



08 Newsletter

October 2025

Welcome to the October Newsletter

This newsletter is a little later than normal, but as usual is jam-packed with information. As 2025 bush events have now finished, it will also serve as the final newsletter for the year.

With 2026 in mind Neil Barr has done a masterful job in putting together next years fixture list, following on from the fixture survey – also analysed by Neil. See both documents at the end of the newsletter.

We also have reports from the Vic Relays, Australian Championships and the final club event of the year at Whipstick Forest.

James Roberstson has given us a bird's eye view of his time competing at the 2025 World MTBO Championships in Poland.

Dianne and Peter

2025 Vic Relays – Jenny Ball

Thank you to the 14 Bendigo members who participated in the Vic club relays at Mt Lofty on Sunday 14th of September and to Prue who organised the teams. It was a great opportunity to represent our club. Weather conditions were ideal and Jim set quality courses in a scenic area of open spur gully terrain. The start area was a hub of activity. Clubs set up tents and banners to gather together in what was a very social, fun event. Because of the staggered starts we were able to mix and mingle before or after our runs. It was great to chat with fellow orienteers from Bendigo as well as other clubs. Young orienteers cooked sausages and had sweet treats for sale. Jim placed two spectator controls close by and the finish chute was organised so runners could be cheered on to the end.

Looking to the year ahead Julie Flynn outlines the use of the defibrillator purchased by the club in September.

And finally, don't forget the end of season social get-together at the National Hotel in November.

End of Season Social Event

All members are welcome to a social night on Tuesday, November 13, 6.00pm at the National Hotel, High Street Bendigo. Pay just \$10 for your main meal – the club will cover the remaining cost. Members pay for drinks and dessert.



Jen, Phil & Katherine – Course 3 winners

We entered 4 complete teams, one in each of courses 1,2,3 and 4. In addition Stanley competed with two others from Red Roos in course 4 and Craig W joined with ARDF in a mixed courses team. All teams went well. Congratulations Phil, Katherine and Jen -Course 3 winners and Alicia, Amy and Patrick- Course 4 victors. Our course 1 team of James, Michael T and David B came 4th. Our course 2 team of Keely, Nigel and Tony were placed 10th out of 15 teams in a close competition. Stanley and the Red Roos came 2nd and Craig and the ARDF team came 3rd.

The Whipstick Twilight O event – John Wilkinson

The last Bendigo O event for 2025 was held as a twilight score event in the Whipstick Forest on 11th October.

Organised by John Wilkinson and Jenny Ball, the event attracted 30 entrants in near perfect conditions.

Two classes were provided - 90 min and 60 min. The 90 min competitors started first followed by the 60 min competitors 5 min later.

This allowed most competitors to finish close together and socialise at the end of the event (sunset).

The idea was to get as many control points as you could in the time allowed. You were penalised if you arrived back late.

About half the competitors headed off to the west, while half headed east. Control sites were chosen to provide points of interest in the forest which has lots of old mining features.

The first back in the 90 min class was Ben Goonan followed very closely by his brother Richard, then Craig Feuerherdt. Six competitors managed to visit all 20 controls - well done!

Don Cherry was fastest in the one-hour course getting 17 controls. Well done to everyone who competed.

It was a very enjoyable night as the forest contained many wildflowers - not that you had a lot of time to see them. Sunset is always a good time in the forest.

Cake, cookies and chocolates were provided at the finish thanks to Julie Flynn and Jenny Ball.

Thanks to Lorraine Leversha and Nola Juniper for helping to pack up on Saturday night. Thanks also to Neil Barr, John W and Jenny B for picking up controls on Sunday morning.

Well done to everybody.

John W.



Amy, Patrick & Alicia – Course 4 winners

It was a very enjoyable day. Jim was very pleased to have 46 teams competing compared to 35 last year. Hopefully next year we can improve that even further. Thanks Jim and the VIC Vikings for organising such a wonderful event.



Jim in full flight at Vic Relays



Whipstick wildflowers

Photo: J Wilkinson

2025 World MTBO Champs, Poland - James Robinson

A trip to Poland for something a little different: World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships

Back at the very end of July, all four members of the family set off to Europe to visit the rapidly not-so-little cousins and finally put an end to the slightly manic block of cycling training that was attempting to make the best of what had been a relatively productive summer of running in the lead-up to Easter.

We landed in Birmingham on a sunny Friday about lunchtime. Despite it only being about 20 degrees, jeans were in fact not the correct choice. Within 400 metres of the terminal, I was dripping. In the four short days that I was in England, before I set out alone, Stanley did his first Parkrun, picked lots of blackberries for crumble, and an ill-fated attempt at going for a run without a phone or a map got a little out of hand. On another of those days, I went for a lovely attempted ride along the Vale of Berkeley, which it turns out is a no-bikes-permitted deer reserve. The ride wasn't a complete right-off though, as I still made it to Berkeley and the castle and back just before it got properly dark. No thanks to the cows though, that really seemed to want to be my friend.

At the end of all that, I said goodbye to Jayne and the children at a train station and headed for Heathrow and the flight to Warsaw.

The next morning, having met up with the rest of the team (Will, Maya, Miriam (Will's mum, the manager)), we headed into the middle of the city to pick up the biggest van that Enterprise had in Warsaw. On the way, as we passed through the Charles de Gaulle roundabout, which is home to a slightly absurd plastic but very much lifelike palm tree, we came across the locals heading to the Warsaw uprising protest. After collecting the van and heading back to the house, the bikes came out and headed for the nearest map without Will (hill training day). The area was a lovely open pine and oak forest atop gentle and rolling (flat) sand dunes.

The next day, the plan was to start on the maps and courses from the Polish Championships a couple of months earlier. Maya's dad (Gavin) met us at the sprint/relay map, and Will went off to train with the Polish team elsewhere. The day was rounded out with a gentle ride to the Vistula River.

By this point, we were up to Friday. The morning was taken up with doing the middle distance course, followed by an easy afternoon and dinner at the local fancy restaurant (we did not get the reminder that Polish people really dress up for dinner out. This also only became apparent to me in another week). By Saturday, we started getting onto the official training maps, started seeing glimpses of other athletes out in the forest, and really started finding some bigger sandpits to get our bikes stuck in. Sunday and Monday, right before the races kicked off for the week, involved a lot of looking at recent old maps that hadn't been published by the organisers and the not-very-well-hidden bits of map in the bulletin (including nearly the whole new sprint map, just a touch of drama).

Now on to the racing.

WMTBOC kicked off with a sprint race in the forest adjacent to the military university and an air force base. I myself was a little nervous about what was to come but seemed to be doing relatively okay with very few mistakes until it all went horribly wrong and I skipped a control. Three controls later I realised and went back around, losing three seconds in the process. The course twice made use of the winding single track in the south of the map, with a map flip around a third of the way through. Maya and Will didn't have the greatest day, with Maya taking the senior map instead of the junior one and crashing, and Will just plain missing a control. Not the greatest start. Maya was very disappointed after coming fourth last year and it being her target race. The opening ceremony after the race almost officially opened the Championships, but they seemed to forget after the lovely memorial to Mattia Debertolis following the fateful race at the World Games in Chengdu.



Will, James and Maya

The sprint was followed by the middle. For myself, that meant 35 controls, the latter portion of which involved crisscrossing a large dune on a track network so dense it was hard to read the map. It didn't start well with a poor but direct route choice on the first control, losing me a bit of time, but I managed to keep my head and have a relatively clean ride until the last control. You see, we hadn't gone to look at the finish setup, and it was a little odd. That, coupled with the last control not punching on the first attempt and having to go back, lost me about 40 seconds in 200 metres. Oops. The Finns nearly managed a clean sweep of all the podiums, seeming quite well suited to the complex area.

For the mass start the following day, there was a grid start with rows of eight. I was in row 11. That aside, I stuck with the rear group for a while before heading out into the loops. Aside from one particularly bad moment of map reading where I ended up at the bottom of a dune rather than the top, it was a fairly uneventful, albeit long, race for me and yielded my best individual result of the week (although that was helped a little by one of the Finns crashing and a few of the favourites abandoning to help). Jayne, the children, and Grandma had arrived in Warsaw by this point and attempted to get out to the hot and slightly desolate old airfield where the race was, but after being on various buses for two and a half hours, they just missed me finishing.



James in Polish undergrowth

Thankfully, by this point in the week, and just in time for the hottest day, a rest day was scheduled. I headed off on the train by myself into the heart of the city to find the rest of the family and go to the local pool park. Also in part due to the fact that it was a public holiday, it was by far the busiest pool I have ever been in. Afterwards, we wandered through the park. Thea ran through the fountain, and we had ice cream before heading to the square in the old town for dinner. We got pierogi and cold beetroot soup (Chłodnik), which was wonderful. The waiter was a little

surprised at the choice. Possibly not the best food for the next day.



James & Stanley with beetroot soup

Saturday brought the long-distance race which bridged between the areas used for the mass start and the middle distance. Not something I was particularly looking forward to, and not something I expected to do particularly well in. Will was really on edge all morning as he hadn't had a top 50 result as requested by the selectors and there was only one race left. He set off four minutes ahead of me, but as he managed to lose a good portion of time on the first control, I never saw him in the forest. I had a very clean race aside from a couple of little moments but just didn't have the pace to keep up on the less technical trails.



James, Maya & Will in planning mode

And finally, the relay at a military hippodrome. We managed two composite teams with Denmark. Their two junior women and Maya, and myself and Will with Bjarne, the Danish coach. I was off first, again starting in the back row, but with some careful map reading and patience, I found myself over and over again ahead of the stronger teams like Estonia, Austria, and Poland. It was my cleanest race of the championships, and despite a few rather silly cutting route choices at the end of the course which didn't gain me any places (or

lose any), only a little time, I still managed to come back 17th out of 27 within three minutes and a bit of second and ahead of Italy 1. Will went out and lost a little time but only one place, which Bjarne held to the finish. Maya went out third for her team and set a great time, but unfortunately, one of the Danish girls had lost quite a few places. Jayne and the children managed to make it to the race after getting Grandma to the airport and had a great time watching the close racing, digging holes, and washing my bike off. That night, we headed to the banquet dressed as bees, and I had a wonderful but strange chat with an Uzbek taxi driver who barely spoke English or Polish.

After all that, I headed south with the family on the train to Zakopane via Kraków (the old town, the castle, and the Jewish quarter) for a few days of "holiday" in the mountains. We were intending to go up the mountain one of the days in a cable car, but it was about a three-hour wait, so we just walked. Stanley managed two big days of hiking, fuelled by the idea of mountain pub food, including whole trout and schnitzels. Zakopane is one of the stranger places I have ever been; it sits somewhere between an outdoorsy mountain town resplendent with all the mountain gear shops and chalets; a touristy destination town with little stalls of local produce up and down the main street; and a carnival. There were stalls everywhere selling the most random assortment of plastic things and fluffy toys. The national park, though, was delightful, not particularly high mountains but pointy mountainy mountains that are spectacular to look at.

After a long train ride back to Warsaw, we got a little lost in a shopping centre attached to a train station, which was across the road from our hotel. I collected my bike from the nut shop where I had stashed it. And we headed back to Melbourne.

Some notes on the Championships:

The course setting was very similar to what I have come to expect from elite foot orienteering courses for each discipline (mass start - Hagaby with a common first leg).

I managed to be the fastest non-European in all races except for the long distance. In that race, it was Hiro from Japan. He nearly got me in the mass start too but made a huge mistake about five controls from the end.

In the senior men's field, there was nearly 20% DNF/mp on the hot and long days of the mass start and long distance.

Maya did really well with top 20 finishes on all the days except for the sprint. It'll be interesting to

see how she does with another year of training and orienteering.

Despite cutting between tracks being permitted, there were probably only five or so legs out of all the races where it was advantageous, and most people didn't bother.

2025 Australian Championships

This years Oz Champs were held in sunny Queensland, unfortunately in unseasonably hot, but dry, weather conditions. The organisers took this into account with plenty of portable shade solutions and a plentiful water supply, including a misting station in the finish chute, a much appreciated arrangement!

A small contingent of Bendigo members travelled north, including Keely with the Victorian schools team. A fabulous result on day one for Keely when she won gold in the Sprint Distance Championship W16A ahead of nine Kiwis before the next Australian finisher. What a great run, congratulations Keely. Tony R also had a fast run and stood on the podium holding a silver medallion.

Another silver placing for Tony the next day in the Long, a great effort on an extremely hot day in steep difficult terrain. Well done.

The schools championships took place during the week, and Saturday saw the Oz Relays, with Keely's Victorian W16 team running third and an unfortunate result for Tony's M75s with a mispunch, Tony having recorded the fastest time on his leg however.

Next years Australian Championships will be held in Tasmania as part of the Easter carnival.



Keely W, Australian Sprint Champion

What Fixture do members want?

How often do I wish to attend events: Responses were split equally between those who would like to attend an event once a week and those who were happier with once every two weeks or longer. This is the same as the survey last season.

| HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEND ORIENTEERING EVENTS | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | More than once a week | 1 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.2 |
| | Once a week | 15 | 48.4 | 48.4 | 51.6 |
| | Every two weeks | 11 | 35.5 | 35.5 | 87.1 |
| | Once a month | 2 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 93.5 |
| | Less than once a month | 2 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 31 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

How far will I travel: We asked our members how far they were likely to travel to events. This tells us that-

- Bendigo, Castlemaine, Heathcote and to an extent Inglewood are considered local events. Daylesford and beyond are attractive to only a third of our respondents.
- Castlemaine residents and those living further south are keen for events around Castlemaine and Maldon.

The implication is that when fixturing, we should not worry about fixturing a Saturday event on a weekend with a Sunday event at Ballarat or Daylesford.

| HOW FAR ARE YOU LIKELY TO TRAVEL TO ORIENTEER? | | | | |
|--|-------------|-----------|---------|------------------|
| | | Responses | | Percent of Cases |
| | | N | Percent | |
| Willing to travel to ^a | BENDIGO | 27 | 17.0% | 87.1% |
| | CASTLEMAINE | 30 | 18.9% | 96.8% |
| | HEATHCOTE | 26 | 16.4% | 83.9% |
| | INGLEWOOD | 22 | 13.8% | 71.0% |
| | DAYLESFORD | 14 | 8.8% | 45.2% |
| | BORUNG | 14 | 8.8% | 45.2% |
| | BALLARAT | 12 | 7.5% | 38.7% |
| | ELSEWHERE | 14 | 8.8% | 45.2% |
| Total | | 159 | 100.0% | 512.9% |
| a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1. | | | | |

What type of events will I attend:

- The 5-course format is by far the most popular.
- Any other format will potentially reduce the attendance of members.

- Some formats have the potential to attract orienteers from outside Bendigo to compensate for the lower local attendance (Mass start, Long). If someone wants to organise an event like this it needs to be scheduled to be attractive to visitors from Melbourne.
- There is a group of 10 people that indicated an interest in summer evening park and street type events. It maybe worth reviving the summer evening events. There are 8 street maps and potentially two or three park maps depending on the approach to permitting (or not).

| What event formats do I prefer? | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|
| | | Responses | | Percent of Cases |
| | | N | Percent | |
| Formats ^a | Bendigo Bush 5 Course | 29 | 23.8% | 93.5% |
| | Score events | 19 | 15.6% | 61.3% |
| | Mass start events | 15 | 12.3% | 48.4% |
| | Park and Street events | 9 | 7.4% | 29.0% |
| | Summer Evening events | 10 | 8.2% | 32.3% |
| | Sprint events on campuses | 9 | 7.4% | 29.0% |
| | Night Orienteering | 8 | 6.6% | 25.8% |
| | Longer courses | 8 | 6.6% | 25.8% |
| | Bendigo Bush 3 Course | 7 | 5.7% | 22.6% |
| | Come and Try It | 4 | 3.3% | 12.9% |
| | MTBO | 4 | 3.3% | 12.9% |
| Total | | 122 | 100.0% | 393.5% |
| a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1. | | | | |

What terrain do I prefer:

- Mining and flatter spur gully are the most popular.
- Steeper spur gully and granite are a little less popular. This may reflect an ageing club membership.

| Preferred terrain | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|
| | | Responses | | Percent of Cases |
| | | N | Percent | |
| Terrain ^a | Mining terrain | 29 | 23.4% | 93.5% |
| | Flatter spur gully | 28 | 22.6% | 90.3% |

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------|-----|--------|--------|
| | Steeper spur gully | 25 | 20.2% | 80.6% |
| | Granite | 24 | 19.4% | 77.4% |
| | Park and street | 9 | 7.3% | 29.0% |
| | Campus sprints | 9 | 7.3% | 29.0% |
| Total | | 124 | 100.0% | 400.0% |
| a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1. | | | | |

| Favourite maps to compete on: | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------|------------------|
| | | Responses | | Percent of Cases |
| | | N | Percent | |
| Favourite maps ^a | Mt Korong | 7 | 10.8% | 31.8% |
| | Mt Egbert | 7 | 10.8% | 31.8% |
| | Kangaroo Gully | 6 | 9.2% | 27.3% |
| | Sedgwick | 5 | 7.7% | 22.7% |
| | Fiddlers Green | 5 | 7.7% | 22.7% |
| | Browns Reef | 4 | 6.2% | 18.2% |
| | Mosquito Creek | 4 | 6.2% | 18.2% |
| | Mt Tarrengower | 4 | 6.2% | 18.2% |
| | One Tree Hill | 3 | 4.6% | 13.6% |
| | Mandurang | 3 | 4.6% | 13.6% |

Offers to assist at events

Collecting controls is a universal offer, with the exception of some who feel they are not physically or navigationally capable. The extent of offers is greater than for last year's survey, meaning the 2026 local fixture will have more events than this year.

| Offers to assist | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|
| | | Responses | | Percent of Cases |
| | | N | Percent | |
| Offers to assist ^a | Not interested | 3 | 2.9% | 9.7% |
| | Collecting controls | 24 | 23.5% | 77.4% |
| | First Aid | 6 | 5.9% | 19.4% |
| | Event assistant | 17 | 16.7% | 54.8% |
| | Operate Computer | 11 | 10.8% | 35.5% |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----|--------|--------|
| | Organise and set an event with others | 16 | 15.7% | 51.6% |
| | Organise and set by self | 15 | 14.7% | 48.4% |
| | Learning to organise and set | 2 | 2.0% | 6.5% |
| | Mentor someone to organise and set | 7 | 6.9% | 22.6% |
| | Mentor organising not setting | 1 | 1.0% | 3.2% |
| Total | | 102 | 100.0% | 329.0% |
| a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1. | | | | |

The 2026 Bendigo orienteering fixture

The current season is just drawing to a close, but its time to start applying for permits for next year. The proposed fixture has been built upon the preferences to organise expressed in the recent club survey. Whilst the fixture is not quite finalised, the shape won't change much from here. Some features are:

- Local events almost every weekend between late March and October. Some of these events are organised by other clubs on either a Saturday or a Sunday.
- The season starts with the Fowl and Fizz and the Bendigo 2-Day as usual. After this we have a CATI event for newcomers followed by four events close to Bendigo to encourage newcomers to make Saturday orienteering a habit.
- Every fourth or fifth weekend there is a break in the fixture where another club is doing the work. Some club members are working at every event (computer, control collection, parking etc) and we need to rest them.
- The plan this year is to have an assistant for every event as well as the main organiser/course setter. Its up to the organiser and assistant to negotiate tasks. If you would like to learn how to organise an event, being an assistant is a good place to start.
- We plan to run some software instructional sessions over summer so we can spread the load on the computer desk. This is going to be particularly important early in the season when we hope to have quite a few newcomers who will not have pre-entered.
- The Twilight 3hr makes a return next October, but with the finish time being sunset, rather than an hour after sunset. The hope is to have everyone finishing together and then hanging around for some food and drink. The plan is to have an accessible kitchen.
- Finally, attendance at our events often falls off in mid-winter. Don't make that mistake this year. There will be four new maps over five weeks during July-August. As well as this, there will be events on three of the maps used this year in the Easter-Anzac carnival. If you missed them this year, make sure you experience this terrain next year.

Thank you to everyone who filled in the survey, particularly if you offered to help organise an event or two. Between us all we have helped create one of the most interesting Bendigo fixtures in quite some time. See you out in the forest once we get through the summer months.

Neil

Fixtures listing 2026

| | Fixture | Map | Organiser | Assistant | Assembly | |
|-------|---------|---------------|---|--------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Feb | 7 | Fowl & Fizz | Dead Bullock Gully | J Wilkinson | J Ball | Crusoe Rises Reserve |
| | 14 | | | | | |
| | 21 | 2-Day | Argyle | Jim Russell | ? | ? |
| | 28 | | | | | |
| March | 7 | | | | | |
| | 14 | CATI | Wildflower Drive | Julie Flynn | Club | Shelter/toilets at Sth end |
| | 21 | Bendigo Bush | Wildflower Drive | Peter Searle | Dianne Searle | Shelter/toilets at Sth end |
| | 28 | Bendigo Bush | Myers Creek | Jenny Ball | John Wilkinson | Collins St-channel crossing |
| April | 4 | | EASTER | | | |
| | 11 | Bendigo Bush | Diamond Hill Sth | John Wilkinson | Jenny Ball | Apeline Track |
| | 18 | Bendigo Bush | Smiths Reef | Lorraine Leversha | Nola Juniper | Gower School |
| | 25 | | National League and spectator races at Ballarat | | | |
| May | 2 | Bendigo Bush | Kalimna | MFR | MFR | ? |
| | 9 | Bendigo Bush | Mt Egbert | Nigel McGuckian | ? | Cemetery environs |
| | 16 | Bush Sprint | Black Jack Gully? | Tony Radford? | Neil Barr? | Old Tip |
| | 23 | Bendigo Bush | Sedgwick NTH | Colin Walker | ? | Sedgwick Hall? |
| | 30 | Bendigo Bush | Crusoe Sth | CHOC | CHOC | Tackaberry Rd |
| June | 6 | Bendigo Bush | Mosquito Creek | Neil Barr | Julie Flynn | Godfreys Rd |
| | 13 | Bendigo Bush | Peter The Great | Charles Brownridge | ? | ? |
| | 20 | Bendigo Bush | Lockwood Range | David Jones | Heather Jones | Brigg Rd toilet site |
| | 27 | Score/Scatter | Coolibah | Michael Tolhurst? | Daryl Fleay | Mandurang Oval area |
| July | 4 | | Double header weekend at Beechworth | | | |
| | 11 | Bendigo Bush | One Eye East | Louise Hall | Tim Turnbull | O'Keefe Trail and Burnt Trck |

| | | | | | | |
|--------|----|--------------|--|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| | 18 | Bendigo Bush | Old Tom | Neil Barr | Julie Flynn | |
| | 25 | Bendigo Bush | One Eye West | Colin Walker | ? | Hookes Lane |
| August | 1 | Bendigo Bush | Diamond Hill Nth | Heather Jones | David Jones | Bendigo Mining Parking area |
| | 8 | | Sunday event at Fryerstown | | | |
| | 15 | Bendigo Bush | Sydenham Hill | Julie Flynn | Neil Barr | Timor-Bromley Rd |
| | 22 | | Vic Relays on the Sunday. | | | |
| | 29 | Bendigo Bush | Andersons Diggings | Michael Loughnan? | ? | Low Slung Dumps |
| Sep | 5 | | <i>Events on Saturday and Sunday at Daylesford</i> | | | |
| | 12 | Bendigo Bush | One Tree Hill | Peter Forbes | Alicia Martin? | Guys Hill Rd |
| | 19 | VIC SHORT | Tappit Hen | Ted van Geldermalsen | Jim Russell | |
| | 26 | Score | <i>Lyell Forest</i> | <i>Louise Hall</i> | <i>Tim Turnbull</i> | |
| Oct | 3 | Score | <i>Birds Reef</i> | <i>Nigel</i> | ? | |
| | 10 | Social score | Botanic Gardens area | Street crew | | |
| | 31 | Twilight 3hr | Whipstick | Prue Dobbin | Neil Barr | |