

The Australian Bush Poet's Association Inc.

Monthly Newsletter

No. 12 Volume 4. December 1997



Marion Fitzgerald

Bobby Miller

Greg Scott

'Bluey' Bostock

Billy Hay

Milton Taylor



Carmel Dunn

John and Joy Major

"Blue the Shearer"

Jim Haynes

Campbell Irving

Merry Christmas
Merry Christmas



Mark Giori

Noel Cutler

Ray Essery

Johnny Johannson

Bob Magor



Geoffrey Graham

Ellis Campbell

Trisha Anderson

Ron Selby

Tim McLoughli

Glenny Palmer

*Australian Bush Poet's
Association Inc.*

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Second Vice President:

Merv 'Bluey' Bostock.

3 Marlin St. Birkdale Qld 4159

Phone. Mobile 018 699 176

**THE
BIG BUSH BREKKY SHOW**

At the

**Bushman's Billabong
WEST TAMWORTH
LEAGUES CLUB**

Breakfast at 7am — Show starts 8am
with

JIM HAYNES

and a big roll up of

Australia's Best

BUSHPOETS and YARNSPINNERS

also

THE BUSH KIDS

WITH

PADDY RYAN & CO

POETS IN THE PUB

2.30 pm — 11th January 1998

V WALL TAVERN

NAMBUCCA HEADS

FEATURING

National Folk Festival Reciter of the Year

Warren 'Arch' Bishop

Ph/fax Maureen Garner 02 6568 5269

MIDDAY WITH MUZZA

BUSH POETS LUNCH

In the Big Hokka

12 NOON TO 2PM

**WEST TAMWORTH LEAGUES
CLUB**

17th - 25th January 1988

Starring: John Major - Marco Giori

Murray Hartin - Shirley Friend - Bobby Miller

and guest after guest after guest

It's New! It's Big! It's Free! Don't Miss it!

"POETS IN THE PUB"

GANG

RIDES AGAIN

Featuring again:

Gary Fogarty from Millmerran Qld.

John Major from Baralaba Qld.

Noel Cutler from Milawa Vic.

ALL

NEW

SHOW

and INTRODUCING

Frank Daniel from Canowindra NSW

A TWO HOUR BALLADRAMA WITH AUSTRALIAN BUSH POETRY,

YARNS AND QUIPPY ONE LINERS, STAGED IN A PUB SETTING

USING SPECIAL SOUND AND LIGHTING EFFECTS

FROM IAN ENDERS

NORTH TAMWORTH BOWLS CLUB

8.00PM NIGHTLY WEDNESDAY TO SATURDAY

21st to 24th January 1998

OASIS HOTEL BUSH POETRY

4PM TO 6PM. EVERY DAY

FROM TUESDAY 13th JANUARY

BUSH POETRY COMPETITION

In Honour of the late John Philipson

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY

21st. — 22nd JANUARY 1998

FINALS — FRIDAY 23RD.

CONDUCTED BY MERV 'BLUEY' BOSTOCK

(WORKSHOPS ETC. SEE ARTICLE THIS ISSUE — Page 8)

WELCOME TO THE ORIGINAL

LONGYARD HOTEL

BUSH POET'S

BREAKFAST

TAMWORTH

17th — 26th January 1988

With Hosts

TIM MCLOUGHLIN

RAY ESSERY and FRANK DANIEL

Guest poets and performers

8am to 10am — Free admission

President's Letter....

Dear ABPA Members,

May I first take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

1997 has been a great year poetry-wise with a lot of new exciting faces hitting the scene, new festivals, new poetry and so on.

I wish you all the best of luck for 1998 and hope that you have enjoyed your association with the Bush Poets throughout 1997.

Please note! The Association's financial year ends on December 31st. So here comes the big 'bite'. Renewal of Membership is now due.

It is very awkward for our Secretary to keep the books in order with late payments, so we would appreciate your subscriptions by return mail in order to get 1998 off to a good start.

Save us the embarrassment of not sending you the next issue of the newsletter. This past year it cost the association a lot of money publishing and posting three months copies, and in some cases more, of the newsletter to non-financial members who eventually did not re-join; only then to find that, when some renewed later in the year, they asked for back copies.

Not an easy task at all. We can't afford to keep a lot of back copies. We'd hate you to miss out on even one copy of the Newsletter, so please remit your fees as soon as possible.

The Annual General Meeting of the ABPA Inc. is set down for Saturday 24th. January 1998 at St. Peter's Hall on the corner of Vera and Kathleen Sts. Tamworth.

Starting promptly at 2.30 pm we expect members visiting Tamworth, to be on time, as it is an important meeting, and with the busy schedules set down for many poets that day, it is imperative that we start on time.

Minutes, reports and election of office bearers will be the first item on the agenda and I remind members that the meeting will start on time.

My comments last month in reply to Keith Ireland's question, *'what is bush poetry'* drew a response from Liz Banting of Kingaroy Q. suggesting one more 'important ingredient'. Liz feels that *'the writer of poetry/stories, bush or otherwise, should have or have had experience and good knowledge of the subject(s) of which they write'* for the sake of authenticity.

Perhaps so, but I feel that proper research and thorough investigation of a subject by an author can also

produce some very good results. I am sure this is how many of our great books and better poems eventuated.

'Banjo' Paterson wrote *'In The Droving Days'* but I have never read where he was a drover. His *'Bush Christening'* so I am told was written from a story related to him about a similar situation; and from where did he gain his inspiration for *'The Man From Snowy River'* and *'Waltzing Matilda'*?

From stories he had heard. We know this.

I partly agree with what Liz is saying because I am a stickler for getting things right myself, or as close as possible. I appreciate the feeling one gets from poetry from the likes of our good friend Bruce Simpson to mention only one, who writes from true experiences.

Another good poem, *'The Night Rush'* can be found on page 15, from which I gained also the feeling of authenticity and first hand experience by the author, but was it so or was it here-say?

Thanks for the letter, Liz.

For all the kind letters and the many poems received during the year, I wish to thank the writers and express my gratitude for their assistance, enabling me to get the newsletter together on time all the time.

Sadly, not all the poetry submitted was suitable, many lacking true rhyme and meter. Not wishing to set myself up as the judge I elected to use as many prize-winning entries as possible. This way I feel that all arguments as to suitability are swayed. I trust that by including so much quality verse, up and coming writers will set their sights higher. Other poetry included from time to time I chose at random from the number on hand. Perhaps in time some of these poems that didn't make it to our pages will appear in later issues.

My congratulations must go to the many poets who help keep our literary competitions alive by submitting written works. Too many to mention of course, but the consistent winners in our ranks have certainly set a high standard for others to follow.

Again, thank you all for your support over the past year and have a really top Christmas, and a helluva good new year,

Keep on writing and reciting,
regards,

Frank Daniel

Note. I will not be seeking re-election as President for 1998. It is time that I had a spell and got on with many of my own pursuits which I have neglected over the past twelve or eighteen months. See Page 23.



WINTON 1998

Australian Bush Poetry Championships
Opening of the Waltzing Matilda Centre
Poetry Olympics
Junior Bush Poetry
EASTER 1998
Plan ahead — Send A4 size SSAE to
The Organiser
P.O. Box 7714
Toowoomba Mail Centre Q 4352

NOPA '98

National Outback Performing Arts
LONGREACH
ARIL 5 - 9 1998
Contact. The Secretary,
National Outback Performing Arts,
P.O. Box 518
LONGREACH Q. 4730
Ph. 076 581 718 Fax 076 583 1988

The Third Annual Golden Gumleaf Bush Laureate Awards

2pm Tuesday January 20th. 1998 2pm
Hosted by Nick Erby
with a star studded line up of presenters
and guest performers
In the Big Hokka
WEST TAMWORTH LEAGUS CLUB

THE NAKED POETS

Murray Hartin — Marco Gliori
Bobby Miller — Ray Essery
Shirley Friend

Special guest vocalist
PAT DRUMMOND

Sunday 18th. January
followed by

**Wednesday - Thursday - Friday
and Saturday**

**21st - 22nd - 23rd and 24th January
1998**

7.45 PM NIGHTLY

TAMWORTH GOLF CLUB

Bookings essential 02 6765 9393 — \$10.00

BRONZE SWAGMAN BOOKS OF VERSE

Published since 1972 — Back copies available from
The Secretary
P.O. Box 44 WINTON Q 4735
\$9.50 ea or 10 at \$7.00 ea.

THE BRONZE SWAGMAN AWARD Worldwide competition for BUSH VERSE **1998**

**AUSTRALIA'S UNIQUE AWARD FOR
TRADITIONAL BUSH VERSE
Prize.**

BRONZE STATUETTE OF THE SWAGMAN
Designed and sculptured by Daphne Mayo
Value \$2500 Plus a Winton BoulderOpal, Value
\$250

SSAE to
The Secretary
Winton Tourist Promotion Association
P.O. Box 44 Winton Q. 4735
Phone. 076 571 502
Fax. 076 571 322
Entries close on January 31st.

BUSH POET'S BREAKFASTS ELMSLEA HOMESTEAD BUNGENDORE NSW

Sat. 31st January and Sun. 1st February 1998

plus
POETRY WORKSHOPS
Saturday 2pm
WITH

'Blue the Shearer' - Bobby Miller - Frank Daniel
In Association with the
BUNGENDORE COUNTRY MUSTER
ALL WELCOME

POETS IN THE PUB

7.30 pm — 21st February 1998

Bowra Hotel

BOWRAVILLE

FEATURING

Bush Poet and Folk Singer
RUSSELL CHURCHER

Ph/fax Maureen Garner 02 6568 5269

AUSTRALIAN BUSH POET'S ASSOCIATION INC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2.30pm. sharp.

24TH. JANUARY 1998 TAMWORTH
St. Peters Hall Vera St.

Secretary's notes. . . .

Dear Members,

The Australian Bush Poets Association's Fourth Annual book of Bush Verse is currently at the printers. We are grateful to Ron Selby who sorted out the poems and arranged it for printing.

I know you will all buy copies. They are available from my office at \$3.00 each to members plus \$1.10 postage. They would make an ideal Christmas gift with two posted together for the same postage fee.

Back copies of the first three annuals are still available at the same prices.

If you wish to nominate a member for an executive position, any two (2) members of the Association shall be at liberty to nominate another member to serve as an officer.

Nominations shall be in writing and signed by the member and the members proposer and seconder and should be lodged with the Secretary at least 14 days before the A.G.M.

However, if there are not sufficient numbers of candidates nominated, nominations may be taken from the floor of the meeting.

Our President Frank Daniel has given unstintingly of his time to prepare these newsletters in their excellent form, as well as take care of the everyday running of the Association.

We have been well represented by him and are very grateful for his continuing interest.

Now, a Christmas Greeting from me to you all —

May Christmas add height to the joy of your being,

May the New Year add breadth to the scope of your seeing,

May love add depth of purpose to all that you do,

And may life be a piece of poetry for you.

Fond regards and best wishes,

Olive Shooter

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AUSTRALIAN BUSH POET'S ASSOCIATION INC.

24th. January 1998.

2.30 pm. (sharp)

St. Peter's Hall.

Corner Vera and Kathleen Streets
TAMWORTH.

AGENDA

- Apologies.
- Minutes of last Annual General Meeting.
- Presidents written report of management committee to be read.
- Election of Officers.
President.
Vice Presidents.
Secretary - Treasurer.
- Appointment of Auditor.
- Management Committee.
- Appointment of Editor.

IT'S ALL NEW

George New, "The Bayldon Bard", has just released his first cassette tape entitled "It's All New". The tape includes many of his popular poems which featured in his recently published book of the same name and includes 'The Shopper', 'The Moz from the Gunning', 'The Northeren Marauder', 'Shorts and Thongs', 'My Akubra', 'Dunnies I Have Known', and a witty ditty called 'Thinkin'.

Available from

George New

1/8 Brush Cherry Close
COFFS HARBOUR 2450

Book. \$10.00

Cassette \$12.00

The two \$20.00

Postage \$2.50

TALENT QUEST SUCCESS

Bush Poet's often meet with mixed reactions when they enter talent quests.

Not because they aren't good Bush Poets — but simply because some people in the entertainment industry just aren't aware of the enormous potential this great art form of Australia offers and it has often been said by some that "Bush Poetry is the full stop at the end of a sentence."

Contrary to this outdated opinion, Sydney Poet, Warren 'Arch' Bishop met with a high degree of success in an open forum with other entertainers in the recently held Rooty Hill RSL Talent Quest.

Warren came third in one of the six heats, placed fourth in his semi-final and competed well in the final on Saturday 6th. December which was attended by an audience of 600.

It's great to see someone in this arena pounding the boards on behalf of the Australian Bush Poets.



George New



Carmel Randle



There was movement at the CHAPEL

Geoffrey Graham will present a pile of entertainment at the Tamworth Festival in the the Chapel Theatre (Conservatorium) in Marius St. behind the K-Mart carpark.

At this new venue, Geoffrey will present a celebration of our Heritage through music and the spoken word with several performances of three different show plus a special gem called Aussie Stuff.

"The Man from Ironbark", the masthead of Geoffrey's entertainment, will continue this year as he presents his amazing portrayal of 'Banjo' Paterson.

The combining of 'Banjo's' works and aspects of his life, Geoffrey's talents as an entertainer, actor, musician and comedian, results in a fascinating family show. Following an incredible response across Australia since its inception in 1995 the demand continues for more of Geoffrey Graham as A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson.

"Ratbags and Romantics". Following the success of 'The Man from Ironbark' Geoffrey has developed another show. Rather than a specific portrayal he is able to use a greater variety of material to create another stirring performance.

In his unique style and blend of songs, verse and comedy he brings you a mix of material that is funny, provoking and most of all entertaining.

The two hour performance is a colourful tongue-in-cheek look at the dinkum Australian. Take a dash of 'Banjo' Paterson, Lawson and Dennis; add some songs from Jack O'Hagan and Peter Allen; throw in Dad and Dave and gems from Geoffreys own pen and you have a classic session of entertainment.

"Humpin the Bluey". A one hour-show that Geoffrey has toured around Australia as a school show suitable for kids of all ages as well as Mums and Dads.

A collection of songs, bush poetry and tall stories bringing to life 'Bill Baloney the Swagman' exploring the real story of Waltzing Matilda.

"Aussie Stuff" is a collection of some of Australia's top musicians presenting the best Australian songs. A group of very talented, energetic performers, who are passionate about their music and their country.

Enquiries: Geoffrey Graham. 03 5469 1312



GEOFFREY GRAHAM
PRESENTS

'The Man from Ironbark'
The 'Banjo' Paterson Show
"Ratbags and Romantics"
A look at the real Australians
"Humping the Bluey"
Bill Baloney the swaggy and
other characters
Plus

"Aussie Stuff" — The top Fair Dinkum Aussie Musos.

CHAPEL THEATRE

Marius St. Tamworth (behind K-Mart carpark)

Booking Tamworth Visitors Centre

(See Tamworth Programme for details)

COMES A TIME

© Mark Kleinschmidt



There come a time 'round the gidgea coals
When the day gets short, the nights more cold,
The ground too hard and the coat too thin,
Teeth too long and the eye-sight dim.

Comes a time and it's too damn late
To feed him steel or shut the gate,
The fire has gone and it hurts to sit
On a girth-proud colt that just won't quit.

Comes a time when old bones break,
Muscles shrink and prone to ache,
The body longs for a warm, soft spot,
Not the rough bush bed of a ringers cot.

Comes a time when the surge of blood
Of a mad scrub rush or a breasted flood
Subsides to just a gentle beat,
Attuned to pipes and slippered feet.

Comes a time down the hoof-marked years
When the senses lose those long-held fears.
Time to join the bush-gate line,
Comes a time, there comes a time.



Mark Kleinschmidt

The Flying Doctor's Coming

The Flying Doctor's Coming

© Robert Raftery. Brisbane Q.

We'd just flown in to Coopers Creek, we'd put the aircraft down,
And all around the wing tips forged the tiny outback town.
The sea of faces, strained, distraught, their outback conga thronged,
And soon I fixed the stricken face to where the voice belonged.

"It's Jan Maclean from Boorooloo. Please, God you've got to try..."
"Our Tim got in the bore drain, Doc. Without your help he'll die."
From routine flight to mercy dash, with the mighty engines humming,
"We're closing on the Cooper, Jan. 'The Flying Doctor's Coming'."

With lightning crackling overhead, we'd kept in constant touch.
We tried to calm the mother when the minutes meant so much.
Now underneath in parallel, the runway fires glowed
Through people in the headlights of the cars along the road.

We knew that life was leaving Tim. His little face was blue.
We checked for breath and heartbeat as the whole town checked it too.
And red stained eyes searched for the glimpse of God's own Son, begotten,
As friends and family found the prayers they thought they had forgotten.

With the skills of man and medicine we fought for little Tim,
As I thought of the Flying Doctor and its founding father, Flynn.
And 'midst the sprawling vastness like a mirage in the air,
Through the tingling of a heartbeat I could sense John Flynn was near.
"Come on Timmy, you can do it!" prayed our frail and fractured force,
Like signal men we waited for Tim's tiny tap of Morse.

Seconds, precious seconds, scoured the hearts of town and crew.
The toddler's chest seemed lifeless, there was little we could do,
As anger and frustration took their brushes to the faces,
A father and a mother wished for Tim a trade of places.

Then a bolt of lightning struck in close, it singed the heated air.
Tim's father's voice in anguish cried to Christ, "It's just not fair."
"You took our hearts, You sent the drought that killed our little run."
"Then when our backs were partly turned, You took our baby son."

The rain in sheets now pounded down in flashes silver green.
My fingers felt a little "thump." I screamed "a pulse! The screen!"
Like a violin first pale and thin, like the heart of a just born bird
We watched the rhythm, stronger now. Breathless. Not a word.

Tim's little frame now pumped with life and a cheer was duly earned.
A two year old, a toddler, to the Cooper had returned.
And assembled down below us, as our right wing bid adieu,
The people of the Cooper waved their thanks from Boorooloo.

Robert Raftery c Picture Writer Brisbane Australia October 1997

SKYDOCTOR

This is a book based on the adventures and experiences of a flying doctor in the 1950's.

312 pages with many black and white photos, maps, memorabilia and colour plates.

Dr. Len Dawson was born in Tamworth, NSW and educated at Armidale and Sydney Boys High School before graduating in Medicine at the University of Sydney. After a posting at M.R.D. Hospital, Taree NSW he became the flying doctor for Charleville base, Queensland, in early 1954, reluctantly relinquishing the position in 1957. He became a member of the R.A.N.Z.C.P. in 1972.

This is a story of the Channel Country in Queensland's Outback. It details with feeling the lives of real people in real places who bravely battled against the odds in an unforgiving but starkly beautiful land.

Dr. Dawson tells of high adventure and changing fortunes, of excitement and the mundane, living an often thrill-a-minute lifestyle while going about his daily rounds.

SKYDOCTOR

A true story,
available from
Dr. Len Dawson,
P.O. Box 113
Wingham NSW 2429
\$29.95 PP.



Merry Christmas



Notes from 'Bluey' Bostock — OASIS BUSH POETRY

Merv 'Bluey' Bostock will be running Bush Poetry from 4pm to 6pm daily from Tuesday January 13th. for a full week leading up to the start of the Oasis Bush Poetry Competition held in honour of the late John Philipson. Heats will be conducted on Wednesday 21st and Thursday 22nd with the big Finals on Friday 23rd. January.

'Bluey' also intends organizing some workshops on Performing and Writing Verse. These workshops will be in the form of collective input rather than lectures. A further workshop, possibly on Tuesday 20th. will be held on the task of judging poetry, both written and performed. 'Judging is one aspect of our art' writes 'Bluey', 'that is overlooked and is so important. Not all good performers can judge their fellow performers'.

Having had a busy year Compering and Judging at contests as far afield as Hungerford, Camooweal and Cairns, 'Bluey' states he 'has found that organizers of festivals are concerned enough to want to get accredited judges. And with an educational system on the subject, we will be able to lift Bush Poetry a little further up the ladder'.

During the past year 'Bluey' has performed for schools and created an interest in the teachers enough, to go back a few months later to be amazed at the interest shown by the students once he'd unlocked the myth of 'I can't do that. I don't know how!'

'Bluey' has also set in motion a committee of some 20 poets to form an association for North Queensland.

He was also honoured to have been asked by the organizers of The Drover's Hall of Renown, Camooweal, to join the committee of management. This venue will become a very big event for Bush Poetry according to 'Bluey', and the proposed hall and surroundings will be a must on the Tourists itinerary around Australia.

Hungerford will again host the Will Ogilvie weekend under the guidance of Bob McPhee who has been invited to do the same at Gatton Heavy Horse Day, and 'Boulia' Bates and 'Bluey' have been asked for their input once again.

'Bluey' extends his congratulations to Ron 'Boulia' Bates for his involvement throughout the year. 'Ron has been instrumental in organizing some very successful venues for Bush Poetry, with Charleville being no exception'.

* If we all pulled in the one direction the world would keel over
* When the teacher asked Jimmy to name two pronouns, he said, "Who, me?"
* Fat lady to her reflection: 'Mirror, mirror on the wall, don't you ever fib at all?'

STAR-STUDDED GOLDEN GUMLEAF AWARDS

The Golden Gumleaf Bush Laureate Awards have become such a success in three short years that they are moving in 1998. Hundreds were turned away last year so a new home has been found at West Tamworth Leagues Club where the air-conditioned Country Club Pavillion seats 1200 in concert-style comfort.

The Awards will be presented on Tuesday 20th. January at 2pm. Nick Erby will again host the event assisted by Jim Haynes with a line up of guests including Slim Dusy, John Williamson, Graeme Connors, Troy Cassar-Daley, Shanley Del, Darren Coggan, Jane Saunders, Ray Essery, Frank Daniel, Bob Magor and The Bush Kids.

Special guests include Tamworth Mayor, James Treloar, Event Sponsor the Tenterfield Saddler, Brian Meldon and ABC's Mr. Country Music, John Nutting. A new award for Performance of the Year has been added for 1998 for single entries.

For a list of the finalists turn to page 22.

I WISH

© Grahame Watt Kyabram V.

I wish that I was wealthy,
I wish that I could fly,
Away to far off places,
To mountain tops so high.

I wish, I wish, that I could go
Where life is ever free,
Where everyone can build a home
And raise a family.

I wish that I could travel
To places that I know,
Nor border guards, no curfew hour,
Free to come and go.

I wish that I could live in peace
For ever and a day,
Where I'm allowed to speak my thoughts,
To stand and have my say.

I wish for richness in my life,
The right to kneel in prayer,
I wish that I could always live
Without a fear or care.

Where is this land in all the world?
This dream I hold so dear,
I tell you friend it's not so far,
It's where we are right — RIGHT HERE.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

© Beth Vinecombe-Bashford
Berrigan NSW



There once was a mouse
Who lived in our house
And gnawed his way through the wall.
The pussy cat knew
The mouse did too,
One stumble and he would fall.

He stepped on the sill
And crawled out until
He felt he was safe and sound.
He then looked below
And descended so slow,
Until he had reached the ground.

With stealth-like precision
He made the decision
To run across to the Deli,
The pussy cat saw,
Shot out his great claw,
Now mousie is in the cat's belly.

The moral is clear.
Do not live in fear,
Always be your own boss.
We all make mistakes
Just do what it takes,
Or you'll finish up losing the toss.

MACARTHUR LITERARY COMPETITION — CAMPBELLTOWN. 1997

Traditional Verse Section.

First place to Geoff Allen of Balgowlah. with
'The Talbot Understands.'

Second was Ellis Campbell of Dubbo. NSW with
'Dawn Pilgrimage.'

Highly Commended. Ellis Campbell Dubbo,
Pamela Romano Ingleburn NSW, Joan Timms
Ballina NSW, Garth Madsen Frankston Vic.,
and Phil Ilton of Brighton Vic.

BUSH POETRY PERFORMANCE COMPETITION AND CONCERT

9AM SUNDAY 12th APRIL 1998 9AM

V WALL TAVERN

NAMBUCCA HEADS

ADMISSION \$10.00 inc. Brunch

LOCAL RECITERS WELCOME AT ALL
EVENTS

POET FOR HIRE

© Dick Warwick
Oakesdale Washington USA



I'm a poet for hire, fastest tongue in the west
I pen poems of pathos, praise, passion, and protest
Of marriage and morals, mischief, manure
I'm a laureate for laymen who love literature.

Have pencil will travel, I'm a poet for hire
I'll write sacred lyrics for cult or for choir
I'll pen you some lines aimed straight at your pard
That you can paste over the crap in some card;
When you're marking a birthday or other affliction
I'll invent a more apropos valediction.
Don't try it yourself, why flirt with disaster —
Enlist me, a professional poetaster!

I'm a poet for hire, my work is all custom
You've tried your own words, you know you can't trust 'em
You stutter and stammer, put your toes where your teeth are,
Your thoughts tangle up like your stoned out on ether;
You utter the opposite of what you may mean
More often than not it sounds quite obscene
And only much later while you wish you were dead
It will come to you clearly — what you wish you had said!
So — don't do this yourself, nor try it at home —
Don't worry or fret, simply purchase a poem!

I'm a poet for hire, by the word or the line;
On any durn topic you want to assign;
Yes, you state the subject, I'll gladly expound
Whether prolonged or pruned, profane or profound
I'll do blank or free verse, rhyming and meter
Scribble it freehand or type it much neater
I'll make it elongated, wider, even shorter
Your personal poem will be tailored to order!
I'll write it quite light, or I can be pensive
But I warn you, great thoughts are rare and expensive —
It takes time and effort to cogitate deeper
So take my advice and order the cheaper.

I'm a poet for hire, bonded, insured
My services can for a price be procured
And my work comes complete with a full guarantee
If the words all wear out, I'll re-write them for free!
So take my advice, use a hired wordslinger
No one need know you're retaining a ringer
Heck, that's how I get all the poems that I claim
I buy 'em wholesale, and just tack on my name!

Now you did not truly deduce, think or gather
That I would waste *my time* composing this blather?

A LETTER TO SANTA

© Johnny Johansson Yarrowonga Vic.

Please farva Crismas, I want ta orda some fings,
Now dont'cha fergit — an make sure that ya brings
A new mota car — a yot an a 'ouse,
Wif millyuns a dolla's, plus lotsa fings frouse.
A beaut moter bike, wif petrol in it,
A Melbin Cup winna, wif bridle an' bit.
A farm wif grouse cattle, grown choox an' a pig,
A fifty poun' diamon', all sparkly an' big.
A great Crismas stockin' all fulla beaut stuff,
While a 'undred poun' puddin' jist won't be a nuff.
A reel big fat turkey, sum ham an' a duck.
Great heaps a cool drinks, loaded up, on a truck.
Orr yeah, Farva Crismas, if ya 'ave enny more room,
Could ya bring fer me muvva a buckit an' broom.
Now don't fergit Dad, 'cos 'e's works very 'ard,
A nice pick an' shovel, fer out in the yard
Then, fer our dear teacha', the book, Markee de Sades
An' please Farva Crismas, could ya dose it wif Aids!
An' fer that rotten tuff freddy, wot beats up on our
class
A flamin' good hidin' wif a kick in the arze!
Now, all tha small children. Lotsa fings free,
Give 'em wot ever, but, don'tcha miss me.
You'se 'ave a grouse Crismas, ya missus an' elves,
Why, good luck ter ya all — an' look afta ya selves.
Now all a tha people, I wish 'em all joy,
I luv ya Saint Niklus! Frum the worlds bestest boy.

LONGYARD POETS

Tim McLoughlin grew up with poetry, but it was only a few years ago that he realised there was an audience 'out there for poetry', and became a regular performer up and down the Hunter. He has also competed successfully at Tamworth's Fireside Festival and at The Imperial Hotel during Tamworth's Country Music Festival, and at the Yarns Night during Scone's Horse Festival. He enjoys doing an occasional radio spot on ABC's 2UH, has produced one cassette of bush poetry... *"Not Too Bad"* and is working on another... *"Not Too Bad At All"*. Performing for a live audience is what he enjoys most, keeping alive the poems of long ago, as well as those of our modern day bush poets. Tim has been know to pen the odd line and occasionally break into song.

Greg Scott is a long-time muso who was inspired to write a poem for a friend turning fifty, and found he

DAYS THAT USED TO BE

© Bob Kane Rutherford NSW 1996

You may wonder why I'm sighing,
As I sit alone tonight,
You may ask me why my eyes are showing tears.
I am reading faded letters
From a dim and distant past
And I strive to bridge again those bygone years.

Just country kids, we roamed the plains together,
Too young to know the roads ahead,
Of horses slow and fancy talking gamblers
And wars that left us sad and old instead.

I've travelled many miles, seen many places,
But childhood memories still crowd my mind.
Where are you now, familiar faces?
The answers here perhaps I'll never find.

Are you contented, Mates, or sad and lonely?
Do you tramp the roads, or dwell in luxury?
Perhaps you wish the old times were returning
And yearn to live the days that used to be.

Old memories, they seem to ever haunt me,
Why do we brush aside the golden years?
In visions now, I turn these timely pages,
As I sit alone with misty tears.

Ghostly visions in my dreams of those asleeping
On foreign shores so many miles away,
I'd give the world to see those friendly faces,
But dreams will never bring them back again.

couldn't stop at one. Seems to come up with his best lines whilst ploughing so he is reluctant to give up his day job.

The resulting poems have won him a host of awards, including those at the Imperial and Oasis Hotels during Tamworth's Country Music Festival, at the Scone Horse Festival's Yarns Night, and airplay on Mike Carleton's ABC radio programme during the 1997 Royal Easter Show, broadcast for the last time from Moore Park. Greg joins Tim to entertain audiences with a blend of traditional and modern poetry, and foot-tapping music.

Sally Mitchell began her career as a poet comfortably performing a poem a week to an eager group of school children. Since then she has experienced the adrenaline rush of performing, not quite so comfortably, in parks, pubs, clubs and at dinners; of busking and of live radio (remember that day you thought you heard Pam Ayres...); of competing, and winning at Scone's Horse Festival Yarns Night. Sally's debutante year is nearly over and she's fast becoming a seasoned trooper, but sing?

Find another Long-yard poet on page 12.

THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT

© Keith Ireland. Nth Rockhampton

It was the eleventh hour. I was really in a state.
Tomorrow's my wife's birthday and I forgot the date.
I'd been days out of the office, only just got back:
There, on my desk calendar, circled twice in black,
'Janet's birthday tomorrow. Don't forget!' it said.
If I don't get a present, I might as well be dead.

The Superstore stays open late. Maybe I could catch it.
She wouldn't speak to me again if I gave her just a Scratchit.
Out of the office, down the stairs, fast as I could go.
Raced across the parking lot, cursed others who were slow.
I reached the gift shop just in time. They'd even closed one door.
Down the aisle, across and back, I sped across the floor.

Why doesn't something stand right out and say, 'Come on! buy me.
I couldn't find a blessed thing in all that I could see.
What would she like? What does she need? Did she drop a hint?
I could see myself in the doghouse, maybe for quite a stint.
One shop assistant tapped her watch. The other gave me a glare.
But this was life or death to me so I wouldn't move from there.

I made another hurried search. The result was still the same.
With still no present in my hand, I had just myself to blame.
I couldn't buy just anything. She'd be sure to know.
It had to have some meaning. It wasn't just for show.
I left the store dejected. They closed the door behind me.
I slowly wandered down the street. Rock bottom you would find me.

I spent a really shocking night, wond'ring should I tell her.
Thought it best to put that off or maybe I'm just yellow.
I hardly slept a wink at all, things churning through my head.
I let her sleep in late so I, could take her 'breakfast in bed'.
My darling wife came through the door before I could take in the tray
'Happy Birthday, Love,' I blurted out, not knowing what to say.

She saw the breakfast all set out; couldn't be a better time.
I started to tell her about NO gift, when I heard the doorbell chime.
She opened the door and her face lit up. I'd never seen such a glow.
The courier had flowers on his arm and huge box tied with a bow.
He handed her the presents and a card on which was painted,
'To my darling wife with all my love'. My God! I nearly fainted.

Well! I was the King of the Castle; The bee's knees none the less
And I relished in the glory . . . but how was I saved from this mess?
When I arrived at work much later, it became abundantly clear.
The staff were in on the secret with grins from ear to ear.
There was a note on my table, tied with the same sort of frill,
'Knew you'd forget so we helped. But YOU have to pay the bill'.

BREAKFAST ON THE SHOALHAVEN

Grady's Caravan Park at Burrier on the banks of the Shoalhaven River, was the venue for Burrier Country Music Treat on 15th. and 16th November.

The weekend drew a large crowd of country music fans to this very picturesque venue on the South Coast of NSW. Most visitors camped for the weekend and took advantage of the warm spring days to enjoy the talents of the Dead Ringer Band and the many local country artists who performed in a great concert on the Saturday night.

A Poet's Breakfast held on Sunday 16th. attracted a crowd of over a hundred people who were entertained in fine style by host for the breakfast Warren 'Arch' Bishop.

Perfroming with 'Arch' was Carl Leddy organiser of the recently held "Poetry under the Stars" in the beautiful Kangaroo Valley; Mark Willers from Nowra, Chris McConachie, manager of Grady's resort and the ABPA's roving reporter, Maureen Garner who was visiting from the Mid North Coast.

The local Rotary Club provided a beaut breakfast for the assembly, many of whom commented on the quality of the performances.

All proceeds from the weekend were donated to support the Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital Building Fund and the Melanoma Foundation.

Originally Vivian Sawyer was to host the Shoalhaven event, but was taken ill at the last minute, missing out on all the fun. It is hoped that Vivian recovers soon and gets back on the road again. Good on ya Viv!

*An Aussie booking in to an Irish Hotel was asked if he wanted a room with a bath, or one with a shower. Mindful of his pennies, the Aussie asked what was the difference. The receptionist informed him that 'You stand up in a shower!'

I ponder on the heroes, the best that they have done.
Eureka and Pat Lalor where our freedom first began.
South Africa where 'Breakers'* final freedom song was sung
Barton, Deacon, Fisher. How we need such men today.
The gameness of Ned Kelly would not even go astray
with that pioneering spirit that showed us all the way.

In the scheme the poet's dream has always played a part
Henry Lawson introduced the working class to art
Banjo wrote a stirring note for every eager heart
There came the pen of Dennis then the teach us how to grin
Ogilvie chipped in to see us take it on the chin
Judith Wright, a sheer delight and others of her kin.

Suddenly my memory is shaken by a gale
Who could stay in Nippon's way? They surely must prevail!
Then our militia — heroes all, held that Kokoda trail.
Australia's fate — right at our gate, into the breach they strode
John Curtin with a wiser plan that showed another road
instead of 'Empire', USA would come to share the load.

In every field, endeavours yield a new Australian name
Olympics, Art and Industry, they find their way to fame
Literature and Medicine, it still remains the same
Yet out of all my heroes, from my heroes memories
Only Christ and Weary Dunlop forgave their enemies
I leave it to the reader who may choose from one of these.

*Breaker Morant.

DOWN BOY

© "Blue the Shearer" Wellington NSW (aka Col Wilson)

Mum's old dog had caught the mange, this faithful family pet
Was losing all his lovely fur, so she took him to the vet.
The vet prescribed a tablet to give the dog that night.
He told her not to force it down, in case the dog should bite.

So she put it in a sausage, put the sausage on a plate,
Put the plate inside the fridge, and went off to the fete.
Dad came home from shearing. He was hungry, tired and hot.
He saw this corker snorker, and he scoffed the bloody lot.

When Mum came home from town, she said,
"Now where's your father at?"

We found him underneath the tank, sleeping on the mat.
When she woke him up, she said, "What's the matter dear?"
"Bugged if I know," he said. "Just scratch behind my ear."

When she found the sausage gone, my Mum near threw a fit.
She rang the vet and told him, and he chuckled quite a bit.
He said: "He should be O.K., if he's not already died.
Pat him gently on the head and tie him up outside.

Dad's about recovered now, but sometimes in the park,
He'll lie around, and scratch himself, and race about and bark.
And it gets a bit embarrassing when he's out with Mum and me.
Whenever nature calls, he cocks his leg against a tree.

Longyard Poets

Tony Parry was told a good yarn way back in '94, and with the Scone Horse Festival Yarns Night coming up, he set to work to retell it inverse form. The result was *"The Suitcase and the Cat"* and with ink not even dry on the paper, he proceeded to claim the award for the best original recitation that year. Tony continued to write and repeated the win the following year. In the last twelve months he has really swaggered onto the performance stage (in his high-heeled riding boots), conquered park, pub and club and has been a finalist at the Imperial Hotel during the Country Music Festival. There is no record of him being a singer as such.

Ray Essery as always will be on hand to dazzle the audience with his home-spun yarns and verse during January. He has certainly come a long way since his initiation in 1993. Many new 'pomes' have been 'wroten' by the 'Mullumbimby Bloke' since then, many stages have been crossed and many microphones have been altered, adjusted, twisted and screwed during that time. Tales of his past dairying days, his experiences as a trotting driver and general bugging about as a lad on the farm, from *'The First Time I Did It'* to the *'Opening of the Show'*, Ray is a laugh a minute. A favourite with Longyard audieces, Raymond has a unique simplistic style of delivery which can leave the listener in raptures long after he has left the stage.

Other poets gathering at the Longyard in January will be **Bob Magor** of Myponga in SA. Bob won the coveted Bronze Swagman Award for Bush Verse earlier this year with his poem *"The Cooper Coming Down"*. Bob is a seasoned performer, has travelled widely and has published three books with another soon to be released.

The 1996 Australian Champion Bush Poet, **Milton Taylor** will be returning as well. Milton covers a wide area of Queensland and New South Wales each year attending festivals and taking the bush poetry 'message' school-children from the Gulf Country to the Snowy, as well as spending a season at *'Banjo's Outback Theatre'* in Longreach, performing verse, telling stories, shearing sheep and generally entertaining Coach travellers and tourists alike. Milton has a book and cassette of his work.

A GRANDMOTHER REMEMBERED

© Cecilia Kane Rutherford NSW

With gentle hands and smiling eyes
She greeted us each day,
We had a sense of worth, when...
"Come in, my dears!" she'd say.

Her rooms just glowed with lovely things,
Work of her busy hours,
Tapestries, crocheted rugs and mats,
Cushions, soft chairs and fresh flowers.

Her kitchen was a Mecca of bottled delights,
Which mingled the aromas of jam,
With the hot spice of pickles and Sunday roasts
Billy tea and the fragrance of ham.

Her home was the place where hurt feelings were
soothed
And injured limbs band-aided,
Where the emollient of love smoothed troubled souls
When spirits were dull and jaded.

Out in her garden amongst the flowers,
Is a place we remember her well,
In a frame of roses and a mist of vines,
Midst the summer stock's heady smell.

She did not have a fortune
To leave us when she died,
But a memory of the love and peace
She dispensed at her warm fireside.

And the coin of love she expended on us
Was minted in the depths of her heart,
But she gave it so freely that every child
Received a generous part.

She is gone, little Gran of the smiling eyes,
But we pass the inheritance on
And her loving ways and kindly acts
Are repeated like a well-loved song!

CAPRICORNIUS STUPIDIUS!!!

If you are ambitious,
And treat the 'plebs' with scorn,
There isn't any doubt at all.
You're a Capricorn.
You go through life quite sad of face,
Looking very serious,
It's hard to tell if Capricorns
Are normal or delirious.
You need to lighten up a bit,
Otherwise you'll bore us,
So seek some happy company.
That rules out a Taurus.

(Dec. 23 — Jan 20).

'Blue the Shearer'

Ask a friend to join
**The Australian
Bush Poet's Association Inc.**

\$ 25.00

January 1 to December 31

Better still —
buy a subscription as
a

Christmas Gift.
Send a letter to Olive
and
let her do the rest.

HELP INCREASE OUR MEMBERSHIPS

DEADLINE — NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER — 8TH. JANUARY 1998.

Send copy to P.O. Box 16 Canowindra NSW 2804 or Fax. 02 6344 1962

Thank you to the following contributors to this month's Newsletter:

Ron Selby - Author Unknown (Cousin to Anon.) - Robert Raftery - Max Jarrott
Beth Vinecombe-Bashford - Dick Warwick - Keith Ireland - Roy Briggs
Maureen Garner - Cecilia Kane - Merv 'Bluey' Bostock - Carmel Dunn - Liz
Banting - Keith Douglas Jnr. - Joe - Mark Kleinschmidt - The Goondiwindi
Grey - Col "Blue the Shearer" Wilson - Helen Avery - Valerie Reid - Ellis
Campbell - Ted Webber - Col Newsome - Harry Bowers - Johnny Johansson -
Bob Kane - Len Dawson - Mark Thompson - Grahame Watt - Geoffrey Graham
Bob Miller - Graham Brunkhorst - Greg Young



Judith Hosier

POET'S CALENDAR. EVENTS AND COMPETITIONS.

- Dec. 30 **Tumbarumba Bowling Club.** Tumbarumba NSW. Snowy Mountains Bush Poetry Club Championship Recitals.
- January 11th **Poets in the Pub — V Wall Tavern** Wellington Drive Nambucca Heads 2.30 pm. Featuring Warren 'Arch' Bishop. Contact Maureen Garner. Ph/Fax 02 6568 5269
- January 22 - 24 **Tamworth Poetry Group Bush Verse Competition.** Imperial Hotel Tamworth Entry forms from Tamworth Poetry Group P.O. BOX 1164 Tamworth 2340
- January 24 **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING — AUSTRALIAN BUSH POET'S ASSOCIATION INC.** St. PETERS SCHOOL TAMWORTH. 2.30 PM SHARP.
- January 31 Closing date. The Bronze Swagman Award for Australian Bush Verse. See article this issue.
- Jan 31 **Bungendore NSW Country Muster.** Elmsleigh Homestead — Bush Poets Breakfasts, Workshops
- Feb 1. All welcome. Frank Daniel — Blue the Shearer — Bobby Miller. Ph. Toni Flanagan. 02 6238 1651
- Feb. 21 **Poets in the Pub.** Bowra Hotel High St. Bowraville. Featuring Bush Poet and Folk Singer Russell Churcher. Contact Maureen Garner 02 6568 5269
- Feb. 28 Closing date. **Central Coast Poetry Society's Henry Kendall Poetry Competition — 1998** SSAE to D. Theodore, Competition Secretary, C.C. Poetry Society, 57 Empire Bay Drive, Kincumber. 2251
- March 26 - 29 **Martis Canowindra Hot Air Balloon Fiesta.** Poet's Breakfast 8 - 10 am Saturday. Enquiries to Frank Daniel. Ah. 02 6344 1477. Fax 02 6344 1962. Biggest Hot-air Balloon festival in Australia.
- Easter 98 **Winton Celebrations** See ad. page 2.
- Easter 98 **N.O.P.A. Longreach Q.** See ad. Page 2
- April 12 **Bush Poetry Performance Competition and Concert.** V Wall Tavern Nambucca Heads Admission \$10.00 incl. Brunch. Contact Maureen Garner Ph/Fax 02 6568 5269
- May 9-10 **Warwick Bush Week Bush Poetry Competition.** Sat. 9th. All day performance poetry competition — Sun. 10th. Poets in the Park. Written competition. Entries close 31-3-1998 Ph. Max Jarrott 07 4664 1115 or 07 4664 1606
- June 1998 **Mt. Isa Writers Association and Mt. Isa Folk Club.** Mt. Isa Inaugural Bush Poets Festival in conjunction with the Top Half Folk Festival Queens Birthday Weekend. Celebrating Mt. Isa's 75th Anniversary. Phone 077 435 201 Fax 077 433 386
- Regular monthly events.** If you happen to be passing through these areas, tell 'em Joe sent ya!
- 1st. Sunday **Poets Get-together—** Traders Restaurant - Mt. Coolum Qld. (074) 491 991
Bundanoon Hotel Bundanoon NSW Jennifer Compton (048) 836 005
Pine Rivers Camp Oven Breakfasts. Petrie Q. Ph. 07 3260 5506 - 07 3886 1552
Bush Poets 9am - 12n. Victoria Hall. 179 High St. Fremantle W.A. Ph. 9335 3384
Aroma's Restaurant & Coffee Shop. Toowoomba Q. Ron Selby (076) 301 106
'Interludes' Ashfield Civic Centre, Sydney — Joye Dempsey 02 9797 7575
North by Northwest Poetry and Folk Club. North Ryde. Ph. 02 9887 1856 — 02 9874 7653
Pine Rivers Camp Oven Breakfasts. Petrie Q. Ph. 07 3260 5506 - 07 3886 1552
Poetic Folk — Rooty Hill School Of Arts. Sydney — Arch Bishop (02) 9625 7245
The Monaro Leisure Club. 7 pm. Vale St. Cooma. Bush Poetry and Country Music.
Grafton 'Live Poets' 7.30 pm. Roaches Family Hotel. Victoria St Grafton.
Queanbeyan Bush Poets. Phone David Meyers Ph. 06 286 1891

ADVERTISE YOUR FESTIVAL OR OUTING — LET EVERYONE KNOW ABOUT IT



Neil Carroll



Carolyn White



Sally Mitchell

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

(Author unknown)

"We met, we married a long time ago,
We worked long hours, wages were low,
No telly, no radio, times were hard.
Just a cold water tap and a walk up the yard.
No holiday abroad, no carpets on floors,
We had wood on the fire, we never locked doors.
Our children arrived (no Pill in those days).
And we brought them up without State aid.
No valium, no drugs and no LSD.
We cured our pains with a good cup of tea.
But if you were sick you were treated at once,
Not "fill in this form and come back next month."
No vandals, no muggings, there was nothing to rob,
In fact you were rich with a couple of bob.
People were happier in those far off days,
Kinder and caring in so many ways.
Milk-men and paper-boys would whistle and sing
And a night at the flicks was a wonderful thing.
Oh, we all had our share of troubles and strife
But we just had to face it, for that was life.
But now I'm alone and look back through the years,
I don't think of the bad times and trouble and tears;
I remember the blessings of home and love,
We shared them together and I thank God above.

BOOK LAUNCH AT NANANGO

Local poets Roy Briggs and Liz Banting launched their latest works recently at Virgil's Tucker Bag, Nanango.

Liz was on hand to sign her first work, *'The Shadows and the Substance'*. *'The Trackrider Bush Poems'* is the fifth volume released by Roy Briggs. They say their aim is to please their readers with bush poems, prose, novels and short stories.

In his introduction, Virgil Smith said Liz and Roy were regular supporters and have recently moved into the art of publishing novels so they have total control from concept through to the completed product ready for sale.

Mayor Cr. Reg McCallum launched the two books and wished the authors well in their sales and future writings.

The books are now available by writing to

Roy Briggs or Liz Banting

c/- P.O. Box 335,

Kingaroy Q 4610

'Trackrider Bush Poems' (volumes 1 to 5)

\$15.50 pp

'Neverending Adventure Series' \$16.50 pp

'The Shadows and the Substance' \$15.50 pp

THE ONE WHO WATCHES

(in memorium, Hugh Mullins)

© Carmel Dunn (13) Warwick Q

I was only two years old
When My Grandad cried
"This youngster is now old enough
Its time she learnt to ride"

So ride I did as Grandad said
Through many falls and tears
The memories of those happy times
Keep drifting through the years.

Yes, Grandad was my tutor
He'd guide me on my path
He'd watch to see I wasn't hurt
And together we would laugh

Through years of joy and happiness
With Grandad by my side
But then one day when I was nine
I was told that Grandad died

My life was not the same from then
Although I soldiered on
Mum and Dad were always there
But Grandad now, was gone

Some say there's angels out there
That guard you day and night
Grandad must be my Guardian
He'll make sure I'm all right

He'll watch me, like he used to
From a better place maybe
And when I win and do well
I know that he can see

But now I'm growing older
No more a little girl
I'm sure Grandad is proud of me
To see my life uncurl

But no more is my burning need
So I'll set my Grandad free
Now I'll say goodbye with a final thanks
To the one that watches me

Winning entry — Junior Section Charleville 1997



THE MAD DROVER

© Colin Newsome Glen Innes 1970

Down the dusty stock routes winding towards the Border Gates
Old Jack, a judge of character 'di-ag-nosed' his mates.
He could read most sun-tanned drovers, like the pages of a book,
But Slim was hard to fathom, with his strange and haunted look.

Like a man who'd met with something that very few had seen,
Or travelled on a journey, where no one else had been.
Who feared someone or something, who'd accosted him before,
And he waited there in silence, with tragedy in store.

One night beside the campfire, while the cattle were at rest,
And the blood-red sparks were flying on a cold wind from the west.
With the full moon rising over the ribbon of the range,
Jack asked Slim had he travelled through a country wild and strange.

Slim looked sadly at the embers in a yellow blaze and red,
Glanced fearful at the rising moon, and shivered when he said
"A journey once I travelled that my steps would not retrace
For all the souls in Hell tonight! Or all the human race.

"Down the roadways hedged with hunger and cobble-stoned with care
'Twas fear, and death and danger that kept the toll-gates there.
"Weird shapes and clutching fingers, and terrors best untold
Sometimes I dread the morning for my pathway might unfold.

To the bridge of desperation o'er the brooklet of despair
Kindness, cheer and comradeship, are total strangers there."
Here Curl, the skiter, rudely interrupted to relate
How he rode the Warwick Outlaw, till he dropped dead at the gate!

The drovers sought their bed-rolls 'neath the branches overhead,
While a dingo pack howled mournful like a message from the dead.
When the boss was riding dog-watch as the dawn crept o'er the range
The cook awoke the drovers and said Slim was actin' strange

Slim's face revealed the madness that accounted for his fear
He was droving stranger cattle down the stock routes of the Queer

WIFE SWAP

George was walking down the street
When a good old friend he chanced to meet
Said George to Tom, "G'day there mate!
I haven't seen you much of late!"
Said Tom to George "I've had some strife
And I got this greyhound for my wife"
"Well half your luck" George doffed his hat,
"I wish I could make a trade like that!"

© Joe

BACK FROM THE DEAD

Last months request for information regarding the whereabouts of 'the late The Jolly Swagman', Campbell Irving, has resulted in a number of calls determining his whereabouts at various times. As mentioned in November one of his last sightings was at Victoria's Maldon Festival, and three more calls have verified this. Since then he was reported as being at Majors Creek on the Great Divide south of Braidwood early in November.

Other reports to hand had him in the Australian Capital Territory, Canberra, followed by his re-appearance in the 'Big Smoke' Sydney.

Roger Climpson would have been overwhelmed by the replies to our 'missing person' request for information, 'Australia's Most Wanted' doesn't get as sharp a response.

Campbell has since called our President and made his whereabouts known. By his itinerary which arrived later in the mail, it is a wonder he doesn't need a secretary. Keep up the good work, Campbell, and keep in touch.

Further news about Campbell can be found in this issue. He will now keep in touch so that we will not be disappointed should he happen to 'pass away again' without letting us know in advance.



Bob Kane



Reid Begg

Don

THE NIGHT RUSH.

© Liz Banting Kingaroy Q

Did you ever see hear the thunder of hoof on hollow ground
Of cattle spooked to running by a trembling, rumbling sound?
Their eyes all wide with fear and their nostrils spouting steam,
Like thunder, hear them coming, like a rushing, racing stream.

On they rush, their blazing eyes not seeing where they go,
Some fall, by foot in hole and trampled by the flow
Of hooves that number thousands, and there are forced to stay;
Some rise to run, but cannot some, and broken-legged lay.

The trusty steeds are mounted, all fretting to be gone,
Sturdy mounts and riders, fearless, true and strong.
At lightning speed, like rushing wind, those mounted now must ride,
To turn the beasts, those steeds must push against the lathered hides.

With muscles taut, like iron straps, and legs like hardened steel
They push and strain, they don't give up, to make the leaders wheel.
The rush is fast, the push is hard, the pace begins to ease;
The steeds have won the battle, the victory theirs to seize.

The job is done, at walking pace, the beasts now turned around
And led back to their resting place across the hollow ground.
All froth and foam, the steeds now stand, brave and sturdy fellows,
Their nostrils flare, they take their breath, like puffing Smithys bellows.

All is still, and quiet lays the cattle bedded down,
The crackling fires circle them, lit there to keep them bound.
Settled now and resting, their trembling fear now gone,
All quieted now by gentle tones, as the night watch hums a song.

As first new light of morning shows, the weary riders mount,
For where last night the rush was run, the losses they must count.
Together strays are gathered, the lame and injured too,
And pleased were they that they did see the losses were but few.

Pull up camp, they must be gone, a long way yet to go;
With tired men, both horse and beast, the going will be slow.
But go they must, and keep a pace, their destination gain,
Before the season soon to come, of heavy drenching rain.

Before the rising waters, and the mud that bogs the track,
For if it comes before they're gone, there'll be no turning back.
The yards are reached at wane of day, and heavy laden cloud
Lays across the darkened sky, like a black and misty shroud.

With cattle safely yarded, the counting now all done
Open the gates, let them through, in pastures let them run.
For sturdy steeds, a job well done, all have reached their crest;
Let them free that they enjoy a long and well earned rest.

A gentle stroke, a loving pat, a nuzzle, nicker too;
Loving masters, faithful friends, all quietly say 'adieu'.

- * Life is not one damn thing after another. It is one damn thing over and over.
- * Crocodiles teeth should be more precious than pearls. Anyone can open an oyster.
- * There's no doubt about it. Women are here to say.
- * Warning: Be careful at an auction sale. You might get something for nodding.
- * No man goes before his time, unless the boss leaves early.

SOCIAL DOWNS



© Keith Douglas Jnr.
Dipvale Station, Cloncurry Q

I went to town the other day
To pick up a man or two,
With mustering about to start
And a plant of horses to shoe.
I rang the Agents early
To put the word around;
They mentioned men were hard to find
Because of 'Social Downs'.

I'd never heard of 'Social Downs',
But we'd always paid the best,
And our tucker and conditions
Were far above the rest,
So I headed for 'The Local',
Mentioned two good blokes I knew -
The barman with a grin replied,
"Mate, they're with 'Social' too!"

"They kick their camp off early!"
said, a little annoyed.
"Seems they must pay alright --
They got those better boys!"
"Oh, the money's much the same,
said the Barman with a grin,
"But on 'Social' they can drink all night
And not get up till ten!"

"Hey! There's a man -- Bob McCoy!
Hey Bob, you want some work?
They missed a good bloke here!"
I said with a bit of a smirk.
"No thanks, Boss!" Bob replied
As he slinked away.
"On 'Social' don't have to work!
Each fortnight, still get paid!"

By now I wasn't quite as calm....
I could feel my temper heating.
"Who runs a place like that?" I yelled.
The Barman yelled back, "Keating!"
"Well, he'll go broke! He's gotta!
You just wait and see!"
"Oh, I don't know!" the Barman drawled,
"He's backed by you and me!"

- * Between the truth and fiction
There lies a world of fact,
and the path that goes between the two
is the gentle path of tact.
- * An ounce of 'keep your mouth shut'
Is worth a pound of explanation.

W.A. BUSH POETS AND YARNSPINNERS

Renowned Bush Poet Carmel Randle of Preston on the Darling Downs will be guest of the WA Bush Poets during December.

Keith Lethbridge opened up the Bi-Centennial Shed, Armadale, on the evening of December 12th for the group to provide a warm welcome to Carmel. A barbeque followed by yarns, music and bush poetry kept everyone busy until late in the night.

The previous gathering of poets at the Bi-Centennial Shed was arranged to meet South Australian Bush Poet Bob Magor.

The W.A. Bush Poets and Yarnspinnners Association was formed on a wet, cold windy night in July 1996 with thirty eight enthusiastic poets, would-be poets and just plain interested folk meeting in the Tivoli Hall Applecross to discuss the formation of an organisation.

The group had already conducted two very successful events on Wireless Hill in Ardross and now thought it was time to form a structural association, opting for the inclusion of Bush Poets in their name as against merely Poets.

Heats of the WA bush poetry competitions are under way, the first held on October 3rd in the Riverview Room of the Raffles Hotel at Canning Bridge. The four performers recommended to go on to the finals on Australian Day 1998 were Peter Capp, Leigh Mathews, Val Read and Bill McAtee. Peter Capp and Keith Lethbridge were the successful yarnspinnners gaining a place in the finals.

The second heat held on November 7th was compered by Kel Watkins who set the tone for the evening in a casual but constrained manner, exhibiting the talent and skills that have earned him the title of Australian Champion Yarnspinner for two consecutive years after a long stint as a professional story and yarnspinner throughout the English speaking world.

Peter Nettleton went into the finals of the yarnspinning on this occasion. Heat winners in the bush poetry were Jeff Swain, Joan Macneall, Chris Sadler and Beth Scott.

They meet on the first Sunday of each month at the Victoria Hall, 179 High St. Fremantle. Make a phone booking to secure tea, scones and snagga brekky. Phone the Secretary, Lorelie Tacoma 9335 3384

THE OLD FARM UTE

© Ted Webber Narellan Gardens

I'm just a pile of junk now, lyin' rustin' in the yard,
Stuck behind the dunny, paint-work scratched and marred.
Me windscreen is all broken, the chooks crap on the floor,
A dog sleeps on me saggin' seat, and me mudguards are no more.
But once I was magnificent, a right real royal sight,
Bouncin' down the old farm road and givin' 'orses fright.
Me bonnet was well polished and me odoors were painted blue,
Me wheels were all awirlin' and me tyres spankin' new.

And up on top of me radiator, a silver lady stood,
Her pointy things thrust forward, she sure made me look good.
But now life seems to pass me by, me workin' days are done
And I just sit her day-dreamin', and rememberin', in the sun.

I well remember that first day, when standin' on the floor
Of Jimmy Smith's motor garage, while kids looked on in awe.
Me old boss wandered in and said, "How's yer goin' Jim?
I'm thinkin' to buy a motor ute, and trade the old un in."

"Not fancy mind, not cost a lot, but a real damn good goer,
Just show us what yer got, then make yer prices lower."
Now Jimmy thinks, 'you bloody beaut, I've got a good'n here
I'll show him all the beat up heaps, then trade him up, no fear'.

So off they goes around the yard, walkin' here and there,
Liftin' bonnets, lookin' under, and checkin' engine wear.
Till Jimmy sez, "I'll tell yer what, this here's a fine new machine",
He points at me, the boss turns round, and I do a little preen.

Well, he looks at me, I looks at him, we both knows straight away,
That we was gonna be real good mates, in a very special way.
He kicks me tyres, rubs me paint and sits behind the wheel,
He honks me horn, flashes lights, and checks the gear-stick feel.

But he's actin' rather casual like, for he wanted none to see,
How he was fair filled with pride, at the thought of ownin' me.
So they haggled hard and talked a lot until a deal was done,
Then papers signed, load up Mum, and off for the old farm run.

But life is hard on a family farm, and luxuries are few
And each and every member must work to pay their due.
The boss had named me Bernie and he loved me like a son,
So I would never let him down, while jobs were still undone.

We rounded sheep, chased the cows, and sprayed the prickly pear,
We pulled the stumps, carted feed, and checked the rabbit snare.
We fought the drought, bore the heat and then the floodin' rains,
We mended fences, strained the posts, and harvested the grains.

Yound and strong and light hearted too, we worked day on day
To tackle all the many tasks to make the old farm pay.
But nothin' stays forever new, I lost my spic and span,
For time and work take their toll, on machines, and man.

But we battled on, ne'er shirked a task until the day arrived,
The family got together and said, that we were best retired.
They parked me here behind the loo and told him ease to takin'
Oh, they mean it well but never knew, how our hearts were breakin'.

I sees him almost every day, but he's not real sprightly now,
Feedin' chooks and pattin' dogs and checkin' on the cow.
But on sunny days and winter nights, when he stops behind the loo
And stands beside me in the quiet, I know, that he remembers too.

SOLACE

© Frank Daniel Canowindra NSW

Martha Mary Regan held her dying husband's hand.
Some forty years her senior, a proud and modest man.
For twenty years in wedded bliss he loved his Mary so —
This union saw a family — four sons were seen to grow.

The first three boys were big and strong, tall, solid and stout,
The fourth and youngest was a wimp, in looks he had missed out.
The old man cast a trusting eye towards his loving wife
And feebly whispered thanks to her for the good times in his life.

"But tell me — darlin' Mary, — — please lay it on the line.
That skinny little bloke of ours — is he really mine?"
Mary clasped his trembling hands then whispered in his ear,
"Yes my love, he is your son — rest assured and have no fear."

Old Regan closed his dimming eyes — life faded from his face,
Mary took a long deep breath and sighed, "Oh Saving Grace.
Thank God! He's gone with peace of mind, still with faith in me
Gone — and thank the Lord he didn't ask about the other three!"

CANOLA CROPS NEAR COWRA

© Murray Hartin 1997

Nature's colours can't be captured in their purity and glow
It's a thought that tortures artists, as only artists know
While the scene is rich and vivid in a rich and fertile mind
On the journey to the canvas something special's left behind
But I'll share with you a vision that will never go away
The canola crops near Cowra on a warm September day.

We headed out from Canberra for South West New South Wales
With the old colt Billy Rowlands fertilizing bushman's tales
And he's got a way of speaking that the country folk know well
"Colt, six weeks ago out here the place was dry as hell
But then we got the rain like I thought we bloody would
And colt, there's canola crops out here that are pretty bloody good."

As I absorbed the Old Colt's character the miles quickly passed
Laughter silenced silence and each yarn was his last
The countryside was lush and green, the wheat as thick as thieves
With the willows and the gum trees swaying gently in the breeze
But then came forth the vision that took my breath away
The canola crops near Cowra on a warm September day.

That dangerous hue of gold that alters minds and fathers dreams
Was oozing over fence lines, paddocks bursting at the seams
A patchwork-quilted countryside hypnotizing passers-by
A sunkissed magic melody composed by earth and sky
And as I go through life I'll remember all the way
The canola crops near Cowra on a warm September day.

- * Today's Update: Have a blast while you last.
- * Men are creatures who can wait three hours for a fish to bite
But can't wait fifteen minutes for their wives to dress.
- * If you worry about what people think of you, it goes to show that you think
more of their opinion than your own.



BUSH POETRY BY THE SEA

Nambucca Valley Country Music Club has added a Bush Poetry Performance Competition to its Inaugural Festival Programme on the Easter Weekend next year.

The V Wall Tavern in Wellington Drive Nambucca Heads will host the event on Easter Sunday, 12th April.

The Competition will be sponsored by the V Wall Tavern in conjunction with the Bowra Hotel in Bowraville.

Entertainment commences at 9am taking the form of a Poet's Brunch, admission being \$10.00 which includes light lunch. Entry forms available by return mail with SSAE to Secretary, Nambucca Country Music Festival, 2/8 Salamander Parade Nambucca Heads 2448.

Two Free Poet's in the Pub events have been arranged to introduce local communities to what is being hailed as one of the most popular live forms of truly Australian entertainment.

The V Wall Tavern will stage Poets in the Pub on Sunday 11th January at 2.30 pm led by ace reciter Warren 'Arch' Bishop, (Reciter of the Year, National Folk Festival 1997) with Traditional and Contemporary Bush Verse.

The Bowra Hotel will host the second Poets in the Pub on Saturday 17th February at 7.30 pm with the ever popular Russell Churcher, Poet and Folk Singer, performing. Russells previous visits to this pub have resulted in packed houses with patrons asking many times for his return.

Competition details from:
Maureen Garner. Ph/fax 02 6568 5269

Definitions.

Untouchables — People you can't borrow from.

Husband — A man of few words.

Fireproof — What you are, when you have something on the boss.

Mink — A tranquilizer for certain women.

BUCKJUMPERS TO BAR ROOM RECITERS

Old time and present day bronc riders (that's American) from all over Australia will compete for a record first prize of \$15,000 at Omeo Vic. on January 2nd, 1998.

The old-time buckjump (that's Australian) will be run with the pre-1960 saddlery and rules, and will be known as the Lance Skuthorpe Prize.

Old time rough-riders and Snowy Mountains Poets Norm Bradley and Neil Hulme have been invited to judge this event.

Following the rough riding the Snowy Mountains Bush Poetry Club will hold a 'Bar-room Yarns and Recitals'. Further information is available from Ron Connely. 03 5159 1384

WOOMERGAMA HOTEL

GET-TOGETHER

The Snowy Mountains Poets get-together at the Woomergama Hotel situated on the Hume Highway just north of Albury, on Sunday November 30 was a great success.

New member Barry Martin of Bungendore opened the show with Stan Coster's old song 'Catchin' Yellowbelly'.



Another Bungendorian, Max Love gave a good demonstration of yodelling. Max also proved he could mimic anything from a blowfly to a freight train.

From then on it was mainly bush verse.

A.B.P.A. Members noted at Woomergama were Johnny Johansson of Yarrawonga and Neil Hulme of Lavington.

The next Snowy Mountains Get Together will be at the Tumbarumba Bowling Club on December 30th. at 8pm.

FAREWELL ALBIE THATCHER

© Ellis Campbell Dubbo NSW

In flannel shirts and moccasins and *bowyanged dungarees disgruntled shearers stood beneath a clump of gidgea trees. In hush of dawn's awareness there - like ghostly silhouettes they shuffled dust with nervous feet and puffed an cigarettes. Displeasure lined their troubled brows and mutterings began — it seemed some problem new disturbed the mind of every man. The Warragloaming station sheep were mustered to the yard, but rumours that a strike loomed near caught shearers off their guard.

"I aint got no complaints at all" said burly Dan McGee, "the pay of fifteen bob a hundred's good enough for me. The others nodded in assent and growled within their beards while Mickey Markham flicked away his cigarette and sneered, "There's just one agitator here - as far as I have heard. That city bloke, as sure as hell, he's trouble - mark my word! He'll stir some others up, you bet, and cause no end of strife; we'll lose a heap of dough for sure if this galah runs rife."

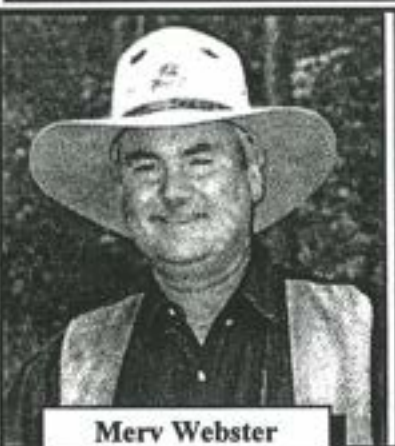
Then Porky Rolfe assumed a stand that broached on grave concern. "The Warragloaming sheep shear well and good cash we can earn. Who wants a bloody hold-up now, with Christmas nearly here? The breeding ewes and lambs look good and tallies we can shear. If Thatcher wasn't round the place the rest would be all right; his silky tongue can con a crowd and sway a meeting's might." Up stepped the one they called "the giant" - the bearded Slugger Zorrow. "The river's deep, the current's strong — he won't be here tomorrow."

Shear blades-clicked and shear-blades flashed - the white wool falling free and Warragloaming tallies equalled guns at Gibber Tree. And no one ever questioned Albie Thatcher's disappearance. Did he somehow get the message and lacked the perseverance and courage for advancement of his cause? None ever knew or cared to seek the truth of why the whinger had shot through. Perhaps he slipped away in darkness — nothing underhand? But Slugger Zorrow never gazed at Thatcher's vacant stand.

*Bowyangs. Straps worn beneath the knee of shearers' trousers.

This poem is based on an incident that actually happened in a large NSW shed around 1890. All names fictitious.

'Farewell Albie Thatcher' was the winning poem in the Henry Lawson Diamond Shears competition, Longreach 1997.



Merv Webster



Kelly Dixon

I CAN'T REMEMBER THEM ALL

© Roy Briggs Kingaroy Q

I ain't got the time, as I once penned a rhyme
in a previously written bush poem.
One rushes here and then rushes there,
and don't even get time to know 'em.

The verses I write through the day and night,
have numbered far too many.
I try to recite with all of my might,
but I just can't remember any:

I write down of this and I jot down of that
and I print them all out in a book.
And I wonder why I even bother to try,
cos I ain't even got time to look.

I judge a bush poem and hope that they know 'em,
cos a bushman I'll always be.
But I can't recite, though I try day and night
to remember the words that I see.

Some gyrate on stage, with words hard to guage,
and the audience barely hears it.
If that's performing, I'll not be conforming.
I'll just read it out as I see it.

Words come out fast and I wonder they'll last
the distance to even get through it.
What sense in learning words that are churning
and they did claim that they really knew it.

Jumble words up like they're gonna erupt,
is their way if they don't really know it.
The public's the judge, and the poets should smudge
a good poem, cos they'll only just blow it.

Presentation, audibility, add some agility,
and if they don't know that, then they're lost.
Why bother to try, for the audience to buy
if they can't get their poem across.

I know when they go if it's going to flow
and I pick up the falws of the bush.
Get the audience involved as your poem unfolds.
Use your heart and your eyes without push.

Of course, I won't try, if it means I must fly
'round the stage like a ping-pong ball.
Too hard on the brain to go through that pain,
cos I just can't remember them all!

- * Does a bigamist mean a man has one wife too many,
when a man can have one wife too many and not be
a bigamist.
- * Good better, best. Never let it rest.
Till your good is better, and your better best.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

G'day!

I'm Campbell 'The Bushwackin' Swaggie' —
Reciter of Australian Bush Verse and Poet — now
celebrating eleven years of performing on the Folk
Club Festival Scene. My first happened at the
Kapunda Folk Club back in May, 1986.

As well as Folk Clubs Festivals, I have also
appeared at Country Music Clubs Festivals, Outback
Musters, Centenary Celebrations and State Schools in
all States except W.A and Tassie receiving media
coverage from newspaper, radio and T.V, especially at
the Waltzing Matilda Centenary Celebrations in
Winton Q. in 1995.

Over the years I have been successful gaining
finals status with both Traditional and Original
material, which I started penning back in 1987. At
bush verse levels I have also been runner up in three
different Traditional categories.

Campbell's career highlights are far too numerous
to mention but range from Re-enactments at Burra-
Port Wakefield, SA, in 1986. From Uluru and 'The
Alice' 1997, to Aboriginal Protest Rallies in Sydney's
Hyde Park 1988. He has covered Festivals from the
Children of Eureka in Ballarat to the Laura Aboriginal
Dance Festival in Cape York Peninsula.

In 1995 Campbell took part in the Commemorative
Swagman's 140 miles from Longreach to Winton
Walk — Won the Outback Muster Damper Making
Contest at Longreach the same year, (beat Marion
Fitzgerald and Billy Hay).

Known far and wide by so many, Campbell is a
regular on the bushking scene and is often found
outside the Post Office building during the Tamworth
Country Music Festival — winning the Peel Street
Buskers Competition in 1988.

He won the Imperial Hotel Bush Verse Traditional
section in 1989. He has also had wins in story telling,
busking and verse reciting at such places as the
Mapleton Yarn Festival, Poet Fairy, The Canberra
National, Kapunda Celtic Music Festival, and the list
goes on, and on . . . and on.

One of Campbells best known and most recited
poems may be found on page 27.

LIMERICK CORNER

A cattle ranch owner named Fred
Just purchased another homestead
Like butter on toast
He made it his boast
And called it his higher priced spread.

Dick Warwick

SOMETIMES ANGELS WEAR BLUE

© Mark Thompson. 1997

Blue lights flashing busily,
sirens cutting through the night,
Those who wear the blue are off again,
to stop another fight.
It's Friday night, the weekends here,
and the cops know all it's time,
For domestic violence, pub brawls,
and other assorted crime.

All those months spent at the academy,
don't really pave the way,
For the dramas and the traumas
that they'll encounter every day.
There'll be some who cannot handle it,
and will by the wayside fall,
While others, once they've retired,
can say they've seen and done it all.

Yes it takes a special character,
to do the job they do,
So I'm probably right in saying,
"Yes sometimes angels wear blue".
Whether helping people from a wrecked car,
that was stolen for a lark,
Or ranging through the bushland,
for a child lost in the dark.

These men and women of Australia,
do work that others can't face,
they see people at their greatest,
they see people in disgrace.
All these things plus many more,
they take calmly in their stride,
To fulfill a community service,
that rightly sees them fill with pride.

A lot of people whinge about the cops,
you know that's true,
But we all agree we can't get by,
Without these Angels dressed in blue.



Ron Stevens
Award winning
Poet from Dubbo

PLACES

© Ron Munro Kincumber

I know a place where bellbirds ring
Wee elfin bells in the treetops high;
Where currawongs and magpies sing
Their songs of joy 'neath an azure sky.

I know a place where the Tasman Sea
Rushes in to a beach of gold,
Where young bronzed gods ride fearlessly
Their plunging steeds like knights of old.

I know a place where cavemen dwell,
'Neath a ledge by Obiri Rock —
Frozen in time with the tale they tell,
By the hands of the Dreamtime clock.

I know a place by an alpine lake,
Where "Billy Buttons" grow,
And tiny daisies mass to make
The hillside look like snow.

I know a place where an old swing bridge
Shelters a big trout's lie,
In the Goodradigbee along the ridge
From a farm called "Coorabri"

I know a place where two bronze men
Stand guard by a plinth of stone;
Reminding the Nation of those times when
For a while we stood alone.

I know a place where a crystal creek
No longer has a name;
Now a concrete drain with a nauseous reek
Bears witness to our shame.

In all those places in the great outdoors,
Those places I hold so dear,
When our grandchildren know them, mine and yours,
Will the air be pure and clear?

WIDE HORIZONS

© Mark Kleinschmidt Longreach Q

Majestic those wild rugged summits,
How noble these gums reaching high,
But give me the far wide horizons
And contented I'll be when I die,
For I love the huge sky and the distance
Of the plains that roll to the west,
Though I see the beauty of elsewhere,
Wide horizons are all I request

Mark Kleinschmidt is the 1997 Australian Champion Bush Poet, and along with the 1997 Australian Ladies Champion Bush Poet, Helen Avery will be setting off for the USA in January for the Cowboy Poet's Gathering in Elko Nevada.

LET'S SING AGAIN TOGETHER

* Robert Raftery Picture Writer Brisbane. 28.11.97

Let's have a different Christmas from the ones we've had before,
Give the gifts that lift the spirit, not the tinsel of a store,-
Try to heal the rifts that happened when a friendship crashed and burned,
Quell the thoughts that crush a marriage when your back to her was turned.
At this time a quiet reflection on a friend whos lost his way,
Might construct a path around the things that block his right of way.

We have witnessed stark reminders that our lives at best are short,
In the pale of 'ninety-seven' and the shock waves she had wrought,
As we watched the people's princess pass from palace to the hearse,
And our hearts drummed out the chorus and the lines of Elton's verse.
And it seems we'll not be seeing him 'cept on Rocky Mountains High,
That the poet's gone to Heaven, where his fire lights the sky.

Let's seek to know that neighbour locked behind that six foot fence,
Re-invent the tribal virtues when we lived in trust, in tents.
Let's dispense with things that rankle us, let's smooth the scars of time.
'Let's sing again together' to the strains of 'Auld Lang Syne'.
Then let's bind our hands in friendship, let's recall the days of old,
When mateship was a mighty king who stacked his vaults with gold.

'Let's sing again together', feel our choirs throbbing roar,
Cut the curtain from the Crucifix and kneel upon the floor.
Then embrace the loved ones 'round us, offer thanks for gifts bestowed,
Give our kids that little compass with its hand fixed 'Open Road'.
For steeped in eastern culture 'midst its reams of written laws,
Lies the lore that says, 'Release it. If it comes back, it is yours.'

And with Christmas 'round the corner and its reindeers 'round the earth,
Let's gather by the stable and await the Saviours birth,
Feel that guiding star above us, see those kingly cameleers,
Sight the Christ child Baby Jesus, 'midst His earthly overseers.
Then contemplate the gift of giving . . . what a Father's love has done,
On a totemed tree on Calvary when He gave His only Son.

* Anyone who has been to Ireland or has known an Irishman or has drunk Irish Whisky or has celebrated St. Patrick's Day may consider himself an Irishman. Save yourself an overseas trip. Go to the Illawarra Folk Festival, Jamberoo in March. It always co-incides with St. Paddys Day — give or take.

The Illawarra Folk Festival is one of the foremost festivals in Australia — the biggest and best in New South Wales. The scene of the biggest Bush Poets Breakfasts in the country. Just park your car and walk everywhere. No hassles, great friendly atmosphere. From the Pub to the Wine Bar to the School of Arts to the Giant Marquee it all happens. Plenty of Guinness, Poets Brawls, More Guinness, Woolly Yarns, Guinness again, New Faces, More tucker than you can eat, Workshops, Music, Dancing from the best artists in the world. Make it a date in '98. Watch for more news.

GOLDEN GUMLEAF AWARDS

... AND THE FINALISTS ARE !!

Performance of the Year:

Ray Essery - "Old Man Noah"
 Frank Daniel - "A Grave Situation"
 John Williamson - "Veggie Bill"
 Bob Miller - "Raymond"
 Carmel Randle - "Seasons"

Book of the Year:

Kelly Dixon - "From a Drifter's Pen"
 Jim O'Connor - "Look Before You Leap"
 Mark Klienschmidt - "Westering"
 Ellis Campbell - "Eye Of The Beholder"
 Joy Baillie - "Let It Be Recorded"

Heritage Award:

Mark Klienschmidt - "Westering"
 Merv Webster - "In Days Gone By"

Joy Baillie - "Let It Be Recorded"
 Kelly Dixon - "From A Drifters Pen"
 Tom Penna - "A Bit Coasty"

Album of the Year:

Kelly Dixon: "From A Drifters Pen"
 Carmel Randle - "There and Back"
 Bob Miller and Carmel Dunn -
 "The Larrikin and The Lady"
 Peter Coad - "Bush Verse"
 Jim Haynes and John Kane,
 with Frank Daniel, Shanley Del,
 and Ray Essery
 "Dipso Dan and other Silly Buggers"

The Tenterfield Saddler presents
 The Golden Gumleaf

Bush Laureate Awards

Country Club Pavillion

West Tamworth Leagues Club

Tuesday 20th January 1998 2..00PM

Hosted by

NICK ERBY

Guest artists

Slim Dusy, John Williamson,
 Graeme Connors, Troy Cassar-Daley,
 Shanley Del, Darren Coggan,
 Jane Saunders, Ray Essery, Frank Daniel,
 Bob Magor

The Bush Kids — Ali Ryan, Paddy Ryan,
 Carmel Dunn and Dan Binns

TICKETS \$10.00 ea. Ph 02 6765 7588

Brought to you by Golden Gumleaf
 Enterprises, The Tenterfield Saddler,
 West Tamworth Leagues Club and
 Allied Artists and Event Services.

Dear Members,

Time has come for me to call for a rest. I have committed myself totally for the past three years to help foster and improve the Bush Poets Association as the premier association in Australia, as a publicity officer, Vice-President, President, and as President - Editor for the past year.

My feelings are that new blood must be waiting out there in the ranks and it is time that we had input from others.

It was never my plan for the ABPA Inc. to go open slather organizing festivals and competitions, but I feel that I have instilled a strong sense of unity in the ranks through example, as a performer and as President. As Editor I am sure that the newsletter in its present format has vastly improved. We need to keep the standard high.

Having done my best, I now urge members to consider seriously, replacements for my two positions in January.

I have a great backlog of personal commitments to catch up on, a million stories and poems to write, and not enough time to do it in. Thank you one and all for your great support, it has been tremendous. Best wishes and kindest regards,

Frank Daniel. 10.12.97

Kangarooing the Seat



NEW RELEASE

Award winning performance bush poet Terry Regan, has produced a cassette of 15 poems, nine originals, three of his fathers, two from Banjo Paterson and one by Eric Frazer. In a mixture of serious and humorous bush poetry, Terry captures all the expression and action which he puts into his performances. \$12.00 pp.

Terry Regan

282 Railway Parade
 BLAXLAND NSW 2774

M O R N I N G

SHOWS WITH JIM HAYNES

The 1998 Country Music Festival will see Jim Haynes hosting The Big Bush Brekky Show from 8am to 10am each day at the Bushman's Billabong, a specially designed new venue at the West Tamworth Leagues Club where there's plenty of room, plenty of parking, and an atmosphere created so people can just turn up, sit down and enjoy a great Aussie Brekky and a good laugh!

There'll be all the old favourites — the best of the Bush Poets and Yarnspinners in Australia, like Ray Essery, Shirley Friend, Frank Daniel, Milton Taylor, Bob Magor, Time McLoughlin, Greg Scott and more. The Bush Kids Brigade (Paddy and Ali Ryan, Carmel Dunn and Dan Binns) will have regular morning spots previewing their forthcoming ABC 'Bush Verse for Kids' Album.

Other regular features include The Billabong Singalong at 7.30am. Celebrity guests will be dropping in each morning to draw the Chook Raffles and perform. The Bushmans Billabong is the place for bush poetry, surprises and prizes, big name mystery guests, lotsa laughs and audience participation.

PROPS

AND POETRY

Bush Poet, Max Jarrett is keen to use his talents by offering to perform to audiences of school children in his area.

Using a variety of props, including a massive 'stuffed' goanna named 'Sandy' who lives in a hollow log by the Condamine River near Killarney in Queensland, Max's shows have been enjoyed by young and old alike.

Max resides in Killarney where with his wife Rita, they operate 'The Killarney Cafe'

Phone Max... 076 641 115



THOMMO AT MT.

TAMBOURINE

Long time bush poet and ABPA member, Mark Thompson, the man from everywhere, called to say that he is now resident Bush Poet, Story Teller, Boomerang-thrower, Whip-Cracker, Rouseabout and just about everything else at 'The Original Avocado' at Mt. Tambourine in Qld.

Mark says they have over 600 trees growing on the plantation. He extends an open invitation to readers travelling in that area to come and have a look, hear some great bush poetry, enjoy a cup of billy tea, some damper and syrup, and see what they have to offer.

Ph. 07 5545 3066

THE BANKS ARE MOVING IN

© Valerie Reid Bicton WA.

A neighbour telephoned today, distressed and overwrought
"I thought I'd ring to let you know my farming land's been bought."
"I didn't see a 'For Sale' sign. Why are you leaving Jim?"
"I've got no other option, mate. The bank's have done me in."

I heard a sob in ev'ry word, my heart near broke in two.
Jim's family had owned that land since eighteen nintey two.
They'd battled flood and fire and drought and never given in,
That same proud pioneering will was born and bred in Jim.

I felt the fear crawl in my guts. I had a mortgage too.
The payments o'er the fast five years were far between and few.
Like Jim, we too, have never known another way of life.
We'd all been born to farm the land, and bred to cope with strife.

When flooding washed our crops away and drowned our breeding flock
Jim had come, without demand, to help us save our stock.
And when the bush-fires threatened Jim, we all worked day and night
And cried with him o'er blackened plains, a truly dreadful sight.

You can fight a fire, fight a flood, but drought's a diff'rent thing.
If it goes on year in, year out, disaster it will bring.
Your feed dies off, the water goes, your stock gets thin and weak,
You shoot the bawling cattle first and then the starving sheep.

I couldn't say a word to Jim, his news had struck me dumb,
I knew that if I tried to speak a flood of tears would come
We'd known each other all our lives, like brothers we were now,
And he had telephoned to say that he was moving out.

I looked across the plains where hot mirages played,
I looked into the clear blue skies and once again, I prayed.
"Oh, God, please send us some relief, we've been to hell and back,
We've paid our penance, Lord, it's true, and we're about to crack."

We've had hard times and seen them through, my old mate Jim, and I,
We've watched our paddocks turn to sand and seen our dams go dry,
But now the banks are closing in and selling farmers out,
I reckon, that compared to them, our kinder foe's the drought.

HELP PLEASE

The Goondiwindi Grey, Merv Webster, of Bargara Q. requests the help of any reader who may know the origin and the rest of the words to the following verse.

Old Jack.

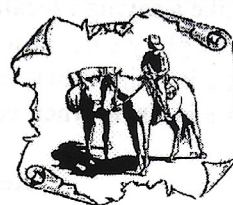
*The gold haired boy from the house had strayed
And none had seen him go.*

*'Till he wandered out on the grassy glade,
A mile from the house or so,
Where the steep creek bank a death trap made
And the grey tide churned below.*

Merv's address is

8 Hawaii Crt Bargara Qld. 4670

The Australian



Bush Poets Association

Fourth Annual

\$4.10 pp

from the Secretary
(See Secretaries notes)

WHO DUNNIT ?

Editors note: On Wednesday 3.12.97 at about 8.50 pm. I received a fax.

Unfortunately part of the letter was a bit 'skew-wiff' and illegible, with no evidence as to its origin. Sadly, I don't know who to acknowledge for the following poem by the late Tim O'Connor.

Tim O'Connor was a much loved folk musician who died from a heart attack at Penrith Hospital on 3.11.97.

Occasionally some complaints come to hand from dissatisfied competitors regarding their failures at various competitions, or their dissatisfaction with certain judges. Perhaps they should bear these words in mind.

RISING WHEN YOU FALL

by Tim O'Connor.

If you've lost the dream that mattered
And your world is upside down
And your plans and schemes are shattered
And there's not a friend around
And the ladder keeps on slipping
When you try to climb the wall
The glory's not in winning
It's in rising when you fall
It's in rising when you fall

Why look over your shoulder?
There's nothing there to find
You're wiser, and you're older
A good soldier never looks behind
If you feel too sad for crying
And the tears are locked inside
There's nothing left worth trying
And there's nowhere else to hide
Is your story just beginning?
Like a saying I recall:
The glory's not in winning,
It's in rising when you fall
It's in rising when you fall . . .

Rest in Peace, Tim!

'TIS CHRISTMAS O'LEARY!

© Neil McArthur Ballarat V.1997

'Tis Christmas, O'Leary, a time to be cheery,
Not drowning yourself in the mem'ries of home!
'Tis Christmas, begorra! and though we be poorer,
There's riches unknown in this pile of loam.

And not as a failure will I leave Australia,
I've come here for gold, and 'tis gold that I'll find!
With patience and caution we'll stumble on fortune,
We've the luck of the Irish, so never you mind.

'Tis Christmas O'Leary, no time to be teary,
For I miss my family as badly as you.
Keep the Emerald Isle, out of mind just a while,
And drink to our future and raise up your brew!

With windlass and bucket, we'll raise that great nuggett,
That seems to elude us in every shaft
But there's time left a'plenty, to rise to the gentry,
A miner needs patience to ply out his craft!

'Tis Christmas O'Leary, now don't look so dreary,
Drink to our Lord and the Ireland you grieve.
There's gold to be found in this Ballarat ground,
So let's drink some ale afore taking our leave.

Don't dwell in the clover, Eureka is over
Though many a digger is now in the ground,
Great works are to follow, so take that last swallow
A toast to the fallen, then buy the next round.

So here's to the gold and to Ireland the Bold,
And here's to the toil that makes us both cuss.
'Tis Christmas O'Leary, and though we be bleary,
The luck of the Irish is riding with us!

LOVE SONG © Helen Avery Longreach Q

I look at the hands on the table before me,
gnarled at the knuckles, and rough at the edge,
tanned to a leather, deep seamed and weathered,
strong in the fingers, calloused beneath.

These are the hands that handle rough fence posts,
dismantle an engine in black oil and grease,
wrestle with stock in hot sweat and bull dust,
fondle the work dog, and part the deep fleece.

Firm is their hold on the things they believe in,
they shade the eyes from the distance and sun,
shaped by the soil, and the earth that they work with,
they tilt back the hat when the day's work is one.

These are the hands that love me at night time,
gentle my fears, and tender my soul,
bring me to joy, and the sweet depths of passion,
walk by me side, and keep my life whole.



BANJO PATERSON FESTIVAL

The Banjo Paterson Festival in Orange will be held from the 27th. February to March 8th. 1998.

Part of the festival will be the Banjo Paterson Writing Awards in honour of Banjo Paterson, a great writer and a favourite son of Orange, with a competition to foster writing of prose with Australian content.

The competition will be judged to select, in the opinion of the judges, the best entries of poetry and prose with Australian content. First prize will be \$1,000.00, second \$400.00 and third \$200.00 in each of the sections of poetry and prose.

A third category has been recently introduced and a prize of \$500.00 will be awarded for the best comic poetry entry.

Entry forms are available from
The Banjo Paterson Festival Committee, P.O. Box 194 Orange NSW 2800.

Entries close last mail on 13th. February 1998.



LET DOWN

© Greg Young
Mt. Coolum Q

He caught her glancing at him
and he thought he understood,
She must have thought him handsome,
of course he knew she would.

Her lust could not be hidden
as she eyed below his waist.
He checked her over also till
she reached him. Then they faced.

She smiled at him so sweetly.
He returned a smile — as one.
And then she broke the silence with
"Yer bloody fly's undone!"

**Microsoft
Publisher**



OUR SPIRITUAL EARTH MOTHER (THIS ANCIENT LAND)

© Campbell Irving. 'The Bushwacking Swaggie' 21.2.1989

I think of our mother, she's the rock, stone and earth —
Our spiritual mother, who has raised us from birth.
Our spiritual earth Mother, this great ancient land.
She is the dreaming, she's the red dust and sand
All clothed in rainforests, she's the rock, stone and earth;
She's our spiritual earth mother who has raised us from birth.

In her valleys I see the red kangaroos in the dawn
As the birds in the trees sing a new day is born,
And too, the sun woman, as she crosses the sky
With her blazing fire sticks as each night passes by.
But I worship the dreaming, she's the rock, stone and earth;
She's our spiritual earth mother who had raised us from birth.

I see the lightning from her mountains, I hear thunder, see rain
Filling all of her rivers like the blood in our veins
I see the greenery of her rain forests, from the caves up so high
And the feasting of the animals. where the waterholes lie
In this land of our dreaming, she's the rock, stone and earth;
She's our spiritual earth mother who had raised us from birth.

I cherish our earth mother — the mountains — the trees
Both watching as we dance for her our corroborees
Our spiritual earth mother — the brolga — the emu
Who is dancing in the firelight to the didgeridu
A sacred love to her children, she's the rock, stone and earth,
She's our spiritual earth mother, who had raised us from birth.

In the night I see the moon and bright stars in the sky
And the glowing of red embers, as the fires now die
I hear the faraway call of curlew in the night
For the dearly departed in the new dawning light
Then I weeped for the children she raised and the children she bred,
Who's blood stains the dust sand now all covered in red!

Still I cry for her children, the sorrow — the pain —
And for their spiritual earth Mother who was broken for gain
By the rape of the forests and big iron drill
Of the mining corporations who are mining at will
In this land of our dreaming, she's the rock, stone and earth;
She's our spiritual earth mother who had raised us from birth.

In this land of our dreaming, she's the rock, stone and earth
She's our spiritual earth mother who had raised us from birth.



BUSH POETS — SURAT Q 1994

The first troupe of bush poets in Surat for the 70th. Anniversary of the last run of Cobb and Co. from Yuleba to Surat. (L to R.) Alan Palmer, Carmel Randle, Bobby Miller, John Philipson, Frank Daniel.

Front (L to R) Glenly Palmer, Ron Selby and Marion Fitzgerald.

THE SECRET'S OUT

© The Goondiwindi Grey



The vet he looked him up and down,
Then handed Ray a pill.
"This ought to do the trick" he said,
And handed him the bill.

The Mullumbimby bloke's new bull
Was looking kind of poor.
He shunned Ray's Jersey milking cows
And serviced them no more.

To buy this so called champion
Poor Ray had saved for years,
And seeing him the way he was
It near brought him to tears.

That pill it did the job alright
His vigour was now back.
Ray fed his mate a pill a day
To keep the bull on track.

The neighbour viewed the goings on
And sought the secret out.
Ray then revealed, "It's in a pill,
A miracle no doubt."

"So what does this pill look like then."
The neighbour sought a hint.
"It's big and white," Ray replied,
"And tastes like peppermint."



Ray thought — I'll ring the local vet.
To come this very day.
If any one can perk him up,
He'd surely know a way.

GURAKI (Wisdom)

© Ron Selby Drayton Nth. Q

There once was a land, not so long ago
Where progress and time stood still
And the air was fresh, clean rivers flowed
And the Aborigine roamed at will.

A timeless culture in a timeless land
A proud people with nothing to fear,
They were part of the soil, the sea and sand
And life was rich and clear.

But time goes by and life moves on
And now we're a civilized race,
A traditional culture is almost gone
Now look what we have in its place.

Is this a land where beauty abounds?
Where animals and people are free,
Do we treat the air, the sea and the grounds
With love like an aborigine?

Maybe we should rethink our way
And learn where we went wrong.
Listen to the things they have to say
For this is the land where they belong. . .

MOST PRECIOUS

© Graham Brunkhorst

Though the years are passing
And your hair is turning grey
You will always be our mother
Until your dying day
But to all our family
You're not really getting old
But more precious than an antique
Or a treasure chest of gold

MY MOWER

© "Blue the Shearer"

I have a motor mower, an abortion of a thing,
And my hate for it increases with the coming of each spring.
When first I bought my mower, the written guarantee,
Said it would start first time, with just one pull from me.

I fill it up with petrol. Make sure I've turned the switch,
Move the throttle. Check the choke, and try to start the bitch.
I pull it once. I pull it twice. I pull my sacred guts out.
Surprise. Surprise. It gives a cough, a wheeze, and then . . . it cuts out.

And if, by some stange accident, the bastard starts to run,
I race to cut the lawn, and then . . . the catcher comes undone.
I put the catcher on again, the mower stops. Guess what?
No way is there to start this bloody motor when it's hot.

You wonder that I don't complain. What would be the use?
They'd send an expert to my house. He'd take me for a goose.
He'd give one pull and start it. I'd lose again, you see,
In the never-ending battle, between machines and me.

The bloke who sold it to me, he says the mower's O.K.
(I bought my chainsaw from him too, and I lived to rue the day.)
He says that I'm the problem, that mowers hate me. Then . . .
He's got the hide to tell me, I should shop at Mitre 10.

My wife can start it. Kids can too. The woman down the street.
Everyone can start it, but that bugger's got me beat.
I'm sure it sees me coming. And decides to have some fun,
And though I pull, and pull, and pull, I can't get it to run.

My family quite enjoys the show, I know the neighbours do.
They like to see my face turn red, and watch the air turn blue.
I can't reveal the brand name of this cursed pain inflictor
But here's a clue: you'll never guess . . .

It rhymes with boa constrictor.