

Emu Thoughts

1988

The St Leo's club and the Navigators club had merged some time before but the combined one wasn't viable and when it dissolved Vin & Kevin Maloney, and Max & Doreen Schinck good active members, came to Emu. Sue Sturges & Hjalmer Nilsen (a Bendigo member and friend of the Adrians) also came along about this time. Margaret Badminton donated funds to purchase our club trailer and Adrians paid for its canopy – still going strong years later. There were also 4 new members, nuns at Caritas Christi, Elizabeth Wall, Margaret Galvin, Mary Clarke and Anna-Marie Parlevliets invited to the club by Garnet Edwards -- the first two dropped out, the others remained for a few years and attended social functions and AGMs.

One of the main events was at Crocodile Reservoir in September and though not noted, the Johnsons were there. Daughter Janet had set the orienteering ball rolling with the suburban event at Currawong shortly before; Marion and 3 daughters, Erica, Janet & Rachel attended --- the next week they then went to a bush event near Bendigo. I stayed home and sulked – ‘stupid, who'd ever want to do that?’ But I turned up at Crocodile, duly chose a course much too hard, and from then on we didn't miss an event. So much so that Ian Baker (the starter one day) asked, ‘why don't you join a club? – he recommended Emu.

1989

The year started with field checking for the new Hepburn Diggings map. Then there was an event at Crocodile Reservoir where a bridge was required – John Cole and Paul Adrian spent half a day constructing (a great success) and Ron Frederick who camped nearby said ‘better than a five star hotel – there were millions of stars’. Hazel wondered whether the name was because of the hide-like mud – crocodile? The Js took part in their first relay, having been roped in by organiser Max Schinck. A Wattle Park event attracted a then record 157 people and there was an equipment working bee at Adrians.

Easter was at Burra in SA and the J's went along; our early booking was in vain as the hotel had burned down but we found an alternative place. (later a 31-year-old man was finally charged with burning down the hotel ‘very drunk and did not understand what he did’ – he was placed on a 3-year bond). Burra was quite an experience; what I thought was a highway turned out to be a dry riverbed. The history of the place (Cornish miners etc.) was fascinating. Afterwards we continued Northwards the long drive to reach and climb Ayers Rock.

‘Margaret Badminton has purchased a property in good orienteering country and we are all invited to stay’ This was/is at Yapeen (“Puddle Duck Farm”) near Castlemaine

and some of us, including Johnsons have indeed stayed there. We had a new suburban map, Wattle Park, an event at Steiglitz and Sailors' Diggings, and a new map was being planned for the North Brisbane Ranges. Kathy was plugging club training, fartlet circuits, terrain running, map memory, but on one such set day the only ones to turn up were Rachel and self – at 100 Acres – Kathy's great enthusiasm was not being captured. Then, in April, the J's were welcomed (a John Burton the month before) and we attended the AGM at John & Nina Coles -- the Davidson family was also welcomed, Carmel to be important later on.

Hazel Edwards was now editor and her first profile of a club member was Janet J. There were various working bees during the year such as the laborious task of making chest numbers for the Vic Champs and for hiring out (some 1000 I recall – stenciling and cutting for ages!). That proved wasted effort as they were rarely used again – all those safety pins too! New members were the Erm family and Marn Wynn. The second profile was re Vin Maloney the oldest Emu then at 77 – he and Kevin ran the O Shop, always friendly to newcomers. Hazel had another book, "Cunning Running" and it featured Roslyn Frederick on the cover with other club orienteers within. There was also a well-attended Trivia night at the Edwards home

1990

There was a stir when Kathy wrote 'Our club is in a spot of bother. Too few people to organize, set courses, control, to map --- we seem to be in a downward spiral'. She went on to suggest a possible amalgamation with Yarra Valley which was similar in number but more active. President Paul responded 'I certainly agree that Emu is going through a rough patch. Our old guard have moved, retired, suffered burn-out or simply faded away.' He went on to say that we were a fairly laid-back club that looked on the sport as leisure, and that he feared loss of identity if we merged or were taken over. 'Come on folks, forgotten and new, dust off the cobwebs and come orienteering! You do know there is nothing else like it'.

At the May AGM Marion J became Treasurer and in November I became Editor. That first issue reported that a black and white street map for Quambee Reserve was planned and spoke of the Aust-NZ Relays (part of the Hovell Tour) 'that went off very well at Hepburn Diggings' where the local farmer put in 300m of piping to bring water close to Registration. Our team of helpers, from Emus & Nillumbik, was small and everyone worked right through from 7.30 to 1.30, no relief shifts. We stayed at a school camp at St Leonard's Hill. The issue concluded with a press photograph of Rachel J as Nunawading Gazette's junior Sports Star of the week – this resulted from her participating in the Schools Champs in mallee scrub North of Adelaide.