

The Australian



Bush Poets



Association

No 9 OCTOBER 94.

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FEMALE BALLADEERS.

Let's hear it for the women
who are writing great bush verse.
Move over all you stockmen poets,
Let us put your tales in reverse.

We too know about the country,
the horses, stock and drought,
And until now you've had your head,
Let us turn it all about.

We'll bring back the sensitivieity
Great poets once put on display,
Like Banjo's words in 'Eyes of Blue'
Milton Taylor's, 'Laughing Eyes of Grey'.

Sure; we may not raise a laugh a minute,
as some bush poets tend to do,
But we'll show the strength and glory
of true Aussies like me and you.

We'll prove, with Australian progress,
Working wives and equal rights,
That the hand that rocks the cradle
Keep sweet memories in their sights.

We may not glorify our body parts
in laughter-inspired verse
But we'll bring the tender feeling back
of real life, in which verse should emerse.

So accept us, fellow poets,
because we're here to stay.
Next year at Toowoomba Carnival,
Expect more females on the finals day.

Bette Shiels.

Welcome to the Brotherhood.

When the poets of the bush assemble
in one place, you might
Hear a lot of words about
the poor bush poet's plight

Of stumbling over words and rhymes
never know which
Would flow together in a rhyme
designed to make them rich

Or bleeding hearts that wonder
if they'll ever get a prize
Or blokes complaining for a beer
with "ego's" oversize

Or ladies crying "On ya girls!
We'll give those men a spill!"
To which the brothers all reply
"Like flamin' 'ell you will!"

But,

If you dare to stand and join them
(Just once will seal your fate)
You'll find this rough and ready mob
are proud to call you "Mate"

They'll spin some fancy yarns along,
They'll stretch and sink the truth,
They'll paint your faces wet with tears
Or red with words uncouth

But,

If you'll overcome your fear of man
and beast, I'm sure you would
Hear- like me- words sweet as honey:
Welcome ... welcome ... welcome ...
Welcome to the Brotherhood!

Catherine Sercombe.



Bush poet, Max Jarrott, Killarney, and Australian Bush Poets Association secretary/treasurer, Ron Selby, Toowoomba, enjoyed the supper with the poets held during the Poets at the Carnival in Toowoomba.

● Bush Poets at Carnival

What an invasion! There are 60 competing bush poets plus others who have been entertaining Carnival crowds since Wednesday with traditional and new bush poetry.

Tonight will be a Kick-Cup session where 39 poets will recite for less than one minute at the Queensland Polo Clubhouse at Hodgson Vale. A lucky door prize is travel worth \$716 for two people for two nights with the Queensland Drivers on their annual drive from Longreach to Condamine which starts on October 10.

This morning you can also enjoy smoko with the Bush Poets at the Cobb & Co Museum in Lindsay Street while enjoying billy tea and damper cooked by that old drover's cook himself, Ned Winter from 10 o'clock to noon.

This afternoon from 3 to 4 it's Poets at the Plaza where there will be one hour of non-competitive bush poetry at High Street Plaza.

And tomorrow the competition is really on to find the champions in both the traditional and original sections when the finalists — the cream of Australian Bush Poets — will be judged by a panel of three.

This judging will be held at the Toowoomba Sports Club, Russell Street, from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

Poets performed to a packed Bistro at the Southern Hotel for two hours yesterday. They recited poems that ranged from the deeply moving to those that brought tears of laughter from the audience.

Yesterday's winners in Heat 1a traditional or established bush poetry were, Bill Glasson reciting *Sweeney* by Henry Lawson, Campbell Irving's version of *Dipso Dan* by Jim Haynes, and Ray Essery with the *Black Stallion* by Tom Somerville.

Heat 1a original bush poetry winners were Neil McArthur with *The Day Young Des Bitt the Dust*, Frank Daniel with *God'll Get Ya*, and Bob Miller's *A True Australian*.

Dear Carmel.

Tha pos'man, stopped, this mornin',
pulled up 'is mota bike,
'ee sez, "there's only one terday,
but, it's one, yer'll flamin' like."

"Tis a big one, frum Toowoomba,
now, I'd say, that it's a card,
frum tha Poets, at tha Carnival"
then, 'ee watched me, ratha' 'ard.

"Ain'tcha gunna' flamin' open it
an' let me 'ave a look,
for, it's neither creased, nor wrinkled,
lots a care, wif it, I've took."

"Let me say, that 'ee's a good bloke,
so I'll guess you'll unda'stan',
why, I showed 'im, that certifykit,
'cos, 'ee is an ardent fan."

'EE looked at it, then sez ter me,
as 'ee revved 'is trail bike up,
"mate! it proves, that you've contended,
Toowoomba's, Polo club - hick-cup.

Then 'ee rode orf, on 'is noisy bike,
though, I'm sure as sure kin be,
that 'ee'll tell all in this neighbour'ood,
'bout this letta', wot, you sent me.

JOHNNY JOHANSON.

Thanks Carmel for sending this to me, GOODONYAMATE.
All tha best ta you'se all, up on tha downs.

Oh yeah mate, is there any way that I can git one of them
group pitchers wot was took, how much an' frum hoo.

Like I sez before, GOODONYERMATE,

Stay nice an' live ferever,
all tha best.



▲ Campbell (The Swaggle) Irving,
of "all around Australia",



▲ Glennie Palmer, Mary Adelaide House,
Cedar Vale; and Dorothea Quinn, Echo
Cottage, Murgon; enjoyed the supper with
the poets held during the Poets at the
Carnival competition in Toowoomba.

Johnny Jo'

**** "The Carnival is over..." ****

Who popularised that haunting song?

Our "Poets at the Carnival" IS over, but I hope it won't "...be our last good-bye"!

At the outset, may I thank those sixty-odd of you who corresponded, put your entries in (in advance), turned up for the three days, and MADE the Carnival function! Your co-operation was greatly appreciated!

May I say a sincere THANK YOU to the informal Committee we established this year -- Jay Randle, Ron and Joy Selby, Sandra Neale, John Morris, Dan McCabe -- for all their hard work before, during and after, and Mark Gliori for his experienced input! Then there were Visitors, like Tiny Hall, who just happened to be in Toowoomba in advance, and found themselves conscripted to work for the Cause! Teamwork won the day!

We tried a few innovations this year. Some were more successful than others! ALL will be dissected before 1995.

1. Seven different locations kept the Poet body moving. At least everybody saw more of the town than one Hotel!

2. The printed souvenir Program answered many questions before they were asked. Such a program can only be effective when entries are "in advance", and when the vast majority of entrants actually arrive -- as they did at our Carnival.

3. The medals in addition to 1st Place Trophies and Prizes certainly proved popular.

4. Our first "Hick-Cup" was a crowd-pleaser! I guess it's here to stay!

5. Our efforts to get a group photo NEARLY succeeded. About fifty made it to the stage at the Saturday Finals when the call went out! I have seen only the (very small) proofs of these, but they look quite reasonable, and ARE AVAILABLE from Queensland Country Life DIRECT, as are those taken in the Market Plaza, and the Winners' Groups at the Finals. SEE ORDER FORM ELSEWHERE IN THIS MAGAZINE.

By now, every Competitor should have received their Certificate, either in person or through the post. If you were here and competed, and haven't yet a Certificate to prove it, please let me know!

Thanks to Mike Priest, I now have "Home Videos" of the Friday Night at the Polo Club and the Saturday Finals. Apart from the last 20 minutes or so at the Polo Club, they are of quite reasonable quality. Each fills a 180 minute tape.

Should you desire a copy of these, send me BEFORE THE 1st of NOVEMBER....

1. A BLANK TAPE...or TWO!

2. \$10.00 PER TAPE that you want copied.

A CARNIVAL READING: An authentic bush touch gave the Bush Poets first prize in the novelty and humorous float section at the 45th annual grand floral parade.

Sorry, but no, I can't edit them out, or copy just your performance for you! I just don't have the time to do it! I will be taking the originals and your tapes to a local Business House, paying them to make your copies, then posting them back to you.

So much for the practicalities of the organisation!

My personal thanks to those of you who supported my own literary efforts by purchasing my Anthology, "MANY FACES". As you realise, it's quite a thrill to see the culmination of several years' work there in your hand, and the encouragement of your friends and peers sets the seal on such a special event.

One factor brought home to me during the Carnival I would like to share with you...

I don't know the current population of Australia, so I'll estimate it at 11 million. At a rough guesstimate, about a million Australians would so far have come into contact with Bush Poetry through the efforts of OUR BUSH POETS. Out there are another 10 million that we haven't yet reached. Among that number are probably ten times as many POETS as we know about at present, many of them also excellent performers! We just never know where we'll run into them! Two out-of-the-blue performers at the Carnival were known only to me as customers in my shop. Both were very good...one made the Finals! Another "first-timer" made the Finals too!

Perhaps what I'm saying is that, while at present the KNOWN Bush Poets are a talented, vibrant, entertaining group, we don't have a monopoly on talent, and it is important for our Artform and our professional development that we retain an openness that can encompass the talent that we may not realise is just over the horizon from us! Enough of my pontificating!

Again, thanks for your support of our efforts...



Carmel Randle

P.S.

Obviously the stimulation of fellowship with such a vibrant body of creative souls inspired many to verse. Some results have come my way...like Johnny Johanson's reaction to receiving a Certificate (I had a good laugh at that one!), and the following, from new-comer this year, Catherine Sercombe..



► Joy and John Majors, Nonda, Baralaba; were among the bush poets at the Poets at the Carnival supper in Toowoomba.

PART 1.

Many performance bush poets and bush poets in general are confused as to the role they play in this current resurgence of the craft.

The public love the performances they see, even if the quality of the performance outweighs the quality of the verse. So what do we do? I say we try to preserve the quality of the verse, but we have not yet begun to address the quality of performance needed to reach the widest possible audience.

Charlee Marshall's piece in the September issue of the Aust. Bush Poets Assoc. Newsletter inspired me to relate my views on certain matters particularly the performance of 'Bush Poetry'

Firstly let me say that great writers of verse will always be considered great writers amongst their peers, as well as amongst performers of verse. However good performers will not necessarily be considered good writers simply because of their ability on stage to please an audience, or to pronounce their words clearly.

A 'good' writer observing a thousand strong audience in raptures (or tears) may feel agrieved that the person causing such reaction is an average poet who may even win an award for 'Bush Poetry'. But the word 'PERFORMANCE' rescues the average poet from feeling embarrassed about the quality of their written verse. A 'performer' is there to engage an audience. If they do so in an entertaining fashion, then they deserve our admiration

HUMOROUS OR SERIOUS.

During the last two years I have seen the majority of major Bush Poetry performance awards won by poets reciting serious verse, including the last two 'Original' awards for Tamworth. The view that you need to make the audience laugh to obtain recognition in these events does not wash with me.

However I will acknowledge that audiences generally enjoy the laugh-a-line poems as a form of entertainment, but once you have won them over they will appreciate the change of pace that a serious poem can offer.

All poets should be looking to improve the quality of their written verse, but as I am no grand authority on that I would like to address the following:

THE PRESENT STATE OF 'PERFORMANCE BUSH POETRY' IN AUSTRALIA.

In the near future I believe we will recognise two distinct camps of Performance Bush Poets.

The first will be those who are content, for whatever reason, to participate in Eisteddford style competitions. I see this camp filling the role that Country Music Clubs play in the Country Music business. They are an amateur event offering performances of varying quality, and thus limiting their appeal to a wider audience than the poets who attend them and perform.

I do believe this camp is extremely important, as they have in the past proved a valuable source of potential talent.

However conflicts will arise within the ranks when performers of recognised high quality continue to compete in such events. It often seems unfair to novice performers that someone who has previously been paid to perform poetry at another event, can compete against obvious amateurs.

Some may suggest more categories would solve the problem, and it might, but personally I would not recommend a performer of 'note' to continue competing in amateur events after having earned a reputation as an entertainer in their own right.

Some organizers, no doubt concerned with drawing a crowd, will dispute this. But I did not say they should not perform at these events. They can be utilized for compering and/or putting on a well managed and entertaining concert for the public.

I also see poets of varying calibre sharing company and talents at such events as Poets Brawls, free for all Poetry gatherings such as exist at Folk Festivals, and various other events such as the National Outback Performing Arts gathering.

The two camps that I speak of can co-exist, but will serve a different purpose, on the way to achieving a common goal.

The second camp will consist of Performance Poets who are at that stage where they are being invited to speak and entertain at functions. They will have established themselves by offering a unique and appealing form of entertainment. These performers will continue to band-together, drawing large crowds at Festivals and other venues, commanding reasonable fees for a Bush Poetry Show that portrays an air of professionalism.

The question must now be asked, "Who is qualified to perform in these shows?" I once questioned the right of any person to judge another's poetry, yet now having been instrumental in organising several poetry venues, I find myself in the unenviable position of appraising not the poem, but something even more delicate, the person themselves through their performance.

Many poets/performers will feel ignored or bitter about this process. As Charlee Marshall put it, some poets will start to enforce their exclusivity upon fellow poets'. There is no denying this happens, it is part of the entertainment business... OUR BUSINESS! But let's not pretend that prior to to-day our lives have not been subject to criticism, rejection, knockbacks and job refusals. These are the constant challenges of life, and you must answer them if you are to progress in any of life's endeavours.

This whole conflict arises because we have found ourselves experiencing a process that is concerned with turning a 'soul-surrendering craft' into a money making enterprise. These are the cold hard facts. As a poet I am as much confused about this clash of ideals as the next poet, but I also have a vision of 'Bush Poetry' playing to packed houses at places like The Lyric Theatre, and 'Bush Poetry' through innovative and contemporary productions, inspiring young Australians to join the fellowship and continue the evolution of a wonderful craft.

The future is the challenge for Bush Poetry. Performance gives it a popular and wide-spread appeal, and through our bold committed efforts on stage we can provide an important link to yesteryear for young Australians, and personally I believe 'Banjo' would be as proud as punch!!

PART 2. A busker has the right to perform to an audience in public. However, it is a privilege to perform on stage to a captive audience, and you can bet the impression you leave will often be a lasting one.

HAVE YOU EARNED THE PRIVILEGE TO PERFORM ON STAGE????

The 'professional' and appealing image of a Performance Bush Poet may be enhanced by addressing (amongst others) the following points;

READING FROM A SCRIPT.

This is not performance poetry. An actor would not dare to take a script on stage. I am not suggesting you should become an actor, but if our poetry is to be experienced by the audience, they need to see the poet's eyes, and/or feel the poem surging from the body. Knowing your poem inside out (ie; learning the words) will allow your soul, heart and mind to concentrate on re-living the 'creation' of the poem over and over again, thus translating the entire poetry experience to the audience.

DEVELOPING YOUR PERFORMANCE.

Develop a repertoire of poems that vary in length, pace, mood and rhythm. Put-together 5-10 minute brackets and make them sharp, including your introduction and exit. Once you have mastered these brief spots, your confidence will grow and so will your desire to expand your repertoire.

***** PRESIDENT'S REPORT. *****

Well the last few months have been very busy for our association with contests in far flung corners of the state. Poets seem to come out of the woodwork when there is a contest, no-matter where it be. The worth of an association to capitalise on the popularity of 'Bush Verse' is being justified.

The standard of verse being presented to tantalise the public is being recieved by them at a rate far beyond any individual effort.

Credability of our association has been accepted in the highest regard by everyone in the entertainment and media circles. This has come about by the standards set by all members and a special effort by our secretary, Ron, and the popularity of the news letter. I thank all for their effort and never doubted for a minute that success would come. I have found a lot of co-operation and friendship from all and I am sure that is the key to success, doing what you enjoy and enjoying what you do!

I am sure the success we will find in the Swaggies-Poets Walk to Winton in April next year will only be surpassed by the success of our Australian Poets' Championship held at the same time, in it's rightful place, Winton, on the 100th anniversary of our National song, 'Waltzing Matilda'.

I look forward to hearing from any-one who is interested in participating in all or part of the proposed Swaggie-Poets Walk from Cairns to Rockhampton and out to Winton, doing a poetry night in a selected hotel in each of the main towns along the way. This should encompass about 40 towns, and at the same time around 30 towns from Brisbane to Winton.

A start at Camooweal and Birdsville will only cover the major towns. I will be organising transport and accomodation for all participants and the whole trip should reach the attention of every news-media in each town we pass through especially if we are dressed as swaggies or wearing period costume. Financially we should be self funding and should generate a large cash flow to support selected charities such as Drought Aid, The Flying Doctor, Waltzing Matilda and Australian Bush Poets by charging admission to each concert and running raffles.

For further information contact me. I would like to hear from all poets interested in taking part in the whole walk or any part of the walk.

GRANNY'S REPLY.

Bette Shiels.

Bob Magar wrote a poem once, about his Granny's boobs,
All caught up in a mangle and turning out like tubes.
A few of us took umbrage at his careless, callous humour.
What will he think to write of next? Will it be a malignant tumour?

Because a few of us are Grannies, we decided to get even,
And I was nominated to put a stop to all our grievin'.
I researched Bob's long lost passions, with floozies he has known.
They assured me in a minute, it was not wild oats he'd sown.

It was more like planting daisies or a cow chewing its cud,
He was known to brag of assets and considered himself a stud.
But talk is cheap, as well we know, and Aussies like a laugh,
But true comedians like The Larrikin, don't make fun of their better half.

He doesn't need to put Grannies down, or good ol' Ma-in-law,
And with women writing bush verse, we're about to even the score.
So Mr Magar, write about yourself. Say you tuck it in your socks
Or when you go in swimming, you're mistaken for a pile of rocks.

But keep us women out of it, we like our body parts.
If you're a true blue poet, find a better way to win our hearts.
Try laughing at your portly stance, and we'll laugh along with you,
For when it comes to knowing women, you haven't got a clue!

Saddlesaw Productions

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Telephone: 076 614024

Ron Selby
Australian Bush Poets Association
P.O. BOX 77
Drayton North Qld 4350

Dear Ron,

Giddy mate. What a great time we all had at Toowoomba. It was bigger than Ben Hur this year, and will only grow in stature.

Please find enclosed a piece that I have written on Performance Poetry in Australia. It was inspired after Charlee Marshall's piece in the September issue of our magazine. He queried what was happening with several areas of Performance Bush Poetry, and I have attempted to address some of these in my 'expose'.

I have divided it into two parts should you feel it is too long, but ideally they run better together.

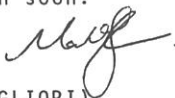
I thought the article might spell out my vision for Bush Poetry and it may also assist those in our midst who are confused about the role they play.

I hope you will consider publishing it and invite replies.

See you again soon.

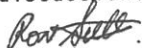
Best Wishes

Marco (Mark GLIORI)

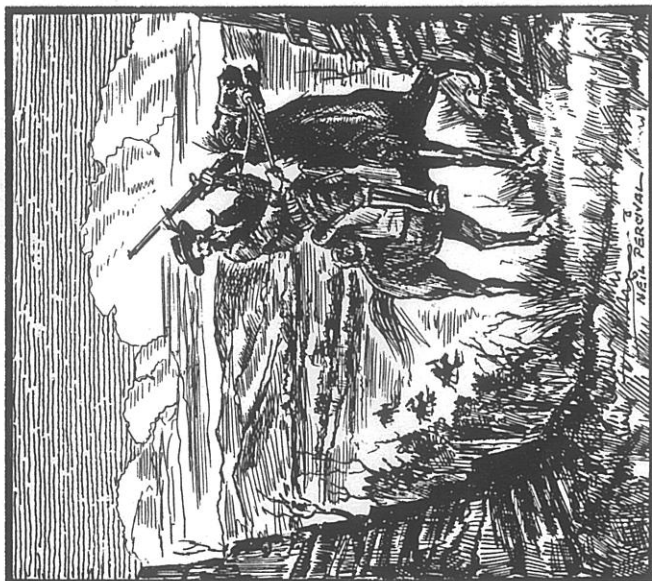


EDITORS NOTE.

It is great to see these pages being utilized for the purpose the magazine is intended. To give you the member a forum to discuss or answer any topics that may arise on our chosen field of Bush Poetry. So don't be afraid to put pen to paper on anything you deem to be worthy discussion.



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Colin Newsome is an active 73 years of age (born 1916) can still shear 100 sheep in a day. As a young man worked in bush occupations, choosing in particularly bushranger areas. Met many relatives of bushrangers and talked with Bill Monckton, who rode with Thunderbolt.

Colin was also a showground fighter, wrestler and toured Australia with boxing troupes, particularly Jimmy Sharman's and competed in rough riding at rodeos.

Colin Newsome obtained many inside stories of bushrangers, black trackers and convicts and was recently referred to by song writer and historian Alan Scott as Australia's modern day Duke Triton.

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Poets at The Impi

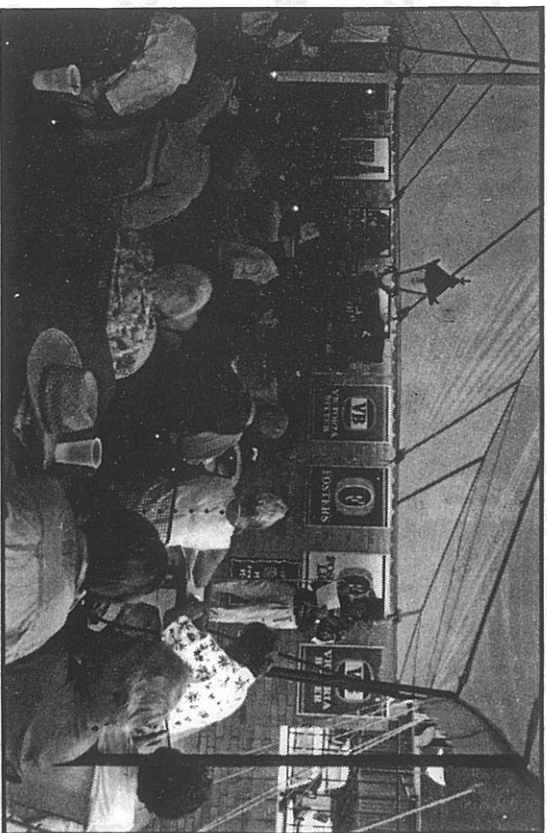
Tamworth's Imperial Hotel will again play host to some of Australia's finest Bush Poets when the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group stages its 1995 Imperial Hotel Bush Poets Competition next January.

Heats will be conducted over January 25, 26 and 27 (Wednesday to Friday) and Saturday 28 will see the battle of the Bush Poets as the final sorts out the wordsmiths once and for all.

If the past festivals are any indication, next year's event is guaranteed to be a block-buster affair and one of the most exciting spectacles on the Tamworth 95 Festival calendar.

The competition has two sections - Original Poetry and Traditional Works - and is open to newcomers and seasoned "Troupers".

Entry forms are now available from Jan Morris, Tamworth Poetry Reading Group, PO Box 1164, Tamworth, 2340, NSW. (Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.)



Poets, judges and audience gather under the marquee top at the Imperial Hotel in Tamworth during the 1994 Foster's Australasian Country Music Festival.

Photo: Des Ryan.

BLACKENED BILLY VERSE COMPETITION

Poets from far and wide are invited to enter the Blackened Billy Verse Competition 1995, organised by the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group.

The competition was launched in 1991 and entries were received from throughout the local region and now from across the country as the enthusiasm for next year's Country Music festival starts to build.

Many entries are anticipated and local Tamworth musical and theatrical and ABC Radio Identity Bill Gleeson will judge the best original bush verse.

There is a limit of two entries per person. A fee of \$3 must accompany each entry and the closing date is set for November 30, 1994.

Results will be announced at a presentation in conjunction with the Imperial Hotel Bush Poetry Contest, staged each year during the Tamworth Country Music Festival.

The winner will receive \$100 cash, together with the Blackened Billy trophy and a certificate. Second and third place-getters will receive \$70 and \$30 respectively, and a

certificate. The runners-up will each receive a highly commended certificate.

The sponsors include Seed & Grain Sales Tamworth and Easy Does It Automotive Services. Certificates will be donated by AM Printing Services and the Blackened Billy trophy will be crafted by local artist Fred Hillier.

Anyone requiring an entry form may write and forward a stamped, self addressed envelope to Maureen Quickenden, The Blackened Billy Verse Competition, Tamworth Poetry Reading Group, PO Box 1164, Tamworth 2340.