

Emu Thoughts

1993

Bayside and Red Kangaroos agreed to merge as Bayside Kangaroos --- two clubs, Nillumbik and Rockhoppers said that in the present climate of amalgamation they'd consider their position in the coming year.' The Warby club folded (it was later said Emu should have taken it over) – maps and equipment went to Albury-Wodonga. The thriving Summer series had many events and were duly noted, the first Bush one was at Chewton, start and finish being beside the old Garfield Waterwheel. Continuing from the previous year there seemed to be a lot of wet weather as at Mt Doran and Borhoney Ghurk (274 participants) 'Scribe took half an hour to find number 1 but was consoled to learn that Dorothy took longer and had found 2 on the way – still beat scribe by 50 minutes though. Dunga Mt (the land of bracken) was another good event.

Then came Easter, the first to be in the West, 570 were registered. There was a detailed five-page report in the newsletter but in brief Good Friday was at Gleneagle approx. 300km from Perth – our Emu T shirts were commented upon – “oh look, there's another one”. Saturday was at Ngangauringguring Hill in typical WA eucalypt forest beyond York with lots of Xanthorrea (blackboys) 'orange, brown and black predominated as colors. Rachel won W16A and was duly announced, Janet J won W21B. Sunday was at the same place – along the way there is a sign saying “St Ronan's Well” – good, we didn't know he'd been sick. We did the usual tourist things, haunted houses, railway stations, museums, and the like. Monday was at Peterdine Hill where the stiles and hessian bag fence crossing points were confusing causing Rachel to lose to the WA girl who with her had had the fastest (unofficial) relay time in Wangaratta the year before – sore point with me, records didn't mention Rachel by name, merely as a “Victorian leftover”. Over the three days Paul, Dorothy and Peter (Keogh) scored trophies for 2nd and Rachel for 3rd. Fergus Fitzwater, son of Janet F of Nillumbik was first in M20A.

Tuesday was a free day so the Js did the 275km trip from York to the famous Wave Rock, the 15m granite cliff sculpted by the wind to give a striped pattern from minerals dissolved in the water, crystals are dated at 2700 million years. A long drive, 275km each way in our hired car ---- scarcely saw another vehicle either way. Wednesday was a score event at Mt Observation not far from York for those who had not returned; Rachel topped the Emu scores and was 6th of 70 women. Thursday saw us leave our hosts in York and go to Perth where, by J standards we had up market accommodation magnificent view across the Swan Estuary, the city skyline, joggers, cyclists, walkers, yachts with striped sails bobbing about, water skis etc.

Friday was south to Pinjarra Hills, steep and rocky, thorns, spikes, prickles, it was the individual day of the Aust/NZ Champs and Rachel's time was best, bettering that of the official teams (she'd missed selection by about one second over the first three

days). Marion took a long time, as usual, and the organisers became concerned, even to suggesting a search party when 3, and then 4 hours neared... When I again said she would be OK and not to worry I overheard one say to another “how’d you like a husband like that!” Eventually the scrub parted and there she was.

Saturday was the Relays at Bindoon to the North of Perth on the property of the Boys’ Town that had featured in the News re alleged abuse of migrant children in the 50s and 60s. I had visited it in 1951 (saw the boys constructing piggeries) while waiting to be accepted as a postulant at the nearby Benedictine Abbey of New Norcia. It was rather flat and dull country and little of interest; Erica’s team of 4 came first in W35A. In the afternoon we went to NN, famous painting, monks and abbots, charts, documents, tools, vestments dating from 1845 when Bishop Salvado (of Spain) founded the Mission. We went into the pro-cathedral and I motioned toward the confessional box and said, “been in there” only to have a startled Rachel exclaim, “what did you get in the cupboard for?” After that it was to a tramway museum (good one), to an aquarium with moving walkway, to Rottnest, and emu farm of 440 birds.

The next event was Hepburn Diggings again, run by Nillumbik but as it is our map, we shared the profit. Then Kooyoora Spur, Diamond Hill relays -- Max ran as Paul and then Kevin ran again, as Max. 14 attended the AGM at Scowen’s and Max Schinck was elected new President. It was arranged that the equipment would be moved from the Adrian abode to Erica’s garage. There had been an approach for merger from Bayside, but we were not interested --- we fear it would end up more work for the same people. Marion’s detailed Treasurer’s report showed us getting richer with \$11410 in the bank -- \$2092 surplus for the year. On an address basis there were 29 memberships. Now settled at Yapeen Margaret Badminton decided not to renew hers. It was decided not to remap North Brisbane Ranges re possible \$10,000 cost and the cinnamon fungus threat.

In the middle of the year the Adrians and Gill secured adjoining 80 acre properties at North Harcourt --- and the Johnsons bought a very old miner’s cottage 2km from Campbells Ck along the road to Fryerstown, half an acre. Rachel won the High School’s 3km run for the 3rd year but ‘a hollow victory as few kids really try’. The next rung was schools within Whitehorse which Rachel won after being 3rd the previous years. Jack Bayliss featured in a two page newsletter profile and there was a two pager from Paul re Nepal. Bush events were Watsons Glen, Paradise, Glenluce, Mt Kooyoora (two days), and Slaty Ck. The Winter Classic was at Jim Crow, then came Mandurang, Springdallah, Watsons Glen. From another club – Madeline Seviar had a false start when her head failed to ignite!’ Emu oil was all the fashion at this time, farms springing up everywhere.

New members were Carol Corrigan and Marc Sands, the Coyne family, and Tim Patrick and Ben. Tim said he’d recently been in France and competed in a 4 day event there with his sister and family. A schools’ event at Macedon was washed out (35

schools 432 children) – that WAS a depressing day. A coaching day organised by the Fredericks at Crocodile Reservoir, and an event there, were also very wet’ with frozen fingers couldn’t untie shoes or open the car doors. Ron Wescott and Cheryl Taylor won the Mixed Pairs. Of social note, Janet Fitzwater of Nillumbik known to Emu regulars married Arthur Thurlow. She is referred to in the following as Janet F to distinguish from Janet J. The Vic Champs at Snake Head Ck (near Mt Pilot) were also very wet with flooding around Wangaratta. Max rang to say that Tim had suicided.

The AGM showed a Surplus of \$4957 for the previous year with bank now up to \$16,000. It was unanimously agreed by members present that Committee should proceed with making the necessary technical and legal enquiries toward an amalgamation with Nillumbik – there has been no divisiveness or urgency about it, merely the gradual realisation that the time has come for the smaller clubs to get together. I think this came about at a VOA meeting when I slipped a note across to Arthur Thurlow ‘how about merging with us?’”

At this period the three Fell boys, Stuart, James & Robert to be important in later years were doing the String or Novice course with Don or Fiona following where required. They were also looking to develop park maps in the Werribee and Hoppers Crossing areas. Cheryl Taylor became an Emu. Midyear events were at Little Forest, Charlesford Diggings, Yarrowee Pines (awful place!), Sedgwick Blodslitet, (Kevin had been to all 10 Blodslitets), Hope Ck, Kooyoora Spur & Diamond Hill. We were mixing with Nillumbikians a little ‘we have more money and a better trailer; they have the edge on orienteering prowess’ (NK did have \$8000). The JASMs were still the backbone of Emu bush attendances (1069 of 1279, 85%) and it was thought Nillumbik probably has a similar concentration of regular members. At Kooyoora the NKs were the Edmonds, & Shuttleworth families, Russell Yeoman, Derek Morris and Janet & Arthur Thurlow (nee Fitzwater). Other NKs we were to later meet were the Hughes family and the Davidsons of Bendigo. The Js were involved with schools’ events – at one 3 of the 4 boys from Blackburn High did not turn up at all and the other didn’t find any control at all; Rachel was continuing to collect medals though.

Paul & Dorothy went off to Nepal (again!), the rarely sighted McCredie’s popped up at Mineral Springs; there was a double weekend at Beechworth (Kangaroo Crossing & Snake Head Ck), Mt Franklin Gorge, Wurdi Youang and a double at Kimbolton. There had been pre-merger meetings with Ron Frederick and Ross Hodgens (NK) examining the legal position – at the time daughter Roslyn was in Europe with tennis coach Martin Kozma; she reached the Singles and Doubles semi-finals in Denmark and Holland, and the quarter finals in France and Germany. When Nillumbik changed its name from the original Eltham College the then new name was said to mean “a quiet and restful place” – now it is said that it means “red earth’ and that said red earth could feature under a green emu.’

Fiona's mother and sister (Jean & Flora) joined the club after a You Yongs event and her father later constructed metal banner supports, in club colors, for treeless areas. I was still the Treasurer for Sue Sturges' activities and in addition just as Erica had been co-opted as Minute Secretary for the coming 94 World Cup, I likewise was co-opted to be Treasurer. Several coaching days late in the year had to be cancelled rain, rain, rain --- Rachel appeared in the Herald Sun as "up and coming" – won the 800m and 1500m again. Spargo Ck was also very wet but there was a double event at Hepburn with fine weather Both Kevin & Marion were to clamber/slide down the deep sides of an erosion gully and then arduously climb the "other" side only to find themselves on an island in the middle. These two events, NK with Emu course setting (Ron W), had 175 competitors.

Merger! Both clubs are to hold meetings concurrently --- at opposite ends of the hall. This was on 5/12/93. It has been said, by several, that they remain in the club because they like reading the newsletter but if the proof of the pudding is the eating then nobody would get indigestion from Emu attendances -- and the same goes for Nillumbik. It seems to me that a bit of a shakeup is required. Remember Paul's exhortation of 4 years ago? – 'come on folks, forgotten and new, dust off the cobwebs and come orienteering – you do know there is nothing like it'.
