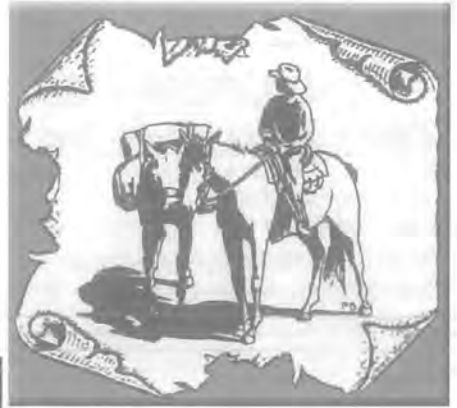


The Australian Bush Poets Association Inc.

NEWSLETTER

Volume 12 No. 6

December 2005 - January 2006



*Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year*

The ABPA Inc. Executive extends their best wishes
to all members and readers for a very
Happy Christmas
and a prosperous and poetic
New Year

THROUGH THE BRUSH OF NAMATJIRA

© Ross Magnay - Alice Springs NT

A short drive out of Alice, in the West McDonnell range,
The seasons come, the seasons go, and so the colours change.
A scene that nature painted, and by Namatjira's hand,
We see the visions captured, of this stunning ancient land.

We can see his view of dreamtime, through his visions of the
land,

His feeling for the outback, the rocks and hills and sand.
The spinifex and mulga, and the ancient river trees,
Through the brush of Namatjira, we can see the things he sees.

There's the ghost gums and the mountains, as they take on
different hues,
Of reds and greens and whites and browns, and all the differ-
ent blues.

The narrow white and sandy creeks, against an azure sky,
Sometimes painted flowing wet, but mostly painted dry.

The golden wattle blooming, and the sand of different reds,
The shady gum trees leaning, over ancient river beds.
The distant purple mountains and the closer ones of blue.
The west McDonnell country, that Namatjira knew.

BUSH POETRY EXCELLENCE AT DORRIGO

THE NSW STATE BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS held in Dorrigo over the weekend of October 8th were acclaimed by poets and audience alike to have achieved a ranking of excellence. Dorrigo was mantled in the magnificence of spring, and the two hundred plus visitors to the town left only with joyful memories.

Fifteen highly ranked poets competed in the three categories of Traditional, Modern Contemporary and Original to determine the outright ladies and men's champions for the state.

Congratulations to the Ladies Champion – Claire Reynolds of Gloucester, NSW, the Men's Champion – Roderick Williams, East Marlee, NSW, to the Junior Champion – Jack Brown – 'Gilgai', Inverell, NSW and to the Written Champion – Joyce Alchin – Corrimal, NSW

Participants in all categories contributed such a high level of Bush Poetry that the judging panels were well tested to decide the winning entries.

The Open Champions were both thrilled to receive magnificent trophies generously donated by Realities Cold Cast Living Statues of Gleniffer. These were truly artistic masterpieces and possibly unequalled by previous poetry trophies. Runners up to the Champions were presented with beautiful portraits of Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson created by that little known Coffs Harbour Artist, Di Parmenter.

The Dorrigo community centre, not renowned for acoustic excellence, was given some simple temporary modifications and under the management of local sound-man, Dave Munro produced a clarity of sound that could not be faulted. Dave also won the hearts of the performing poets with his professional attention to their individual sound and microphone needs.

As ever the ladies of Dorrigo provided a wonderful country style afternoon tea at the Saturday event that left our visitors well satisfied and generous in their praise.

The Friday evening: "Meet the Poets" night and the Sunday poets breakfast at the Dorrigo Hotel enjoyed capacity crowds and provided a highly entertaining and light hearted wrap-around for Saturdays competition.

This event has definitely cemented Dorrigo as the focal point for NSW North Coast Bush Poetry. (results p.22)

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(Established 1994)

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The Australian Bush Poets Association Inc Newsletter is set-up, published and posted direct to subscribers bi-monthly by the ABPA Inc. Deadline for copy—20th of month preceding the month of issue.

Note: Every endeavour is made to inform readers, poets, competitors etc., of functions, written and performance competitions and so on. Space does not provide to print competition entry terms and conditions, or details beyond the closing dates and dates of such event. Further information can be obtained from the organizers by sending an SSAE (stamped self-addressed envelope) to the addresses supplied.

Dear Members,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the last issue of the Bush Poets Newsletter for 2005. As such, I feel this magazine plays a very important role in holding the association together, keeping the Poets and members informed with up-to-date news and views, publishing as many readers poems as possible and attracting new members.

As a foundation member since 1994 and having a full knowledge of the association's history, I pride myself in this presentation, continually striving for improvement and endeavouring to cram as much content as possible into its twenty-four pages. This magazine could be improved a lot further if we had a greater number of financial members and I ask that each and every member make an attempt to invite others into our association.

I have served as President in 1996, '97 and '98, and 2002, '03, '04 and '05 coupling up as editor in '95, '97 and '98 as well as '02, '03, and the latter half of 2005. I feel that I have done my bit, and know that I have done it with a passion for Australian Bush Poetry. It is time I had a spell and a new head took the reins.

I will not be seeking re-election as President at the next AGM, and hereby nominate Mr. Noel Stallard of Brisbane for the position. I know he will do an excellent job if elected. As you can see here, I've run out of room already, but sincerely thank each and everyone for their support and assistance. Have a happy Christmas and we'll see you in the New Year.

Keep on writin' and keep on recitin', *Frank Daniel*



THE PIONEERS - A Tribute to A.B.(Banjo) Paterson

25 years ago, the release of 'Pioneers' by a new group Wallis and Matilda, changed the face of Australian country music.

To the delight of the true Australian music lover, 'Pioneers' took some of Banjo Paterson's timeless classics, and transformed them into haunting, evocative songs. It gave Australians from all walks of life a new way to relate to poetry and in particular the much loved works of our favorite bush poet, Andrew Barton Paterson.

Since the release of Pioneers, Wallis and Matilda have released a further 4 CD's. Those being, The Old Australian Ways, A Singer of The Bush, Australian Gold and Song of The Federation, which was released at Tamworth in 2004.

Pioneers, The Old Australian Ways and A Singer of The Bush have been also been released as a 3-CD boxed set entitled The Great A.B. (Banjo) Paterson collection.

Wallis and Matilda can proudly take their place amongst the pioneers of Australian country music, and Bush balladeers.

John Wallis and Colin Perkins (the group originators) will be performing special 'unplugged' versions of their Wallis & Matilda concerts at 4 pm on Wednesday 25th, Thursday 26th, Friday 27th and Saturday 28th of January 2006 at the North Tamworth Bowling Club with a truly modern expression of the old Australia, a unique blend of music and poetry as you will have never experienced before.

Donation. The WA Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners forwarded a cheque for the sum of \$387.75 to the Darren Jeacocke appeal late in September, (just too late for mention in the October news). The money was a direct donation from the WABP & YS and people who attended their monthly 'Muster'.

INSURANCE NOTICE: The Secretary is finding an
 increasing number of Performers who are being asked by Festival and
 Venue Managers for proof of their third party insurance cover.
 Please be informed that this cover is not available at a moments notice, and
 cannot and will not be issued until the full payment is received.
 The ABPA Third Party Insurance is still the most affordable in the country,
 and costs \$70.00 per annum to December 31st irrespective of joining date.
 Available to financial members only - please send payment, name and de-
 tails to the Secretary.

DARE TO DREAM

© Joyce Alchin, Corimal.

(Winning Entry, Written section NSW State Championships, Dorrigo)

In the depths of aging forests, in the languid flowing streams
there are treasures that are hidden often only found in dreams
of those locked away in cities where the thick smog-laden air
dulls the thoughts and clouds the mem'ry and creates untold despair.
For they only see the roof tops, the unending urban sprawl,
narrow streets clogged up with traffic moving slowly in a crawl.
Do they know there's something better not too many miles away
ready for investigation, gently beck'ning day by day?

I would show them if they asked me, open up a varied land
filled with rolling hills and valleys, surging seas and golden sand.
They would learn to ride the rapids and to climb a mountain range
in the summer, in the winter – how we'd see the seasons change.
They would hear a magpie's warble from a twisted spotted gum
or a kookaburra laughing with an invitation, "Come,
and observe the bell birds flitting in amongst the tow'ring trees,
hear the crystal bell-like music drift on early morning breeze."

I would take them where the colours of the cliffs are golden brown,
while cascading like a rainbow water falls and tumbles down
in a white and misty vapour to the gorge spread out below –
quenching thirsty desert vista with its quiet steady flow.
We'd traverse those tranquil waters and we'd marvel at the sight
of the water-lilies blooming as the bird life lifts in flight,
while a croc enjoying sunshine casts a lazy watchful eye,
and we wonder at his motives as we slowly pass him by.

We would walk the aging forests, smell the rotting leaf and bark,
find so many tiny creatures living in the semi dark.
There'd be ferns of all descriptions and a fragile orchid bloom,
twisting vines embracing tree trunks – could it be there was no room
on the floor of this great forest to allow all things to grow
so they've reached and struggled skywards waiting for the sun to flow
and to feed them with its warming, while the gentle show'rs of rain
start a trickle that will wander from the mountain to the plain.

So from very small beginnings will develop flowing streams
wending through the quiet valleys bringing hope, or so it seems,
to the fisherman and farmer as they travel to the sea -
growing wider, growing deeper, demonstrating all that's free.
And I'd show the city dweller how to paddle a canoe,
how to sit for hours fishing, solve a problem, think it through.
Build a campfire, boil the billy, look into the 'milky way'
and compare the silver moonlight with the sunshine of the day.

May those locked away in cities some day have a chance to find
all the treasures of the country, freeing up the heart and mind,
seeing far beyond the roof tops and beyond the endless smog
to inhale the frosty mornings, feel the damp refreshing fog.
Look at beauty and the hardship only country life can bring,
hear rosellas fight and squabble, listen to a wagtail sing.
But 'til then continue thinking, plan ahead, design a scheme –
for one never knows the outcome if one only dares to dream.

ENGAGEMENT: Colin Carrington of the Bendigo Bush Poets and his lovely Deborah have announced their engagement. Wedding bells will be ringing in November next year. Congratulations and best wishes from all.



The Eleventh Annual Australian Bush Laureate Awards and Presentations will be held in the famous Tamworth Town Hall on Tuesday January 24th at 2pm.

The Australian Bush Laureate Awards were instigated in 1995 to recognise excellence in published and recorded Australian Bush Poetry.

The Awards Concert showcases the CREAM of Bush Poetry and tickets always sell out - so book early. Tickets will be available November 1st from Tamworth Visitor Information Centre Corner Murray and Peel Streets, telephone 02 6755 4300.

Beccy Cole, The Sunny Cowgirls, Travis Sinclair, Tracey Coster, Brendon Walmsley, The McClymont Sisters and others join Bob Magor, Carol Heuchen, Jack Drake, Melanie Hall, Garry Lowe, Greg North and other of our best bush poets for this wonderful awards show.

NOTICE:

*The Annual General Meeting
of the
Australian
Bush Poets Association Inc
St. Edwards Hall
Hillvue Street Tamworth
2 pm Saturday
28th January 2006
Contact: Ed Parmenter
Secretary ABPA
Ph. 02 6652 3716*

'BEATIN' 'ROUND THE BUSH'

The second annual 'Beatin' 'round the Bush' Festival was held at Euabalong in the heart of New South Wales on the October Long Weekend.

Appreciably sponsored by Country Energy and supported strongly by Rotary and local input, the main coordinators, Julie and Trevor Ingram of the Melaleuca Café, were overwhelmed by the response and the number of visitors from distant places.

Travellers were drawn to this tiny historic Lachlan River town by the comfortable atmosphere and the friendliness afforded them by the locals.

Apart from a concerted advertising programme, word of mouth from the 2004 festival played a big part in seeing many new faces in 2005 with a lot returning after last years success.

Visitors came from Victoria, the Riverina, and the Central West; with lots of holiday makers who were passing through, opting to stay over to enjoy some fair-dinkum, down-to-earth Aussie hospitality for the weekend.

Workshops were a feature again this year revolving around Quilting, Aboriginal Arts and Crafts, Scrap Booking and Photography.



Aboriginal singer, Lawrence Barlow, from Condobolin was well received with his versatile performances covering a wide range of popular songs.

The Calare Dance Group gave an excellent display of aboriginal cultural dance and music with many of the local children joining in.

Bush Poetry was another highlight of 'Beatin' 'round the Bush' with association President, Frank Daniel of Canowindra NSW, conducting two performance competitions and a yarn-spinning challenge on the Sunday.

The yarn-spinning challenge brought

out a lot of natural talent from the story-tellers with John 'Tractor' Rennick of Forbes taking out the award for the second time with an entertaining yarn about duck hunting.

Lance Parker, formerly of Hillston and now from Griffith NSW, was runner up with a rather far fetched version of growing pumpkins while Betty Walton of Tintaldrá Victoria left nothing to the imagination with her story about old aged homes and old women.

In the non-original section of the Bush Poetry Performance competition, Betty Walton won hands down with a fine example of Henry Lawson's 'The Squatter's Daughter'.



Local organic farmer and poet, Edgar Vagg, came second with 'My Lachlan Home' written by fellow competitor Jack O'Connor of Shepparton Vic. who came equal third ('Outback' H. Lawson). with John Rennick. (The Day they Came Together by Rupert McCall).

Lance Parker took out the Original Verse section with his humorous version of 'My Brother Eddie'. Second was Edgar Vagg with 'Reconciliation'; third went to Jack O'Connor with 'Old Three Legs' and fourth to Betty Walton for her poem 'My Dad'.

Winners of the previously adjudged written competition were; First and Second, Don Adams of Paraparaumu Beach NZ and Katheryn Apel of Mount Tom Qld.

On the Monday morning a poets breakfast with a difference saw not only poets taking to the microphone but also non reciters encouraged by the MC to stand up and relate a story about themselves, their families, their past history or days at school.

Euabalong is a long way to go for some, but it's well worthwhile. October long-weekend next year, eh?

THE OLD BLACK BILLY AN' ME

© Louis Essen (1879-1943)

The sheep are yarded, an' I sit
Beside the fire an' poke at it.
Far from the booze, an' clash o' men,
Glad, I'm glad I'm back again
On the station, wi' me traps,
An' fencin' wire, an' tanks an' taps.
Back to salt-bush plains, an' flocks,
An' old bark hut be th' apple-box.
I turn the slipjack, make some tea,
All's as still as still can be -
An' the old black billy winks at me.

HAT TRICK TO ELLIS!

The third annual Nandewar Poetry Awards were held in the Riverside Room at The Crossing Theatre on Saturday 15th October and conducted by the Narrabri & District Historical Society Inc. None of the finalists were able to be present on the night, however the winning entries, 'Miracle Make-over', 'They No Longer Call Sheep-O' and 'Spare the King' were very ably read by Alan Keast, Ron McKenzie and Gillian Kahl.

The three winning poems had all been submitted by Ellis Campbell, much to the surprise of the judge Mrs. Judy Rolls who only learned the poets names at the time of presentation. Society President Max Pringle said 'I am not sure, but I would imagine this could be a first for any poet'.

Ellis is no stranger to winning poetry competitions. He has now been awarded 118 first placings, had countless second and third placings, and while he has won 'firsts and seconds' and 'firsts and thirds', this is his first clean sweep.

Two highly commended awards went to Shirley Everingham for 'On Guard' and to Ron Stevens for 'Choices at Gilgandra'.

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of their winning entries in the Junior Section by brothers Ross and Blake Palmer. We should be hearing a lot more from them in the future.

When Royalty's blessed in the time-honoured way,
there's doubt and it constantly lingers -
while the Danish were checking the child's dna
the Tassie's were counting his fingers.

ALL ABOARD, 2005

© Ron Stevens, Dubbo

(1st prize Rail Fest Verse Competition 2005 Tamworth NSW.)

It's time to take a journey through the yesterdays of rail:
recorded history, as well as half-remembered tale.
Perhaps I'll visit sidings where my memories lay piled,
to take on board a younger man and brash inquiring child.
Each might convey faint images from life's well-travelled hoard,
lost-property of mine reclaimed before fate's 'All aboard!'



The ride is swift on my express: a century and half
speeds by without a signalled *slow*, or *stop* to pass the staff.
At Parramatta cheering greets a train from Sydney, for
it's claimed the country's first, although the eighteen fifty-four
short Goolwa line from town to port is churlishly ignored.
Already we are split on gauge; can't leap, as one, aboard.

The Irish versus English gauge, each state's pigheadedness,
have cost the country dearly since; almost beyond redress
till *Indian-Pacific* showed such foresight sometimes can
demolish distance, lay a track for nation-spanning *Ghan*.
While fettlers fettled, firemen fired, our *pollies* snarled and warred
between themselves, as railways spread and unions climbed aboard.

They rode the rail to outback Bourke, brought back the bales of fleece
which used to go by riverboat, at floods' and droughts' caprice.

The railway's growth was magical, creating towns en route.
Each town sustained a family -- a railways institute --
of more than bricks, but loyalty inspired by trust's accord.
The surety of lifelong work kept railway men aboard.

My journey back to present days diverts by Kurrajong,
a passenger on *Pansy*, out from Richmond, borne along
by steam's impressive strength against some sorely testing grades.
I wipe some soot from reddened eyes, to find the scene cascades
through Windsor, Vineyard, high-school bound, when schoolmates pull the cord
and I deny all knowledge to an angry guard on board.

A blur of signpost *Griffith's Teas*, a cavalcade of pies
and sauce, a tryst *beneath-the-clock* at Central, tears and sighs
as troop-trains puff their painful way to ... somewhere's distant clash.
These images converge and swirl like firebox spark and ash.
Yet solid still before young eyes, a destination board
invites me out to Mudgee, Bourke by train, so 'All aboard!'

Alas, most journeys now include a bus trip part the way
and many tracks are derelict, no longer can convey
a passenger or country freight from silo, farm or mine.
Huge trucks are working overtime, but rail's in steep decline.
Timetables verge on fictional, so travellers choose *Ford*
or *Holden*, rarely contemplate a daily 'All aboard!'

Tonight I'm hearing stories at the Railway Bowling Club,
a whistle-stop to sip a beer, enjoy some Chinese grub.
Retired guards and drivers boast of good-old-days before
the *Thirty Eight* was side-tracked by a diesel conqueror.
We pay respects to *Waterfall* and *Granville*, underscored
by bravery, then stand to toast 'The Railway! All aboard!'



NSW Railways Celebrate 150th Anniversary

Since the first journey on 26 September 1855, the railway system has grown from a modest 22km line between Sydney and Parramatta to a complex, state-wide network covering 11,000km. On Monday, 26 September a re-enactment of the first official rail journey to open the Sydney to Parramatta line capped off a spectacular weekend of 150th birthday celebrations for rail. The re-enactment train carrying a range of guests and dignitaries, including NSW Governor Professor Bashir and Deputy Premier and Transport Minister John Watkins, departed Platform one at Central at the same time as the very first service did 150 years ago. Official records show it was a wet and gloomy day back in 1855, just as it was for the re-enactment.



2005 Bronze Swagman Book of Verse



Winning Verse 2005:
"The Chance to Say
Goodbye" by Veronica
Weal

A Brief History:
The Winton
Tourist Promotion Asso-
ciation was formed in

October 1967, and because of the connec-
tion to Banjo Paterson and Waltzing
Matilda, it was a natural concept to look at
ways to encourage the writing of Bush
Verse, which is so much a part of our Aus-
tralian heritage.

Bruce Simpson, a recognised Bush Poet
and living in Winton at the time, was part of
the team instrumental in organising the
Tourist Promotion Association's first publi-
cation of Bush Verse in 1970, a book called
"Matilda Matilda", featuring a swagful of
poetry from local talent.

After the success of this publication, it
was decided to introduce a national and
worldwide competition for written verse,
with the prize to be a Silver Swaggie.

Daphne Mayo, a famous Australian sculptor
who had completed the famous fibre cast
swagman for the Winton Shire in 1959, was
approached to create a swagman statuette to
be used as a trophy.

In 1971, Daphne was given permission to
proceed with the swagman, but because of
the high cost of silver, the swagman was
cast in bronze instead, and a tradition was
born.

The Competition has now run continu-
ously since 1972, and produces a Book of
Verse each year.

Now, after 34 years, and over 10,500
original verses written, the Bronze Swag-
man Award is the most prestigious in this
field and attracts hundreds of entries each

Deadline

for copy and advertising in the
February—March Issue
15th January 2006



02 6344 1477



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Canowindra NSW 2804

STARLIGHT'S RUN

© Brian Beesley, 2005 (Winner. 'Outback' Section. Gilgandra 2005)

There are men revered as heroes for their daring sacrifice;
there are those who take from others whom you wouldn't think of twice.
But the two are sometimes woven into one without a thought
and receive a jury's blessing from the Crown's collusive court . . .

Out along the winding Cooper there's a feat the bushmen praise,
of a stockman who duffed cattle in those early droving days.
He was known to drop an alias to keep the 'Traps' confused
but the name of Harry Redford, is the name his mother used.

Riding north from Hawkesbury River where he learnt the droving game,
Harry worked the Queensland border, for a time, till he became
anxious from a constant yearning for the country further west,
where there are no laws to bind you and the worst are like the best.

It was early eighteen-seventy when Harry Redford planned,
on the southern side of Bowen Downs, to duff their cattle and
run them south along the Cooper, with a prized white bull in tow,
lady-luck in his possession, and the Barcoo full in flow.

He enlisted help from men who shared his bent for duffing stock,
building yards near Rio Waterhole and crafting words to mock
squatters' wealth and their indifference to the common workingman
so it made no sense to question where the squatters' cattle ran.

On the bare unbroken landscape from a scrubby reddish mound,
Harry kept a lookout perched where he could see, for miles around,
any sign of boundary riders, or a stray defenceless mob
drifting off from Bowen Downs towards the rocky treeless knob.

Using Forrester's old property below the waterhole,
Harry branded calves and cleanskins but the treasured bull he stole,
had the letter 'S' and 'Archer' markings, branded on its hide,
firming Harry's mind to sell the beast on South Australia's side.

Though he'd mustered up a thousand, had them watered, thrown and fed,
there was plenty more to think about with challenges ahead.
He was riding into country Burke and Wills and Leichhardt crossed
Burke and Wills had perished south from there and Leichhardt's team was
lost.

For the bush will punish those who disregard its danger sign
who will try to tame its ancient unforgiving parched design,
but the bushmen who will treat her with profound respect succeed
and the outback blushed with favour for the likes of Harry's breed.

Harry crossed the Barcoo at Wahroonga Ford above Retreat,
pushing onward, slowly onward, through the seething desert heat,
yet the nights provide a respite 'round the campfire's dancing flames,
where the cattle low in chorus with the tinkling hobble-chains.

Harry reasoned he would have a lead of almost thirteen weeks,
on the chasers out of Bowen Downs, but when the outback speaks
of intrepid overlanders, Harry's name is mentioned too
would it be a fruitless chore to stop the mob from getting through?

After weeks behind the restless cattle, Harry and his mates
saw the weather-beaten greyness of the Carraweena gates.
There, he traded with two brothers, giving up the Gracemere bull,
signing off as 'Henry Collins', for 'provisions paid in full'.

It was not without reluctance Harry signed the brothers' bill,
he supposed it could be used against him in a court, but still,
using false identity outback was fairly safe and while
daring ventures marry consequence, it suited Harry's style.

GILGANDRA'S COO-EE FESTIVAL

Gilgandra is situated on the Castlereagh River sixty-five kilometres north from Dubbo and comes alive each October long weekend with a number of festivities to mark the anniversary of the Coo-ee march. The previous Saturday leads up to the festival with a country music talent quest at the Gilgandra Services Club and features no less than eleven sections. On Friday night of the long weekend a packed house at the local bowling club witnessed the presentation of awards for both the junior and senior poetry competitions, complimented by performances from local and visiting poets.

This year a bronze statuette was awarded to the best overall poem. Brett Garling, of Wongarbron, crafted the statuette and Brett's relatives owned the store in Bridge Street, where the Coo-ees lined up in front of, before marching off to Sydney! A highlight of the evening's entertainment was a rendition of Slim Dusty favourites by Barrie Batten. Barrie is a devotee of Slim's work and believe me, Slim will never be gone while ever Barry is singing his ballads. The presentation evening was masterfully MC'd by local Dubbo radio personality, Leo DeKroo, (remember the DeKroo brothers on Bandstand?) Leo handled the proceedings brilliantly and added polish to the evening's programme.

Since the inception of the poetry competition, the organisers have engaged the services of top-drawer judges, beginning with Quendrih Young, then Peter Hanbury and for the past two years, Ron Stevens.

A street parade, began at 12n on Saturday and featured a number of floats depicting local businesses, sporting groups, community services etc., all intermingled with marching bands, vintage cars and tractors and of course, bringing up the rear, were the Coo-ee marchers. The parade made its way to the Coo-ee Memorial Park where a short service was conducted by local dignitaries, followed by a wide range of activities, including a number of stalls trading in a variety of goods and chattels.

Further down Strzelecki track, across the rippled sandy dunes, where the land is hardly tempered by the quench of winter moons, Harry and his drovers saw Mount Hopeless through a sultry haze and their stockwhips cracked in rhythm to the dreams of better days.

For the drive was almost done and Baker's property loomed near, where the waters from MacDonnell Creek flow into Blanche's weir. Baker's station manager agreed to buy the mob and wrote, out in Henry Collins' name, a legal promissory note.

Harry cashed the note in Adelaide five-thousand-pounds they say and his droving exploits still remain as folklore there today. But the law and 'Bowen Downs' were riding hard along his trail, till a pair of Mudgee troopers put the wealthy thief in gaol.

Now, the bushmen knew 'Squattoocracy' and 'Justice' were the same - if a horse or mob went missing then a bushman got the blame, yet the irony is squatters worked outside the law as well, but with property came power and that's where the difference fell.

So the Redford trial at Roma was a colourful affair, with the judge arrayed in squatters' 'clothing' yet the locals there idolised the lanky bushman, as a champion to their cause and acknowledged Harry's presence, in the court, with loud applause.

Testimony mounted high against him as the trial progressed, and the judge's grin grew wider as each duffing mate confessed. Then the jury gave its verdict, finding favour with the thief, while the Bench's comments echoed to the bias of its brief.

Harry's bold acquittal marked a triumph for the common man, fighting the 'Establishment', before the spread outback began. He became a bushman's hero, quite apart from other 'crooks' eulogised as Captain Starlight in Australian storybooks.



At Gilgandra. Ellis Campbell, winner of the humorous section, and adjudicator Ron Stevens, flanking Brian Beesley holding the coveted bronze statuette of a WW1 soldier in coo-ee pose. The statuette was awarded for the best overall poem 'We Will Remember Them'.

The Coo-ee Eucharist at St. Ambrose Church opened the programme for Sunday. It is interesting to note that the church was built with funds donated by St. Ambrose parish in England, as Gilgandra was deemed to have been the town in all the Empire, which contributed most towards the war effort. This year Bill Hitchen's great grandson was present at Gilgandra and a dedication of a memorial was made in Bridge Street to mark the 90th anniversary of the Coo-ee March.

Gilgandra has a number of fine museums to peruse and from Monday to Saturday the Observatory was open for a peek at the stars in a wide, clean country sky. A rodeo at Gilgandra Showground on Monday concluded the festival. However, an activity as broad as the Coo-ee March Festival could not run as smoothly as it did without the hard work and dedication of local organisers. So mark your calendar for the October long weekend next year, enter the poetry competition, then go and enjoy some worthwhile Australian History!

Brian Beesley

POOR POOCH! (or Strings Attached)

My dog has fleas,
he's ill at ease,
he whines and scratches daily.
I'd use shampoo
but if I do....
How'll I tune my Ukulele?????
Tee hee, Tiger Tom! 3.11.05 ©

Col Newsome: A Champion In The World.



Each age has its champions. Such a word can summarize the character of a person, from particular achievements in his or her story. And due to the actions of persons at particular times and places, it turns out that there are a number of senses to that word. A champion is 'one who wins in an officially designated contest'. This can be a bit of an exclusive category, with relatively few attainments. In a slightly different sense, a champion can be appreciated as 'one who acts in greatness in some activity'. Due to the greatness that many people can attain in one or another activity, there have been and are many 'champions' in this sense. Yet most of them are not 'officially' recognized, except by expression of informal camaraderie. In a different sense again, a champion is 'one who is an activist for the cause of another, for some, or for many'. In the human story, there have been some people who have achieved in all of those senses. Col Newsome is one such person.

An account of that first sense listed above is that in 1947, Col Newsome won an Australian Bullock Riding Championship at Glen Innes, and defended that title the following week at Walcha. This title was officiated by a body known as the Bushman's Carnival. The only difference between that body and the Australian Rough Riding body was that the latter paid more prize money. The Bushman's Carnival competition eventually faded out.

As for the second sense listed above, there is no shortage of its examples in Col Newsome's diverse and colorful history. He was born in a Midwifery at the rear of the Courthouse at Glen Innes in northern NSW in 1916, into a Grazier family based at the 'small township' of Wellingrove, 20 km west. He became Secondary School educated in the 1920's, but at the age of 15, went on to put his hand to shearing and bush work. After serving in the Army during World War 2, he returned to continue those lines of work. If we were to conduct an appraisal of the degrees of performance one can attain in their lines of work, we would be faced with a host of complex relativities. Still, by knowing what 'shearing' and 'bush work' are, I can tell you, and can prove to anyone keen to find out, that they are not easy. To stick with shearing as an occupation for most of one's life is an act of greatness in itself. And of course, as Col would be one of the first to acknowledge, there are many champions in this sense, and not only in shearing, but in all lines of work, and in many roles of life. Col Newsome has acted in the shearing industry as more than a long-term worker. He has also been a staunch representative for other workers in that and other industries. His involvement for the cause of workers goes back a long way, well before the 1956 Shearer's Strike, a crucial event within which he was a prominent activist. And this involvement also continues a long way. There are still the younger generations of shearers who remember his ongoing role as a representative for them. In 2004 he was officially recognized by the Australian Rural Worker's Union.

But that involvement is only one form of greatness that Col Newsome has exercised. As a youth and as a man in a great country, in a greatly changing era, he has lived a life that these words can only begin to describe. Yet he has described a fair amount of it, and of the lives of others, by the poetry, short stories and historical accounts that are there within the books he has written. One of the most colorful chapters of his life is portrayed in his poem: "With Jimmy Sharman's Troupe" (The Green Tree Snake, 1981, p. 87). For anyone taking the simple delight of reading this poem, I would like to remind them that it is not fiction.

Nor is it swollen rhetoric. I can remember as a child seeing him make a 'return-guest appearance' as a wrestler in Jimmy Sharman's Troupe at the 1969 Glen Innes Show. I smelt the sawdust and sweat, saw the amazing characters, heard the drum, and felt the thrill of the crowd. Now when I read that poem, having seen a bit of Australia and met many great people, I know that it is a real account. Poetic, but real. As for most of Col Newsome's poetry, it tends to speak for itself. Upon reading "The Shapeless Blob", "Tree Snake and Family Go To Church", or "The Rat Faced Man", (all in The Green Tree Snake), you don't need to meet Col to feel that he has an open mind. But still, an open mind he has, and most who meet him get to know it. He has had an uncanny ability to attract quite amazing characters. The characters my sister and I have met as his children growing up involved in the stock game with him were certainly eye-openers. There are three names that stand out: Wally Price (an eccentric loaner with a big property who agisted Col's cattle), Jack Kilner (a local stockman) and No Boots (a traveling artist and shearer who notoriously shore sheep at sheds with no boots on). And those are just three names amongst a cast of characters... types that don't seem as common in the Australian bush anymore (the trucks changed things in the stock game a lot). Anyway, upon reading "The Drover's Camp" (first published as an eponymous booklet and later in The Green Tree Snake), you don't need to meet Col to feel that he is an activist for respect, social goodness, and freedom... both *from* oppression, and just as importantly, *of* expression. And perhaps those are the main underlying themes pervading all of Col Newsome's work: the importance of respect, goodness and freedom... for all peoples and beings. He has expressed these themes throughout his poetry, and has lived them as much as he can in his actions, while still managing to "Eat the apple of life to the core" (The Green Tree Snake, p.98). In these respects and more, Col Newsome truly is a champion. By seeing the champion in him, I have been able to see it in many others. I hope this story has inspired the same for you in some way. Each age has its champions, maybe more than we think.

(Written By Laurie Newsome 18.9.05).

LAND OF THE BEARDIES FESTIVAL

For the second time in 2005 Glen Innes celebrated its Celtic Heritage over the first two weekends in November with the "Land of the Beardies" Festival. Earlier in the year the town hosted the "Australian Celtic Festival" a major event in the Celtic calendar.

A Rodeo and other outdoor activities occupied the first weekend whilst the weekend of the 11-13th saw the focus of events swing firmly back to the centre of town. A huge 'Street Parade' on the Saturday set the ball rolling with members of the Ulysses Bike Club, Ford & Holden Car enthusiasts and representatives from every other local organisation. The Parade lapped the main street then headed the assembled masses on a "Pied Piper" chase to the local King Edward Parklands where the rest of the weekends festivities took place. Here amongst the shaded grove Market Stalls plied their trade as Tug of War and Strongman Competitions held sway over the crowds.

Carnival rides, Children's Show's & face painting kept the young ones happy whilst Celtic band "Braemer" from Melbourne and 'The Rhymer from Ryde', Graeme Johnson, entertained on the main stage.

The highlight of the Saturday was the Testimonial night held for Bush

Poet legend Colin Newsome at the Club Hotel. Over 100 guests packed the conference room to reminisce and share the occasional yarn about their friendship with Col and the times that they'd spent with him over the years. In a highly emotional evening Col's son Laurie delivered a touching speech that showed that the gift of the gab had not been lost in its path through the Newsome family generations.

Colin himself was in fine fettle with several energetic renditions of his all time favourites performed with an enthusiasm belying his 89 years. It was a night that touched the hearts of all concerned and the warmth of the camaraderie will make it a night to be remembered.

Sunday saw the focus of attention switch to the Bush Poetry Competition where places on the perpetual 'Colin Newsome' trophy were up for grabs. Thirty-two performances were judged with NSW & Australian Champions amongst the eager contestants. The standard of the competition was second to none.

Colin Newsome scrubbed up well after his late night and gave the front-runners a 'run for their money' with some fine reciting. A highlight of the Competition in the Traditional section was Ron Liekefett's rendition of a Colin Newsome poem, 'The Old Grey Night-Horse'. To have Colin in the audience as the living author of that piece (written over 50 years ago) was a once in a lifetime experience the attending poets should never forget.

The results of the Inaugural 'Colin Newsome' Bush Poetry Performance Competition can be found on page 22.



Eighty-nine year old Colin Newsome at the tribute afforded him by family, friends and fellow bush poets at the recent Land of the Beardies Festival in Glen Innes.

PALMA ROSA - 50th SHOW

The Palma Rosa Poets held their 50th Show with a celebration of Henry Lawson's song and verse from the Hills Country Singers and three of our best performers, Noel Stallard, John Major and Geoff Sharpe.

The evening was a great success breaking all attendance records and voted by regulars as 'one of the best.'

Palma Rosa Poets started in 1996 with Robert Raftery, Glenny Palmer, Trevor Kuchel and Trisha Anderson, followed by a succession of singers and poets many who have been featured on an Album 'Palma Rosa Poets Live' a double CD (\$30) available from Trisha Anderson at 113 Manson Road, Hendra 4011 Brisbane Qld.

To be included on the Palma Rosa Poets Mailing List - Phone Trisha on 07 3268 3624.

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BEST EVENT AWARD JOHN O'BRIEN FESTIVAL NARRANDERA NSW

In July 2005 Narrandera was awarded the Inland NSW Tourism Award for best event for the John O'Brien Bush Festival. It's the second time the festival has taken out this award and the third year running that Narrandera has been acknowledged as a Regional Flagship event by NSW Tourism.

The Festival has grown in prestige over its ten year history. It started modestly with a few poetry activities and a parade to celebrate Narrandera's connection with the man who wrote Hanrahan, Around the Boree Log and Tangmalangaloo.

The festival now holds at least seven poets breakfasts, a number of walk-ups as well as luncheons, Australian performances, trivia and bush music and dancing.

It's known for it's friendliness and the fun you can have!

The next festival will be held 15-19th March 2006 and the program should be out by mid-January. Poets and their partners get free tickets to breakfasts.

The Bush Poetry Performance Competition will pit 15 or so of the best poets against each other for some Country First Credit Union cash, and the performers of Original poems will have a shot at taking home the Jim Angel Memorial Award.

NSW MEN'S STATE CHAMPION ROD WILLIAMS



Roderick was born in Lismore in 1940 and in the years since then he has

lived a busy, committed and colourful life.

A hard working childhood (before, during and after leaving school at fifteen) amongst broken men, a dying father and a disintegrating family (all results of world War Two) was spent with horses, cattle, in banana plantations, timber cutting, post splitting, fencing, saw-mill worker, stockman to professional shearer and professional actor. Scoring top-tallies in these two main professions, with many other jobs done and skills acquired along the way.

Roderick has remained committed to his Indigenous brothers and sisters in a fight that has won back the rights and dignity of a humiliated and disgustingly downtrodden people.

He went up to Wattie Creek, Wave Hill station in 1970 and worked and fought beside Vincent Lingiari and The Gurindji Tribe, to win back the rightful ownership of their land against the English Multinational Co Vestys.

At present he is involved with The Birripi people in The Manning area and has made some very close friends with whom he writes and performs.

A deep love for children is held by Roderick. Partly because of his own childhood, but mainly because of the horrors dealt out to kids through bloody wars and just plain ill-treatment of young people and kids who are not even respected as citizens!

He has two programs that he has developed for both Primary and Secondary Students.

This is where the laughter, love, joy, truth and optimism exists in his world amongst the wonderful young people of all different colours and cultures.

Roderick's illustrated book of children's poetry, 'Frogs and Dogs and Kids', won the Australian Bush Laureate Award (Original Book of the Year) in 2003.

www.rodwilliamsbushpoet.com.au
Email. bonzablu@tpg.com.au

WOLLEMI PINE COMPETITION WINNER

The Wollemi Pine

Promotes National Tree Day

Canowindra Public School in regional NSW became the proud home of one of the first Wollemi Pines after winning a national poetry competition designed to drive Australian schools to sign up to National Tree Day.

The competition was proudly sponsored by Channel Nine and Planet Ark and attracted over 600 entries with the theme 'Why my school would like to plant a Wollemi Pine'.

Promoted nationally on Channel Nine, the competition raised awareness of the tenth annual National Tree Day, (July 31st) when thousands of volunteers got their hands dirty by planting trees to 'Green Up Australia' and generate native flora. Last year more than 250,000 volunteers planted over a million trees at 3,200 sites across Australia.

A ceremonial planting of a two-metre, five-year old tree took place at the Canowindra Public School on Thursday 27th October after the Wollemi Pines were released to the public for the first time.

This was the first tree to be planted in a school anywhere in Australia, and was presented to the school by Anne-Marie Byrne, General Manager of

Planet Ark and Sally McGeoch from Wollemi International.

"By having their own Wollemi Pine, the kids from Canowindra Public School will be able to see first hand an international conservation program" said Anne-Marie.

The Wollemi Pine was discovered by David Noble in 1994.

Here's the prize-winning poem written by the year three/four students of Canowindra Public School.

THE WOLLEMI PINE

In the deep, dark canyon David saw,
A living, breathing dinosaur.
With skin like bubbling chocolate
and wings like a Christmas tree,
This Noble man found seventy six,
wild and living free.

On the 10th of September 1994,
History was made
and much, much more.
Something as old as time itself,
was in an awful plight.
We could not let her die,
not without a fight.

Metal birds collected the seed,
So that new plants they could breed.
A majestic tree for
Canowindra Public to treasure
Forever, a Wollemi Pine would
give our school great pleasure.

OLD HENRY

© Duncan Williams Tamworth 2002

Old Henry wrote of Sweeney,
And a word to Texas Jack,
With sympathy and pathos,
In the shame of going back.
I've read most Henry's stories,
And I've studied him for years,
Had the insight for Australia,
The stories of the pioneers.

At a cemetery plot at Waverley,
Overlooking the ocean view,
I've stood by Henry's gravesite,
Felt proud and honoured too.
I've spent hours in the libraries,
With the history books of old,
From his early life at Grenfell,
To old Gulgong's hills of gold.

Come have a drink we'll call it,
By the Darling River town,
With old Henry's words of Sweeney,
Of a man so broken down.
And of characters he wrote of,
Many a night spent round a fire,
Jack Ellis and Jimmy Nowlett,
Bill, Jack Dunn of Nevertire.

Hannah Thornburn, Mary Gilmore,
Became part of Henry's life,
And Mrs. Byers, the land lady,
Stuck through Henry's saddened strife.

I've found faith in Henry's verses,
In his strong and unique way,
And I guess this would agree,
With the poets of today.

NSW LADIES STATE CHAMPION CLAIRE REYNOLDS



Winning the NSW Ladies State Championship has been the greatest thrill for Claire Reynolds of Gloucester. Claire reckons one of the best things about getting involved in the bush poetry scene has been the great people that she has met. The heart warming support from the followers of bush poetry, fellow poets who become instant mates and experienced poets and judges who are so generous with help and encouragement along the way have just overwhelmed her.

Claire has loved bush poetry from an

early age. Born in Coolah and raised on a farm she loved the old traditional poems that her Dad would recite by the fire on winter nights. All her primary years she attended a one-teacher school where the teachers read to the kids often and taught them lots of poetry of all kinds. While boarding at a hostel in Mudgee to attend High School she was popular as a room mate because she would recite poetry to the other girls after "lights-out". She has always read poetry for her own and her family's enjoyment and was often asked to recite at parties and community functions, usually because they could not get a singer.

However the world of bush poetry really burst open for Claire in 1999 when she and husband, Coll, went on a day trip to Tamworth Country Music Festival. Looking through the program she discovered the finals of the bush poetry at The Imperial. It was a wonderful surprise to find there were such great performers and a whole lot of people who shared her love of bush poetry.

Claire says she would have been happy to stay in the audience but her sister Shirley shamed her into "having a go" at the 2001 Oracles of the Bush at Tenterfield. There she achieved a highly commended in the written section with the first "real" poem she had

written and The Naked Poets who judged the performance section were so generous with helpful advice and encouragement that she was hooked.

The sisters have attended The Oracles every year since where Shirley has won the written section several times and Claire has reached the performance finals a few times and in 2003 managed to win the traditional section.

Since Claire retired she has been able to travel to Narrandera, Wauchope, Krumbach, Forster, Inverell and Dorrigo to take part in poetry events. In 2004 she and Coll took their caravan around Australia and seeing more of our great country Claire says has been a great inspiration. They included the Waltzing Matilda competition at Winton and the Australian Championships in Perth in the trip. It was a brilliant experience all round and participating in the poetry was icing on the cake for Claire.

Another great poetry experience for Claire has been going to Tamworth the last three years and performing with Sam Smythe's Bush Poets at the City Bowling Club. She is looking forward to performing there and at The Oasis with Garry Cullen's group in January 2006. Claire's current project is getting a CD or book of her poems completed - email: candrey@tpg.com.au

BEYOND THE PAIN

© Claire Reynolds Gloucester NSW. March 2005
(NSW Ladies Performance Champion 2005)

He sits cross-legged on the ground beneath the spreading tree,
Around him flows the life-blood of the city.
The bustling crowds ignore him, as they hurry off to work
Except perhaps a random glance of pity.

His women loudly haggle over something in their bags;
One slaps a child, who whinges at her knee,
A tiny girl is handing out cold chips to other toddlers,
And the rushing city people just don't see.

Nearby, the young men of the tribe spreadeagled on the grass
Still suffering the effects of last night's drinking.
He sits so still, aloof and proud yet somehow disconnected.
I look at him and wonder what he's thinking.

Does memory take him back to the camp beside the river,
To childhood's carefree days of games and fun?
The women at the cooking fires, the children at their play,
While the men were working on the cattle run.

Or in "the wet" when work was slack; the tribe went "walk-about".

He learned the sacred Dreamtime rituals then.
The tribal law traditions passed on to him by elders
And girls came back as women, boys as men.

Is he seeing in his mind's eye his young days, breaking horses?
His prowess as a stockman on the station;
His skill with stock a legend among bushmen black and white -
The pay-cheque showed the sole discrimination.

Does he feel again the anguish, when the white boss sold the station?
His people torn apart from their traditions
Transplanted to the city --- they really had no choice but
Adjust to foreign ways and strange conditions.

In the painful years that followed, he struggled with his task
To teach the young ones as an elder ought.
But they ignored his wisdom and scorned the sacred lore
For grog and pleasures easy money bought.

His life spent in a white man's world has honoured black man's customs.
He hopes the Dreamtime culture will remain,
But that must be the charge now of the coming generation
For soon, he knows, he'll be beyond the pain.

UNCLE CLYDE

© Zondrae King - Corrimal NSW
(July 2005)

(My uncle worked in the mines until 1965. He died of lung cancer but was a life-long smoker; the cause of his illness is debatable).

As I rummage through my treasures
there's a faded photograph
Of a chubby baby straddling a mare.
I'm that curly headed toddler. I was
only two years old
When my uncle lifted me and sat me
there.

My uncle was a farrier and he worked the Kembla mines
Back when ponies pulled the wagons from the hole.
After work each day he'd head for home, with face and clothing black
Covered with the dust created by the coal.

We would hear him, in the evenings, as he cycled up the path.
"All the miners cough like that", I heard them say.
"But it's not tuberculosis. Oh it's nothing, just the dust"
I can see his bloodshot eyes unto this day.

In his yard he had an anvil and a forge beside his shed
Where the waiting ponies lined up near the trough.
For his skill with hoof and horseshoe was well known around the town
And he'd turn his head away when he would cough.

He would pound the red and glowing rod and bend it into shape
'Til he made each horses shoe the perfect fit.
Then he'd file and trim the plate so that it fixed an errant gait
Or would heal a wounded hoof that time had split.

So on he worked for forty years, through the dust and through the fears
Fear of layoffs, fear of cave-ins, fear of strikes.
He would wear a leather apron that was thick with sweat and hair
Filing hooves and scraping frogs and driving spikes.

A gentle, tall and balding man, he'd always have a game.
He'd steal my nose then give it back to me.
Or scoop me up and swing me high and put me on his back.
He'd feed me bread and dripping for my tea.

Sometimes he'd say a poem about a lady fair and fat.
He said Mrs McFaddion was her name.
I must have heard it fifty times, beside the open fire
But each time I enjoyed it just the same.

In the village of Mt Kembla there still stands the pony shed
Where he worked the days he wasn't down the hole.
And though disasters make the news, there are others I would choose
To call heroes of the mountain and the coal.



There's no fanfare, there's no
headlines, there's no statue
large or small
For the men who breathed the
dust and slowly died.
Although hist'ry may forget
them, there are hundreds just
like him.
I know I won't forget my
uncle Clyde.



Zondrae King

A TASTE OF COUNTRY HARDEN NSW

Harden-Murrumburrah came to life over the weekend of October 21-23 with a rodeo, country music, bush poetry, a school workshop, photographic, art and dancing competitions, street stalls and exhibitions.

The revitalized Mechanics Institute, now one of Harden's historic features, saw the rejuvenation of performance poetry in the town after some years in abeyance. In earlier times the annual 'Hardened Liars' Bush Yarns competition saw some lively entertainment but none to equal the Open Performance Competition held on the Saturday night.

Compered in his own inimitable style by Frank Daniel, the contest was a very casual and entertaining event where the fifteen poets, not restricted to time, were given the freedom to express themselves with some truly credible performances.

It was an open competition with a much emphasis placed on original (mostly humorous) poetry, with just a touch of Paterson and Spencer.

Special guest, 'Mrs. Eileen Smith', mother of fourteen and aunt to five of the competitors, enraptured the audience into fits of laughter with 'her' hilarious contributions.

Harden is never short of a reciter, with the likes of Restauranter Rob Provan, the Smith Brothers, Neil, Keith, Oscar, cousin George, 'Aunty Eileen' and Faye Velarious. From nearby Young came Ted Webber and Greg Broderick and among others, from Canberra, Jim Weatherstone. Fourteen poets battled it out in a tight first round to see seven go into the final in another close fought tussle.

Harden-Murrumburrah is located 342 km west of Sydney, and was once a very important railway town in south west NSW. The separate names are misleading as they form, in reality, one town. The population is currently 2,130. Prior to white settlement the area was utilised by the Wiradjuri people. European settlement of the district began after Hamilton Hume's exploration in 1824.

Harden Murrumburrah was the site of the first call up muster to the 1st Australian horse in 1897. A memorial to the 1st Australian (Volunteer) Horse and the Australian Light Horse was opened on August 30th 2003 with the unveiling of a spectacular Beersheba scene.

A bronze statue of 'Bill the Bastard' was erected in 2004. 'Bill', played a heroic part in Romani during 1916, when, along with his rider, carried five de-mounted light-horsemen to safety from Turkish fire, galloping over a distance of one mile.

Put Harden-Murrumburra on your calendar for next year. (to p. 22)

THE RED SOIL GROUND

(C) Roderick Williams. 1999

My Spirit flies back to the Wattie Creek as the days seem to take their toll -

I long to sit with my family tribe down by that old water-hole.

In life I've soared other times dug deep to bury a raging despair-

And flying or caged I hold and keep those memories dear and rare.

Only as a boy when I roamed and ran the ranges and mountain streams -

Is there so clear in the memory span of my life and all my dreams,

Another time many years ago, when I was made one of the clan -

Given a skin and a family's love, the finest achievement of man.

Donald and Nidje, two proud strong men, the father and brother of mine -

Leading a fencing team once again, ramming posts in a perfect line.

Fencing off land that was already theirs, land that was stolen away -

Powerful men with their humble hearts, living dreams for a brand new day.

Hobbles, whose gardening skills were plied to his veggie plot neat and grand-

His amazing story how Captain Cook tried defending the tribes and their land.

How Cook was called back but failed in the Courts to protect the blacks from the guns -

In settlers chains on their backs they brought the goods to the new stock runs.

When I turned thirty I came of age and was welcomed by patient souls -

Feeling our spirits unite as one we'd gaze in the night fire coals.

You showed me love and silent respect, new-born to the family tree -

A Julima skin the tribe did elect my family forever to be.



Oscar, Keith and Neil Smith showed the 'Smith' talent at the Harden Poets Dinner.

Now as I try with my own blood's kin, to seek peace from a painful past -

I call to you and I search within and climb and cling to this mast.

As the waves of neglect crash over me, I reach for that sheltering cave,

With brothers and sisters I need to be not sunk in a selfish grave.

Where did I go and why did I go there and why is this pain so great-

Lingiari's spirit speaks to me, Rangiarri I miss you mate!

Distance and time have chipped at my life and love can't be measured in years-

Vincent is gone from this earthly strife but Mick is still shedding the tears.

The Spirit of hope that unites our dreams, tugs hard, as these doubts I cast-

The black mans face in the silence beams and his tears flow over my past.

At Wattie Creek where we sat unchained in the silence and calm firelight -

The skin of family always remains through the days and darkness of night.

I see you Vincent through dust and dreams, so patient, humble and strong-

Giving new life, returning the pride, so peacefully righting a wrong.

Gentle and calm with soft loving eyes in silence we'd sit by the fire -

Bringing me peace and family love, then back to your camp and retire.

I love you still and visit I must to free this soul once again - This aching body may turn to dust the Spirit is what will remain.

And soar as it may 'tween the golden sun and shade 'neath the paperbark trees -

We'll meet at the birth where life began, the tips of the leaves of the trees.

And floating down to the red soil ground once again on the earth as one -

We'll talk of the past, the lost, the found, sit dreaming as father and son.

Re-binding ties you'll soften my eyes, spread wisdom and calmness around -

A watch I'll keep, as you silently sleep, in the shade in the red soil ground.

THE SIX-STITCHER © Frank Daniel - 1998

We had a brand new six stitcher,
it was shiny, red and hard.

Dad saw us playing with it
as he walked across the yard.

"Where'd ya get that from?"
came his inquisitive remark.

"No problem Dad! we found it
in the long grass at the park."

"Was it lost" he then enquired
with a hint of turning sour.

"Bloody oath!" Young Jim replied,

"They were searching for it near an hour!"

HISTORY OF THE DOG ON THE TUCKER BOX

by Frank Daniel



Much has been written and various stories told of the origin of the world famed Pioneers' monument – 'The Dog on the Tucker Box' – situated five miles north of Gundagai on the Hume Highway.

Few people know the correct story of the dog, or the numerous happenings which finally lead to the erection the monument, and the unveiling by the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. JA (Joe) Lyons.

The true story is unique, and a small booklet which I found inside a copy of 'Beyond the City Gates' (1923) by Jack Moses gives the facts of the famous and immortal dog, its creator, how it became famous, and finally how the decision was made to erect a monument.

The booklet, printed to commemorate the unveiling of the dog on Monday, 28th November 1932, reveals that Gundagai's 'Dog on the Tucker Box' was first introduced into verse in the period when the pioneers travelled in Bullock wagons, pushing their way into the vast unexplored interior of Australia, in the early days. Gundagai was then the 'chief port of call' on the main highway between Sydney and Melbourne, and a favourite camping ground of the teamsters was the Five Mile Creek where the monument is now situated.

It was at this locality an incident occurred that inspired the bard to write the original 'Tucker Box' poem.

A faithful friend, the guardian of the teamster's possessions, a dog, accompanied every wagon that pushed inland. It was the action of one such dog in spoiling foodstuffs whilst he sat on a tucker box that so amused the poet that he wrote:

*Good morning mate, you are too late,
The shearing is all over,
Tie up your dog behind the log
Come in and have some dover.
For Nobby Jack has broke the yoke,
Poked out the leader's eye
and the dog ---- in the tucker box,
Five miles from Gundagai.*

That original doggerel was considered crude and vulgar according to the booklet, and verse after verse ran on depicting the incidents along the track that leads to Gundagai.

Methodical searches were made to find the original poem, old newspaper files, libraries and pioneer homes, but the author's name and the complete poem was not found.

Old resident's of the district recalled certain lines of the doggerel, but it was not until the advent of O.A Collins, a newsagent and keen business man, that the verse which appeared on many souvenirs was pieced together.

Collins commissioned Tom Kinnane, a reporter on the Gundagai 'Independent', to piece together the missing lines of verse of the original poem. That poem appeared on match box covers that were distributed throughout the land.

The 'original' as Collins called it was printed at the Gundagai Times and would have been little different to that which was penned more than seventy five years before.

The poem read thus: -

*As I was coming down Conroy's Gap
I heard a maiden cry,
"There goes Bill the Bullocky,
He's bound for Gundagai.
A better poor old ----- *
Never earnt an honest crust,
A better poor old ----- **
Never drug a whip through dust."
His team got bogged at the Five Mile
Creek,
Bill lashed and swore and cried,
"If Nobby don't get me out of this,
I'll tattoo his ----- hide." ***
But Nobby strained and broke the yoke,
And poked out the leader's eye,
Then the dog sat on the Tucker Box
Five miles from Gundagai.*

* Beggar ** Beggar *** Bloody, (these words were omitted from the booklet. According to the booklet, the author was Anonymous, but another reference I found accredited these words to a 'Bowyang Yorke' in 1850).



Salesman and balladeer Jack Moses wrote a cleaned-up version in the 1920s in which the dog sits on and guards the tuckerbox. For unknown reasons he called it 'Nine Miles from Gundagai'. The lyric was very popular and inspired the commissioning of the sculpture by Frank Rusconi, famed for his marble masterpieces, for the 1932 'Back to Gundagai' celebrations.

Jack Moses' poem
'Nine Miles from Gundagai'
*I've done my share of shearing sheep,
Of droving and all that;
And bogged a bullock team as well,
On a Murrumbidgee Flat.
I've seen the bullock stretch and strain
And blink his bleary eye,
And the dog sat on the tuckerbox
Nine miles from Gundagai.
I've been jilted, jarred and crossed in
love,
And sand-bagged in the dark,
Till, if a mountain fell on me,
I'd treat it as a lark.
It's when you've got your bullocks
bogged,
That's the time you flog and cry,
And the dog sits on the tuckerbox
Nine miles from Gundagai.
We've all got our little troubles,
In life's hard, stony way.
Some strike them in a motor car,
And others in a dray.
But when your dog and bullocks strike,
It ain't no apple pie,
And the dog sits on the tuckerbox
Nine miles from Gundagai.
But that's all past and dead and gone,
And I've sold the team for meat,
And perhaps, some day where I was
bogged,
There'll be an asphalt street,
The dog? Ah, well he got a bait,
And thought he'd like to die,
So we buried him in the tuckerbox,
Nine miles from Gundagai.*

JACK MOSES (1860-1945)

Jack Moses was born in Sydney and spent most of his working life as a commercial traveller in wine, and became known on the agricultural show circuit of NSW and other States both as a salesman and as a reciter of Australian ballads: The Bulletin Book of Humorous Verses and Recitations (1920) was dedicated to him as a 'good Australian' who was 'for many years a Bulletin reciter in the bush'.

One of his favourite authors was Henry Lawson, who in the poem Joseph's Dreams (1923) refers to Moses in stating 'my best friend was a Yid'; Moses recalled their friendship in Henry Lawson by His Mates (1931).

A long-time contributor to the Bulletin, the Sydney Mail, Smith's Weekly and other journals, Moses wrote 'Beyond the City Gates' (1923), a volume of sketches and poems in which he celebrates bush life as the 'matrix of our Australian nation', and 'Nine Miles from Gundagai' (1938), a volume of verse; the title piece is the well-known poem about the dog on the tucker box at Gundagai.

After his retirement Moses settled again in Sydney, where he was an affectionately regarded street character who distributed postcards of his poems.

'Australian Bush Songs and Ballads' edited in 1944 by Will Lawson, was dedicated to Jack Moses "Author of 'Nine Miles from Gundagai', who is the oldest bush poet and philosopher in Australia, 84 years of age, and still in active business and literary work." Moses died in 1945.

In 'Beyond the City Gates' (1923) by Jack Moses, Frank Morton of Manly, wrote the introduction which started with this paragraph . . . Introducing Jack Moses.

"One lazy night, about a thousand years ago, I wandered into the old theatre at Hobart and heard a man reciting bush-verse better than I had heard any man recite it before. It was "Saltbush Bill," and I have never heard any other man recite it so well since.

Most people in Australia have, indeed, lost the trick of reciting; they have taken to elocution, and that is the most dismal dead-end of entertainment". (So much for elocution, eh?)

ON THE ROAD TO BANGALOW

© Jack Moses

I've left the stuffy city
Where my nerves have had a jar,
through the hustle and the bustle,
Till I dunno where I are.
I'm trampin' in the open,
Just for freedom and a blow,
Where no coppers guard the corner,
On the road to Bangalow.

The Richmond hills are bonny,
And are worthy of a boost,
And we ought to crow our loudest,
Like the rooster on his roost.
I've seen them in the dawning,
And at sunset's ruddy glow,
Where the kookaburra chuckles
On the road to Bangalow.

There's the ibis in the rushes,
And the blue cranes at the pool,
And the kiddies on their ponies,
All a-coming home from school.
The corn is getting ripier,
While the pigs and poddies grow;
There's money in the milkers,
On the road to Bangalow.

It's not a Jimmy Woodser
'Cause I've got me cobber here,
And we'll have another snifter
just to toast the pioneer.
We'll drink this with our hats off,
'Cause we wouldn't like to go
And forget the Digger's father,
On the road to Bangalow.

WHEN THE POLICE FORCE COULDN'T SPELL

© Jack Moses.

Years ago when our land was new
Scholars then were very few
A poor old cabbies horse dropped dead
In Castlereagh Street, it is said.

Policeman '9' was standing by
And saw the Neddy fall and die.
'On this I must at once report -
Can I spell Castlereagh?', he thought.

God bless the force!
They're never beat.
He dragged the horse into King Street!

On the Road to Bangalow (c.1920)



NIMBIN By Jack Moses c. 1920
(Nimbin is an agricultural centre twenty-one miles from Lismore, on the Richmond.)

I can't forget you Nimbin;
You charm me like a book,
The cattle in you valley,
The mountain and the brook.
The whip-bird in the ranges,
Waking up his mate,
And the basalt-columns standing
Like the pickets at your gate.
You've a dowry and you've beauty,
You've wealth, as yet untold,

In the orchard and the timber,
And the streams that carry gold.
You've an asset in your baby,
And the soldier who's come back,
Ye children of the Pioneer,
Who blazed the Nimbin track.
You were nothing but a wilderness
Just a little while ago,
You're a town of some importance now,
It's grand to see you grow!
Well, I'd like to toast you, Nimbin,
Now I'm on the job.
"God keep your waters going
That are flowing from the Nob!"

[N.B. The 'Nob' is the dividing ranges of the waters which run east and west in the Richmond District.] From 'Beyond the City Gates' by Jack Moses.

A penny saved is ridiculous.



IN MY GRANDCHILD'S EYES

© Glenn Palmer

In my grandchild's eyes,
two pools of wonder full of "why"s' ?
alive with mischief, wide with awe,
look up at me, and offer more
than life itself could hope to prize:
the past and future there abide
in sanctity,
within my grandchild's eyes.

In my grandchild lies
the immortality we prize,
and all the love from ancient times
lives on, amid the childish mimes
so true, my mother there implies,
and all I knew and loved of her
returns to me,
borne in my grandchild's eyes.

As my grandchild tries
to comprehend how childhood dies,
and seems to violate the heart,
transcending each and every part
of fledgling fear, the adult spies
a whisper of divine intent;
the path appears
before my grandchild's eyes.

When my grandchild flies
beyond this life to sacred skies,
and we are pledged to history's care,
the children of the child will share
the light, that yet within me lies,
bequeathed to all eternity
and held in trust,
inside my grandchild's eyes.

GRANDPA by Claude Morris

"Grandpa, I'm in trouble,"
said the maiden with a sigh.
"I've been in trouble all my life,"
was Grandpa's gruff reply.
"But Grandpa," said the maiden,
"you know not what you say.
For I'm very much in trouble —
I am in the family way!"
"Well me girl," said Grandpa,
"when as old as me you've grown,
You'll be in everybody's bloody way,
and often in your own."

OLD HECTOR © Brian Langley 20-7-2005 (Winning entry - Written Section - WA State Championships)

He'd be sitting on the footpath as I walked by each day.
His skin that once was shiny black now seemed a mottled grey.
Beneath the Poinciana tree, the sunlight's dappled shade,
Hid disfigurations that the sun and time had made.

A pair of faded, once black shorts, was all Old Hector wore;
With reading glasses on his head, though I don't know what for.
I never saw him read a book, I'm told he knew not how,
But he knew well, the book of life. On that I'd take a vow.

For I'd been told that in his day, he'd been a man of worth,
Known for his special skills, from Wyndham down to Perth.
For he could read the signs he saw, like footprints in the sand
He could always find fresh water in this dusty arid land.

He'd track the flight of finches, and watch the eagles soar
And see the trees along the creek from fifteen miles or more
And food, he'd find, enough for all, when there was none to see.
A kangaroo, deep in the shade, beneath a stunted tree.

The old explorers knew him well, his skills they'd often use.
A young man then, his name unsung, he didn't make the news;
For he was black, and if at all, his presence got a note;
"Accompanied by a black tracker" was all the papers wrote.

But had he not been with them, The chances are today
The history that we learned at school, would read a different way.
For the names that fill the journals, of travels far and wide
Would be like Burke and Wills are known. Just known for how they died.

The tribal scars that on his chest, he'd once displayed with pride
Some people now, within the town, insisted that he hide.
But Hector took no notice, he owned no shirt and tie,
He sat bare-chested on the path, as people walked on by

Some turn away as they walk past, as if he wasn't there.
A few cross to the other side, and some, they stop and stare.
But one or two, including me, we'd nod and say G'day
He'd raise a hand, (he rarely spoke), and we'd go on our way.

And he would sit with tired eyes, beneath his silver hair
A swarm of flies around his face, he didn't seem to care.
He'd gaze up at the mountain-side, a smile upon his lips.
Perhaps he was remembering, those past exploring trips.

I don't know much about him, there's very few that do.
I'm told he had a family once, but they died from the flu.
I'd heard he used to help police, to find folks who were lost;
That he could ride a wild horse, and rarely, he'd get tossed.

But who can know what is the truth, it's all too long ago.
He's sat upon the footpath here, for twenty years or so.
How old is he? I've no idea, perhaps he's eighty five.
The folks who knew him in his youth, there's few of them alive.

The district nurse looks after him, makes sure that he is fed.
He's got a room around the back, It's where he has his bed.
There's some who say, he shouldn't be, allowed to sit and stare.
The footpath is no place for him, that he should be in care.

But I believe that where he sits, is where he wants to be;
In the dappled shade beneath the Poinciana tree.
I know, one day, he wont be there. His life will pass away.
But I'll still see Old Hector there, and I'll still say, G'day.

RUSTY NAIL BUSH VERSE FESTIVAL

The inaugural Rusty Nail Bush Verse Festival, incorporating Primary School students Written and Performance sections was conducted at Wedderburn on Sat. 8 Oct 2005, by the Central Goldfields Bush Poets (Verse & Song) Inc. (CGBP).

CGBP Vice President Ric Raftis had the vision to plan a Festival in 3 parts. A Poets Breakfast; Original and Other performance and written sections in 2 categories for primary school students and a two hour gala Bush Poetry and Music Show with featured artists from 3 states.

Involvement by schools in both written and performance sections was the best achieved by the CGBP to date. Entries exceeded expectations. Thirty children performed. Written entries totalled just under 300.

Despite the possibility of rain the Festival proceeded at the Hard Hill Reserve, an appropriate setting for the CGBP. Many remnants of the gold diggings from the 1800's remain, with miners tents and even a Whim being reconstructed.

No gold nuggets were discovered on the day, but a wealth of young talent was 'unearthed' among the students who entered. Most performed their original poem, which they had memorised. In the 'Other' Category a good mix of Traditional and Contemporary poems were performed.

In addition to many inspiring individual renditions, there were 2 fine duo performances. First time entrants Fred Assi and Michael Webb received great applause and encouragement for their

performance of the Henry Lawson classic, 'Andy's Gone With Cattle'.

Naomi Frederick and Patrick Clarke, who in addition to their talent and dedication, displayed the benefits of having performed in the previous 2 annual performance festivals conducted by the CGBP.

The Performance Encouragement Award, 'The Cambo', (donated by Dr. Max Higgs to the memory of his late father, Campbell 'Cambo' Higgs, a noted bush poet) was won by Susannah Hargreaves. As Max could not be present for all the performances, Susannah was selected by the Senior Judge, Carol Reffold.

The written sections were judged by Steve Smith. Steve provided a summary of each placed poem which was read out at the presentations. His overall comments were: "Congratulations to all students who entered poems for consideration. The standard of writing was excellent and left me with a very difficult task of judging winners. Students were asked to write a piece of poetry with an Australian Bush Theme. The best poems invoked images in the mind, flowed well and held the attention of the reader."

All winners received a unique red gum trophy embedded with a rusty nail suitably engraved. Runners up in each written section also received a similar trophy. However, it was stressed at the presentations that all who participated were winners by doing so and have achieved something that sadly few Australian school children are provided the opportunity.

Geoffrey W Graham, was in his usual fine form compering the performance sections.



Jude and Ric Raftis

of Wedderburn Vic, have been the prime movers in the Rusty Nail Bush Verse Festival since inception.

Jude is integrally involved in the organisation and running of the event and all those behind the scenes preparations. Good on ya Jude!

The Gala Bush Poetry and Music Show featured artists were Jim Brown - current Victorian State Champion, Carol Reffold SA Stumpy Award Champion, acclaimed singer song writer Jill Meehan, Ric Raftis, Geoffrey Graham and last but not least Glenny Palmer.

Thanks to the Regional Arts Victoria grant, obtained by Ric Raftis, specifically for the Rusty Nail Festival; it was possible for a poet of the calibre of Glenny, to be paid travel expenses to attend the Festival.

At the conclusion of the performance sections, Glenny enthralled the children and adults alike with a selection of original and other poems.

Colin Carrington.

President, CGBP

(Results p. 22)

IMPORTANT NOTICE: ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Please note that renewals of both Membership and Public Liability Insurance fall due at the end of December.

Renewal forms have been included with this copy of the Newsletter and hopefully will be returned post-haste with all due payment.

Members who joined later this year are financial for 2006 and are excluded.

The normal bonus issue sent out in February as a reminder for members to rejoin will not be available in 2006.

Unless payment is made by January 15th this could be your last newsletter.

Membership which declined earlier this year has been growing steadily of late, and we would like to see members make an all out effort to help increase our numbers by inviting others to join our ranks.

Any enquiries should be directed to the Secretary, Ed Parmenter. (p.2)

AUSTRALIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2006

The Gold City Bush Poets of Charters Towers are well under way with preparations for the ABPA Australian Championships which will be held in the World Theatre Auditorium on 25th, 26th and 27th of April.

Prizemoney will be in the region of \$8,000 with Trophies.

Entries in the performance sections, including Novice and Juniors, will be accepted up 31st March with no exceptions for late entries.

The format for the competition will be Classical, Modern Traditional, Original Serious and Original Humorous and will be conducted under the auspices of the Australian Bush Poets Association Inc. Points aggregated over the four sections will determine the Champions.

For more information contact Harold Jackson, 5 Princess Close Charters Towers, 4820, or phone 07 4787 3211; fax. 07 4787 8310; E. dawnharry@austarnet.com.au



Letter from Leanne

Dear Members,

I'd like to begin by thanking everyone who has supported us in so many ways in the last few months, both financially and emotionally. It is hard to express how much we appreciate your generosity and thoughtfulness during this very difficult time. As any parent knows, there is nothing worse than seeing your kids suffer, and the added financial burden could have been devastating. Thanks to your assistance, I have been able to spend most of my time at the hospital, assisting with Darren's care and generally making his convalescence a little more endurable.

By the time this goes to print it would have been over five months since Darren's accident and his progress has been very slow but steady. He has overcome many of the problems of

*'Did you think that we'd forget you mate
with the slow march of the years
That as time passed we'd wipe the slate
Of your sorrow and your tears
Did you think we'd scorn your sacrifice,
Find no honour in the dead
When your lives paid our freedoms price
How then could we forget
And that's the Diggers Legacy
The freedom we hold yet
We never can repay them
And we never should forget*

Eric Bogle



William Thomas Hitchen

COO-EE MARCH 1915

The following information and photographs are extracted from John Meredith's book *The Coo-ee March*, 1986, and can be purchased for \$15 (inc postage and handling) from the Gilgandra Visitor Centre.

Following the disaster of Gallipoli and the heavy casualties in France in the latter half of 1915, recruiting figures for enlistment in World War I had dwindled. Numerous recruiting rallies became increasingly ineffective. It was at this dark hour that Gilgandra's butcher, R.G. Hitchen and his brother Bill, the local plumber, had the idea of organising a route march of volunteers to Sydney, enlisting recruits as they marched.

The idea caught the imagination of the public, and the Coo-ees (as the volunteers were known) became national heroes. The action of "Hitchen's Own" and the subsequent marches, which followed, were responsible for a dramatic upturn in recruitment figures.

Twenty six men left the little Western town on the Castlereagh River. They were feted at each town on the route, and the stirring story of their march has become part of the official war history of Australia. Recruitment meetings were held in each centre and their number increased to 263 by the time they reached Sydney.

Conditions in the country in 1915 were vastly different from those today. Meredith describes: The unsealed roads were made of dirt, or perhaps, in a town, of crushed stone or blue metal. In dry weather traffic was coincidental with clouds of dust; when it rained the roads became ribbons of mud. Considered against this background a march of 320 miles over those rough roads was a much greater undertaking than it would be under today's conditions. The feats of cooking, transporting and servicing the food provided for the Coo-ees at each camp place, and even assembling of welcoming crowds were huge accomplishments.

the first few weeks and now has no trouble breathing unassisted and sits in a wheelchair most of the day without extra head support. He has regained movement in his left bicep, enabling him to lift his hand to his face. Although he has no movement of his fingers or wrist, he is now able to control an electric wheelchair and he recently managed to feed himself using a specially designed spoon.

He also has minute movement in his right bicep that we expect will improve over time and the sensations he feels in his legs and feet are definitely a promising sign. He is still at the Princess Alexandra Hospital Spinal Injuries Unit, where he is expected to stay till the end of January although plans are

in place to take him to Rockhampton for Christmas.

Although barely a minute goes by that he's not foremost in my mind, I was grateful to be able to get away for a while in August to attend the Queensland poetry championships at North Pine and from there to go to the Gympie Muster. It was fantastic to catch up with friends and enjoy a bit of a break. After the Muster I went back to Thangool and spent a couple weeks moving the rest of our furniture to Tannum Sands where we will take Darren home when he is ready – possibly in March.

Again thank you all for your support, it is truly overwhelming. God Bless you all.

Leanne

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

© Brian Beesley, 2005

(Winner. Coo-ee March Festival 2005. Winner best overall poem)

When you've sung Waltzing Matilda and the cheering is all done,

when you've finished making Kaiser Billy pay;
will you spare a kindly thought for ev'ry Coo-ee mother's son

who marched down to Sydney from the Castlereagh?
They were unassuming fellows with convictions strong as steel

and it didn't need repeating to remind them,
that they joined up with the A.I.F. to bring ol' Fritz to heel
and they left a lot of memories behind them.

There were jobs they didn't finish fencing, mustering and such,

chances are they left a sweetheart waiting too
but they heard some little problem needed fixing with their touch

and they weren't about to miss out on a blue.
They were country boys at heart as you are likely to recall
and it only took three-hundred miles to bind them
into mates you'd want beside you when you're caught up in a brawl,

not unlike the one their God and King assigned them.

Bridge and Miller streets resounded from the throng at Garling's store,

when the Coo-ees lined up ready for the march.
Captain Bill and Lee addressed them telling what's ahead
before

leading off towards a rose emblazoned arch.
They were showered with red roses going down that western track

and the scent will always linger to remind
did they know how slim their chances were of ever coming back

or did blandishments of war succeed to blind them?

There was talk of 'King and Country' from the loyal Rev'rend Lee,

shaming men to go where he had never been,
to repel the 'brutal Huns' and halt their push for victory
but his regiment was nowhere to be seen.

Talk is cheap and unrelated when the troopship's on the tide,
steaming north with Gil a thousand miles behind them;
far from home with just a prayer and righteous glory
on their side

and they didn't need a sermon to remind them.

They were sighting down the barrel of an Enfield three-o-three

as Gilgandra came to share their nervous wait
holding on in spite of danger for the sake of you and me

and a likely rendezvous at heaven's gate.
They were trembling in their dugouts while the shells
were raining down,

thanking Christ the deadly salvos didn't find them
but they stared fate in the eye and overlooked its ugly frown

and remembered what they proudly left behind
them.

'Captain' Hitchen didn't make it to the place of his designs,
after stepping up to do the Army's bid;
dreaming dreams that seemed impossible to bureaucratic
minds,

though he tilted several windmills while he did.
But the Coo-ees faith was shattered when the message came
around

that their 'Captain' wasn't following behind them
he was buried near the hospital in Harefield's sacred ground
and the news of 'Captain' Hitchen's death repined them.

William Hunter joined his brothers did his mother still re-
mark

that she'd like to give more children to the cause?
But the trenches were a long way from a hall at Harris Park
and the strong encouragement of loud applause.

There was not much to compare with Pozieres and winter
mud,

when the 'push' was stalled with no support behind
them;
asking why they traded moleskins for a tunic stained with
blood,

as a fading thought of Gil came to remind them.

It's reported young Maguire took a bullet through the head,
when the 45th were butchered near Albert.

He was 'trusted' and 'a valued NCO', his captain said,
in a letter posted home from over there.

Other Coo-ees met the slaughter of the searching Maxim
guns

and a field somewhere in France is where you'll find
them,

but the Coo-ees who came back, were they indeed the lucky
ones?

Time revealed they tried to leave it all behind them.

But the battle-smoke has settled on the bloody fields of
France,

now the poppies bloom in no-mans-land once more.
Why did thirty-five Gilgandrans toss it in and take a chance?

Well, it's up to you and me to keep the score.
Tell the world how they responded when good reason fell
apart

tell the generations following behind us,
that Gilgandra and her Coo-ee marchers touched a nation's
heart

and we'll keep October free just to remind us.



2005 WEST AUSTRALIAN STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

The West Australian Bush Poetry Championships were more than a success in many different ways.

It was a great competition at a fantastic venue with inspirational poetry, excellent organization and quality camaraderie.

The weekend consisted of three poetry events, The WA State Championships, the Country vs. City Bush Poetry Challenge and a Poets Breakfast.

The Championship was a mixed Men's and Women's event with two Junior and two Novice categories, five Open categories and a written verse competition.

Keith Lethbridge was the Overall State Champion for 2005.

The Country vs. City Challenge consisted of seven categories in which two teams of ten poets determined if the best poets came from the bush or from the big smoke. The teams were ably headed by captains Ron Evans (Country) and Rod Lee (City), with

four nominated members of each team performing in each category. By the narrowest of margins, the Country Poets outperformed their City Poets cousins.

Overall, thirty poets presented about eighty poems along with nine stories in the yarn spinning.

While the competition was intense, the fact that some poets were not competing as individuals meant that they had a bit more freedom of expression, a few of the poems relating directly to the Challenge and its team members' poetic and other attributes.

Prior to the Presentations, the top five written entries were read out. It was fortunate that four of the authors were present and able to read their own poems.

Quite a number of poets spent the Saturday night camped at Tumbulgum or at nearby 'Diggers Camp'. This resulted in many poets assembling early for the Sunday's events in time to enjoy the camaraderie of a Poets Breakfast, many catching up with friends they had not seen for some time. (To P.22)



Work continues with planning for the SA State Championships in 2006. The President is currently involved in contacting likely companies for sponsorship. Sponsorship

is vital to the running of the Championships and important to the offering of prizes that will attract poets from around the state and nationally. With such a good product to offer, sponsors can be assured of a beneficial coverage.

Members or readers with ideas should make contact with the address above - all help will be appreciated.

Some thought should be given to attending the Barmera Festival in June next year. If you're planning a holiday put it in your calendar. Accommodation will need to be booked and notice of your presence helps with the planning.

Accommodation will need to be booked early and an indication of your presence will greatly assist in the planning of our events. Details—Poet's Calendar P.21

2006 BUNDABERG BUSH POETRY MUSTER

July 7th 8th and 9th

Performance Competitions:

OPEN (Male & Female) - Intermediate - Novice - Under 15's
Yarn Spinning - Duo Competition - One Minute Cup

BUSH LANTERN AWARD FOR WRITTEN VERSE

The Written competition closes May 26th 2006
Results announced on July 9th at the Muster

Entry forms : SSAE to

Performance Poetry Co-ordinator
or The Bush Lantern Co-ordinator
(As applicable)

Bundaberg Poets' Society Inc.,
PO Box 4281

BUNDABERG SOUTH. 4670



All phone or e.mail enquiries:

John & Sandy 07 41514631 or lees@interworx.com.au
Laree 07 41517409 or kandlchapman@bigpond.com
Dean 07 41591705 or dino123@dodo.com.au

MORE POETRY THAN EVER at WESTS

There will be EXTRA VALUE and an EARLIER START for 'The Best Bloody Bush Poets Show' to be held every day at West's Leagues Club during Country Music Week in 2006.

The Best Bloody Bush Poets Show will run every day with a great line up of Bush Poets including John Best, Gabby Colquhoun, Jack Drake, Gary Fogarty, Melanie Hall, Carol Heuchen, Bill Kearns, Garry Lowe, Bob Magor, Col Milligan, Greg North, Paddy Ryan, and introducing . . . Julian Luke, with your happy host Grant Luhrs, The Nude Boot Scooting Man from Wagga Wagga.

AND GREAT NEWS - in response to Bush Poets' comments that there are less and less opportunities for Bush Poets at Tamworth these days there will be an EXTRA 30 mins entertainment from 7.30 am with various Bush Poetry Clubs presenting their best poets, so you will see the STARS OF TOMORROW every morning from 7.30 to 8 am with the STARS OF TODAY from 8 am to 10.00. Entry is just \$5.50 with free tea & coffee and, of course, breakfast is for sale.

POET'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dec 3-4 **Young NSW Bush Poetry Competition & Breakfast.** Ph Greg Broderick. 02 6382 2506 (p. 23)
January Tamworth Bush Poetry Competition & Blackened Billy Written Competition.
SSAP Jan Morris, PO Box W1 West Tamworth 2340 mailto:janmorris@northnet.com.au
ABPA Inc. AGM. St. Edwards Hall, Hillvue Street Tamworth - Ed Parmenter 02 6652 3716
Jan 26. Goovigen Q. Australia Day Celebrations. Kym Eitel, PO Box 15, Thangool. Qld. 4716 (p14)
Feb 4-5 **BUNGENDORE Poets Breakfasts.** Bowling Club. Ph Frank Daniel 02 6344 1477 bushpoet@bushpoetry.com.au
Feb. 7 **Whittlesea Vic.** Country Music Festival
Feb. 21 **Shepparton Vic** Ph 02 6043 3220
Feb. 24 Closing date. **Dunedoo NSW Written Competition.** Sue Stoddart dddgroup@bigpond.com 02 6375 1975
Feb 27 **Bendigo Vic** Bush Poets Concert. Colincarrington@mydesk.net.au - 03 5441 2425
Feb. 28 Closing date. **Midlands Literary Competition.** SSAE. PO Box 1563 Ballarat Vic. 3354
Feb. 29 **Wedderburn Vic Rusty Nails Competition.** Ric Raftis. 03 5448 8132 ric@bushverse.com
Mar 5 Closing date **Ipswich Poetry Feast - \$2,600 Written Competition.** Ph. 07 3810 6761
Mar 10 Closing date. **Grenfell NSW Short Story and Verse Written competitions.** SSAE PO Box 77 Grenfell 2810
Mar 10 Closing date. **Henry Kendall Poetry Award.** SSAE Central Coast Poets PO Box 276 Gosford NSW 2250
Mar 12 **Wauchope Hastings-McLean Performance Poetry Competition 12n.** - Cay Fletcher 02 6551 2953 - Sam Smyth 02 6562 6861
Mar 17 **Narrandera NSW John O'Brien Bush Festival & Competition -** www.johnobrien.com.au Ph. 1800 672 392
Mar 26 Closing date. **Dunedoo Performance Competition.** (See April 8)
Apr 8 **Dunedoo Performance competition.** SSAE - PO Box 1 Dunedoo 2844 dddgroup@bigpond.com Ph. 02 63751 975
April 24-28 **CHARTERS TOWERS - AUSTRALIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS -** Ph. 07 4787 3211 dawnharry@austarnet.com.au
May 26th, 2006 : Closing date for Bush Lantern Award for Bush Verse. Details as per advertisement on page 20
June 17-18 **SA STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS -** Maurie O'Brien SSAE 23 Frances St. Morphett Vale SA 5162 08 8382 1504
July 7th, 8th & 9th: **Bundy Bush Poetry Muster week-end.** Details as per advertisement on page 20.

POETTES. Trisha Anderson has asked for expressions of interest from Poettes regarding appearances at Tamworth in January.

Poettes not on the mailing list are invited to contact Trisha as early as possible.

The Venue will once again be the Masonic Hall in Peel Street on Friday 27th January at 3pm. This very popular 'Ladies Presentation' of Australian Bush Poetry is now in its fourth year and, like Topsy, continues to grow.

All performers must be female of course, and all poetry must be about women, either classical or contemporary, written by male or female.

If time permits, Poettes attending should prepare at least two poems for the occasion, and must send the titles to Trisha Anderson well in advance to avoid repetition.

KYABRAM NEWS

Two big pieces of news from the Kyabram poets. Firstly - The Kyabram Group has had a change of venue for their meetings. They now meet every first Monday at the Baptist Church Hall in Fenaughty Street at 7.30 pm. with actual business discussions every second month with an added get-together each first month.

Secondly (and even more importantly), the local cemetery has increased the price of burial plots.

They have blamed the increase on the rising cost of LIVING?

The Kyabram Kid.

ABPA AGM AGENDA

Saturday 28th January 2006 2 pm

St Edwards Hall, Hillvue St, Tamworth Meeting opened at.

One minute silence observed in memory of deceased members and relatives. Apologies.

Attendance as per Attendance Book. Confirmation of minutes of 2005 AGM.

President's Report.

Secretary's Report.

Treasurer's Report.

Appointment of Returning Officer.

Nominations for:

President

Vice-President

Secretary Treasurer

Committee Members

State Delegates.

Appointment of Editor.

GENERAL BUSINESS.

Close meeting.

ACCOMMODATION

Carol Heuchan has a house organized for Country Music Week in Tamworth and is looking for poets to share with her but a strict system of vetting will determine acceptability. Good looks, money, non-snorers, sense of humour, willingness to share toilet facilities on a three-day roster. Phone 02 4977 3210 or carrobity@hotmail.com

WAUCHOPE

Make a note of Sunday, 12th March 2006, that's the date of the Hastings-MacLean Performance Poetry Competition to be held at the Wauchope Country Club starting at 12 noon.

There will be two adult sections. Original and Established and the organizers are especially keen to hear from junior competitors -

part of their contribution towards promoting

Bush Poetry. A special prize has been included for the most humorous poem.

SSAE to Cay Fletcher for entry forms at 19 Patricia Avenue Taree NSW 2430.

HUNTER POETS Tamworth

The Newcastle based Hunter Valley Folk Club / Hunter Bush Poets has the following activities planned to be held at the Masonic Hall, 464 Peel St Tamworth:

Friday 27th - Poette's Concert (see Trish Anderson's ad. for details)

Friday 27th - Folk Club Concert Night. 7pm to 10pm - \$5.00 A night of musical fun with Hosts Ken Jones and 'Aitch'

Saturday 28th - Bush Poet's Folley's Night 7pm to 10pm - with Bar-b-Que dinner \$15.00 - show only \$5.00

Bush Poets from all over Australia will be encouraged to let their hair down and show their versatility in other fields of entertainment. The results should be amazing.

The Group also has plans to take part in the huge Tamworth Cavalcade.

Poets and entertainers interested should contact Ron Brown Ph: 49261313 Email: ntpe@kingnet.com.au

Entry forms can be found on the Hunter Bush Poets Web Page

www.hunterbushpoets.org.au/

TAMWORTH BACK TO NORMAL IN 2006

The 2006 Tamworth Festival will start Sat 21st January and finish on Sun the 29th, reverting back to the traditional format with the Awards Concert at the end of the festival, Sat night 28th. Everyone is predicting it should be bigger than ever and naturally it's all systems go for Jim Haynes and the Big Bush Brekky show at the New Diggers'.

The Big Brekky Variety Shows are once again in the air-conditioned comfort of West's Diggers right in the middle of town, in the rebuilt upstairs auditorium.

The upside of this is that the 'Brekky'

has a great new intimate space for 350 people and the shows will be even better with hilarious ventriloquist comedian DARREN CARR joining Jim every morning along with Paddy Ryan and Rustling Russell and all the big stars of Country Music dropping in. There'll be all the regular features: Joke of the Day, Country Classic Chook Raffle Chook Raffle, Top10 Countdowns, Tongue Twisters and host Amber Lawrence.

On the downside tickets will harder to get as the room is smaller. The booking number to save time queuing each morning is 02 6765 7588.

There's still bottomless tea & coffee. It's the funniest show in town and still great value at \$ 9.50. 8am Sat 21st to Sun 29th.



LIGHTNING RIDGE

© Janice Downes

As the Drover took the mob,
across the stony ridge,
Lightning flashed thunder roared,
they didn't reach the bridge.

As he tried to get them home,
the lightning struck the sheep,
The wool was a good conductor,
they all dropped in a heap.

To this day, it bears the name,
he called it "Lightning ridge"
And, in the mining days,
it was a wealthy acre-ige,

The opal there, is black with fire
rare one of it's kind.
Men discovering that sparkle,
kept quiet about their find

But modern people of today,
they think it got its name
Because of pretty opals,
their history and their fame.

The place was once an inland ocean,
alive with many fish,
Many thousand years must pass,
before miners get their wish.

Although it's hot as Hades,
it's seventy down below,
shafts are put down everywhere
scattered too and fro.

Men that go there with the fever,
think they'll get rich quick,
End up getting sunstroke,
and getting mighty sick.

Now it's all commercialised,
tourists everywhere,
Tram mobiles, Buses, Coaches
even planes up in the air.

But, only round the open campfire,
yarns about the past,
And the stories of the drover,
of when they saw rain last.

NSW STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Written: 1st *Dare to Dream*, Joyce Alchin.
2nd *Blackbeards Leap*, Terry Regan,
3rd *The Great Aussie Bloke Test* - David Campbell.

Junior: 1st Jack Brown,

2nd Thomas Finnerty, 3rd Calvin Grogan

Traditional (Ladies): 1st Carol Heuchan,

2nd Claire Reynolds, 3rd Kathy Edwards

Mens: 1st Roderick Williams,

2nd Gregory North, 3rd Graeme Johnson

Contemporary (Ladies):

1st Claire Reynolds, 2nd Carol Heuchan,

3rd Cathy Edwards and Cay Fletcher.

Mens: 1st Paddy O'Brien,

2nd Roderick Williams, 3rd Gregory North

Original (Ladies): 1st Claire Reynolds,

2nd Gabby Colquhoun, 3rd Carol Heuchan.

Mens: 1st Gregory North,

2nd Jimmy Brown, 3rd Billy Lasham (p. 1)

HARDEN NSW RESULTS

Open Performance Competition.

First. Oscar Smith, Harden. 2nd, 'Eileen'

Smith, Juneec. 3rd Ted Webber, Young.

4th Rob Provan, Harden. 5th Jim Weather-

stone, Calwell ACT. (p. 10)

WA STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

2005 State Champion. Keith Lethbridge

Equal 2nd. Peter Blyth - Brian Langley

Original Humorous - 1st Peter Blyth

2nd Keith Lethbridge 3rd Tim Heffernan

Original Serious 1st Brian Langley

2nd Keith Lethbridge 3rd Peter Blyth

Classical 1st Keith Lethbridge

2nd Rusty Christensen 3rd Brian Langley

Contemporary 1st Rusty Christensen

2nd Keith Lethbridge 3rd Barry Higgins

Yarn Spinning 1st Keith Lethbridge

2nd Bill Park 3rd Phil Strutt

Written Verse 1st Brian Langley

2nd Val Read HC Keith Lethbridge (p.20)

GLEN INNES RESULTS

Original: 1st John Best,

2nd Paddy O'Brien 3rd Garry Lowe

Contemporary: 1st John Best

2nd Ron Liekefett 3rd Ron Brown

Traditional: 1st Ron Brown

2nd Paddy O'Brien 3rd Ron Liekefett

Written Section: 1st Arthur Green

2nd Ellis Campbell 3rd Kym Eitel

WALLA WALLA WAGON

WHEEL WRITTEN AWARD

Ladies Section: 1st. 'Charlotte Brown'

Carol Heuchan. 2nd. 'The Fever - Kessler's

Curse' Kym Eitel 3rd Kym Eitel 4th

'Keepsakes' Carol Heuchan

Men's Section: 1st 'Two Bulls' Donald

Crane 2nd 'Sweet Sugar Kane' David

Campbell 3rd 'A Funny Breed of Cattle'

Donald Crane

WEDDERBURN Vic. RESULTS

Performance to Grade 4 **Original:** 1st Jarvis Holt, 2nd Shaun Stephenson and 3rd Corey Youngson, (from Wedderburn School).

Other: 1st Jacinta Kenny, Quarry Hill (Bendigo); 2nd Rhordan Holt, Wedderburn.

Performance: Grade 5 & 6. **Original:** 1st Naomi Frederick & Patrick Clarke (Duo), Lockwood, 2nd Patrick Clarke Lockwood; 3rd Madison Holt, Wedderburn

Other: 1st Naomi Frederick, 2nd Patrick Clarke (Lockwood Students); 3rd Michael Webb & Fred Assi, Bridgewater

Encouragement Award, Performance. Susannah Hargreaves.

Written Comp. (to Grade 4) 1st Kate Darvell, 2nd Maykala Dunstone, 3rd Dayna Marsh (All from Wedderburn)

Written. Grade 5 & 6 1st Paige Stephenson, 2nd Kane Lang, 3rd Troy Springthorpe. (Wedderburn students). (p.15)

Book Shelf

Advertise Product here. \$5 per ad. per issue. Post to Editor.
(Maximum of three lines).

* **NEIL HULM**, 361 Cheyenne Drive, Lavington NSW 2641, Phone/Fax 02 6025 3845. 'Aussie Country Comedy' 136 page book with 'perfect' binding, for only \$13.00 pp. Full of Aussie Bush Poetry, Yarns and Jokes, both humourous and serious. Lots and lots of laughs - as a Christmas present, hard to beat.

* **DUNCAN WILLIAMS**, PO Box 746, Tamworth, NSW, 2340. Ph. 02 67623286, duncan1969@hotmail.com
'Poetic Collection' CD - Containing fourteen original tracks by Duncan Williams. \$20.00 Post Paid

VALE: Jack Purcell

The death occurred in Coffs Harbour during October of ABPA member John Patrick Purcell known as "Jack".

One of six children, Jack was born in 1918 and grew up near Leeton, a typical bush kid riding a horse to school and swimming in the local irrigation canals.

Jack's home was full of music and bush poetry, and he never lost his love for either.

Jack lived through the depression years and a handwritten message under the nearby Euroli Bridge, written by an unemployed, read - "Go to Mrs. Purcells at 73 Acacia Ave., Leeton for sandwiches, no knockbacks" paid testa-

ment to the caring family that Jack was part of.

Jack served in the Second World War in New Guinea and Borneo with the 2nd 1st Pioneers. He survived the war, married Irene, and drew a rice farm in a Soldiers Settlement Ballot near Leeton. His home was always filled with the smell of cooking and farmhands were always welcome to share the family meal. He was an exceptionally kind man and gave many opportunities to returned soldiers.

Jack never gave up checking the supermarket rice section to make sure they stocked "Sunwhite" which was the Leeton brand. His two daughters Theresa and Irene often had to drag him out of shops to stop him talking about rice.

Jack lived by his philosophy on life which was "life is what you make it, mate" and his secret was staying positive and to have lots of laughs.

The following is the last verse of a poem written about Jack by his nephew "Put your Dukes up" you'd say whenever there was a challenge,

"Put your Dukes up, and show you're a man!"

You had a great scrap with life Jack - and showed us

What a great gift is the life and love of a good man."

Jack is survived by his daughters Theresa and Irene, their husbands Phil Goodman and Luke Hartsuyker (Federal MP for Cowper) and grandsons Ben and Paul.

Marg. Parmenter.

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Competition

John O'Brien Bush Festival
Narrandera NSW
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Dunedoo Bush Poetry Festival

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Competition Saturday 8th April (Before Easter)

Juniors, Novice, Serious, Humorous, Traditional, Dunedoo Theme
and Written Competition

Over \$2,000 worth of prizes

Entry \$5 per poem - ABPA Rules - No Finals

Performance competition, Entry forms necessary

Closing date 29 March 2006

Written competition. No entry form required.

Coversheet with each poem with name and contact details

Poets name not to appear on poem

Closing date Friday 24 February 2006

Dunedoo and District Development Group Inc.

PO Box 1, DUNEDOO NSW 2844. Ph. 02 63751975. Fax Ph.

02 63751297 dddgroup@bigpond.com

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Tamworth Bush Poetry Competition

West's League Club
Phillip Street, West Tamworth

Heats: Wednesday - Friday
25th - 26th - 27th January
Finals: Saturday 28th

Send SSAE to:

Jan Morris
PO Box 3001
West Tamworth 2340

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**Please remit payment to the
Secretary**
(Address details page 2)

Poetry in this issue . . .

1. *Through the Brush of Namatjira*
Ross Magnay, Alice Springs NT
3. *Dare to Dream*
Joyce Alchin, Corrimal NSW
4. *The Old Black Billy an' Me*
Louis Essen
5. *All Aboard*
Ron Stevens, Dubbo NSW
6. *Starlight's Run*
Brian Beesley, Cherrybrook NSW
7. *Poor Pooch!*
Tiger Tom, Nambucca NSW
10. *The Wollemi Pine*
Canowindra Public School
10. *Old Henry*
Duncan Williams, Tamworth
11. *Beyond the Pain*
Claire Reynolds, Gloucester NSW
12. *Uncle Clyde*
Zondrae King, Corrimal NSW
13. *Red Soil Ground*
Roderick Williams, Marlee East
15. *On the Road to Bangalow -
Nimbin - and When the Police
Force Couldn't Spell*
Jack Moses
16. *In My Grandchild's Eyes*
Glenny Palmer, Beaudesert Q.
16. *Grandpa* - Claude Morris.
16. *Old Hector*
Brian Langley - WA
18. A few lines from Eric Bogle
19. *We Will Remember Them*
Brian Beesley, Cherrybrook NSW
22. *Lightning Ridge*
Janice Downes Port Macquarie

2005

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