

AB.P.A.

Australian Bush
Poets Association



Volume 20 - No. 6 December 2014 / January 2015



20th BUNDY BUSH POETRY MUSTER

2015

JULY 3RD - 4TH - 5TH

at

ACROSS THE WAVES SPORTS CLUB

MILLER STREET

BUNDABERG

2015

Performance Competitions

- Open (Male & Female) – 18 Yrs +
- Intermediate – 18 Yrs +
- Novice – 18 Yrs +
- Junior Categories (U/ 7 Yrs.
7 Yrs to 12 Yrs & 13 Yrs to 17 Yrs.)
- Yarn Spinning
- Duo Competition
- One Minute Cup



Competition Enquiries & Entry Forms

SSAE to:
Bundaberg Poets' Society Inc.
PO Box 4281
BUNDABERG SOUTH 4670

BUSH LANTERN AWARD – WRITTEN COMPETITION FOR BUSH VERSE

ALSO

BUSH LANTERN AWARD – JUNIOR CATEGORY

(Primary & Secondary School Students)

- **Closing date** for written competitions May 22nd, 2015.
Results announced on July 5th
at Presentation of trophies
Muster week-end.

Entry forms : SSAE to
Bush Lantern Co-ordinator
Bundaberg Poets' Society Inc.,
PO Box 4281
BUNDABERG SOUTH. 4670



All phone or e.mail enquiries:

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Jayson Russell (Vice-President) .. 07 41550778 or blanaa@bigpond.net.au
OR ... ABPA website



The Bundaberg Poets' Society Inc. is proudly supported by Across the Waves Sports Club, Miller Street, Bundaberg

MILTON SHOW SOCIETY NSW BUSH POETRY ADULT PERFORMANCE COMPETITION



TO BE HELD AT THE MILTON SHOW
SAT 21ST FEBRUARY 2015
11AM START



TOTAL OF \$1000 PRIZE MONEY

1ST \$500 2ND \$300 3RD \$200

Maximum of 12 Performers accepted on First In/First Served basis

Poem can be Serious or Light Hearted and Classic, Contemporary or Original

Download Entry forms from ABPA Website www.abpa.org.au OR www.showdayonline.com

and follow the prompts

OR

Contact John Davis 37 George avenue Kings Point NSW 2539

Ph 02 44552013 email jda76436@bigpond.net.au

EDITORIAL



G'day and welcome to the December/January Edition of the ABPA Magazine. And it's a big MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR to all our members. I hope yours is a happy and safe festive time. I will be missing my family for most of that period, performing this year at the Woodford Folk Festival. Then I should get a week or two home before the fun of the Tamworth Country Music Festival begins! It is great to see so many Poetry Venues starting up around the Festival so all Poets can have a chance to perform. Robyn Sykes has submitted a list of all Bush Poetry Venues for the 2015 Festival as you will find in this magazine. Thanks Robyn.

Of course we will be having our AGM as well (as explained in Hal's President's Report) and I encourage every member who is up at the festival to attend, or at least submit a Proxy Voting Form.

I hope you have all enjoyed Frank Daniel's contribution to our 20th Anniversary Issues and sorry it did not carry on through to the end of the year, but for those unaware, Frank is quite ill again and our best wishes are with him.

Not much more from me this edition except to say a big thank you to all those who responded to my call for submissions. I have more than I can print, which is great, and for anybody who's submission could not be fitted in, don't worry, it will appear in the next magazine.

And also a big thanks to our ABPA Committee and Delegates for all their hard work keeping the Association at a high standard throughout the past year. It is a thankless job sometimes, but they were prepared to volunteer and sacrifice many, many hours to keep our Bush Poetry Family alive and thriving.

So once again, a big MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

ABPA Magazine Advertising Rates

Black and White Ads

Full page \$80

Half Page \$40

Quarter Page or less \$20

Full Colour Ads (Space limited)

Full Page \$200

Half Page \$100

Quarter Page or less \$60

Poets Calendar and Regular Events free (one or two lines only)

To help offset costs, articles regarding a festival or event would be appreciated if accompanied by a paid Ad.

Send all details in plain text or PDF Format to
editor@abpa.org.au

All payments to be made within 14 days to
The Treasurer Greg North - 5 Dryandra Place
Linden NSW 2778

or via Direct Debit to ABPA Account
Comm. Bank BSB 064 433 Account No 1023 1528

Please put your name/club/invoice as reference so Treasurer can identify who the deposit is from.

Happy writing and performing to all and safe travels!

Neil McArthur

editor@abpa.org.au

NOTE:- Next Magazine Deadline for submissions is January 31st

ABPA Committee Members 2014

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President's Report



Sadly, we need to begin on another unhappy note. In September the ABPA lost two of its valued members. Barry Lake who was an ardent poetry supporter and keen performer and Bob Sanders who was a well-known and much admired Aussie 'character' and a great entertainer in competitions. They will be sorely missed around the bush poetry circuit and our condolences go to their families and to all who loved them. At this time of year, when we are all preparing for Christmas events and possible family reunions, our hearts go out to all members who are experiencing loss or illness.

West Australian State Championships

The ABPA, WA Championships were a great success and the report from Bill Gordon, the President of the WABPYS is on page 9. It was a delight to be able to be there and to have received such a warm welcome. Thank you to all the West Australians for their enthusiasm, efficiency and hospitality. In Bill's words "The east-west divide might exist in politics, but it certainly does not in Bush Poetry."

Tamworth Country Music Festival

Following the suggestion from previous AGM's, we are putting out a one-page sheet to assist the public to find where bush poetry events are being held in Tamworth. On behalf of the committee, Robyn Sykes has compiled this sheet from the information she has received from performing poets who will be at the festival. This information sheet is included on page 12. .

There are many wonderful shows being offered in Tamworth and we hope members will take the opportunity to see our poets there. In particular, to help the ABPA, we ask members to support the Golden Damper Competition at West League's Club and the various events at St. Edwards Hall.

As co-ordinator of the Golden Damper, Graeme Johnson has placed an advertisement on page 15. To date the number of competitors is well down on previous years so please, consider entering this ABPA showcase competition to ensure that it can be kept going into the future.

Tom McIlveen is co-ordinating the bush poetry at St. Edward's hall on behalf of the ABPA and his advertisement is on page 14. . It is our aim that St. Edward's Hall should be a 'hub' for ABPA poets and supporters in Tamworth this year and we look forward to seeing you there many times throughout the festival and in particular to having your company at the fund-raising, get-together planned for Wednesday night, 21st January, following the AGM.

ABPA Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held in St. Edward's Hall at 2.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 21st January, 2015. Again, we urge all members attending the Tamworth CMF to come along to this meeting to have a say in how the ABPA is to go forward.

This year, we have had a dedicated and extremely hard-working executive supported by a very co-operative and helpful committee and by the state representatives. We have also been fortunate to have had a competent and willing webmaster in Gregory North and a real trouper in Neil McArthur who, despite trying personal times, kept the magazine running without a hitch. Thank you to you all.

At the AGM all executive, committee and state representative positions will be declared vacant and elections for 2015 will be held at the meeting. Being a member of the organising body requires energy and commitment but such people are needed to ensure the aims of the ABPA, to preserve and promote our unique Australian cultural heritage through rhyming poetry and storytelling, are preserved. The opportunity exists for YOU to be a part of the 2015 committee team. The required nomination form is enclosed as a flier with this magazine.

To all ABPA members and supporters of bush poetry thank you for your contributions to our worthwhile and enjoyable cause. I wish you a joyous festive season and a prosperous and healthy 2015.

In poetry Hal

CONTINUING OUR THANK YOUS TO OUR WONDERFUL CO-ORDINATORS

ERIC BEER – DUNEDOO BUSH POETRY COMPETITION

"Dunedoo will be holding its 17th Festival, based around the first Saturday in March 2015. Dunedoo is a small country community of around 400 town's people plus approx 400 surrounding farm residents, at the junction of the Golden and Castlereagh Highways, on the edge of the Talbragar River. Throughout the previous years, there have been only four Co-ordinators, and I must say that the general format of the week-end has run smoothly, so I found little need to change much. Our town layout and venues have suited the patrons admirably. Sometimes the weather is very suitable for the recent change to the indoor venues. We have a few major sponsors that contribute greatly to the wonderful prize money with some of the local smaller sponsors assisting with those little things that help the Festival run smoothly and become the success that it really has been in the past.

I became Co-ordinator in 2012 after we (my wife and I) attended our first Saturday evening show and enjoyed it so much that my wife, Colleen asked "could we help for next year?"; thinking we would be making sandwiches or something similar. So a few weeks later the President of the Dunedoo and District Development Group, Lloyd Graham, phoned and asked would I like to be the Co-ordinator, and as they say in the classics, "the rest is history". This is my third year and enjoying the position as we have a small but nonetheless strong group of 7 senior committee members who pull together, each doing their own speciality and working quite well as a whole."



ZONDRAE KING – KEMBLA FLAME, ILLAWARRA & KANGAROO VALLEY FOLK FESTIVAL

"As a founding member of the Illawarra Breakfast Poets, for the past three years I have been the co-ordinator of the Kempl Flame and last year I was asked to take on the Kangaroo Valley Written comp. It is a lot of work but if we wish to keep Australian Bush Poetry alive someone has to do it. Until this time I had given little thought to how a competition was run. When you are given the task of organising a poetry competition the work begins many months before the event.

- 1 You have to establish the ideals of the sponsor or organisation that is holding the comp. Then set the rules and conditions.
- 2 You have to seek sponsorship, settle on trophies and prizes,
- 3 Performance comps need a suitable venue
- 4 Find judges – for performance comps you may need as many as six judges where as written comps can get away with a panel of three.
- 5 Then there is advertising and publicity in various media- distributing entry forms and rules.
- 6 A Competition Secretary to receive and number the entries and fees - even if I am not judging I like to have another person act as the comp secretary.
- 7 A good convenor or coordinator should be able to delegate some duties but still be aware of progress. Entries start arriving up to 4 weeks ahead of judging. Mostly there will need to be extra copies made of the poems to distribute to judges.
- 8 There must be time for the judges to make their individual assessment then at least one, if not more, 'pow wows' at group meetings to decide on the final winner.(s)
- 9 Names must then be matched to poems
- 10 Trophies engraved and certificates produced
- 11 Arrange a suitable time, place and person to announce the results
- 12 Distribute the list of winners to appropriate people, eg ABPA magazine, sponsors of the comp etc.
- 13 Send out any prizes and certificates not presented at the event and if anyone has requested results with sase.
- 14 Then finances have to be reconciled and reported to club or organisation.
- 15 Some comps offer a critiquing service – this has to be followed up. Maybe then the coordinator can sleep."



Zondrae King

When A Tree Falls

© David Campbell

Winner 2014 Toolangi C J Dennis Open Poetry Competition, first published in the competition anthology

When a tree falls in the forest and an ecosystem dies,
there's a tiny world forsaken in the graveyard where it lies,
for the birds have lost the shelter that for years they have enjoyed,
and the rare Leadbeater's possum sees its habitat destroyed.

For a tree is home and haven to a teeming multitude,
a variety of life forms that depend on it for food
and a chance to give their species the most-favoured breeding place,
with protection from the weather in our climate's harsh embrace.

As the 'dozers and the chainsaws kill the heartbeat of our land
with a careless, callous blindness that is hard to understand,
we are left to mourn the passing of the legacy of time
in a moment of destruction that should constitute a crime.

All the government's excuses are just politicians' noise,
a mere bureaucratic smokescreen that the leadership employs
as a means of hiding pledges they have made to buy some votes,
with an ignorance unequalled of the danger that denotes.

For the forest is our future, it's the breath of each new dawn,
and a refuge for the creatures that we soon will have to mourn
as they vanish from the valleys that have nurtured them since birth,
to fall victim to the carnage as we desecrate the earth.

In the hills around Toolangi, where the Mountain Ash trees grow,
mighty monuments of grandeur from the days of long ago,
there is no halt to the logging that creates an ugly scar
which disfigures verdant beauty across vistas near and far.

You'd have thought consideration for the fragile countryside
might have been a telling factor when so much of nature died
as the bushfires' devastation changed the forest's green to black,
but the government did nothing and unwisely turned its back.

So the Eucalyptus regnans is brought crashing to the ground;
once the ruler of its kingdom, it is ruthlessly uncrowned,
to lie shattered, crushed and broken in some former leafy glade,
and then harvested as woodchips so that paper can be made.

In the lofty mountain ranges, when the loggers' days are done,
it is death that haunts the stillness, for their battle has been won;
the machines of man have conquered, the environment has lost,
and in each year's long, slow turning, we will have to pay the cost.

For the bounty we should cherish will soon disappear from view
in an arid, barren landscape that replanting can't renew,
and the children of our children will despair when we recall
that we stood around in silence as we watched the last tree fall.

The XMAS CUP.

The field is at the Barrier for the 'Xmas Cup this year,
"XMAS Tree" goes in now, followed by "Santa's Deer",
"White Boomer" is fighting fit today, "Candles" is looking trim.
A "Xmas Carol" is settling down, to be ridden by "Tiny Tim".

The late mail is for "Xmas Card", a Good Stamp of a horse.
And "Santas Sleigh" has been supported and backed well on the course,
"St Nicholas" and "Holly" are in barriers eight and nine,
"Pudding" is slightly over-weight, and "Turkey Roast" is looking fine,

"They're OFF", the "Xmas Party" roared, They're coming into sight,
A "Xmas Carol" leads the field followed by "Silent Night",
"White Boomer" now is bounding up, with "Yuletide" on his tail,
"Xmas Stocking" is hanging up, and "Holly's" on the rail.

"St Nicholas" is moving up as they turn into the straight,
There's "Xmas Tree" and "Turkey Roast" and "Candles" burning late.
When down the outside rail comes "Santa" and his Deer,
"Jingle Bells" is flying and the crowd let's out a CHEER.

It's "White Boomer" and "Santa's Deer" and "YES!" it's "Turkey Roast"
And "Xmas Card" is also there – a late run for the Post,
They flash across the line – the crowd is in despair,
There's Xmas Cheer and shouting – - - "It's a PHOTO I DECLARE.

And the Winner gets a mighty Cheer – as in the frame it goes,
It's a SPECIAL XMAS WINNER,
IT'S RUDOLPH – BY A NOSE.

Written by Grahame "Skew Wiff" Watt.



A SUMMER STORM

©Neville Briggs

*At the rising, with portent of midsummer heat;
from the east comes the sun with its fiery face.
In that day to day summons from ages gone past,
this great furnace that flares from the reaches of space
has a task that is set and its progress is sure;
bringing light, making heat, giving life to the land.
And the energy sent from the heart of the sun
will unleash mighty forces from nature's hard hand.*

*On the fields and the roads, on the tops of the roofs
there is nothing can hide from the heat of the day.
Silent waves of the heat haze are rippling along
like a shimmering lake, on the flats far away;
as the sky burns to bronze and the breath of the air
has gone still, very still, as though fallen asleep.
Far away in the heights a cold crop has been sown,
for the scythe of the storm has a harvest to reap.*

*From the earth's gathered moisture the clouds start to form
into great gleaming mountains that billow and boil.
Looming over the face of the land comes a tide,
forming wave upon wave, where the dark masses roll,
so a thick angry ocean is churning the sky
sending flashes of lightning and thunderous roar.
There's the promise of rain and relief from the heat,
such a welcome refreshment from nature's rich store.*

*All at once with a flash and a violent blast,
by a rush of the wind comes the charge of the storm.
Just a patter at first, just a tap and a knock
then a rapping and banging and rattling will form
a tumultuous tattoo of clattering blows
as the hail smashes down in a merciless spate
onto houses and fields, onto roads, onto trees;
a vast barrage of ice, with the beat of its weight.*

*For those long noisy moments, the deluge descends,
where it leaves a deposit of crystalline stones.
Now, the gale dies away and the soft steady rain
soothes the hot battered land, as if washing atones
for destruction that's wrought by the fury before,
when the elements raged in a feverish dance.
Angry clouds move away and the sun shines again.
It's the cycle of nature, of time and of chance.*

*At the setting, a farewell; the day's work is done.
To the west goes the sun with its fiery face.
In the day ending pattern from ages gone past,
as the earth rolls around in the vastness of space,
there's a task that is set and its progress is sure
so that life will remain on the face of the land.
Endless energy sent from the heart of the sun
Will obey unseen powers, we don't understand.*

BINALONG N.S.W. Bush Poetry Championships

Banjo would be proud.

What a weekend! Binalong was buzzing on September 12-14 when the NSW Bush Poetry Championship caravan parked itself in Banjo Paterson heartland. People came from Queensland, Victoria and all over NSW to tell stories of people and places around Australia.

It was a weekend of competition poetry interspersed with music, yarn spinners, MC patter and more. A huge variety of classical, original and contemporary bush poetry had the audience thoughtful, tearful and then roaring with laughter.

A real highlight of the weekend was Saturday night's Celebrate Australia Concert, featuring the judges, MCs and local musicians. MC Mike Grogan, present-day owner of "Illalong" (the property on which the young Banjo Paterson grew up) told hilarious tales of modern "Banjophiles" on the trail of their idol.

The event brought together a huge number of people. Open mic events gave everyone a chance to perform and Binalong's own Celia Walker won the One Minute Poem. The way the community got behind us was fantastic.

The rural scenery (courtesy Binalong School) and gum leaf decorations made the Mechanic Institute feel like a bush setting, highlighted by a delightful wooden cockatoo on a stand, painted by Binalong's local Archibald Prize winning artist, Janet Dawson.

The Binalong primary school children recited Banjo Paterson's poem "Weary Will the Wombat" beautifully. The Binalong Junior Brass Band, some dwarfed by their instruments, won even the hardest hearts and had the hall swaying to "Bound for Botany Bay".

Local glass artist Peter Minson crafted spectacular cockatoo trophies for the Bubbles Garry Award (for the NSW Women's Performance Champion) and the Adrian Sykes Award (for the NSW Men's Champion). Representatives of the Garry and Sykes families presented the awards to Rhonda Tallnash (Violet Town Vic), who completed a clean sweep of the women's categories, and Ralph Scrivens (Corrimal NSW).

Binalong Bush Poetry Prize Performance Winners 2014

Women's Classical

1. Rhonda Tallnash
2. Claire Reynolds
3. Jacqui Warnock

Men's Classical

1. John Peel
2. Ralph Scrivens
3. Jason Roweth

Women's Original

1. Rhonda Tallnash
2. Claire Reynolds
3. Sue Pearce

Men's Original

1. Ken Potter
2. John Peel
3. Ted Webber

Women's Contemporary

1. Rhonda Tallnash
2. Sue Pearce
3. Claire Reynolds

Men's Contemporary

1. Ralph Scrivens
2. Jason Roweth
3. John Davis

2014 NSW Women's Bush Poetry Performance
Champion and Bubbles Garry Award:
Rhonda Tallnash

2014 NSW Men's Bush Poetry Performance
Champion and Adrian Sykes Award:
Ralph Scrivens

Winners of the Written NSW Bush Poetry Championships 2014

Overall Champion: David Campbell

Serious

1. David Campbell
 2. Tom McIlveen
 3. Milton Taylor
- HC Will Moody
HC Tom McIlveen
C Brenda Joy
C Tom McIlveen
C Val Wallace
C Milton Taylor

The Lucky Country
A Call to Arms
Stinky Steve
The Chorus of the Night
The Cattle Pastures
Secrets of the Desert
Eugene
To My Son
In Defence of the Workers

Humorous

1. Milton Taylor
 2. Milton Taylor
 3. Tom McIlveen
- HC David Campbell
HC A Musing
HC Tom McIlveen
C Beryl Stirling
C Neil Carroll
C Beryl Stirling

Wallace Dot and Croc
Of Felines and Females
The Breathalyser
When Rhyme is a Crime
Brenda Joy
Roadside Pizza
Bob from Burrado
Rob the Pilot
Wedding Day at Bunji

Best Novice: Rob Hughes

Wild Dog Trapper



Toodyay, W.A. Bush Poetry Festival

The weekend of 24 - 26 October 2014, Toodyay once again hosted the WA Bush Poets for their annual Bush Poetry Festival and State Championships. People from far flung parts of the state came to see and hear some of the best bush poets in action. The Memorial Hall, which is a magnificent heritage building, was decorated in all things poetic and historic, with a display from the Toodyay Historic Society. Our Bush Poetry Festival is well and truly established on the calendar now, and Toodyay can rightly claim to be the "Home of Bush Poetry in WA".

It was a real pleasure to have the ABPA president and secretary, Hal Pritchard and his wife Brenda Joy, with us for the weekend. Both are extremely supportive of all we are doing in the west. They were a great help to us in the running of the State Championships. The new judging guidelines recommended by the ABPA worked very well and they are to be commended for their efforts in standardizing and simplifying the management of these events.

Brenda's workshop was well attended and was exceptionally interesting for poets and supporters alike. Brenda's tips for writing and performing, both in competition and in general entertainment, were well received. As a judge Brenda gave encouragement to all competitors and was eager to help individuals improve their poetic skills. Thank you, Hal and Brenda, for coming across and for all your support and assistance. The east-west divide might exist in politics, but it certainly does not in Bush Poetry.

There was an excellent standard of poetry throughout the competition, and also at the walk-ups each day. The Bush Dance could have been better attended, but Les Helfgott and the Southern Cross Bush Band were a big hit with all who were there.

Christine Boulton rose from the ranks of the novices to win the title Champion WA Bush Poet. Brian Langley was runner-up with Peter Blyth third.

It was easy to imagine Arthur Leggett sitting by a campfire as he gave his winning yarn in the Yarnspinning. Two of our favorite local writers, Terry Piggott and Peg Vickers won the serious and humorous sections of the Written Competition from a field containing the best writers in Australia. Congratulations to Christine, and to all the winners. Congratulations also to all the competitors. The friendly manner in which the events were contested made it a pleasure to take part.

I am thankful my passion for bush poetry has led me to the WA Bush Poets and Yarnspinnners Assn. Meg and I have made many genuine friends through that involvement. The willingness of everyone to volunteer for any task made the organizing of the event so much easier. My personal thanks go to all who attended and who assisted in any way in making the weekend the huge success it was.

I would also like to thank our sponsors, Toodyay Shire, Roadwise, Makit Hardware, Bendigo Bank and the Toodyay Lions Club for their generous support, and Toodyay Festivals Inc for their assistance in planning and running the weekend.

Bill Gordon
President

Winners and runners up for the Toodyay Bush Poetry Festival – 2014 **incorporating the ABPA West Australian Written and Performance Championship**

WRITTEN

Written Serious

- 1 Terry Piggott
- 2 Will Moody NSW
- 3 Will Moody NSW

Written Humorous

- 1 Peg Vickers
- 2 Peter Blyth
- 3 Carol Heuchan

PERFORMANCE

WA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

Contemporary/Modern

1. Brian Langley
2. Arthur Leggett
3. Christine Boulton

Traditional/Classic

1. Christine Boulton
2. Arthur Leggett
3. Roger Cracknell

Original Humorous

1. Peter Blyth
2. Rhonda Tallnash
3. Christine Boulton

Original Serious

1. Peter Blyth
2. Brian Langley
3. Roger Cracknell

WA Bush Poetry Champion

Christine Boulton

Runner Up: Brian Langley

Third: Peter Blyth

OTHER

Junior Original: Alex Heffernan

Junior Other: Alex Heffernan

Novice Original:

1. Christine Boulton
2. June Eastwood
3. Greg Joass

Novice Other:

1. Christine Boulton
2. Robert Gunn
3. Alex Heffernan

Local poet's award: June Eastwood "Roadwise" poetry competition (16 lines)

1. Brian Langley
2. Irene Connor
3. Bill Gordon

Novice Classics Reader

1. Anne Hayes
2. Nancy Coe
3. Jem Shorland

Poet's Brawl Roger Cracknell

Yarnspinning State Champion

1. Arthur Leggett
2. Peter Blyth
3. John Hayes



A Little Boy's Letter to Santa

© Mick Coventry

Dear Santa, God Bless ya!
Y'know, you're my besets mate.
And I send this letter to you
To try to set the record straight.

See, I been really good all year
And I've tried so very hard.
And I always help me Mum and Dad
With little jobs around the house.

But sometimes accidents happen
And it's me what gets the blame.
So Santa you must believe me
Because I need to clear me name.

It wasn't me who burned the haystack down
Though they found matches in my pocket.
Then the hashed caught fire to the machinery shed
And Dad's tractor blew up like a rocket!

And it cost him heaps for a new one,
'Coz the Insurance Company wouldn't pay.
They said 'We were a bad risk!'
After I burned the Dairy down last May!

And because I burned the Dairy down
Dad had nowhere to keep the cow.
So I let her walk on the road --- by herself,
She's probably in North Queensland by now!

And Dad used to let me pick up the mail
From the mailbox at the end of the lane,
But after I lost his Wool Cheque
I wasn't allowed to go there again!

Then one day I thought I'd be real helpful --
I'd start the mower and mow the lawn --
But that mower's got a mind of it's own,
And Mum's prize-winning roses got shore.

And, speaking of things with a mind of their own,
Dad's ute is like that as well.
I accidentally started it -- in gear --
And it shot through like a bat out of hell!

It wiped out the garage, and the outhouse
Then up the tank stand it started to climb.
And Dad got upset because
He was in the outhouse at the time!

So things haven't gone too well, Santa --
I've had a very unfortunate year,
But I know that you will forgive me
And still bring me some Christmas cheer.

So please come to my house, Santa
Although you mightn't recognise the place,
'Coz I accidentally burned it down last night,
And Dad's got a strange look on his face!

But I know he'll cheer up, Santa
If you bring heaps of presents real quick.
And I wish you a Merry Christmas too, Santa
From your bestest,
favourite little boy,

Mick

Santa Claus (Comes to Camp)

by Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson

"Halt! Who goes there?" the sentry's call
Rose on the midnight air
Above the noises of the camp,
The roll of wheels, the horses' tramp.
The challenge echoed over all—
"Halt! Who goes there?"
A quaint old figure clothed in white,
He bore a staff of pine,
And ivy-wreath was on his head.
"Advance, O friend," the sentry said,
"Advance, for this is Christmas Night,
And give the countersign."
"No sign or countersign have I.
Through many lands I roam
The whole world over far and wide.
To exiles all at Christmastide
From those who love them tenderly
I bring a thought of home.
"From English brook and Scottish burn,
From cold Canadian snows,
From those far lands ye hold most dear
I bring you all a greeting here,
A frond of a New Zealand fern,
A bloom of English rose.
"From faithful wife and loving lass
I bring a wish divine,
For Christmas blessings on your head."
"I wish you well," the sentry said,
"But here, alas! you may not pass
Without the countersign."
He vanished— and the sentry's tramp
Re-echoed down the line.
It was not till the morning light
The soldiers knew that in the night
Old Santa Claus had come to camp
Without the countersign.

A Christmas Memory

©Kathy Vallance

Sitting with a cup of tea my mind was backward cast,
I found a hidden memory as I searched through Christmas past.

Streamers spanned the ceiling for the Holy celebrations,
A pine branch for a Christmas tree with homemade decorations.

Greeting cards hung on a string from unknown friends and rellies,
The pungency of Christmas food to fill our hungry bellies.

Rifling through a Santa sack we looked for nuts and cherries,
The two bob in its corner made every Christmas merry.

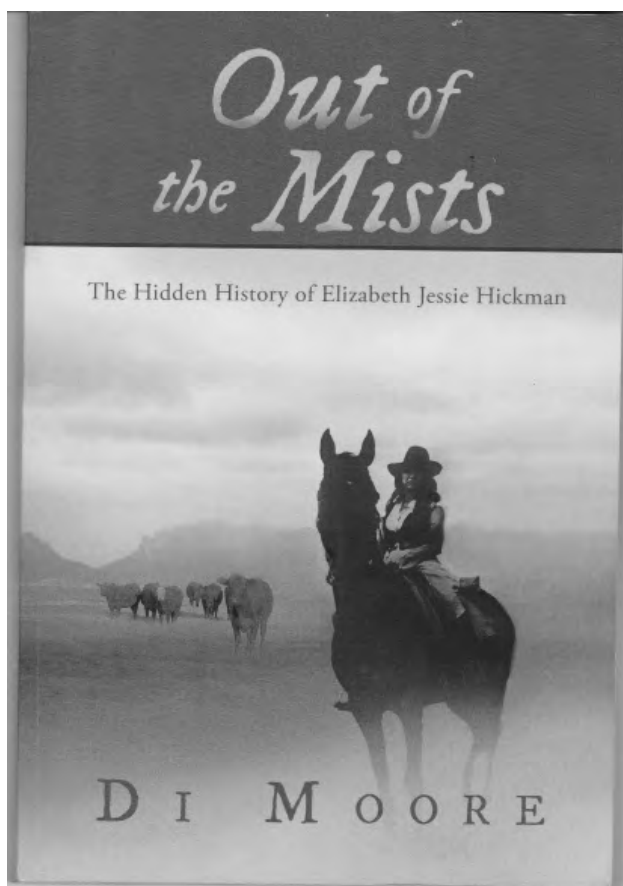
I saw it hanging on the door, the gift I most remember,
I'd watched her on the tele from March through to December.

I almost feel the texture of the fabric in my hands,
Ming blue with two inch fringing, a wide elastic band.

Guns with caps and holsters, I reckoned I looked beaut,
The year I got for Christmas my Annie Oakley suit.

GREAT AUSSIE READS

with Jack Drake



Out of the Mists by Di Moore (Balboa Press 2014) is a brand new Aussie Read. It gives me a lot of satisfaction to review this book as I had some input in its output.

Di Moore was sixty seven years old when she discovered that the lady she knew as her grandmother, was not actually her biological Gran. It came as quite a surprise to find out her father's birth mother was a lady who had come to be known in Australian folklore, as "The Lady Bushranger". Elizabeth Jessie Hickman, the lady in question, began her career as a circus roustabout and performer, and went on to become a star roughrider in Lance Skuthorpe's and later Martin "Martini" Breheney's buckjump shows.

She had given up Di's father as a baby and fell foul of the law a few times. The Lady Bushranger eventually ran a cattle duffing gang in the New South Wales wild Wollemi Ranges. Di Moore has meticulously researched her grandmother's life and presented a 'warts and all' account of the life and times of Jessie Hickman, "The Lady Bushranger".

She has also exploded a few myths caused by tall tales, faulty research and outright fabrication by other chroniclers.

Out of the Mists is no dry historic rendition. It leaps off the pages like one of the rope ring buckjumpers Jessie rode so well.

Bush poetry and horses are inextricably linked. There has probably been more bush verse written featuring horses than any other subject that the versifiers turn their pen to.

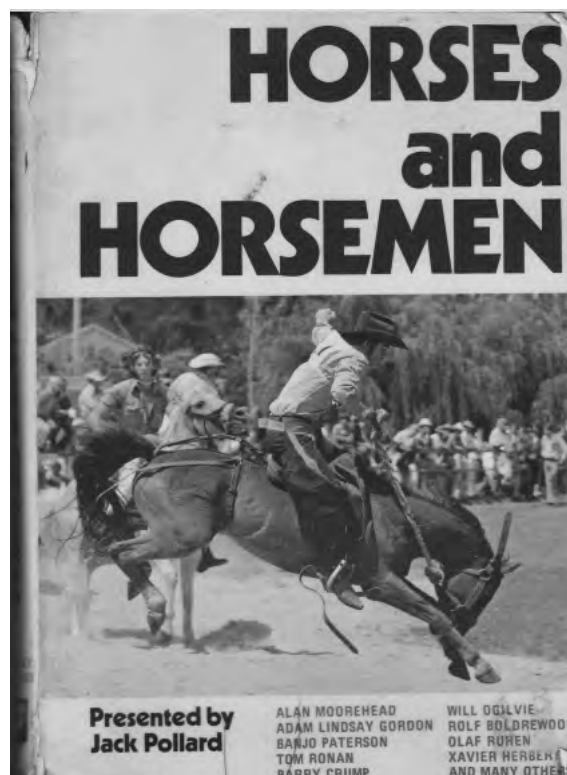
Horses and Horsemen, Wild Bush Horses, Thoroughbreds and the Men who Rode Them edited by Jack Pollard (Landsdowne 1965), is a collection of stories, articles and history interspersed with items of poetry that share a common theme. The horse.

Pollard has put this selection together featuring Australian writers like Rolf Boldrewood, Dal Stevens, Olaf Rhren, Frank Hardy, Elyne Mitchell, Bill Wannan and many others including a few from across the ditch like Barry Crump.

Iconic racehorses like 'Tulloch', 'Bernborough' and 'Phar Lap' feature as do horse masters like Lance Skuthorpe and Breaker Morant. In a blend of fact and fiction, Pollard celebrates the horses of Australia from the first arrivals, to the time of writing, in a medley of humour, drama and history. Liberally spread with photos, illustrations and cartoons, the book is visually entertaining as well.

From the outrageous tall story like "The Biggest Buckjumper in the World" by Dal Stevens whose equine rebel manages to force most of the inhabitants of a stock camp to take up residence on a cloud, to the dramatic "The Wells of Beersheeba" by Frank Dalby Davidson.

Horses and Horsemen is definitely a Great Aussie Read



Jack Drake

Bush poetry events Tamworth, January 2015

The Longyard

Hosted by Neil McArthur and Marco Gliori
Saturday January 17 - Sunday 25: 8-10am
The Longyard Hotel, Goonoo Goonoo Room
(at rear of hotel)

Sam Smyth Bush Poets and Balladeers

Friday 16 - Sunday 25: 7.45am and 10am
Tuesday 21 and Thursday 23: 7pm
West Tamworth Bowling Club.

Rhymer's Roundup

Friday January 16 - Wednesday 21
10.30am - 12.30pm
North Tamworth Bowling Club

Thursday January 22: 7.30pm
Manilla Bowling Club

Partners in Crhyme

Gregory North and Graeme Johnson
Saturday January 17: 7.30 pm
Manilla Bowling Club

Golden Damper Competition

Heats: Tuesday Jan 20, Thursday 22
and Friday 23: all from 10.30am
"Outback Bar" Conference Room
Finals Saturday Jan 24, from 7am
Blazes Auditorium
All in West Tamworth Leagues Club

Walk-ups

Saturday 17 - Tuesday 20, Thursday 22
Saturday 24: 2-5pm
St Edward's Hall
72 Hillvue Rd, South Tamworth

ABPA AGM

Wednesday January 21: from 2pm
St Edward's Hall
72 Hillvue Rd, South Tamworth

ABPA get-together and fundraiser

Wednesday January 20: 7pm
St Edward's Hall
72 Hillvue Rd, South Tamworth

Poettes

Friday January 23: 2-5pm
St Edward's Hall
72 Hillvue Rd, South Tamworth

Bush Laureate Awards

7pm Tuesday January 20
Tamworth Town Hall

Four Funny Buggers

Poetry, Comedy, Music
Marco, Muz, Brad and Alan
Tamworth Golf Club
Monday 19 - Friday 23: 11.30am-2.45pm

Bill Kearns and Ray Essery

Peel Inn, Nundle
Sunday afternoon, January 25
Time tbc

Australia Day Show

Bill Kearns and Jack Drake
Monday January 26: 11am
The Dag Station, Nundle

Geoffrey Graham

Voices of War
Friday January 16 - Friday 23: 11am
Saturday January 24: 2pm
Sunday January 25: 11am
All at Harvest Bible Church Hall
Cnr Bourke & Carthage Sts

As the Crow Flies

Monday Jan 19: 1.30pm
St Edward's Hall
72 Hillvue Rd, South Tamworth

WANTED!!

AUDIENCES To LAUGH THEIR BUMS OFF!!

WHERE ?
EVERY MORNING

AT THE FAMOUS
LONGYARD HOTEL
BUSH POETS BREAKFASTS
GOONOO GOONOO ROOM
HOSTED BY
NEIL McARTHUR
ALONG WITH
MARCO GLIORI & RAY ESSERY

FEATURING AUSTRALIA'S
FINEST & FUNNIEST BUSH POETS
MURRAY HARTIN, BILL KEARNS, JACK DRAKE, BRAD MACLEAN, ,
PROUSTY, ERROL GRAY, DAVE PRIOR, JOHN LLOYD, COL MILLIGAN,
PETER CAPB AND MANY MORE!!
EVERY MORNING FROM 8AM TO 10AM
FROM SAT 18TH TO SUN 26TH JANUARY 2014
ADMISSION \$7.50
BREAKFAST AVAILABLE
NEW SHOW EVERY DAY
TAMWORTH CMF'S BEST VALUE SHOW!!!!!!

Tamworth walk-ups at St Edwards Hall 2015.

We have finally started to gain a little momentum with the St Edward's Hall walk-ups, which have been running for the past two years in Tamworth. The venue is also spreading amongst the public, through 'word of mouth.' By listing known performers' names in the gig guide, we have managed to slowly start enticing members of the public, who wouldn't normally attend a 'bush poetry' event. They come to Tamworth primarily for the music, however, they do feel inclined to want to check out a free event, which is of a different genre, to what all the other afternoon venues are offering.

We are starting at 2pm each day, so as not to compete with the various morning bush poetry shows, that are currently in place. I believe the walk-ups are invaluable at Tamworth, as they provide a platform for anybody with a passion for bush poetry, to get up and share, either their own, or somebody else's yarn or poetry, with an appreciative, attentive audience. Who knows how many latent performing poets are lurking out there on the streets of Tamworth? If we can entice even one of them to come along and break the ice on stage, then it makes it all worth while! Our usual standing ovation, for first time performers, ensures that they will get the bug, and want to come back and do it all again.

For those of you coming to Tamworth this year, who haven't been to St Edwards Hall yet, please come along and support us, either as a participant, or as a member of the audience. It is a free event, however, we place a gold coin donation box on the table at the front door, which provides us sufficient funds to pay back the ABPA for the hire of the hall for the week.

We are trying something new this year, as a fundraiser for the ABPA, by putting on a fund raising concert and ABPA poets' get together, at the hall at 7pm on the Wednesday night, after our AGM meeting. I have organised the legendary Pat Drummond, Geoffrey Graham and Greg North to entertain us. They are doing this gratis on behalf of the ABPA, and have very kindly offered us their time and talent, at no charge, to make this a memorable occasion. We will be charging \$10 per head to get in, and are keen to make this an annual showcase event at Tamworth.

For those who haven't been there, St Edwards hall is located at 72 Hillvue Road, South Tamworth, at the top of the hill, next to St Edwards church.

The programme for Tamworth walk-ups this year is as follows.....

2pm SATURDAY 17/1/15 and SUNDAY 18/1/15; mc'd by John Peel & Ray Essery.

2pm MONDAY 19/1/15; mc'd by Geoffrey Graham

2pm TUESDAY 20/1/15; mc'd by BRENDA JOY and ROBYN SYKES.

2pm WEDNESDAY 21/1/15; ABPA AGM.

7pm WEDNESDAY 21/1/15; ABPA FUNDRAISING CONCERT featuring...

PAT DRUMMOND, RAY ESSERY, GEOFFREY GRAHAM, AND GREG NORTH.

2pm THURSDAY 22/1/15 mc'd by Pat Drummond.

2pm FRIDAY 23/1/15..Ladies Poettes mc'd by Trish Anderson.

2pm SATURDAY 24/1/15 mc'd by Greg North

3pm SATURDAY 24/1/15 mc'd by Jack Drake.

For any enquiries regarding the above, please don't hesitate to contact me.
Tom McIlveen Ph- 0417 251287 or email ...portalarms@gmail.com

Official Results Kangaroo Valley Folk Festival Written Poetry Competition 2014

Section 1 (up to 12 years)

Infants: Amelia Sim
Junior Primary: Molly Jones
Senior Primary: Madison Walker

Section 2 (13 years to 17 years)

First: Thomas Loos - Mother Nature

Section 3 Open Adult - Bush Verse

First: Pauline Haggith -
A Morning With My Book
Second: Terry Piggott -
When It's Time To Say Goodbye
Third: Terry Piggott -
The Last Of The Old Australians
Highly Commended: Terry Piggott -
A Blaze Upon A Tree
Highly Commended: Jim Kent -
In A Bush Clearing Small
Commended: Tom McIlveen -
Working For The Dole

Section 4-The Crystal Creek Meadows Award (Two nights with breakfast)

The Theme this year was 'Endeavour.
Won by Trevor Shaw of Biloela QLD
with his poem:
'Proudly 'True Blue' Volunteers'

There were over 120 entries in all. This included 75 from the local primary school. The children's attempt at rhyming was very good. It was remarkable that a 6 year old was able to use onomatopoeia correctly and another had a great line containing a four word use of alliteration. Congratulations to both the children and the teachers.

All of the awards of the open section went out of town this year to places as far as Gordonvale Qld, Port Fairy Victoria, and Canning Vale West Australia. (Full results published in the results section)



Even the Crystal Creek Meadows prize went away to Biloela Qld.

All in all a most successful competition with every section receiving more entries than the previous year!

The performance competition which is held on Sunday was hotly contested, with around a dozen reciters. It was judged by the previous years winner and to my surprise he named me the winner. He said I had the advantage of doing an original poem. I did 'The Hem of Her Apron' and it reminded him of his mother. The trophy is an impressive lump of timber. So next year I receive two tickets to the festival and have to be the judge. All in all a most enjoyable weekend.

THE CARNAGE AT STRINGYBARK CREEK

©Tom McIlveen

I rode alongside of the Kellys,
on a colt that could gallop all day;
a strawberry roan, who was bad to the bone
and as tough as a bullocky's dray.
He ran like the wind and I swear that he grinned
every time I had called him a cur,
and seemed to delight in the wonder of flight,
when I tickled his rib with a spur.

The gelding that Ned had been riding
was as flash as I'd seen in a while;
a thoroughbred cross, with a velvety gloss
that depicted his breeding and style.
He seemed to have wings integrated with springs
as he soared over timber and scrub,
and landed inbound on the sanctified ground
alongside of the Everton pub.

The bar was a tad overcrowded
as we pulled up a seat in the rear,
and tried to ignore the old tuppenny whore
whose intentions were blatantly clear.
She'd recognised Ned from the papers that said,
we'd been hounded for nearly a week,
and hiding in holes like marsupial moles,
since the carnage at Stringybark Creek.

She said they were calling us butchers
for the slaughter of innocent men,
who's only concern was to safely return
to their wives and their children again.
The headlines proclaimed that we should be ashamed
of the manner in which they had died;
bespattered with blood and submerged in the mud,
without dignity, honour or pride.

They said we were merciless cowards,
and the scourge of colonial times,
who'd tried to disclaim allegations of blame
for atrocious despicable crimes.
What God-given right did they have to indict
such a charge without probable cause?
Condoning their lies, in the flimsy disguise
of primeval draconian laws.

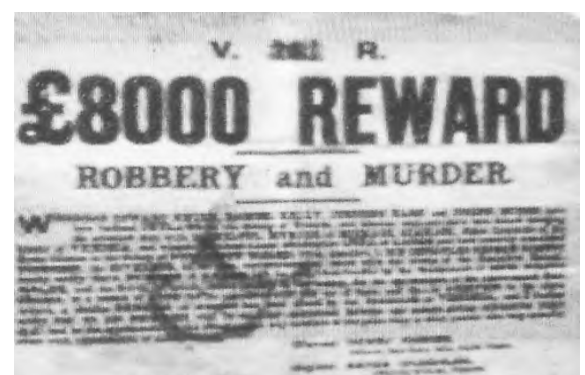
Perhaps there's a law for the masses,
and another for those in control,
to govern and bribe every newspaper scribe
who has squandered his conscience and soul?
The squatters and swells and their mademoiselles
had endorsed every journal and rag,
and tried to subdue every rebel who flew
the Eureka republican flag.



The papers neglected to mention,
that those troopers came hunting for us,
to apprehend Dan and the rest of the clan,
who'd been causing a hell of a fuss.
So why did they come with their guns and their rum
with munitions concealed in their swags...
to shoot us like dogs and then gut us like hogs,
to be flaunted on calico bags?

Condemned by the righteous and holy,
for atrocities deemed inhumane,
we yearned for respite, in the shadows of night,
from the spirits of those we had slain.
When Father O'Hea had come over to pray,
he absolved us of damnable sins
and tried to erase every secular trace
from the Kellys, the Lloyds and the Quinns.

I ride through the Warbys alone now,
as a phantom devoid of physique;
immersed in the shroud of a lingering cloud
that descends over Stringybark Creek.
My spirit remains in the timeless terrains
of the ranges that tower on high,
still riding on wings, integrated with springs
on a pony that thinks he can fly!



2015 ESSENTIAL ENERGY AUSTRALIAN BUSH POETS ASSOCIATION BUSH POETRY COMPETITION

The "Golden Damper" Performance Awards

"TRADITIONS"

Graeme Johnson: Co-ordinator Golden Dampers 2015: In this my third Press Release for the upcoming competition I wanted to write something that showcased the rich history and traditions that the Golden Damper Awards have established within the Bush Poetry fraternity. Then it struck me, why not speak to someone whose been there since the beginning? Jan Morris, President of the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group. Jan wrote this piece she called "Traditions".

The "Golden Damper Awards" competition began life as the "Tamworth Bush Poetry Competition" and was the brainchild of members of the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group, who saw the prospect of adding Bush Poetry to the Tamworth Country Music Festival as a natural fit. A very small start was made with the first competition in 1987, which was held at the Longyard Hotel, and won by locals, Murray Hartin and John Philipson. By 1989 the competition moved to the beer garden of the Imperial Hotel and the word was quickly getting around that these bush poetry competitions were really good! The "Impy" became the home of Bush Poetry and continued there for 15 years. The Imperial was also the venue for the first meeting of bush poets to form the Australian Bush Poets Association in 1994.

There were just so many wonderful poets, and it was so exciting to see new poets like Bob Miller, Dave Proust, Marco Gliori and many others get up on stage for the very first time. So many stars have been born in our competition and many are still around, still supporting our competition. Even as the competition grew though, there was always room for beginners and I am very proud that we gave the opportunity to get on the stage to so many first time performers.

In 2012 the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group decided that we were all getting a bit too old for the rigours of organising such a competition & needed the energies of younger people and the guidance of the ABPA to take the competition on to hopefully, bigger and better things.

The competition continues now under the "The Golden Dampers" name and is still sponsored by Essential Energy. The venue is now the West's Tamworth League Club and the management has embraced Bush Poetry as a big part of their Festival program. It is a wonderful venue. I hope bush poets, both members of ABPA and newcomers who walk up and say "Can I have a go?" continue to enter the "Golden Damper Awards" and help keep the excitement and tradition of bush poetry performance alive & well for future generations to enjoy.

Yours, Jan Morris.

Sponsored By



A Lesson in Life

© Shelley Hansen

First prize winner in the Ipswich International Poetry Competition - Open Bush Poetry Category, and was also the overall winner of the competition and the iconic "Babies of Walloon" trophy.



He was just an old bloke who was probably broke,
and he camped in the bush by the creek.
He would carry his swag and an old duffle bag
when he walked into town once a week.

Other boys would poke fun, shout their taunts and then run
as he stopped by our small corner store
for his meagre supplies. They'd kick dust in his eyes
and would call him "Old Ashes" – and more!

But I never joined in, for it seemed like a sin
when I thought of the hurt he must feel.
I'd seen hobos before, but to me he seemed more ...
with a dignity hard to conceal.

So I followed him back as he walked down the track
till we came to his camp, where I knew
that he couldn't see me as I hid near a tree
while he boiled up a billy of brew.

Then he suddenly said without turning his head,
"Are you coming to join me, or not?
There's no point lurking there, and we might as well share
while there's plenty of tea in the pot."

We just sat for a bit by the campfire he'd lit,
drinking tea without talking at all,
and I saw in his gaze a whole lifetime of days –
sweet as honey, yet bitter as gall.

Then he said with a sigh, "Lad, I'm not quite sure why
you stood back while the others poked fun.
But I know that took nerve, so I think you deserve
to find out who I am, what I've done."

He said, "Lad, I'm no fool. I once taught kids in school,
and those times were my happiest years,
for my future was bright, and my work a delight
till the day it all ended in tears.

I had put my roots down in a little bush town,
wed a girl who was sweet as could be.
Then our hearts filled with joy at the birth of a boy –
there was no one more lucky than we!

And I taught from the heart, as I tried to impart
all the learning that I loved so well.
Through tough times we survived, and our tiny school thrived
as together we strove to excel.

But, my lad, it went wrong one hot day when a strong
summer wind parched our throats and our eyes,
and we saw with dismay bushfires heading our way
as a pall of smoke darkened the skies.

As the gusts fanned the flame, it swept onward to claim
crops and houses, consuming them fast.
But we stood to defend our school right to the end ...
and we saved it! The wind changed at last.

But my wife was away. She had gone for the day
to a neighbouring town with our son,
and there wasn't a phone, so she wouldn't have known
that the blaze in the hills had begun.

And I knew her return would collide with the burn
where she'd probably meet its full force.
So I hoped she'd delay – find a safe place to stay
and wait there till the fire ran its course.

But in vain she'd begun to drive through, to outrun
the inferno that raced down the ridge.
But she slid off the edge of the river bank ledge –
in the thick smoke, her wheels missed the bridge ..."

As he faltered I saw what I hadn't before –
weathered tracks from the tears he had shed.
There seemed nothing to say as he thought of that day
when his hopes for the future had fled.

Then his story went on, "With my family gone
I lost heart as I withered inside.
Overcome by my grief, I could find no relief –
and my passion for teaching just died.

So I took to the road, and I've carried the load
of my swag and my sorrow alone.
Now the earth is the bed where I lay down my head,
and my story – to most – is unknown.

People don't have a clue! They take one look at you
then decide what they think you might be.
But there's one thing I've found as I've travelled around –
never judge just on what you can see!

People come and they go, and you often don't know
just what cards they've been dealt in their life.
You can make up your mind to be harsh or be kind –
and thus lessen or add to their strife."

I went back the next day, but he'd gone on his way
and the dregs of his campfire were cold,
and he never returned – though I waited and yearned
to hear more of the story he'd told.

Now the decades have flown. I have sons of my own
and I watch their advancement with pride.
I have tried hard to show them what counts is to know
what a person is on the inside.

And I sometimes go back to that place down the track
where I sit and remember the past.
Then I think of my friend as his days reached their end –
and I hope that he found peace at last.

It's Dry

©Colin Driscoll 2009

Well the day was bright and sunny as they often tend to be
When I pulled into a wayside stop to make a cup of tea.
But as I got my thermos and my biscuits from the boot,
An old bloke pulled up next to me in a white Toyota Ute.

He was towing an old caravan, a relic from the past,
And I could see he'd done some travellin by the stickers on the glass.
He introduced himself as Bill as I shook his outstretched hand,
Then he muttered, "Pleased to meet ya", as he leaned against the van.

He rolled himself a cigarette and he offered one to me.
I told him that I didn't smoke, then I offered him some tea.
He nodded as his finger wiped the grit out of his eye,
Then he lit his smoke, took a puff and said, "By Jeez it's dry"!

"I've just been up to Bendigo; by jeez it's dry up there.
In fact I've been all over and it's damned dry everywhere.
It's dry up at Benalla and it's dry in Castlemaine.
And it'll get a damned site dryer if we fail to get some rain.
By Jeez it's dry"!

I nodded in agreement as I handed him his tea,
But the old bloke kept on talkin' as he took the cup from me.
He kicked the dirt, then shook his head and looked up at the sky.
"Yeah, this bloody drought's enough to make a Mallee farmer cry.
By Jeez it's dry"!

"It's dry up at Manangatang and 'round Quambatook.
Albacutya's got no water, and Lake Boga's lookin crook.
In fact it's dry and dusty right throughout the Bull Oak Shire.
But up around Pooncarie mate, I think it's even drier.
By Jeez it's dry up there"!

"The poor old Darling River is a string of stagnant pools,
Thanks to all those bloody rice and cotton growin fools.
And while a dried up Lake Menindee can reduce a man to tears.
Lake Mungo has been bone dry nigh on fifteen thousand years.
By Jeez that's dry!"

Now, as he talked I popped another tea bag in his cup,
And then I took the thermos and politely topped him up.
He nodded his approval, and then proceeded to explain
How he'd travelled half the continent without one drop of rain.
"That's how bloody dry it is"!

"From The Coast to Goondiwindi, 'cross the plains at Narrabri,
To the border at Mungindi it's never been so bloody dry.
And right along the Great Divide I've never seen it drier
Where the blackened peaks and valleys show the ravages of fire.
By Jeez them hills are dry"!

"And the reason why it's dryin out is really not that strange.
The experts seem to want to put it down to climate change.
But it's just a natural cycle where we don't get any rain.
It's happened many times before, and it's happenin again.
It's called The Dry."

Now folks, I'm quite observant, therefore I'm in no doubt,
That for many years our country has been in the grip of drought.
So although I liked this old bloke, I had to question why,
He thought he had to tell me why this place was going dry.
He's just so freakin dry!

So I had to find a subtle way to end the conversation;
Before he started on the pros and cons of irrigation.
I couldn't sit and listen to his ranting all damned day.
But I couldn't be so rude as to just turn and drive away.
I finished my last biscuit and I packed away my cup.
And that was when the old bloke asked if I could top him up.
I casually leaned across, and with conviction in my eye,
I turned my thermos up and said, "I'm sorry mate, it's dry.
Thank God it's dry"!

Brophy's

©Dean Trevaskis

He stirred my fascination
With a rhythmical oration,
As he beat a drum and drew the crowd like moths around a light.
"Who will mix it with the Mauler"
"Lads? I want an outback Brawler?"
"Game to step in Brophy's boxing tent and make his name tonight."

Seven boxers then paraded
On the boardwalk; faces faded
From a life of fighting, boozing, packing up and changing towns,
But one is dainty, thin and pale,
Her auburn hair in pony tail,
And she's introduced as "Red Adair the Champ from Darling Downs."

Then I spot the brave contenders,
Seven 'drunk too much' pretenders,
As the showman waves the patrons in, he calls out "fighters set."
In a flash the tent is seething,
Stench of beer and smoke we're breathing
As they carry out a ringer, broke and bleeding, challenge met.

Then the drunken crowd gets vocal,
Cheering loudly for the local
Girl, a bare foot aborigine of Kalkadoon descent.
As I contemplate the notion
In the grips of mixed emotion,
I hear the call "It's showtime folks, this is the main event"

Female warriors fiercely glaring
In this place devoid of caring,
Let their fears succumb to violence at the ringing of the bell.
Smooth and light of foot advancing
Is the white girl jabbing, dancing,
As her stinging punches snap and rip, a face begins to swell.

We watch the champ unloading,
Hooks and uppercuts exploding
As a native head is reeling back with every thudding blow.
But she puts up game resistance,
Hanging on to last the distance,
Knowing three rounds earns her sixty bucks in Brophy's boxing show.

But, the champion's fists of lightening,
Land in combinations frightening,
Her dark opponent moans in pain, she can't take anymore.
Her wobbly knees are sinking
Battered puffy eyes are blinking,
But she's born and bred of fighting stock and won't stay on the floor.

Crouching bravely on her haunches,
Now the Kalkadoon girl launches
Up, to stun her pale opponent with a God almighty clout,
She is freed from her suppression
Landing blows of raw aggression
As the white girl reeling, staggers falls and Brophy counts her out.

There is division in the crowd;
A Murri mob is dancing proud,
While the tourists, clearly sickened, now deplore the wretched place,
Unaccustomed to the violence,
Most are walking out in silence,
Feeling guilty they'd supported degradation and disgrace.

But none here want their pity,
Nor righteous morals from the city,
As the bloodied champ unaided, gets up proudly from the floor,
I linger in neutrality
of triumph and brutality,
Fred Brophy nods indifferently; he's seen it all before.

His troupe will box tomorrow,
Quite divorced from pain and sorrow,
It's a way of life connected to the days of long ago,
Where no favours were conceded,
Only sweat and guts succeeded,
In a country built on spirit where the battler had a go.

Coonabarabran High School Workshop

with Manfred Vijars

Earlier this year, Coonabarabran High School held its fourth Feast of Words. This challenging initiative engages students in a wide range of English that many can find daunting and difficult.

Author, JC Burke, screenwriter, Patrick May, and myself were invited for this year's Feast.

We each had twelve workshop sessions to present over the three days as well as a plenary session with the teachers. Sadly I wasn't able to sit in on any of the other presenter's sessions.

The teachers were very giving, particularly with insights into their respective student's needs. Those insights went a long way into tailoring the workshops to work in concert with student's particular needs and the curriculum. The students we workshopped ranged from years six through to eleven. They were engaging and had little hesitation in participating. Ironically, one group of boys I was cautioned against, were totally engaged in the workshop activities, particularly in the writing and performance of their pieces - much to the surprise of their teacher.

An inspired move called, "Living Libraries" was introduced by the High school this year. These 'Libraries' are revered local, long-time community members ranging from an Aboriginal Elder, WW2 Veteran and a Pioneering Family member. They participated by telling their 'stories'. This initiative exposed students not only to their local history but also to different ways of telling a story.

To encourage creative writing during the Festival, the school has the "50 Word Novel" competition. Rather than explain, I've included the entries of three student to showcase their creativity.

Feast of Words – "50 Word Novel" winners

1st

"The Burning of the Books"

Daisy Andrews Year 9 ...

A library of empty shelves. Phantom stories, missing pages, now forgotten tales. They ordered for the books to burn, stacked in towers of written word. They believe they're purifying the world, cleansing the human race. But they can't be cleansing anything if the air is thick with smouldering, black memories.

Highly Commended

"Revenge"

Isaac McElhinney Year 8 ...

The blood oozed out like air from a balloon. He dropped the gun and bolted from the room as the sirens sliced through the air. Bounding fences his mind raced, his only thought was freedom. Destination? Unknown.

They say that two wrongs don't make a right, but he knew differently.

Highly Commended

"How I escape"

Hannah Smith Year 9 ...

I assumed the position, as I do every day when I get home. Headphones on, body comfortably positioned on my bed, staring into the small bright screen. The place I go to escape it all; to avoid contact with the outside world. I watch the screen continuously. I am bored.

It was a most entertaining and rewarding three days of words.

I had a ball ...

Manfred Vijars



Moi-JC Burke and Patrick May_Coona High



NAVBITCH

©Bob "Pa" Kettle

The time has come, my employer said, I have to let you go.
You're now sixty-five, the retirement age, and it must be hard I know
To leave your mates and job you've done all of these long years,
Here's a watch, and a handshake Bob,
Please, try not to shed any tears.

Tears! It's not the tears I'm glad to shed; I would like you all to know
It's the long hours of toil, the daily grind, the coming too and fro
From this hard place where I worked the press and machinery I won't mention,
I'm glad to give it all away,
Now I can get the pension.

We want to travel, my wife and I, with our mobile home in tow
We've read travel books, we have the maps, and the wife will tell me how to go
From place to place, which way to turn and tell me in what direction,
But when it comes to a woman reading maps,
God help us. Give us your protection.

When maps are printed, there all the same with every page pointing north
And that's the way you should read the things, whenever you set forth
To North or South or East or West, uphill or coming down,
If the road were travelling doesn't point north,
My wife turns the map upside down.

"A left hand turn will soon come up; it's only just up the road",
I thought it was right we had to turn; she says I'm a silly old Toad
Who doesn't know his right from his left, or which way is up or down
But I know that this old dirt farm track,
Won't get us into town.

In desperation I complained to our daughter, Our trips are all the same
Mum keeps leading us up the garden path; it's starting to become a pain
In bum and back and head and wallet, for paying to be towed out.
"Never fear Dad, -- buy a GPS,
That'll help you get about"

I bought the latest Navman device, a model XT5
In either male or female voice, it would tell me when I arrived
At my final destination, but I didn't have any choice
I had listened to my wife for 45 years
So it had to be a female voice.

"Make a right hand turn at Johnson Street", the female voice it said
But a sign that read, NO RIGHT HAND TURN was looming up ahead
So on and on I had to go with her screaming in my ear
"Make a U turn as soon as possible"
"I can't----- there's a semi up my rear."

"Recalculating a new route" she said, as I pulled to the side of the road,
"In 50 kl at the round-a-bout"---- I was ready to explode
To go that far in the wrong direction, it really was absurd
I wasn't going to follow her advice
That stupid Navbitch Bird.

I was finally going the way I want, heading back into town
I'd chuck a left into Johnston Street, she wouldn't get me down
When she said "move to the left hand lane". But more trouble I was about to meet
As I started to do a left hand turn
I saw, NO ENTRY-ONE WAY STREET.

I kept my cool and motored on, with my destination in mind
And when you tow a caravan you get used to the traffic behind.
Blowing their horns, waving their arms, and pointing up to the sky
But I can never see anything up there
No matter how hard I try.

For half an hour I've tried to search for this place I want in town
But then came the final straw "Low battery - I'm going to power down"
Wait on a minute, don't leave me, I gave a desperate plea
I pushed some buttons - swiped the screen
But it was as blank as blank could be.

She's back aline with more advice, but we seem to be going round & round
Between "Calculating new route" and "Do a U turn", she's starting to get me down
Into anxiety and deep depression, she's caused us such a fuss
Let's sell the car and caravan
And take a tour bus.

If 'Banjo' Had Been

a Fisherman

© Warren Cox 2007

Me and a mate went to Bramble Bay
but we should have gone there last week.
We drifted around best part of the day,
but of whiting or flathead not even a stray.
"You should have been here last week." they said.
"There were schools of 'em here last week."

"Let's try Ramsay's Reef." I said to the mate.
But I should have said that last week.
We had the right gear and plenty of bait,
but the locals said "Lads, you're a few days late.
You should have been here last week." they said.
"They were boatin' themselves last week."

I looked at the chart. "There's a creek nearby,"
that I wished we'd fished last week.
'Cause the tide went out. Left us high and dry
and still no fish. It'd make you cry.
"If you'd only been here last week." they said.
"They caught swags of 'em here last week."

So I thanked the locals for their advice
on how things were last week.
Took the last two stubbies out of the ice.
"Hey guys! Reckon' these'll go down nice.
Bet you wish you'd been here last week." I said,
"We'd an esky full last week!"

MILDEW'S ROMANCE

© Cobber (Keilh Lethbridge Snr.)

Old Mildew took a fancy
To the Big Boss Cocky's daughter;
He wasn't too romantic,
But eventually he caught her.

They spoke of getting married
And he swore he'd settle down,
Then give away the cooking game
And build a house in town.

But, when he popped the question
She appeared to hesitate,
Then finally she opened up
And gave it to him straight:

"I'm young and fit and healthy
And you're sort of passed your peak.
I'd need a man that's amorous
At least five times a week."

Old Mildew smiled his little smile:
"If that's the way you feel,
Just put me down for Fridays
And you've got yourself a deal!"

* * *

This story has a moral
I discovered in my youth:
Don't judge a cook by his lover,
If you can't accept the truth!

2015 Aust Bush Poetry Championships at MFSR Festival

The 2015 Australian Bush Poetry Championships will be held at the Man from Snowy River Bush Festival at Corryong 9 – 12th April 2015. (Everyone should come to MFSR at least once!) The MFSR Festival Board members are excited at this highlight to the festival program and look forward to working with Jan Lewis, the Poetry event manager to make it happen like it did in 2012.

Following ABPA guidelines, we" have Original Humorous and Serious, Contemporary and Classical sections. We"ll also cater for Open, Intermediate, Novice and Junior classes..

Entries closing 13th Feb here <http://www.bushfestival.com.au/main-events/poetry-bush-music/> , or on ABPA and VBPMMA websites or contact

Jan Lewis 0260774332 or info@vbpmma.com.au .

Interstate poets can fix up their campervans and put the dates in their diaries.... even though there is limited indoor accommodation, there's plenty of room for camping, and possibly billets. With a 1914 -15 theme, our guests will enrapture the audience with a great repertoire of Anzac and other poems and ensure an unforgettable weekend for poets and fans alike.

GUESTS: Geoffrey Graham, Chloe and Jason Roweth, Graeme Johnson, Brenda Joy, Carol Reffold and John and Carmel Lloyd and friends.

MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER BUSHFESTIVAL THURSDAY 9 To SUNDAY 12 APRIL 2015

3 day - \$60,000 Man From Snowy River CHALLENGE, Art & Photography Competition, Street Parade, Re-enactment of AB Paterson's Man From Snowy River Poem, Ute Muster, Street Stalls, HIGH COUNTRY RODEO, Arts & Crafts Market, Entertainment Marquee ANZ High Country Station Team Muster, Aussie Bush Idol Talent Quest, Busking Competition, Dog Jump, Working Dog Competition, Campdraft, Team Penning, Arena Entertainment,

COUNTRY ROCK CONCERT with The McClymont Sisters

Tickets: www.bushfestival.com.au



Maurie Foun – one of Jan's many helpers



Matthew Hollis MC with Jan Lewis at MFSR

Come from the city, Wallaby track,
or maybe up near Scone,
Come bush bashin' with your cobber,
or on your Pat Malone.
Horses, poets, friendships
and songs and yarns true blue.
Get crackin' – enjoy our bush festival
until you say "Hooroo".

PROUSTY - Man Of Many Talents

Dave Proust (Prousty), comedian, entertainer, storyteller, bush poet and now a movie star? The not so 'diminutive' Prousty has been withholding. Yes, Prousty has been withholding his 'thespian' side! Great to see him venture into Movies. He has always been the consummate performer. In fact while Prousty was earning his straps in performance poetry, Ray Essery pulled him to one side and said, "You need to write more comedy!"

And Prousty did! In the process of writing comedy for his performances, he polished and refined his on stage act. His performances shine and are enjoyed by many and even noticed by talent scouts. Now with a number of on screen performances under his belt including 12 TV commercials (he is on an AAMI ad at the moment) Underbelly, Place to Call Home and What's Up Down Under, Prousty landed a role in "1500 Steps" where he plays a drunken, cranky dad! (Maybe he has been typecast)

While Prousty was filming 1500 Steps, Therese (his partner in comedic crime) was out 'stepping' over great mountains through Nepal and the Himalayas. think she 'out-stepped' you Mate!!!





Festival of Australian Country Music.

Bungendore Showground - 31st Jan – 1st Feb. 2015

Saturday.

From 1.00Pm – 7.30pm

Concert: featuring top line Australian entertainers.

Backing by Peter Coad and the Coad Sisters

8.00Pm

Stan Coster Memorial Australian Bush Balladeers

Presentation and concert.

Backing Band The Bungendore Muster Band.

Sunday

Starting at 10.00am

Concert featuring the best of Australian Bush Balladeers, including Winners Of Stan Coster Awards

Backing Band - The Bungendore Muster Band,

Admission, Saturday \$30.00, Sunday \$30.00

Campsites available after midday Monday 26/1/15. \$7.00 p/p per night. Power \$10.00 per night extra.

Contact: 0458-896-180, Email,

bungendorecountrymuster@yahoo.com.au

Webb: www.bungendorecountrymuster.com.au

Pre Muster Entertainment.

Tuesday 27th to Friday 30th

Organised Walk ups, all categories', Singers, musicians, poets, and yarn spinners. Campers will have their chance to vote on their choice of entertainer. The winner will have a spot on the main stage on Saturday.

Poets Breakfasts Walk ups

Tuesday to Saturday am.

Time and place for all, beginners, readers and professional. No competition, just appreciation from a grateful audience. Coordinator Barry Martin. (02) 6238 1458

Around the village

Entertainment will be available at the pubs and Bowling Club. Program at the Muster

Busking

Entertainers are invited to busk in the streets of Bungendore on Saturday morning. Winner will have opportunity to perform on stage. For information contact Winston Masters 0418697028.

Special prize for the person who submits the best song or poem, containing the words "Bungendore" 3 times or more.



Weekending 28st — 30th August 2015

North's Leagues Club
Anzac Avenue,
Kallangur.

Claiming the Date

Another great weekend of great bush poetry and camaraderie is on the drawing board. Plenty of time to hone up your best poem, write some new ones and book accommodation. Enjoy our laid back atmosphere in company with good mates and maybe make some new ones.

Enquiries
07 5495 5110
wmbear1@bigpond.com

Yass Show Poetry

featuring a just-for-the-fun-of-it

Poets' Breakfast

8.30 - 10.30am

Sunday March 15, 2015

at the

Shearing Pavilion, Yass Showground.

There will also be a Junior Written Competition.

Entries in the Junior Written Comp close

Monday February 23.

Junior entry forms at www.abpa.org.au or www.yassshow.org.au

For more information contact Robyn Sykes

robinsykespoet@gmail.com, PO Box 100, Binalong NSW 2584 (02) 6227 4377

Come along – just for the fun of it!



**POETRY READING
Group**

PO BOX 3001 WEST TAMWORTH 2340

Organisers of The Blackened Billy Verse Competition



**Blackened Billy Verse Competition
will be 25 years old in 2015!**

How would you like to be the 25th winner in a list of highly credited poets who have gone before.

The Tamworth Poetry Reading Group, and sponsors ABPA, are looking for a record number of entries to celebrate this auspicious occasion, which will culminate in the publication of a book featuring all 25 winners.

First Prize is the famous Blackened Billy trophy plus \$600
Second prize \$300
Third Prize \$ 200

Opening Date September 1
Closing Date November 30

For an entry form, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Blackened Billy Verse Competition, PO Box 3001, West Tamworth NSW 2340 or email janmorris33@bigpond.com

Entry forms will also be available from the ABPA Website from September 1

Total Prize Money Over \$5000

DUNEDOO *Bush Poetry* Festival

5th — 8th March 2015



THURSDAY 5TH MARCH

6pm - Dunedoo Jubilee Hall

Meet & Greet - BBQ available - Brawl Titles available

FRIDAY 6TH MARCH

9am - Bus Tour

Bring own lunch - cost \$15 - Bookings required

4pm - Sports Club - Intermediate Competition

7pm - Sports Club - Yarn Spinning Competition

SATURDAY 7TH MARCH

8am - Central School Hall

Classical - Female

Classical - Male

Original - Serious - Female

Original - Serious - Male

Contemporary - Female

Contemporary - Male

7pm - Central School Hall

Original - Humorous - Female

Original - Humorous - Male

Entertainment by professional poets

Bookings required - Supper provided

cost \$25 per person (poets free & partners \$10)

SUNDAY 8TH MARCH

8am - Dunedoo Jubilee Hall

Brawls at Breakfast

BOOKINGS AND FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

Eric Beer

ph: (02) 6886 3592 mob: 0429 388 530 fax: (02) 6886 3592

email: pine.hill.2831@bigpond.com

ACCOMMODATION

Swan Motel - 02 6375 1112

Redbank Gums B&B - 02 6375 1218 or 0428 751 218

Rose Cottage B&B - 02 6375 1151 or 0429 724 200

Sharon Nott - 6375 1509 or 0428 859 509

Dunedoo Hotel - 02 6375 1403

Dunedoo Caravan Park - 02 6375 1455

Showground or In-Home Contact Eric



MAJOR SPONSOR:
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ABN 24 104 412 400



DATE SAVER

RATHDOWNEY IS BACK ON EASTER SUNDAY



Events will include:

Readers, Novice,

Open Traditional, Open Original,

and **The Rathdowney IDLE (IDOL)**

(As soon as we know the value of grants we will put up an entry form and let you know the value of prize money and cut off dates)

Two NEW EVENTS for those not able to attend.

(1) A VIRTUAL BUSH POETRY COMPETITION. (\$10 to enter)

Poetry must be **original and performed** (not read).

We would like to see and hear your audience. (Family is fine!)

Must be put on a DVD, a FLASH DRIVE or similar, and **posted**.

THIS WILL BE A SELF FUNDED COMPETITION -

to the value of \$100, \$50, \$25. (If we receive that many entries)

(2) An Original Poem illustrated with Computer Graphics

(this is for all who have skills with the computer -\$10 to enter)

Bring your poem to life, have it move, with the power of the computer.

Present it on a DVD or flash drive or similar

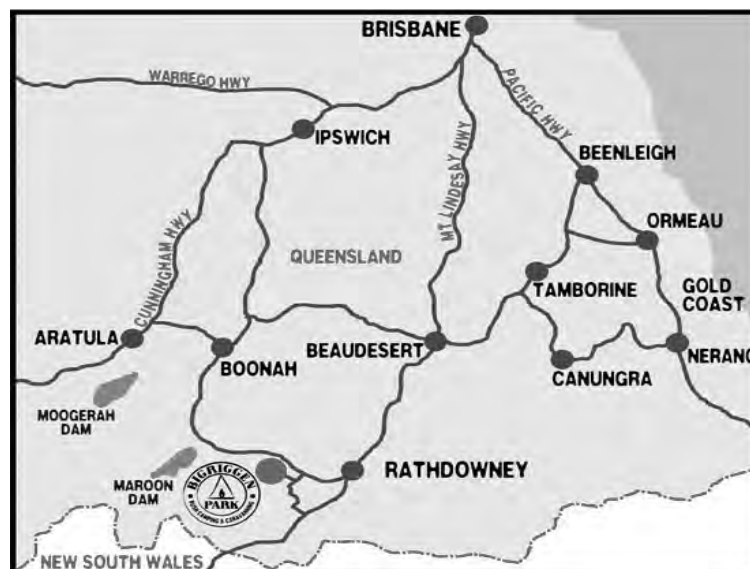
(\$100 first prize has been donated for this event,

there will be a second and third prize depending on entries)

There is no written at Rathdowney in 2015

Contact

Gerry King:- geraldineking@virginbroadband.com.au





Regular Monthly Events

NSW

Illawarra Breakfast Poets meet every Wednesday at 7am at Coniston Community Hall, next to Coniston Railway Station. Ample parking, no steps, everyone welcome.

"Bush Poetry In The Upper Lachlan." The Laggan Pub, Laggan NSW. The 1st Wednesday of every month, starting at 7.30pm. For further details contact Mike or Elaine on (02) 4837 3397

Gosford Bush Poets meet at 7pm the last Wednesday of every month at the Gosford Hotel, crn. Mann and Erina Streets Gosford. All welcome. Contact Vic Jefferies 0425252212 or Peter Mace (02)-4369356

Port Macquarie (Hastings-Macleay) Poetry Group now meets 2nd Sunday afternoon 1pm to 4pm, Port Macquarie Senior Citizens Club (Pioneer Room), south end of Munster St, Port Macquarie. Contact Rod, Janice, Ian, Tom or Bessie 6584 5425

Milton Ulladulla Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners Group First Sunday Every Month at Ex Servos Club Ulladulla 2pm start visitors welcome contact John Davis 02 44552013

Binalong - A Brush with Poetry @ Black Swan Wine Bar and Gallery. last Sunday of every odd month (except January), 2-4pm Open mic. Contact Robyn Sykes 02 6227 4377

The Queanbeyan Bush Poets meet at 7pm on the fourth Thursday of the month in the Casuarina Room at the RB Smith Community Centre, Crawford Street, (opposite the Council Chambers). Contact Laurie McDonald on 02 6253 9856

Port Macquarie Minstrels, Poets and Balladeers meet fortnightly; 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month at 1pm in the Pioneer Room, Senior Citizens Hall south end of Munster St, Port Macquarie. Contact Tom McIlveen 0417 251287

2nd Sunday - 2:00 pm Poetry at the Pub Katoomba Blackburn's Family Hotel. All forms poetry, free entry. Contact Denis Rice 02 4782 6623 tdrice@southernphone.com.au

QUEENSLAND

North Pine Bush Poet Group meet from 9am on 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month at The Distillery - North Pine Hotel, Old Petrie Town, Dayboro Rd. Petrie Contact :- John 07 38862660 or Noel 07 33513221

Kurilpa Poets - last Sunday of the month 2pm to 4.30pm, Croquet Hall, 91 Codelia St. Sth Brisbane. Contact Marilyn 0458 598 683

Geebung Writers - 9.30 am every 2nd Wednesday of the month at Geebung RSL. Contact Jean (07)32654349

Bundaberg Poets Society Inc. 2nd Saturday of the month. Rum City Silver Band Hall, Targo Street. Contact Edna 0428 574 651; Jayson (07) 41550778 or Sandy (07) 41514631.

Beaunesert Bush Bards meet on the 3rd Friday of each month from 9.30am at the Beaunesert Arts & information Centre, Mt. Lindesay Hwy, Beaunesert. Phone 07 5541 2662 or 3272 4535.

Redcliffe Peninsular Poets - 1st Tuesday of the month, 7pm to 9pm. Winton Room, Redcliffe Cultural Centre, Downs Street, Redcliffe. Contact Trish (07) 38847790 or Trish1942@gmail.com

Russell Island Writers Circle - 2nd Thursday of the month at 9.30 am. St. Peters Church Hall (Next to IGA). \$2 donation. Contact Trish (07)34091542

Shorncliffe Cafe On The Park - 3rd Monday of the month from 6pm, 6 Park Pde, Shorncliffe. Contact Kevin Dean (07) 38810986

Townsville Bush Poetry Mates Inc meet every first Tuesday of the month at Aitkenvale Library Meeting Room at 7:00pm. They also meet at Bellevue Hotel, Allen Street, South Townsville, every third Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm for 'Pub Grub' and 7:00pm for 'Walk-Up' poetry. Loads of fun. All welcome.

Victoria

Kyabram Bush Verse Group- First Monday, every second month, namely Feb, April, June, Aug, Oct, Dec. at the Kyabram Baptist Church meeting room, crn Fenaughty Street and Lake Road Kyabram 7.30pm. Contact Mick Coventry 0427-522097

Gippsland Bush Poets meet Monthly, 7.30pm on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the RSL Hall in Hood St. Rosedale

Top of the Murray Poets and Bush Storytellers (TOMPABS) meet Monthly (mostly Tuesdays in Corryong) for writing workshops, Monthly on 3rd Sunday for Music and Poetry at Maurie Foun's 'Poets' Paradise'. Contact Jan Lewis (02) 60774332

Bendigo Goldfields Bush Poets - Third Sunday even numbered months, except December when second Sunday. Newmarket Hotel, cnr Nolan St & Strickland Rd, Bendigo 1.30pm to 4.30pm. Contacts: Geoffrey Graham 03 5446 7104 or Ken Jones 03 5441 5121

WA

Albany Bush Poets Group 4th Tuesday of each month. Contact Peter 98446606

Perth monthly muster, 1st Friday of each month 7pm - 9.30pm at The Auditorium, 26 Plantation Drive Bentley Park 6102 Contact Dave 0438341256 or Terry 0894588887.