



04 Newsletter

June 2025

In this Issue:

Many thanks to all the contributors who gave of their time to write articles for this issue. In particular, Neil Barr, Julie Flynn, Prue Dobbin and Clare Brownridge.

Neil gives us a background look at the work that goes behind running the largest multi-day event on the Australian calendar – the Easter 3-Day Carnival. Prue describes her experience in competing in a ski-o event in Poland, one of the Worldloppet Gold Master events where to become a Gold Master you need to complete 10 such events in different countries. (Prue is up to number eight!!) And Clare provides an insight into some of the issues faced in setting courses for a large event – Psalm Singing Gully for Day 1 at the 2025 Easter event.

Enjoy.

Dianne and Peter

President's Message

Our orienteering year has got underway with two really good events in May. The first was a scatter event on May 10th on the Diamond Hill map. Charles Brownridge made good use of the area which consisted of old gold mining, eroded gullies and thick bush in places. The idea was to get as many controls as possible in one hour. Craig Feuerherdt got all 24 controls in 54 minutes, followed closely by David Brownridge 24 controls in 58 minutes. Clare Brownridge was fourth with 18 controls in 53 minutes. Well done to everybody who entered. The weather was kind to us this year and it was pleasant adventuring through the bush. Thank you to Charles for organising the event and thanks to those people who helped pack up and collect controls.

The second event for May was on the 17th, on Mandurang-Coolibah map. David and Heather Jones organised the event in the normal five course format. Hills are plentiful in this area as are water channels. Everybody enjoyed the day and it was nice to see a number of newcomers take part. Thanks to David and everyone who helped pack up. Course 1 was won by James Robertson in 42.17 minutes followed by Simon Rouse 52.44. Well done James - a quick time indeed. Don Cherry won course 2 in a time of 57.59 min - well done Don. In course 3 it was Michael Loughnan who emerged fastest in 41.25 min with Paul Elam 2nd on 42.34 min (well done Paul). Best in course 4 was Michael Tolhurst and for course 5 it was Patrick Symes. Thank you to those who completed.

Our club (general) meetings are usually held on the first Monday of each month. These are conducted online and all members are welcome to join in. These meetings are usually open and as such those in attendance (financial members) can vote on issues/matters. A committee meeting is closed and only those on the committee can vote. The next general meeting is on Monday June 2nd at 7.30 pm and the Agenda will be sent out prior to the meeting. All financial members are welcome to join in.

Regards to all members.

John Wilkinson

COMING EVENTS

Local Bendigo and nearby Victorian events coming up in June are listed below. For full details, including directions to each event go to the Eventor website.

Saturday June 7

Event type: King's Birthday Weekend, Day 1
Map: Sailors Diggings, Daylesford
Organizer/Course setter: Eureka Orienteers

Sunday June 8

Event type: King's Birthday Weekend, Day 2
Map: Chapel Flat, Creswick
Organizer/Course setter: DROC

Monday June 8

Event type: King's Birthday Weekend, Day 3
[Two person relay]
Map: Tipperary Springs, Daylesford
Organizer/Course setter: Eureka Orienteers

Saturday June 14

Event type: Bendigo Bush Event
Map: White Hills #4
Organizer/Course setter: Micheal Loughnan

Saturday June 21

Map: Lockwood Range
[EVENT CANCELLED]

Sunday June 29

Event type: Ballarat Classic Series #4
Map: Nerrina
Organizer/Course setter: Eureka Orienteers

Pilchers Bridge Central 2-hour score event, May 31

Around 33 people (including 19 club members) participated in this event, with around another 7 people attending as helpers or supporters. A number of family groups participated and had picnics afterwards. Prue Dobbin set a 20 control score event over lovely fast spur-gully terrain. The weather for the event was perfect and suitable for running or for the family groups to wander at their leisure through the forest. Many people admired the 4m cliff and the big tree that featured on the course. After the event everyone enjoyed socialising and a complementary cup of hot vegetable soup and delicious biscuits. James Robertson cleared the course in a blistering time of 49:54 and won the Men's category. Rumour had it that his feet didn't touch the ground. Clare Brownridge also cleared the course in 1:24:35 and won the Women's category.

Prue broke her little toe several weeks prior to the event, and couldn't put the controls out, so the event was only made possible only through the efforts of a number of club members. Thanks go to:

- Neil Barr (map updates, including mapping minor tracks in the days before the event, control collection and web results)
- Ted van Geldermalsen (assistance with course setting and printing, control placement)
- Julie Flynn (control placement and collection, and general moral support)
- Heather and Dave Jones (trailer towing)
- John Wilkinson (administration on the day and control collection)
- Michael Loughnan (control collection, packing up and trailer towing)
- Derek Morris (control collection, packing up)
- Phil Robertson (control collection, packing up)
- Verna Greenhalgh and Bill Punton (packing up)
- Jess and Patrick Symes (packing up)
- Clare Brownridge (cookies).

Thanks to all who helped and those who attended. It looked as though you all had a great day out in the bush.

Cactus Removal at Mt Korong

Cacti are a real issue on a number of our granite-based maps. One land care group has been particularly active in their removal as indicated in a recent Facebook posting:

"Over 100 Cacti treated today on Mt Korong and adjoining farmland by Mt Korong Ecowatch. Thanks to the amazing Neil Barr from Bendigo Orienteers for his cactus map. We got 'em all:)"



Psalm Singing Gully – Reflections from Course Setter, Clare Brownridge

Early last year I was asked if I would set Day 1 of the 2025 Easter Orienteering Carnival. Even though it was a great honour to be asked I accepted with trepidation, knowing the high standards required and having an inkling of the amount of work it would take to get there.

A few people asked how many times I'd been out on the map – not as many as I would have liked, but as many as I could manage! (5 in the lead up, + Wednesday and Friday before the event to put out stands and SportIdent boxes).

Living in Melbourne and not owning a car made for a 4-hour one-way trip to Inglewood – luckily Mum and Dad kindly lent me a car once I got to Bendigo on the train, as the bus schedule to Inglewood wouldn't have been much help!

I also don't love the heat, so over summer I was watching the weather forecast to see when it was going to drop below 30°C. Fortunately, work is flexible enough that I could take time off when I needed. My reward at the end of each trip was a much-anticipated Bundaberg soft drink!

I didn't find any gold nuggets (just HEAPS of detectorists out searching), but the highlight of the trips out were the birds – each time I saw completely different things, including an owlet nightjar (which I accidentally scared from an adit), a painted buttonquail, golden whistlers, a red-capped robin and maybe some dusky woodswallows. The lowlight was putting a control stand down on an ants' nest.

The time on the ground was backed up by many hours in front of the computer – setting courses, adding descriptions, tweaking courses, and finally double and triple checking everything to make sure numbers and circles weren't obscuring important detail.

This was the first time I'd set a major bush race – the hardest thing was managing the number of courses (24), which all have to be the right length, level of difficulty, and different enough from other courses with competitors of a similar speed to avoid trains of people forming in the bush. I was lucky to be working with Neil as my controller. He spent many more hours than me out there, including making sure the map was up to date, and also schooled me in the process of setting and checking courses.

On the day of the race, it was a relief when the first runners came back, particularly the M and W10s! It was lovely to get some nice feedback on the courses, and looking at LiveIox afterwards was interesting to see how people had tackled them.

And, yes, there are things I would have changed in hindsight!



First scouting trip out there at Easter 2024 – it's a scrubby shrubby place!

Reflections on organising an Easter carnival

In the beginning was curiosity. Curiosity drove Neil to go exploring. Exploring led to maps of new terrain. After five test events, the word was out about new terrain in the Loddon Shire. There was musing of how good these areas would be for a large event, but no inclination from the mapper to drive that process. Ted and Margi were more motivated and in 2023 put a proposal to the two of us (Julie and Neil) – they were prepared to organise the next Easter carnival in 2025 if we were prepared to join their team. It was a hard proposal to reject, as Ted and Margi clearly had the skill set to drive a carnival based on their experience organising events such as Sprint into Spring. They knew what needed to be done. When we agreed, the organising team grew to 5 main planners– Ted, Margi, Chris Norwood, Julie and Neil. The two of us started with what turned out to be an unrealistic desire for a simple carnival format. Ted and Margi wanted a great carnival. We went along with that. The team agreed on some basic principles - an enjoyable carnival with excellent terrain, excellent maps and excellent courses. That led to a decision for 3 days of classic length courses for all except elites, and a bush “sprint” on the Friday. Ted thought initially that setting and controlling could be managed by just 3 people on the organising team. Some simple logistics exploration showed this was highly unrealistic. We ended up sharing the controlling between Ted, Chris and Neil and recruited the next generation to setting. After allocating maps to the four days of Easter, there were three maps of excellent terrain that lacked parking for an Easter crowd but would suit an Anzac weekend of State Champs. And so we ended up with 7 events in 10 days, with training courses on Kooyoora in the “empty” three days in between. The planning group had a very good mix of complementary skills.

- Ted- Overall vision, high level of technical issues, finance manager, controlling;
- Margi – excellent Melb and OA networks an excellent understanding of rules, marketing and web site building;
- Julie - community liaison, logistics;
- Neil – mapping, remapping and map updates, controlling; and
- Chris – high level of understanding of carnival technical requirements, saved us when printing problems arose. Also a controller.



Neil & Julie



Margi & Ted

Some other people worthy of special mention in the planning preceding the carnival-

- Stuart McWilliam did all the graphics work including the bulletins which were drafted mainly by Margi.
- Toby Cooper managed the traffic management plan process – this is not an area of responsibility to underplay.
- Simon Rouse created all the start draws, and these were complicated.
- Ian Chennell set up the results platform
- Carl Dalheim hired a big van and took up the role of carnival equipment ‘roadie’

There were teams that ran important functions each day

- Geoff Robinson managed the start team across the Easter weekend, perhaps one of the most important on-the-day activities. His assistants included the Searles.
- The Eureka Club managed download and results service each day.
- Dandenong Ranges Orienteering Club provided the registration and information service each day.
- Various clubs managed the set up and administration of the arena each day.
- Jenny Ball and Nola Juniper managed the Kid-O program each day.
- Toph’s and Jim’s commercial business provided an excellent commentary infrastructure, with the main commentary by OA Executive officer Arpad who brought his World Championship commentary experience.

There were numerous other people that took on various jobs during the carnival, and if we didn’t mention you, we apologise. We are still recovering.

Looking back, we both feel this was a rewarding process, if at times demanding and tiring. The main team of five worked well together, each with their particular skills recognized by the others. Having a team and a long lead time seems to have helped avoid the usual sense of the carnival teetering on the edge of disaster. Members of the team supported each other when some of us were particularly stressed, so avoiding hot headed blow-ups.

Working with the Shire of Loddon was very positive. They were impressed that we began the planning with them two years before the event and met with them regularly as the planning progressed.

Now with the benefit of hindsight, we have a few reflections. First, the carnival has left the sport with some useful legacies.

- The obvious two are the modest financial surplus to be distributed to clubs and seven maps now upgraded to elite event standard. These maps are now owned by our club.
- The orienteering community around Australia now is aware of the great terrain in Loddon Shire beyond the confines of Kooyoorra State Park.
- Some “younger” orienteers have enhanced their course setting skills in a major event and are now well-placed to take on controlling roles. This includes two graduates of the Bendigo Junior program from 20 years ago (Clare and James).
- The Loddon Shire has a very positive image of orienteers as both well organised and well behaved.
- We have a positive working relationship with Parks Victoria Inglewood office through both our wheel cactus working bees at the Granites and the professionally organised event they saw at Inglewood.
- We have built relationships with some landowners and service providers in the Loddon Shire. This should make it easier in the future to request land access for parking or events.
- We think we have demonstrated a functional model for carnival organisation.

We have been asked on a number of occasions whether we have recovered and whether we would do it again. Julie says we are almost recovered. Neil is unsure. As to doing it again, well, carnivals come to Victoria every three years. At this stage it looks like the next will be in northeast Victoria in 2028. After that there will be another in 2031. We will be in our late 70s. The logical answer is no.

Would we advise anyone else to take on the role? The answer depends on whether you have the right team committed to collegiate decision making with full support of your orienteering community. Good terrain helps as well. If those hurdles can be jumped, we think you could find it a rewarding experience. But it would be nice to see the sport simplify its carnival rules and expectations of organisers.

Prue's Bieg ski race report

In February this year I was asked to speak at the memorial service for orienteer John Sheahan, who sadly passed away last year. My presentation was about his cross-country skiing activities and included that he and Jenny impressively participated in a number of Worldloppet events.

The Wordloppet series is an annual series of long-distance citizen races (42km to 90km) in different countries. To become a Worldloppet Gold Master you must finish 10 different races in 10 different countries across at least two continents.

My interest sparked, I looked up the race calendar and flight/accommodation information and, to my surprise, the Polish race was in March, it still had vacancies and flights etc seemed very cheap (it does border Ukraine, after all).

So, at short notice and with virtually no training, I headed to Poland with skiing buddy Ian Mack to do the Bieg Piastow 50km classic ski race. This would be my 8th race (I've done races in Australia, New Zealand, Italy, Czech Republic, Austria, Germany and France, when I was much younger and fitter) and it would be Ian's 9th race (he's also done the Chinese race).

We began our trip in the Czech Republic at Liberec, where we last raced in 2004. We had two days practice. I had caught a bad cold (on the plane I think) and felt quite ill, the snow seemed awfully slippery, I pulled a muscle in my leg, and my skis seemed really old fashioned and slow. It wasn't looking good. Ian was fine.

We crossed the border to Szklarska Poreba in Poland, to the cross-country ski centre that cost 60 million euros to build. 5000 people were competing there over that weekend. We were surprised at the level of welcoming. The organisers knew we (and two other Aussies – one of whom was due to complete her 10th Gold Master – that's 100 races) were coming and hung Australian flags in the streets. We were invited to a Masters Dinner (even though we weren't quite there yet) and given showbags full of goodies – hats, thermals, gels, cabana sticks etc.

On race day I felt really sick but was determined to at least start the race. Due to poor snow conditions in the lower areas, the race was reduced to 42kms, which was great for us. We didn't have any health insurance for the race (it's not available for ski racing, or for over 65s in ski race training) so my plan was to start in the back row and go slowly and carefully, and there were opportunities on the course to pull out. Ian was prepared to risk it.

The trail led through pine forests, along ridgetops and alongside creeks and waterfalls – it was just beautiful. There were a few other people at my pace and I watched the kilometre signs slowly tick by. There was little flat terrain – rather, many kilometres of gentle uphill, followed by horrendous steep icy downhills, where thousands of other people had snowplowed before us and many fallen. I snowplowed slowly and carefully, whereas other people hurtled at speed, generally landing in a heap at the bottom. There were only three drink stations, mainly serving tiny cups of warm tea, wafer biscuits and cabana (no thanks) and I was very thirsty. I didn't know Polish for water and no one spoke English. All except for one man who, when I yelled out 'English' asked me where I was from. When I said Australia, he announced that highest mountain in Australia was named after him – Mt 'Hoskosvo'. When I said we called it Mt 'Kosciusko', the surrounding onlookers all burst into riotous laughing. They took my photo and I skied off with them all yelling 'MT KOS-CI-OSS- KO' after me! At 23km, I began to think I might make it. At around 30km, I faded fast and didn't think I'd make it – but I had brought a small bottle of water and a gel with me. I got an onlooker to open the bottle (I was too tired) and the water turned out to be lemonade which, combined with the gel, gave me instant energy.

I battled on, but it was cooling down, the crowd was gone and the track was long and lonely. Oddly, every time I started to feel cold, a burst of warm air would come up the valley. But the downhills seemed even more horrendous and with no-one in front or behind, I didn't want an accident so took my skis off and walked down a couple.

At 10 minutes to 5pm, I made it to the finish line. There was music and fanfare, they announced my arrival, gave me my medal and took my photo. Ian, who'd finished hours before and had given it his all (and sported a rather grazed nose as proof), met me and helped me with my boots etc. We'd done it (and I wasn't last – there were another 10 people behind me)!



Prue Dobbin finishing the Bieg Piastow 50km classic ski race

Mapping News May 2025

Now that the Easter carnival is over, mapping efforts are swinging back towards the local fixture.

1. The remap of Mt Korong was completed in time for the Victorian Championships. This was a massive exercise taking the equivalent of 12 weeks of full-time work. The task started in 2021 and was completed in March this year. The new map covers the complete reserve – the original covered only 40%.
2. Pilchers Bridge. In preparation for the 2-hr event the track network of Pilchers North and Central has been fully updated. Three new tracks were found and a new area of private land has been fenced off. The original map was somewhat distorted, so a new base map has been prepared using 2020 lidar data. As an interim measure the original map has been rubber sheeted on top of the new base map to remove some distortions. The longer-term aim is to extend the base map to include Lyell Forest as well as the unmapped area of Pilchers South and to progressively re-field work the current maps and field work the new area. This may take some time.
3. Field work has started on the map of One-Eye forest near Heathcote. This is a mix of fast open spur gully that will appeal to Colin Walker, as well as a flatter mining area that has some similarity to Andersons Diggings. Those with a sense of club history may remember that the area was initially considered for the Easter carnival in 1998, but put aside in favour of Smiths Reef. The base map is again 2020 lidar, so progress will be faster than was the case with the Easter maps.

2025 Club Committee

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