

Christmas in July by Jenelle Templeton

Great company, fine food and good fun. This was the reward for venturing out on a chilly winter's night for the annual NE Christmas in July celebrations. The setting was complete with a beautifully decorated Christmas tree and giant sized blow up Santa.

We were treated to entrée of sushi, followed by a delicious array of roast pork with crackling, turkey, baked vegetables with all the trimmings.

A necessary break from the meal (to make room for dessert) was provided by Rob with several games. They provided an opportunity to get to know our fellow members a little better, a little team building and challenge our map reading skills.

Dessert was well worth the wait, an ice-cream Christmas Pudding as well as a traditional Christmas pudding with custard sauce.

Christmas in July was completed with the mandatory Kris Kringle. It was obvious that a lot of thought had been given to gifts and some were in high demand as they changed ownership several times.

Thank you to all that attended the night. A special thanks goes to Lauris for coordinating and preparing the meal. A truly magnificent effort. Thank you to all the helpers who contributed to make the night such a success.

"Some very creative Kris Kringles were on offer. When I opened my present, I found a large jar filled with the ingredients and a recipe for cookies. They baked up very nicely. Thank you from, Rob."

World Rogaining Championships 2016 – Ross River NT

The WRC were held in the East MacDonnell Ranges near Alice Springs on July 23/24. The base for the event was the Ross River Resort. A majority the 304 teams were Aussie, but a sizable contingent of competitors was from overseas.

Three club members took part; Kerry Rim, Phil Giddings and Ron Frederick. Phil and Ron also carried out a great deal of the organisational work for the event. Derek Morris, the course setter for the upcoming Hepburn Maxi, also competed.

Here are also some snippets from Derek and Kerry and Ron, followed by a more extensive account and photos from Phil.



Kerry Rim: Kerry reported that there were over 100 spinifex needles stuck into her legs and most are still there. Kerry and Brett covered the heavily covered spinifex vegetation first. Gaiters would need to have been mid-thigh to offer protection. "The navigation was exceptionally tough especially for Brett and I who were both rusty. Our training was the Larapinta track completed 2 days prior. I'm now eager to improve my navigation skills."

Derek Morris: Derek, like all competitors has horror stories about the spinifex. He suffered lacerations above the knees which were only protected by his O'Suit. Derek broke his compass in the first hour and although he managed to obtain a replacement later on, it didn't have a luminescent needle and the markings needed for night navigation. He also found the scree slopes and the dry, sandy riverbeds tough going.

Ron Frederick: Ron was responsible for transporting some of the gear needed for staging the event and ended up hiring another vehicle to get there. He left his vehicle at Sea Lake and hired a Budget

vehicle to tow the gear to Ross River, when it's engine played up with an intermittent electrical fault. Ron wrote: "I competed in the Men's Ultra Veteran division; all team members over 65. Derek Morris was in one of the 13 teams in our category. I teamed up with VRA treasurer Don Baker. We had almost perfect weather for the Champs - max around 20 and min around 8 degrees.

The map was of better quality than most Rogaining maps. It showed vegetation types which was most helpful in planning. Spikey spinifex covered a lot of the map and was to be avoided if possible. I am happy to show anyone interested the map and our course.

Our strategy, which we managed to follow, was to do about 20 kms before dark on the Sat arvo. Then have a shower, eat and sleep at the Hash House. The moon didn't rise until after 9.30 PM, so it would have been very difficult to try to navigate in total darkness. We set alarms for 3 AM and were underway again about 4 am. We picked up a 50 pointer fairly close to the HH in the dark. We then used an old track to take us over 5 km and fairly close to a 100 pointer, which we reached about dawn. There was some other high scoring CPs which we all successfully found as we worked our way back to the HH getting in with time to spare. We did about 30 kms on Sun morning. I don't think we could have done much better, without risking injury. I had one fall, but no permanent damage!

There were over 700 competitors, from more than 30 countries and over 100 volunteers, many of who were accompanying competitors."

Phil Giddings: Ross River NT, 80 Km East of Alice Springs. Not a place many have been to but somehow this was my third visit. How things change. There is now a sealed road to the Resort. Green grass in the wide valley beds and, I did not expect it, but we finish this Rogaine with a wet feet river crossing; fortunately, only 1 km from the end for us. What a difference some rain will make in the desert.

In 2007 when the Australian Rogaining Champs were held out of Ross River I think there had been 8 or more years with no measurable rain. It was dry and bare. I recall finding very little spinifex and I don't recall any grass and certainly not green.



The red jagged rocks are still as rich red as they are famous for. The sun was still shining. Be aware winter in the red centre can be cold. Just ask those who did some walking in the area before the Rogaine. The forecast was for -4 degrees one night.

People reported walking in the day time with all the clothes they had on and a rain coat to prevent the cold wind getting through.



I've been told on previous visits that Alice Springs drops into a cold winter for about 6 weeks then suddenly it ends. Maybe that is what happened in the week before the Rogaine. Thursday I arrived to a very warm 28 degrees and Friday was forecast to reach 29. The good news was Saturday a south easterly wind would blow in from Victoria and cool the temperature to a high of 20 and keep the temperature down to 20 on Sunday. I did not have a thermometer but I am pleased to report that is exactly what

happened. Maybe 6 degrees overnight which I felt could not have been better for a 24hr Rogaine.

We were there to Rogaine so it all begins at 9am Saturday morning when maps are issued. An A1 size, 1: 25,000 map. Big enough to use as a table cloth on a camping table. My first thought is this is a World Champs so we can ignore half the map as that has been set for the elite. Our normal plan is 60 to 70km for a 24hr Rogaine. There is no doubt in this terrain we will be slower. Make a plan for about 50 with some options to add more or short cut home in the morning. Avoid any high range crossings and avoid the thick spinifex mapped by the darkest green vegetation, get to the all night café for some food before it closes at 8am.

The Ross River Resort is in a wide valley. To the east it forked with the north fork expiring. However, it did reach out to a less vegetated (Read Spinifex) area to the far east. Note it is 17km from the Hash House to the eastern boundary to the map. The limitation at the end of the northern valley branch is a large area with no access and no water points. Our plan had us travelling from about 2:30pm to sunrise on the water we can carry. We were equipped to carry around 4 litres each as the setter's notes had warned us of this before leaving home.

The valley walking was delightful. Cattle or camels had created their paths and rogainers adopted them. Most of the valley check points were in the hills off to the side creating a decision to return to the valley or attempt to go cross country. I think it was what do you prefer and which is your team best suited to. Through the night we kept to our plan only missing one check point initially however still finding it with the loss of maybe an hour. When checkpoints are typically to 2 km apart there is a reluctance to abandon one. The bigger issue is, how to you relocate yourself. The next road or track to the east maybe 500km away. The next road to the west is the Sturt Highway 100 km away. The large valley running east west through the middle of the map is the only sure landmark to relocate to for the totally lost. Scanning the split times of the winning team shows they appear to have relocated to this valley.



The lighter vegetation less step terrain meant we travelled faster than planned and reached the All Night Café for water soon after 4am about 2 hours earlier than we expected. Maybe we should have picked off a couple of extra CP in this area. Not a decision I thought much about when my 3 litre bladder was empty and earlier than I expected. I still had 400ml of water when we arrived at the All Night Café. A popular water hole. I heard them counting up their supplies. They only had an hour a food left at 4am. I heard they did raid send a car to the Hash House to raid those supplied as teams were preferring the All Night Cafe.

By 8am we had only 1 Check point to home. It did seem many teams around us were heading that way. Amazingly my feet were still in reasonable condition. I was still walking with little discomfort which is the best I have ever been by this time on the 24 hr Rogaine. We added another 4 Check points to our plan (11km) with the potential for more. It included a delightful valley walk down a well-trodden camel track and concluded with a wet feet river crossing about 1km from the Hash House. Yes, this was a desert Rogaine with running water.

The winning team were close to triple our score and 600 points ahead of the 2nd place team. Some people are super human! Without Rogaining, terrain like this would never be visited. The same is true in Victoria where Rogaines in areas less often trod create the chance to get off the beaten track and discover our own country.

Derek Morris & Ian Herbert came 78th overall and 3rd in Men's UltraVet with 2150 points.

Kerryn Rim & Brett Sparkes (Mixed Veteran) 137th with 1680 points

Phil Giddings & Rob Mason (Men's SuperVet) 146th with 1640 points

Ron Frederick & Don Baker (Men's UltraVet) 199th with 1250 points

The overall winners were Kiwis, Greig Hamilton & Chris Forne (Men's Open) with 4400 points. Second place went to the Victorians, Rob & Kathy Preston (Mixed Open) who scored 3880 points.

All the results and the map can be viewed at [World Rogaining Champs](#)



Altona Meadows

Barry Giles organised a Saturday Series event at Altona Meadows on July 30. There were 8 club members amongst the 48 competitors. Barry had to relocate the event assembly area when he became aware that the Altona Roosters Rugby League Club was using his proposed site. The event went well despite the very windy conditions; and the rain stayed away.

Coming Events

I have had a limited number of offers to help at both events, so far. We need volunteers to handle registration, coaching, finish, set up and tidy up for the Diamond Creek event.

If you can help out with either event, please contact Rob Edmonds 0408 467 258 or rob.edmonds@bigpond.com

1. Diamond Creek MelBushO, Sunday August 14

When: Enter and pay at registration from 9.30am-11.30am.

Where: Diamond Creek Reserve (Marngrook Oval), Main Hurstbridge Road.

What: Bush orienteering near Melbourne for anyone of any age who can walk or run.

There are 4 courses from 2.6 km to 6.1 km

Cost: \$10 adults, \$5 juniors.

More info: [Website](#)

2. Hepburn Maxi, Daylesford (Hepburn Springs), Sunday August 28.

[Online entry](#) is now open. The Maxi is a 3-hour score event with an 11:00 am mass start.

Entry is open to individual competitors and teams of 2-5 members.