**END**