

## Emu Thoughts

1991

I developed the theme that I was to stress for seemingly ever. After outlining how the J's had come to orienteering, joined a club and so forth, I was wondering 'where is everybody?' I had analysed attendances against membership and found that the participation rate was usually only about 15%. It seemed, and was for some years to follow, that four families made up almost total attendances, Johnsons, Adrians, Schincks, Maloneys so I coined the abbreviation JASM's and recorded the PR rate at various events. 'The Adrians & Gill King are back from their Himalayan trekking, 837km in 37 days Most days started at minus 10C and the food alternated between cabbages and noodles, and noodles and cabbage'

The JASMs and Kathy had done the Ballarat 5 Days -- Canadian Forest, Slaty Ck, Springdallah, Mt Beckworth & Yarrowee Pines. There were 100 Victorians and 150 Interstaters. The newsletter included a copy of the Springdallah map with notations -- at (d) I met a novice woman walking due South who was looking for (e) -- we were pleased to meet for she hadn't seen anybody for an hour either.' Kathy was the best of the Vics but, not altogether a surprise, Kathy announced that she was changing clubs, moving to Yarra Valley where she'd be able to be in winning relay teams. 'I have decided to move clubs, mainly for selfish reasons, but not without a lot of consideration and heartache --- I don't know that yellow and black will suit me -- it wasn't a decision made for the uniform' Many years later, with Kathy still very active and winning, it is ironic that it is NE and not YV that has been the top bush club On lighter note -- Rachel J has a penchant for names and finds it hilarious that an orienteer appears as 'Diddy Needham' but an old Vic News goes one better with a supposed Tasmanian named 'Willie Kumbac.'

Janet J and friend Peter Kehoe, and Garnet Edwards paired with Gordon Edwards of Bayside, did the High O at Bogong. The first normal event of the year was Williams Ck at Narbethong 'among the dark and sombre pines. Knowing that Max had taken 69 I hurried home in 68 but heard 'excuse me, you haven't punched number 4' -- needless to say it was furthest away so amid jocularly re a bicycle it was a case of re-tracing for a second coming in 107' The January long weekend saw events at Wattle Gully, Boundary Ck & Mineral Springs, the Monday being a Relay in which I dead heated for last in a time of 170 minutes (long after Results and tents had been packed up), the first of what were to become numerous marathons. The Js had stayed at Puddle Duck Farm; Sue Healy (RH) and Dave Lotty (NSW) were among 21 there for the Sunday night social. The Yapeen school is right beside PDF, one of the very few one teacher schools still existing (?), and Rachel noted the aptness of the name of the teacher there in 1877 for it was just what we had been doing on a training exercise -- Mark a Pitt !! Judy Frederick wrote of her Level 2 Coaching course in Canberra. The

Murphy family from SA joined us because of our Emu motif; their Onkaparinga club's emu faced right, our stylised one, left. The Summer series results were noted.

Resulting from a survey there were colored stickers re renewals or indicating interest in coaching or being coached or this or that and 'so that other people do not feel deprived, there's a green blob for them!' The Coles were selling honey from bees on their Barkers Ck property. Conical Hill, so steep and dense, saw our 3 hour score event 'damp bush, up to neck in undergrowth, slipping on moss covered logs --- Carmel and party liked it so much they stayed for 4 hours! – Erica and I won the two generations category. Due to Max's chasing people up the Vic Relays at Watsons Glen saw 34 Emus attend, a PR of 66% -- 'Rachel couldn't find number 4 but was sure she was in right place --- DNFd she was later reinstated while those who had found the flag had been in the wrong place.

There was an event at Mt Alexander that differed from normal in that courses were down the mountain and a safari type bus took us to the top. Easter was at Mudgee in NSW and Max reported on it "the spectacular country made this one of the most enjoyable Easter 3 Days in which I have competed.' Other events were at Lysterfield, Lauriston, and Dunga Mt where new member Martin Kozma attended. The new Night series was beginning to grow – at one such Max and son Denis put out the plates and Marion collected the moneys by torchlight.

The year's AGM was at Johnsons -- 'Some might stay away from AGMs for fear of being dragooned into something --- quite likely too – but don't dismiss it out of hand. Emu is rather informal and laid back and you might find that you like doing something for the club. Previous Presidents had been the three Johns (Burrow, Turner, Cole), Paul Adrian and Judy Frederick --- incoming was Mike Scowen. The Hepburn Diggings map had cost \$10,293 and with 600 of the 2000 maps having been used a profit of \$845 was calculated, with half going to Nillumbik. The sale of Wattle Park maps (2039) was profitable --- also of apples and equipment & chest number hire. The PR rate had risen to 22% with 33% at one event.

There was another Hepburn event again with Nillumbik that set the courses while Emu provided the infrastructure; Marne Wynn was organiser. Control AE was correctly placed but the master map showed it in the wrong gully. The course was eventually cancelled but one runner had got it right by incorrectly copying the incorrect map. There was a slip-up at the Blodslitet at Middletons Ck too for two controls had the same letters (EK) but as they were "a mile apart" it 'wouldn't matter' --- needless to say I found both! Marion and self-took 4 hours 'but time-wise we were outstripped by Hjalmer who took nearly 5 hours.' Wattle Gully was wet and cold 'when the wind blew the trees dropped thick and heavy droplets, the coffee bushes were like wet towels, knuckles became white and fingers numb --- I became aware I'd bump into an aqueduct about half way – many of us have childhood types of fears of some kind; mine are aqueducts, rivers and girder bridges probably because we had

lived very near the Elwood Canal which flooded in 1934, breached levies, came into our hallway' This fear was to indeed become a great trauma later on (in the Taradale area).

A Saturday event at Mt Franklin (volcano) had been poorly advertised and with adverse weather only 12 people turned up, more than half being Emus! – 'not unpleasant running or walking along the thick carpet of orange pine needles. There was a training weekend at the Doxa Youth Camp with a detailed report by Dorothy Adrian Other midyear items were re a combined Yarra Bend/Studley Park map (with Red Kangaroos) in the wet, then Christmas Hills in the wet Yarrowee Pines – 'there were dozens – hundreds – of large brightly colored toadstools just like the unbelievably ones in children's books -- bright red with yellow spots, evocative of elves, gnomes and gingerbread.' Melbourne was having a wet year; the June 116 ml was a record.

Later there were schools' events, the Winter series, Mt Beckworth, Kimbolton, Monument Hill, Crocodile Reservoir, Wewak & Glenlyon Roses. The PR ratio ranged from 18% to 22%. At the time there was an orienteering limerick competition and Carmel Davidson's sister in law (an ACT Paringa runner) sent in a number – here is one of them. "There was once in Silvan domain, A Sylph o'the woods who rogained, she ran in her nightie, but found it too tightly, her athletic prowess constrained". A shortage of club colors had arisen --- olive green is OK, but the camel has the hump.

Triptera in Wangaratta's Warby ranges were lovely and green after the Winter rains -- - good open country with rocky outcrops. The next day was Donkey Hill in the Chiltern Forest. After this with 4Js in the car and with cases on the roof we set off North, 500km to Forbes, then 300km to Coonabarabran (saw the radio telescope --if we drove toward the sun at 100kph we'd take longer to get there than a snail slithering to Perth and back', Warrumbungles and the 800 step staircase, then 600km to Goodiwindi At a roadside stop Rachel found a driver's licence in the gravel – we returned it to its owner in Toowoomba'. Then to our destination, Esk, which usually nestles in a lush valley but is now straw and brown colored as a bushfire burns to the South, a pungent yellow haze'.

It was the QLD Champs and the first day was Grand Final Day, so I hurried to get back to the motel but instead ran into a dead branch in a cleft between rocks. Normally squeamish about blood, of which there was plenty, it was, however, a case of first things first, so to find 322, 326 & 149 then down finish chute, to first aid tent, hospital for tetanus shot and stitching. The second day was at the same place then to Bigges Hill a school's score event, then Mt Dongineerian for the relay where I became entangled in lantana (really vicious when huge and rampant "fight!") Presentations were on when I struggled home, but my comrades, Bill Davis and Keith Holmes shouted at me to get the last control right (some did not) – did it, and we

scored a 3<sup>rd</sup>. Back to hospital to have stitches out, and to motel were 22 lovely King Parrots were plodding around under a sprinkler.

Then to Stanthorpe, incurring traffic fine and dead battery on the way, for an event at Harslett's Rd, then Amiens State Forest --- my NSW namesake BJ took 51 to be top Kevin deliriously thought it was me but this BJ tailed in 178. Some stayed for Relays, but we had had enough and came home via Tamworth, 4500km all told. Then to a minor event at Brimbank Park where there was a tiger snake sunning itself on a rock only metres from a control it had a crisscross pattern like a trouser belt' – crept around it. Bush events which were the tail end of 1991 were at Wewak, Paul Range & Long Gully; there were numerous Summer series reports and schools' ones at which Js assisted. The year finished at Canadian Forest when a new face appeared, Kevin's sister Joan after years overseas. Brother Peter was to appear later. Scribe has now been scribbler for a year if anybody else is interested please surface!

## 1992

A Bayside newsletter said most members merely 'want to go into the Bush every weekend and sniff the eucalypts – seems that they're ahead of us, we could do with more sniffers. How about doing some eucalypt snorting in 92? Frances Scowen, who had been secretary from 1986-1988 died – she had helped in the making of the chest numbers, she and Mike went to the Oberammergau Passion Play in her last and 60<sup>th</sup> year. There was an article about blood pressure and hypertension, and an interesting full page about Vin Maloney I was stunned when Rachel asked, "what is Vin's name?" – "Vincent of course" – "well why does he sign his card L?" Leonard Maloney was born in Coventry in 1912 but an older cousin had the same name, hence Vin became Vin to avoid confusion.

About this time there was general talk of mergers but the proposed one between Dandenong Ranges (DROC) and Red Kangaroos was rejected by the latter on proxy votes. Erica J was asked to become VOA Minute Secretary and was to hold the position for some years. And as Sue Sturges in her VOA role of school activities was being snowed under, I was asked to become pseudo treasurer for the Heart Health side of things (VHF) – this continued for some years too.

The newsletter had an Adrian page, top half from Dorothy "Up the Creek without a Paddle" – the Xmas 5 Days in NSW where Scandinavians talking gobbledygook reigned supreme and had revealing O gear --- after four days of the treatment the King (Gill) and I returned with decimated confidence and almost no sartorial excellence. The lower half was similarly shattering by Paul reporting on the High O event at Kiandra 'jammed solid in bracken and other muck ---- today was infernal, but yesterday was pure unadulterated hell.

Tasmania! The Veteran World Cup – entries received from 22 countries. Most events were in the St Helens area which was booked out so the Js and very many others were based at Bicheno and were ‘to make the 150km trip six times pleasant drive between ocean and mountains; often had to rise at 5.30am, could see the sun rising above the sea. On the first day a large pond of still water looked scary. So was picking off leeches. Kevin splashed down to his waist and it is said a short woman sank to her neck. There was very good Media coverage and parochial favour – a fuss made of a Tasmanian orienteer who came 79<sup>th</sup>. Vin & Kevin were in the paper as Vin was 2<sup>nd</sup> (by 10 seconds) in the M80 class. The oldest Australian, 81, was Chris Candy but Swede Nordenfelt (whom I spoke to in the scrub when we were both lost) was 89. The Scandinavians impressed nudity-wise and by pressing for help (even to snatching maps) – one was disqualified for cheating. There is 6 pages of articles and notes on this carnival, a major event, and most enjoyable even if arduous. Gill took an hour to find number 1 on the third day, but Gordon Edwards did not find it at all. Paul was Emu’s best and also Australia’s best in M70A.

Paul Adrian wrote a very good profile of Hjalmar Nilsen ‘he was a vegetarian and teetotaler when we first met in 1941 -- I can confess to some merit in his subsequent conversion’. Nina Cole also wrote of her early orienteering years and MUMC bushwalking and said she hoped to return to the scene after the house building at Barkers Ck was finished --- the house was finished but John had shoulder and other operations and there was to be no return. About this period I had a few tiffs with the VOA and there were various meetings --- one matter concerned the upgrading of girls’ events, usually by two classes but in Rachel’s instance it meant 3 – from moderate course 9 to hard course 6, onerous for a 14 yr old. I lost that one. In Marion’s words ‘you’ve had your say; now give it a rest.’ Another issue was re not having resident badges in championship events why should someone who comes last get a badge?----- but Rachel had come a close 2<sup>nd</sup> to an ACT runner (several times) and was thus deserving --- but no, lost that issue too.

The year had a busy Summer Series, a Saturday series, and Winter Night series --- one night a Mr Whippy van was waiting at the end. Early in the year were Williams Ck, Woodend Park, Kimbolton (two days, North & South), Lauriston, Mt Franklin Gorge (entered from the other side, via Porcupine Ridge) and Mt Alexander. Easter, however, was the big one for us; it was shared by Eureka, Emu and Rockhopper. There was a great deal of work in preparation, course setting, taping control sites, equipment updating (borrowed 50 Bayside stands to augment our own 80), clue sheets, map bagging and the like. Emus who helped on one or all of the days represented 61% of membership.

The warm up event was at Blackfellows Flat near Bostock Reservoir --- to those who remember it was the only time that Marion was known to have run --- down the finish chute to pip Vin by 4 seconds – he said he always gives way to ladies. Most Emus stayed at Baanya Biami towards Anakie the rooms, for want of a better word, are, or

appear to be, concrete water tanks with up to six bunks – not unlike igloos.’ The first day was at Little Forest --- Dorothy and I were checking chest numbers and names but ‘had trouble with names like “Grbyz” and how could a manly hirsute fellow bear a card in the name of Sue?’ Second day was Mt Doran and the third was Borhoney Ghurk -- those helping at the Start had to move away as often a gust of wind would engulf us in the stench of a dead calf. It was a good Easter and we worked well with the other two clubs --- our best performers were Dorothy & Rachel. It is noted that Heather Davidson attended – her brother Sean had recently passed first class honours in genetics and was doing postgrad. Marion reported that we had spent almost \$8000 and got it all back except \$12 --- and still had 2000 Borhoney maps for future use.

Nearing the end of the year saw Mandurang (on my first day of retirement), the SA Champs at Mt Gambier (8 JASMs), Mt Beckworth, Graytown (new member Tim was there) -- kangaroos springing about all over the place --- a small five petalled mauve-blue flower -- Gill will know about that – yes, ‘Glossodia major’, the Fox Orchid. The Js were heavily involved in schools’ events too, Triptera, Jubilee Ck. The Aust Champs were at Canberra but as it was booked out the Js stayed in Yass ‘we visited the homestead that had been Hamilton Hume’s. ACT, as usual, was very difficult – Non-Smokers Flat (40 minute climb to start) – Vin put up a good fight and stayed out 251 minutes. A rarity for Marion too but she only found one control in 202 minutes. On a very similar course Rachel and Kevin took only 70 and 83. I took 2 hours to get to number 3 and tired of clambering over trees then gave up --- after Gundagai it was unbroken rain all the way home.

Max phoned to say that a member had taken his own life – Tim. The year wound down with Wurdi Youang, suburban maps, Lysterfield (where Rachel won the perpetual Spring Cup -- it’s a mounted coiled spring!), Kangaroo Arm. Hazel Edwards, recently in China, wrote a bright page on “Beijing Bike Survival” – says she did a lot of walking. And the end of the year was to conclude with the VOA having a gathering at the Bylands Tram Museum where I am a life member, I prepared a history handout of Melb electric trams with a quiz on the back. It seemed to be a good day, with activities such as gumboot throwing, and bussing to Kilmore to ride our motorised cable tram then there. There were more orienteers from other clubs than our own though, only 11 Emus turning up and 5 of those were our own family. I did a 5 day driving course a little earlier and am, qualified to drive at Bylands – tuition was in Melb, driving along St Kilda Rd – nerve-wracking! Awards were given to Wally Cavill for his great Summer series work, and to Erica for her VOA role.