



# *Up Hill and Down Daele 8/15/24 hour Rogaine*

## **Organiser's Report**

It's been a fantastic experience to organise this year's 24 Hour Champs, partly because of all the time I got to spend out on the course but mainly because of the great people I met along the way.

Once we had decided on Passchendaele as a location, I sat down with Stu Gordon who had organised the previous event we held there in 2003. I took part in that event, so I had a bit of an idea what the country was like, and Stu was able to give me a few more pointers. I decided to try to get a bit more land than last time, mainly by using more of the state forest on the western side of the map.

My first visit to Passchendaele was with Tony Scott in early June. We visited Ken and Carolyn, who operate a farm stay on Passchendaele, and Ken drove us around to meet some of the other landholders. He also took us to a small cave that he sometimes used as a wine cellar – this became the site for control number 65 (which was the subject of a few complaints. Apparently there are many small caves on that “s”. Which is short for “spur”, of course). Poor Tony was struck with some sort of food poisoning on Sunday but still managed to tape a few controls with me.



The course setting was completed on 17th-18th July, and I was generally very pleased with the way it was all coming together. I eventually met 8 out of 9 landholders, and all of them were very friendly and interested in what we were doing (although I suspect that they consider us to be completely mad). I met with Murray Haines on the 24th July at Passchendaele and he spent the next 3 days out on the course vetting the control sites. Given the care and attention he dedicates to this task, it was a great effort to get it all done in three days.

Everything was going smoothly until the weekend of the 28th-29th August. I drove up to Passchendaele on Friday night to meet with Murray, who was planning to hang many of the controls over the next 3 days. During the night, camping on a ridge behind Passchendaele, I heard Murray get up several times and it was clear he was rather unwell! In the morning I suggested that he go home, but he soldiered on and managed to hang nine controls until the pain became too much. Once he got home he was eventually diagnosed with a peptic ulcer and with the right medication recovered quickly.



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To make a bit more progress on the hanging I decided to go back out on the course on 5<sup>th</sup> September. I invited my father Roger along, thinking it would be an enjoyable thing to do on Father's Day. The rain got heavier as we approached the site, and luckily we thought to stop and buy some plastic covering for our maps. Driving in on the farm tracks was fine until we got to the track which leads up the gully beside Piper's Dodge (near 130). It was very slippery, and we fishtailed up the road towards 12W. We hung 9 controls in the state forest in very cold and wet conditions. My father runs ultra marathons, is a tough sort of character and very rarely complains. After a few hours in the forest, however, he was shaking with cold and decided that he had to go back to the car. On the way back he mistook an unmarked track for the marked track and became very worried when he couldn't find the car. Eventually he realised his mistake and we both made it back to the car OK.



I wasn't very keen to drive back down the way we had come (thinking we would slide off the road into the gully) so we decided to try to drive out to the south, which I hadn't done before. We drove very cautiously, since the track was still very slippery, and thought we had made it through when we hit the first bit of bitumen. However, another couple of kilometres down the road we met a flooded creek. It was flowing too deep and fast for the Suzuki to handle so we realised we would have to stay the night. We had very little

food and not much warm clothing. We had passed a driveway on the way out, so we drove back to see if someone was home and to use their phone. Luckily Tim Bassingthwaighte at Diamondy Station was home, and not only let us use his phone but offered to let us stay the night. We took up his offer very gratefully, since we were not particularly looking forward to camping out in the Suzuki. The next morning the creek had fallen and we drove out no problems.

The next weekend Tony Scott and I drove out to complete the hanging, meeting up with Michael Meehan and Kim Harburg at the Hash House site. In the morning, in very wet conditions, we dropped off Michael and Kim to hang the SE corner of the map, while we headed out to the NW corner. Our problems started near control 64, where we got a flat tire. About 30 minutes later we were crossing a small creek near 57 when the wheels lost traction. After trying a while to get out of the bog, I realised that the 4WD light was not lit. We weren't going anywhere without 4WD.



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Tony headed off to hand some more controls while I walked back to Ken and Carolyn's place to see if they could help. They weren't home, so after waiting a while I called Annie McGill, who was organising the catering for us. Annie and her husband Russell came out to help us the next morning, with their three daughters Bonnie, Emily and Lilly. Tony and I jumped in the back of the ute and showed them the way to the bogged Suzuki. After a few attempts we managed to pull the stricken vehicle out of the creek, but didn't think we would be able



to go the rest of the way without 4WD given the very wet conditions. Luckily, one of Annie's relatives was heading back to Brisbane that afternoon, so Tony and I got a lift with them.

I went back up to Passchendaele on the day before the event to finish the control hanging. I was very surprised and impressed to find the Suzuki had been brought to the Hash House site – apparently the ground had dried out enough to drive out in 2WD. I was amazed at the transformation of the Hash House – the sheds had been cleaned up (despite a very large molasses spill!), the toilet pits were dug and a large fire was set up ready to go. Ken generously offered to let me use his quad bike to hang the remaining controls, which was a superb way to do it. The bike is perfect for rogaine setting – the cargo hold fits the controls comfortably, and can even accommodate two water containers and a food box!

On Friday night the first lot of competitors arrived, and we had a very pleasant evening sipping wine around a small campfire. Dave Raffelt showed remarkable skill at attracting the smoke from the fire, and Zim Chan made us all very jealous by showing off his camouflaged cardboard toilet. It's amazing what you can find on eBay these days!



The morning of the event went very smoothly, I enjoyed chatting with teams about their route choices, and the weather looked like it was going to be OK. Before we knew it the event was underway and Tony and I jumped in the Prado to put out the water stops. Apart from a very large bump while crossing a creek on the way to 11W we had no trouble driving around the course, to our relief.



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Judy Scott drew up a roster and very kindly gave herself the graveyard shift from 1-4am. Annie arrived with the Hash House crew and started their preparations. The flood of people returning from the 8 hour soon began. Tim McIntyre and Paul Frylink won the event with 1440 points, which was especially impressive since Tim was recovering from flu. In second place, Trevor and Meredyth Sauer also did extremely well to finish at 7pm with 1010 points, taking out the mixed open, mixed veteran and mixed super veteran categories. Also congratulations to third place-getters Neets Pluschke and Paul Elby, who were cruelly denied recognition at the presentations due to my mishandling of the Navlight software.



The night was generally very pleasant for those of us at the Hash House, with a warm fire and great food. There was a fairly steady stream of 15 and 24 hour teams passing through, and I met a few teams out on the course on safety patrols. Most of the feedback was positive at this point, which was very satisfying as a course setter.

After 5 hours sleep I went out for another water point check in the Prado, but only got as far as the creek near 90. The vehicle was

slipping and sliding in the mud (it was raining gently), and I wasn't happy going any further. I went back and collected the quad bike, which again performed its duties admirably and successfully resupplied 10W.

As mid morning approached the remaining teams began to trickle in, mostly happy with their performance, although there were some grumbles. Steve Gage (aka Caballo Blanco), Darren Smith and Robbie Andrews came in with 35 minutes to go, setting the best score so far at 2750 points (out of 3290 total). One of the last to arrive were Richard Robinson and Tamsin Barnes, who were not looking particularly pleased with themselves! They had had a dreadful time trying to find 44 in the dark. I had known that the forest would present problems at night, so I wasn't surprised. They were even more disappointed when we printed out their score and they learnt that they had tied for points with Steve, Darren and Robbie on 2750, but had arrived 22 minutes later. Richard has developed a habit of this, finishing in second place twice in the last two years with the same score as the winners (in those cases sweeping the course).





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In the 15 hour, a very interesting competition developed between the team of Amanda and Bevan Koopman and the team of Phil Scott and Bob Houghton. They had similar flight plans and leap-frogged each other for most of the course. In the end, Amanda and Bevan were too quick, running all the way back from 50 to the Hash and taking out the 15 hour event. Apologies to Amanda for repeatedly announcing her win under her former name (Amanda Guard)... old habits die hard!

Thanks very much to all competitors, and to everyone who helped collect controls, set up and pack up. Special thanks go to Sue Clarke and Walter Keleman who were out all night in the 24 hour and still managed to collect several controls and a water point. Others who helped with control collection and packing up include Dave and Audrey Raffelt, Zim Chan, Mario Cheng, Lynley Murtagh, Jenny Hogue, Robert Crosato, Richard Nottle, Ilaria Croci, Ales Neubert, Bob Houghton, Phil Scott, Bevan Koopman, Susan Bohme, Julie Pidgeon, Hung Vu and KaiLee Ng. Apologies to those I've missed!

Thanks again to the team - Tony Scott, Murray Haines, Roger Guard, Judy Scott, Kim Harburg and Michael Meehan.

Thanks to the landholders – the Stone, McGill, Downes, Northcott, Basingthwaighe, Johnson, Cooper, Moloney and Campbell families. Special thanks to Ken and Carolyn who went out of their way to help us at every opportunity.

And thanks again to the wonderful Ironpot Hall Committee, led by Annie McGill, who did a magnificent job of the Hash House. It wasn't only the superb food that made it great, but also the positive attitudes and friendly service. Most of the people helping with the catering were also landholders for the event, and they rely on events like ours to raise money to help fund maintenance and upgrades for the Ironpot Hall. The good news is that Annie is already talking about inviting us back for another event in the area!

I hope to see you all at the post-event BBQ or another event soon.

Paul Guard

