

## Emu Thoughts

1994

We are the Nillumbik Emus. The name was suggested by Janet Fitzwater. 21 Emus and 9 Nillumbikians attended the formation meeting, Rob Edmonds was elected President, Arthur Thurlow, Secretary, Glenn Collins, Treasurer, me editor, Dorothy vice-president with Max and Randall Boyce as committee members. Fiona, Kevin, Dorothy & Janet F were to look into new club colors and logo. 'Our NE code could stand for "North East" or "New Entity" or in a burst of enthusiasm perhaps "New Excellence" – financially we are sound, we have maps, we have equipment but all that is to little avail without an active membership, we DO need you, preferably an active you'

The year started off with the Bendigo 5 Days – after the coldest Boxing Day in 70 years and two days of near constant rain. The events were at Sedgwick, two at Diamond Hill, two at Kooyoora. Judy was our best on the middle day and Rachel on the others. Meanwhile the Adrian's and Gill had been at APOC in NZ, Gill gave us a good descriptive 3 page report --- fences are not marked on maps --- 7 strands (2 barbed with droppers every 18 inches, nearly impossible to climb through. Hazel having been seduced by hot air ballooning' wrote us an article on her experience.

Next came the Summer series – Greensborough courses were set by Jeff Hughes, 17 such events are reported and yet again rain was a problem 'Dorothy had water and slush to her knees and Paul to near neck at Yarra Flats; they were lagooned'. A query issued to members as to interest in course setting, controlling, helping (start? finish? registration? results?), tracksuits, T shirts, social events etc. Membership of exactly 50 was increased by new members in Shane Doran of Cottles Bridge, Fiona Rector and son Alan of Kangaroo Grounds, Michael Wonder of Ivanhoe, Jeremy Fitzwater & Erika Brendall of Elwood, and Warren Halliday of Diamond Creek. An earlier NK was Paul Drinkwater. Randall had been leading most of the Season in the street series but after the final evening it was Michael 1<sup>st</sup>, Warren 2<sup>nd</sup> and Randall 3<sup>rd</sup> on the long course. Rachel was 2<sup>nd</sup> of the women and Marion by dint of perseverance was 1<sup>st</sup> on Vet E as in earlier years. Max, Hjalmer & Vin were all in hospital at this time, and wheelchair "Trail O" for people with disabilities, said to be doing well overseas, was trialled but didn't catch on.

Our first Bush event as NE was the Inter-club challenge at the You Yangs and we won at our first performance as the newest club. The second newest club was second, Bayside Kangaroos, and only one point behind until right at the end when Helen Edmonds came running in. It was the first event for Alex Shepherd who had joined NK shortly before. Course setter Rob was the sole putter-outer of controls, started at 1.00am and did not finish until midnight. How anybody could find anything in the dark when many of us struggle in the day is a mystery --- though he did have a torch and it was moonlight; nevertheless! Janet J thrashed around in the green stuff. The next events were at Little Forest, Mt Doran (the Js hit a kangaroo and were stranded until the RACV arrived,) Watsons Glen. There were also coaching and equipment days for with the approaching World Cup it was necessary for us to change our control stands from alpha to numeric numbers; we were allotted numbers 400-549. Eureka's numbers had cracked when left out in the cold night at Mt Doran so ours were to be screwed, glued and rivetted to backing plates.

Janet Fitzwater gave us a 4 page rundown on the Nillumbik Club which arose from the Eltham College club by the efforts of physical education teacher Fred Veler in 1975. As Fred was a life member I, for some years, sent him a newsletter to his then new residence in America. The first one brought an 8 page handwritten response in which he echoed Janet's history but started a little earlier – the first true champion and feared competitor, he said, was John Agar, known as “Ogre Agar”. Fred himself was no slouch being a champ somewhere in Australia every year from 1977 to 1985 – won in America in 1989-90 “Please continue to send the newsletter; a connection to sanity for me.” The early families were Agars, Bakers, Barretts, Fitzwaters, Hendersons, Vallances, Velers, Collins's, with Yeoman, Davidsons, Staudtes joining in 1978. The name changed in 1980. Events and happenings paralleled Emu's for years, similar re maps, coaching and so on. Along the way the Edmonds transferred from the defunct Latrobe club, Ken Watters, the Spriggs, Neil Brewster and Margaret King joined. Bernie Shuttleworth (and Dylan, Alex, Jenna) joined in 1989.

Meanwhile, while the above had been happening there had been extensive planning for the World Cup, the Goldfields Challenge. Erica and I attended numerous meetings along with Max and Bernie ----‘mind boggling – flags (16 countries), flagpoles, anthems , plane times, transport to and from and in between airport, accommodation, events, souvenirs, food, meeting centre, medical facilities, a safe house, TV coverage, radios, faxes, video back up at Finish, new numbered controls, new cards, computer programs, labels, laminating, differential drinking cups in the field (water, and those with additives) and many other things’

A running Emu had been adopted as our motif and the May newsletter had a colored one in that ‘a yellow beak, head & neck indicates that you are in the relays – a blue tail refers to coaching – a yellow rear leg says you have a social interest --- blue front leg says you wanted a T Shirt, a green front leg says you also wanted a tracksuit --- and a pink breast says that you have or have had a raffle book.----- with still 107 raffle books on Erica's table the call again goes out for people to assist – put a pink heart in your emu! Tickets were \$2 and the prize was two return tickets to Europe; this appeal however, completely bombed out when nobody took the books. Easter was in Canberra; the Js stayed home but 16 NEs took part including Alan Watts (first time mentioned); events were Pierces Ck, Tanners Flat Ck, and Honeysuckle Ck -- Derek and Dorothy were our place getters, first and third.

However, the World Cup week was the big event of the year; I was involved as Treasurer though the actual bookings from overseas (a huge job) was done by somebody else, and also still as Treasurer for Sue Sturges' schools activities ---- these last started off at Sovereign Hill with a parade of competitors from 17 countries being piped up the main street. The first event was at Nerrina with a steep descent to the last control. There were model events at Springdallah and Slaty Ck to acclimatize the overseas runners and then our Borhoney Ghurk event – those NEs residing around Castlemaine (such as the Js who had just found termites devouring their cottage) had to rise at 5.00am for the 130km trip (to Ballarat this was done 9 times!). Then came, via a 12km gravel road amid thick forest, a new map in Enfield Forest near Smythesdale centred on a wide grassed hill. The World Relay was won by a Norwegian team for the men and Czech Republic for the women. The Southern Cross Junior Relay saw Victoria come second, Rachel & Alex were in the team and received a gold-plated miners' dish supported on a wooden base by a piece of quart at the Sovereign Hill banquet evening.

Next event was at the same place (now known as Little Hard Hills) – the day scribe found a wailing child way out in the scrub – ‘I can’t find it, I can’t do it, I know nuffin!’ I sent her toward home along a track, but later Sue Healy encountered her (still wailing), took her to the Finish and berated the parents. The final event was back to Nerrina where Kevin won in M50A, Dorothy won W60A and Hjalmer scored as sole runner in M75A. The Abraham family from Geelong took part in this; the two boys though totally inexperienced had entered 16A and 18A and refused to DNF as others had one --- but it did take them 5 hours. Our auditor, Doug Carroll and son Greg had helped throughout the week, very busy on the huge Results board. The World Cup had had seed money of \$10,000 from the OFA and VOA and as Treasurer I reported a profit of \$14,472 to be split between them 2/3 and 1/3 --- we did well with grants and event fees but not with commercial sponsorships or merchandise.

Macedon and Strath Ck were mid-year events dense and steep; tree ferns, moss, lichen, toadstools, rotten logs, creepers --- rained steadily – blackberry canes. About this time the Nillumbik trailer was sold and contents placed at Erica’s, the Renzi family (Wendy, Lucas, Megan) was on the scene for a while, Randal’s boys Tristan, Jarrod and Rachel Edmonds began to appear; Lenore Shepherd chose to bushwalk as Alex ran. Steven Ridd, David and Will Hart, and the Dear family also attended a few events. We had 14 teams for the Relay at Belltopper Hill ‘terrain open, times fast John Cole, Shane Doran & Andrew Frederick won the 3km course, Janet J, Erica & Judy were second on 4km, Janet F, Dorothy & Gill third on 3km.

Vin Maloney died on Anzac Day. Requiem Mass was at the Holy Redeemer church in South Oakleigh, the celebrant was a long-lost cousin. Orienteers from various clubs were present. Family members and friends plus the Js then repaired to Healesville cemetery when Vin was laid to rest, a gentle sloping area surrounded by blue mountains. Hazel wrote a Goodbye. At Charlesford Diggings (Jim Crow South) members wore black ribbon in memory of Vin.

As noted earlier the World Cup raffle bombed within NE -- scribe was ashamed to have to return 107 blank books – (the Js accounted for 30 of the 53 books sold). Ours was not the only club to do poorly; it was rather general and looks like claiming a major victim in Sue Sturges. It was Sue’s idea to hold the raffle – she sold 10 at Safeway’s in one evening. But even the enthusiastic and zealous Sue is not immune to burnout and after her very busy years with the VOA she is now looking for alternative employment – there are various factors, the poor raffle response the final straw. The raffle was not a loss however, 495 of 750 books were sold for a profit of \$6996, an orienteer won second prize. Hazel had her 107<sup>th</sup> book named “Birds on the Brain” published, a children’s mystery about a missing dove. Bayside Kangaroos held a widely publicised Trivia Night --- Erica, Rachel, Janet & Peter, plus Blair Trewin of ACT, won it with a font of knowledge and obscure facts. Some consolation for the raffle flop was that 88% of membership had been sighted for the period to June; rather good.

25 members did the Glenlyon Roses event; Alex Shuttleworth won course 2, Kevin was second in course 8. 11 members went to QB3 at Wagga Wagga --- scribe, on own, had only gone a little way when the car locked in second gear --- very close to a transmission firm. As it had gone 256,000 km the gear box replacement was certainly due. Resuming the journey some 7 hours later, and in the dark, it was nerve wracking on the narrow roads around Culcairn where the glare of oncoming headlights made it impossible to see suicidal kangaroos – got there by midnight.

On leaving next morning for the event I got trapped in a vintage car rally proceeding at 20 kph, a bright red wasp shaped vehicle in front complete with moustached, begoggled, bemuffled and scarfed jockey – while behind appeared a green box like contraption with bonneted females --- eventually escaped and went the 66km or so to Shockeroo Track, the last starter. Thickets! – everywhere a thicket, blackberries included many inhabited spider webs. A search vanguard came looking for me although my time of 129 was quite reasonable by my standards – male elites in the O League had done it in 25! The next day was at Burngoogee and the third back at Shockeroo on a lesser slope. In Wagga I had noticed that Best chiropractor said a sign, another Best Dentist, then Best Naturopath???? – I was in Best St. Our new tracksuits (from Lithuania) and T Shirts (the white ones with flying emu) had been complimented upon; also, our club banner was now in use. Lyell Forest and Mineral Springs with Kevin our only place getter at the former were the next events. Thanks then to Rob for a 4 page handout on how to hold the map and use a compass.

Derek Morris, with poles supplied by the ranger, and paint by the club, put in a new permanent course at the You Yangs, the Adrians went to Germany for the 3 days and to Scotland where there were more than 100 entries in M70. Then, after a few days in London, off to Norway and Hungary, where Paul who speaks both tongues (as well as German) has friends. Dorothy remarks that the Swedish maps look as though they have measles. Janet and Arthur were also in Scotland, following Greece; Paul sent a card to Gill saying that he was “desolate in success, rich in experience.” He had made the M70A final but came 60<sup>th</sup>. After a Greensborough event we met the Niven family (Rex, Laurie, Angus, Jessica) who had just returned to Australia after 17 years abroad, firstly NZ, then Europe where they’d orienteered and course set extensively; a great new asset for the club.

MAXI – Nillumbik had pioneered the concept of a 3 hour maxi score event (Rob’s idea) – the first was at Conical Hill in 1991, then Crocodile Reservoir, Wattle Gully and this time Hepburn Diggings – numbers increasing each year, now 165. There were several showers of hail which gave way to drifting snowflakes. Scribe’s never one for towers or heights but who bothers about that when there is a control at the top! – number 5 was atop Jackson’s Lookout. The Coles donated 15 jars of their Hepburn Diggings honey; Russell Yeoman prepared the labels. Thanks to Rob again for further instructions re folding the map, cutting across country, and using handrails.

The Australian Champs were at CANTARA DUNES. It was a long 850km to Kingston (where there is the Big Lobster and where we stayed) via Warrnambool and Mt Gambier --- at one point we stopped to allow emus to cross the road. Cantara was 70km further on --- all sand dunes in the Coorong National Park amazing that anybody can ever find anything. Paul won his class, the only place getter of our 17. Home via Tower Hill where a funny looking emu turned out to be an ostrich. The Vic Champs warm up was at Buninyong (Union Jack Reserve) but the location of the main event is not shown. However, we had 33 entrants (of the 246). It was the first event on her own for Tania Doran, 15. Jenny Davidson was another youngster. Rachel was the only entrant in W18A but her run of outs with the VOA continued as she was transferred to W21AS (same course) and was ineligible for an award despite

