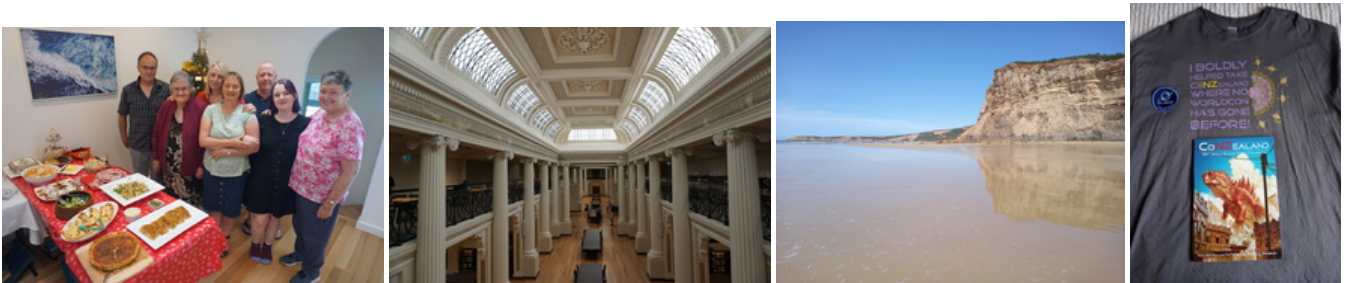


## Lawrie's 2020 Year in Review

Hi, I hope you're keeping safe and well in this crazy year. I wish you all the best for this festive season. Like you all, my plans have been disrupted this year. However I am thankful that compared to many places, living Canberra has meant I've had a safer year than many, despite being impacted by smoke, fire, storms, hail, and of course the coronavirus. So the photo below shows the Namadgi fire, in the distance beyond Tuggeranong Town Centre in Feb. We had some uncomfortable days watching that fire burn across the horizon. Despite the losses, the forests do regenerate, as seen in the photo of East Gippsland, on my drive back to Canberra in early Mar. And it was wonderful to have decent rain after so many years of drought. So nice to see the dams spilling over, including Scrivener Dam on Lake Burley Griffin, and our water storage Googong Dam.



Most of my travel plans for this year were abandoned. I did have a nice time in Melbourne over last Christmas & New Year, with our regular family gathering for Christmas. It was great to see the newly renovated Queens Hall in the State Library of Victoria. And to spend some time on my favorite Pt Addis beach on the surf coast. I also managed a trip to Port Stephens in mid March, just before the lockdowns started. That was meant to be a dance weekend, but the dancing was cancelled at last minute. My plans to be in New Zealand for the CoNZealand SF Worldcon in July were cancelled, of course. However the organisers did a great job of pivoting to an online convention for a couple of thousand people in just a few months. I volunteered to assist with the zoom meeting hosting as they were (very) short of volunteers. I ended up doing some 35 hours of hosting over the convention, but really enjoyed myself, and got to see some panels and workshops I probably wouldn't have otherwise. Afterwards, I was sent a couple of nice souvenirs, including the teshirt and badge shown in this photo, along with the con book. Since then I've attended half a dozen other online conventions, which has been a great experience, as I would never have travelled to these events in US or Europe.



And yes, I really missed dancing through much of the year. It really showed how important that social contact is for me. I was thankful to get to the Trentham Irish Set Dancing Weekend in Jan. And back to Melbourne at the start of Mar for a weekend of balboa dancing at "All the Cats Join In" (which was indeed the last big swing dance weekend in Australia this year). More recently, with no community corona cases in Canberra for months, I've been back at West Coast Swing classes. And I really enjoyed a weekend away swing dancing at the Railway Barracks in Goulburn in early Nov. During the year I also attended several online dance workshop, and a couple of workshop weekends. These were great, learning from teachers I'd normally need to travel to Europe to see, even if a little frustrating having to drill them by myself. It was also good to be able to rewatch the recordings, and really analyse what they were showing, as these were kept up for a few weeks after. I also very much enjoyed watching some online, discussing and trying steps out, with my friend IngridS in Germany.



One of the wonderful things about living in Canberra is being able to walk in our nature reserves, and indeed in green spaces in town. I have enjoyed exploring many places that I'd not found before. I've walked up my local Simpsons Hill (about 1km from home) and enjoyed the views many times this year. My house is hidden in the trees around the middle of this photo. Then photos of Red Rock Gorge on the Murrumbidgee River in Apr. Of me standing in the stone spiral on Melrose Hill in Jul. And IngridR with a grass tree spike on the walk up Gibraltar Peak in Aug.





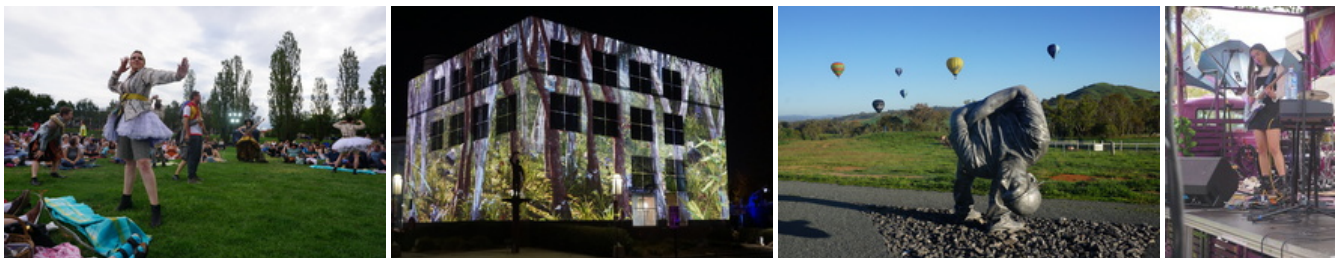
And from the same walk, a photo of me atop Gibraltar Peak. Then an Aug view from the lookout on Mt Ainslie over Lake Burley Griffin and central Canberra, with the snow capped Brindabella mountains in the distance. It was great to enjoy some lovely street art on my walks around the suburbs. This one on a pumping station in Fadden. And lastly, a photo of one of the tulips in my courtyard garden in Oct.



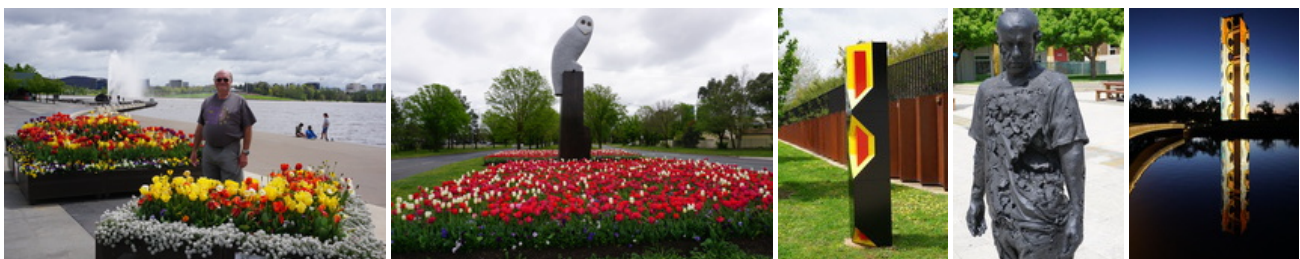
Orienteering has been another important activity for me this year, both street events and in the bush. When the regular events were cancelled in Mar, I along with a couple of others, worked out how to create virtual [MapRun orienteering courses](http://MapRun.orienteering.courses). You can do these whenever you like (so nicely covid distanced as needed), navigating with a phone app that tracks your progress, and beeping as you reach each control. We've created over 40 such courses, and this technology is now being used for some of the regular street events since they restarted in Sept. I received a thankyou "President's Award" for this at the Orienteering ACT picnic recently, which was lovely. I've also now designed a number of street courses, both virtual and regular, which has been rewarding. So below is a photo (by John Harding) of me at the registration table for the Farrer event that I designed and ran in Sept. Next a photo (also by JH) of me approaching the finish of a bush course on Bruce Ridge in Sept, and another of me at Mt Majura in Nov (as you can see, the grass has been growing insanely this year!) Lastly my photo of a control on a lookout above the Molonglo River on the edge of Coombs, during a street orienteering event in Oct.



And Canberra still put on some wonderful festivals, adapting as the year progressed. There was Lakespheare's performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in Tuggeranong Park in Feb. And Enlighten and the Balloon Spectacular, both of which I really enjoy seeing every year, mostly ran as usual in Mar before things went crazy. As did "Art Not Apart", with art and performances, here by rising local star, Lucy Sugerman.



Later in the year, Floriade was reimagined, and scattered in little displays through the city, very successfully I believe. So a photo of me with planter boxes of flowers by the lake, with the Captain Cook Memorial Jet in the distance. Also around the big owl sculpture at Belconnen. We also had the Contour 556 Sculpture Festival in Oct, which is named for the lake's height. It included several sculptures reflecting on the fires. Here are photos of "Carbon Totem" reflecting on burnt trees still red hot in their centers, and then "Regret" musing on how some of our politicians are fixated on coal. Lastly we had some beautiful illuminations of the Carillon as part of NAIDOC week, celebrating indigenous culture.



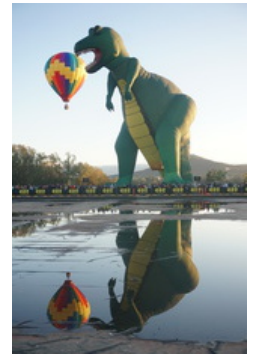
So that is a quick overview of some of my activities this year. Despite it being very unsettling, and plans disrupted, I've had some good times, and appreciate even more our wonderful, beautiful world. I look forward to hearing your news.

This letter is online at: <http://lpb.canb.auug.org.au/diary/>.

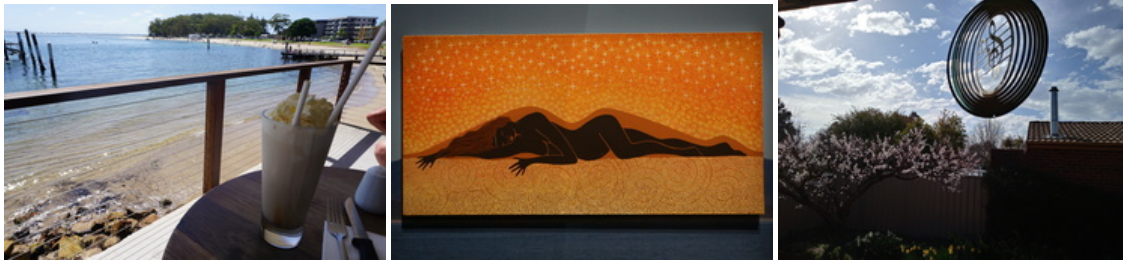
Wishing you happiness and joy this festive season and beyond. Cheers [Lawrie](#) - 3 Dec 2020.

And a few more photos that I didn't get room to squeeze into the printed letter.

Starting with another photo from the Canberra Balloon Spectacular, with the T-Rex dinosaur balloon threatening the "globe". I decided to use this for my card this year, because 2020, dinosaur invasion, why not?!?!?



Next a photo from my trip to Port Stephens in Mar, of a lovely lunch at the Little Bay Boathouse (the day before restrictions came in!) Then a painting of Gulaga (Sleeping Woman) Mountain on the far south NSW coast, from the "Endeavour Voyage" exhibition at the National Museum of Australia in Aug. And a photo of my "wind spinner" and the apricot blossoms in my courtyard in Spring in Sept.



Another photo from my walks around Canberra, here of Gilmore Hill in Sept. More photos of Floriade Reimagined, amongst the sheep sculptures at Kambah, and by the Carillon.



Lastly another Contour 556 sculpture "Hovering Figure". And a photo of the little bookmark I was given for my OACT President's Award.





*Seasons  
Greetings  
2020*

*T-Rex threatens globe  
Canberra Balloon Spectacular  
12 Mar 2020*

