

## Emu Thoughts

1996

Scribe had analysed the kilometre rates for our 35 members who had completed 4 or more of the first 8 OY events of 1995, and suggested that at Kimbolton we could have a club badge and a chocolate bar for the most improved, by percentage, for each sex. At the time Tuckonie was doing something similar. This did not appear to happen, but Ron Scholes had all our results on his computer and was devising a handicap system for 1996. We'd also had a competition to see how many words could be formed from "Nillumbik Emus" (no proper names or plurals) and it was won by Laurie Niven with 93 – VERY good! – including words such as kine, mensk, slub, seabem --- it was Marion who came up with only 9 letter word that nobody else had, not obscure, colloquial or archaic – a chocolate bar for first correct answer; put your thinking caps on, and that's a hint!. (The word turned out to be "Numbskull")

The year began with many street series. At Waverley Woods another J daughter, Felicity, attended. (Janet J, who had been doing well at cross-country developed knee trouble and had to have surgery, her running days over.) Melissa Kempster (12) was at Greensborough and some others, Warren had to climb a roof to escape savage hounds on a Western series, Hazel back from NZ re researching her latest book was at Eltham Parklands. The Hudsons (Geoff, Schon, Glenn, David) who were new members brought a friend to Loughnan's Hill and he liked it so much that he joined on the spot, Ian Stirling and Lauris – both families were to become pivotal in NE. Lewis Schofield, Helen's father, was another new member. Two others were Damien Calvert and Bruce Paterson. Our big results frame which had continued to be housed at Adrians after earlier equipment transfer was finally moved to Erica's.

Warren came under fire for his course setting at Diamond Creek (we recouped our map cost on its first use) for blackberries were a menace, it was steep, and numerous steps were no good for prams or carts, and the railway bridge was/is dangerous. Control plates are often stolen or vandalised in the area and irate landowners pop up and threaten. Attendance at the many street events were generally good, 217 at Camelot Rise; a good number of NEs with the Steers sometimes coming the 55 km from Launching Place. Andrew and Leandra Johnson came occasionally. Rachel J had her first experience of course setting with Quambee – a great deal of preparation including checking punches, padlocks & chains, even re-painting some plates. We put them out in the day and checked shortly before the start, but during the course of the event runners were followed and some plates cut off with a bolt cutter – we lost chains, padlocks and (new) punches. Other clubs had lost plates too, one within minutes of being placed.

Though so early in the year we had a bush event on Jan 6; St George's Lake, Creswick. the first of the 5 Days. Joyce wrote an article praising the effort and

thanking all. It HAD indeed been a big job; map bagging was at Fredericks where 15 pairs of hands attached clue sheets to 550 maps. Judy used a Danish computer program for compiling and printing clue sheets; it also produces ancillary lists such as the number of people passing through a control and which courses share a particular control. Packing the trailer was a 4 hour job the day before the event. Ron Frederick towed it to Creswick, Russell took the Results Unit. Joyce, Derek and Ron F placed the controls. Next day it was a 4.30am start from those based around Castlemaine. There were 470 actual runners; we had 31 entrants and 10 other helpers on the day.

Day 2 was close by at Creswick Diggings where for the second time in three months Marion lost a near new pair of glasses --- we searched in the likely area without luck. Day3 was at Lake Wombat making excellent use of the old Ballarat-Daylesford railway cutting and trackbed --- it was scribe's best run ever the usual snake trepidation went to the winds when seeing Finns and Swedes charge straight into reeds. But there was to be no moment of glory on the Results board for scribe's chest number 29 had been recorded as 291 and it was not sorted out until the next day. The Gurmans were assisting Bayside Kangaroos and that was indeed an ominous sign for they were good workers and keen participants – they indeed moved to BK soon afterwards (more in their Dandenong region) and it was a quite disappointment. (Some 14 years later Marion and I walk with Stan & Sue every week).

The next day was a free one so the Js visited the Harcourt property of Gill (Adrian's adjoining). With a caravan on site Gill had a dam constructed and planted trees but rabbits and kangaroos munch just about everything. Day 4 was at Chinaman's Flat in Linton, again with a disused railway cutting (Ballarat-Skipton) and Day 5 at White Swan. Over the 5 Days Sue H was first in W65A, Adrian first in M14B, Carolyn, Joyce & Dorothy were second, Rachel E was third. The Result booklet was delivered around Melb not by the postman but by Blair Trewin who ran all the way – 38km in his Blackburn-Mt Waverley delivery. NE received \$5,949 as its share of the profit, very good indeed.

“I exercise religiously!” “Me too. I pray I'll be able to make it around the block”

Rob & Helen received letters from the Boyces (Randall's joined the Ugly Gully club in Brisbane) and Fred Veler who teaches High School in Seattle and continues to be highly active in orienteering, still competes at high level and sets courses. Janet Fitzwater had a “Matters for Members” page or pages in most newsletters, setting out the various tasks required before an event, during an event, and after an event. She devised Team 1 and Team 2 for Bush events (later renamed green & blue) and likewise for Parkland events so that the same people do not have to run every event. The handicap system adopted was  $\text{score} = (100/R) \times (B/K)$  where R is our rating, B is the average km rate of the first three on course 1, and K is our km rate on the day. It was suggested by Joyce and welcomed by Kevin that we have the Vin Maloney award in memory of Vin, maybe a prime winner and an ancillary award to best of opposite

sex and best whether senior or junior at the end of the year. National Rankings were also published made up of results from Easter, Aust Champs or a State Champs (one of the first two mandatory). The winner in each category is graded 100 and the names of those up to 150 are published. NE had 10 women and 5 men in the list, with Sue Healy on top with 100.

A new member was Michael Atkinson. Others were Jim McLennan and Mary Omodei (who had been behind the head camera program). On Leap Day, there were extra "leap" controls not shown on the map (briefly viewed on a master); to find any was worth an extra point. Rachel J who won the 7.5km course found a leap and thus scored 101. The Js did 40 of the 41 Summer events and NE received a certificate for the highest aggregate points, 67,699 – 50% of NEs had been to at least one event. On A course Ron S was third (was first in the Western series) and Janet J also (had been first until her injury), Rachel was first on B and Carolyn second; Michael W was 3<sup>rd</sup> on C. On D Adrian and Kevin were first, Rosemarie and Colin were third. After 6 years on C or D, the most regular but with no hope of a placing, scribe had opted for E and thus scored a first. Melinda and Marion likewise first, Melissa second and Schon third.

The VOA had called a meeting re President Halvard Dalheim's "Towards 2000 Plan" and scribe raised the financial issue, namely that a \$7878 loss on the school's program and an overall VOA loss of about \$15,000 for 1995, the VOA is headed for bankruptcy. The plan endorses the schools' program and seeks to expand and enhance it --- scribe regards it as a millstone or black hole and doesn't believe that all the time, money and effort, produces anything of lasting benefit (no bums on seats). Sue Sturges was certainly dedicated but even though several hundred kids would attend a schools' event none, other than those from O families, would ever be seen again. It was argued that maybe in later life some could take up the Sport. NE, the only club to have actually paid its affiliation fee, submitted a proposal re increasing event levies which was finally adopted. I resigned from the VHF treasury position that I had held for some years.

The Bush year began at Little Forest with 37 NEs --- on the way home some of us caused a mini-invasion at a small establishment advertising Devonshire Teas --- the cry ran out for "more scones!" Next was Mt Beckwith. Sketches by Charles Norton in the 1840s showed Beckwith and there is a Beckwith St in Creswick, but other maps and sites show Beckwith. Ironic that the O calendar shows Beckwith! There is a most distinctive tree on it which can be seen for miles and as Erica's course was not too far from it she went to it she touched it, a strange conifer. Then came Glenlyon Roses the gazebo had its best use to date with members gathered around it – we were the only club with such a visible presence. We had 38 NEs including Lisa McLennan; our winners were Rachels J & E, Helens E & S, Dorothy & Joyce. (No males!) Strath Creek followed, advertised as a Come and Try It event, but only 80 did – 70 finishers,

for head high bracken and scrub seemed endless, times were slow, up to 3 hours for 4km.

The Mt Alexander event started in a 1900 oak plantation – lots and lots of oaks and zillions of suckers --- but then the hard slog on the steep spurs, Quite a number of people were lost, including scribe who eventually waited at a (wrong) control for somebody to turn up – it was Rachel! The Easter 3 Days were in NSW centred round Orange named by Major Mitchell for his friend the Prince of Orange. Day 1 was Ophir Diggings said to be the first payable goldfield in Aust --- being a mining area it was rough with lots of loose slabs and deep adits. Day 2 was Lookout Rock about 25km from Orange, eucalypt scrub and a pine plantation; scribe had a 4 hour wait until starting time. Day 3 was Kahli's Rocks 35km toward Bathurst, an inspiring view from assembly. The start was almost a 2km undulating pastoral walk of an escarpment – not a cloud – fine and fresh and good to be alive. Courses were along the scarp, like Beckworth and Alexander, cliffs from 2 to 20 metres in height and 70 in length. Js visited the famed Japanese Gardens at Cowra next day, and then home, 1850km. Sue H, though injured and with walking stick, was first in W65A, Carolyn was second in W35A, Helen E in W40A, Lisa in W20B, Doreen was third in W65A. Marion rejoiced on the middle day by actually beating somebody, Beverley Johnson the wife of Brian who often heads M65A.--- they live in NSW but when the family subdivided an area of North Blackburn 50 years ago, a street was named Beverley, just around the corner from the Js!.

There was a coaching day at Hepburn Diggings at which the new Hudson, Stirling and Horne families participated. Peter J put out controls and Carolyn devised two exercises, the first were normal courses to notice features such as fence corners, track loops, dry ditches, and the like. The second consisted of forming 5 color coded teams of 3 with the first in each team placing 2 colored streamers at each of the control points for each team (20 in all as marked on the map), the second to retrieve one streamer and the third to collect the other There were mass starts at 5 minute intervals – not an easy exercise as it had been wet and was slippery underfoot. The Hudsons and Stirlings, and also Bruce Paterson (a dual member but later to revert to BK) were active in the ARDF radio finding form of orienteering, and the parallel vehicular form known as Fox Hunting.

John and Nina Cole, stalwarts of previous years, did not renew. John had been Emu president in earlier years and Nina was an active secretary --- looking ahead to retirement a decade ago they decided to build a house in the middle of spur/gully terrain as a kind of orienteering base at Barkers Ck. But now that the house is built, by John, and the boys who are now adult, the flame has gone out. The Winter night series was well patronised, also various parkland events with NE participation rising to 66%. Derek replaced a permanent course post that had been stolen from the You Yangs – several others had been pushed over. An event near Brimbank, Lagoon Reserve, had a control on the old hoopla bridge erected 1868, disused since 1964 – similar to the one

of same age still in use at Mia Mia which was a phobia for scribe, old childhood fears of girder bridges. (Years earlier scribe rode a motorcycle across such a bridge with eyes closed to avoid seeing it).

Bush events were a Sedgwick blodslitet and a Badge event at Creswick Diggings. Then came two combined Vic-NSW events, the first at Burngoogee opposite the Shockaroo map of 1994 scribe forgot to punch the last control but it wasn't picked up – Colin did one better for he unknowingly took a last punch with him, stuck to his card! The second day was at Tabletop on private property 25km North of Albury you drive through a farm with lots of cattle grids -- two mudbrick cottages have been built on the slope of the hill “to capture your hearts and inspire a new love affair”. There was almost a 2km stiff climb to the start near a promontory and ledge looking over the valley, over the tops of the trees, quite inspiring. It was scribe's hardest in 7 years, a belief shared by many others – negotiating around the precipice edge of some of the cliffs was hair-raising –scribe slid down a shelf of loose stones but a woman who followed became terrified and froze – others scrambled to her aid. Janet and Arthur were back in time for that torture after the Veterans' World Cup in Spain where they had been joined by the Vallances (earlier Nillumbikians). Janet F wrote us a fine article about Spanish processions and floats; there were 2900 competitors including 26 Australians but none were to be placed the courses were challenging, terraced pine forests, stony ground with big stones and gravel, undulating hills, not too high, but climbing terraces doubled the effort. The organisation and transport with shuttle buses was excellent rows of big square tents, all flying flags, like a medieval tournament.

In May there was the Secondary School Champs at Creswick Diggings. As usual Marion was the timer (for 3 hours), scribe the slat writer and Erica at the Start. There were 300 entrants, some from as far afield as Albury. NE had two, Glenn Hudson from Scotch and Adrian Jackson from Wesley. Warren accepted the offer to be Team Manager of schools' events and the Southern Cross Challenge. Peter Kempster was in the Puffing Billy race, 75 minutes to 57. The Vic Relays were at Chinamans Flat near Linton, a day in which several controls had the wrong number or the correct number with the wrong clue – a number of NEs were caught by these which caused our placings to be few. One team did win; Helens Edmonds, Helen Schofield, and Mary Omodei, three were second and one third. Then came a double event at Kimbolton, followed by Lyell Forest North, Derek being our only first. NE attendances had been good.

The end of June saw our Borhoney Ghurk event. Rex & Laurie put out 80 controls, Ross collected the trailer, and there were 30 helpers on appointed tasks. Despite a few showers it was a good day with 185 entrants. Peter J, Rachel J, Colin. Kevin & Adrian won their courses (Adrian though the junior also qualified best for the senior school's team). The Winter Classic was Mt Franklin Gorge first day and Lake Wombat the second which again saw Derek and Kevin as winners; Carmel missing by a point. At South Boundary Ck where Derek was controller, Peter J was our sole

winner in wet weather sticks, twigs, logs, lichen covered rocks were very slippery. The Radio Direction Finding enthusiasts had an international event near Townsville with competitors from Bulgaria, China, Poland, Korea and elsewhere – the four from Kazakhstan though Townsville was a suburb of Brisbane and caught a taxi from the airport; 1300km! Bruce wrote a detailed 7-page report about it, Chinese were first, second and third with Bruce eighth.

Rachel J agreed to maintain a register of NE's badge credits. Gill gave us a page article on Hippotherapy. She had travelled to San Francisco would return if I could find the money to study occupational therapy with the help of horses (not hippos), a treatment for the disabled, especially children. We walked through rainbow filled mist from the waterfalls, saying hello to cheeky chipmunks and squirrels. On the social side NE celebrated Xmas in July at Joyce's; Steers, Thurlows, Horns, Jacksons, Johnsons, Schincks, Adrians, Edmonds, Nivens, Gill --- 29 including children and toddlers. very well done. There was traditional Christmas fare, presents, and games – thanks to Joyce for initiating such a pleasant evening.

Another newsletter issue had colored emus, body and legs, this time to indicate if entitled to a gold, silver or bronze badge (having received 3 credits within 2 years), and/or for those who had controlled, organised or course set in the previous two years. Marion made the front cover of OVIC, AWOC reprinted Rachel's word puzzle, and the NEV vehicles got a run in Australian Orienteer. The Js thought that perhaps some other NEs would personalise number plates but this was not to be. The long missing control 431 (years) was found by the Jacksons at St George's Lake. Graeme Baker has returned to Qld. Dave & Elaine Alden (& Bryony & Rowan) are new members. The Maxi Score was at Sedgwick and numbers were up again, to 190, though NEs were below the 29 of previous years our soup sign originally said, 'tomato & pumpkin' but was changed to 'tomato or pumpkin'! 3 teams scored the maximum 1200 points – our category winners were Peter & Carolyn 1060, the two Helens 1010, and. Adrian and a Bendigo lad 970. There were our usual Port and chocolate prizes and Rachel put in the champagne she has been winning in cross-country events. Special thanks to Derek and Rob, the prime movers behind the event, and to controller Ron S. Scribe put in an article re home organs and mature age students if you are busy or lazy, forget it! We had new club T shirts (blue with white emu) and club color tracksuits, green, blue, and white. Russell & Marion Yeoman returned from 3 months overseas, the highlight being walking around the coast of Cornwall.

September saw events at Mt Doran and the Vic Champs at Kangaroo Gully – scribe managed to do stupid things at both but wasn't alone, Paul ran 5 to 7 and skipped 6, Rex ran to 6 rather than 1, however Erica with a similar long leg deliberately ran to the wrong control and turned around to view how it would look coming from the opposite direction later on! We ran the St Georges Lake event, another big one with a great deal of effort and work; the Jacksons put in many hours devising the 12 courses

and placing the controls, whilst the children set up the String course. We had plenty of helpers, one brought by Jack Bayliss being the president of an organ club in Scotland. Very windy, an equinoctial gale, but nothing blew down.

On Grand Final day, the Js rose at 5.30 to fly to Launceston, to hire a car, and to catch up with other NEs there for the Tasmanian and Australian Champs. First, was to Trevallyn Dam to collect our registration kit, then tourist things such as the imposing masonry tower windmill – up the spiral staircase to see the workings, the huge wooden wheels and cogs with their many teeth -- it's 7 stories high and the sails are 2 tonnes each. One is lost in admiration for the millers of earlier centuries. Then onto St Helens (which looked the same as 4 years before) via the verdant Esk river valley and the winding St Mary's Pass originally hewn by convicts in 1846.

The Tasmanian Champs were 103km back toward Avoca, the Menuggana said to be aboriginal for yellow-tailed black cockatoo map. It was freezing in the open, fingers turned white, ear lobes burned, and people were scarcely recognisable under their layers of clothing; some wore garbage bags over their O suits. On the actual course it was much better, protected from the wind. There were 26 NEs including Sue's sister Pella from UK; Helen E & Sue scored firsts, Rachel J, Paul and Adrian seconds, Joyce a third. The rain became heavier, torrential, on the way home and some cars were later stranded; Js escaped with only minor water across the highway at Styx Ck.

The Silva Handicap was at Weeanoobryna a sulphur crested cockatoo on a large sheep farm. In the schools' section Rachel J was fastest female on course 2 (a male beat her by 2 seconds); she received a wooden echidna. In the handicap section Warren whose teenagers were staying at Fawltly Towers (!) romped home on course 1. The next day was at the same place surely the most attractive assembly area imaginable for the relays. Kevin had the fastest time. On the way home we repaired to the noted Mt Elephant Pancake Barn. Helen S was photographed standing beside the road sign to "No Where Else"!

The model event for the Aust Champs was at Sue's Spur a few km from St Helens a marshy bog or boggy marsh loomed up – squelch and ooze. Mt Pearson, about 20km from St Helen's, was the venue for the Champs for the older and less agile the walk to the start was an adventure, firstly in crossing a small but swift stream over logs (with a rope to hold) and then across a dam wall to the far side with another rope to enable you to haul yourself up the rock face. At one stage scribe was lost, misplaced, and tried the time-honored procedure of finding a tree; so, scribe sought a tree and lo and behold two lasses appeared out of the green and ran straight to the control. Rachel, winner the previous year, reversed things and came last. Sue & Paul won their classes, Gill & Dorothy were second and third in the same, Warren and both Helens likewise second. Helen E had been given a late start in W40A which the organisers refused to alter (the family would have missed the return boat) so she had run up to W35A

