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RAMBLING ON and ON

With Dave McEvoy & Susie McLachlan

Issue 1, Nov 1978 - Issue 123, Feb 2000



ISSUE 1. 14th November 1978

NAME: RAMBLING ON.

REASON FOR CREATION:

At the recent meeting of the A.P.F. at Parachutes Australia in Sydney, a motion was put forward "that the A.P.F. start a National Magazine". The motion was put forward because I felt that there was something really lacking in Australian Parachuting communication.

The A.P.F. felt that, due to past bad experiences, it did not want the responsibility of, nor did it have the personnel to produce a National Magazine. The Board's reply was "Do it yourself".

This is Issue #1.

DAVE McEVOY,
EDITOR.

SUSIE: So Dad, what's the story behind Issue 1? Was it done in anger?

MACCA: No, not anger. Frustration, before Rambling On started there was the ASM, then after Trevor Burns and Steve Swann stopped running it, the APF Board ran it for a couple of issues, there was APF support in there. I was guest editor for one issue, that's what got me started on the idea because when it fell over, ie. no more magazine (looking horrified), it wasn't being produced and I just said at the Board Meeting that "we've got to have it" and as it says there (pointing to Issue 1), they said "go do it yourself" and that's what happened.

SUSIE: A bit like with you and me towards the end of Rambling On hey, you wanted to close up shop and I begged you not to, trying to appeal to your sentimentality but you said to me "if you want it so much, you go do it!" I still remember that feeling of youth rebellion and with such intensity declaring, "well I will." Today I understand it more as "passion".

MACCA: When I first started jumping and right up until that point in time, everybody, we all loved getting our magazine in the mail, it was just something we really looked forward to and read from cover to cover every time and we needed one and there was nothing being done. So, there was room for a magazine, but at Ramblers there was room for a newsletter. Rambling On was our first newsletter. Joe Armstrong came up with the name. In that first year, it was all about drop zone stuff and as the year went on we started getting more and more stuff from the Northern Territory – the Katherine Skydivers and the DPC were always supportive. We started sending it out, we were sending it out weekly for starters, then fortnightly.

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SUSIE: When did you make the transition from Newsletter to Magazine?

MACCA: Issue 29 was our first attempt at a Magazine, not quite a year later. The rest were just Newsletters. Issue 32 was our first front cover, 12 months later. It coincided

with the opening of Toogoolawah drop zone, so the cover was with the Premier Joh Bjelke-Peterson, at the Airshow. The second year of the magazine had about 8 issues, it was a magazine format, we started getting ads, the content was great and the quality was still matt paper. We didn't upgrade too much, but we started getting black and white photos in there and then we started using coloured paper to give it some sort of colour, lots of

contributors were coming along, it was still a newsletter but with an upgrade.

SUSIE: Did you have subscribers straight away?

MACCA: I remember our first subscriber. We went down to the Gloucester Nationals, Rambling On had been going for a while, but then I started to try to sell it nationally. Tony Duckworth was the first person to flick me 2 bucks and say, "I'll be in it". It started going interstate fairly soon to subscribers.

SUSIE: And advertisers?

MACCA: The first advert appeared in Issue 31.



SUSIE: Did you share the job of producing the magazine?

MACCA: Rick Collins was the backbone behind it for years before he left to work for the APF. He did all the hard work,

his heart was in it. Louise, the Ramblers lady at the time would type it up for us, and the labels, we'd crank out a couple of hundred of each page, have big piles of each page, walk around and pick 'em up in order, staple them together. I'd put on a carton of beer, usually at Rick's place, we'd walk around, walk around, walk around collating, stuffing envelopes, sorting into post codes, away we'd go and take 'em to the post office. It was one hell of a show!

SUSIE: Yes, I know only too well (pointing to self) ie. child slave labour.

MACCA: (Laughing) Yeah, the Halligan kids were great value!

SUSIE: What were the printing equipment advances?

MACCA: After a while, Nobbsie got a collating machine from the University; great old machine, it worked well. Took about 28 pages, 7 a side, load it all in there, press a button, push a thing, pull a lever, up it would pop and (many hand actions and sound effects) and out it would come. Instead of walking around the table we collated them one by one. Then we got a new Gestetner machine and that was a really high class thing for us, automated. Rick used to turn the old gestetner by hand, then we got the new one, second hand, and we were all excited about that. Higher technology too so instead of cutting and pasting. We could do it differently, better, made life a lot easier. Rick would stand there and do an all-nighter when it was on, especially when the circulation increased.

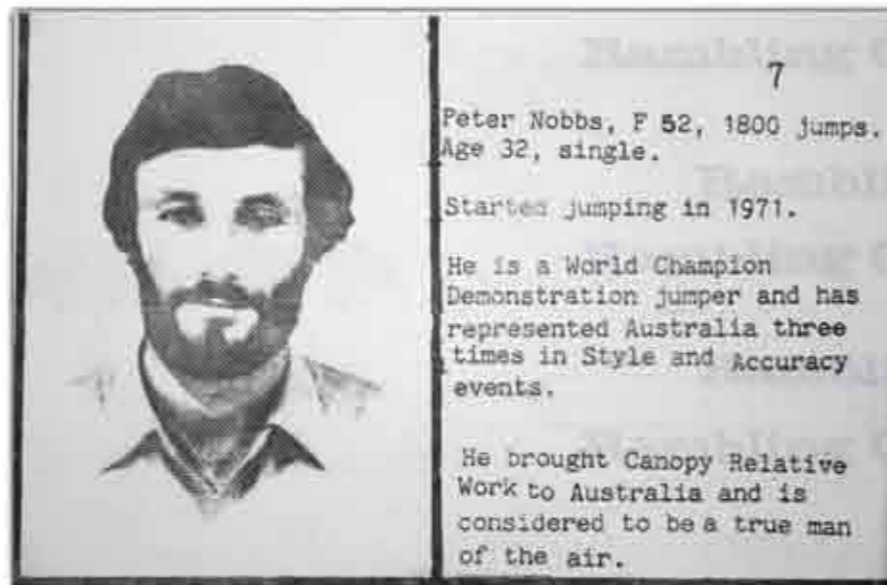
SUSIE: Was it still newsletter type of content or did you get into any politics?

MACCA: Throughout the whole magazine, there was never anything too political in it. We tried to keep it like a "family" magazine. In the 80s though, McEvoy, Nobbs and Holmes appeared on the front cover about 5 of the times, so that's when Dick Hall made up that song "On the Cover of Rambling On"... (singing) "with McEvoy and Holmes, Peter Nobbs are on their own and we can't get our picture on the cover of Rambling On."

Well one cover at that time was the first Tri-Plane in Australia. Nobbsie came back with the Canopy Rel and he did a link up with me, then he took Holmes. Then I went and did a link up with Holmes and Nobbsie came on the bottom of that; and that was our first Tri-plane.



Rick Collins



Peter Nobbs, F 52, 1800 jumps. Age 32, single.

Started jumping in 1971.

He is a World Champion Demonstration jumper and has represented Australia three times in Style and Accuracy events.

He brought Canopy Relative Work to Australia and is considered to be a true man of the air.

The Cover of Rambling on

by Dick Hall, Mary Ski & Doctor Hook

(to the tune of: Cover of Rolling Stone)

Well we've got sign written clouds
And we're thrilling all the crowds
And we're loved wherever we go
And if the weather's hot and sunny
Or up the shit, we earn our money
Cause we always put on a good show.

But McEvoy and Holmes and Peter Nobbs
are all alone
When the cameras start clicking and it's
wrong
Cause they're always in the picture
And we can't get to feature
On the cover of RAMBLING ON.

CHORUS:
RAMBLING ON - Gonna see my picture on the cover
RAMBLING ON - Gonna buy 5 copies for my mother
RAMBLING ON - Gonna see my smiling face
On the cover of RAMBLING ON.

Well we've tried every caper
And we've made the local paper
And we even made the news on T.V.
And we take spunky Lady Pilots
In a bit to hit the limelight
And Marker wipes out trucks and canopies.

And people say he's always blind
But Tony's never far behind
With the ladies we try to lay it on
But we're doing something wrong
Cause we just can't get it on
With a cover shot in RAMBLING ON

CHORUS.



McEvoy, Holmes & Nobbs first Triplane

In 1981 we had our first colour cover. The South Australians sponsored most of that and Bermo too by advertising in the front and back. Col Parsons appeared on the back cover.

SUSIE: Why did SA donate it?

MACCA: It may have had something to do with Steve Swann back then, I can't quite remember. It was just a one-off thing but it gave us hope for the future. We ended up doing a black and white quality cover somewhere along the line and we started adding splashes of colour, but nothing like the real thing. The mag was a labour of love and it just kept gaining momentum. There was nothing super quality about it, but people still loved getting it in the mail, nothing changed in that department. It was about this time that Rick started getting really good on the gestetner, started experimenting with glossy covers as another step forward but nothing over the top. It was about this time that Canopy Rel really started happening too. We jumped into the Commonwealth Games, three TriPlanes, another one of the front covers. It was a big deal! Our second colour cover, Issue 62 November 1984 was 5 years later. After this we started going splashes of full colour every now and then.

SUSIE: Did the APF give any financial help?

MACCA: The mag became more and more an Australian magazine, because what happened, we were reporting on nationwide things like the National Championships and I'd go down and take photos of all the teams. It got APF backing in so much that the APF didn't pay anything towards it but they advertised for us on their yearly membership renewal.



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I put that to them as a business proposition, I think it was \$35 subscription for the year and so the APF would keep \$5 of it, like a commission. That worked quite well, because every June the subscriptions would come in from all around the country and that's when it became the Australian magazine.

Whenever I could afford it I would go colour, something special like the World Meet edition. I was on the front cover again! Early Openers at the Gatton World Meet, we got a bronze medal at that one, so it was worthy. No wonder people got the shits, but they were great photos, you can't deny that. It was ground-breaking stuff what we were doing back then, the kites and the double-diamonds...

SUSIE: Advertisers?

MACCA: We started getting full colour adverts, which paid for the front cover in colour, that's how that worked. Because it was printed 4 pages to a sheet, we'd charge two advertisers the cost so we could run the two colour covers.

SUSIE: Hooray to all advertisers past and present I say. So who were the first colour advertisers, PA and Paragear?

MACCA: No Windshear Jumpsuits, I think they were out of Newcastle.



SUSIE: And those thongs! Rage Ons, everybody had a pair!

RAGE ONS

turf-surfing footwear

Australian made for hot summer skydiving
Distributed by SKYSPORTS SKYDIVING (03) 523 2424
Retailers of fine turf surfing gear
Zero porosity SABRE, AERIAL VIPER, REFLEX, PREDATOR.
Containers: TALON, RACER, VECTOR, JAVELIN.

MACCA: Yeah and so the mag progressed a little, progressed a little, progressed a little. I kept the politics out of it, any nasty letters about so-and-so going crook at so-and-so never made it, anonymous letters never made it and I tried to keep it pure skydiving and related to skydiving and it worked out fairly well, I didn't upset too many people.

SUSIE: Hah, what about Parapenalia?

MACCA: Yeah I did get myself into a bit of strife with Parapen! I used to quite enjoy getting funny bits and whacking them in there. I used to carry a notebook with me all the time, especially at parties and boogies and whatnot. Someone would always say something that was profound and funny and I'd write it down because it was always too hard to recall. A couple of times I went a bit too far apparently and it really backfired on me, I won't say what.

SUSIE: I'm not surprised. I'm too scared to run it the way you did, though it does make for great reading. I wish people would send more jokes and quotes and poems in.

MACCA: People were sending in poems all the time, we ended up with the Rambling On Songbook, which was beaut.

SUSIE: So what was the next big milestone?

MACCA: For some reason we went full colour throughout.



EDITORIAL

Issue 78 - Another milestone in Australian Parachuting History, as, for the first time, Rambling On hits the streets in full living colour. The good news is that from now on, at least once a year, Rambling On will continue to be produced in full colour. Thank you to the Australia Parachute Federation for their financial support and thanks also to all the advertisers who could see value for money.

This is also the biggest ever issue and thanks to all the contributors. The magazine has been sent to all APF "A" license holders and above. I hope you enjoy the reading. Please subscribe !!

For Sale..

4450 Trim Rig - 2004
Blue - Spectrum
Sportlite - Large Pilot
Cuts - 28 ft security
Lupo Steerable window
Pano Mod Red/Black Mat -
Complete Rig - Perfect
Condition -

8450.00

Interlink
37 St James Village
James Street,
Dandenong, 3175.

"I sell cars. I've got to look respectable"
GEOFF COWIE (N.T.)

Exciting days. I started taking the magazine to printing houses, I'd just give them a rough and they'd do all the work on their machines to make it more of a magazine. That was fantastic, we started going fairly colourful. It was getting better and better all the time and became THE mag, the subscriptions hit a bit of peak just before you started up, about 1994.

MACCA: Issue 100 was a big one. It was a big deal.

SUSIE: You're not wrong! I'm only half way there with ASM right now and I can vouch for every issue being a very big deal!

MACCA: Yeah, but the first 30 odd were not really magazines.





1996



1996



1998



1999

SUSIE: They're all part of it. It's history. That's what important I think. If you didn't do Rambling On issues and I didn't do ASM issues, we wouldn't have the history accounted, you know what I mean? Like the APF building burning down and losing all those records!

MACCA: It's always been a small community but over a large country, if we didn't have a magazine we'd probably never know what's going on out there. It was the only method of communication there for a while.

SUSIE: Did you have regular contributors and photographers?

MACCA: The skydiving photography evolution was fantastic. Mike McGowan deserves a special mention, he really was so supportive all those years and through his photos he encouraged other jumpers to send their photos in.

SUSIE: Next milestone?

MACCA: It was about mid 90s when you started coming along and getting interested and it was about the same time that the APF was producing their bimonthly newssheet, Skyline. The advertisers started dropping off because Skyline was pushing for advertising. Rambling On started dying a natural death because it wasn't getting the advertisers to help pay for the colour and subscriptions alone couldn't hold it. It was like fighting an uphill battle and I started, not losing interest, but it was hard to maintain the enthusiasm. The APF wasn't against the magazine or anything like that, it was just a natural progression. Skyline would have turned into a magazine maybe, if they had the staff, but Skyline was enough for the advertisers to get their message out to Australia. So that was the demise of the advertisers for Rambling On, until you came along. When did you start?

SUSIE: During Uni. I was helping from about Issue 100, only really with the database and taking it to the printers for you, licking envelopes, that sort of thing.

MACCA: You changed it to RO and gave it your signature as such.

SUSIE: Yeah, Issue 116. The intention of RO as opposed to Rambling On was to make it less Ramblerish. Don't think I was fooling anyone! My contract with the APF states that I'm not to be South Queensland biased. Poor Toogoolawah jumpers, they are so discriminated against! They don't realize how many of their photos and stories don't make it in ASM.

SUSIE: So 21 years of Rambling On is a big chunk of your life.

MACCA: Yeah, it was great going through the mags again. Some definite milestones there - starting it, getting the first year done, surviving, getting subscribers, the new gestetner and collator machines, then Rick left, getting it printed outside, colour pages, 100th issue - it had a pretty good run in the sun. The rest is history. You took over Rambling On, increased the contributions and the advertisers came back, you had a few ideas, took them to the APF, voila, jobs done, Aussie jumpers still have their mag!

SUSIE: You make it sound easy! It was pretty full on standing up in front of 20 people at the APF Board Meeting, pitching my idea. I tried to picture them all naked, didn't make any difference.

MACCA: I watch you and see that the mag is still the same love job. History repeating itself!



New Gear Store opened up at Just Jump Skydive, Hunter Valley

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If you are new to the sport, it is in your best interest to check out how we can make your gear purchases affordable. We go way beyond.