

***What's to come in this issue:***

In this first issue of the Australian Parkour Association Newsletter we talk to **Shaun Woods from Newcastle**, NSW, to find out, what Parkour has done for him.

Furthermore we take a look back at the first **National Parkour Jam in Australia**, which took place in Sydney a few weeks ago.

There are also updates of the activities of the APA involving **Bluearth** and **Sports Health Check**.

Apart from this we also present you an insight in the training experiences from the French traceur **Stephane Vigroux**.

**Contents:**

Letter of the editor(s)/ APA president	2
Interview with Shaun	3
National jam	4
Activities of the APA	6
Stephane and I	7
Workshops and training in your state	12
Have your say	13
Contact	13
Subscribe	13

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***Letter from the APA president***

Hi everyone,  
Welcome to the first edition of the Australian Parkour Association newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide people with a resource that comes to them and presents information and updates on the APA and Parkour in Australia in general without the need to trawl a forum or check websites endlessly. Feel free to give us feedback and/or contribute articles, photos, offers to help with the newsletter and ideas for future editions.  
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Matthew Campbell 'Chippa'  
President APA



*By Florian Sturm*

***Interview with Shaun Woods, 17, The Entrance, NSW***

**APA: How long have you been training Parkour and why did you start it?**

Shaun: I started training what I thought was 'Parkour' in 2005 after I saw several videos related to it on the Internet. Then I met up with several Sydney traceur.

**Was it hard to keep up the regular training considering the fact that you were the only traceur in your area?**

No, it wasn't. After I saw the Sydney guys training I had a goal to aim for: getting to the same level that they're at. But after I went to my first group training session I realized that what I'd been doing was very far from what Parkour really is. Till then [...] I'd do flips and whatever I wanted and call it Parkour. I had no clue about the philosophy or any other aspect of it. I then went into solo training for six months to 'reeducate' myself.

**So what is Parkour for you now?**

Life.

**When you first started, Shaun, did your motivation come from seeing Parkour live in action or rather from watching videos on the Internet?**

Mainly seeing the Sydney traceur doing Parkour.

**If you look at your motivations now, did they change in any form?**

My goal now is to improve myself. Satisfaction is hard to achieve in Parkour, as the limits are constantly pushed further and further. I am also motivated from training with people such as Rhys, Ish, Anan and Djordje on a weekly basis. [...] This is where my motivation now comes from – the whole group.

**How do you see Parkour in Australia at the moment?**

I have a mixed opinion about that. [...] Personally, I was both amazed and utterly thwarted after the National Jam. I was first amazed by some of the skill located on our shores but then disappointed by the attitude and education of some of our highest regarded traceurs. I believe Australia is up there with the rest of the world in terms of Parkour-ability, however we really need to work on the image that we have of Parkour in Australia, before we can be compared to great Parkour nations like France and England.

**Do the ethics of Parkour carry across into other aspects of your life?**

They certainly have. [...] I think I am now a much more focused and reliable person than I was before. The self-confidence and dedication that I gained through Parkour have transferred into my everyday life, i.e. schoolwork, relationships and many other things.

**Which advice would you give someone, who is just about to start Parkour?**

Once is never. Train hard and dedicate yourself to it.

**Thank you very much for your time, Shaun...**

Thank you!

*By Florian Sturm*

### ***National Parkour Jam***

What would you call it, if round about 65 traceurs from all over Australia and even overseas met up in Sydney for three days?

Simply a huge training session, an interstate Parkour meeting or a national jam?

Whichever choice you made for yourself, the reasons for every Parkour practitioner who decided to be part of this unique event have mostly been the same: practicing Parkour, meeting other athletes and having fun.

Several months ago, Ruzkin – one of the ACT's most experienced traceur's – initiated the idea of having the first nationwide meet-up of traceurs on a big scale. Shortly after, Blair, who is part of the Parkour community in Victoria, got in touch with different people to find out if there's any general interest in such an idea. He didn't have to wait very long for an answer, which reflected the attraction of Parkour in Australia as a whole.

As time went by and the idea got bigger and bigger, the first decisions were to be made. Which location would be the best one? Is there any date that suits everyone interested? Who will be the leading organiser for this event?

Considering the number of people involved and their different situations, there had to be compromises. In the end a solution could be found, which satisfied the majority of organisers and participants.

Not long after the thought of the National Jam was raised, it was clear that the first event of this kind was to take place in Sydney from 29<sup>th</sup> September till 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006.

'As soon as the main details were clear they were posted on several forums where every traceur interested could make suggestions as to what could be done and how everything might happen', Blair from Geelong tells us.

Representatives from each state started organising transport, accommodation and other necessities to guarantee their traceurs a stress free stay, so that Parkour could be the main focus of everyone.

The first highlight of the three-day happening had been the gym session in Sydney's Olympic Park on Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> September, which was organized by JZ, a local traceur. He tells us, that 'for a \$16 entry fee you had the opportunity to improve your technique and learn new moves in a safe environment and under the supervision of qualified instructors'.

On the following day the 'official opening' was held at Belmore Park, where the 'organising committee' welcomed everyone and explained the schedule for the next two days. Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> September, was also the day the Australian Parkour Association was launched by its President, Matthew 'Chippa' Campbell.

Then the Sydney crew took over and split the 65 eager traceurs into seven groups; each of them led by one of the local athletes to ensure that the areas' best spots will be seen.

# AUSTRALIAN PARKOUR ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

[www.parkour.asn.au](http://www.parkour.asn.au)

During the third and last day the seven groups were reduced to only two. One of them went to Bondi Beach to reward themselves for the last day's hard work with a training session in a relaxed atmosphere. The other group went off to Forest High, a school in Sydney's northern suburbs. Whoever decided to come along got a glimpse of what a class led by APA-instructors might look like in the future. Rhys, Chippa and Djordje took their time explaining the reasons of a proper warm-up and -down, followed by a fitting exercise. Besides teaching basic techniques of rolls, vaults and landings, they were also offering their time and advice to any questions the traceurs might have.

Most of the participants of the National Jam won't find it hard to remember those few days, but there are more than memories to help you look back at this milestone in Australia's young Parkour-history. The APA website offers you photos, videos and articles as well as a forum to discuss what made this event special for you and what may need to be thought of for the next time. I'm quite sure, that not only Blair is 'looking forward to the opportunity of showing the community what can be done with an event of this sort' and that it's in everyone's interest to help Australian Parkour establish in any way possible.



*By Chippa*

### **ACTIVITIES OF THE APA**

#### **BLUEARTH**

Not long after the official launch of the APA we were contacted by 'Bluearth'. This organisation develops and delivers physical activity programs to schools. They wished to initially set up a meeting and have a chat about what they wanted to achieve with Parkour and to see whether we would be able to provide what they needed.

The initial meeting went well. I explained my history and that of the APA I also talked to them about their understanding of Parkour and helped fill in some blanks with the information they had so far. They then discussed with me what they were wishing to achieve in regards to Parkour and the APA. The end result being that they would employ volunteers from the APA to teach them the fundamental aspects of Parkour in regards to philosophy and technique.

The first training session was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2006 on South bank in Melbourne. Chippa, Josh and Blair were instructors for the six Bluearth coaches that attended the training. The techniques covered in the two hour session were: warm ups, rolls, split foot technique, speed vaults, climb ups and turn vaults, as well as a warm down. The coaches we trained were hoping to go for three hours but after two they were tired and being overloaded with information, so decided to call it quits and come back for more at a later stage. They were very happy with what we taught them and how we went about it. They are keen for more training soon. The funds raised from the session will be used to pay for upcoming insurance.

Should you wish to know more about Bluearth visit their website: [www.bluearth.org](http://www.bluearth.org)

#### **SPORTS HEALTH CHECK**

Another organisation that the APA has been in contact with recently has been Sports Health Check. They provide physical activity programs for schools and children and young adults in detention centers.

Initially they wish volunteers from the APA to help develop and run Parkour programs in juvenile detention centers in Malsbury, Victoria.

The first step towards achieving this was an outing to the detention centre on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2006. The aim of the day was for Josh and Chippa to meet the detainees and centre staff and introduce ourselves. The day was also going to be a 'survivor' day. Little did we know that we would be roped into the activities when we set off for the day. The concept of the day was for groups to complete challenges and tasks using teamwork.

When we arrived it was declared that we had enough people in our group to participate and that we would be wearing the pink bandanas as our team colours because 'pink wouldn't go down quite so well with the boys'. At the end of the day our team came second over all. It was a good day and we got to meet many of the people we will be interacting with and training in the future.

Should you wish to know more about Sports health Check visit their website:  
[www.sportshealthcheck.com.au](http://www.sportshealthcheck.com.au)

**By Djordje Djordjevic**

**Stephane and I**

*Below is a discussion between Djordje and Trevor Kjeldal on Trevor's experiences training with Stephane Vigroux and the insights gained from it.*

Stephane and I discussed many different things that day, and over the following week, including David Belle, Parkour in France, the difference in the public reaction in different countries, Stephane's ligament injury, my injuries, life in Thailand, doing Parkour all over the world as a profession, alcohol consumption, sushi, promoting Parkour, where Parkour is heading etc.

He gave me some great insights and advice though.  
Basically the things that come to mind are:

**1) When doing strength training, always do the full movement.**

For example, if you are doing push-ups, do them slowly and make sure your chest touches the ground, if you are doing chin-ups, make sure the bar touches your chest and go all the way back down until your arms are straight, once again SLOWLY, pausing halfway down and holding for about 5 seconds. Stephane said: "I am quite a lazy person, so I don't do as many as some others, but I do them slowly, I can't be bothered doing too many without getting the benefits".

**2) Small injuries are good.**

Small cuts, abrasions, bruises are good teachers, they let you know that you are not concentrating enough, or getting sloppy. He said: "This is the sport we are involved in, it is dangerous, it is a contact sport, like rugby, you are going to bash yourself and hit the ground. Sometimes I see people (traceurs) that have no scars on their arms, knees, shins, and I think they are not training enough.

It's just the big injuries, torn ligaments, tendon damage, broken bones, that

He also explained about his torn ligament incurred when doing a deep jump, late one training session, when he was fatigued and thought "Well, I'll just do it one more time," and upon landing - WHACK - torn ligament, intense pain. Then the original operation didn't work, his body rejected the graft, and he had the operation again. After about 2 years he still couldn't walk properly and the doctors kept disagreeing with each other and basically saying that he would be lucky to walk again, let alone intense exercise like Parkour. But after two and a half years he found Forrest who told him to just use his leg, start doing Parkour, and train through the pain (which Stephane found hard because he was used to trying to avoid pain, not push himself through it). Anyway it took about three and a half years before he could train properly again, but now he is back to 100%, but is wary about deep jumps.

**3) And the most important piece of advice, told to him by David Belle, was this: ALWAYS DO EVERY MOVEMENT/TECHNIQUE, PERFECTLY!**

This may seem obvious, but he told me this when we were jumping a small 5-6ft gap between 2, 3ft walls surrounding 2 flowerbeds, in the park. He made the jump 3-4 times, every time PERFECTLY!

I mean always landing on the balls of both feet, both feet perfectly in line, he didn't have to use his arms to regain balance upon landing; he just stopped still, with no movement at all, then repeated the act, flawlessly.

When I did the same jump 4-5 times, I made it every time, but with small, stumbles, overbalancing and having to step forward, falling backwards once, and flailing my arms to regain balance upon landing. Stephane watched these attempts, then I did one jump that was close to perfect but landed one foot slightly in front of the other, and was just a little unsteady. Stephane said: "See, it's still not perfect". "You must always do every move, no matter how small, perfectly. You have to know what your body is doing the whole time, even in the air. You have to do it over and over maybe hundreds of times until it is perfect! That's what David taught me".

I now understood what he meant.

That was the reason in my 3 or so years of Parkour, I had injured myself seriously about 5 times, including broken bones.

It was because I was happy to simply perform huge drops, rail gaps, SDC's into deep concrete environments etc, but not to do them perfectly.

I would leap over a railing, into a car park and just go on instinct, not really thinking in the air, just clearing my mind and only focusing on the rail, then the ground.

But Stephane stressed the fact that you must be constantly aware of every moment of the technique, speed approaching the rail, hand placement, once in the air be aware of your body position, weight distribution, whether your legs are tucked enough, lowering your legs at exactly the right moment for impact, foot placement when landing, hand placement for the roll etc.

Another example, if doing a gap between two rails, no matter how far, you must try to always land on the balls of the feet, bend your legs just enough to cushion the momentum, use the arms in one fluid motion to regain balance, and that's it.

I know, before talking to Stephane, I was content (especially if it was a large gap) to merely land on the opposite rail, without falling off.

Even if I had to flail my arms wildly, or stick my leg out to regain balance, I was happy to have made it and eventually regain balance and continue to walk along the rail.

Or maybe I would land it neatly without too much movement, but one of my feet may have landed on the arch, instead of the ball, but I would be happy with this effort.

**But now I see that's what makes David & Stephane the elite Traceurs in the community. They never accept less than perfect, and try again and again until they achieve perfection, every time, every technique, on every obstacle.**

**Now, less than two weeks after receiving this advice, I'd say my style has improved 200%!**

Now if I don't do everything perfectly every time, I try over and over until I do. And I find that it's easier than I thought. A lot of the time we simply accept less than 100%, and are lazy mentally. Especially when practicing the same maneuver over and over again, boredom and fatigue occur very easily. This is also when we are in danger of injuring ourselves.

I used to think: "Well if we do the same dangerous technique hundreds, maybe thousands of times, then the law of probability says that we will do something wrong eventually, especially as we get more tired and lose concentration". But this is only true if you let it happen.

Basically, if everything you do is as perfect as possible then you should be quite safe.

I mean if you do a SDC 8ft down to a car park 1000 times, with all sorts of different levels of concentration, different levels of perfection, then most likely one or more of those attempts will be half-assed and different levels of injury will occur.

But, you can do 1 000, 10 000, 100 000 PERFECT SDC's, if every one is carefully considered and done with 100% concentration!

In the old days I used to worry that more serious injury was inevitable, it was a mixture of concentration and luck that will get me through.

But NO, it is 100% concentration that will keep me safe, and allow me to do even more dangerous, bigger tech's than I previously imagined!

I now see why DB is so crazy with his big jumps.

I used to think, when watching him jump from that staircase to that 4-storey building, that "It would only take a small error, a slight stumble, to kick his toe accidentally, a slight loss of concentration, and the next minute he would be plummeting five stories down to the street below". But now I realise that this is very unlikely, because every time he does this maneuver - big or small - to the utmost perfection. Every time.

It gives him confidence and has kept him safe and injury free, all these years.

Well, sorry to go on and on about perfection, but Stephane has said the same thing in many interviews before, and I had heard him talking about drilling techniques 1000's of times, until perfect, but I didn't quite grasp what he was trying to say until he explained it to me face to face and demonstrated it first hand.

When I watched him move, after we had finished training, and observed him walk through crowded public streets, go up and down escalators, stairs, move in and out of vehicles etc., on the way back to his apartment, I noticed he strives for perfection when he moves anywhere! Even walking down the street, he does it fluidly, efficiently, and gracefully, always constantly aware of foot placement and body posture. When we were entering in and out of his elevator he would spin 360 degrees all of a sudden, and I realised that he never stopped doing Parkour. He was not the sort to ever trip up a gutter or kick his toe when walking, accidentally knock over a drink, or stumble, he was always moving with complete efficiency.

So, I have learnt now that we should never stop doing Parkour, except when we are sleeping.

Every waking hour, whenever we are moving in any way, even walking like normal people along our channeled routes, we should always be doing it as perfectly as we can.

**Parkour isn't just choosing the different obstacle filled route, sometimes it's choosing the same boring route as everyone else, but moving along that route with perfection.**

Anyway, I hope I haven't bored you but I really wanted to share this advice with a fellow traceur, as it has immediately changed my style for the better. You're right I should start a thread about it, I probably will when I get some free time, then everyone can benefit from my experience. Anyway I hope this advice helps you as much as it has me.

It's weird to think at the start of this year I was sitting in a small town in OZ, now four months later I've just finished a holiday in Thailand, and met Stephane Vigroux and Chau Belle Dinh!  
You just never know what life has in store!



***Workshops & training in your state***

<b><i>Where?</i></b>	<b><i>When?</i></b>	<b><i>What?</i></b>
Melbourne, VIC		
Sydney, NSW		
Canberra, ACT		
Brisbane, QLD		

As of yet there are no workshops or events. This will change as soon as we have acquired insurance and can begin classes.



***Have your say***

In the upcoming issues we will publish the feedback you give us on the APA and this newsletter in particular.

So if you'd like to give us your opinion, simply write an email to [newsletter@parkour.asn.au](mailto:newsletter@parkour.asn.au)

***About the APA***

The Australian Parkour Association Inc. (APA) was formed in 2006 by some of the most experienced and dedicated Parkour practitioners in Australia in order to develop Parkour as a discipline and to foster its growth in Australia. It is a nationally recognised organisation capable of operating in any state or territory within Australia.

***Join the APA***

If you have not yet joined the APA and wish to do so then get online and click [HERE](#)

***Get in touch with the APA:***

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