

Emu Thoughts

Introduction

Having attended Nillumbik Emus 2008 AGM and seeing the usual faces, same ones year after year, led to me thinking that it is high time for some new blood --- and I reflected on the past in this regard. We, the Johnson family, came along in 1988, officially 1989, and were indeed new blood at the time – we certainly had no experience of orienteering, no expertise, no course setting or organising ability – however we've been of value in that Marion was Emu Treasurer for many years, I became Editor for 12 years, daughter Erica was VOA Minute Secretary for years as well as NE treasurer until Marion reclaimed it. We were the most regular event attenders in the VOA for years, both Bush and Street; have been general helpers, dogsbodies. I've been Equipment officer for years, and Erica's double garage has housed our trailer and accessories for a decade or more. All six children have turned up a few times but the regulars were Erica, Janet & Rachel (National and Vic Champ at times) It was rarely seen Felicity, however, who once looked askance at one of my newsletters and said 'Do people really read this?' So, it is at the risk of such reality that I attempt this perspective, as I see it, which might not, of course, be how others do.

Nillumbik Emus was formed by the amalgamation of Emu and Nillumbik clubs in December 1993. Nillumbik (NK) had started off in 1978 as Eltham College (EC) and changed its name in 1982 to broaden appeal. Two other clubs contributed to it on their closing, Geelong from which Derek Morris joined Nillumbik, and from Latrobe University came Rob & Helen Edmonds. Emu was formed in 1982 (EM) and it too inherited from two deceased clubs, St Leo's and Navigators, which had merged before eventually folding in 1987 when the Schincks and Maloneys were salvaged. Nillumbik was thus the elder but being in Emu, and possessing the early newsletters, it is best to start there.

1982

It is back to 1982 when the club grew out of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club (MUMC). The inaugural meeting was on 21/4/82 in East Melb when a Constitution was drawn up, membership resolved, a committee elected, discussion re club name and colors, about a map at Steiglitz and so on. At the time 'Red Kangaroos' existed which is perhaps why names discussed included 'Blue Emus' and 'Green Emus' but the first naming motion to be put was for 'Karawingi Orienteering Club' which was seconded by Fiona Fell. However, it was defeated and 'Emu Orienteering Club' proposed by Don Fell was accepted. (Ex Melb Uni) ... Don says it was Geoff Lawford's idea, an MUMC member then moving to Canberra.

The names mentioned either by attendance or apology at that meeting follow with present members underlined. Some will be classed as families to save space including singles later married. Turner family, Murray Hicks, Waterfield family, Jan Scheffer, Paul Rainey, Cole family, Ron Wescott, Philip Salvano, Mills family, Fell family, Kerr family, Frederick family, McCredie family, John Burrow, Geoff Armstrong (resuscitated after long absence) Kathy Liley, Susan Armstrong. (New members still present will also be underlined the first time).

The rest of the year saw new names in the Bayliss family, Adrian family, Cathy Arceri, Margaret Badminton (prominent later), Peter Lambert, John Lillyston, Frances Pulis, Jacquie Rand (went to Canada), Tien Shen Saw, Tony Scalzo, Jean Silver, Keith Strathmore, Rob Thurling. Social nights were set at 2 monthly intervals at members' homes (often John & Jill Turner's) and the club's first event was at Wattle Park on 13/8/82. Bush events were at Sunwest Lodge (Hepburn), Korweinguboora, Splitters Ck (Bendigo) & Kinglake West. There was a coaching course (run by Fred Veler of the VOA (later), novice instruction and similar efforts at getting the club established. Colors were chosen, those not used by any other club, olive green with camel. The occasional newsletter had a good article re line orienteering, native cherry trees, and direct routes by John Burrow.

1983

It started off with a training weekend at Borhoney Ghurk and a barbecue at Turner's. There was an event of the new Steiglitz map and the club claimed 80 members though they included children and social non-active members --- truly active ones were fewer! "It is detrimental for the club if the same people do the same jobs all the time." There was a social evening at the Adrians ('really like to see some of our newer members'), there was a survey on hopes and wishes and offers of help, relay teams, and an invitation for the Rockhopper Club to join in some activities and to co-host the 1985 Aust Champs. A club T Shirt was designed by Fiona Fell and Judy Frederick. Margaret Badminton had a successful fund-raising scheme (not detailed, probably chocolate bars) and during the year the Edwards family (later) materialised.

1984

An AGM was held at Steiglitz and new names to appear were Neil Kirwin, Stephen Kaylock, Boden Drosdowskyj & Alison Boothroyd. Kathy Liley, who was running training courses, and Secretary, also took over the Newsletter in March and it became a regular monthly with membership exhortations, social and orienteering notes, and a worthy production. (Kathy's uncle was Anglican Archbishop of Melb.) Paul Adrian re-organised the medical squad for bush events.

It was quite a busy year with John Turner and Geoff Armstrong the chief organisers, an event on the Graytown map (belonged to Rockhoppers), accommodation arranged at various places such as St Leonard's Hill and Heathcote -- there was also 'Kathy's guide for eating at Daylesford' Some "old" members (as described) were overseas, Geoff Lawson in Norway (later Canberra), others in America or interstate. The badge credit scheme saw lots of members score. The Karton family came onto the scene, the children won various events at Mt Franklin Gorge but like so many others were then to disappear, the Scowen and Cameron families had appeared, also the Trease and Middleton families, Robin Gray and Gill King (Dorothy's cousin) – on the inclusive basis m'ship totalled 82 but 4 years later I was only to ever sight 22 and some of those but rarely.

On the suburban scene Dorothy Adrian was arranging permission for our first city map, Fairfield Park. (The first event in Northcote indeed was ours 14/10/84) A "regionalisation" scheme allocated Nunawading, Heidelberg and Northcote to Emu. Meanwhile the Bush had been rather wet with numerous boggings "Olive green and camel O-suits featured prominently in the second mass start, then the news filtered back --- two controls mislabeled, steep gullies filled with blackberries, no dry crossing-places on the creek, lots of mud."

1985

Ron Wescott & Murray Hicks were relieved to pass over the Equipment role to Paul Adrian (items now stowed beneath the house at Donvale instead of previous boatshed). Club incorporation, mooted the previous year, was affected. Margaret Badminton arranged a display at the Nunawading library and the Clark family ('they drive a blue VW') resulted. Also new were Val Greer, Andrew Selkirk, Kirsty Halliday, Kari Fristad, Russell Smith, and the Martin family (Jan had initially introduced Kathy Liley to orienteering some years before).

This was the world orienteering WOCARN year and Emu & Rockhopper pooled resources to run the Australian Champs. This was on the crocodile Reservoir map which we had bought from Rockhopper. With 1760 entries, 25 courses, 150 controls, this was a huge event, John Turner was overall organiser, John Burrows the course setter and many helpers were required, 23 alone for the Finish and Results. There's a great deal about it and also other events such as Relays, major interstate events and the like. 'Avid orienteers remember every contour, boulder and root mound. Others remember bull ant bites, boggy creeks, or barbed wire. I remember the O toilets' The Newsletter also contained knitting plans (for Caps and Mittens re a Club Beanie) re junior training camps, an "Ask the Expert" section. The Mills family was in Wisconsin for a year and wrote that a new little "Emu" was born there – the weather

was minus 26C and the family was learning to skate.

1986

“Is there life after WOCARN? After the pressure of the seven days carnival it seems hard workers were exhausted and by 1988 had largely disappeared from the scene. Kathy became a Level 2 coach and had a Coaching Corner in the newsletter with articles on ‘relocation’ ‘attack points’ and various training events. Various club members were appointed to assist others. The Scowens, and later the Adrians went to Nepal (Paul & Dorothy had originally met there), others were away, and it seemed that things were falling off a bit.

John Cole had constructed our Results system for big events, the large wooden construction easy to erect and dismantle by tall people providing it was done in a specific sequence (if not then the beams would split) ---- presumably it was for WOCARN but here in 86 there’s reference of it being sent to SA. Years later it went to Broken Hill and between times lived in Erica’s garage until finally being given to the VOA for schools’ events. New names appearing were Kate McLoughlin and the Freer family. The year showed the usual events such as at Slaty Creek, Steiglitz, Crocodile Reservoir, and training at Vaughan Springs. The Summer series of suburban street running was beginning to be noted at this time. One of the original members, Mike Waterfield, cycled to Perth, 3800km ‘I got sunburned just on one side’.

1987

An event at Fairfield Park attracted 175 entrants with the Cole and Kerr families organising, a Vaughan Springs day was a success despite a total fire ban, and there were the usual Newsletter tips and advice re training, health and expertise, VOA matters. Masters’ Games and the like. But then, in March, after a well attended AGM (24) at her home, Kathy decided to call it quits as editor after four productive years. The Fredericks and later Hazel Edwards took over. Hazel Edwards, noted author of children’s books had written one with an O theme the year before and now had a new one, “Grandma Zeal”, whose illustrator had been introduced to Hazel by Nina Cole. The Edwards and Frederick children were interviewed re orienteering on Radio 3RPH. Easter was in Qld this year and the regulars attended.

A few injuries and sickness reduced available numbers, and some families had moved to the country or interstate; Paul Adrian wrote expressing concern re zero increase in our membership in recent years --- several of our highly valued old actives disappearing into the mist’ Those active, however, were indeed so, lots of events, a coaching weekends, social evenings at Fredericks; new members were Jim Happ,

Gerald Foxhall & Joyce James. Easter had been in NSW 'marshes, swamps, monotonous steep rocky gullies.'