

PUNCHLINE

Dandenong Ranges Orienteering Club Inc

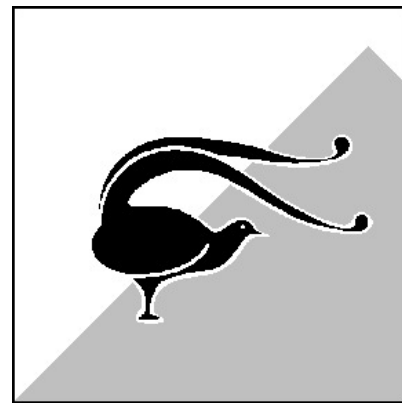
www.droc.orienteering.com.au

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NEWSLETTER

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DROC ON THE PODIUM

With the Championship season over for 2007, many DROC members graced the podium at the Middle Distance, Long Distance and Sprint Distance Championships. Louise Hall (left) is now a Victorian Sprint Champion. See Results inside.

DIARY DATES - WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 19 - CHRISTMAS PICNIC at Willison Park, Camberwell (after the event). Please bring a salad or dessert to share, plus your own drinks. We'll provide the rest. We'll also be presenting a Life Membership with the recipient to be announced on the night.

SATURDAY JANUARY 19 - SUMMER MTBO AT SILVAN RODE

DROC's annual MTB event at Silvan has proved very popular and this time should be no exception. Starting at 6pm, you'll have 75 minutes to collect as many controls as you can. Head to Stonyford Rd, Silvan (Melway 122 E2), register from 5.15pm. Bring a picnic. If you don't want to ride but can lend a hand with registration or scoring, please come along. For more information about MTBO events, go to www.vicmtbo.com.

SUNDAY JANUARY 26 - TWIN PETES REPETE BIKE RIDE

It was so much fun the first time, we're doing it all over again. As we did last year, we'll begin our leisurely 40 km ride from Peter Dalwood's in Glen Waverley, proceed to Peter Yeates' in Croydon for morning tea, then return to the Dalwoods for a bbq lunch and swim. The ride will mostly be on bike paths and is suitable for all ages, fitness levels, and bike types. Arrive at the Dalwoods, 75 Glen Tower Drive, Glen Waverley, for a 10am SHARP start. Bring bike and gear, swimming gear and lunch (bbq meat provided, but please BYO salads, desserts and drinks). Family and friends welcome! RSVP to Debbie (by email or verbally), before Jan 17.

SATURDAY/SUNDAY FEBRUARY 9 AND 10 - BEACH-O WEEKEND, SAN REMO

Planning is underway for our weekend of sun, sand and sea. Although details are to be finalised, we plan to take a hike on Saturday afternoon around Cape Woolamai, featuring spectacular surf, mutton bird rookeries, impressive rock formations, and sand dunes for sliding down; followed by a fish & chip tea in San Remo. Stay overnight (please make own arrangements - there are plenty of options). On Sunday morning we'll have our Beach-O event in and around San Remo. It will be a score event (with 60 and 90 minute options), starting and finishing in a seaside park with bbqs. We'll wrap up the weekend with lunch - bring a picnic or bbq. Keep an eye out in January for final details, published on the noticeboards at streetO, and in the weekly E-bulletin.

PREZ SEZ - Peter Hobbs (President's Report for 2007)

It is with pleasure that I table the President's Report for the 29th year of operation of the Dandenong Ranges Orienteering Club. This year the club has organised 34 events including an extended score event, a sprint/maze-o course and a duO/run-ride-run event. Whilst street orienteering remains clearly the club's most prominent area in terms of organisation and participation, I would like to draw upon a passage from the 2003/04 President's Report in relation to other forms of orienteering:

"In recent years some outsiders have dismissed our club's abilities in the bush orienteering arena. Our success in organizing the technical aspects of the Silver Lyrebird rogaine, together with a slowly increasing number of members participating in bush orienteering is beginning to change this view".

This so called 'renaissance' continues. Participation by club members in rogaining and bush orienteering has been strong whilst our representation and organisational efforts in the emerging field of mountain bike orienteering, thanks particularly to Phil Torode and Graham Wallis, is also noted.

Club members now hold positions on the Victorian Orienteering Association Board (Ian Dodd - President; Debbie Dodd - Vice President) and Victorian Rogaining Association Committee (Karen Pate - Committee Member; Peter Grover - Competition Manager; Ainslie Cummins - Volunteer Recruitment Officer). Recent decisions made by the club to organise the 2007 Victorian Sprint Championships, assist in organising the Victorian Relay Championships in March 2008, and organise an event at the 2009 Australian Schools Relay Championships, add to the renaissance.

The club experienced an unprecedented rise in membership during 2006/07 with a 17 per cent increase in membership including 15 new households. Financially, the club has continued to produce a positive cash flow and has preserved a strong asset position.

It is also worth noting that in the November 2006 State Parliamentary Election, Nick Wakeling won the Lower House Seat of Ferntree Gully - appropriately located in the club's heartland. Nick has been a club member since 1996.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members who have volunteered in one or more capacities this year. I can't possibly list the efforts of all volunteers, however the following list gives an indication of efforts that members have put into the club and the sport in general:

- Debbie Dodd - Punchline editor, membership secretary and general organiser of many things
- Peter Dalwood - Treasurer, production of the Monash University map and organisation of the 2007 Victorian Sprint Championships
- Ray Howe and Mark Besley - Scoring
- Peter Yeates - Series coordination and ideas
- Pam King - Mapping
- Wally Cavill and Ian Dodd - Always a helping hand

A strong core of dedicated members have continued devoting their efforts to the operation of the club, steering it in a 'northerly' direction. It must not be forgotten, however, that at this time last year the club was headed in a somewhat 'southerly' direction with several committee positions being vacated, including that of the President, and replacements proving difficult to come by. I encourage all members to become involved in the club and its activities whether it be in a small or more substantial capacity. New faces are ALWAYS welcome on the committee or in other areas such as course setting, participation in club relays or simply offering to pick up a few controls after a club event.

The year ahead is shaping up to be a busy one with the usual allocation of park/ street events, several Sunday Special and mountain bike events and two state level events outlined previously. I would like to thank all club members and the committee who have made this year one of the club's most prosperous.

I wish the President and committee well for the upcoming year.

VICTORIAN SPRINT CHAMPIONSHIPS AND CAMPUS CHALLENGE, MONASH UNIVERSITY

DROC took on one of its biggest challenges in recent years by running a Victorian Championship in the relatively new Sprint Distance format. The map was meticulously prepared by Peter Dalwood who spent many hours in the field. Peter also set all the courses which were hugely enjoyed by the 90-odd competitors. It was a day of Firsts - the first time that the Sprint Champs offered entries across all age groups; the first time DR had run an event using Sportident; and the first use of a data projector to display results. Ian and Debbie learned all the ins and outs of SI - allocating controls to courses, time syncing the controls for daylight saving, entering all the competitors, producing start lists, and so on. Not difficult as long as you have some instructions to follow. At 9:30am we were a little stressed as none of the DR helpers had been out for their runs yet, it was still raining, and the computer system was only just up and running. However we were ready to start right on schedule and everything ran without a hitch.



We had an absolutely fantastic team of volunteers - Pam, Peter G and Peter Y ran the starts with aplomb (except that Peter Yeates started himself on the W55 course instead of the M55 - the only error made all day!) Ray handled the finish/results with ease, and we impressed everyone with the instant results displayed on the screen in the back of the tent (early rain meant we couldn't set it up in a more accessible location, but we proved the technology works easily enough). Judy, Ilze and Tina breezed through registration, and our control patrollers/infrastructure helpers - Ainslie, Denise, Wally, Gary and Peter Hobbs - did a great job. Thanks so much to all who made the day a great success.

A highlight was the announcement of the Cavill Cups, new perpetual trophies donated by DROC, to be presented annually to the Men's and Women's Victorian Sprint Champion. We wanted to recognise and acknowledge Wally's amazing contribution to both the club and to orienteering, and this seemed a very appropriate way to do so. If it weren't for Wally, we would never have been in a position to run such an event, and to involve so many park/street orienteers.

If you enjoyed the Sprint at Monash, think about entering the Easter 3-Day Carnival in 2008 - the first event is a Sprint at Dubbo Zoo (the 2nd best sprint map in the country, after Monash of course!) Entry forms are now available - pick one up at StreetO.

WHO'S DOING WHAT - MEMBER NEWS

Membership fees for 2008 are due on January 1st. Your membership form is enclosed. Please complete it and forward it together with your fee, to Debbie Dodd. If you are already financial for 2008, there is no need to complete the form.

NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome our newest members Ian Davies, Greg Swenser, David Blom and Dianne Shalders. We now have 6 "Ians" and 6 "Peters"!

OTHER NEWS

From Phil Torode - "Guess what folks? I'm a grandfather now thanks to my daughter Bronwyn having a baby on Wed 26th September 2007. Georgia Ellen Tydeman is her name. Thanks to Chris for providing such a nice daughter to provide such a nice granddaughter. I guess I have girl genes in me. Grumpy gramps is doing well".

Mark and Jill also became third time grandparents with the arrival of grandson Caelan in mid November.

NEW CLUB SINGLETS AND JACKETS FOR SALE

We need to cover all weather extremes - we have our fantastic new windproof jackets available, and new stocks of our famous Giramondo running singlets, as well as bike tops. See Peter Yeates to add to your DROC wardrobe.

SATURDAY BRUNCH-O TRAINING RUNS DURING SUMMER

Looking for a weekend run? Join us at 10am Saturday mornings for a 1 hour casual run or walk, using "virtual controls". Then adjourn to a nearby café for brunch. Check the streetO website during the week prior for map details (<http://street.orienteering.com.au>).

CLUB CONTACTS

For information about, or assistance with EVENTS (first event vouchers, transport, equipment loan, newcomer information kits, informal coaching etc) contact:

Ian Dodd tel: 9878 9168 email: debiandodd@inet.net.au, or
Peter Yeates tel: 9725 4612 email: yeatespi@aol.com

For CLUB CLOTHING (running and bike tops, and fleece jackets and vests) contact:

Peter Yeates tel: 9725 4612 email: yeatespi@aol.com

For MAPS AND COURSE SETTING enquiries, contact:

Pam King tel: 5968 3076 email: pamela.king@haileybury.vic.edu.au

For MEMBERSHIP and NEWSLETTER enquiries, contact:

Debbie Dodd tel: 9878 9168 email: debiandodd@inet.net.au

SPRINTS AT MONASH - COMPETITORS' REPORTS by Peter Hobbs and Ian Davies

Peter Hobbs ran M21 at the Sprints, against some of the top sprint orienteers in the country. Pete has since been featured prominently on his staff website at work, with an article and photo about the Sprint.

It bore little resemblance to a street-o event and most certainly could not be compared to a bush event. Navigating one's way around Venice probably best describes the experience of competing in the 2007 Victorian Sprint Championships, staged at Monash University (Clayton Campus) on Sunday 18th November.

Most competitors would have woken to steady rain, dark skies and a testy northerly wind. However, as luck would have it, by the time the first runners set foot on the course the rain had stopped and the wind has eased, leaving perfect overcast conditions.

The event format, for instance visiting 13 controls in 2.9km whilst navigating through a large university, is unusual for most orienteers as I suspect most of us compete in dozens of bush and street events each year but very few urban sprint events.

The first control for class M21 was accessible via three routes and its location on the ground level of a dimly lit, multi storey car park, was unique. The route to my third control included use of one of the many 'light grey' sections on the map which indicate access through the ground floor of a building. Not only were competitors running through university buildings, we were also competing with automatic sliding doors! It's not often during an orienteering event that competitors have to stop and wait for a man made object to shift out of the way. The route between my 12th and 13th controls involved a hasty descent down a steep flight of stairs into an incredibly secluded, tranquil and narrow court yard, featuring a bamboo plantation

and flanked by tall buildings on either side. And so it went.

The map was very intricate. Planning ahead for the next 100m was challenging - let alone planning control exit paths or upcoming controls. There was no sense of being able to 'stretch out' for a few hundred metres as one may do whilst traversing a long spur and certainly no time to take your eye off the map as may be done on easier legs during street-o. Successful navigation required constant map contact and frequent directional change - not to mention an acute awareness of the constant changes in running surface.

Classes M21 and W21 were taken out comfortably by Adrian Jackson (MF) and Tash Key (MF) with margins of approximately one minute over second place. Whilst space does not allow a list of all winners and place getters here, other highlights included: only 11 seconds separating the top three in class M45 won by Geoff Lawford (EU); Louise Hall (DR) blitzing class W35, finishing some 12 minutes ahead of second place; Rob Fell (NE) pipping Leon Keely (BG) by 10 seconds in class M20; and the wily John Sheahan (BK) and Ruth Goddard (YV) winning their respective classes, M65+ and W55, by comfortable margins over strong fields of other similarly cunning competitors.

The main event was followed by an informal scatter-o course which utilised all 25 controls on the map and a presentation ceremony at which the Cavill Cup, a new perpetual trophy for the male and female Sprint Champions, was awarded. The cup is

named in well-deserved recognition of Wally Cavill's contributions to orienteering over many years.

Special thanks must go to Peter Dalwood for the countless hours spent mapping the university and setting the courses, Debbie and Ian Dodd for their fine efforts in the administration and coordination

of the event and to all helpers who pitched in on the day. The event was a great success and we look forward to the 2008 Sprint Championships and the surprises they are sure to present.

Ian Davies was first introduced to BushO and Rogaining in the early 80's. Knee problems halted his involvement after a few years. He has recently taken up StreetO and runs two nights a week in Melbourne. The sprints this year were at Monash Uni, within walking distance of home, so, on a whim, he decided to give them a go. This was his first attempt at a state event. He ran M45 and finished in second place behind Geoff Lawford (by the narrowest of margins).

Off we go on the sixth beep. Turning the map over, I turn it through 90 degrees four times as usual. At the top of the short hill three go left & one goes right, I go with the majority and in no time I'm one building past the best route. This feels just like a street event and I'm right at home. The navigation is easy with all the details popping up in the right place on the ground, and for a change I'm thinking ahead several controls. Then I arrive at where I think the first control should be, hmm I can't see it, eyes back onto the map. My cogitation is interrupted by the arrival of two runners who go to the other side of the dividing wall for a moment then run off. OK, so they hide the controls!

One to 2 is an easy run, this time I find the control immediately. My route choice 2 - 3 is not the best, but once I've committed I start planning ahead again. 3- 4 is easy with 4 (in the carpark) being visible for at least 100 metres. Control 5, a 'cliff', you've got to be joking, there aren't any hills on the map. Back to 6 and I blow it by turning one building too early and winding up in a cafeteria looking for a canopy and seeing only umbrellas (are they canopies?), eyes back onto the map and I sort it out reasonably quickly. 6 to 7 then 8 are nice and fast and I have time to decide how to get to 9. The out of bounds area is obvious, so is a short section of uncrossable fence, and there is a gap giving a nice access to the control. However when I arrive at the fence, I can't see the gap, and switching immediately to StreetO mode, mentally shrug, put it down to 'a map error' and run around the long way. 10 is easy as someone is just leaving, but I've forgotten to plan ahead and although I can see a control just 50 metres away, I have to put my eyes onto the map and turn it over a couple of times to confirm that the clue for 11 (the last control) and location match what I see. Sprint to the finish, and I'm done.

Well, that was great fun, and I especially enjoyed the degree of detail and accuracy of the map. It's also nice to be on a course where people are going 'in all directions', rather than the usual 'lead or follow' games we seem to play. Next year, I'm in, & I'll volunteer to brief any StreetO first timers.

Here are some personal observations on the event in no particular order:

Not having the map after I've finished makes it hard for me to hold a comprehensible conversation about where or how fast I went. Running a further two maps on the same area with some common controls for the Campus Challenge has rendered me almost completely unable to recall my route choices.

When I noticed the photographer pointing his camera at me, I grinned. You see, I'm trying to break my reputation of looking (in photographs) like a large version of a concrete garden gnome. I was then fascinated by his behaviour as I got closer, he slowly disappeared behind the small hedge until only the camera lens was visible, and it was just pointing up to the sky. I go round the corner and there's the finish. That evening, it starts to make sense... The last control on the steps was his 'photo opportunity' & although I'd seen it when I was leaving the second last control, I'd been too distracted to punch it. Hence the DNF for the Campus Challenge.

If I had any comments about the map, it would be that the gap between the uncrossable fence and the out of bounds area was not to scale (controls 8 to 9 for me). I'm not complaining, but I hear that one of our (regular StreetO) competitors was, 'unable to pass', though he is hoping that by next year this type of feature will no longer be an impediment.

As an engineer I know what an SportIdent stick does and how it works, but I'd never actually used one. Looking at the 'check' & 'clear' controls, I could guess what they were for, but my usual tactic of fiddling until either it worked or something broke somehow didn't seem appropriate. I hovered a polite distance away until someone 'cleared' then 'checked' before doing the same.

I treated the splits printout like a supermarket receipt, saying 'thanks', smiling and as I'm walking away screwing it up and later dumping it on the floor of the car. I retrieved it later when I had the map back and I'd realised what it was for.

The start procedure made sense, except for the control clue sheet. Picking one up, I could see that it contained quite a bit of information about each control. The numbers 1 to 11 I understood were the control numbers, the numbers between 100 and 129 were... well, I'm not sure, but the hieroglyphics, wow. Resisting the temptation to burst out laughing, I am not sure what to do with this small useless rectangle of paper, which the other people also starting seem to regard as useful, clipping it into wrist holders. Clearly littering was not on, I'd had my sweaty fingers on it, so putting it back in the box didn't seem right either, I settled for folding it neatly and putting it in my sock.

Don't worry Geoff, next year I'll invent a couple of new ways of being just that bit slower than I should be. I'm good at that.

RESULTS

Victorian Middle Distance Championships

Congratulations to placegetters Ilze Yeate, Tina Smith, Louise Hall, Pam King, Denise Pike and Wally Cavill

Victorian Long Distance Championships

Congratulations to placegetters Denise Pike, Mark Korvin, Wally Cavill, Ilze Yeates, Debbie Dodd and Erica Sholl

Victorian Sprint Distance Championships

Congratulations to placegetters Louise Hall, Ian Davies, Martin Steer, Gary Rook, Peter Grover and Pam King

Victorian Rogaining Championships

Congratulations to placegetters Karen Pate, Denise Pike and Peter Grover

Spring Night Series:

A Course Div 2 - David Gorman 2nd

A3 - Ian Greenwood 3rd

A4 - Mark Besley and Louise Hall eq 2nd

B Course Div 1 - Marta Salek 2nd, Peter Hobbs 3rd B2 - Peter Dalwood 2nd

B4 - Graham Wallis 1st, Jo Ferry 3rd

B4 - Chris Wallis 1st, Peter Yeates 3rd

C Course Div 1 - Phil Torode 2nd, Peter Kovassy 3rd C2 - Robyn Hall 1st, Ben Lalor 2nd

PW Div 1 - Greg Cavill 2nd

PW2 - Denise Pike 2nd

PW3 - Judy Hopkins 1st, Ilze Yeates 2nd, Stan Gurman 3rd

Saturday Series (CakeO):

A Course 1 (Eclairs) - Ian Dodd 1st

A2 (Iced VoVos) - Ray Howe 1st, Ian Greenwood 2nd

A3 (Chocolate Crackles) - Mark Besley 3rd

B Course 1 (Coffee Scrolls) - Phil Torode 2nd

B4 (Chocolate TeddyBears) - Peter Yeates 1st, Debbie Dodd 2nd

PW Course 3 - TimTams - Judy Hopkins 1st

PW4 (Vanilla Slices) - Wally Cavill 1st

Our thanks again to Mark Besley and Ray Howe for scoring these series.

Oxfam Trailwalkers - DROC will contribute \$75 towards entry fees for each club member who enters the Oxfam Trailwalker. Please provide a copy of your entry to treasurer Peter Dalwood.

This article by Judy Hopkins is very timely. We would like to remind ALL course setters to check their course lengths carefully, particularly for the C and D scatter courses. Many of them have been too long this summer.

For C course the correct length is approx 5.5 km, and for D course it's approx 3.5 km. Please refer to the Course Setting Guidelines at <http://street.orienteering.com.au/Common/CourseSetting.html>. Judy is well known for her very cleverly and carefully set courses, and has been shortlisted for this year's Park and Street Course Setter of the Year.

MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS - WHICH PLANET ARE COURSE SETTERS FROM?

This 2007 torchlight orienteering series seems to have been particularly punishing on the mind and body, and even more so for walkers. In fact there was one Monday night training run which sent me home questioning why I go orienteering, and after nearly 16 years, did I want to continue.

Walkers and C course runners make up nearly half of the competitors, so you would think that course setters would want to make their course enjoyable for them as well as the good A and B course runners. However, a lot of courses have shown that this is not the case and have left me wondering just what the course setter was thinking. What we want out of a course first and foremost is route choice. After all, that's what orienteering is about - making us think, and exercising at the same time.

Secondly, a good route needs to be achievable. This means a choice of controls which make us think about the route and keep us thinking, perhaps leaving a control near the end, 'just in case'. So how do course setters achieve this and keep the runners happy? The last thing we expect is a walkers' course with a few controls placed much further out to get distance for the runners.

The very first thing to do when you get a copy of the map on which you are setting a course is to check the scale. Don't believe what you are told; check it against the Melway (or any better method you may have) to be sure. Set your armchair course, and the next thing you need to do is measure an 'all controls' course for length. If it's 14km, it's too long. Think about how long it takes a good runner to do 1km and set the 'all controls' length at just a bit more than it would take that good runner to get all controls and be back in an hour. When in doubt, check the street O brochure. In the winter we run to time, but in summer with scatter courses the brochure says about 10km for A course runners.

If your course is too long to be achievable, you have wasted your time putting out controls which no-one will get to. Walkers expect to use more than half

the map and get more than half the controls. Did you allow for that?

One useful method for setting courses is the onion. In the same way as an onion has rings getting larger towards the perimeter, set your controls with three or four ways out from the start, and getting progressively further away. Those initial three or four ways out should be not further than 350 - 400 metres from the start - far enough so the runners can't clean them all up easily, and close enough so the walkers feel as if they are getting somewhere. There are lots of other theories for setting an interesting course, but having a big 'hole' in the middle of the map with no controls in it doesn't work for walkers.

Have you ever heard someone say they love running down long courts or dead end streets, only to have to run back out again? I don't think so. The only excuse for this abomination would be if the map is tiny and you need to get enough length out of it. My personal theory is that five minutes between controls is good, 6 minutes is tricky and anything longer spoils my chance of a good route. So does putting the five point controls on the perimeter of the map. By all means put a few good points far out to attract the runners, but use the idea that all five of the five point controls should be within the reach of the best of the walkers.

I'm not ignoring the C runners here. Imagine turning over your map and with 40 minutes (less if we have started late) realising you can't make a good route choice out of what is available. It's either follow the leader or do it in reverse; come in late, or settle for an unsatisfying course.

But what we want is satisfaction. We want to feel that we've socialised, chosen a good route, got back on time and exercised all at the same time. Otherwise we may as well have stayed at home. These are my personal ideas, but there are course setters' notes online on the StreetO website. If you set one of those punishing courses, did you read them first?

How far would you go for a weeknight Street-O? OK, I'll admit that I have purchased "All 4" season tickets and will possibly go as far North as South Morang (odd how an extreme Northern point is known as "South" something), as far South as Hallam, as far East as Lilydale and as far West as Caroline Springs. However, this Summer, I have had the opportunity to go much further East in search of Street-O and took part in the second event of the Auckland (NZ) Summer Series.

Some of you know that I do a bit of work-related travel. Unfortunately this usually means missing one or more weeknight events. When the trip to Auckland was arranged, I decided to enquire about weeknight events there. It happens that there is a NZ orienteer, Steve Oram, who is both an AOC (Auckland Orienteering Club) and a BK member. Steve's work brings him to Melbourne very frequently and he usually makes the effort to come to weeknight events when he is here. I spoke with Steve, and yes, there was weeknight orienteering in Auckland, and better still, the event that week was close to the central city where I was working. So I packed my running gear, and on the Wednesday evening I made my way up (actually South-East but very definitely UP elevation-wise) to the Auckland Domain where the start location was. The Domain is a large parkland area and as soon as I entered the area I saw people running everywhere with maps; I soon obtained directions to the start.

Arriving at the start, I quickly discovered that things were organised somewhat differently to our weeknight Park/Street events. Think Bush-O. You can start any time between 5:30 - 7:00 pm and all are line courses. The significance of the latter didn't sink in at the time. There were a number of courses on offer: 14 km, 9 km, 4.7 km and a couple of shorter ones. OK, I thought, "I run 10 km in A Course in Melbourne, so 9 km here will be fine..."

I paid my entry fee - NZ\$5 - and was handed two colour maps with pre-marked courses in a plastic bag. I must say that this is very good value for what works out to be about the same as our Summer Series entry fee. I did get the members' discount rate for being a DROC member - apparently members of any orienteering club in the world qualify for this discount. Some business colleagues in NZ tell me that colour photocopying/printing there is quite a bit cheaper than the rates that we typically pay in Melbourne, so it seems that orienteers frequently benefit by getting colour maps.

Start times are self-allocated in order to minimise the personnel required to run the event, in fact all the timing relies on the honesty of the competitors. So I set off at my allocated time of 6:22 PM. The first part of the event was on a detailed parkland map, 1:5000 with 3m contours. The controls were plates at ground level (no flags), often well-hidden and were generally on typical bush-O type features. In fact the only two controls that you could not have described using IOF symbols were a "Transformer" and a "Lamp Post".

The first few controls were straightforward enough, although I took a little while to get used to the scale and overshot a couple of them. However it then became a bit more difficult as I got out of the more public open areas and into the parts of the Domain with more vegetation. I guess plants grow a lot better in New Zealand due to the higher rainfall. Their light green "slow run" on the map is more like my idea of "fight", and the next shade "difficult to run", I would describe more as "impenetrable jungle". This, combined with the steepness of some of the areas involved me having to take the long way around to attack some of the controls but eventually I located and punched the first eight of the seventeen controls on my course.

Then the fun really began. The North-Eastern edge of the Auckland Domain is bordered by a railway line. After Control 8, we were required to follow a track along the line and cross via a tunnel under the railway. This took us onto the second map. This was a "street" map named "Parnell-Remuera" which was more in the style of our Street-O maps. The difference was that the scale was 1:15000 with 20 m contours. And yes, there were plenty of contours.

Although the tunnel was marked on the map, it simply appeared to lead into an out-of-bounds area adjacent to the railway line. When I got there, I found a track along the railway, so I assumed that I had to run South along the track until I reached a street, from where I could then navigate my way to Control 9. So I ran nearly a kilometre along the railway only to discover that it went into a tunnel, the street was about 10 metres above me and I was facing a vertical brick wall!

As there was no way to climb up to the street, I had no alternative but to run back to the tunnel and then try heading North. After heading North of the tunnel, I discovered an unmapped walkway with a sign "To Parnell". Apparently some local knowledge was required for this part of the course! I followed the walkway and eventually came out onto Parnell Rd. I only knew it was Parnell Rd because someone had taken us to dinner there on a previous visit to Auckland. I had to run up and down the road for a bit to work out exactly where I was.

Having done this, I finally got back into the course and headed towards Control 9, but by now I had spent nearly an hour since the start. The courses closed at 7:30 and it was already close to 7:20. So unfortunately I was forced to make the decision to quit the course, head back to the start and DNF. This was a real shame as I had been having a good time despite my difficulties. It was a perfect evening for running - sunny but not too warm and I had the pleasure of running in an area that was both interesting and new to me.

With hindsight, I should have realised how much longer the actual running distance was than the quoted straight-line measured distance. I think in these areas it could have been up to 50% more so the "9 km" course was probably about 13 km. Either I should have started around 5:30 to allow adequate time, or done the shorter "4.7 km" course which didn't go out of the Domain.

Some other comments of interest about the Auckland events:

- Only one event is run per week, and the night varies from Monday to Thursday. I guess this is to give opportunity to those who may have commitments on a specific night. They don't have the luxury of four series as we do here
- There were nearly 200 competitors on the night I attended. Steve Oram told me that attendances tend to increase as the season progresses and they have had close to 400 on occasion
- They seem to put a lot of effort into setting up the event - I would guess that it took most of the afternoon to set up the event that I attended, or that many people were involved putting out controls (or both)

If you are going to Auckland in Summer, check out their events calendar at www.orienteingauckland.org.nz/ - I'll certainly attend another of these events if the opportunity arises. I just won't be quite so ambitious with the distance!

PARK / STREET CHORUS - by Wally Cavill

Sung to the tune of "The Old Bullock Dray", with apologies to those plagiarized

Don't talk at briefings - let's have some Shush!
When you have finished, don't run or push
Take care of locals, they have their rights
Turn your cheeks to ugly ones, their nasty dogs bite!
Enjoy your outing - help where you can,
Plenty of exercise extends a life span
Treat all roads as loaded, just like a gun
We are not here to beat all, just have some fun
Look first to left, and then look to right
Look left again then for dangers in sight . . .

And you'll never ever get runned over!