

1963 AUMC 24hr Walk

Tanunda

April 20/21

Inaugural Event

Organisers: Ted Lovegrove, John Hudson, Fay Kerr

Ted the event organiser had brought the concept from Victoria and was the Trails Officer for the National Fitness Council at the time.

Maps were not supplied to competitors in the early AUMC events. For the 1963 event people were required to purchase 2 A2 size maps, Gawler and Adelaide. The scale was then 1:63,360 or 1 inch to the mile with 1,000 yard grids and 50 ft contours. (This scale of maps were used from the 1930's to the late 1960's when they were superseded by 1:50,000 maps with 2cm to the kilometre, 1km grids and 10 metre contours.

People had to mark the start, finish, 2 hash houses and 9 controls onto their maps while travelling to the starting point by bus. A 6 figure grid reference was provided and indicated the location of a concealed tin at each control containing a code word. The code words were names of climbing peaks in the European Alps. The tins were easily found in the typical rock cairns on the summits. All 9 controls were on summits. The winners were the team that visited all the controls in the least time.

Organisers notes: Teams should record the codeword from each control (which had no values) and visit both Hash Houses where hot food and drink will be provided.

Controls: C1 Mount Kitchener (now Kaiserstuhl)
C2 Pewsey Vale Peak
C3 Wirra Wirra
C4 Lookout Tower (Trig)
C5 Mt Gould
C6 Simmonds Hill
C7 Fox's Peak
C8 Trig near Thomas Hill
C9 Black Hill

There were 2 starting points A & B. The latter being the furthest distance. The team of Arthur Ward, his sister Gwen and Tony Lothian started at A as they had the only women competitor. All the others started at B.

Arthur's team reached C5 Mt Gould by nightfall. Arthur commented after C5 "In the moonless conditions we were able to follow the correct ridge line now traversed by the Heysen Trail without using torches to betray our position. No others had reached HH2 below Simmonds Hill by the time we left it and we later learned that only Scott Cameron and Eric Jackson continued beyond this HH".

Arthur's team won the event, finishing in 23 hours, followed by Scott and Eric 2 hours later. Distance covered approx. 43 miles (70km)

These are more of Arthur's recollections of the event.

"Although young and fit in 1963 I could hardly walk for a week after the event held the weekend after Easter. Apparently that first AUMC 24 Hour Walk is now regarded as the first 24hr rogaine in South Australia.

1. The event was over a linear course from Tanunda to Morialta and likened to a 24hr Orienteering event. (Similarly, the 1964 event organised by Tony Lothian and me was from Meadows to the Adelaide foothills). The event was always open to members of other clubs.
2. The 1963 organisers made the mistake of giving our team a head start.

We were dropped off from the bus before it reached Tanunda at start A and were never headed.

3. The first control was on the summit of Mt Kitchener (Kaiserstuhl) and the second on Pewsey Vale Peak. After Fox's Peak we proceeded via Fox Creek, Croft and Mawson Roads to "a black stump"- thereafter known as "The Black Stump". The event continued in a similar fashion over practically every peak, with the last control being on Black Hill where we arrived at dawn. The stretch to Black Hill involved plunging down to Sixth Creek followed by climbing the Corkscrew.
4. Of all the controls (which were put out weeks before), only one was missing-that on Fox's Peak.
5. Most controls were on private property but I doubt that any property owner permission was sought-the usual in the 1960's.
6. The two hash houses were on the eastern bank of the Warren Reservoir and at the Gumeracha Weir. All teams except two retired at the latter. We were fed at both by the organisers Ted Lovegrove, John Hudson and Fay Kerr. The hash houses were in the open with what could be transported in a Holden ute. I was so cold without dry clothes after mistakenly stepping into a chest-deep pool in Cudlee Creek at 2.30am that we lit a fire in the middle of the track and boiled some soup!
7. We walked into the finish at the car park immediately below Morialta Falls after 23 hours. I was thoroughly dehydrated. The only other finishers (and the only ones to walk the full distance) were Scott Cameron and Eric Jackson."

These details were kindly supplied by Arthur Ward