

## Emu Thoughts

2000

1999 was a good year for the club in that we retained the Rockhopper trophy and won the Qantas National one. If we analyse our activities and membership however, the fact is that we operate at half power in the sense that almost exactly 50% of our membership is inactive. (Another club reports 70%). Read all this issue and then think about it; a number of people do a lot for the club; more would be appreciated. For the first time the newsletter contained some color photos.

Seven NEs went to NZ for the Masters Champs, some 1500 entries from many countries. Apparently, courses were tough, in sand tunes, and times were long. In the final Sue was 5<sup>th</sup>, Joyce 9<sup>th</sup>, Paul 13<sup>th</sup>, Rex 16<sup>th</sup>, Dorothy 34<sup>th</sup>, Gill 36<sup>th</sup> and Laurie 38<sup>th</sup>. Paul & Dorothy (only weeks from major surgery had walked in NZ but was now back to running) were the only NEs to do the 5 Days in NSW at Yankee Jack's Hill, Timberlight, Yuruga, Sooley Valley & Wollondilly Bend, coming 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Peter Herd joined us 3 years ago but as his running and rock climbing friends are in BK he now runs for BK and is on its ctte. There was a 6 hour foot or cycle metrogaime in the Silvan area, in 38C heat -- many teams dropped out before or during -- surviving NEs Ron & Helen won Mixed Vets. The Fells had been developing street 7 park areas in the Western suburbs; the first 29/2 leap day for 400 years saw an event in Werribee. David Hudson was involved in a 24 hour event at Mt Disappointment and scored a T shirt for exceeding 100km (104km). TV showed a mineshaft rescue -- the shaft is on our Smiths Reef map. The Js, Rex, Rob & Geoff spent a mapping day in the outer areas of Whroo --- relatively featureless terrain.

The Blowhole was first bush event of the new century, HARD -- hot conditions, a solid workout; a number DNFd. Creswick Diggings was next day. NEs who finished were 32 first day, 38 the second. Adrian (course 3) and Rachel E (courses 12). The Club Relays were on Smiths Reef map, spider country! The usual NE bike enthusiasts did well at the Balt Camp in the Wombat Forest, and Warren won the Kalparrin Fun Run from Greensborough to Diamond Ck -- Helen E was third. For those going to Canberra there was a granite training day at Mt Alexander. The OFA Merit Badge awarded 36 NEs with gold, silver or bronze badges, paid for by the club. NE ran the final night of the Summer series at Maroondah Triangle, a record attendance of 256. Laurie and John Sheahan made the presentations, lots of awards including one to a dog. Peter J had the highest points; other NEs with firsts were David, Rachel J, Randall, Melinda, Marion & Colin. Adrian, Ron S and Jenny were second, Warren & Joyce third. The end of another year and a credit to those such as Wally and John who make it so.

The May Newsletter was by Geoff as the Hudsons had been to the Easter 3 Days. The family relays were at Laurel Camp 30 minutes West of Canberra --- an introduction to

Sportident detail of which with pictures was included in the issue. Day 1 was at Namadgi National Park, complex granite in eucalypt forest, the green was really green. Day 2 was at Shoalhaven River, 90 minutes East of Canberra, similar terrain with cypress pine and fallen timber in the steeper areas. Day 3 was the hardest, complex granite was an understatement. A Wangaratta weekend was a kind of wash out – the first day at Triptera in the Warby Ranges was not too bad but waking to pelting rain, uniformly grey skies, -- shameful to relate – we squibbed it – didn't fancy rain and possibly snow at Mt Pilot, so along with the Schincks we headed home, rained nonstop to Euroa. It was later learned that the event was cancelled due to heavy snow and fallen and falling, trees; roads were closed. A few got through earlier; Alan Watts was the only one to complete a course.

The Winter Classic started off at Butterfly Gully but scribe who'd been having back trouble for a few weeks (and osteopathy) pained all the way, all 177 minutes (Marion 207) and we again squibbed the second day, wherever it was. For the above bush events our usual winners and place getters indeed performed as usual, quite well. There was a newsletter plug for Rail trails (which Joyce and scribe belonged to at the time). The next newsletter was chiefly re Qld and it was compared to the Qld experiences of 1991, six pages of it. The first day was the Aust Champs at Dalveen between Warwick and Stanthorpe where there had been ice on the road the day before, and only 6C at the time – grazing land, open forest small thickets of blackberry or lantana, map dissected by railway line, stock crossings. Later it turned out to be a fine day – we had been given plastic bags at registration for clothing return – labelled bags to avoid the usual searching and sorting through a clothing pile. Also, a timing chip was issued to each competitor – a green light should flicker and a beep should be heard if your chip is functioning correctly – it was placed beneath chest number – you will be charged \$25 if chip is lost or not returned. The male and female Results were separate, a distance between them – in Victoria it is considered sexist in some quarters not to have the sexes on the same side. Day 2 was the same place, minus railway, for the Relays. The Js instead had a trip to Toowoomba and the old town of Allora, the usual museum of whiskered gents, forbidding women, and the biggest collection of junk imaginable – depressing – WW1 gasmasks, rusty teaspoons, tarnished sporting cups, barb wires, broken radios --- the 1991 account referred to a traffic fine in the area – were waved down --- and history now repeated itself 'pull over, driver'. Way out in the country, a STOP sign on the side road as it joined the highway – OK, nothing about, slowed down from 100 or so to about 10kph --- and, where'd he spring from! (Motorcyclist)

The Park O for elites was in Warwick's Queen Park – the best 16, then the best 4. Karen Staudte was among them – her mother Judith is now a headmistress in Darwin and sends best wishes to all. It was well attended and concluded with a procession to a college for innumerable speeches by mayors and aboriginal elders and the like. There are certainly a lot of eateries in Warwick – a group of 5 takeaways next to our motel. However, this night a large number of orienteers gathered at the RSL, a huge place.

The only NEs we sighted were Janet & Arthur. It was a long wait for a meal (long queues, self-service -- but excellent variety and quality --- during the wait Janet told us of her interesting family history – one ancestor owned the George Hotel St Kilda in its heyday. Another was the manager of the steam tramway that plied between Sorrento and Portsea for many years. The Aust/NZ Challenge was at Goomburra Valley, NE of Warwick, at first lovely farming country with ranges on both sides gradually closing in; a small map with as many as 60 watercourses, my number 5 required crossing a creek – wide and still – people were plopping into it to waist height but I detoured upstream and crossed at calf depth. After some dreadful climbs another crossing, in full spectator view, loomed and there was no escape; had to wade across. Then back to the motel where, since Marion likes very early nights, I repaired to the toilet as reading room and read “Eucalyptus” and Bryson’s “Down Under”. The next day was for APOC Short and the schools – neither Vic senior nor juniors were placed, very stiff competition. The Leslie Dam was a lovely setting (like Maroondah) – very steep, and with obnoxious “jumping cactus” --- scribe struggled home in 75, winner took 19.

Then came two free days – the first the Js went to Killarney to the Queen Mary Falls – a cross between Marysville and Daylesford – a platform juts out over the precipice beneath, the vertical walls disappear into the bowls of the earth – there’s a kiosk frequented by Crimson Rosellas and King Parrots – and a Satin Bower Bird (very dark blue-black) and his speckled mottled grey mate. The older houses in the district are typical QLD on stilts with enclosed verandahs, but those at Killarney were different, more utilitarian, more modern. The reason is that Killarney was destroyed by an earthquake in 1968 – “flying tin came through the window and cut the legs of the kitchen table”.

The second was the opposite, went to Leyburn, a dismal place -- the best thing (only?) was a Bottle Tree planted in 1878. It comes alive one weekend in August for sprint car racing around the dead paddocks. The Asia-Pacific Championships were at The Cascades, Stanthorpe, part of the Amiens map where we, and many others, were massacred in 1991. In 1991 B Johnson headed the list in 58 (Kevin deliriously thought it was me) but this BJ tailed in 178 – a shallow gully on top of a hill stumped me. Again, history repeated – BJ topped again, and I bottomed again, in 222. The Relays were next day but Js visited the Warwick railway museum that used to stable 50 locomotives, and staff of 300 all long since gone. There had been social gatherings such as trivia nights, bush dances and the like, but we’d scarcely saw anybody (early starts and late finishers) or new of any Results other than that Aust beat NZ 18 to 3 in the Relays, Helen E & Dorothy in winning teams.

Back home in Vic to Canadian Forest where it was a shock to find bench control 500 at the end (for our 500 is safely at Erica’s); some other 500’s had been used – these are allotted to NE whereas Eureka has the 200s! The undefeated NE had been against the BR/CH/TK combination in the progressive inter-club challenge and won by 16

points. With the finals approaching it would be wise for us to think about our better performers and their elected courses --- not much point cutting our own throats with duplicate possibilities on a popular course when other courses have nobody at all. Toward the Rockhopper Marion & scribe can gather about 15 points per OY despite being last, but inter-club it is zilch as points are only for the three best.

A low-key event at Wewak followed but then came Two Kangaroo Creeks, good weather, and open terrain. It was Vin Maloney day, and also the final of the inter-club challenge. Don Fell, now State selector (congrats!) being concerned sent an email to over half the club about it – hard copy to others. “It does not appear that we will win the Final as an analysis of past results indicates that AW/BG will probably do so. That they did not beat us earlier in the year (29/25) was because they were the event organisers on the day and not at full strength”.

We did it! We won 37/31. Our trio of young girls, Rachel H, Jessica, and Kate scored a clean sweep in W10. Rob & Rex ran up to courses 1 & 2 to win points (both survived) and we were well served by others. The older brigade was not as successful as usual due to younger age groupings being on their courses and there being no gender provision. New member Greg Edmonds did course 9 and collected 3 points there being no BG/AW opposition.

It was unfortunate that the Jackson family took umbrage at the NE win, and resigned from the club, on the grounds that NE had cheated in some way. Obviously, there was some controversy and heated emails about it; however, the newsletter was quite moderate. We thank them, however, for assisting NE to win the Rockhopper trophy 5 times (or is it 6?), the interclub last year, and the Qantas award in 1999. Without their expertise it will be difficult for NE to do as well in 2001 – more of a challenge for the rest of us.

Carmel won a computer in an Age competition, husband Ian a green stuffed dragon. Daughter Heather (who has contributed to this newsletter in the past) and husband have moved to America – it is the brain drain of talented and qualified people moving to greener pastures to pursue research and remuneration. Carmel, fluent in French is now learning German; Dorothy is learning Spanish. The three Fell boys scored a page and picture in the Werribee press – there is now a second street map in the area. Christmas In July was again at the Fredericks, the usual attendees, about 40 – thanks to Janet for the puddings, Kevin the ham, Dorothy the brandy butter. Wattle Gully was a low-key event, no toilets, no tents, no frills and not many present – NEs only the Fells, Kevin, Marion & scribe. On the other hand, Blowmine was good. Michael set courses 1-7 and Sue did 8-12. Organisers were Gill & Geoff. Geoff & Schon called for the control stands, also for the string course (Rosemarie, Rachel & Freya stuck elephant stamps on the string course ones), Ron F took the trailer which had just had the canopy re-waterproofed.

