

ABPA

*Australian Bush Poets Association
Volume 26 No. 3 June/July 2020*



Thanks to all our ABPA Members who have been doing the right thing by Australia during these unprecedented times. And don't worry about me, I haven't let it effect me at all.



Neil McArthur - ABPA Editor

MECHANICAL SURRENDER

© Ellis Campbell

Winner, 2011, 'Poets by the Sea —Humorous Section' Harrington, NSW.

"A GPS is what you need," my neighbour said one day.
"You simply set it when you start and it will show the way.
They know the highways, city streets and every country lane—
attach it to your motorcar and you're as right as rain.
It's got the clues to guide you so you never will get lost –
eliminate the hassles and forget about the cost."

I was reluctant, I'll admit—I'm never keen on change—
how some machine could know so much I found a little strange.
I'm wary of new-fangled stuff, it scares me quite a lot –
it's almost supernatural the things they say it's got.
I finally relented and I bought a brand new car,
equipped with navigation gear, a TV and a spa.

In morbid trepidation I approached this monstrous thing—
it seemed to ooze such luxury, befitting of a king.
I opened up its gleaming door and sat upon the seat,
its strange array of glossed controls predicted my defeat.
A cultured voice from nowhere came that gave me quite a fright,
"Good morning, sir, and welcome to this carriage of delight.

"You just relax and take the wheel and leave the rest to me,
I'll find the toilets and the pubs and guide you to the quay."
Like someone in a trance I tried to start this strange machine.
"Your seat-belt, sir," the smooth voice said. "You'll find it in between
the plush arm rest and your left leg—make sure it's done up tight—
and don't forget the hand brake, sir—it's there upon your right."

"I've driven bloody cars before," I snarled and bumped my head.
"Don't speak like that to me, you fool," the damn thing coldly said.
"Get stuffed and shut up for a while, and let me work it out –
I've driven wagons, tractors, trucks—and road-trains without doubt."
"I'm sorry, sir," the thing replied. "My knowledge is profound."
"No over-rated fool machine can order me around."

"Impatient drivers are a curse—my system is programmed
to stamp out such aggression and the engine has been jammed.
Remote ignition monitors your temper's high degree –
you cannot start the vehicle unless I turn the key.
May I suggest you take a walk—make sure the door is locked –
fresh air will cool you down a bit," this mongrel bastard mocked.

"I've heard e-bloody-nough!" I said and slammed the monster's door.
"I'm tired of this new-fangled stuff and can't take any more."
I flounced away and left it there, beside the asphalt road –
I'm cured of all technology with one small episode.
It's gleaming in the sunlight there, a sign upon the grille.
"For sale. In new condition. All mod cons & mileage nil."



Next Magazine Deadline is May 27th

ABPA Committee Members 2020

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President	-- Tim Sheed	president@abpa.org.au
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Editorial

Send Submissions to editor@abpa.org.au



Well what a couple of months that has been so far! Isolation, lockdowns, Festivals cancelled, jobs lost or on hold. Something we never really imagined we would see during our life time. But most people have stayed at home and made the best of the situation.

But the one thing that amazed me was that even with so much extra time at home and so many new things to write about, we recieved very few submissions for the magazine! I was not hoping for a barrage of Covid poems, as I would like to keep our magazine one of positivity and optimism, but other than a few regular contributors, sadly nothing made it through to the Editors desk.

But we move on, and hopefully soon we may see Poetry Festivals once again being organised and gatherings for Country Mucic festivals being able to mingle again. But we must support the Organisations who have supported us for so long and keep them going by entering the Written Competitions they are still providing us with. It is vital that we do this so as we don't emerge from this as an Association with no audience.

We are resilient, we are patriotic and we endure as Storytellers of this great land.

The question we must ask ourselves at the moment, though, is do we want to share our stories or are we just keeping them until we can gain some form of financial remuneration for them?

Something else to think about.

Stay well and our hearts go out to everyone effected by these difficult times

Neil McArthur - Editor

For Magazine Submissions can you all please note.

Articles, Poems, Stories, etc. need to be submitted in either Word (.doc or .docx) format or PDF (.pdf) format. Old Publisher files and .odt and .windat files can not be used due to being outdated.

For Photos, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE send Pics that are of a high quality and most importantly IN FOCUS! A lot of readers tell me 'That photo was a bit blurry!'. But when receiving one photo from an event which has not been captured well, it does not matter what programs, filters etc. you put it through, it cannot miraculously be put in focus.

I appreciate all efforts of those members submitting to the magazine, so they are just a couple of important hints to help me publish your articles and poems with the respect that they deserve.

ABPA Magazine Advertising Rates

ABN 17 145 367 949 ARBN: 104 032 126

Black and White Ads

Full page \$95

Half Page \$55

Quarter Page or less \$35

Full Colour Ads (Space limited)

Full Page \$240

Half Page \$140

Quarter Page not available

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, Word or PDF Format to editor@abpa.org.au

All payments to be made within 14 days to

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President's Report

Hello to you all.

We have a very positive start to the poetry year with a strong and cohesive committee consisting of the following office bearers:

Ray Essery, Vice President.

Meg Gordon, Secretary.

Christine Middleton, Treasurer.

Tom McIlveen and Manfred Vijars, Committee.

The following State Representatives are also full Committee Members:

Bill Kearns (NSW)

Irene Connor (WA)

Peter Frazer (QLD)

Jan Lewis (VIC)



A very unusual couple of months with all festivals and gatherings cancelled, our thoughts go out to those professional poets and storytellers who have lost all their bookings.

The impact on the small communities not having their gatherings cannot be overestimated as they are one of the main ways of socializing.

I know many southerners who are champing at the bit to get into warmer climes and if restrictions permit, the grey nomads may well play a key role in getting the economy moving again.

On a brighter note plans are progressing for the National Bush Poetry Championships next February in conjunction with the Banjo Paterson Poetry Festival in Orange.

Our former President and long term committee member, Manfred Vijars, is working and planning for the bush poetry festival in Tamworth, run over the period of Tamworth Country Music Festival and again we will be looking for people to help with the day to day operations.

As reported last issue, a membership drive by our Treasurer has had a very positive result and we currently have 255 members and rising.

We are running a new written Bush Poetry competition called "The Dusty Swag Awards" (see article in this issue).

Overall our organization is in a good place operationally and financially. Now all we need is a chance to get out there and share our stories.

May the wind be at your back.

I wish you all well through these difficult and trying times.

Tim Sheed, President



Vale Arthur Edward Green

G'day Neil,

Yesterday Noel and Ann Stallard, John Best and Barry and I attended Arthur's memorial service and I elected to do this write up for the ABPA magazine with Kay's permission. Please find room for it in the next issue.

Cheers Cay Ellem

Vale Arthur Edward Green

13 September 1934 – 2 February 2020.

Well known poet and writer of prose, Arthur passed away suddenly on the 2nd February. Arthur lived on the Sunshine Coast and is survived by his wife Kay, adult children, Catherine, Andrew and Michael and grand children Isaac, Aiden, Oscar, Michaela and Samuel.

His writing commenced in 1987, lured into the realms of bush poetry by the works of Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson. He was also a writer of short stories for which he won many awards. He also won many awards for his bush poetry in written competitions. He was not a performer.

Between 1989 and 2007 he won 16 first prizes in competitions in Queensland, NSW and Victoria. Twelve 2nd and third places include 2nd in the Bronze Swagman in 1990, 3rd in the Bundaberg Bush Lantern Award in 2006 and 2nd in the Gulgong Heritage Festival in 2007.

He was appreciative of his association with other bush poets who encouraged him. He had fond memories of Charlee Marshall, Ellis Campbell, Frank Daniel and Ron Stevens and Peter Pike the editor of 'FreeXpressions

Arthur enjoyed his retirement on the Sunshine which gave him ample time to spoil his beloved grand children, to spend time writing and continue his interest in gardening.

Arthur will be sadly missed by his family and many friends.

Where Old Poets Go

By Arthur Green

Winner – 1990 Laidley Writer's Poetry Competition

You can say I'm inspired or just lucky,
rhyming verses in story or song;
fluctuating from fact to fantastic;
that cold logic and I don't belong.

You can pinion my arms and my ankles.
You can bind me with chains to a chair.
You can blindfold me, gag, or whatever –
but the real me, I fear, won't be there.

I'll be off on some inner-mind journey,
there to roam, unrestrained, as you'll find,
skipping distance and time and dimension,
as I leave here and now far behind.

I'm a virile, mind-fantasy Viking,
kin-related to 'Eric the Red',
in our long-ships, invading Great Britain,
with the news of our conquests widespread.

I've been swordsman, gun-fighter and soldier,
Nostradasing quatrains in rhyme;
I've flown jets, UFO's and a star-ship,
flipping backwards and forwards through time.

Age can never curtail my excursions,
though some ultimate fantasy flight
to the stars may, in fact, last forever,
for our lifespan, I fear, is finite.

But...when spirit and spark have departed,
and I'm off to where old poets go –
while I'm dashing off verses in heaven,
I'll still think of you lot down below.



The Swing

© Bob "Pa" Kettle

There are times in our lives when no matter how hard we try, we can't seem to fix a relationship. Yet the innocence of a child can overcome what we couldn't. I present "The Swing"

Winner the Royal Brisbane Show 2019 and Second at the 2020 Banjo Patterson festival, Orange.

She stopped her battered Holden car, outside the farmyard gate.
She was tired after her long drive, but this trip could no longer wait.
The man stood there in silence, at the door of the old farm shack.
She looked in the window of her car, her son was asleep in the back.

The old tyre swing still hung in place, under the Pepperina tree.
The broken fence; the leaning tank; just as they used to be.
"Hello Dad", she said to the man. His silence hung heavy and thick.
"I've bought your grandson to see you Dad; I've called my little boy Nick".

His steely gray eyes just stared at her. There was so much she wanted him to say.
But as he turned and closed the door, he said. "You're not welcome; go away".
The tears welled up behind her eyes, as she looked at that closed door.
"I'm such fool; why did I come? Whatever was I hoping for?"

She remembered when her mother died. That's when his heart died as well.
He receded deep inside himself, his silence like a prison cell.
When her mother was alive there was joy in this house, they were as happy as could be.
Their laughter, and their smiling faces, so much love for the world to see.

But the love had gone when her mother died, there was nothing to fill the void.
The picnics; the games; the trips away; all the things she had enjoyed.
She was sixteen when she got into trouble, with the boy that led her astray.
She was looking for the love she craved, but her father just turned her away.

She drove away in a cloud of tears. It was thirty K's back to town.
Twenty minutes later she was walking back. Her car had broken down.
Holding her little boy by the hand, he met her at the farmhouse gate.
"My car broke down; I can't get a tow; I'm sorry it is so late".

He stepped aside and let her passed, mumbling, "I've got things to do".
"We'll go first thing in the morning", she called. She didn't want to cause a blue.
She knew the layout of the house, so she went straight to her room.
She made a bed up for her son. Morning couldn't come to soon.

When she awoke her son was gone, from the bed she made on the floor.
She heard his voice in the front yard, so she went and looked out the door.
He was sitting on the old tyre swing, her father was pushing him there.
The boy was chatting away nonstop, as if he didn't have a care.

Her farther looked up with tears in his eyes, "I've been such a stupid old fool.
Please forgive now if you can. How could I have been so cruel".
"Oh Dad" she said, with a lump in her throat. Then a smile spread over his face.
His next words were the best of all. ----- "Welcome Home, Grace"



DUSTY SWAG AWARDS 2020

by Christine Middleton

The "Dusty Swag Awards" were established in 2000 by Paul Bannan of Yea, a highly respected poet and presenter of bush poems and yarns. The name of the awards comes from a poem by Paul titled "The Dusty Swag". Paul has carried a swag and says it was more comfortable than a suitcase, better than a pack and best for camping when on the track.

My father Rex Tate, whom many of you over the years would have met and got to know at the MFSR Festival, Benalla Bush Muster, "When Bush Comes to Town Festival", Yea Carnivale and other local events, has been the driving force behind "The Dusty Swag Awards" for the past 20 years. Every year, Tim and I would drive to the Yarck Hotel and along with Rex, spend a marvellous evening with local poets and storytellers, young and old, to celebrate the stories of Australia, its unique landscape, its unsung heroes and to announce the "Dusty Swag Awards".

Rex was brought up on a farm by his aunt and uncle in Tenterfield. He attended a one teacher school and it was here that he developed his love of Australian bush poetry and yarnspinning. Rex would often tell the story of how he and his fellow school mates were required to recite "The Man From Snowy River" perfectly in order to pass their literature exam. Rex was a pilot during WW11 and met my mother Sylvia in Scotland. After the war, mum sailed out to Australia as a War Bride and after marrying, they both settled in Alexandra where Sylvia ran a womens clothing shop and Rex practised as a chartered Accountant. Although never having written his own poetry, Rex was a keen poetry reciter and washboard player.

Tim and I promised Rex that we would carry on the "Dusty Swag Awards" into the future and upon his death in 2018, Rex left a small legacy to this end. I know that dad would be so pleased to know that the "Dusty Swag Awards" are continuing and that the winners will be announced and awards presented at the National ABPA Championships to be held at the Banjo Paterson Festival in Orange during February 2021.

Entry Forms can be downloaded on the ABPA Website

<https://www.abpa.org.au/events.html>



DUSTY SWAG AWARDS 2020

INFORMATION SHEET

The "Dusty Swag" Awards were established in 2000 by Patron Rex Tate to encourage poets and storytellers to record the stories of Australia, its unique landscape and its unsung heroes.

Entries are invited from Poets and Storytellers of all ages.

2020 Competition Theme "AUSTRALIAN BUSH"

Opening Date: 1/6/2020

Closing Date: 30/11/2020

JUNIORS (Primary) Poem 20 lines max: Short Story – up to 200 words
SENIORS (Secondary) Poem 40 lines max: Short Story – up to 750 words
ADULTS (Over 18 yrs) Poem 60 lines max: Short Story – up to 1000 words

Entry Fee per entry \$10 (adults) Children (free)

Prizes will be awarded for 1st place (\$100) & 2nd Place (\$50) – Adults

1st place (\$50) & 2nd Place (\$25) – Juniors/Seniors
(**plus a years subscription to the ABPA)

***Winners will be announced on Australia Day 26th January 2021 and winners will be invited to present their Poem/Story at the ABPA National Championships to be held in Orange at the Banjo Paterson Festival in February 2021. With the author's permission, winning Poems/Stories are eligible to be published in the ABPA Magazine and on the ABPA Website (see entry form)*

ENQUIRIES – Christine Middleton 0419526550

A Precious Chance

© Shelley Hansen

Winner, 2020 Sutherland Shire Literary Competition – Traditional Verse Section

From the outback to the city, swept a wave of grief and pity
when we heard the tragic news that yet another life was lost
in the prime of springtime season – and it seemed beyond all reason
that the future of a child should seem too bleak to face the cost.
Then we gained the information that brought rage and consternation
when we learned the cause of suicide was cyber-bully threat.
Though its venom is untruthful, to our kids so fresh and youthful
it presents an anguished challenge that at times cannot be met.

So we stopped at last, and listened – and our tears of anger glistened
as we came to understand how many children are involved.
Then committees formed for talking, but they found that they were baulking
as they struggled with the strategies to get this problem solved.
Is the issue with our schooling? Should we try to make a ruling
to enforce a change by punishment for those who may transgress?
Can we pass some legislation that requires co-operation?
Should we drag these perpetrators to the limelight to confess?

What has caused this strange obsession with unbridled rank aggression?
We have always had our bullies, but the plague's become a curse.
Now antagonists are faceless, and their accusations baseless,
yet designed to generate a tide of ridicule – and worse.
Are we satisfied with blaming social media, in flaming
indignation that these posts are not deleted, stopped or blocked?
Can it be that we're ignoring reasons firmly underscoring
what the issue really is? If we were told, would we be shocked?

In my mind an ancient saying seems to often keep replaying –
that a workman, poorly trained, will always castigate his tools,
so our tendency of railing at the internet for failing
us, might have the same effect – and even make us look like fools.
For the cause is so much deeper, the descent of conduct steeper
than the rise of cyber-space, which is a platform, nothing more.
When did manners start to falter? When did values start to alter?
When did people cease respecting rights of others – rich or poor?

We have built this land together, and it doesn't matter whether
we inhabit open space or we have walked the coastal rim.
For our "mateship" should be binding and uplifting when we're finding
that a helping hand is offered during times when things are grim.
But that way of life is shrinking. Have we stopped and done some thinking
that we hold a deadly weapon of destruction in our hand?
It's reflected in our choices and the way we use our voices.
This is how we've been brought up. Do we no longer understand?

Once we tempered speech with manners and avoided waving banners,
and we often kept opinions to ourselves, lest we offend.
Now we have a strong compulsion that has overcome revulsion
to declare our thoughts aloud, online, insistent to the end.
But with many paths to travel, life can easily unravel
if we use our words to turn a reputation into dust.
We may rightly speak with candour – but the tentacles of slander
can untie the bonds of friendship and can break the hand of trust.

We might think we'd rather perish than give up the things we cherish
like the right to our opinions, and the freedom of our speech;
but with right comes obligation, and the fabric of our nation
has been woven with "fair dinkum" in the values that we teach.
We must think before we utter speech belonging in the gutter.
There is no way to recapture hasty words that we release,
and such words, once harshly spoken, can destroy a heart that's broken
just as surely as a dagger thrust can cause a life to cease.

So let's set the right example, let our conduct be a sample
showing how we treat our mates is how we hope that they'll repay.
Practise bullying no longer. Prove that being kind is stronger,
and perhaps our kids will follow us, to seek a better way.
If we choose to be uncaring, then we'll have to be preparing
for the tide of youthful suicide to steadily advance.
Then the nation will be weeping, and the guilt will haunt our sleeping
as we blame ourselves forever that we lost a precious chance.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WA

W.A. Bush Poets



WE ARE *ZOOOOMING* AROUND THE COUNTRY



WA has been linked to the rest of the country thanks to the marvels of technology through Zoom.

Mick Martin spearheaded the Zoom Muster in **Brisbane** with **Poets in The Park** group. Bill Gordon joined the first group muster but Meg had a ukulele commitment. We missed the next one as we were up to our elbows in bathroom renovation.

WA Bush Poets will hold their first Poetry Muster on 5th June from **Boyup Brook**. It is business as usual for us in the west. We have had zoom committee meetings and have launched the **Silver Quill Written Poetry Competition** which will coincide with our Festival in November. We are not sure what form this will take this year but hope that the current situation will have eased by then.

Paul Browning in **Kalgoorlie** got off the mark very quickly with Poetry Musters. He has conducted two so far and with Kalgoorlie very isolated at the moment it will be wonderful to catch up this way.



Many thanks to Jim Lamb in **Young** NSW for inviting Bill and Meg Gordon to join their Poetry Muster which has been operating monthly while we are all in lockdown. Other poets from areas in NSW including Orange, Yass, Forbes and Cooryong Vic joined and it was a great way to keep poetry alive and "socialise" in the new "norm"



Our Poetry Kids

with Brenda Joy

Thank you to Mick Coventry and the organisers of the BETTY OLLE POETRY AWARD conducted by the Kyabram & District Bush Verse Group.

2019 BETTY OLLE JUNIOR WINNER

The aim of the Betty Olle Poetry Award is to provide an opportunity for poets to share their work, to encourage the writing of new work, to acknowledge the skills of our junior poets, and to keep the spirit of Bush Poetry alive.

"My name is Caspar West and I am eleven years of age. I am a city kid who has had an interest in the bush for many years, particularly within the region of Ned Kelly and his life story. It is an honour to be accepted into this calibre of Poetry, I think it's wonderful that the ABPA gives us the opportunity to express ourselves!"

DEVIL EYED HORSE

by Caspar West

Galloping down the mountainside,
thick underbrush under his stride.
Out from the valley the horse came
with a black, sweat-glistening mane.

All too fast, did the movie end,
wanted that horse to befriend!
The doorbell rang, and people sang,
the *Happy Birthday* song to me.

Gifts were great, but to my surprise,
I received a card in disguise.

It wasn't a usual card,
with love and care and some regard.
No, this didn't have much care,
but rather pictures of a Mare!
I opened it with much doubt,
to see what this was all about.

The card was the shape of a horse,
with dark eyes of such plain remorse.
My heart skipped, exploding with pride,
I was to find my friend and ride!
The thrill in my body took course
I leapt up, "*Let's ride this Horse!*"

The night before I couldn't sleep,
but didn't dare to make a peep.
For I knew, that I may not go,
and get to observe his mane flow.

The night was long, hard and painful,
eager for my comrade's stable.
Despite my very restless night,
the next day, dawned fine, clear and bright.
Soon in the car and on our way,
we reached the farm with no delay.
The stable man came from a tin barn,
old, mad, weary, broken and scarn.

We pulled up in a driveway mere,
and the old man made it quite clear,
*"Take my advice, listen to me,
choose your darn horse so carefully.
Some of them bite, others stampede,
and there's one that wants you to bleed."*

But I didn't care what he said,
I would ride my loved thoroughbred.
The man led us to the stable,
to choose our horses most able,
hoping for the ride of our life,
without the slightest sight of strife.

There he was, elegant, prancing,
his black mane in the wind dancing.
*"The Black one's mine, that black Horse,
I must ride this Devil-eyed force."*
*"Listen up, this horse ain't for you,
this horse is all bad, through and through."*

But I still mounted anyway.
The horse gave a disgusted neigh.

Soon on our horse and off we set,
we reached the track with no regret.
The stallion took its grand stride,
I felt like I was in Jim's ride.
"The advanced riders at the front."
My horse gave me a teasing grunt.
That old man wouldn't hold me down,
and I ignored his steely frown.
Heading off quickly down the track,
I would be the fore of the pack.

Soon like a fresh burning timber,
I felt my horse begin to cinder.
I kicked the horse soft with my heel,
and the horse just seemed to repeal.
I gave him a much harder kick,
he responded galloping quick.

DEVIL EYED HORSE continued

I let out an unsettled cheer,
as the pack watched in very fear.
I dropped the reigns with sheer panic,
the horse's hatred was volcanic.

Through the trees on rough broken ground,
I never looked down at his bound.
At a racing pace the horse went,
running to a deadly descent.
He turned around and kept his feet.
Too feared to shift in my seat,
holding the mane, fearfully mute.
Still the horse galloped in pursuit.
It ran till it couldn't no more,
and I certainly knew for sure
that he no longer wanted me,
and wished that I would let him be!

That is when he saw some petals.
Bending down to stinging-nettles,
over his neck I was soon spurn –
In nettles I began to burn.
My stings hurt bad, I thought I'd die.
but that horse would not see me cry.
I walked back to the stable slow,
cursing at my now brand-new foe.

And now comes my end conclusion
of love, care in some profusion.
Movies don't always hold the truth,
this I discovered in my youth.
My feral stallion taught me
a lesson in humility.
A course to listen to indeed,
or face the wrath of the black steed.

YOUNG WRITERS –

If you would like to enter written poetry competitions there are some great opportunities coming up for young writers from 5 to 18.



THE DUSTY SWAG AWARD
has a section for Primary and
Secondary children.

So does the West Australian
SILVER QUILL.

THE IPSWICH POETRY FEAST
has sections for children 5-7
years, 8-10 years, 11-13 years
and Young Adults 14 to 15 and
16 to 17 years.



Entry forms for these written competitions and more can be accessed through the ABPA website <https://www.abpa.org.au/events.html>

And here's another poem from Caspar –

THE LOST MAN

by Caspar West



I visited your house,
old, broken and with mouse.
torn by industry,
they've taken your brilliancy.
There's buildings new, the city's getting near
and I knew I wouldn't find you here.

I went to where you got a sash for bravery
and ate a wealthy meal so savoury.
I looked for you where the creek sat still,
where you saved a boy who took your will.
But I realised that you weren't here,
so I searched another town so mere.

I went to where you stole,
gold, a fortune's whole.
You kept people at the station,
where you showed off – you were a sensation.
But you couldn't be at the Bank,
your style was never swank.

I saw where they held you, bleak and daunting,
the Trap's spirits still taunting.
Your prized cloth now resting there,
a remanent of history beyond compare.
So I went to your very last stand,
where your capture haunts the land.

But you couldn't be at Glenrowan,
the place where your end is shown.
So I looked for you in prison walls,
to see how much your cell recalls.
The place was dark, gloomy and blank,
and when I saw your skull my heart sank.

Your revolution refrained,
however, your soul could not be contained.
Your spirit runs with the horses,
obeying nature's courses.
Forever, a legend iron-clad
and for that I will always be glad.

Both poems above © Caspar West, 2019

Letter To The Editor

Dear Neil

As a coordinator of the bush poetry group 'Logan Performance Bush Poets.' I get quite concerned when some of my poets return from competitions feeling disillusioned and hurt by low scores in some competitions. These scores can make developing poets more nervous and forgetful and unless poets have a good support network around them they could go as far as giving up poetry all together.

This letter will try to address some of their concerns and hopefully make judges aware of how poets are feeling, particularly when reasonable performers get between 40 and 60 points from some judges.

Scoring can vary considerably from judge to judge and simply stated some judges are low scorers but we as a group would like to make it clear that a reasonable score of at least 60 points or better should be given when a poet gets through a legitimate bush poem (one with rhyme and metre) without memory lapses or hesitations and performs well. So we stand behind our poets and argue that they are being hard done by.

I asked 15 poets for their opinions about some of our concerns and I was surprised at how many issues surfaced in these conversations some lasting up to 2 hours.

Of the 15 poets consulted, there were 10 males and 5 females comprising: 1 novice, 6 developing poets of just a few years, 2 winning poets of a few years and 4 winning poets of many years and two Australian champions of some years.

I asked these poets if scores were more important than comments. The greater majority told me that scores were very important although they appreciated comments particularly comments that were helpful. Poets did like receiving comments as opposed to just scores and they felt cheated by judges that just scored them. Many poets felt that good comments did not make up for low scores and that this practice was rather incongruent and contradictory and it left poets rather confused.

Another issue that was raised in these discussions was being marked very low (40's- 50's) by one judge and high (high 80's and 90's) by the other two (in a three judge competition). This seems to have been a problem in many competitions even within the Australian championships throughout the years and is still quite common place. At times many competitors except the placegetters have been given very low scores by at least one judge.

Of the discussion group, one poet suggested that when this happens the marking criteria was not spelled out clearly which then leads to this sort of disparity in points he felt this was the case with most competitions.

This situation also leads some poets into thinking there really isn't any science or skill to judging, it's just a popularity tests. Poets dealt with this issue by avoiding places where judges didn't like them or their style of poetry.

Our two Australian champions who were also competitors for many years, but now judge said judges should use the full range of scores available to them and not just hover around the 50 points. They also said that there was a big difference between being a writing judge and a performance judge. Writing competition have very strict rules and expectations but these rules are relaxed 'somewhat' in a performance competition where the poet is being judged on 'performance.'

Obviously poems need rhyme and metre but poems in a performance competition should not be scrutinised like they would be in a written competition. Many poets enjoy performing and some have winning performance poems but these poems may not always stand up to the critique of a written judge.

Some solutions were offered to this disparity of points:

1. Scrutineers/scorers should be given more power to approach judges when these anomalies happen. At these times the scrutineers need to approach the judge with the aim of having scores adjusted.

2. OR another simple solution and the one most poets were happy with.

Drop off the lowest score when it is 20-25 points less than the middle score and average the two highest scores when there are three judges. (This sort of thing happens in the Olympics)

The problem of low scores might be eliminated by doing this and it would be easy to make this a rule across all competitions.

We really do feel something need to be done to make competitions fairer and for them to be 'seen' to be honest not just 'seem' to be honest.

Gerry King.

Great Aussie Reads

With Jack Drake



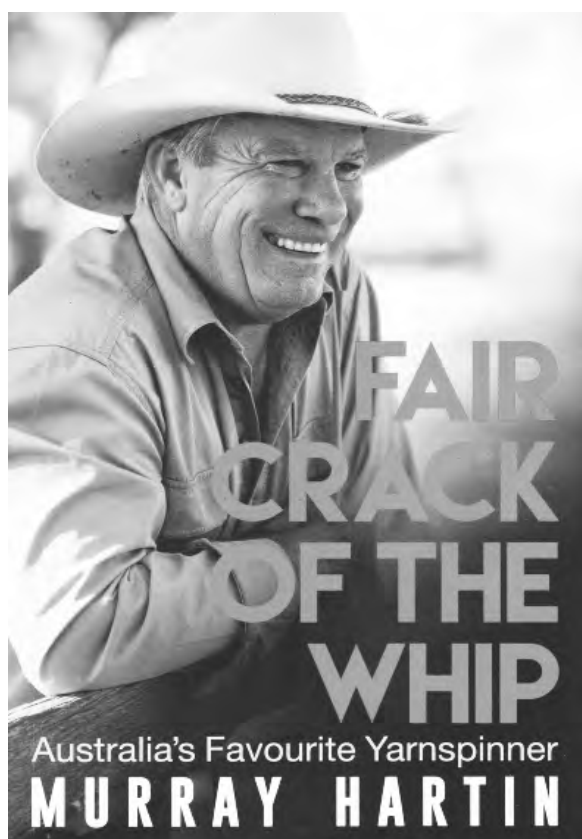
There have been several books written on the history and meaning of our unofficial National Anthem. Richard Magoffin's and Dennis O'Keefe's probably being the best known. This year at the Outback Writers Festival at Winton, the latest offering was launched and is well worth a read.

Waltzing Matilda. Australia's Accidental Anthem. A Forensic History by W Benjamin Linder (Boolarong Press, 2019) approaches the story from the point of view of a criminal barrister which is the author's day job.

Linder has exploded quite a few myths that have slipped past other Matilda historians. By evaluating the available evidence from a legal and forensic angle, he has proven positively that some of the times and events others have quoted, me included, could never have happened the way we have been told they did.

Banjo Paterson's indiscretions at Dagworth Station that Dennis O'Keefe uncovered, have been elaborated on by Benjamin Linder. While his behaviour regarding two ladies would barely rate a mention these days, it was scandalous stuff in the 1890s.

Waltzing Matilda by W. Benjamin Linder is certainly worth reading by anyone with an interest in The Banjo and his writings.



I was in the local newsagency getting a paper when I saw a bloke I know grinning at me off the cover of a new release. Yeah! It was Muz Hartin's first professionally published book *Fair Crack of the Whip* (Wilkinson Publishing, 2019)

This is a Great Aussie Read for the simple reason it contains Murray's classics "Turbulence" and "Rain from Nowhere" but I personally have never seen Muz in a cowboy hat in the twenty odd years I have known him, but there he is on the cover in something John Wayne could have sported.

Turn to the back cover and here is Muz walking off into the sunset still wearing the hat and gawd help us, a dryasabone with a stockwhip draped over his shoulder.

I think many of us have heard copious usage of the W word from the bloke in question when someone else took the stage similarly attired. All I can say about the art work, not the book, is "fair crack of the whip Muz".

Despite having said that, the book is classic Murray Hartin with a bunch of great poems and some entertaining tongue in cheek pieces from his journalist days.

More great Aussie reads at www.outbackbooks.info

THE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE

© Ross Knudsen

Bush tracks carried horses and settlers
To cold winter's nights and a camp;
Where the hovels of canvas and shingles
Became homes in the mist and the damp.

In the heat of the sun and the summer
Where providence offered return;
A schoolhouse was fashioned from timber
For pioneer's children to learn.

Pioneers with their stock and on horseback
To make meagre an earning from land;
The homestead, the stockyards and fencing
Their endeavours were shaped by their hands.

They sought wealth in the valleys and rivers,
They sought hope, in holding a run.
They brought glimmers of hope for their families
And the fickle rewards if they won.

But this little schoolhouse in the valley
Suggan Buggan is hidden away;
To the echoes of children of farmers
Whose chorus has slipped to decay.

The schoolhouse stands mute in a clearing
Its timbers are weathered and old;
No smoke drifting out of its chimney
The fireplace, empty and cold.

Its timbers are silver with ageing
Old hardwood from slabs cut and trimmed.
With silent sunbeams through the shingles
Its dappled rays, ghostly and dim.

In its day Suggan Buggan was lively
Pioneering and farming had hold;
Till a calling then emptied the valley
And the holding was transferred and sold.

There's an old schoolhouse in a valley
Its timbers now echo its past.
Gone are the tutors and children
And memories of when they were classed.

The school had not even a number
And tutors that only some knew;
But the school is still there to remind us
That it nurtured the minds of a few.

The Old Schoolhouse was written about Sue and my experience after stopping at Suggan Buggan for lunch on our way to Jindabyne in November 2018. The school was built in 1860 by Edward O'Rourke to have a tutor educate his eleven children because it is so remote in the hills of the Great Divide.

The Lesson

© J.P. Coyne, 2019

The morning yoga class was held
within a Council hall.
That day the sight that we beheld
was shocking to us all.

Some scraps of cake and this and that
were strewn upon the floor.
To find a spot to place a mat
was not an easy chore.

We often talk while in the class—
a friendly little group.
But tolerance, that day, was sparse
and charity did droop.

The party of the night before
"was run by grubby folk.
Unthinking, stupid, bad and more—
their manners are a joke."

"I'll ring the Council to complain
and get those people banned."
To put against their name a stain
was what the group had planned.

The Sun Salute was put on pause
on hearing of a noise.
A little girl came through the doors
"I'm looking for some toys."

She skipped into a room at right
returning with a game.
"You had a party here last night"
the teacher did exclaim.

"It was my cousin's, she is five"
the chirpy girl then said,
"She's lucky to be still alive—
a cancer's in her head."

Then out she went, back through the doors,
as quickly as she came.
Our hearts had been attacked with claws—
and heads we hung in shame.

When mouths and feet became detached,
the mats were then removed.
With mops and brooms and sweat unmatched
we got the room improved.

Dear Neil,
In a recent issue of the magazine you printed a couple of parodies.
Reading them prompted this effort of mine which you are free to use.
Regards,
Peter White

NANCY OF THE OVERTHROW.

I had written her an email where I outlined every detail
Of the pay and the conditions of a newly vacant job.
‘Twas in Gympie that I knew her, so I sent the email to her
In the hope that she would come and join my Ladies’ Cricket mob.

Her answer was, “You betcha!” But I had to go and fetch her,
As a recent driving accident had written off her car.
I said I’d come and get her and I hoped that she was better,
‘Cause in my Ladies’ Cricket Team she would be the star.

I remembered in my boyhood, Nancy Wilson with great joy would
Play street cricket with us boys. She was handy with a bat.
She was also great at fielding, from her throw the stumps were yielding.
And when it came to bowling, fast or spin, she’d manage that.

In games she’d make a showing. Team mettle would be growing.
My aim to end the season, not on bottom, but on top.
But first day of Team Practice, I’m afraid that she was “cactus”.
So then I thought that Nancy from my Team I’d have to drop.

She said to me. “Please trust me. I’m just a little rusty.
I haven’t really played a game since I was seventeen.”
I said to her, “Well Nancy, your playing’s not too fancy.
But I am the proverbial rock, and a hard place, in between.

I’ve invested my finances, so I’ll have to give you chances
To regain your fitness level and your Cricket skills diverse.
You must practise in the netting, because, with you, I’m betting
Our chance of winning matches will not go from bad to worse.”

In our first game of the season, I really had no reason
To think my Ladies’ Team would be victorious on the day.
At the end of our innings, I began to count my winnings,
Our score so high the others couldn’t win. NO WAY!

They needed four to beat us and the last ball could defeat us.
Nancy fielded the ball. She’d end the opposition’s show.
Her throw at stumps went missing. Our win, “Goodbye”, I’m kissing.
That’s how I came to name her, “Nancy of the overthrow”.

Peter White, Eagleby, 2020



C.J. Dennis

by Tony Hammill

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis (1876-1938), known as 'Den', was unique amongst the bush poets in that his main works were set in the city – Melbourne in fact. His work combined elements of the poet, playwright and novelist, the narrative or plot unfolding through the eyes of a central character known variously as 'The Kid', 'The Bloke' or 'Bill'. We follow the fortunes and character development of Bill, Doreen and Ginger Mick around the time of WW1. His people are working class larrikins using the Australian 'slanguage' of the day; hence the glossary following 'The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke', which was compiled from earlier work in the Bulletin with additions, published in 1915 and dedicated to the AIF. It sold 65 000 copies in its year of publication, quickly making Dennis a wealthy man. Because of its popular appeal, trench pocket editions were published for the troops who could follow the story and thoughts of Bill and Ginger Mick who is killed on Gallipoli in the succeeding 'The Moods of Ginger Mick' (1916) which sold 39 324 copies in its first run. Probably Dennis's best poem was 'The Play', a satirical take on Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' which Bill sees with Doreen. He also wrote quite serious verse. He was the true 'laureate of the larrikin' and captured the Australian spirit.

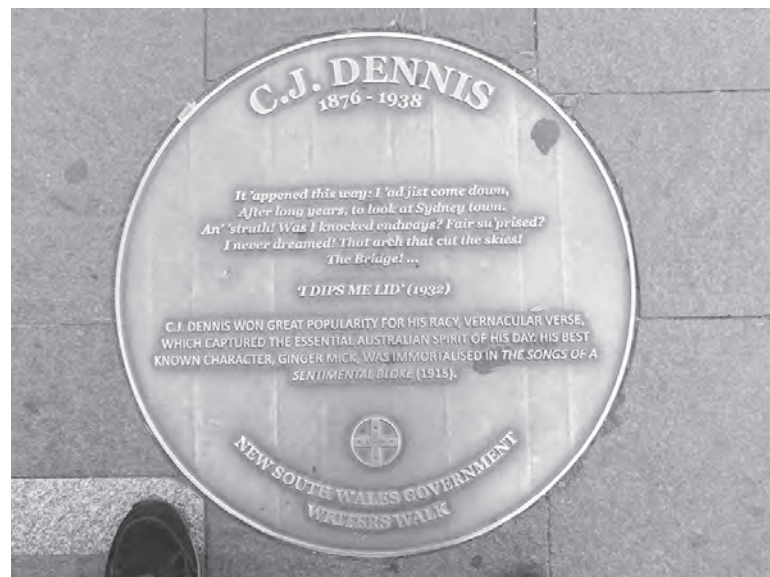
Dennis was born in Auburn, South Australia, the son of a publican. He worked in various jobs including law clerk and had his poetry published in the 'Sydney Bulletin' and 'The Australian Worker'. He moved to Melbourne in 1907, where he was a freelance journalist, and in 1908 camped at Toolangi 45 kilometres north-east of Melbourne where he was to spend most of his life. He worked as a journalist in Sydney in 1914, and was appointed secretary to the Federal attorney-general. Here he met and in 1917 married the novelist Olive Harriet who wrote under the penname Margaret Herron. He built a house, Arden, at Toolangi which was destroyed by fire in 1965, but his 'Singing Garden' still exists, and an annual festival is held in his honour at Toolangi. He wrote regularly for the Melbourne Herald.

Dennis suffered from asthma and bouts of intemperance and died in Melbourne of cardio-respiratory failure in 1938. He has a monument at Auburn and a plaque on the Writer's Walk at Circular Quay, and has been the subject of several biographies. A silent movie made in 1919 very loosely based on his Sentimental Bloke, was, in my opinion, horribly miscast with Arthur Tauchert as Bill; Lottie Lyell was fine as Doreen. Nevertheless, Dennis earned 1000 pounds in royalties from the film and it was immensely popular, claimed by producer and director Raymond Longford to have been made for 900 pounds and to have grossed 50 000 pounds worldwide. A stage play was produced in 1922, a sound movie in 1932, and a musical in 1961, as well as gramophone recordings and radio and TV programs.

Dennis's books were: Backblock Ballads and Other Verses (1913), The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke (1915), The Moods of Ginger Mick (1916), The Glugs of Gosh (1917), Doreen (1917), Digger Smith (1918), Backblock Ballads and Later Verses (1918), Jim of the Hills (1919), A Book for Kids (1921, reissued as Roundabout 1935), Rose of Spadgers (1924), The Singing Garden (1935) and The Ant Explorer (posthumously, 1988).

'Wot's in a name? Wot's in a string o' words?
They scraps in ole Verona wiv the'r swords,
An' never give a bloke a stray dog's chance,
An' that's Romance.
But when they deals it out wiv bricks an' boots
In Little Lon., they're low, degraded broots.

Wot's jist plain stoush wiv us, right 'ere today,
Is "valler" if yer fur enough away.
Some time, some writer bloke will do the trick
Wiv Ginger Mick,
Of Spadger's Lane. 'E'll be a Romeo,
When 'e's bin dead five 'undred years or so.' From 'The Play'



LOVE IN ISOLATION

I remember a time, way back when,
Together alone, we treasured then
Our honeymoon, fifty-three years ago;
Lost in each other, no-one to know.
Fast forward to now, it is twenty-twenty;
New laws in place, of which there are plenty:
Disinfect, isolate, together, apart;
A world stopped in its tracks - when will it restart?
I look in his eyes and my heart skips a beat
Reminding me of when first we did meet.
So, we are taking these days, as our world does renew,
To consider the riches of a love which just grew
From a spark to a flame and a warm, glowing ember -
The blessing now is we both still remember.

Marion Jordan, April 2020

LIFE DURING LOCKDOWN

© Maureen Stahl

I didn't wake up each morning and think, "What have I on today?"
Activities had been cancelled and we'd been told to stay away.
I never knew what day it was; all my days had become the same.
We were all prisoners in our homes and COVID 19 was to blame.

My husband once complained and said that I was always going out,
but in lockdown he was fed up with me always being about.
I used to dance and play tennis but all I could do was to walk.
I used to visit my friends but only by phone we now could talk.

Rather than do a weekly shop it was delivered to my door.
If I drove without good reason I'd be booked for breaking the law.
But then looking on the bright side I had so much more time to read.
I sorted through all my cupboards and threw out all I didn't need.

I put my writing into books and I sorted through photos too,
and just for a bit of a change I worked on a jigsaw or two.
I made contact with some old friends, rekindled my interest in art
so I'll be refreshed and renewed when our old life we can restart.

Some businesses will not survive that's a fact or so I am told,
the huge economic downturn forcing many of them to close.
Lots of people have lost their jobs will they be taken back again
when this virus scare is over? If not what happens to them then?

Some folk showed great initiative and with some new skills they branched out,
fulfilling certain pressing needs, helping to make ends meet no doubt.
We have flattened the curve, they say, by keeping in isolation
and I did my bit and stayed home despite growing agitation.

We'll be glad when it's all over and our lives are back to normal;
but will it be like it was, maybe more casual or more formal.
We've learned to manage with less and we've taken hardships with a good grace
Let's hope when this virus is gone that our world is a better place.

ODIUM to a VIRUS.

By The Bullock Driver

Sneaking, clandestine, hidden in breath,
contemporary version of antique, Black Death.
Poor China's misery unleashed upon Earth,
scourging nations with hardship and dearth.

Slow to envisage your malevolent scope,
authority lingered in unjustified hope;
while you, vile invader, sought victims, untold;
your Death's embrace grasping, especially, the Old.

Lucky Australia, shielded by sea,
saw calamity inflicted on benign Italy.
Our Government's responses, scientifically led,
have shielded us all from the worst that we dread.

Alas for the cruise ships, sad jails of distress,
floating hot-beds of contact; inescapable stress.
Lavish praise for the nurses, the doctors, and all
who, day after day, fight what may befall.

Hippocrates' legacy; Nightingale's gift;
your strength- our protection; your actions, so swift.
Brave souls "manned the barricades", without any fuss.
Churchill's "Battle of Britain" words could be spoken by us.

There is humour and patience; kindness and care;
and we need every gram for the burdens we share.
We must follow staunch footsteps of Australians past,
to vanquish this vile thing, in triumph, at last.

The Queue

© 2020 Long John Best..

There's an etiquette to queueing,
we acquired, back in our youth,
To-days young ones pushy, shoving t
hey're impatient, that's the truth.

We were lined up, early opening,
for we oldies up at Coles,
Nearly seven, from the car-park,
comes this young bloke, boldy strolls,

To the queues head, we don't think so,
Old Nell hooks him with her cane,
Round his neck and pulled him backwards,
trips him, he cries out in pain,

Rights himself then surges forward,
he's determined that's for sure,
Poor Old Punchy, who hears bells ring,
then left hooked him to the floor,

Where he lay and stared, bewildered,
what he said, hard to ignore,
"I'm Tom, your new Coles Manager,
let me open up my store."

"The Dusty Swag"

© Paul J. Bannon. Yea Vic.

Promised mum that I'd clean out the old shed today
Had been used as a workshop by dad, in later times for hay
Discovered an old swag up in the rafters – well out of the way
Dusty not only from years of storage, but from ancient river clay

A bit of a battle dragging it down from that lofty Hidey-Hole
Gave off a rather funny smell – a mixture of possum pee an' mould.
Musty an' Dusty, no doubt of its age – well an' truly bloody old!
Didn't have a clue of its importance nor history till I got her unrolled

Fought to loosen corroded brass buckets from cracked leather straps
Tried to minimise any damage but the old hide bands let go with a snap.
24oz canvas in damn good nick – at least no damage caused by rats
Blankets Blue, a pair of boots, shirt wrapped round a billy-burnt black.

In its heart discovered Grandpa's medals from two world wars
Wrapped in dog eared letters from his father, killed fighting the Boer
Answers to long asked questions, not only these two but many more
As I sorted through the treasures tucked away in this Dusty swag's core

Long hidden love letters from a lass who wasn't me grandmother
Wonder if dad ever found out, before he died, that he had a half brother.
Would be easy to track down this new found uncle, wouldn't be a bother
Perhaps best to leave it alone – some secrets better left under cover.

No surprise the swag was so stiff, a '92 Winchester with ammo to suit
Times bloody tough back then, but there was plenty of tucker to shoot.
Discovered the reason for Grandpa's limp, on this subject always went mute
Answer plain to see – a bullet hole clean thru the toe of an R.M. Williams boot

Bundle of photos – young blokes in khaki uniform full of vigour an' pluck
Photos of the same old young men covered head to foot in Flanders muck.
Few made it through those four years of hell – most just ran out of luck.
Joined up again in '39, felt that the job wasn't finished – couldn't pass the buck.

Warrant to commissioned rank there as well – signed by General Blamey.
A letter sent to him in the desert – written on a leaf from an ol' gumtree.
Government telegram, informing of the death of a son on Kokoda dated 1943.
Another dated the same day, no, he never wore it, awarding him an M.C.

Open a tattered an' patched calico bag – the contents topped the lot!
Set of false teeth plus a velvet lined box containing that Military Cross.
Well-thumbed bible, a book of poetry an' a small enamel pot.
A note, asking to explain a missing sheep, from the local cop.

Just about covers it except for the hood ornament off a model T Ford
And a faded pawnbroker's receipt for his lighthorse sword.
Well that's the story of Grandpa's swag – hope you haven't been bored.
It's the reason why our poetry competition is called – The Dusty Swag Award



Poet - Rex Tate

DIGGER'S HAT

by Paddy O'Brien

West of the Tweed Shire boundary
just on the Richmond side,
a small settlement called Lillian Rock
there's names of two soldiers that died

A war Memorial stands,
thirty returned soldiers names are engraved.
I knelt to give my thanks
for the freedom to us they gave.

That night I thought of the War Memorial
and their families so dear,
I slept but I dreamt a story
I'd like you all to hear.

It was as if this soldier spoke to me
about his family he leaves behind,
and why he now lies beneath the soil,
only his hat and prayer book you will find.

"My hat now rests in the field,
where it landed only the wind dost know.
It lies not where it fell,
on the soil where the grass did grow.

A soiled prayer book now torn
from creases with folds so tight.
And a pen without the ink,
lost in the shadows like night.

The smoke still hovers above,
guns cold now, noise they once gave.
My hat and prayer book
the only reminder left of my grave."

This soldier's future is over.
Never a tear from his cheek shall fall,
not so from the ones he's left behind
Lovingly his picture hangs upon their wall.

For the battle that raged in the fields,
the loved ones left to remind,
how they weep for their only son,
in despair of an act so vicious and blind.

LEST WE FORGET

Paddy O'Brien



THEM TELEMARETERS.....!!!

© Jim Kent

I'm sittin' down ter dinner just a little after six,
meal of steak and vegies hot that took a time to fix,
Worcestor Sauce, a glass of wine, a meal fit for a king,
then it 'áppens, sure as hell, the'phöne begins ter ring.
Answer it, a pip or two, a sexy little voice
calls me by my name and says "you have a lucky choice
to—" Go ter buggery, I says, - **and 'angs up in her ear!**

Watchin' tele in the ev,ning,show I want to see ,
saga grand, a special show- the good old Aye Bee Cee;
nestled in me comfy chair I watch the show begin,
suddenly the ringing phone—an awful bloody din.
Answer it, a pip or two, a voice that don't seem real
calls me by my name and says, "for you a special deal
that—" Go ter buggery, I says - **and 'angs up in his ear!**

Strugglin'with a ledger, for a balance to obtain,
for me local footie club, its punishin' me brain;
I'm no good wit' figures see, they simply won't compute,
battling' fer a balance when the bloody phone a hoot...
Answer it, a pip or two, an ethnic voice replies,
calls me by my Christian name - "for you the best of buys
if....." Go ter buggery , I says, - **and 'angs up in her ear!!!**

Ain't a selfish fella, I will give a buck or two,
charities and worthy causes that are runnin' true.
When one fella rings me, says he's from a dinkum mob.
Asked him what percentage paid to do the bloody job.
"Forty, mate,"he starts to say, then quickly backing down,
"for a salary" he says, - the stupid bloody clown.
Go ter buggery, I says,- and **'angs up in his ear !**

I'm a patient fella, I can take it on the chin,
Telemarket fella's diff'rent, patience wearin' bloody thin,
asked one bloke for name and number said I'd ring him back.
Never done that way, he says, and takes a diff'rent tack,
has me 'óoked, he reckons. "I will ring YOU later, sure,
have yer Visa ready, it's a deal you can't ignore
and"Go ter buggery, I says- **and 'angs up in his ear!!**

Signed a bloomin' paper stoppin' telemarket calls,
Still they ring me regular, it drives me up the walls
ringing right on dinner time or when yer extra busy.
Telemarket calls they really make me bloody dizzy
Nasty buggery, said of me, me missus says I'm crude,
if they keep on ringin' I will keep on bein' rude
and— Go ter buggery, I'll say, - **and 'áng up in their ear!**



An Australian History Lesson

©Beryl Stirling2020

Winner Humorous Section, KOTR 2020

It started way back at the Oval.
Yeah! August, in eighteen eight two,
when we took out the match with seven run win –
something they didn't dream we could do!

Now this was a famous occasion!
Went to school, did yer? What'd yer learn?
That's the year when the Pommies said Cricket had died
and its ashes was stuffed in an urn.

On the side of this urn there's some writin' –
crook meter and terrible verse –
that listed the team they'd selected next year
to regain it for better or worse.

Now, you've heard of that other world scorer
what writes Yay or Nay 'gainst yer name?
Sez it matters not whether yer win or yer lose
but yer attitude, playin' the game.

But yer Ashes is no way a friendly,
where everyone cheers when yer score.
No, yer Ashes is more of a stoush if yer like –
unofficial, but yeah! It's a war.

And so it's gone on over decades,
a grudge match if ever there was.
We all lose our blocks if the Poms win the urn
and they rage when it comes back to Oz.

Tell yer the truth, though, it never gets back,
for the Poms keep it locked up at Lords.
It's a trophy that's never presented, y'know
and an ongoing source of discord.

You'll of heard of the body line series?
'Thirty two, when the Poms tried it on?
Puttin' theory of fast leg to practical use
in an effort to do in The Don.

I tell yer, that's no understatement –
no slanderous yarn or a myth!
An accident, maybe, in that second test
when Archer damn near clobbered Smith?

No! Yer Ashes is serious business.
No pussyfoot, sandpapered balls.
Barmy Army and sledgin's just commonplace stuff –
but check out the umpires' calls.

Like I told yer it isn't a friendly.
It's all about winning the game
and after a loss there'll be heart searching probes
to decide where to settle the blame.

See, if they win they've used dirty tactics
and when we do, they reckon we cheat,
but when it's a draw, it seems nobody's pleased.
It's gotta be win or defeat.

'Retained them?' It's time that we claimed 'em,
the way the Invincibles did
in that '48 test when we won every game
and the Pommies was really outdid.

See, in cricket there's no compromises
when the Pommies and Oz take the field.
Yeah! A hundred years back and a century on
don't give quarter's the word. Never yield!

God save the Queen? There's no problem
with Him keepin' her happy and glorious –
but whenever the Ashes come under dispute,
it'd better be us that's victorious!



FAREWELL HOLDEN

©BJlees2020

My brother bought a Ford: he never stops to think.
Bringing a Ford home was bound to create a stink..
Dad was a devoted Holden man through and through
Having anything to do with Ford would never do.

Dad's first car was a second-hand surf green FJ
Followed by a Torana really something in its' day.
A Kingswood followed, then a Commodore sedan
Which would be the last model owned by this Holden man.

When brother Jay bought home his latest pride and joy
A Ford Focus? Dad was furious with his boy.
Didn't he understand that it blackened the family name
His son laughing it off, as if it's just some silly game.

They didn't speak for weeks; Dad his son he'd denounced.
Hostility existed until General Motors announced
That the Holden Brand was dead and would soon disappear.
Then Jay consoled his father who shed a quiet tear.

So Dad decided that the only thing he could do
Was to look after his Commodore treat it like new.
Keep it clean, polished and serviced as you should
To make it last, he would use it as little as he could.

He would walk to many places where he used to drive
As a way to keep his precious Commodore alive.
But if Jay offered to drive him in his bloody Ford
No bloody way would he ever, ever climb aboard.

(Illustration also by author. Thanks Bruce)



The Logan Performance Bush Poets Competition in September

The members would like to invite all poets to join them (if all restrictions are lifted) on the 11th 12th and 13th of September this year 2020 in Beenleigh Queensland.

Friday 11th will be a 'Meet and Greet' starting at 6pm

Saturday 12th will be the competition between 9 and 3 pm, this event will be part of the Beenleigh agricultural show so all competitors will get a free ticket into the show.

Sunday 13th will be Heritage Day at Beenleigh Historical Village with a full morning of walk up entertainment as one of the events.

Our full program and entry forms are on the ABPA website.

We also have written competition which is on the website.

For more information ring or text Gerry 0499942922 or Jim 0403871325



BRONZE SPUR AWARD 2020

for written bush verse.

First prize = handcrafted
Bronze Spur trophy + \$350
2nd \$200 and ribbon,
3rd \$100 and ribbon

CLOSING DATE
17th July, 2020

For entry form and
conditions of entry
contact Ellen Finlay
Written Poetry Coordinator,
PO Box 21,
CAMOOWEAL Q.4828
phone (07)4748 2022
0427 127 864



ENTRY FORMS CAN ALSO BE DOWNLOADED FROM
ABPA WEBSITE
abpa.org.au – Events



*His battered hat was pushed well back:
he stood out from his peers*



Raymond Fryer's Pride

Ray Fryer mustered Roper flats for more than thirty years. His battered hat was pushed well back: he stood out from his peers, a raw-boned, tall but gentle bloke whose life was apt to change. That man grew up on Table Top, a place on Hervey Range.

The boy had quit from All Souls' School before his 'Senior' Test to work up in New Guinea and a few more jobs out west. He watched and learned on basalt ground the western ringer's skills, to shoe a horse alone out bush and gallop rocky hills.

The year that Ray had turned Eighteen, in Nineteen Forty-Eight, his rough and stoic father died, his trusted lifelong mate. Young Ray pitched in with kin folk when they bought the land next door: the place picked up as things improved through ending of the war.

The army needed rural blocks to build a training ground: the search was on for likely lots until a site was found. The Fryer lease was cut in half to serve some lauded scheme that sent a signal out to Ray to chase his boyhood dream.

He drove through distant countryside, he searched his agent's board to find broad-acre, pasture grass at costs he could afford. The junction of the Roper and the Wilton Rivers vied to be the heart of Urupunga – Raymond Fryer's pride.

He bought that run-down grazing land on feelings in his gut, the homestead built from bark and mud, a tiny, useless hut. Fresh water flowed so clear and clean across that distant place that rotten rails and fences etched a smile upon his face.

The Fryers knew the Roper Valley could not be their home, that Urupunga Station was the land for Ray to roam, to build a mighty cattle herd, his mission here on Earth, though not a place to rear their kids for years past their birth.

Ray's wife and growing family would stay at Table Top where he would visit in the 'Dry' when drenching rain would stop. This reads like some odd fiction tale on folk who lived that way; but grit and constant fervour served to hold the odds at bay.

He hunted feral cattle in that God-forsaken land, where ringers rode to burn on hides the Urupunga brand. Those mobs had never seen the yards or been behind the wire had never heard the sounds of men or smelt a branding fire.

That was routine, all winter long, to fund expansive plans, to pay his men and shape his dream between those sun-burnt hands. The money flowed throughout each 'Dry' from clean skins sold for meat until a plunging market posed the concept of defeat.

He'd fought and won so many times: he knew he would not fail. When he set up his meatworks, he could kill and pack for sale. That venture was so typical of every Fryer fight as he would always give his best when he thought he was right.

The fame of Urupunga was no crown for just one man: the place evolved and made a name when Fryer Law began. Ray taught the native people there. He gave them guiding lights, he taught the traits of courage with respect for human rights.

Ray built a school, new workers' huts and public trading store. He planned and built an abattoir on solid concrete floor. The full-time pick-and-shovel gang shaped every track and trail: a daily flying service brought fresh fruit and station mail.

A day on Urupunga, when the place was running hot, deserved the tag of 'movie set' - a 'shoot' on every lot. The 'Wilton Hilton' catered with enamel pots of tea: the 'Boss Man' watched and lapped it up - no place he'd rather be.

Ray Fryer shouldered, day and night, a constant driving force to overcome and conquer like a torrent down its course. He worked to forge an empire that would make a drover smile, committed soul and sacrifice to build a dream worthwhile.

Throughout the years, Ray lived that dream - he satisfied the beast. With no regrets, the time had come, he had to go back East. He left that place in splendid shape - for him some wrinkled skin, still young enough to make up with his faithful kith and kin.

When Ray returned to honour friends whom he had known for years, a wretched, broken, squalid greeting brought the man to tears. It seemed as if he'd never been, had never walked that ground, had never lost his sweat and blood, had dreams he'd never found.

The devastation was complete. Ray was beyond annoyed - the abattoir, his pride and joy, abused and then destroyed. The crucial aircraft landing strip was overgrown and closed: the ethics of some well-paid men lay brutally exposed.

He knew deep-down he loved that place with all his human might: he prayed for strength to start again, to be their guiding light. His mind's eye saw the missing stock, the buildings' savaged state: he shook his head: he set his jaw... he drove out through the gate.

A poem by Ross Rolley

March 25th 2020.

Ray retired at Table Top Station.
*'Throughout the years, Ray lived that dream -
he satisfied the beast.'*



Roper Bar Crossing.
*'Fresh water flowed so clear and clean
across that distant place'*

Regular Monthly Events

NSW

Illawarra Breakfast Poets meet every Wednesday at 7am at Marco Polo facility at Woonona. Ample parking, everyone welcome.
"Laggan Bush Poets." 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 Bush Poetry Group meets fortnightly 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month at 1pm in the Pioneer Room, Senior Citizens centre south end of Gunster St, Port Macquarie. Contact Bill Yates 6583 3360, Barbara 6584 0208 or Bessie 6583 5255.
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 @ Cafe on Queen, 15 Queen St. In the studio by the Balgalal Creek. 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 Old School House at Christ Church, 39 Rutledge St, Queanbeyan. Enter via Church Lane. 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 tdrice3@southernphone.com.au
Singleton Bush Poets. Meet at the Albion Hotel, John Street Singleton. 7pm on the first Tuesday of each month. Contact Neville Briggs 02 65711398.
Wombat Bush Poets meet at 1.30 pm at the Young Hotel for poetry, music and open mic. Last Sunday of even months except December. Contact Ted Webber 0459 707 728

QUEENSLAND

North Pine Bush Poets Group meet at the rear of Coutts Cottage, Old Petrie Town, Dayboro Road Kurwongbah, on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of every month from nine a.m. to twelve noon. Contact the President Ian on 0427212461 or the Secretary Mal on 0417765226.
Kuripia 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 Jayson (07) 4155 1007 Edna 0428 574 651 or Sandy (07) 41514631.
Beaudesert Bush Bards meet on the **Second** Friday of each month from 9.30am at the Beaudesert Arts & information Centre, Mt.Lindesay H'way, Beaudesert. Phone 07 5541 2662 or 3272 4535.
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
Shorncliff "Poets of the Park" "Poets of the Park" meet at St Margaret's Church Hall in Sandgate, beside the primary. every 3rd Tuesday from 5-45 pm contact 042 15 14 555
Townsville Bush Poetry Mates Inc meet every first Tuesday of the month at Aitkenvale Library Meeting Room at 7:00pm. Loads of fun. All welcome.
Bribie Island Bush Poets meet at 6.30 pm on the 4th Monday of each month in the Conference Room of the Blue Pacific Hotel, Woorim on Bribie Island. Contact Cay - 07 34083219
Logan Performance Bush Poets - meet 2nd Sunday of every month, 9 to 11am at the Beenleigh Historical Village. 205 Mains Road Beenleigh. All Welcome. Breakfast available Ring Gerry 0499942922..

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, cn Nolan St & Strickland Rd, Bendigo 1.30pm to 4.30pm. Contacts: Geoffrey Graham 03 5446 7104 or Ken Jones 03 5441 5121
Henry Lawson Memorial & Literary Society Inc. - Meet third Saturday each month/except January. Monastery Hall St. rear St. Francis Church. Lonsdale street. Melbourne. All Welcome. From 1-30pm till 4-00 pm. Contact: Maree Stapledon: 0408 100 896

WA

Perth 1st Friday monthly 7-9.30pm The Auditorium, 26 Plantation Drive, Bentley Park. Contact Rodger 0419 666 168 or Sue 0418 941 016
Albany 4th Tuesday monthly. Contact Peter 08 9844 6606
Bunbury 1st Monday even months 7pm. Rose Hotel. Contact Alan 0400 249 243 or Ian 0408 212 636
Geraldton 2nd Tuesday monthly. Beliar Caravan Park. Contact Roger 0427 625 181
Kalgoorlie 1st Wednesday monthly. Kalgoorlie Country Club. Contact Paul Browning 0416 171 809