

## John Oliver: Brief O-history

- First event: a promotional event held in Studley Park, Melbourne in late 1969. My memory is that I came second. And if my memory is to be trusted the winner was another young bloke by the name of Alex Tarr.
- I was enthused enough to attend the next few events mainly on the premise that this and the cross-country running fixture could be a good way to maintain fitness between track seasons (I was a steeplechaser). However, it was not long before orienteering became the main focus and the track season became a good way to maintain fitness through summer for orienteering.
- In those early days, maps were black and white - often army ordinance maps or forestry commission maps enlarged to 1:25,000. Prior to starting participants would use coloured pencils to enhance various features. Control markers were inverted red buckets with a white stripe and self-inking stamps were used to “prove” you had visited the correct control site. Control descriptions were often interesting: *Yellow bush on the side of the hill; Old stump in gully; 30 yards SE of rock pile; The wombat hole.*
- In 1970 I competed in the first Victorian Orienteering Championships held at Portsea but did not have a good day.
- My first win was in September 1971 at Churchill National Park.
- In November 1971 I participated in the first international event in Australia - an Australia-New Zealand Challenge held at Tooborac, Victoria in 1971 which was also the first Australian Championships. I was an individual participant, not a team representative.
- In 1972 I joined the newly formed Tuckonie club and competed with them until 1987 when I moved to Wagga Wagga and joined the WaggaRoos.
- First event interstate was in the ACT in 1973 - the selection trials for the Aust-NZ challenge at Smokers Gap and Kowen Forest.
- Not sure when my first event in NSW was but it may have been the 1973 Australian Championships at Fishermans Point on the Hawkesbury River.
- Competitive highlights:
  - In 1974 won the first Australian Easter 3-Day event. This was held in the Royal National Park, Sydney.
  - Was fortunate enough to represent Australia at three WOCs (1974 - Denmark; 1976 - Scotland; 1978 - Norway).
  - Won the State Championships of Victoria, NSW, South Australia, ACT, and Tasmania.
  - With Maurice Ongania (ACT) and David Miller (SA) won the 1980 Asia-Pacific Orienteering Relay Championship. This was a very pleasing win because we were a scratch team that ended up beating the official national teams.
  - Finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in Australian Championships 5 times but have never managed to win one.
- Other activities:
  - OA Badge Secretary since 1974.
  - President, Tuckonie OC for a few years in the 1980s.
  - President, WaggaRoos for the past several years.
  - Active in map making, event organisation, club coaching, and delivering Sporting Schools programs.
  - Have organised the Riverina Schools Orienteering Championships for the past 10 years.