

## **Camooweal Drover's Camp Festival Report 2011**

### **BARDS IN THE BUSH**

On the fourth weekend in August 2011, the friendly folk of Camooweal in Western Queensland welcomed visitors from around Australia to the 15th Annual Drover's Camp Festival. Three days of genuine outback hospitality where drovers and townsfolk intermingled with artists, photographers, cooks, balladeers, bush poets, storytellers and bronco branders, included a children's performance, a street parade, a mail race, a Drovers Ball, a concert, exhibitions, stalls and competitions.

Sunday began with a fun-filled Poets' Breakfast with Brenda Joy, John and Carmel Lloyd and enthusiastic poets from Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory. The brekkie ended with a rollicking rendition of Grahame Watt's *The Bare Facts* acted out by Brenda and Carmel, which had the crowd of over three hundred participating with gusto. All present then moved to the main stage area for the announcement of the Bronze Spur Award for written verse, and for the junior and adult performance competitions.

The Bronze Spur trophy was won by Colleen McLaughlin of Springsure, Queensland for her poem *A Man's Dream*. Second place went to Ellis Campbell of Dubbo, New South Wales for his poem *The Fortune of Irish Bill* and third place went to Brenda Joy of Charters Towers, Queensland for her poem *The Sheik of the Scrubby*. In announcing the winners Liz Flood, the Festival Co-ordinator, said it was wonderful to have one of the place-getters present and she gave Brenda the honour of reading out Colleen's beautiful winning poem to a most appreciative audience.

The Junior Competition which followed was won by talented, ten year old Shyama Wauchope – a name that poets will definitely hear more of in future years – with his original poem of outback station life. Brenda then commandeered Poet/Drover John Lloyd from out of the performance competition to provide authenticity as M.C. of the inaugural Drover's Camp Talent Award which had twenty-two entries – 12 poems, 5 songs and 5 yarns.

Lois Sanders of Clarence Town, New South Wales won the coveted bronze carved winner's trophy with her hilarious yarn *The Battle of the Bulge*. Carmel Lloyd was a very close second performing *The Rapist*, a humorous poem written especially for her by Bill Kearns. Third and fourth places went to Open Performance singers Kevin Harris and Earl Kyle with Lois in fifth place also picking up the Best Novice Award for Sheila Sibley's poem *The Convict's Daughter*. This made Lois one of a long line of poets to step up from Novice to Open through the Camooweal Drover's Festival. Liz Flood said she was delighted to have performance poetry back in Camooweal and asked Brenda to organize the same again for next year. Due to the overwhelming success and popularity of both the Poets' Breakfast and the talent competition, Liz gave assurance that Bush Poetry will definitely be a feature of all future Drover's Camp Festivals.

With this in mind, whether you are a performer or a supporter, if you want to have a chance to win the Drover's Camp Talent Award trophy or just want to have a true-blue outback experience, put the dates 24th – 26th August, 2012 into your diary and watch for details in the ABPA magazine.

Hal Pritchard