

Location: Congewai Valley
Map: John Elm Creek (NEW)
Entries: Enter on the Day
Starts: 9:30 - 11:30 am

Terrain: Mostly open, undulating to steep eucalypt forest with generally fast running. Areas of complex rock and watercourse detail.

Directions: From Cessnock, travel south-west on Wollombi Road for about 7 km to Pelton. Veer left onto Middle Road and travel 4 km to Paxton. Continue through the 'T' intersection onto Congewai Road for about 12 km to the event site. The last 5 km is on a narrow dirt road – take care. Alternatively, you can travel to Ellalong and Paxton via Sandy Creek Road, Quorrobolong.

Catering: The Congewai Public School P & C committee will be offering sausage sandwiches, cakes and drinks at the event. Please buy from their stall and support the local community.

Planner: Ian Dempsey

HUNTER VALLEY CHAMPIONSHIPS

CONGEWAI - SUNDAY 22ND APRIL, 2011



2011 HUNTER VALLEY CHAMPIONSHIPS

PUT THIS EVENT IN YOUR CALENDAR RIGHT NOW. IT'S THE 22ND APRIL AND IT'S NOT TO BE MISSED. IAN DEMSEY HAS FOUND A NEW AREA, MAPPED IT AND PRODUCED SOME CHALLENGING COURSES FOR US ALL. HAVE A LOOK AT THE PHOTOS, IT LOOKS LIKE A FANTASTIC PLACE TO CONTEST AN ORIENTEERING EVENT. EVEN BETTER, AS WELL AS THERE BEING A GREAT DAY OF ORIENTEERING TO BE HAD, THE LOCAL P&C HAS DECIDED TO PUT ON A BBQ FOR US. THEY WILL BE SELLING SAUSAGE SANGAS, CAKES AND DRINKS SO LETS SUPPORT THEM AND GET TO KNOW THE LOCALS AND HAVE A GREAT SOCIAL DAY AS WELL.

HERE IS SOME HISTORY THAT IAN HAS MANAGED TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE EARLY SETTLERS OF THE CONGEWAI VALLEY.

John Ellem was born at Mangrove Creek in 1832. In early adulthood he lived at Mangrove Mountain near his parents and siblings until soon after his father died in 1857. The pressure of larger families and limited land holdings likely precipitated his move north in the early 1860s to the Wollombi-Ellalong area, along with his wife Mary, whom he married in 1852.

John's property was in the upper Congewai Valley and John Elm Creek (where we're orienteering), Ellem's Hole (the Ellalong Wetlands), and Jack Ellem's Paddock are reminders of his legacy. By 1870, John and his brothers James and Richard all lived within 15 km of each other in the Millfield/Ellalong area. John grew corn and wheat, the latter went to the mill at Millfield. Their diet was supplemented by pork, beef and eggs. However, life was no doubt hard because the area was cleared by hand.

A rust outbreak in 1869 ruined the wheat crop in the Hunter and influenced John's move in 1871 with his brothers to the Clarence River Valley. John and Mary raised a family of nine who eventually dispersed along the northern rivers of NSW. In later life, John and Mary lived in South Grafton and died in 1916 and 1917, respectively.

