



BEACONSFIELD REVISITED

Reflections on the event that started it all

The event that started the present orienteering movement in Australia was held on 23 August 1969 in Upper Beaconsfield, in the hills south-east of Melbourne.

My own memories of the event include:

- an expectation, as an experienced 24-hour walker (= rogainer), that it was going to be easy (how wrong I was!);
- plotting my control locations from grid references (rogaining-style) then subsequently checking the master maps (accessible after the start) to discover that almost all were in slightly different places;
- running down a long straight stretch of road in the opposite direction from a fit-looking athlete in track gear, and wondering which of us was wrong;
- visiting several clearings and looking at the view in order to work out which one fitted the description for Control 3 (see below);
- succumbing to cramps in a deep scrubby gully at the last control and struggling to the finish; and
- thinking that this was just a one-off event providing a novel change from bushwalking (wrong again!!).

The following article presents the memories of some other current orienteers who were also present at the event.

In 1979, the VOA ran a 10th Anniversary event in the same area, which has since been overtaken by urban development plus a disastrous bushfire.

David Hogg

The Organiser's View

Tom Andrews organised the event and learnt the fundamentals of orienteering in the process:

My first exposure to orienteering was in June 1969 when, during a business trip to Sweden, Alvar Kjellstrom, the managing director of AB Broderna Kjellstrom (Silva Compasses), took me to see the Swedish Orienteering Championships at Uppsala. Alvar Kjellstrom, with his older brothers Arvid and Bjorn were Swedish Orienteering Relay Champions in the early 1930s.

Having a few years earlier retired from track and field competition with the Richmond Harriers, running still held a lot of interest for me. Seeing the competitors sprinting to the finish at Uppsala gave me the idea to try organising a similar event on my return to Australia.

Armed with advice from Sweden, I contacted Peter Wills-Cooke, a shot putter/discus thrower at the Richmond Harriers, whose father owned an acre property at Upper Beaconsfield, some 40 kilometres east of Melbourne. Little did I know then that Victoria's state forests would have provided much better terrain and maps than the privately owned land at Upper Beaconsfield.

All we had was a 1:63,300 (1 inch = 1 mile) black-and-white map, which we enlarged, and set out a couple of courses. The longer one covered about 5 miles and crossed nearly 20 properties. Each owner was contacted to explain reason for access request. Explaining orienteering was like introducing a new religion! (Time-consuming!). One owner refused access, due to dogs, which meant reducing the courses. (Again time consuming for a couple of rookies).

Peter finally drew the map, enlarged it to 4 inch = 1 mile. I set the courses and prepared clue sheets. After visiting the chosen control points, most had to be changed again. At that stage I did not know how to use a compass with a map. I remember opening a Silva compass pack, getting out the instructions pamphlet and trying to learn the Silva 1-2-3 system on the way to Control 1 from the chosen starting point.

One control description point was 'clearing with a good view', which was subsequently joked about in an issue of the British Orienteering Federation's magazine.

Between the above chores, we obtained about 20 four-gallon drums and painted them red and white (2 weekends). Each weighed around 4 kilograms.

With two to three weeks to go, I contacted the media with the news that a 'new sport from Sweden' was about to be introduced. Notices of invitation were sent to bushwalking and athletics clubs.

On the day about 28 starters took part. We also attracted three officials from the Victorian Amateur Athletics Association (VAAA), mainly to observe that the code of 'amateurism' was not tampered with. This was running and they controlled running and all Harrier activities were the VAAA's responsibilities. However, as there were no notable professional athletes taking part and no big monetary prizes they left us alone with a warning to officially advise them of any future events that involved running!

The start and finish took place at the Pine Hotel in Upper Beaconsfield. The hotel provided an old shed in the back that was used as changing rooms and a single shower.

The media coverage was unbelievable, despite the event clashing with the last round of the VFL home-and-away matches. Both Channels 7 and 9 were there and provided television coverage, plus the Sun, Age and Herald newspapers. The Melbourne scandal tabloid 'The Truth' sent their top reporter, Evan Whitton, who took part in the event and wrote a story with photos that ran to a page and a half.

One of the participants was MUMC member Annabelle Roth, who competed wearing very brief shorts. Blackberries and bracken left a number of marks on her legs at the end. The Truth's page 7 headline was 'The Girl with the Lacerated Legs'. The story continued to page 8, subheaded 'Shower was Her Reward'.

The first event may not have been an outstanding success, judging by the two dozen or so entries, but the interest created by the media and word of mouth from those present laid a sound foundation for subsequent events.

Tom Andrews

The Winner's Memories

Ron Frederick, a veteran of 24-hour walks and a member of the winning team in the inaugural intervarsity 'orienteering' competition, was the fastest finisher:

There was significant media publicity about a forthcoming 'orienteering' event to be held at Beaconsfield, 45 kilometres south-east of Melbourne. As I had enjoyed MUMC 24-hour walks (now called rogaining), I thought it would be interesting to try participating in a shorter event.

The day was fine and on arrival at the assembly area (beside the Beaconsfield Pub) I noticed that Tom Andrews and a number of fellow members from the Richmond Harriers appeared well set up with much bunting and many time-keepers.

The controls consisted of four-gallon petrol drums painted red and white. Some had self-inking stamps attached. The map was of course black and white, a scaled-up version of the 1:63,360 army map. One checkpoint was located in an orchard and I was most impressed to find that each tree had an individual dot on the map with the checkpoint being therefore easily located within the orchard. My attire was t-shirt and shorts and Dunlop Volleys.

I still have kind thoughts for the organisers as I apparently dropped my control card between the last control and the finish. They recorded my time when I first crossed the line but then allowed me to go back and look for my card which I successfully did.

The media was in attendance at the event. The Melbourne Truth ran an article entitled 'The Girl With the Lacerated Legs'. Their photographer generously handed Annabelle Roth a can of Fosters before taking a photograph of her to accompany the Truth article on the event. Annabelle later married an Anglican bishop.

The finish of the event was also beside the Beaconsfield Pub. Such a choice was appreciated by many competitors.

Ron Frederick

How a Novice Saw It

Graham Moon finished third in his first attempt at this type of competition:

A fellow club-mate at Oakleigh Athletics Club, Geoff James, first asked me if I wanted to train at Beaconsfield. Somebody from the Richmond Club was setting a map-and-compass cross-country course there and as I was then in the Army, Geoff thought I could do the compass work.

Ah — the blind leading the blind!

Anyway we turned up and picked up a map. I had a prismatic compass and off we went into the paddocks, bush and across the roads. Geoff and I were both A-grade athletes at that time so the distance didn't worry us (too much). We managed to get lost but of course that was due to the poor map — nothing at all to do with my compass-work or Geoff's map reading. We passed one runner several times who obviously had more brains than us. He had arranged for his girlfriend to meet him every time he crossed a road. There she was waiting... waiting... waiting with a couple of cold beers. (I never claimed to be the smartest orienteer).

Eventually, we arrived at the finish line minus control card.

Geoff didn't want to go look for it but even then sanity was not my strong point so off I went. I found the card at the last control and so recorded a finish: 3rd place.

What do I remember most?

- Having to think... not mindless running around an athletics track.
- No-one to help me — no sitting behind and waiting for the last lap.
- No guilt in having a beer on the verandah of the pub after the event.
- People standing around after the event talking about it — nobody did that at Olympic Park.

It was the start of 20 years involvement in orienteering. I still enjoy those four factors:

- thinking,
- making the decisions,
- socialising,
- reminiscing,

that make orienteering what it is.

Roll on another 20 years!

Graham Moon

RESULTS (course length 6.8 km)

1. Ron Frederick	1:45:52
2. Ian Lovegrove	1:46:14
3. Graham Moon	1:49:40
4. Tom Kneen	1:53:40
5. David Hogg	2:19:50
6. Roy Whitehead	3:05:20
7. Annabelle Roth	3:12:40
8. Mike Hubbert	3:19:24
9. Terry Hunter and Roy Paton	3:36:45
10. Robert Wallace and Paul Bryant	3:57:43
11. Evan Whitton	4:10:12

TOM KNEEN REMEMBERED

The fourth finisher at the Upper Beaconsfield event was Tom Kneen, an active bushwalker, mountaineer and 24-hour-walker with the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club. He was not a committed orienteer, competing occasionally during Victoria's 'black-and-white' days, but was a friend of many orienteers whose background lay in bushwalking and related activities.

Tom died tragically in a mountaineering accident on Mount Feathertop in the Victorian Alps in 1985, while most orienteers were attending WOCARN'85. He was a regular visitor to the mountain, having played a crucial role in the building of the MUMC hut there.

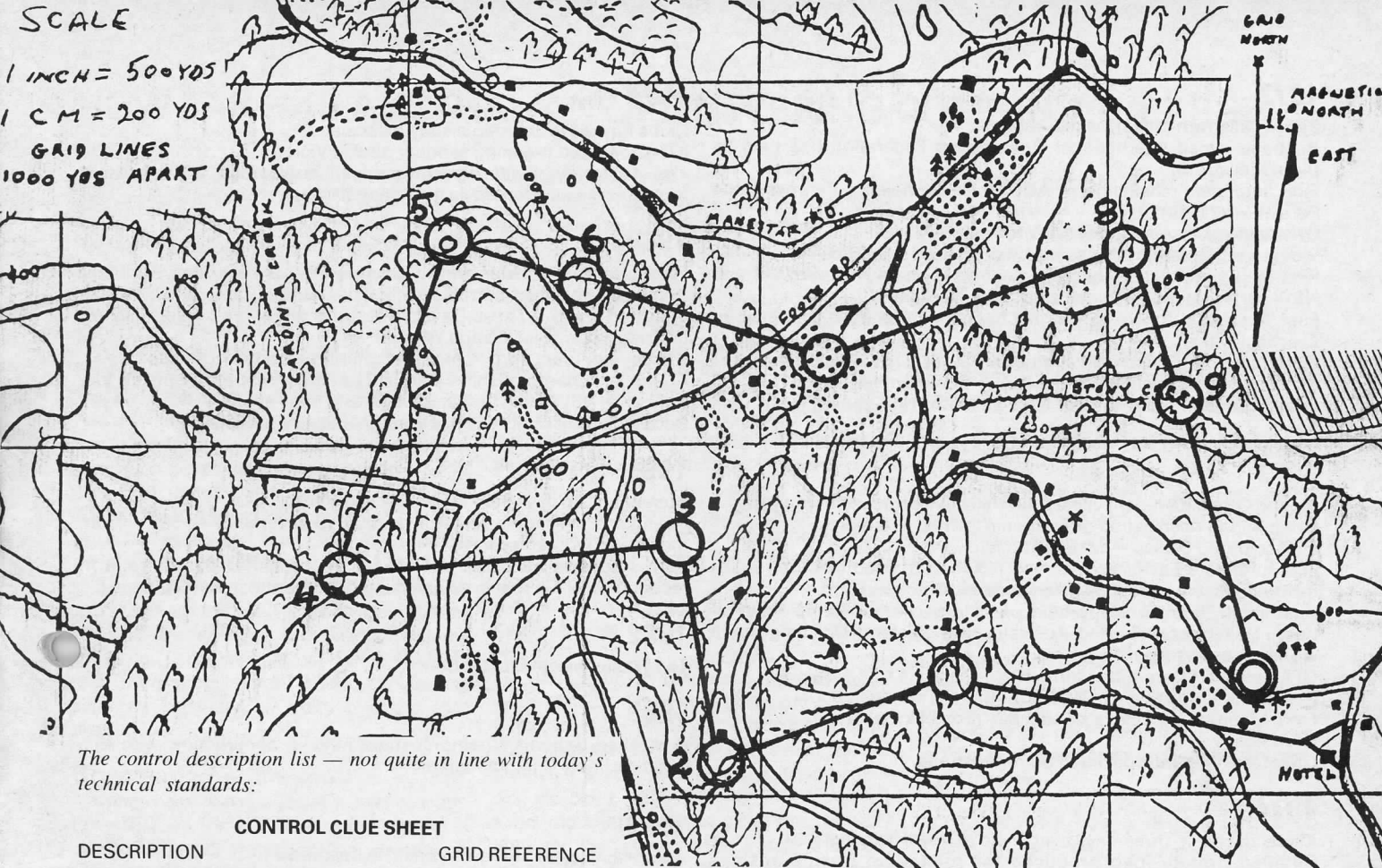
The Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs has applied for the track to the hut that runs up the North West Spur to be officially renamed the Tom Kneen Track in his memory. This application has been supported by the Bright Shire Council. The Federation is currently awaiting a response from the Victorian Place Names Committee.

This instruction sheet was supplied to competitors. A few things have changed over 20 years!

RICHMOND ORIENTEERING CLUB GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Competitors should pay particular attention to distances, as well as direction during competition.
2. There are numerous small tracks, which are not shown on the map. Go by compass direction only, when proceeding cross-country.
3. There are numerous small gullies, which are not shown on the map. Keep in mind that all gullies will take time to cross and will slow you down.
4. Observe out of bounds areas shown on the map.
5. None of the fences are marked on the map. Expect to cross quite a few. Care should be taken when crossing fences or gullies.
6. Gates should be left as you find them. Best to vault over them.
7. Tread carefully over rough ground. Quite often it is uneven, so watch your ankles.
8. Anyone coming across an injured competitor, who is unable to report to the finish, should mark the map accurately for position, abandon the race and report to the finish for help. Remember this is only a game.
9. When running on roads, keep to the right hand side, facing oncoming traffic.
10. Don't follow competitors in front of you blindly. They may be going in the wrong direction. Go the way you think is right.
11. Don't talk to other competitors during the race. Advice should neither be sought nor given.
12. Don't forget to allow for magnetic variation (declination) every time you set a new direction on your compass. You must deduct 11 degrees.
13. Avoid taking compass bearings within 10 ft of metal objects, like tin sheds, fences.
14. Immediately after the start, competitors will proceed to the master map area to copy the control point locations onto their maps. This is a time to make haste slowly. Incorrectly copied control points will cost you valuable time during the competition.
15. Every control point is marked with a red four gallon drum, with a white stripe and can be seen from up to 50 yds away. All control points are coded. The first five controls have a self inking stamp attached. You must stamp your control card in the space provided with this stamp. The last four controls don't have a stamp. Here you must copy the code letter marked on the side of the drum onto your control card. Loss of the control card will disqualify you from the competition.
16. Where competitors are competing in pairs, the time of the second man through the finishing line will be taken for results.
17. The first control marker will be removed at 3.30 p.m. The finish control closes at 5.
18. Maximum time for the course is 2 hrs 30 mins. Competitors taking longer than the maximum time to complete the course will not count in the list of placegetters.
19. **MOST IMPORTANT.** All competitors must report to the finish judges, whether they complete the course or not. We don't want to start a search party looking for you.
20. Remember to trust your compass implicitly; keep track of distance covered and use every bit of information shown on the map.
21. Report to the START sign 10 minutes before your actual starting time shown on your control card, to receive your map.

GOOD LUCK!



CONTROL CLUE SHEET

DESCRIPTION	GRID REFERENCE
1. An old log on the hillside	425 153
2. By the dam wall	419 151
3. The clearing with a good view	417 157
4. By the smaller gully	407 156
5. North side of the dam	412 166
6. An unfinished bridge over the gully	414 165
7. In the orchard	422 163
8. In the scrub	431 165
9. The gully junction	432 162
10. Finish	434 153

Part of our first O-map with the course marked



CHRONOLOGY OF AUSTRALIAN ORIENTEERING

Below are listed some of the more significant 'milestones' in the development of orienteering in Australia.

Orienteering 'pre-history'

1947	First Melbourne University Mountaineering Club 24-hour walk
1955-1957	Orienteering events held in SA, South Australian Orienteering Association formed (later disbanded)
1962-	Orienteering events organised in Canberra for Canberra Bushwalkers
1964	First intervarsity (unofficial) 24-hour walk
1965	Paddy Pallin Orienteering Contest started
1969	First official intervarsity 'orienteering' (24-hour rogaine) — 31 May - 1 June

1969

Inaugural event held at Upper Beaconsfield — 23 August
 First organisation to describe itself as an O-club (Richmond Orienteering Club)
 First Victorian Championships (You Yangs) — 21 December.

THE AUSTRALIAN ORIENTEER August 1989

Compiled by David Hogg

1970

Victorian Orienteering Association and Orienteering Federation of Australia formed — 21 April
 The Victorian Orienter (forerunner of *The Australian Orienter*) commenced publication as a newsletter — May
 First OFA Annual General Meeting — 22 May (in Adelaide in conjunction with Intersvarsity Orienteering).

1971

Orienteering started in Canberra (Black Mountain) — 16 May
 ACT Orienteering Association formed — 14 October
 Orienteering started in NSW — November
 First ACT Championships held (Pierces Creek Forest) — 21 November
 First Australia-New Zealand Challenge and first Australian Championships held (Puckapunyal, Vic.) — 28 November
 First formally constituted O-club formed (Bennelong Occasional Orienteers).

1972

Bjorn Kjellstrom (Silva) visited Australia
Australia joined International Orienteering Federation (fee paid by Bjorn Kjellstrom)
First 'interstate' challenge — ACTOA vs Bennelong (Penrose State Forest) — 20 February
Orienteering Association of NSW formed — March
Victorian Orienteering Association organised into clubs
First major interstate orienteering competition (in ACT with Vic. and NSW participation) — Queen's Birthday weekend.
First Australian to run in World Championships (Rod Dominish in Czechoslovakia)
Ski-orienteering event held at Mt Baw Baw (Vic.) — 27 August
First Tasmanian event held (The Lea) — 9 September
First Australian team to visit New Zealand (November), open men only.

1973

Roland Offrell (Sweden) visited Australia to instruct in map-making.
Orienteering Association of Tasmania formed — 6 March
First coloured O-map — Mt Egerton, Vic.
First interstate Easter competition (Canberra), used coloured maps including first map to show granite detail (Smokers Gap).
Australian Championships held on coloured map (Camp Hawkesbury, NSW), incorporated Australia-New Zealand Challenge with women's and veterans' classes
OFA Technical Committee formed
First orienteering event in Western Australia conducted
First orienteering relays conducted (Bostock Reservoir, Vic.) — 9 December
Orienteering re-introduced to South Australia.

1974

Kareelah Easter Three-days event held in Royal National Park
Detailed granite map produced for Australian Championships (Murray's Corner, ACT) — Queen's Birthday weekend
First Australians competed in Swedish O-Ringen Five-days
First Australian team to World Championships (Denmark)
Orienteering Association of WA formed — 1 August
First orienteering event in Queensland conducted, Queensland Orienteering Association formed
First event in northern Tasmania — 1 October.

1975

Swedish Orienteering Federation and Australian Government sponsored a visit to Australia by four Swedish orienteering instructors, National Workshop held in Victoria — April
Clubs formed in ACT
OFA Badge Scheme introduced, first Badge Event held (Kowen Forest, ACT) — 24 August
First Australian Club Relay Championships and Family Relays held near Wagga Wagga — 8-9 November.

1976

Easter Three-days held outside NSW (Bambara, Vic.) and becomes a national event
First Budkavle event held (Loftus, NSW)
Silva Australian Orienteer of the Year trophy introduced
Australia decided to apply for 1985 World Championships
Clubs formed in South Australia, followed by Orienteering Association of SA.

1977

Australia represented in the World Ski-O Championships (by Danny Flynn).

1978

Australian Five-Days held at Ballarat (January) and attracted European competitors
First orienteering event in Darwin conducted — 19 March
Clubs formed in Western Australia.

1979

Clubs formed in Tasmania and Queensland
IOF-sponsored mapping seminar held in Victoria
The Australian Orienteer commenced publication in its present format and was adopted as the national magazine of the OFA.

1980

Inaugural Pacific Orienteering Championships held near Canberra (Mulloon Creek), as part of Pacific Orienteering Carnival which also included Easter Three-Days (Goulburn area) and badge event (Murrumbidgee, near Wagga Wagga)
IOF Development and Promotion Committee visited Australia
Australian Championships held in Tasmania (first time outside Victoria-ACT-NSW) with both individual and relay events
Tom Andrews awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his role in establishing orienteering in Australia.

1981

Australian Six-days held at Ballarat (January)
Australia's best team result in a WOC (Switzerland) — 6th in both men's and women's relays
Tom Andrews awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his role in establishing orienteering in Australia.

1982

Ted Wester elected to IOF Council.

1983

Australian Schools Championships held in conjunction with Victorian Schools Championships.

1984

Australian Easter Three-Days held in Tasmania
Silva Award for development of orienteering introduced, first recipient Ted Wester
Spring West Carnival held in WA
First training camp for WOC85
First Australian Coach appointed for WOC team (Clive Roper)
Top End Orienteers club formed in Northern Territory

1985

Second training camp for WOC85 in conjunction with Australian Easter Three-days (Wagga Wagga)
National Score Event conducted for the first time (Honeysuckle Creek, ACT)
1985 World Championships (WOC85) staged at Bendigo, supported by Australia's biggest O-Carnival, WOCARN
First award made to an M100 orienteer — Stewart (Grandpa) Nicoll at the ACT Championships.

1986

Australian Schools Championships held as a separate event for the first time (Ti-ree Gully, ACT).

1987

Orienteering event conducted as part of the First Australian Masters Games (Tasmania)

1988

Asia Pacific Orienteering Championships (APOC'88) and World Cup heat held in Tasmania — January
First National Coach appointed (Rob Vincent)
Hugh Cameron appointed to IOF Council to represent Asia-Pacific region
Australian Championships Carnival held in WA.

1989

Australian Schools Championships to be held with official endorsement of Australian Schools Sports Council (Canberra) — 3-4 October.