



# Tales of Emma 2005

## Well, hello there, it's 2006—delayed newsletter

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I apologise for the extraordinarily late Christmas newsletter for 2005 – it's really a bit rich to try & call it a Christmas 2005 newsletter when I'm writing it in February 2006, so it's my post-Christmas newsletter. The reason why it is late this year is because December and January have been horribly busy, and very complicated.

The really big news is that I left my job at the TMA on Friday 3 February, to start my own industrial relations consulting business. A lot of the last two months has been spent preparing for this eventuality, getting an Australian Business Number (a business tax thingy we have to do in Australia), sorting out a new web site and negotiating a contract-back arrangement with the TMA.

I have been wanting to leave the TMA for some time, but it was more of an itch until mid last year, when it became a full-blown necessity. I think that 2005 will go down in history as the most stressful year I spent at the TMA, with the Executive Director, Richard, leaving very suddenly at Easter, although apparently the Board knew it was on the cards for months and did nothing about it. In the vacuum that followed his departure, I ended up being de fact Executive Director for three months, despite my protestations that I didn't want the job.

I still don't want the job, and it nearly drove me batty trying to keep the organization going until the next Executive Director, Ralph, turned up. Unfortunately the organization slid downhill very quickly, and in December 2005 the TMA had to sell its three year old building to pay debts. The TMA is continuing as an entity, but in a much-reduced form, and after looking at what sort of industrial relations work I might get there, compared to other general stuff I don't enjoy, I made the decision to get out as soon as was practicable. Which turned out to be this month.

I am very excited about the prospect of running my own business, and I have put quite a lot of time into planning this exercise. My new web site, [emmawatt.com](http://emmawatt.com), will be up and running in the next couple of weeks. I already have a meeting this week with someone who will probably provide me with some work, and I have a contract to work for TMA for 60 hours per month. I will also be appearing in a TV show on behalf of TMA – Your Business Success – advising a TMA member on their employment relations!

Despite some misgivings on the part of the Board, and some nasty last minute dramas last week, the TMA were very nice about my departure. I got a gold watch and a leather handbag (both chosen by me) as leaving gifts.

Life goes on!

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## Yachting news

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I am still sailing with *Addiction* out of Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron, doing a bit of bay sailing and ocean racing where possible. I was scheduled to delivery *Addiction* to Sydney in December last year, and that was going to be my only ocean sailing for the summer as I had pulled out of doing the Sydney to Hobart due to work commitments. However, due to a nasty accident on the way up to Sydney, one of the race crew was unable to take his spot in the race, and the skippers asked me to fill in for him. Of course, I was only too happy to do the Sydney to Hobart again!

We had a much better time of it this year – we arrived in Hobart after only 3 days, 16 hours, and some minutes, compared to last year's effort of 5 days, 16 hours, 46 minutes. Which meant I had three days in Hobart to run amok. And run amok I did. What happened in Hobart largely stays in Hobart.

I have written a description of the trip up to Sydney and the race itself, and the unedited version is on my personal web site (well, collection of folders) at [www.talesofemma.net](http://www.talesofemma.net). I also managed to get the descriptions published at sail-world.com, an online sailing journal. The delivery story is at <http://www.sail-world.com/index.cfm?SEID=2&Nid=21222> and the race journal is at <http://www.sail-world.com/index.cfm?SEID=2&Nid=21271>.

I feel very chuffed to have made it into a respected sailing journal with a global readership, even if they don't pay much (try nothing!).

The crew of *Addiction* are planning to race from Melbourne to Vanuatu later this year, and I hope to be involved in some way. However, the demands of a fledgling business may prevent me from taking enough time off work to do anything in the race. We shall see.

## Triathlon training & racing

The year 2005 was a particularly bad year for me, as far as training went. The problems with my ankles that arose in late 2004 worsened, and I discovered that I had developed arthritis in my left ankle. This is probably due to the accident I had ten years ago, breaking both my ankles. While the bones were re-set very well, the joint was too traumatized. Add to that I had spent the previous two and a half years consistently running around 30-50 km per week, it's really no surprise that the joint in my left ankle has given up the ghost.

So, as I can't run, triathlon is now pretty much out of the question, including my desire to do an Ironman race. I have been swimming, although not so much recently. I did intend to do the Perth to Rottnest race this month, but when I decided that I might be leaving the TMA, finances put paid to the idea of traveling to West Australia and spending upwards of \$2,000 on a race. I still want to do the swim – it's a 20.2km swim, and it would be a fantastic challenge.

Cycling is still possible, though, and I am enjoying cycling at a slightly more leisurely level than in the past – so far I have no desire to do the 180km plus rides that I did while I was training for long distance triathlon, although I am sure I will want to take on a challenge this year, and maybe Around the Bay in a Day will be a good goal. That's a 220km ride around Port Phillip Bay, usually held in October, including a ferry ride from Queenscliff to Sorrento.

Now the uncertainty and tension of the last few months, not to mention a lot of time spent sailing, has passed, I think I will be getting back into some cycling and more swimming again.

## My family in 2005

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Dad is still working nights at the Buckingham Motel – he even appeared briefly in a Kath & Kim promo for their new movie, talking to Barry Humphries about rooms at the motel! We all bought multiple copies of the Herald Sun the day the promotional CD came out.

Stef is still working at the Lort Smith Animal Hospital, and enjoying life.

Mum had a bit of a tough year, unfortunately. Her father broke his wrist in May 2005, and she went to England in June to spend some time with him, and look after him. Two days after she arrived, though, she fell over and broke her pelvis. So almost all her time in England was spent as a guest of the National Health Service. She did manage to get out of hospital in time to spend a few days with Grandpa at his home, before being flown back to Australia in Business Class by the insurance company.

The accident had another consequence, which we didn't know about at the time. Mum had three compression fractures in her spine, and we discovered that she has osteoporosis. For pretty much the entire month of January Mum has been in bed, waiting for her spine to heal. She is improving slowly, and can now manage a slow walk around Claude Court (the street where they live) with help from one of us. Stef and I went to dinner at Mum & Dad's on Thursday night, and Mum was up to making the gravy, which was good to see. It will be a long recovery, though, and has put a huge dent in her confidence.

## Trip overseas—September/October 2005

I had a big trip overseas last year – the main purpose of which was to be a bridesmaid at my friend Rebecca's wedding, held in Las Vegas. As I was going to be in America anyway, I planned to visit friends in Colorado and North Carolina, and to see New Orleans. Sadly I had to take New Orleans out of the itinerary as I was due to visit only a week after Hurricane Katrina hit. From what I see, New Orleans is still not back on track, six months on.

I kept a travel journal, and took heaps of photos – all of which are at [www.talesofemma.net](http://www.talesofemma.net).

I had a fabulous time, the Las Vegas experience was incredible, including shooting a 9mm Beretta semi-automatic pistol, riding in a stretch HumVee limo and the wedding was beautiful. Colorado was a real experience too – I would live there in a flash, it is a beautiful State. It was also fantastic to see my friend from school days in Papua New Guinea, Heidi, and meet her family, in North Carolina.

From America I went to the United Kingdom, meeting up with my aunt Marjorie and cousins Verity & Angela, including Angela's partner Jason and their son Kieran. Since then, Angela has had their second son, Sam. Because I hadn't seen Angela & Verity in about twenty years, it was kind of like meeting strangers about whom I know quite a lot, but we had a great time together.

In lieu of my trip to New Orleans, I had an extra six days in the UK, and spent about four days down at Cornwall, which I had never visited. I kept marvelling at the beauty of the UK, it is quite simply an incredibly attractive country. I also spent a few days in the Lake District, staying with one of Mum's friends from Uni – and getting to see photos from that time too.

In all, it was a brilliant three and a half weeks, and I would visit any of those places again at the drop of a hat.

**WHAT HAS EMMA BEEN UP TO IN  
2005?**

Home Address  
1/14 Osborne Avenue  
Glen Iris VIC 3146

Phone: +61 3 9886 0184  
Mob: 0411 708 073  
Email: emma@talesofemma.net  
Web: www.talesofemma.net

*Being the best me I can be*



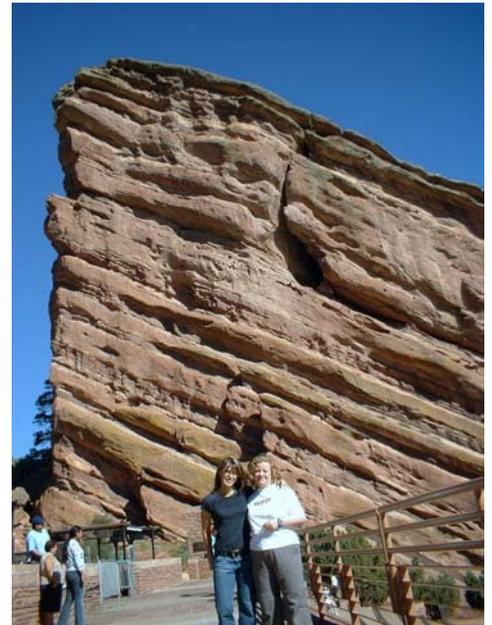
Above—the bridal party at the Bellagio Casino in Las Vegas—standing L-R Fiona Nelson, Mat Larkin, Dan Neubronner, Rebecca Patterson, Mark Stables, Sibilah Breen—kneeling at the front—me.

Below—me on horseback at Red Rock Ranch in Nevada



Right—me & Anne, my friend from Colorado, at the Red Rocks Amphitheatre just outside Denver, Colorado.

Below left, Heidi & me at the airport in Greensboro, North Carolina, just before I did battle with United Airlines



Above, my cousins in the UK, Angela & Verity, at Angela's house in Coventry