

‘Passion on the daele’, a newly weds raving 15.

Bevan Koopman & Amanda ~~Guard~~ Koopman

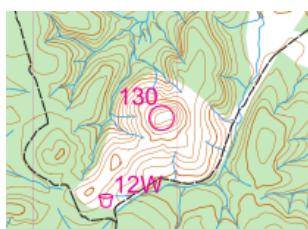
Setting the scene

What better way to put a new marriage to the test than bash through the bush for 15 fours. Having tied the knot a month before, and fitness sacrificed for eating, drinking and honeymooning, we elected for the more civilised roving fifteen. Little did we know that ‘less was more’ in the pain department.

First order of business on arrival was setup up camp. Now that we were married it was no more sleeping in the 2.4kg / 1.5man hiking tent. We setup the Taj Mahal – a six man, two room palace complements of a wedding present from my brother. This was rogaine camping in style, and much appreciated given the weather.

The start

When the (figurative) gun went off we headed out at a run – adrenalin does wonders for bravado over brains. The conditions could not been better: open country, cool weather and interesting terrain



ahead on our chosen route. The problem was that after the third CP the excitement had died down but pace had not. At least until the summit of Piper’s Dodge (CP# 130) was sighted. When questioned previously about the reason for a control worth 130 points Paul’s response was “It’s just to encourage everyone to enjoy the view”. Well he lied, although the view was great the 130 was because of the climb.

Trails and tribulations

After filling up with water at 12W we calculated that we were ahead of schedule and added CP# 63 to the route. Things were looking good, Amanda was on a bearing and moving fast ahead as usual. I did a quick check of the compass and found we were not heading in the direction of my bearing. The conversation went something like follows:

Bevan: “Hey, what bearing are you on?”

Amanda: “276 degrees, why?”

Bevan: “I’m on 243, why are you on 276?”

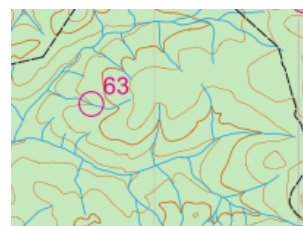
(Stop, look at map and compass)

Amanda: “Oh \$%#, how could we have got that wrong?”

Bevan: “We definitely started off on 243, ’cause I’ve been checking the compass and you’ve been spot on before, I just noticed we diverged now”.

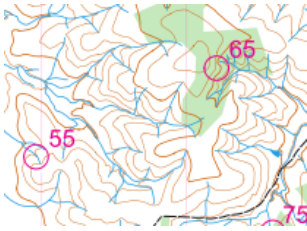
Amanda: “The only thing I can think of is that I’ve somehow bumped my compass and changed the heading, how long ago did you check our heading?”

Bevan: “A little ago, I’ve been following you for a bit”



After some mental arithmetic we guesstimated a course of 210 degrees, hit the creek that contained CP# 63 and backtracked upstream 150m before finding that precious yellow and white little box.

The next couple were smooth sailing and we may have got a little too confident. We headed to the infamous cave (CP# 65) without the use of the compass, having spotted the knoll from a distance on the preceding ridge. After reaching the knoll we dropped off on a spur and found no cave and no control. After some scratching of heads and studying of maps and compass we found right spur. Prior planning prevents...and all that.



The open country in the north section of the course proved a good choice for after dark and we continued to make good progress. Our problem now was that we were an hour ahead of schedule with no real option for adding controls on route.

The half-time show

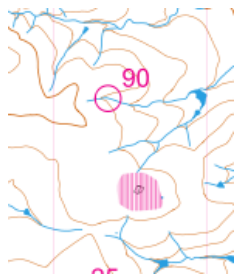
We rolled into the Hash House at a very early 7:30pm with 1300 or so points under the belt. A blazing fire and hot plate of food soon melts away the aches and pains of the afternoon and it was great to chat and find out how everyone was going.



Arriving back an hour ahead of schedule felt great at the time, but now we had a problem. We still had a full 7.5 hours on the much smaller eastern side of course. That basically meant we had to clear all the CPs in east, with some legs being poor in terms of points / km. The very pleasant 7:30am arrival at the hash house meant a far less pleasant departure at 4:30am. Still, this was our first roving 15 and we felt infinitely fresher at 4am than on the 24s we've done.

90 ways to say \$%&

We headed out and were met with drizzle and mud in the long grass east of HH. After clearing CP# 25 we headed north to CP# 90, the checkpoint on wheels that moved to wherever you're not. We overshot it and ended up in the next watercourse. After looking up and down and finding nothing we backtracked, found the previous watercourse, searched up and down and...nothing. Right, back north to where we just came from, search further up and down watercourse...still nothing. Curse, shout, cry, study map more. By now it was light enough to make out a small dam where we re-orientate and had another stab. In the end we found it in the second watercourse, just a little further up than we had searched in the dark. 40 mins wasted.



Punishment time

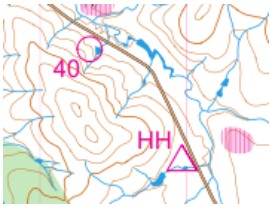
The only punishment applicable to spending 40mins looking for CP# 90 was running to make up the time and remind one not to do it again. Luckily the next few controls were the most open county on the course and we slowing dragged back some of our deficit. Passing CP# 100 we spotted Phil Scott and Rob Houghton, they must have been behind us and were moving in fast. They caught us at the next CP and what ensued was a race through the next four CPs at breakneck speed, nothing like a bit of competition to lift your game. We for one were very relieved when our routes diverged and we were able to resume at a more reasonable pace.

In the thick bush around CP# 80 tempers flared and a few angry words may have been exchanged.

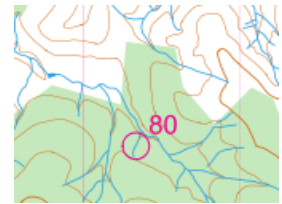
The great thing about a domestic dispute on a rogaine is no one can hear you. Things settled quickly, kiss and make up and all that.

The chute

With about an hour to go we either had to high tail it to get the next four controls or skip them in favour for a easy jog home along the main road.



For some reason the more masochistic approach was taken and we set off at a pace tired legs did not really agree with. Amanda, the normally psycho finisher, said she was feeling a bit faint. Looking back she looked rather pale and was promptly given the rest of the water, a handful of apricots and two panadol. The terrain proved to be easy and quick and time ended up being no problem.



Hash, sweet hash¹

Its always a great feeling cresting the last rise and seeing the tents and cars laid our before you. That is until you stop looking where you're going and careen into a Prickly Pair, last little twist of knife complements of the rogaine gods. All the running seemed a bit silly after getting in with 15mins to spare, but then the results of the 24 showed time is important.

Thanks

Control collection is always tough after a long / hard event, especially if the weathers not great, that is unless you have a quad bike. It was great fun going over some the course again on the bike, especially if the arrangement with Paul was "I'll drop you here Paul, you walk through and collect 80 and 37 and then I'll pick you up on the other side".

Its was great event, one the best we've done. That's all due to the work of Paul and other organisers in putting it together. Thanks again and see you next time.



Bevan and Amanda Koopman

¹ of the house kind