

The Australian Bush Poet's Association Inc.

Monthly Newsletter

No. 1 Volume 5. January 1998



NATIONAL OUTBACK PERFORMING ARTS

GENERAL INFORMATION

The inaugural National Outback Performing Arts was held in Longreach in 1990. It began, and has continued, as the initiative of a dedicated group of people who recognized the quality of the untapped reservoir of "bush art" that was passing through, and living around Longreach.



As the popularity and appeal of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame grew, this group felt keenly the need to nurture and preserve an art form that so well reflected the love of the land and the lifestyle.

Those who built the Outback, and those who continue to make their lives out there, live far from the theatres, concerts and galleries of the city. These people have created their own forms of entertainment, often in the form of a song or a yarn or a bit of verse, and usually presented with utmost simplicity around a campfire or the kitchen table.

The National Outback Performing Arts aims to encourage the preservation of this unique form of entertainment in an environment that is non-critical and non-competitive.

In the almost ten years that it has been operating, NOPA has presented an annual performance event, particularly in numerous special presentations throughout the local area eg. centenary celebrations, conference presentations etc.; arranged workshops on a variety of associated themes; published a collection of poetry; recorded two audio tapes with ABC Radio; successfully toured to Brisbane; encouraged the development of several national award winning performers. The NOPA committee is solid and enthusiastic and determined on future growth for NOPA. Further information may be obtained from President: Mark Kleinschmidt,

136 Emu St. Longreach Qld. 4730 Ph. 07 46582363

Secretary: Helen Avery, 'Nogo' Station, Longreach Qld. 4730. Ph. 07 46581718 Fax. 07 4658 3198

AUSTRALIAN CHAMPIONS HEADING FOR ELKO

The 1997 Australian Champion Bush Poets, Helen Avery and Mark Kleinschmidt, both of Longreach Queensland, are set for their long journey on the 18th January, to the Annual Cowboy Poet's Gathering in Elko, Nevada USA.



Helen and Mark (pictured left) were the winners of the Australian Bush Poetry Championships at Winton Q. in April this year. As such they will be guests of the American Cowboy Poets Association in Elko for the biggest annual gathering of Cowboy Poets in the USA.

Being Winter in America, the pair can expect some very cold days and plenty of snow.

The Australian Bush Poet's Association wishes them well on their journey, knowing they will do our Country and the Association proud.

Good luck, Helen and Mark.

*Australian Bush Poet's
Association Inc.*

President. Frank Daniel

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**PALMA ROSA POETS
9 Queens Rd Hamilton Bris.**

7pm — 18th FEBRUARY 1998

featuring

'The Mullumbimby Bloke' - RAY ESSERY

with

**John and Joy Major's
Brisbane Launch of their new album
'HAND in HAND'**

----- 0 0 0 -----

7 pm — 22nd. APRIL 1998

BOB MAGOR

Multi-award winning Bush Poet

Ph. Trisha Anderson 07 3268 3624 - 3262 3769

\$15 inc supper BYO drinks

**QANTAS — WALTZING MATILDA
BUSH POETRY AWARDS**

in conjunction with

**The Official Opening of
The Waltzind Matilda Centre
Winton Qld.**

8th — 13th April, 1998

**The Australian Bush Poetry
Championships**

SSAE: P.O. Box 7714 Toowoomba Mail Centre 4352

HURRY UP

**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 Boulder Opal, 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.

**BUNGENDORE BUSH POETRY
TWO BREAKFASTS AND A WORKSHOP**

ELMSLEA HOMESTEAD

BUNGENDORE NSW

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

Starting 8am each day

POETRY WORKSHOP

Saturday 31st. 2pm - 3pm.

WITH

'Blue the Shearer' - Bobby Miller - Frank Daniel

In Association with the

13th. BUNGENDORE COUNTRY MUSTER

ALL WELCOME

Contact Toni Flanagan 02 6238 16511

DON'T MISS THIS ONE

'Elmslea' Homestead. Tarago Rd Bungendore nsw

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

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

Secretarys notes...

Dear members, A happy, healthy and prosperous New Year to each and everyone of you. I hope you have time to dream and that some of those dreams come true. Last year just fled by and into history.

I have enjoyed being your Secretary/Treasurer. It takes time and has been a real challenge occasionally. However, I thank you for those lovely notes of good wishes and encouragement and for offering me the privilege of holding this office.

The Fourth Annual of Bush Verse is now available and some orders have arrived. As we did not cover the cost of the Third Annual, I hope members will support us this year. The cost of the Annual is only \$3.00 plus postage of \$1.10. Two copies can be sent for this postage price. (\$7.10 for two books pp). Copies of the other three Annuals are still available at the same price.

We finished the year with a credit balance of \$3,560.12. but when we consider that \$1,756.00 of that is memberships for 1998 paid in advance, and will be used to provide newsletters for members, and we are still waiting for the account for printing 500 copies of the Annual.

Please pay your membership fees promptly to me. The fee is still \$25.00 no matter when you pay. No newsletter will be sent in March to non-financial members, and we cannot be sure that back copies will be available.

If new members joining late in the year wish to have the newsletter it will be arranged that they pay for the copies, but their membership will begin with their subscription for the following year.

It has been quite a task arriving at this satisfactory method as it was nearly impossible to sort out the memberships, and we are required by law to have a register of members.

I look forward to seeing a lot of members at Tamworth and having a feast of your talents at the different venues. We must work together in harmony to promote our common interest of bush poetry, forget our petty differences and forge ahead to make writing, reading, reciting, listening and finally and most importantly, enjoying bush poetry an exciting and exhilarating experience.
Fond regards,

Olive Shooter January 1998

THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN DREAM

As the Aussie 'Superfish', Kieren Perkins, turned for home in his epic gold medal swim in Atlanta, the following words from the pen of Robert Raftery may just have been ringing in his ears.

*"You've done the hard yards,
you're the cream o' the crop.
You're a fighter, you're focused
and you'll pump till you drop!
Tomorrow you'll churn and the water will boil
as you tear at the air and you rip at the soil!
Now go out and blitz 'em but be in no doubt
for Australia to win "Let the Animal Out!"*

* Giving in to impulses has made Robert Raftery's career very interesting indeed.

Robert Raftery — The Picture Writer — page 6.

Presidents letter . . .

Dear ABPA Members,

Another year behind us, eh? How time flies when we're having fun. Can't remember laughing all year though, I must have had a few busy times as well.

Thank you to the many people who wrote or sent cards during the festive season. Being such a busy time for me I didn't manage replies to all, but I am grateful to one and all for the kind words and well wishes.

Tamworth Country Music Festival is set to be the biggest bush poetry gathering in the country, with an estimated 130 hours of bush poetry available through the Longyard Hotel, The West Tamworth Leagues Club, Tamworth Golf Club, North Tamworth Bowls Club, The Oasis Hotel and the biggest and best of the Bush Poetry Competitions at the Imperial Hotel.

Is it too much? It remains to be seen.

It just goes to show how popular the spoken word is, with so many venues clamouring for the audiences attracted by bush verse — at Australia's greatest Country Music Festival.

My own estimates, based on experience, here-say and common knowledge puts the number of poets attending the Tamworth Festival at well over a hundred. I could be wrong, but if you can count them, let me know. And, if they are not members of our association, please ask them to join up.

Problems in the camp have been minimal during the past year with Olive at the helm. The books are well and truly in order, the auditor is happy, and all looks well. Subscriptions have been coming in slowly, but surely, and 1998 looks like being another great year for the bush poets. Happy New Year to all,

Frank Daniel

PALMA ROSA PLANNING AHEAD

Exciting plans lay ahead for the Palma Rosa Poets in 1998.

The first evening will be held on Wednesday 18th February featuring the indomitable "Mullumbimby Bloke" Ray Essery.

Also on the same programme the organizers will be featuring the Brisbane Launch of John and Joye Major's new album "Hand in Hand". John, from Baralaba in Central Queensland, has become a very popular poet on the circuit, and now has his lovely wife Joy performing with him.

Back in Brisbane on Wednesday 22nd April, will be the multi-award winning South Australian Bush Poet, Bob Magor. Bob hails from Myponga, and has won many awards for his poetry in both performance and written application. His latest achievement being the coveted Bronze Swagman Award in 1997 for his beautiful poem 'The Cooper Coming Down' — telling the story of the Cooper Creek system around Innamincka.

Bob is also the author of three very successful books of bush poetry, 'Blasted Crows', 'Blood on the Board' and 'Snakes Alive', which all depict Bob's wonderful, laconic wit. These books tell with irony and great humour the trials and tribulations of country life and our folk history.

Ray Essery, John and Joy Major and Bob Magor are only a taste of what is to come in 1998 at the Palma Rosa.

On Wednesday December 4th, the final performance for 1997 at the Palma Rosa saw the return of Bobby Miller and Carmel Dunn with the launch of their new album, 'The Larrikin and the Lady'.

"The Larrikin and the Lady" features some new poems by Bobby Miller and many of Carmel's originals including 'Shattered Dreams' and 'Sunset' as well as the great Wilf Ogilvie poem, 'The Pearl of Them All'.

SPREADING THE NEWS

A letter from Geoff Fortune of Mandurah in WA tells us that he heard of our association via ABC radio.

Geoff was listening to a poem recited by a bush poet who, in answer to a query from the announcer, advised the name of our President and his home town.

Enough address for Geoff who wrote straight away asking about membership.

Geoff is a published bush poet and sounds very keen to know more about us.

See how easy it is! Spread the word in 1998 and see if we can build our membership to even greater heights.

If the Bush Poet responsible reads this, please let us know who you are and what you were doing in WA.

UP WHERE THE RIVERS BEGIN

© J.H.Sturgiss

In their crag-crowned ramparts the cliff-walls sweep
Where the time-scarred mountains frown
O'er valleys they cradle in their sleep,
Where the rushing streams come down;
Blue canyon and cliff-wall that echo wide
The torrent's thunderous din,
Like a battle chant to the crags beside —
Up where the rivers begin.

Though our years like the clouds go rolling by,
As worry and care conspire,
Still there's sweet respite in the open night
By light of a lone campfire:
In the wind and stars and the singing streams
And storm-rains that eddy and spin,
In tracks my spirit will travel in dreams —
Up where the rivers begin.

Tough I know that man must labour for man,
That struggle and strife must be
As we travel by chance, or hidden plan,
To some unguessed destiny;
Still on clear spring dawns, when the Red God speaks
On winds that are keen and thin,
It's oh, for the hills and the hazy peaks,
Up where the rivers begin.

For despite the lore of a thousand years
And civilization's pride,
Yet the primitive urge still perseveres
For lands that are lone and wide:
For the dream-built havens we all still seek,
And hope, beyond doubt, to win,
To Nirvana, beneath some far blue peak —
Up where the rivers begin.

Notice in Sydney paper:

Lost. Budgie, blue, green and yellow male.
Speaks three languages. Answers to the name of Joey.
Large reward. Phone . . .
So!

Does this multi-coloured fella
Come from Rome or Augathella
If Elle MacPherson passing by he chanced to see
Would he whistle like a plover
Or a famous latin lover
Would he greet her "Hi ya, babe" or 'Bon ami!'
Does this budgie come from Coogee
Or from Cabramatta's slums
Or the multi-national quarter at Kings Cross.
And I wonder what he whispers when the time
for parting comes.

"'Ooray mate" a fond "Adieu" or "Adios!!"

© Hipshot.

AN OPEN DOOR

© Graham Dean. Karumba Q.

You may think it kind of funny,
And you may even think it strange,
That we've moved here to Karumba
And we're really out of range.

But the sunset in the evening
Is worth more than all the gold
That the city we had lived in
Ever promised we could hold.

And the town has proved most friendly,
We are smiled at, not ignored.
And a wave returned so quickly
Is a thing to be adored.

Yes, we've left the throng, the masses,
To a simple life of glee,
And our door is always open
For you to visit Lou and me.

SHATTERED

© Keith Ireland

William Brown was shattered; shocked right to the core.
His life's security blanket lay shredded on the floor.
He sat in his car dejected . . . fighting to hold back tears.
He worked heart and soul for the company, almost fifteen years,
Working his way up through the ranks. A man by all respected.
He prided himself in quality work, and this his staff reflected.
He left for work that morning. His spirits were on high.
He kissed his wife and children and waved them all good-bye.
The day was like any other. Nothing to forewarn of shock,
It didn't seem surprising . . . a meeting at three o'clock.
The full staff was requested, so a flood of rumours grew.
The general Manager entered the room with a man nobody knew.
The stranger did the talking, in monotones, flat and cold,
About restructuring the company; new visions, not the old.
William Brown was shattered: shocked right to the core.
How does he tell his family there's no job for him anymore.

FROM THE GULF

Welcome news from Louise and Graham Dean formerly of Virginia, just north of Brisbane, tells us that they have moved to the Gulf of Carpentaria, passing on their new address as P.O. Box 230 Karumba Qld. 4891 Ph. 07 4745 9231, not wanting to lose contact with everybody.

Moving to Karumba was somewhat of a rush affair with life pretty hectic over the previous four or five months, especially living 2500 kilometers apart for the first three months. Now together again they have taken over the management of 'Carpentaria Produce and Merchandise', a growing rural company selling anything from hardware, produce and steel, to stoves, dog food and camping gear.

If they can get it, they sell it!

Living in a small but comfortable company house, two minutes drive from work, they also have a Four-Wheel-Drive which they hope to make use of on weekends when time permits.

The challenge of setting up and running properly a business takes a lot of time and effort. By the end of the wet season they hope to be up and running well enough to make it a lot easier for the next year.

Above all they enjoy the challenge and working together as they knew they would.

Karumba is a small town, (500 in the good times) and although it has its disadvantages, (No shopping; no five-day banking; no fresh bread), it's a great place so they say, because of the combination of the fishing and cattle industries, which suits them both.

There are many advantages in living in Karumba, taking opportunities when they arise, because there are no second chances. Drumming up some business on

one occasion saw them fly to Burketown, Doomadgee and Mornington Island which was a real experience. A totally different part of the world. Graham flew by Helicopter to Mareeba on another excursion.

The Deans have created a lot of interest with regards to their poetry and art, and can see a poetry festival being organized for the tourist season in 1998. Already some local businesses are ready and willing to support them.

Graham has written poetry for business parties and Louise had the job of designing the logo for a new company called 'Gulf Line Aviation', so naturally their talents will not go astray.

They have also taken a huge step in renting out a new shop in "Karumba's first shopping centre", where they intend setting up with their art and poetry and taking on other people's work as well.

The shop will be called BUSH WOOKATOOK which will be based on Australian crafted art and bush poetry. Opening time about Feb/March '98.

Wishing everyone the best for the Festive Season and hoping that 1998 will be a great year for all, Graham and Louise would like to say that their doors are open wide to anyone who would like to visit the end of the Matilda Highway. So keep in touch!

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

Maureen Garner Ph/Fax 02 6568 5269

Profile. . . Robert Raftery.

Robert Raftery, Picture Writer was born in Toowoomba, Queensland, to the tune of victory in the belltowers at the end of World War II.

A finalist in Australia's Bi-Centennial Short Story Literary Competition in 1988, Robert lives on a small acreage on Brisbane's south-western outskirts with wife Kathleen and four children, Jasmine, Maggie Jade, Zachary and Jacob.

Robert writes from two semi-mobile studios, a railway carriage on his Brisbane base and an ageing bus at his business address in Ipswich, in the south east corner of Queensland.

Under the title of 'Picture Writer' he writes and performs his ballads — broadly engineered under the headings, "Home, Heroes, Humanity and the Bush", the title of his soon to be published book of verse, to poetry gatherings, seminars and conventions. Robert's writings have risen to prominence in the ranks of the Australian Bush Poetry Movement with many of his works being performed by Australia's leading reciters at gatherings throughout Australia and overseas.

In 1996 Robert was asked by Australian Olympic Team motivator Laurie Lawrence to prepare a series of motivational/inspirational poems for the Atlanta Games, and was recently awarded honorary membership in the Lions Service Organisation for his achievements with verse.

He owns and operates 'Great Australian Paint Company', the local 3D store, in suburban West Ipswich, Queensland and has recently developed 'Faded Glory' to buy, sell and broker interesting, exotic and one-off treasures. He runs Yaramak Pty Ltd which develops small industrial tenancies for lease in southern Queensland.

His association with the painting and decorating industry began back in the early 1960's when he joined Piggot and Co. in Toowoomba, straight out of high school.

Four years later, at the tender age of 19 years, Robert became the youngest colour and technical consultant in the country when he was recruited by Pamm Paints.

With the wisdom of knowing 'When to yield to an impulse', Robert bought an old Dodge truck and some excavation tools and set off for Lightning Ridge opal fields where he 'spent a year on the digs', making enough to buy his first house in Brisbane.

During the 70's and 80's Robert's odyssey included periods working in London and the United States, and in manufacturing his own line of paints in Australia.

Someone once described poetry as "your mind dancing to the drumbeats of your heart."

Robert's Dad started those 'drum beats off early'. He was a horse-breaker, gambler, master story teller, fighter, fight caller, auctioneer, postman/linesman and champion snooker player.

"He brought my brother Barry and I up on Lawson and Paterson. I started line linking and thinking about rhyme from an early age." recalls Robert. "My uncle Harry who lived with us at the 'Old Ranch' in Toowoomba chipped in from an opposite angle, with his guitar on the verandah, high on the Great Divide. We'd sing Buddy Williams, Wilf Carter, Hank Snow, Tex Morton, Slim Dusty. Then we'd wind up the gramophone to 'Old Shep', 'The Face on the Bar Room Floor', 'When the Rain Tumbles Down in July.'"

Life for a little kid was as near perfect as it could get, and it would be off to bed with his mind dancing and heart spinning like a ferris wheel to the rhyme and metre and the country magic of the hillbilly beat.

"I suppose all of us poets would like to think we could leave something of our craft behind to light up a century of minds. But so few of those faceted beauties are given that the chances are very slim at best."

"But we have the opportunity to show the bright tapestry of our unique Australian way of life on the stages of a shrinking world, a world that has a ravenous appetite for entertainment and enlightenment. Our opportunity to write, produce and perform will only be limited by our imagination." Words only too true.

Many of Robert Raftery's great poems have been included in the Newsletter over the past four years, and it is with pleasure that another is included in this issue.

'Our Little Boy King' was written for Laurie Lawrence on the death of little Jacob Hobbs of the Gold Coast, for Laurie's "Kids Alive Programme" sponsored by the Queensland Government, which attempts to stem the toddler drownings in backyard pools, dams, rivers and water-ways.

Editors note: On the morning of December 17th. last, I had a very hurried phone call from my wife, en route to Orange to do some Christmas shopping. Her only words were "*Turn 'Lawsie' on quickly! Some blokes talking about Robert Raftery!*" Click! End of conversation. The fact that Kerry had bothered to use the mobile-phone whilst the car was still moving indicated some degree of greater urgency.

I wasn't disappointed, Laurie Lawrence was talking to 'Lawsies' stand-in Ray Hadley, about the Kids Alive Programme. In a very moving rendition, Laurie read with the greatest of feeling, "*Our Little Boy King*". I wished that all could have heard him.

Ray Hadley's comments were none short of the highest praise, as he quoted further lines from the poem.

Congratulations Robert Raftery.

OUR LITTLE BOY KING

© Robert Raftery, Picture Writer, Brisbane. 30.9.1997

Black are the arm bands, the flag's at half mast,
Hang down your head as the coffin files past,
Great seas of emotion gushed forth and we cried
In a backyard pool drowning a toddler had died.
And all the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't give Jacob his life back again.

As he crawled on his knees, Jake was low to the floor,
Through the flap and the frame of the pools doggie door,
And by the blunt edge of the pool, not a sound,
Escaped to the house as a baby boy drowned.
But silvered in starlight on an archangel's wing,
Was that cheeky face beaming of "Our Little Boy King".

"While you're gone, I'll not leave him" a young policeman said,
Lifeless and limp now, Jake's linked to the dead.
His loved ones have found the "all quiet" in his heart,
While their lives are imploding and falling apart.
And found in the water a deathly sad thing,
The tiny toy kitten of "Our Little Boy King".

Time left unguarded is all that it took,
To close off the chapter in Jake's magic book.
"Good-bye precious Jacob" we chant eerily
And it sounds like the ocean in a shell from the sea.
And all the bright candles and all the bright prayers,
Line Heaven's highway as Jake climbs the stairs.

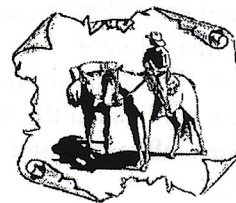
Water is blood in this cracking dry land,
Like crosses she's anchored in a great mass of sand.
We've used her, abused her, in flood, fire and drought,
And cursed her retreat when the crops were in doubt.
This life giving liquid will quench thirst and thrill,
But as quick as a flash she can hit back and kill.

The screams have retreated to the hands on the clock,
And no more the cradle for Jacob will rock.
The wind chime has gone now and in its cold space,
A mighty cathedral has taken its place.
Instruct the throne builders and a chorus to sing
The entry to heaven of "Our Little Boy King".



The Raftery Family. Maggie Jade, Robert, Kathleen, and Jasmine with Zachary and Jacob in front.

The Australian



Bush Poets Association

Fourth Annual Book of Verse

\$4.10 pp
(2 for \$7.10 pp)
from the Secretary

WOMBAT NSW FOLK FESTIVAL AUSTRALIA DAY WEEKEND

23rd - 26th January 1998

Concerts - Dance - Music
Workshops - Poetry
With

Home Rule - Harvest Moon

Graham Johnson

Joe Cashmere

Contact. Pat Emmett

0263843229



PEACE

© Serena Hudson (13)
Cowra NSW

(1st. Prize, Secondary Section Cowra
Peace Bell Verse Competition 1997.)

Peace is the softness
of a sunset in the sky,
Peace is the sound
of a river flowing by
Peace is the sound
of birds up in the trees
Peace is the feeling
of a gentle summer breeze
It's the clean fresh scent of flowers,
where beauty does abound
And the frolicking of creatures,
and nature's happy sound
And little children playing,
together, without a care
Running, jumping, laughing
with energy to spare
I guess that's why God gave us
that perfect bird the dove
That we should be reminded
to have peace, we first need love!

HUNTER BUSH POETS

Another affiliated branch of the ABPA has been set up in the Hunter Region of NSW. President Bob Skelton, 'The Minmi Magster', informs us that thanks to the new publican at the Taro Hotel, another fitting venue has been allocated and re-named 'The Henry Lawson Room'.

Bob and Kay have been going from strength to strength in establishing bush poetry in the Newcastle area and are more than pleased with the results.

The Hunter Bush Poets will be meeting every second Tuesday of the month at 7 pm. at the Taro Hotel, Anderson Drive, Taro. All are welcome. For further information, give 'the Magster' a call on 02 4953 2751

SNOWY MOUNTAINS

CHAMPIONSHIPS

Before an audience of over forty people the Snowy Mountains Bush Poetry Club held its Championships at the Tumbarumba Bowling Club on December 30th.

President Jim Lyons welcomed the visitors and then handed a generous donation to the poetry club secretary Neil Hulm. Neil, with the help of Bob Skelton, Reg Phillips, and the Cottrell family, performed 'The Shooting of Dan McGrew'; 'Said Hanrahan' and 'Fun on the Kiandra Diggings.'

Colin Daniel of Tumbarumba performed two Neil Hulm poems 'The Karate Dog' and 'The Greatest Whinger on Earth'.

Used Track Arthur Webb of Humula did a splendid job of reciting two well chosen C.J. Dennis poems, 'An Old Master' and 'A Letter to the War'.

The Competition was contested by some of Australia's best poets. The Open Championship being won meritoriously by Johnny Johanson of Yarrawonga Vic. with two splendid original verses. Runner up was Milton Taylor of Portland NSW.

The Junior Championships was won by Adam Cottrell followed by Samantha Cottrell in second place.

The Ladies Championships was won by Samantha Cottrell with her mother, Denise runner-up.

The organisers acknowledged their appreciation to the Bowling Club for their generous donation and for the use of club rooms for the contest.

On Friday 2nd of January following the old time Buckjump at Omeo V. Bob Skelton, Neil Hulm, Geoffrey Graham James Lee and Noel Cutler kept a large crowd entertained with bush verse.

MISTY

© Brian Bell Glenbrook NSW

Free - note

Misty, come, let's gallop.
We'll find that track you love the most.
I can ride you, saddle free,
silent runner, equine ghost.

Misty, trot so smoothly,
then we'll stop, you'll have a feed,
while I admire your grey-white mane,
re-mounting when I feel the need.

Misty, silent beauty,
I miss you when I'm far away;
miss the way you nibble grass;
dream that beckons; come and stay,

but other places call me
and I have to go, but when
I rest, each night, in moonlight,
my thoughts are Misty, once again.

**ANNUAL
SUBSCRIPTIONS
FELL DUE ON
DECEMBER 31ST.
PLEASE REMIT YOUR
PAYMENT TO THE
SECRETARY**



RAINY NIGHT

© Ellis Campbell Dubbo

Thurs - note

The Stars resign from inky night and all is deathly still
before the thunder's rumbling crash beyond the craggy hill.
The lightning's gleam illuminates a vast expanse of cloud
where darting, chainlike patterns prance and wind gusts bellow loud.

A moment's stillness follows then, before the lashing rain —
like hail it pounds upon the roof and creaking window pane.
The forest's lofty pines are swayed and bowing to the squall —
and ghostly louvre rattles whine along the darkened hall.

The shrieking gale abates a bit, and swerves to change its course
a fierce, relentless marching drum that thuds without remorse.
The falling rain on parching earth fills every crack and stream;
and gushes foaming to the creek, pureed by lightning's gleam.

Beneath the blankets, sage and warm, I hear the falling rain —
it whispers in the water spout and gurgles down the drain.
It bounces off the chimney bricks and flows along the path —
it makes a leak and oozes in to stain the white-washed hearth.

All through a ceaseless, windstrewn night the surging torrent raged
but dawn's first flush of daylight saw the fierce deluge assuaged.
The valley's dense with drifting fog — the demon's passion's spent —
a beaming sunshine steams the earth and wrung-out clouds relent.

Winner — Network competition 1995.



THE BIG SMOKE

© J. D. McDougall Cooroy Q.

Me and Ted hit Brisbane
We went down on the train,
And the sight of all those people
Really shocked me muddled brain.

There must have been a do on
I remarked to me old mate,
There were people running everywhere
Looking for the exit gate.

"It must be picnic races!"
Ted rubbed his hands with glee,
He had always been a punter
And he liked a bet or three.

When we got outside the station
Me mouth flew open wide,
I had never seen so many cars
Since they buried Billy Clyde.

Now that funeral was a big do
Twenty cars or more,
But this one was a biggen
They was lined up door to door.

Old Ted was disappointed
Seems the races weren't the go,
Just some silly bugger's funeral
Cause the cars were moving slow.

I grabbed a bloke as he went by,
To enquire who had died,
He looked at me lop-sided
And kept on walking by,

We stood in reverent silence
As we doffed our Sunday hats,
But those bloody city people
Were like a plague of poisoned rats.

They just kept rushing everywhere
Seems they didn't care who died,
Showed no respect for the poor old cove
Who was having his last big ride.

We never found out who they planted
On that cold and windy day,
Cause we headed back into the bush
And there we vowed to stay.

REBORN UTE © Ted Webber Narellan Gardens NSW

Strike me pink and stone the crows, yer never woulda guessed
I'm drivin' down the road again, I surely am quite blessed
Me bonnet's nice and shiny and me engine's tuned so sweet
All the doors have been repainted, there's soft leather on me seat.

New tyres rim me wheel spokes, remade mudguards look supreme
Sun glintin' on the windscreen, me chromework's sparklin' gleam,
And me little silver lady?, well she's lookin' extra grand
Standin' proudly on me radiator, gazin' out across the land.

But how did this all happen?, how did the miracle occur?
Who changed me from a rustin' heap, to a vision quite superb?
For there's few that thinks or even cares, for most don't wanta know
That machines like me helped men and women, make Australia grow.

And fewer still have caught the bug, that urgent scratchy itch
To see once more these fine machines, that made our country rich
Take their place again on busy roads, looking really splendid
And recallin' bygone times with sights only just remembered.

But no-one even glanced my way, as the funeral cortege passed,
I guess I cannot blame them, for Joe the Boss at last
Had gone to life's final reward, or so the good book says
But I had lost me best mate and shared memories of other days.

For the Boss and I had built this farm from a ragged little run
To a place to be so proud of, yet when the job was done
We were told our life's task was over and we should retire too
Him to a paper and a rocking chair, me just parked behind the loo!

So I felt my time had been long gone and none would ever save me
From rotting there in the sun, and dreamin' dreams of maybe
When on day the missus came with the grandson close in tow
I thought my days are finally over and straight to the tip I'd go

He walks slowly round me lookin' 'ard and opens a squeaky door
Pokin' here and pullin' there, checkin' out me wooden floor
And then he sez real excited, but to me surprised delight
I'll take him Gran, the old ute's great, he'll do up really right.

Ah the knowin' feel of skilful hands as they start me restoration
The twist of spanners turning nuts, as parts are carefully taken
To be cleaned and checked and sorted through, accepted or rejected
The hunt for good parts in the scrap, the thrill of finds unexpected.

New linings riveted to old brake shoes and drums smoothly skimmed
Diff and gear box carefully checked and big ends so heavily tinned
And you blokes that are wimpin' out on having a prostate test
Just think of me being fully rebored, that puts ya minds at rest.

The search for replacement body parts, the excitement of the chase
Then the watery kiss of wet and dry to make a nice smooth base
For the silky coat of duco to cover the scars of passing time
The tangy sweet smell of polish, me new hoods black-blue shine.

And then that day, that special day, the day of all me dreams,
The day that takes me memory back and recreates those scenes
When the Boss and I first started out, those many years long past
Like a livin' page in history's book, I took the road again at last.

The rush of the air past me sides, the crunch of loose blue gravel
The huff and puff of climbin' hills, the many roads to travel.
I tells yer mate this is great, I look and feel real beaut
And to think that only a while ago, I was just an old farm ute.

TULLYMORGAN

© J.B. Gallagher

As you cross the stoney ridges with Ashby at your back
On a road that lacks good bridges, large stones upon the track,
There is bushland all around you and so little to inspire,
Until you reach Broadwater Lake, there's little to admire.
But here the gloom is lifted as the broad lake to the west
Reflects the sky and sunshine showing nature at her best.
Some humble homes and farms are passed for seven miles or so,
Then your right at Tullymorgan where most crops seem to grow.
A pretty hilly rural spot with rich volcanic soils
That give returns commensurate for skill, employ and toil.
There's a church, a school and dancing hall to fill the social bill;
A quiet village where nice cosy homes are built on every hill.
But the stalwarts of this outback place for better home must strive
Roads free of holes and boulders that are safe upon to drive.
But hark ones thoughts must go back to the first men of this place
Who blazed the trail and made the track; men true to faith and race.
Those men who gave your district birth, forget them not I pray
But link them to the present, and think of them today.

DUCKS ON THE DAM

© Len Dawson Wingham NSW 1983

The black dog barked his earnest, youthful sound,
coming as he did from who knows where.
He ranged the semi-lunar walled up ground,
yapping at the swimmers he saw there.

Maternal duck, with ducklings, paddled up,
choosing readily to make a stand.
She analysed the antics of the pup,
doubting he would leave the hard, dry land.

Affected by the constant, noisy bray,
any other flock would choose to flee.
This feathery flotilla meant to stay,
ponds and pools their safety guarantee.

Parading like a dark, aspiring knight,
two steps forward, one right or left,
the noisy whelp conveyed a wish to fight,
sport at which he wasn't very deft.

The queenly bird protected every pawn,
shifting each a single liquid square.
By matching every move, the game was drawn,
russet, buoyant pieces played with care.

It ended, thus, a stalemate, almost fun.
Play to rules and little can go wrong.
The instinct is, in some, to chase and run.
Other must maintain their kindred throng.

Thank's to the following contributors
to this month's Newsletter: J.B.
Gallagher, Graham and Louise Dean,
Keith Ireland, J.H. Sturgiss, Trish
Anderson, Helen Avery, Hipshot,
Serena Hudson, Neil McArthur, Len
Dawson, Jim McDougall, Ted
Webber, Christiana Kern, Bob Miller,
Sandra Binns, Joe, Brian Bell.



So that's what she looks like! —
Sandra Binns of Kincumber NSW

"It seems to me." The teacher said
To little Encore Smith.

"That Encore is a funny name
For a boy to be labelled with.
Are you the second on the list?"
And Encore answered, "No Ma'am!"
My Mother called me Encore 'cause
I wasn't on the programme!!

© Hipshot.

From American Cowboy Poet, Rudy Gonzales ©

In the dusk of workin' cowboys,
comes a time to fill yer cup.
And to gather by the fire,
while the dishes get's washed up.

Time to patch up yer ol' riggin',
or lean back and roll a smoke.
While somebody tells a windy,
or somebody tells a joke.

Or some cowboy makes up verses,
to the tune of Wildwood Flower.
And each tries to top each other,
and it's called the Cowboy Poetry Hour.

Now I know it don't sound fancy,
but it mends a cowboys bones.
When he's been a workin' cattle,
a thousand miles from home.

Presidents Report...

Dear Members,

It is with great pleasure that I submit my report for 1997.

It has been another great year for the Australian Bush Poets Association Inc. with many new members joining our ranks. We have had a significant increase in the number of new venues for our great art, and we have seen some dramatic improvements in the organization of many of the bigger festivals. But! There is still room for more improvement in many areas.

Festival audiences are increasing in areas such as Tamworth, Gympie, Illawarra, Woodford, Port Fairy, Kiama and the National in Canberra. Organizers and promoters are realising that bush poetry at their festivals is also a great tourist attraction and are taking advantage of this as well.

It is very heartening indeed to find that Country Music Festivals in particular are making allowances for a larger slice of bush poetry in their busy programmes. They are giving the people what they want, with the Bush Poet's Breakfasts being among the biggest crowd pleasers of all.

Congratulations to Olive Shooter who has done a fantastic job as Secretary/Treasurer, keeping the books in a healthy state throughout, and for her untiring efforts in assisting with the newsletter, membership enrolments, conducting monthly meetings, attending to many of the minor problems that have occurred and, for taking all the 'red-tape' in hand that had been so carelessly set aside in the past.

We appear to be financially healthy at the moment but we are not in a position to overspend.

Careful management is a priority, we are not well enough established to cater for some of the elaborate ideas considered in the past. A big bank account at the start of the year is often read as having money to spend. Far be it from the truth.

I urge members to push harder this year and help promote more bush poetry, seek more members, and even submit news items and poems from our Newsletter to their local tabloids (giving the authorship full credit). The more that we put Bush Poetry in front of people, the more bush poets and interested people we will find. Give it a go. Your local 'rag' is always looking for interesting items. Besides, why are so many of them referred to as having nothing in them. Because nobody ever tells them anything. That's why.

I sincerely hope that we can find a new editor for the coming year, as I (time permitting) personally plan to promote bush poetry on an even larger scale through the media, radio and TV.

With a lot of expected difficulty I hope to establish regular columns in rural papers and will be pushing for more exposure far and wide.

FEELING COMMON

© Sandra Binns

I feel just like I've been hit in the face
with a lump of four-be-two ~
I've found that's what the common cold
is commonly known to do!

And this dripping nose and these watery eyes
that I've got in common with you
are making us both uncommonly ill
'cause you've got a common cold too!

And it's common knowledge it lasts two weeks
if you let it run its course.
But it only lasts about fourteen days
if the doctor exerts due force!

KATOOMBA NSW BLUE MOUNTAINS FESTIVAL 20 - 21 - 22 FEBRUARY 1998

Over 100 acts from overseas as well as local
**The biggest festival ever on the mountains at
The CLARENDON THEATRE**
Contact Bob Charters 1800 651 322

BUSH POETS BREAKFASTS
Saturday and Sunday at 9am.
Contact Denis Kevans 02 4757 3119

Book —

"300 Funny Little Poems"
by
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\$12.00 pp
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63 Valley Road
WENTWORTH FALLS NSW 2782

CD Launch.

at Katoomba Festival
'CITY OF GREEN'
Green Ban Songs and Beyond by Denis Kevans

I will need your help in this as well; so don't think I will be leaving anyone alone. We're all in this together, eh?

In respect of the code of ethics tabled by Keith McKenry earlier this year, I intend presenting it for adoption at the 1998 AGM. I feel it is a necessity and to date no objection to the code has been forthcoming.

Thank you one and all for your staunch support,
Regards,

Frank Daniel

POET'S CALENDAR. EVENTS AND COMPETITIONS.

- 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 ad page 2.
- January 30 Closing Date. **Australasian Poetry Awards.** Fee \$5 per poem or 5 for \$20. Poem up to 100 lines. Open theme rhymed or non rhyming. 1st. \$250; 2nd \$100; 3rd \$50. Entry forms SSAE to P.O. Box 1563 Ballarat Mail Centre 3354
- 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 13 Closing date — **Banjo Paterson Writing Awards.** \$1000; \$400; \$200. in each of poetry and prose with an Australian content. \$500 for comic poetry. SSAE to P.O. Box 194 Orange 2800
- Feb 18 **Palma Rosa.** 9 Queens Rd Hamilton Bris. Q. See ad page 2. Booking essential
Ph. Trish Anderson 07 3268 3624 or 07 3262 3769.
- Feb. 21 Blue Mountains Festival. Poets Brekkie. Phone Denis Kevans 02 4757 3119
- 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. **FAW Wollondilly Literary Group.** Open section. Short Story, Poetry (free verse), Poetry (Traditional rhyming), Bush Poetry SSAE from Co-ordinator 32 Hawthorne Rd. Bargo
- 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 2. **Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of Arts.** Competitions in verse, song, short story.
SSAE to Honorary Secretary. P.O. Box 77 Grenfell. 2810
- 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
- April 22 **Palma Rosa.** 9 Queens Rd Hamilton Bris. Q. See ad page 2. Booking essential
Ph. Trish Anderson 07 3268 3624 or 07 3262 3769.
- May 8-10 Australian Bush Festival. Rockhampton. Music - Poetry - Yarns Ph. 07 4936 2600
- 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. Coolumb Qld. (074) 491 991
Pine Rivers Camp Oven Breakfasts. Petrie Q. Ph. 07 3260 5506 - 07 3886 1552
- 1st. Monday **Aroma's Restaurant & Coffee Shop.** Toowoomba Q. Ron Selby (076) 301 106
- 2nd. Monday **Parakeet's Poets, Katoomba.** Phone Denis Kevans 02 4757 3119
- 2nd. Sunday **'Interludes' Ashfield Civic Centre, Sydney** — Joye Dempsey 02 9797 7575
- 3rd. Sunday **Pine Rivers Camp Oven Breakfasts. Petrie Q.** Ph. 07 3260 5506 - 07 3886 1552
- 3rd. Friday **Poetic Folk — Rooty Hill School Of Arts.** Sydney — Arch Bishop (02) 9625 7245
- 2nd. Friday **The Monaro Leisure Club.** 7 pm. Vale St. Cooma. Bush Poetry and Country Music.
- 3rd. Thursday **Queanbeyan Bush Poets.** Phone David Meyers 06 286 1891

ADVERTISE YOUR FESTIVAL OR OUTING — LET EVERYONE KNOW ABOUT IT

NOTICE — NEW DEADLINE FOR NEWS

DEADLINE FOR MONTHLY PUBLICATION:
10th. day of the month of issue.



'ELMSLEA' HOMESTEAD A MUST FOR ALL POETS

Elmslea Homestead is the place to be on the last weekend of this month. Situated on the outskirts of the village of Bungendore on the Southern Tablelands of NSW this venue is fast becoming one of the biggest crowd pullers in the South.

From very humble beginnings in the front garden of the old Light Horse premises four years ago, where the audience spilled out onto the roadway, where passing traffic dawdled past to get a glimpse of the goings on, to the present sight in the beautiful gardens of 'Elmslea' where last year an estimated audience of some 600 devotees gathered neath the shady elms for a feast of bush tucker and bush verse.

This year will see the return of Frank Daniel as MC with his old mate 'Blue the Shearer' (Col Wilson) from Wellington NSW and on his first visit 'The Larrikin' himself, Bobby Miller, from Mungar Qld.

Following hot on the tail of the Tamworth CM Festival, a lot of fans will continue on to Bungendore for the 13th. Annual Country Muster held on the same weekend — Saturday 31st January and Sunday 1st February.

Bush Poets Breakfasts will be conducted each morning at 8 o'clock, with a Bush Poetry Workshop on the Saturday Afternoon at 2pm. conducted by the aforementioned trio.

'Elmslea' Homestead, a home stay guest house, is owned by Toni and Myles Flanagan who put one hundred per cent effort into all their charitable endeavours as well as the Bush Poetry week-end.

Put Bungendore on your calendar, visit the old heritage town, take in the Country Music Muster as well. See ad. page 2.

'MAGGOT' NOT WELL

News to hand last week said that 'The Larrikin' Bobby Miller, also known as the 'Mungar Maggot' among other suitable titles, has had a bit of a spell in the Maryborough Hospital, following a bout of 'Feral Mania' at the Woodford Festival.

Apparently he went to a new 'vet' in Caboolture with a mysterious ailment (We all know what it was Bob), and asked for a check up. The Doc checked his ability to pay and administered a cheaper brand of lower grade, non-compatible, replacement oils and gave him a pat on the back and sent him home.

Overnight he became worse and 'Sandy', not one for putting up with any rot, choofed him off the the hospital — just for some peace and quiet.

All jokes aside, we are happy to announce that he is home again and almost his old self, and we are all looking forward to seeing him in Tamworth.

Good on ya Bob! God Bless Sandra!



Bob Dever (in glasses) celebrating a victory over someone smaller than himself.

This shot was taken outside a 'One Nation' Fish and Chip shop on the West Coast. (Made out he caught it on a line.)

Still enjoying their long tour of Oz, Bob and Carlene should be back in the Eastern States about mid-

February. Creditors please note!

AN INVITATION ('s no snow)

Christiana Kern of Jindabyne extends an open invitation to Poets wishing to perform on the 'Top of Australia' — well . . . almost.

In a brief note Chris says that anyone interested in joining her for bush poetry recitals at Blue Cow Mountain over the following weekends, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 of January.

An art gallery of local artists has been set up in the Blue Cow Skitube Terminal and this would form a great backdrop for presenting bush poetry to visitors to the Snowy Mountains.

As the bush poetry would help to enhance the Perisher Blue summer programme for the Skitube, she has been able to cadge from the company free transport on the Skitube from Bullocks Flat to Blue Cow Mountain, plus, a share accommodation rate of \$15.00 per bed per night at the Station Resort in Jindabyne in 6 bedded motel style rooms.

All arrangements are through Christiana, so give her a call on 02 6459 4511 (wrk) 02 6456 2895 (hm)

IT HAPPENS EVERY NOW AND THEN

It happens every now and then
and now it's happening again.

I just can't write a decent line ~
ah well, this too will pass in time.

© Sandra Binns.

When the porcupine backed into the prickly
pear, he said "Sorry Luv!"
Was Echidna or not? That's the point!!!
© Hipshot

Profile. . . Neil McArthur.

Neil McArthur was born in 1958 and raised in Ballarat, Victoria and spent some years as a boy living in Sea Lake, in the Victorian Mallee Region.

Always fascinated by writing, Neil found himself editor of the school magazine. He taught himself to play guitar by listening to Country Music and Rock'n'Roll records, then came writing songs and playing and singing in a number of bands.

After leaving school he worked for a short period at Sovereign Hill Gold Mining Township before taking on and devoting thirteen years to Pschiatric Nursing. During this time still writing songs for his and other bands, many of which have been recorded.

During this time he met and married Colleen and they now have three great sons.

Eventually, with artistic cravings crying out to be fulfilled, he 'flipped out', threw in his career and moved to Queensland, working at anything and everything from brickies labourer to cleaning super-markets, coming across some of the finest and most interesting people he had ever met.

Moving to Bundaberg, he stumbled across the local Writers Club, had his first run-in with bush poetry, and under threats of violence from 'The Bundy Mob' was coaxed into attending a gathering of Bush Poets in Toowoomba in 1995. It was here, sampling his first real taste of the awesome talents of Bobby Miller, Milton Taylor, John Philipson and Frank Daniels, that he managed a spot in the finals, only to fluff out forgetting the last three verses of his poem. Persistence however saw him release his first book later that year, becoming the fastest selling book in his family.

On the coaster ride from there on he Neil began performing at all types of venues from Government Conferences to Rotary Club functions and eventually compering the Queensland Housing Awards and doing radio and Television commercials with Bobby Miller.

Neil rates his biggest thrill as being the time Milton Taylor won the Traditional Section of the Imperial Hotel Competition with the first poem he ever penned, 'Mulligan's Missus'. Having a poet of such great talent seeing fit to perform one of his poems, to Neil, "is one of the greatest honours and acknowledgements of his writing ability."

After compering at Maleny and Mapleton, meeting up with such performers as Mark Gliori, Ray Essery, Shirley Friend and Glenny Palmer, to mention only a few, it was a hard decision making a return to the "Unknown Poetry Land of Victoria". Releasing his first Cassette, "Love Thongs" at Woodford, Neil and family returned home, unsure as to how Victoria would accept his style of writing, with such signature poems as "The Gay Farmhand", "The Most Popular Bloke in the Pub" and "The Totally Inconvenient Second Coming of Jesus Christ"

Neil soon discovered that 'Mexico' had some wonderfully talented poets from around Maldon, Bendigo, and inparticular, Kyabram, which is as rich in Poetic talent as Ballarat is in gold. His work was acceptable and he once again felt at home with fellow poets.

Through his use of humour, and often ridiculous imagination, Neil hones in on such social issues as drugs, homosexuality, Indigenous Injustice, religion and politics in a way that helps people see the lighter side of these situations withing our increasingly complex society, in a way that causes them neither embarrassment or any sense of discrimination.

Strangely enough, Neil has had some successes in written competitions with his serious works, but prefers to perform the humorous, not enjoying reciting serious poetry.

Currently Neil is working for his brother as a printer at Sovereign Hill, is in the process of compiling a book on the Histroy of Poetry on the Goldfields, and is working towards appearances in Tamworth this month.



Graeme Johnson — bush poet and master of verbal prose will be appearing at the Wombat Folk Festival over the Australia Day Long Week-end. Graeme hails from West Ryde.

RURAL NEWS — A Bathurst potato farmer is reported to have had great success with a cross breeding programme between a champion Tasmanian Potato and one imported from Great Britain.

Going from Bard to Verse, Hipshot comes up with the following:

The little spud had Royal blood
From two distinctive places
But she fell in love with Johnny Tapp,
Who calls the Sydney Races..
Her Mother said, "You silly girl,
Your lineage is much greater.
How many times have you been told
He's just a commentator !!!

MAGGOTOSIS

© Frank Daniel Canowindra NSW 7.1.1998

Sad news my friends. I must relay
The fact that Bob near passed away;
But praise the Lord, we've got him back
Although he walks a wobbly track.
The prayers we prore were not in vain,
We've got the 'Maggott' back again.

What was wrong — what made him ill?
The Doctor's all are wondering still.
No matter what they pre-supposed,
The problem's still not diagnosed.
The 'Vets' can't tell us why he's crook,
His problem isn't in their book.

My Mother could have cracked this case.
With all the problems she did face.
Mum was our family's greatest hope,
She had no use for modern 'dope'.
With Rawleighs tins of salves and balm
She was the doctor on our farm.

With cures for colds and coughs and pain,
She'd scare us back to right again.
With castor oils and epsom salts,
We'd soon be good as new born colts.
Her favourite cure was not morphene,
Just a glass of milk — and kerosene.

No problem e'er befuddled Mum —
The cure the same for head or bum,
The titles that she gave our ills
Made modern Doctors sound like dills,
While Bobby's case in her prognosis —
Would simply end up — 'Maggotosis'.

THE WALLABY TRACK

E.J. Overbury

You may talk of your mighty exploring —
Of Landsborough, McKinlay, and King;
But I feel I should only be boring,
On such frivolous subjects to sing.
For discovering mountains and rivers
There's one, for a gallon I'd back,
Who'll beat all your Stuarts to shivers;
It's the man on the Wallaby Track.

With a ragged old swag on his shoulder,
And a billy or pot in his hand,
'Twould astonish the new-chum beholder
To see how he'll traverse the land.
From Billabone, Murray, or Loddon,
To the far Tatiara and back,
The mountains and the plains are well trodden
By the man on the Wallaby Track.

OFF THE HILL

© Bob Miller Mungar Qld. 8.1.98

I suppose you've heard the rumour
that the Maggot has been crook.
Well, I did go into hospital
but just to have a look,
where I checked out all the nurses
as the bed the did arrange
and this spunky little doctor
but HE thought me rather strange.

Yet, I'm really very grateful
for the messages you sent.
The one they found in children's ward
was from our President.
He could recommend a surgeon
(but I bet the blokes a Vet)
One quick nick should do the trick
then lest you all forget.

There were rumours rife of rabies
as they bunged those needles in.
They even tried to amputate
me bloody Larrikin grin.
But I survived by providence
or some would say default
and I found a way to bring
this vicious virtue to a halt.

See, I pinched a hundred patches
from the heart and lung machine
and I let 'em soak in Bundy rum
till they were turning green.
Then I stuck 'em all upon me
such a wonderous cure I say
but I'll need a can of Coke or two,
about every second day.

P.S. Thanks to all the ABPA members for their well wishes. See you all in Tamworth. Bob Miller.

AUSTRALIAN BUSH FESTIVAL

1998 — 9 - 10 May

celebrating the spirit of the bush

**Bush Markets - Poetry - Yarn Telling
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Music - Arts and Crafts
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The Tenterfield Saddler Presents
The Golden Gumleaf

BUSH LAUREATE AWARDS

Country Club Pavillion West Tamworth Leagues Club — Tuesday 20.1.1998 at 2pm

Guest Artists include — Slim Dusty, John Williamson, Graeme Connors, Troy Cassar-Daly, Shanley Del, Darren Coggan, Jane Saunders, Ray Essery, Frank Daniel, Bob Magor and the Bush Kids - Alli Ryan, Paddy Ryan, Carmel Dunn and Dan Binns.

Hosted by Nick Erby and Jim Haynes

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

Admission \$10.00 Ph. 02 6765 7588

ISOBEL'S HOUSE

© Brian Bell Glenbrook NSW

Isobel's house isn't there any more!

The letter box stand, with its quaint forty-four,
like the sturdy white garage, is suddenly gone,
buth she wasn't the type to be travelling on.

Her weatherboard cottage which stood sixty years,
was razed by a tractor's deliberate gears,
after workmen had taken off roofing and planks
which had sheltered a family which gave daily thanks.

A backhoe made very short work of her trees.
It ripped up the path where her son skinned his knees,
and played with his toys until evening turned black.
Then it pushed down the toilet that stood out the back.

The garden where Isobel spent sunny days
enhances the view in my memory's haze,
as trenches and concrete take turns with the soil,
dismissing long decades of Isobel's toil.

I started to wonder where Isobel went,
for she wasn't so keen about bricks and cement.
That's why it surprised me to find she had moved.
But then I remembered — things hadn't improved

since John fell quite ill, just a few years ago.
His illness was painful, and progress was slow.
Ever since then, well, the garden, for one,
has been missing that glow, and so has their son.

Poor Isobel struggled to bring up her boy
after John had succumbed. It took all of her joy
when she lost him. Young Kenny adored him as well.
Their home had a magic, till death broke the spell.

I found out why nobody's there anymore.
Seems Isobel teamed with the fellow next door.
They both took their dogs and their children and cats,
and sold to a man who builds highly-priced flats.