

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

(by Trevor Gollan, with contributions from Stuart Kurtz & Nicole Mealing)

This year the NSW Championships were located in new rogaining territory on the Kanangra-Boyd Plateau, just south of Jenolan Caves. It's some of the highest country in the Blue Mountains, or is it the Central Tablelands? Our Hash House was only a few metres below the 1200 metre contour and all except one control point were above 1,000 metres. On the course Mt Emperor (1334m), Ben Lomond (1329m) and Mt Budthingeroo (1306m) all crested 1300 metres

With half the course being high moors and swamps, undulating hills, granite outcrops and open forest, the other half was steep with occasional granite outcrops, but still predominantly open forest that dropped into the Hollanders/Kowmung River valleys - exemplified by Box Creek Falls near #100, a series of cascades that tumble 130m down from the plateau. Our course setters, David Williams and Ronnie Taib, were keen to showcase the region and test navigational skills

There were difficulties in creating the course – bound on three sides by the Morong and Kanangra Wildernesses, and in the west by (allegedly) unfriendly, private landowners. We were obliged to use the one-only practical Hash House site, Jensens Clearing, in the south-east corner. An All Night Café was considered and rejected due to workload associated with ANC's. At the end of August the causeway into Jensens was well under water, with two big potholes at each side – uncrossable by standard vehicles. We contributed four cubic metres of rock to the causeway which Parks installed in the final week, ensuring all could access the Hash House. National Parks imposed a 250-person limit which, in the end, was unnecessary because we only received 200 entries. Jensens Clearing could easily host ten times that quota, but the Parks have a concern about walkers impacting the sensitive swamps and bogs. According to quite a few teams we should have been more considerate of the swamps impacting the sensitive walkers

The NSW Champions are Julie Quinn & Susie Spragg who managed to acquire 3,600 points, 200 ahead of second-placed Andy Black and Joel McKay. Julie is a perennial winner of the NSW Champs – this was her 7th time as NSW Champion - but this is the first Women's team to win outright. Paul Griffiths and Stuart Kurtz topped the 8-hour event with 1,350 points. Full results are on our website

<http://act.rogaine.asn.au/navlight/NSWRA/NSW%20Championship%202016/html/>

There was a fault with the Navlight at #85 which slightly complicated results in the 24-hour event and a critical mis-punch at #59 which propelled Rochelle Duerden and Mitchell Lindbeck into the lead in the Under-23 category. This was unfortunate for Elena and Ivan Koudashev, whom we had announced as winners - they ended just 10 points off the lead, and we apologise for the error. Vivien has promised Rochelle and Mitch a jar of his home-made jam to compensate for them missing out on a prize

Other teams struggled with our enforcement of safety equipment at registration, though there was a clear statement in the Final Instructions. It's important that each person carries the mandatory equipment, as specified in the Rules of Rogaining: whistle, space blanket, and at least 1 compression bandage. Quite a few people were not properly prepared, evidenced by the \$200 worth of safety equipment sold at admin. We sell this gear at cost btw, not for profit, to encourage safety

Another salient point about safety equipment is that you should carry it somewhere handy – not deep in the depths of your pack. If you're bitten, gashed, or lost you shouldn't have to shuffle around for several minutes while finding your gear. You may need it quickly

On the subject of injuries, our ever-alert safety squad from BWRS had some work on the weekend. Notably one person in the 8-hour required a ride back to base, a splint for her sprained ankle and subsequent crutches after visiting her medico. Two people had scratched eyes and two people cut their fingers working in the Hash House (something we didn't consider in our risk analysis)

We were fortunate with the weather. After a calm, frosty, Saturday morning the westerly wind built, with regular gusts snuffing caterers' gas flames and battering our tents. For rogainers on the course the wind kept them cooler during the day and warmer at night, so was probably a benefit. The next morning (Monday 17th) was 7° with drizzle/showers and windy. It would have been miserably bleak for everyone involved if that had happened 24 hours earlier. The guys dismantling our Hash House marquees had the worst of it

We were fortunate that the catering trailer axle broke on the way home rather than to the event... it would be difficult to run a Hash House without all that equipment. Perhaps there were one too many potholes on Kanangra Walls Rd? It was Alan's misfortune to be towing the trailer when it failed, and Sonia's car to become bogged when she pulled over to assist. Apart from the personal stress, there was no other damage to our helpers or their vehicles

Prizes were acquired from the local Oberon visitor centre, focussing on local produce: jams, chutneys, olive oil & truffles. This was another way to contribute in small manner to the local community

CREDITS

All our helpers are greatly appreciated – this is a volunteer non-profit organisation that depends on people putting in time, effort and enthusiasm

Course Setting, Vetting, Flag-Hanging: David Williams, Ronnie Taib, Vivien de Remy de Courcelles, Emmanuelle Covert, Roland Cziferszky, Trevor Gollan, Peter Gray, Ian Crakanthorp

Administration: Vivien de Remy de Courcelles, with David Williams, Ronnie Taib

Catering: Alan Mansfield & Sonia Kupina, with 2nd Enfield Scouts

Safety: Dug Floyd, with BWRS

Catering Trailer: Alan Mansfield

Admin Trailer: David Williams & Ronnie Taib

Flag Collection: Ronnie Taib & Ben Itzstein, Pam & Bob Montgomery, Alan Osland, Mardi & John Barnes, Trevor Gollan

Landowners and Carers: Thankyou to Michaela Jones & Hugh Sutton, Rangers with NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service, Oberon

Site Support: Corinna Lueg (thanks for the great photos) & Oliver Pitman

QUOTES, COMPLAINTS and COMPLIMENTS

“That was truly one of the best rogaine courses I’ve ever done (out of more than 150!). Others have said same to me. Congratulations!” [Mike Hotchkis]

“The NSW Championship last weekend was an event not to be missed, if you didn’t make it you missed out on a superb, classic rogaine” [Chris Stevenson’s opening lines in his Forum report, <http://nswrogaining.org/wpblog/2016/10/17/what-you-missed-it/>]

CO-ORDINATOR MUSINGS

In the 1970’s there was a proposal to clear the Boyd Plateau and turn it into a pine forest. Old tracks and sawn tree stumps across the course are evidence of the logging that ended in 1977. We really must acknowledge and appreciate the Colong Committee for preserving the Boyd Plateau natural environment

David and Ronnie chose this area and negotiated the scope with National Parks, Oberon, and I came on-board a bit later to provide co-ordination. It was a pleasant coincidence to find that a rogaine I organised exactly 25 years before had been just to the west of this year’s course

Jaunter 1991 had the Kowmung River as an eastern boundary, including a control on the river just 250m north-east of this years’ #96, another on Lawrie Cone, opposite #83. That course was diverse, including farmland, native & pine forest, a limestone cave and a sinkhole, plenty of waterfalls, and a 100-pointer some way down Morong Deep, not possible nowadays since Morong was declared wilderness in 1997. There are reports on the previous rogaine in NSWRA Newsletter 31 (<http://www.nswrogaining.org/AboutNSWRA/News/PrintedNewsletters/Num31/News31.pdf>)

This was the second course that David and Ronnie have set this year - Ronnie was the leader at the Minigaine in March, David the leader here at the NSW Champs. Bob Gilbert and the Newcastle team also ran two events – Paddy Pallin and Lake Macquarie – and it was my second event for the year, after setting and co-ordinating the Autumnrogaine. We obviously need more people to step up and run events, else the sport will fade. Increasingly outdoor people are swayed by glossy, ultra, outdoor activities. Some of the 8-hour participants told me about their participation in the upcoming XPD AR World Championship near Ulladulla, and it’s only \$8,000 per team entry. How do you compete with that?

I chose to economise on water supply when the best quote available was \$1500. As an alternative Mark extracted the large rubberised water bladder that the Rogaining Association owns, filled it at the Oberon Council Standpipe for a mere \$5 then transported it on a trailer to the Hash House. Lacking the correct connector for the Standpipe, there was a rather bemused reaction in the local Mitre 10 when I asked for “a 50mm female camlock to fill my bladder.” We found one, and all proceeded successfully

My H₂O economizing was to compensate for the loss from running the bus. The contracted bus company had no viable downsize option though we only had nine passengers, so I chose to continue with the original plan - which meant our bus passengers had plenty of room to stretch out on their trip

I sought feedback from some of the Kanangragaine participants:

Stuart Kurtz and Paul Griffiths won the 8-hour competition with 1350 points. Stuart (on the left in this pic) first rogained in 2008 at the Lake Macquarie 12-hour, introduced to the sport by Andrew & Nicole Haigh. Stuart & Paul work together and, since 2010, have teamed up for a couple of rogaines each year



Stuart says: I've only been to Kanangra Walls once before even though I grew up in Oberon and Paul hadn't been there before. It's a very nice rogaing area.

We picked a route that kept us away from the majority of the steeper areas so the going was quite fast with only the more major gully crossings a challenge to push through the scratchy bushes. The downside to this "stay on the plateau" plan was that we were trying to find some of the more difficult control sites in flat, vague areas. We had significant issues with 80 and 84 where we lost a bit of time. This meant we had to make the decision to drop a couple (89 and 50) from our original plan which explains our route from 48 to 68 as we needed to get to the water drop at 20. We also dropped 43 and didn't have time to think about 53 near the end as we knew already that we were going to be late.

The run at the finish down the road from 92 was tough but we seemed to get that second wind that comes from adrenalin and the lollies we picked up at the water drop. Overall we were very happy with the run. The controls, while sometimes hard, were in the correct locations so we quite enjoyed the challenge. The compass came out a lot and there was a fair bit of head scratching trying to match up what we could see around us with the little wiggles in the contours on the map.

We saw plenty of roos and wallabies, a wombat or two, a large black bird with a long fanned tail and a large nest up a tree (we haven't been able to work out what type of bird it was, maybe someone else who knows birds also saw it?) and a rather unhappy brown snake. The snake was about the colour of all the brown grey sticks on the ground and ended up in between the two of us (I obviously stepped right over it). Paul yelled out when he almost stepped on it and I turned around to see it coming towards me with its mouth open and its neck flattened out. Needless to say that was the quickest I moved all day.

The events are very well run. Thanks need to go to all those who are involved putting them on. I can't think of anything to improve them.

I saw two separate lyrebirds up trees while hanging flags, so that's most probably your "large black bird", Stuart. Given their size, they are quite nimble at climbing the tree, but inept flappers as they glide 50-100 metres to safety

Nicole Mealing and Alex Allchin won the Mixed Championship, and with 2680 points they were 7th overall. Nicole's first "serious" rogaine was Dharug Dreamtime, May 2015, near Wisemans Ferry

Nicole says: I've been bushwalking since 2004 however I only ever walked on well signed tracks until about 2½ years ago. In mid-2013 I joined the Sydney Bushwalkers (SBW) and had no idea how to use a compass. SBW got me into the Sydney Summer Series and from these two communities I learnt about rogaing - I haven't looked back since!



What I struggle with most is actually finding a team. I have entered six rogaines this year and all of them with different partners (one was a solo event). One learns pretty quickly that succeeding at a rogaine is not just about your own navigational, nutritional, physical and time management skills, but also about group management and teamwork. This was our first rogaine together and Alex and I were a great fit (phew). We both shared the navigation on every flag (except I think on two where I was almost sleep-walking), we were watching out for each other and we had some really lovely conversations to boot.

I've never walked in this area of the Boyd Plateau before. So far I have only ever been down to the Kowmung and across to Mt Cloudmaker. Box Creek Falls has been on my wish list for the past 6 months though. So much so, that I almost worked a route to ensure I got to Box Creek Falls during the rogaine; however I decided to go for a different route strategy and have left Box Creek Falls for another day when I can sit around and soak them in.

During the event, Alex and I certainly questioned why we hadn't been out to the area before given how lovely it is. We commented a number of times that no matter how the 24-hours went, at least we'd signed up to a stunning region and were seeing a part of bush we probably wouldn't see otherwise.

My highlights were not seeing many other participants (which meant that we were navigating completely independently), the sunset, ascending a spur with the moon shining directly in front of me, devouring a slice of pizza while perched on a rocky knoll at silly o'clock in the morning, and confidently finding flags in the dark.

My lows were trudging around with wet feet and heavy eyelids at 1am, trying to get around the swamp near #41 (after 23 hours, I thought the other participants would have made a nice path for us!! It was part of my route tactic!), and sore feet.

From your splits online, you & Alex obviously pushed hard out along the edge of the course, being at 62, the farthest control, before 5pm. You had some long splits between 10pm and 5am (fatigue-rests? or navigational problems? or just tough country between 103-75-78-101-95? It certainly looks tough) then you really kept pushing along after dawn

What can I say, it's amazing the difference between Night and Day navigation. We're both much better at navigating off features, so we were able to push at about twice the speed during the day as compared to during the night. At night we really had to watch the compass and think about pacing. Plus, I got sleepy at some point.

We only had a handful of stops over the full 24 hours. 1. Getting out head torches (5 mins), 2. northern water stop (15 mins), 3. the rocky knoll at #78 (5 mins), 4. a random spot along a spur to eat more sugar (2 mins), 5. southern water stop (10 mins).

We only had a handful of navigational "errors" but they were all minor - leading to 5-20 mins of time being devoured for each one. These were 82, 97, 93, 75, 86, 80. Everything else was a perfect execution. 86 was our biggest navigational issue, and I think that was purely from fatigue and didn't really burn through that much time (although it felt like it at the time).

I love being out in the bush, I love logical challenges and I love the buzz of finding a flag. Sure, I had sore feet and was tired at times and sometimes I cursed the ascent before me, but that's all part of the adventure. And what can I say, it's truly something to find that cube of white and orange oasis in the pitch black. Especially if it was a perfect navigational execution to find it; or even if it wasn't actually!

I loved this course and I wish the navigation was more like this at other rogaines. The controls were accurate and fair, and not simply put near tracks for easy access - using the tracks was not as advantageous as in other rogaines. The water drops were smartly placed (unlike Lake Macquarie) and the course was large, which meant route planning was crucial.

I used my compass for almost the entire event - my soul purpose for entering this rogaïne was to improve my navigation skills. We weren't expecting to be competitive to be truly honest. A friend lent me a Spectra compass and I have to admit this is the first time I've had such close contact with my map. Typically I navigate off features, but now I'm finally getting a hang of compass work, which made surviving the hours in the dark a million times better than my experience at NavShield earlier this year.

Apart from roos and wombats (baby wombats too) we saw an owl, a snake and a number of other birds.

Any suggestions for this event? It felt to me like the 2pm departure time of the bus from Central was rather early. I would have preferred leaving Sydney at 5pm, say. But thank you for organising the bus. It was a HUGE relief to know that neither of us had to drive home after staying awake all night.

My other suggestion for improvement is for some water to be kept until the very, very end. I packed up my tent and came back to fill up water (my brain was too fuzzy to think to do it the moment we finished) and the kitchen crew had already tipped everything out. Thankfully Vivien was able to top up my bottles to stave off dehydration.

Apart from that, I think it was a really fantastic event. Well managed, catered, thought out, etc. Thank you.

A more extensive review of Nicole's trip, including a picture of the map, can be found on her blog:

<https://smilingleaf.wordpress.com/2016/10/14/24-hr-rogaïne-kanangra-boyd-np-nsw-1516-october/>
