

Blueprint

Bennelong Northside Orienteers Newsletter April 2008

A lot has happened since last Blueprint. So here are a few highlights over the last few months and the months to come.

New Secretary

Michael Fisher has take over as Bennelong Northside Orienteers secretary. Thanks very much, Michael for taking on this task. Many thanks also to Wayne Pepper who is standing down after 8 years as secretary, Wayne will continue as club captain, organising Metro League teams.

New Member

Welcome to Sandra Thomas, who has joined Bennelong this year. Sandra has been to a few of the Metro League events last year and enjoyed the experience and has now joined the club. Welcome Sandra.

Wedding Bells

Congratulations to Eric Morris and Elise Kennedy who were married in Canberra in March. It was great seeing our newlyweds at Easter in Dubbo.



Metro League 2008

Bennelong has entered 3 teams in the Metro League this year, one each in B, C and D division. Wayne will shortly be emailing members asking who will be available for the various events this season.

The first event will be at Haberfield on 4th May, followed by Campbelltown on 25th May, Glenbrook on 25th June, St Ives on 20th July, Marayala on 17th August and Lapstone on 7th September.

The St Ives event is being organised by Bennelong, with Rob Spry remapping and OCADing the western part of the old Davidson Park map. Rob is also the course setter, Michael is the organiser and Wayne Pepper is the controller.

This year there will also be a schools competition run in conjunction with Metro League. Any High School student is welcome to join, the contact for this event is Barbara Hill who has been promoting orienteering in schools. Even if you are the only orienteer in your school, Barbara can organise you into a team.

Easter in Dubbo

14 Bennelong members travelled to Dubbo for the Easter 3 day carnival this year. 3 of our members were successful in gaining places over the 3 days. Congratulations to Gordon Wilson, 2nd in M55, Steve Flick 2nd in M60 and Kathy Cox 3rd in W45AS.

Gordon after a bit of a disaster on the 1st day dragged himself up from 13th on the first day with wins on day 2 and 3. Steve also won day 3 after being 2nd on the first 2 days. Kathy was rewarded for her consistency, she had no outstanding days but worked her way up through the field when others faltered in the rocky terrain.

From my point of view it was an enjoyable Easter, the terrain was challenging each day, there was rocky ground and fallen timber everywhere making it hard to keep a reasonable pace throughout the course. This was one event where I could appreciate how good the top orienteers are. Watching at the spectator controls how easily the top orienteers just cruised through the terrain made me appreciate the skill they have, in the same areas I was stumbling over rocks and logs in a very ungainly fashion.

Others in Bennelong at Dubbo included Sam Tsang who finished 5th in M35AS, myself 6th in M60, newlywed Elise Kennedy finished 8th in W Open B, Judi Hay 11th in W55, Bruce Dawkins and Rod Parkin both finished in 22nd in M65 and M50 respectively. The rest of us failed to finish all 3 days, with Mel Cox being particularly unlucky after injuring himself after a very promising 4th on Day 1.

The carnival was a combined effort from all NSW clubs with Bennelong being assigned parking duties and Rob Spry being very involved with the overall organisation. Below is a picture of Kathy with the big hand on parking duty.



Social at Orange

For those of us travelling to Orange for State League 6 and 7, we plan to have a social at the Robin Hood Hotel, 30 Burrendong Way, Orange 2800, ph 63631999 (also access via Albert St off Dalton St near Mitchell Hwy). It has a large bistro with a typical menu. Lets say we meet there around 7pm on Sat 17th May.

NOSH footrace

The 34th Great NOSH Footrace will be held on 1st June. Bennelong gets a good share of the profits from this event, so we will be asking for helpers on the day and on the day before the event to mark the track.

NSW Championships

Bennelong is organising the NSW championships this year on 14th Sept. We have a new map only 1.25 hours drive from the centre of Sydney. The planning is well under way. There has already been quite a bit of interest from interstate following the hand out and display at Dubbo at Easter. Again we'll need plenty of helpers on the day, all helpers will be able to get a run.

Hunting in State Forests

A warning for anyone who may be in State Forests, the number of forests open for hunting has been increased and will now include Belanglo, Lidsdale and other forests to be used for the World Masters events in 2009. OANSW has protested to the state government about this increase in hunting and its potential to harm orienteering and in particular mapping and course setting. The issue was discussed at our recent committee meeting.

OANSW each year sends a list of dates of orienteering events in State Forests to the relevant authorities and hunting is banned during a period leading up to and following the events for that particular forest.

None of our maps are affected so Bennelong will not be sending a protest letter, but if any individual wishes to make a personal letter on this issue feel free to do so.

Summer Series

The Summer Series is over now. Many thanks for all those helping to organise and assist at our events. In a few months we will be asked to bid for events in the 2008-09 season. I'd be happy to hear from anyone suggesting new areas to map. This season Mel Cox remapped the Killarney Heights map, I'm thinking of extending it to the NE to include Forestville Oval for next seasons Summer Series.

Club O tops

The following Bennelong clothing is still available. See Bruce or Janet Dawkins if you want any item.

New Coolmax O tops \$20

XL 3
L 1
M 15
S 2
XS 2

Trimtex O top \$15

M 1

Blue O pants \$15

XS 3
S 4

Navy Blue T shirts \$5

XL 5
L 4
M 1
S 2

White T shirts \$5

L 4
M 8
S 3
XS 4

Rob Spry recently returned from a trip to South America and Antarctica. Below is an account of his trip.

GEOGRAPHICAL ADVENTURES IN THE DEEP SOUTH

Easter Island, or Rapanui, is a Chilean territory although it is over 3,000 km from South America. In fact it is remote from *anywhere*. The original islanders apparently had no concept of any other land, and believed that their 30km x 15 km island was the entire universe. This may explain why the famous moai statues faced *inwards* towards the interior, not outwards. It is not quite a palm-lined Pacific paradise, but nevertheless fascinating due to its history. The volcanic island is entirely barren except for recent plantings of eucalyptus which give parts an oddly Australian inland appearance.

So to the mainland of South America. Both Santiago and Buenos Aires were impressive cities, despite their recent turbulent history, with friendly people and lively culture provided that you could manage a little bit of Spanish to get around. A problem in Buenos Aires is that there are two airports on opposite sides of the city. I had to do a high-speed 'exclusivo' taxi transfer to catch my domestic flight.

But cities were not the main purpose of my trip. A 3-hour domestic flight takes you due south to El Calafate, a new tourist-oriented town in the middle of the treeless Patagonian desert. Orienteering would be easy here – no green! Even in mid summer, giant icebergs float past the town down Lago Argentino from the Perito Moreno and other glaciers rising in the Andes mountains. I did a fairly strenuous 7-day guided trek in Torres del Paine National Park, past a series of spectacular granite mountains which are eastern outliers (and therefore do not have the constant rain and wind) of the main Andes *cordillera*. In February the weather was fine and sunny even at 50 degrees south. Llamas, flamingos, rheas and cougars all live in the Park although I only saw the first three.



Grey
Glacier, in
Torres del
Paine NP

The main purpose of the trip was a cruise to the Antarctic Peninsula from Ushuaia, which calls itself the southernmost city in the world. Ushuaia is a very tourist-oriented town whose interest for travellers is the airport alongside the Beagle Channel, and frantically-busy shipping wharf. It also has Tierra del Fuego National Park, the southern end of the Pan-American Highway, and beautiful bushwalks thorough Antarctic Beech forests although it takes some persistence to find out about the latter.

The *Akademik Sergei Vavilov* is a purpose-built Russian polar research ship which earns valuable foreign exchange by conveying rich Westerners on polar expeditions. I appreciated the stabilisers and other design features on the 2-day crossing of the Drake Passage. We only had a force 9 gale, which is considered fairly mild in these parts. (on the return trip to Cape Horn it was so calm that we experienced the "Drake Lake"). The compensation is that strong winds provide the best conditions to see the beautiful Wandering Albatross.

We headed straight for the Antarctic Circle at Crystal Sound, latitude 66° 33' 66" south. After spotting the first tabular iceberg we punched through a thin barrier of sea ice to enter Crystal Sound. Crossing the Antarctic Circle is a rare experience and a celebration was in order on a brilliant sunny day.



Crystal Sound is one of a series of protected waterways running up the west side of the Antarctic Peninsula, between the mainland and offshore islands. The scenery was stunning. The Peninsula comprises a range of jagged mountains and ice plateaus generally 600 – 100 metres high, running straight down into the sea where the ice ends in continuous lines of glaciers and icefalls. Only in a few places are there small rock outcrops. We cruised north east through the channels for 6 days towards the South Shetland Islands. Because it is sheltered this has been the main area of historical activity in Antarctica, starting from sealing and whaling through to scientific research stations (the Australian bases are in an entirely different part of the continent, generally south of Hobart).

We were able to do 2 shore landings each day from Zodiacs, usually on rocky promontories where there has been past occupation or bases. This involved putting on layer after layer of thermals and waterproofs in the “mud room”. Visitor numbers have increased in recent years and the landing points, schedules and numbers are closely regulated by a voluntary agreement between tour companies.

The wildlife activity was amazing, like being in the middle of a David Attenborough documentary. Penguins, birds and seals all squeeze on to the few rocky outcrops to nest, breed, and (at the end of summer) moult in preparation for winter. This leads to incredible population pressures such as at Hannah Point where a chinstrap penguin rookery is only fifty metres from a nesting site of the Giant Southern Petrel, a formidable predator. The petrels have dinner laid on and inevitably, a penguin chick was attacked and eaten right in front of our eyes. Such is nature.

We visited Vernadsky Station at 65° 15' south, 64° 16' west. This station was originally British, but when the Brits revised their research priorities, they sold it to Ukraine for 1 pound. The station is credited with having discovered the Ozone Hole, which sits over the Antarctic Peninsula, and it continues to be the leading observation centre for that phenomenon. A lot of scientific work is going on into global warming because the Peninsula is one of the areas showing strong evidence in the form of ice sheets breaking up and changes in distribution of penguin species – the different species have different habitat requirements.



Leopard

seal

Probably the highlight was the sea life. Penguins that are so clumsy on land, could be seen swimming in the shallow water near their beaches. A curious leopard seal swam round and round "his" iceberg, while the penguins nearby seemed to know that he was not hungry. Best of all, one rainy day two large humpback whales deliberately swam towards our group of zodiacs and frolicked around, under and between the boats for 2 hours. They were literally close enough to touch.