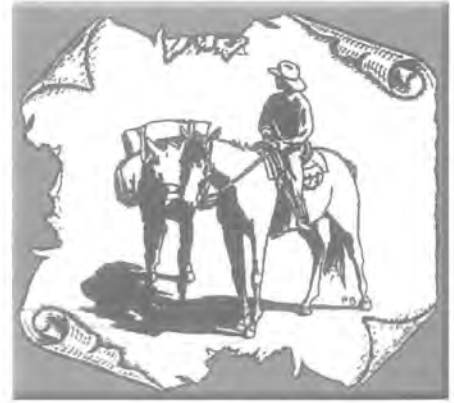


The Australian Bush Poets Association Inc.

NEWSLETTER

Volume 13 No. 6

December 2006 - January 2007



Merry Christmas

The Executive and Committee
of
The Australian
Bush Poets Association Inc.
Wishes its members and
readers a Merry Christmas
and a
Prosperous New Year

2007 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS - DUNEDOO

Visit the country, experience the bush, enjoy a small country town (pop. 837) - discover Bush Poetry.

Make it a date, be at Dunedoo in Central Western NSW for its ninth annual festival incorporating the Australian Bush Poetry Championships under the auspices of the Australian Bush Poets Association Inc. from Thursday 1st to Sunday 4th March 2007.



The Performance competitions will be held at the Dunedoo Central School Hall on the Saturday with over \$5,000 worth of prize-money and trophies, the male and female champions each to receive \$1,000 and a trophy.

The Inaugural Billy Hay Memorial Yarn-spinning Championships will take part on Friday evening at the Central School Hall. Never let the truth get in the way of

a good story, you could be taking home \$500.00 in the winner take all contest.

There will be two sections in the Written Championships. Serious and Humorous with entries closing on January 19th. Entries for the performance sections will close February 9th. Entry forms are available on the web at: www.golden-highway.com.au/2007nationalaustralianbushpoetschamp.htm or from the Festival Organizer, Sue Stoddart, PO Box 1 Dunedoo NSW 2844. dddgroup@bigpond.com

IMPORTANT NOTICE

In accordance with rule 15 for incorporated Associations, nominations are requested for the election of Office Bearers of the Association, and ordinary members of the committee. A representative from each state is required.

- (a) Nominations must be in writing, signed by two members of the association and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate.
- (b) Must be delivered to the Secretary of the Association at least 21 days before the date fixed for the holding of the Annual General Meeting at which the election is to take place.
- (c) Nomination and proxy forms are available on request.
- (d) Please send agenda items to the secretary

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE A.B.P.A.
Will be held at St' Edwards Hall
Hillyue Road Tamworth
THURSDAY 25th January 2p.m.

REMINDER

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE

Please renew your membership
by adding your details to the
membership form included and
forward with payment to

The Treasurer
Margaret Parmenter
1 Avenue Street
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450

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Bush Poets
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Treasurer.

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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.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

Thank you for the support you have given your ABPA Committee this year. It has been an interesting role as Presi-

dent as you never meet face-to-face for decision making but all such decisions are negotiated by email or the occasional phone conversation.

That emphasizes the importance of the AGM held each year in Tamworth when we do meet face-to-face to discuss the development of the association. In 2007 we have moved this meeting from the last Saturday to Thursday 25th Jan at 2pm in St. Edwards Hall Hilvue Rd in the hope that more members will attend. Please put that time in your diaries so the attendance is a genuine representation of the Association's 500 plus members.

Your response to our 2006 membership drive has been outstanding with the addition of nearly 100 new members. This has been the result of groups and individuals requesting batches of the Application for Membership flyer and distributing them at their various gigs. Please continue this practice so that 2007 sees the continuing growth of our membership.

Since the last Newsletter several motions have been passed by the committee.

1. When Australian Championships are held the award for the section titled, Australian Yarn Spinning be called the Billy Hay Memorial. Moved: N. Stallard Seconded: R. Liekefett. Amendment That the ABPA support this award by donating \$100 each year as the prize money for this competition Moved: M Parmenter Seconded: E Parmenter

2. The ABPA accept as a Register the list of names of poets that appeared in the Oct/Nov Newsletter as appropriate people that organizers of Written Bush Poetry Competitions can request as judges for their competitions. With the understanding that these names are of people who have won significant written competitions and have demonstrated a very high standard of written bush poetry. It is also part of this motion that new names can also be added to this register if the committee believe they qualify for this role. Moved N. Stallard Seconded R. Liekefett

3. That if the suggested amendments to the Criteria for Written Competitions (as appeared in the Oct/Nov Newsletter) be accepted by the ABPA that they be presented

to the AGM for ratification. Moved: N. Stallard Seconded: R. Liekefett.

4. That I be delegated as a sub committee in accordance with Rule 21 of the Model Rules to conduct a review of the Criteria for Performance Competitions and bring back any suggested amendments to the committee for consideration. Moved: N. Stallard Seconded: R. Liekefett

5. That I be delegated as a sub committee in accordance with Rule 21 of the Model Rules to conduct a review of and produce a coloured Address Label on which is printed 'IT'S TIME! PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP' and this be attached to the current Application for Membership flyer and included with the Dec/Jan Newsletter. Moved: N. Stallard 2nd R.Liekefett

6. Advertising for product sales to be included on the web site subject to the following. The current fees and conditions which apply to magazine advertisements are two months duration at a cost of \$5 per 2lines. The same fees should apply to web advertising. Moved F. Daniel 2nd R.Liekefett.

7. Two year option be granted to Dunedoo and Beaudesert for their respective competitions, subject to a receipt of a written or emailed request from the organizers and confirmation that the competition be conducted under the auspices of the ABPA. Moved: N. Stallard Seconded: R. Liekefett.

8. That any decision to establish a permanent venue at Tamworth for the National Titles to be held over and to be included in the agenda for the AGM 2007.(any decision will need to include inferred commitments to Vic and NSW. Moved E. Parmenter Sec-
order M. Parmenter

I wish to take this opportunity of thanking the members of the ABPA in 2006 for their continual commitment to increasing the interest and entertainment value of bush poetry with their excellence in both performance and writing. You have continued a great tradition of entertaining thousands of Australians with genuine Australian rhythmed and rhymed verse. Congratulations and thank you.

With gratitude,

CHOICES AT GILGANDRA

Ron Stevens 1st Prize Coo-ee March section, Gilgandra Coo-ee Festival Poetry Competition 2006

*To go or not to go,
to be or not to be?
Another question posed,
another tragedy.*

The words were potent instruments for extracting from the street the hesitants and innocents to adopt a martial beat and *Cooee-march* to Sydney, then to embark for foreign shores. For Kitchener still needed men for this greatest of all wars. The words were *cruel enemy* and our *menaced womenfolk*, faint *cooees* from Gallipoli and a threatened *foreign yoke*. Though *God*, or *King and Country* drew their recruits to fight the foe, the mateship call of *We needyou!* had inspired a lot to go.

The other words were scornful ones which ex-preacher Lee spat out. Enlist to face the German guns, else remain a *shirking lout!* He challenged at Gilgandra,

then at each town along the route, as bands and cheers helped draft young men

to embrace this just pursuit the *great adventure's* righteous cause, at whatever sacrifice.

Yet there were some mistrusted wars and the ever-mounting price of arrogance by distant kings, with dominions under tow. Objectors suffered verbal slings but resolved they would not go.

As ranks marched past, the cheers rang loud,

that momentous day in Gil', though some among the watching crowd

were ashamed and felt a chill, despite the warm October day, realising life had changed.

The friends who proudly strode away must in time become estranged.

For stay-at-homes were suspect then, notwithstanding an excuse; were often judged as lesser men, and deserving of abuse.

White feathers were the craven way to convey a telling blow at one with diverse trusts to weigh, who had chosen not to go.

Perhaps his widowed mother had, as the *cooee* sirens called, reminded him that times were bad and the harvesting was stalled. Or else a wife was almost due, so that surely he could wait, enlist next year; although he knew he'd have missed his old schoolmate who by that time would be long gone to the front against the Hun. So staying home, he struggled on at small battles to be won - resisting slurs and women's stares that implied he'd cause to show why menfolk proudly claimed as theirs should have been the ones to go.

I'm here this fine November day, as again the boys form ranks; except for those in Flanders clay who have earned Gil's endless thanks. The bugle calls Bill Hunter who, with Maguire and Finn, floats free in space to join this proud review; or at least appears for me. Bill Hitchen too steps up, fleshed out from his lonely English grave. They're silent, so I'm left in doubt if they're bitter or forgave my staying back when *Cooees* took to the road five years ago. A *coward*? Yes, in Lee's closed book, though I'd reasons not to go.



FROM the EDITOR

On page 4 of the October issue I published 'A Poem for Remembrance Day' - 'The Inquisitive Mind of a Child', *author unknown*.

Thanks now to John Norman of Morayfield Qld. we learn that the poem was written by an English teacher named Ted Harben.

John found the poem in the October 2004 Hall of Fame Newsletter and in the following issue a letter from Mrs. Margaret Smith of Yorkshire England advising the name of the author and the correct name of the poem 'REMEMBRANCE'

Harben won first prize with this poem in a national poetry competition organized by the Royal British Legion and it was published in England's Evening News Newspaper in 1979.

There were a staggering number of entries in the competition and Ted Harben was genuinely shocked that he had been announced the winner.

The prize money was fifty pounds but Mr. Harben decided to give his win-

nings to the local poppy appeal.

Mr. Harben served in the RAF for six and a half years including the war years and then taught for thirty-six years at the Scalby School where he organized the annual poppy collection.

My request for help on page 20 of the same issue for Mr. Alan Phillips of Charters Towers found a quick reply from Brian Beesley of Cherrybrook NSW. Alan asked about a ditty he found some years back, in part: *'I'm an absent minded beggar and my weaknesses are great'*.

Brian informs us that these words come from a poem by Rudyard Kipling, called - 'The Absent-Minded Beggar'.

Kipling was a champion for the common British soldier, (Tommy), and his poem, *'The Absent-Minded Beggar'*, is about the plight of soldiers who enlisted for the Boer War.

Thanks again John and Brian, I'm sure that many others would be as pleased with the information as I am.

Tim Michael's request regarding books he had read brought a quick reply

from Jim Kent of Port Fairy V, advising the books were written by Keith Garvey, who was born at Frog Hollow near Moree but spent most of his life at Pallamallawa NSW. His "Uncle Harry" series featured on ABC radio in the early seventies and was followed up by the Book "The Funny Bugger", which involved the character's Tim mentioned.

With constant editing and revision before publication I still read the printed newsletters looking for errors, albeit sometimes a month or so later.

On page 8 of the August issue I posted a poem by Lorne Henry of Branxton. On page 24 in the directory of that issue I accredited the poem to Lorne Green. *Ho-hum*, shades of 'Bonanza', sorry Lorne.

In the October newsletter I published some non-original material submitted by Janine O'Callaghan of Sea Lake Victoria, and inadvertently ascribed her as a resident of Swan Hill. Sorry Janine.

'Keep on writin' and keep on recitin',

Joe



GUNDUNGURRA MAN

Blue Mountains based Bush Poet Gregory North has won the Inaugural Gippsland Wattle Bush Poetry Award announced on Sunday 19th November 2006. His poem 'Gundungurra Man' won the \$1000.00 top prize from a field of 152 entries. One of the judges, Ross Noble, of the Gippsland Bush Poets, called it the best poem he had ever read.

Greg said that he was ecstatic over the win since it is only the second written competition he has entered. "I was very happy with the poem and it has been received well by audiences when I've performed it, but I'm delighted that it won such a big written competition. To be chosen among some of the country's best Bush Poets like David Campbell, Arthur Green, Kym Eitel and Joyce Alchin is a great thrill."

The poem took nearly a year to complete and was inspired by Aboriginal axe grinding grooves that Greg came across in the Blue Mountains National Park near his home.

"These grooves in the sandstone are slowly being lost to the elements. Seeing them caused me to reflect on the life of the Gundungurra tribe who have lived here for tens of thousands of years."

Greg credits Denis Kevans as a major influence on the poem. Denis, late of Wentworth Falls was known as Australia's Poet Lorikeet and his poems and songs are well loved in the Blue Mountains and across Australia. "Ah Brother Have You Any Sacred Sites' is a Denis Kevans masterpiece and I borrowed from Denis' style in constructing my poem. 'Gundungurra Man' is a tribute to Denis' works and encouragement. I think he would be proud," said Greg.

As a busy performance poet Greg is in demand at festivals, competitions and corporate functions entertaining audiences with his quirky humour and bent for accents. Greg's winning poem can be found at his website www.gregorynorth.com.au.

GundungurraMan.html

page 22.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

© Ellis Campbell. Dubbo NSW.

Winner 'Boree Log' Literary Competition Eastwood Hills NSW

A scrub bull, wild and cunning, lurked among the gidgee trees – a Brahman cross of smoky grey that roamed the scrub for years. He'd dodged a hundred musters with a warning borne on breeze – uncanny instinct guided by his roving eye and ears.

Elusive and aloof he stood, alert and restless eyed – where barren spinifex stretched far beyond the renegade. His wicked, gleaming spear-tipped horns spread to a metre wide, forever searching noon day haze through wisps of scanty shade.

No stockman claimed to master him - he roamed with scornful pride – and vanished through the broken scrub to gain the waste terrain. He scorned the mob when danger lurked and prowled alone outside the range of wide-spread horsemen as they searched for him in vain.

At night he ventured from the hills to join the station stock upon the river flats and open slopes of scattered scrubs. But daylight saw him striding to the distant timber block his bellow rang defiant through the rocks and sheltered shrubs.

He fought with younger, well-bred bulls and sired many calves. An order issued, "Bulls evading muster must be shot. They wreck our breeding programme, and we can't do things by halves. This station can't host mongrel bulls - eliminate the lot."

Jack Clarkson was a stockman with experience of years, a horseman of renown who understood the cattle's ways. He was recalled from mustering the draft of Brahman steers and nominated marksman who would end the old bull's days.

Jack used his bushman's skills to track the huge bull far and wide through stunted brigalow and rugged mountain range he checked. His trusty rifle ever ready on the saddle's side – he found the job distasteful but his orders were direct.

Jack saw a shadow loom beneath the jagged, frowning bluff – gigantic beast that faded like a fleeting silhouette. He stared astonished as the scrub just swallowed like a puff of noiseless breeze a cagey bull designed for freedom yet.

Some nights around his lonely camp he heard the wild bull's roar, it echoed far through gorges deep and volleyed up the hill. The rebel stirred an empathy that Jack could not ignore - a dawning admiration for this beast he had to kill.



Mujibar was trying to get into Australia legally through Immigration.

The Immigration Officer said, "Mujibar, you have passed all the tests, except there is one more test, unless you pass it you cannot enter Australia."

Mujibar said, "I am ready."

The officer said, "Make a sentence using the words Yellow, Pink and Green."

Mujibar thought for a few minutes and said, "Mister Officer, I am ready."

The Officer said, "Go ahead."

Mujibar said, "The telephone goes green, green, green, and I pink it up, and say, 'Yellow, this is Mujibar.'"

Mujibar now works at Telstra, perhaps you have spoken to him.

Jack found his tracks where crystal water trickled from a rock;
a tiny stream the bull had used for years to get a drink.
Perhaps a watch from target range-and manned around the clock -
could fool the mighty monarch and destroy him at its brink?

For thirty hours Jack sat there without a sign of beast;
till he collapsed exhausted and a deep sleep fogged his brain.
The bull with stealthy tread emerged as sunrise stained the east,
to drink his fill and vanish to the wild woods once again.

That left the stockman brooding on the challenge he'd been set -
the instinct of the bull defied the bushman's every wile.
Two weeks he'd trailed that cunning beast, without a single threat
of snuffing out the old bull's life or matching half his guile.

Reluctantly he told the boss, "He"s far too good for me.
He knows those hills much better than a man could ever learn.
He climbs the cliffs like mountain goat and slides down chasms
free -

his rare uncanny camouflage defeats me every turn."
The scanning helicopter droned above each tree and rock -
its eager passengers alert to all that moved below.
They saw the kangaroos that hopped among the station stock,
the emus stalk with nonchalance-the sluggish river's flow.

Their search was concentrated on the mountain's complex shade -
where something most elusive earned attention of these men.
The bull emerged from shadows - startled by the whirling blade.
The 'copter dropped to treetops as they swung the deadly Bren.

Like rain the blast of rapid fire screamed amidst the trees,
dismantled leaves and shattered limbs strewn fiercely as they fell.
The maddened bull plunged wildly as he sank on shattered knees
and bellowed livid fury that his death alone might quell.

His instincts bade him seek escape as life's blood ebbed away -
he hurtled down a chasm while the bullets found their mark.
He crumpled in a lumpish heap of lifeless, speckled grey
his reign of freedom ended in a canyon lone and dark.

He bellowed with a final breath that screamed his dying wrath -
his gallant eye unseeing in its last defiant glare.
The blood oozed from his nostrils in a clammy foaming froth
a mass of rugged beauty soon polluting mountain air.

The droning engine swung away beyond the range of hills -
the smoking gun was silent now - its rampant carriage wrought.
The pilot and the marksman pleased with their display of skills -
"The mission's been accomplished," read the gunman's grim report.

TASTE OF COUNTRY A REAL TREAT

Harden-Murrumburrah's Annual Taste of Country festival was once again just that, a real taste of country life in a real country town with poets and visitors extended a welcoming hand by the locals.

Apart from the normal festival activities, the highlight of the week was the bush poetry competition organized by the Arts Council with President Connie McFadyen at the helm in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Murrumburrah-Harden.

The refurbished historic Mechanics Institute was packed to capacity for one of Harden's best nights of entertainment with an unsurpassable country style meal provided by Rob Provan.

The open performance competition was decided between twelve poets in a two-go-round of traditional and humorous works.

The \$1,500.00 prize-money donated by the Geoffrey Kruger Trust, a private trust that provides, at its discretion, support for works for the betterment of Harden-Murrumburrah, was split into two sections paying five places in each.

Two new faces in the competition were John Davis of Ulladulla and Alan Hacking of Harden, both writers entering into the performance stakes. Alan has been a resident of Harden for the past four years and took the plunge in the performance section this year with a credible result.

John Davis, originally from Broken Hill and all places 'bush', with connections in the South Aussie Bush Poets Association, now residing on the South Coast of NSW, a virtual newcomer to performing, was well received.

Former Harden district resident, Jim Weatherstone from Canberra, is without doubt one of the better reciters doing the rounds today - his superb interpretation of the old masters incomparable in clarity and understanding, his contemporary works fully emphasising the writers intentions.

Concert performances were also tendered by Gregory North and Lance Palmer. The latter, an old hand at reciting with never a dull moment in his repertoire, exceeded all expectations with another 'newy' (for him), with the well seasoned duck shooting poem.

Greg was once again superb with his skilful grasp of foreign accents and supreme mastery of props.

Next years competition is already in the planning stages with the possibility of taking on a larger venue to cater for the increasing audience numbers. Don't forget to sample a Taste of Country in 2007.

(Pictured left to right, Lance Parker, Greg North and Jim Weatherstone).



Late news to hand at time of going to print. Greg North of Linden NSW has won the \$1,000.00 inaugural Gippsland Wattle Bush Poetry Award for written verse. Congratulations Greg! (page 4 & 22)

The following poem was awarded first prize in the Open Section of the Coo-ee Festival Competition held at Gilgandra on September 29th.

IN PRAISE OF 'GUNGA DIN'

© Arthur Green Warana Qld.

The other day, the mid-day movie popped up on the screen and took me back, near fifty years (or more, it could have been),

as Cary Grant and Douglas Fairbanks Junior, in their prime, earned '*Gunga Din*' an Oscar nomination at the time.

It took me back to Boarding School – those long-gone years ago,

when Kipling's poem was a piece the whole class had to know.

The boy who learnt it first, and could recite it to the end, was nick-named "Gunga Din, the native water bearer's friend".

'Twas just a harmless Boarders' tag that stuck, as such tags do,

that 'Gunga' uncomplainingly accepted as his due.

It wasn't said insultingly – we all had funny names – a rite-of-passage part of Boarders' peer-group's, put-down games.

In English, 'Gunga' sometimes couldn't quite pronounce a word,

resulting in some howlers, coining words we'd never heard. He never won at sports, nor made the gym or swimming team.

Some gain acclaim quite early – others later, it would seem.

But back to '*Gunga Din*' – that ardent movie-goer's dream, with Victor (Mac) McLaglen rounding out the trio's team. Three British Army sergeants fighting vicious Thuggee hordes,

directed by their goddess, Kali's priests and overlords.

Sam Jaffe played the crucial role of humble Gunga Din, with genuine subservience and coffee-coloured skin – a most unlikely hero with a Hindu pedigree, whose bugle-playing skills would one day save those 'Sergeants Three'.

Though Kipling's verse contained no words of love or wedded bliss,

the movie makers must have felt such lack was most remiss, and added Joan Fontaine to bring some romance to the plot. She schemed to split the sergeants up, while they schemed that she'd not.

But that's enough of movie stars, lets set the 'when' and 'where'.

The 'when' was 1840 and the 'where', for those who care,

was Kipling's India – the Empire's rich but troubled jewel, where Kali's Thuggees vowed they'd overthrow the British rule.

Of course compared to modern films, this one lacked such effects

as "F" words, wild car-chases and no scenes of lurid sex – a thrilling epic leading to a sentimental end, without those Soapies' fade-out stares that send me 'round the bend.

And '*sentiment*' it had in spades as humble Gunga Din was shot while sounding bugle calls and sadly cashed it in. And that scene got me started once again on my school-chum – the journey from our school days to the men we've since become.

All through our Uni years, and later, 'Gunga' kept in touch – through jobs, engagement, marriage, kids – through births and deaths and such.

Each year, with notes on Christmas cards he kept us up to scratch – a trait I tried to emulate, but sadly, couldn't match.

Then somehow, through my ever-growing list of jobs not done,

where letters I should answer, but I don't, rank '*number one*'.

I lost a friend, as 'Gunga's' cards and letters petered out, but felt the loss was one that I'd not stress myself about.

And so years passed, commitments grew, and I gave scarce a thought

to what became of 'Gunga' 'til I chanced on that report.

Beneath an article beginning '*Gunga's Passed Away*', beside his name, the paper said the service was that day,

It listed what I'm sure were just a few of his good deeds, but even that small fraction was enough to sow the seeds of guilt, that I'd lost contact, through neglect, with old school friends,

and worst of all, I couldn't call *that* friend to make amends.

Attending 'Gunga's' service was the least that I could do, and there saw some old faces that I'm sure felt that way too. The church was packed and all the while the eulogy was read,

the thought, '*I'd let old Gunga down*' kept churning through my head.

Oh, yes ... and did I mention, 'Gunga's' skin was Asian brown?

From India, his family shifted here to settle down.

And so, misquoting Kipling, for the boy who couldn't win – *You're a better man than I,*

and always will be, 'Gunga Din'.



WILD NASTURTIUMS © Julie Haddrick 2000

Our paddock blooms annually with the rampant masses of spreading Nasturtium flowers. Plants clamber over the wood heap, around the chook house, under the fence, up tree trunks and all unsuspecting plants and even creep onto the bitumen road. In its' hardy habit, the Nasturtium takes the spring warmth and moisture and decorates lavishly with fresh greens, mahogany, reds oranges, yellows and a multitude of pastel shades, that curl and weave into new tendrils and buds. Summers' arrival sees the wild Nasturtiums colours fade, to unceremoniously retreat from extended heat.

DUSTY SWAG AWARDS



Local teacher wins Dusty Swag acclaim

The annual Murrindindi Historic Register's Dusty Swag Awards were announced at the Yarek Hotel V. on Sunday 27th August with entries from across Victoria and as far as Western Australia.

Kath Stewart, a long time Kinglake V. resident and well-known school teacher, recently entered the Dusty Swags writing competition with great success.

Kath wrote a classic Australian poem titled 'Cattle on the Road' and placed third in the Poetry section. She also received an Encouragement Award for her ripping yarn about a hapless snake that found its way into a house and was subsequently sucked into a vacuum cleaner!

Many Kinglake residents will know Kath from her time spent teaching at both Kinglake West and Kinglake Primary School and English and literature have been a life long passion. It is ob-

vious speaking with Kath that she has a natural affinity with children and this desire to motivate saw her co-write two teachers reference books designed to encourage reading in children. "Some children have a natural affinity for writing - it never fails to amaze me" she said.

Encouraged by previous Dusty Swag winner and Kinglake resident Simone Allen, together with the supportive Dusty Swag committee, Kath took a creative leap and entered this years awards with her work being very well received.

Kath looks forward to spending more time with her widely spread family and travelling with husband John, pastimes which should provide great inspiration for further creative ventures.

The Murrindindi Historic Register is responsible for organising the awards and again extends an open invitation to poets young and old to contribute to next years competition. Only two of the winning entries were represented on the day and presented their poems to the audience. (Results p. 23)

Murrindindi is located North East of Melbourne, encompassing magnificent snow country, breathtaking landscapes, rivers, mountain lakes, historic townships, National and State Parks with an abundance of wildlife. Tall trees and ancient rainforests make it an ideal place for touring with wineries and farm gate sale produce scattered all throughout.

THE CONSERVATIONIST

by Wilbur Howcroft

I was winding up me sundial
When a friend rang up to say
That a meeting was in progress
In the hall across the way.

So I donned me best blue singlet,
Ran the clothes-brush through me hair,
And strolled staidly to that building
Looking suave and debonair.

The wild-eyed joker on the stage
Stamped and screeched and raved
About our dwindling forest lands
How the trees must all be saved.

'Take heed, my friends', he loudly
cried,
'Our main aim in life must be
To put our shoulders to the wheel
And save each single tree!'

He raged about our heritage,
All the trees we had in trust,
With such frenzied fire and brimstone
That it seemed he'd surely bust.

'Now is there one amongst us here',
He bawled with animation,
'Who truthfully can testify
They've aided conservation?'

Then up spoke Bluey Cassidy
A well-known ego wrecker:
'I've done me bit, I once shot dead
A riddy great woodpecker!'

CATTLE on the ROAD

© Kath Stewart - Kingslake V.

"It will kill them if you do that!"
His wife exclaimed with a cry
"It's our only chance" the farmer said
"For without it, they'll surely die!"

The farmer had watched helplessly
As the rains had failed to come
He had seen his stock all wasting
In the hot and burning sun.

Just like leather on a hanger
With bones pushing through the skin
His prime and healthy breeders
Slowly withered, and were paper-thin

So the farmer took them on the road
With his cattle barely walking
He knew the time had come to act
The time was done for talking

Each day he would glance upwards
The desperation in his face

Looking for a sign of rain
As the cattle walked a steady pace

He had found some feed along the road
And his stock regained their prime
As he kept them moving southwards
Rain? - surely a matter of time

Driving through quiet country lanes
Having a break from city life
I faced these cattle on the road
Driven by the farmer and his wife

As I waited to pass the herd
And continue on my way
I chatted with the farmer
And heard what he had to say

"On the road for two years now
It was all that we could choose
We've come south in search of feed
Or our cattle we'd surely lose"

"I'm sorry for the inconvenience"
The farmer said with a smile
"Just drive around them slowly

It won't take you but a while"

The farmer dipped his hat to me
As I bade him good luck and goodbye
"She'll be right", he murmured
As he glanced again at the sky

A blue sky, clear and cloudless
No sign of rain in sight
But the farmer remained optimistic
"Yeah" he said "she'll be right"

"As each day of drought goes by
Without rain to drench the land
We're one day closer to it breaking
Do you understand?"

I drove off hoping the sky would soon
fill
With clouds that were bursting with rain
So when it fell on the dry, parched land
The farmer could go home again.



FINALISTS 2006/7

BOOK OF THE YEAR, ORIGINAL VERSE

<i>Wild Horse Rain</i>	Kym Eitel
<i>Rise 'n' Rhyme</i>	Marco Gliori
<i>The Exodus and other verse</i>	Bob Magor
<i>Tracks of Yesterday</i>	Colleen McLaughlin
<i>You know you're in Australia</i>	Dennis Scanlon

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

<i>Up and At' Em</i>	Marco Gliori
<i>I'm Better than she is</i>	Carmel Dunn/Jennifer Haig
<i>The Best Of The Exodus</i>	Bob Magor
<i>Banjo Paterson's Comic Verse & Classics</i>	Paterson/Kel Richards
<i>Only Kidding!</i>	Milton Taylor

SINGLE RECORDED PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

<i>Bush Spirit</i>	Jennifer Haig
<i>Why?</i>	Carol Heuchan
<i>Exodus</i>	Bob Magor
<i>Santa's Little Helpers</i>	Dave Proust
<i>Where's Old Jacky?</i>	Milton Taylor

BUSH POETRY PERFORMER OF THE YEAR

Margaret Bye
 Marco Gliori
 Janine Haig
 Carol Heuchan
 Dave Proust

For more information on the Australian Bush Laureate awards please go to www.bushlaureate.com.au

The Australian Bush Laureate Awards winners will be announced at the Tamworth Town Hall, 2pm on Tuesday 23rd January 2007. Bookings phone 02 6766 1577.



LOST POETRY

D Brown from the UK has asked for help with the words and other information about the following verses.

*Oh how I wish that I could be
 a little aborigine
 I need not eat his grubs and snakes,
 but live on lollies, nuts and cakes,
 I'd dance the wild corroboree,
 Oh how I wish that I were he...*

All help will be appreciated, if you know the poem please let the editor know so he can pass it on.

A COO-EE MARCHER'S 1960 INTERVIEW

Ron Stevens
 2nd Prize, Coo-ee March section,
 Gilgandra Coo-ee Festival
 Poetry Competition 2006

You run the high school paper, Matron said;
 and that you aim to write a Coo-ee spread
 to coincide with next month's Anzac Day.
 Although my memories now tend to fray
 around the edges, I will do my best
 to grip some fragments from our distant quest.
 We strode away when king and empire called
 and great adventure's promises enthralled.

I see you've brought a photo of the march.
 A ragged bunch, before they put some starch
 into our bearing during weeks of drill
 at Liverpool - a routine set to kill
 our youthful eagerness to come to grips
 with cartooned Huns of snarling blood-drool lips.
 Unlike the first fleshed Boche I was to see
 who looked, in death, surprisingly like me.

Imagination possibly, for I
 had only caught a glimpse when stumbling by.
 Yet through the years his sightless stare remained
 though more horrific images had waned
 -- dismembered comrades, rotting flesh, the mud
 and lice, the shelling's scream and heart-stop thud.
 Such visions had not marred our cheerful tramp
 three hundred dusty miles to reach the camp.

Already we were heroes: to each crowd
 along the route that coo-eed long and loud;
 to girls from Euchareena, first to rest
 a tribute rose upon each prideful chest;
 to leaders praising Hitchen's Own at Gil'
 and Dubbo, Molong, Bathurst, right until
 in Martin Place we shared that ageless glow
 of patriots prepared to meet the foe.

PALMA ROSA POETS

The final Palma Rosa Poets evening for 2006 will be held on Wednesday 6th December showcasing four Award winning poets from the North Pine Bush Poets. This talented group of Brisbane poets will include the President of the Australian Bush Poets Association, former Australian and Queensland Champion bush poet and three times winner of the Golden Damper in Tamworth, Noel Stallard.

With him will be the 2005 Male Bush Poetry Champion, Ron Liekefett from Lawnton and Manfred Vijars from Morningside.

'The Rose amongst the Thorns' on the night will be the current Queensland Ladies Champion Anita Reed of Holland Park. All are based in Brisbane and are members of the North Pine Bush Poets.

We met him finally and did as well as was expected; though, I'm bound to tell, some names stood out among us common herd. There's Leslie Greenleaf - see, that's Greenie third there with the leaders in your photo, Son! The Military Medal that he won was due to rescuing his captain who was lying wounded, full in German view.

We lost a few among our very best: Maguire, as the 45th had pressed towards Albert; MacDonald - Moquet Farm. At Harefield Hospital, in England's calm old Captain Bill, the soul of Hitchen's Own, succumbed to illness, fatefully alone. And back in Redfern, Mrs Hunter heard another son was killed - young Bill, the third.

Her other two had died at Anzac Cove. The losses there were why our leaders strove to boost recruiting, while alarming lists of casualties rallied pacifists. I hope you never have to make that choice and judge the pleas of each competing voice. 'My mates are going!' 'Who will work the farm?' 'The cause is just!' 'I'm dreading mortal harm!'

Confusing, yes, but at the time the call of 'Coo-ee!' sounded clearer than them all. I'm proud of having been among that band who marched away for love of native land. I'm grateful someone young as you should feel Gilgandra's march retains its great appeal. My ramblings must tax your writing skills. We Coo-ees never were much good at drills.

Saluting either, which the *Pommie brass* expected yards away from where we'd pass them slumming in a *Gypo* market place or tramping Tel el Kebir's desert base. Our final training ground before the Hun... oh, Matron's back and frowning at us, Son. She'll reckon that I've had enough today. Perhaps again tomorrow then, okay?

BEAUDESERT BUSH BARDS

The BBB's celebrated their third birthday on 3rd September. It is pleasing to see that the membership continues to grow - from their humble beginnings to an average of fifteen at this year's monthly meetings.

One highlight of 2006 was the staging of a most successful writing workshop in February which attracted a capacity crowd. Noel Stallard's presentation was so well received that the BBB's are staging a 'double burger' in April 2007. A poetry writing workshop for adults on Sunday, 15th April and another for children and those who wish to teach poetry to children on the student-free school day Monday, 16th April. Mark it in your diary.

The BBB's involvement in the staging of the Queensland State Bush Poetry Championships at the Beaudesert Country & Horse Festival in June was a steep learning curve from which we all

benefited. Glenny Palmer and her team of experienced entertainers, judges and poetry friends ensured the success of the event.

Once again, Beaudesert will conduct the Queensland Titles. With the knowledge gained from the first event, the 2007 competition will be bigger, better and brighter! The dates - 9th, 10th and 11th June.07.

Some members competed successfully in 'out of town' competitions during the year and continue to gain pleasure in promoting this great Aussie icon.

After three years, the BBB's are moving home. They've now outgrown Thompson Park Receptions which provided a free venue for their meetings and are now in the process of arranging a new meeting place for 2007.

President Pamela Fox is available on 07 5541 2662 for details and further information about the BBB's.

Limericks by Watty

A Coral sea diver named Pete said, 'Me theory is almost complete, if I make some plunges and remove all the sponges the sea would be deeper by feet.

If you are saying Grace out loud (while the heads are reverently bowed), have a good look at the size of the chook, and hop in before the crowd.

BUNGENDORE NSW

BUSH POETS GATHERING

TWO BIG POETS BREAKFASTS

Saturday and Sunday
7.30am Cooked Breakfast
8 am Walk up poetry
3rd & 4th February
(Details in Poets Calendar)



GOLDEN DAMPER CHALLENGE

Getting ready for another big event in January is the Tamworth Poetry Group.

Again, with the sponsorship of Country Energy, the Tamworth Bush Poetry Competition will be held at the West Tamworth Leagues Club.

Heats of the competition will be held at 9.30am daily from Wednesday 24th to Friday 26th January 2007 and the finals will be decided on Saturday 27th at 9.30am.

The chase will be on again as Dave Proust of Forrester's Beach challenges all comers in a bid for his third Golden Dampier; he's done it two years in a row, but can he do it again.

Last year Gabby Colquhoun of Gloucester won the Established section and going on recent form will be the one to watch in 2007.

The competition is made up of two sections, Original or Established works and early entries are invited to avoid disappointment.

And a message to the writers, don't forget the

BLACKENED BILLY VERSE COMPETITION

closes November 30. Send SSAE to the above address or email to janmorrison@northnet.com.au .

Entry forms are now available. Please send an SSAE to Jan Morris, PO Box 3001 West Tamworth 2340.

P.S. Late entries will be accepted up to December 10 for the Blackened Billy Verse Competition by simply attaching a cover sheet with name, address, phone number, and entry fees. Fees are \$5 per entry, or 5 entries for \$20.

Cheques to be made payable to Tamworth Poetry Reading Group.



SKELETON WEED

© Jim Kent - Port Fairy V.

Winning entry in the Eaglehawk Dahlia and Arts Festival Literacy Award.

It appeared in the paddock, the old fellow said,
A bloody great weed 'tween the fence and the shed,
No poison to kill it, not a hope to contain,
But determined he was that it wouldn't remain..

Thistles and gorse and blackberry too,
Rambling Rose and Wandering Jew -
Needle Grass tall but yet 'tis agreed,
None there as tough as the Skeleton Weed.

He cut down that weed as low as he could,
And battered the stump with a great lump of wood,
Then around the taproot, deep into the ground,
He dug a big hole, - wide, deep and round.

There's Noogoora Burr and Lawyer Vine,
And Bridal Creepers trees entwine -
Boxthorn, Bramble, though yet indeed,
Most noxious of all the Skeleton Weed

He poured into that hole old oil from the sump,
Drums of the stuff that he'd kept for the dump,
Then a bucket or so of weed killer too -
Over-lapping the hole, that poisonous brew.

Milkweed and Ragwort, Paterson 's Curse,
Hawthorn and Hemlock and others far worse,
Cape Tulip and Willow, Ragged Boneseed,
Nary a shade to the Skeleton Weed.

Now he covered that hole with broad sheets of tin,
Of the corrugated type although rusted and thin,
Then on top of the tin stacked a rubble of brick,
All pounded down hard and several feet thick.

Cape Weed and Cape Wattle and Creeping Bluebell,
Salvinia, Saffron, and Wild Lily as well,
Bathurst Burr too with its prickle of seed,
But the mongrel of mongrels, the Skeleton Weed.

It was harvest time then so over it all,
He built a great haystack some thirty bales tall,
And covered that stack with a tarp thick and stout
Tied down in all corners to keep the rain out.

Tussock and Pampas, Broom's flowering Shrub,
Horehound and Holly and Rose Apple Scrub,
Butterfly Bush and Sweet Grassy Reed,
Insignificant rogues to the Skeleton Weed.

But with the beginning of spring, the old fellow's claim,
With language uncivil in his disgust and his shame,
It burst through the tarp like some wild creature freed,
And clawed for the sky, that Skeleton Weed.....

Obnoxious and Noxious, pestilence freed,
Persistent, resistant, - in avarice, greed -
Uncaring, despairing, - Disaster from seed,
Unrelentant, unrepentant - the Skeleton Weed.

THE VICTORIAN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Victorian Bush Poetry Championships were held at The Benalla Bowls Club on Oct. 21st and 22nd in the N.E. Victorian city of Benalla. The weekend kicked off with a welcome B.B.Q. on the Friday night. This gave the poets the chance, not only to have a good feed, but to suck up to the judges as well. Thankfully no bribes were seen to change hands.

Everybody rocked up bright and early for the Poet's Brekky on Saturday morning, it was good to see they all survived Milligan's cooking of the previous evening. Neil McArthur was M.C. for the morning and as usual had the audience in stitches. How this man's mind works we will never be able to fathom, but he seems to have a funny response to whatever is put before him.

Beyond The City Lights.

© Zondrae King - Corrimal NSW - July 2006

In town, when you look up, you see at least a million stars
but in the bush that's multiplied by ten,
The moon has for companions planets Jupiter and Mars.
Their playground's never limited by men.

And when she glows, her silver beams spread o'er the western plains
show silhouetted fence posts tall and proud.
She skips along a pathway through the velvet spangled sky
or hides behind a curtain of dark cloud.

You watch a while, you'll catch it, in the corner of your eye,
a meteors path, never seen by day.
While in its' mighty glory there's the gleaming Southern Cross.
The only sign you need to guide your way.

With crickets, frogs, cicadas there to keep you company.
Their chorus, sometimes mellow, sometimes bright.
Your solitude's not lonely when the creatures of the dark
sing harmony to praise the blessed night.

A squalling cat or howling dog can never be compared
with mournful call of Dingoes in the hills.
The scent of gum and tea tree perfume spring and summer air
and golden wattle soothes late winter ills.

The deserts of the centre have the whisper of a breeze
arranging grains of ever shifting sand.
The peace of springtime evenings or the nip of autumn chill
unsullied by the mark of human hand.

Not talking 'bout the city with the street awash with light
and corners mark'd by Technicolor trees,
but mystifying Min-Mins, dancing through the darkest night.
They beckon you and taunting, try to tease.

With noise from busses, trains and planes and never ending cars,
pollution, filling both your nose and ears.
The endless crush of city crowds, are pushing you aside.
They run to something else or from their fears.

Some city folk will point at me. I've heard them call me mad
'cause in my swag I choose to spend my nights.
You keep alarms and phones and horns. I need the dust and thorns.
Just give me night - beyond the city lights.

With plenty of food and plenty of poetry the morning was a rip roaring success.

Competition started in "The Members Room" next door at 10.15. The Traditional section kicked off the show with strong competition in both Men's and Women's. Ed Walker from Narre Warren gave a superb recital of C.J. Dennis's "A Song Of Rain" while Carol Heuchan continued on with her normal standard when she recited Banjo Paterson's "The Amateur Rider".

After lunch the Original Section swung into action with some great poetry, some brought on tears of emotion while others brought on tears of laughter. It was the emotional poems holding sway in the Women's Section with Carol Heuchan's "Why" and Lisa Quast's, "The Sea Changers" bringing on the tears, while Betty Walton and Jan Lewis painted pictures of life in the high country with "Regret" and "The Fire Fighter". In the Men's that Milligan bloke had them laughing about haircuts, while Ed Walker took us all back with his great poem, "You Should Never Go Back." Dennis Carstairs took us riding with the cattlemen of the high country with his poem "Wally Ryder" and John Peel took us fishing for Murray Cod. In fact John took us fishing a few times over the weekend, the cod he catches are bigger than them white pointers.

The musicians got into the act after the poets for a mini music competition. The beautiful voice of Jill Meehan still rings in our ears, the music of Les James had us tapping our toes, and that shearer bloke Ken Prato, boy is he a surprise packet, the man sure can sing.

Saturday night is concert night with the music mingling with poetry for a great night of fun, laughter and above all entertainment. With the mad cap McArthur in full swing it's a wonder we all survived, but the audience loved it. The Concert is never organised until the night, when names are seemingly plucked out of the air and they hit the stage. A poet or musician will hear, "you're on next", and they go on, and they do a wonderful job. The M.C.s however, are very organised, between McArthur, Mr Reliable Reg Phillips and that Milligan bloke the word was "you can M.C. this bit I need a rest". It sounds like chaos, it was chaos, but it was fun and it worked.

A change of venue for Sunday due Ed Walker. Victorian Champion 2006

to a black out at The Bowls Club hardly caused a ripple as a great crowd turned up at "The All Blacks" for brekky. Egg and bacon rolls were on the menu cooked by the All Blacks volunteers. That mad cap McArthur was at it again along with a wonderful line up of poets.

The final section, Contemporary, once again saw some tight competition. Col Carrington did a great job of Ellis Campbell's "An old man Sitting In The Sun", while Dennis Carstairs told us about "The True Australian" by Bobby Miller and yes John Peel took us fishing. Claire Reynolds' recital of Milton Taylor's "Queenie Lucinda O'toole" held the audience spell bound and Annette Roberts had us giggling with "Mulligan's Mob" written by Greg Scott.

There were many winners over this weekend but mostly they were the audience members, they witnessed a wonderful weekend of poetry. Many thanks go to all the poets, they made it a memorable weekend. Thanks also to Neil McArthur, he worked very hard for little pay, in fact no pay at all. Overall it was a great weekend for bush poetry and bush music. The comments from audience members were all in the vein of, "I've never laughed so much in all my life", "The best weekend we've had", "We're coming back next year".

And yes, next year it will be held on the 3rd weekend in October (20th and 21st) at "The Benalla Bowls Club" in sunny North East Victoria.

Many thanks to all those who helped organise this weekend, and to all the poets and musicians who made it such a success.

See you all next year, Col Milligan Secretary V.B.P.M.A.

(Results p 23)



RETIREMENT

© John Davis - Ulladulla NSW

Some look forward to retirement but
we're not of that breed
We loved the life and where we lived
didn't feel we had the need
To give up what we were doing and sit
around on our arse
Though sometimes things just happen
and so it came to pass
That we sold the land we loved, and
bought a house in town
But there is no reason we should be
condemned to forever sitting down
So we started taking nice long walks, I
started writing too
Done some babysitting for our son and
found some other things to do
Started working for a charity, to some
that might seem strange
Done a bit of gardening and went fish-
ing for a change
I joined up with Bush Poets and we
had a real good time
Showcasing some of my work and
hearing stories told in rhyme
I do gigs for old folks now with my
poetry and tales
Of my lifetime in the bush and the sub-
ject never fails
To entertain these people, these folk
from "down inside"
Where meat comes from a butchers
shop, and horses, only jockeys ride
And we do a bit of travelling, all
throughout this land
To see as much as possible before the
devil plays his hand
So you see despite our fears, we've
found lots to do
Maybe retirements not so bad, but I'm
still telling you
We miss our life in the bush, and still
find it sad
That as much as we might want to,
can't regain the life we had
Perhaps we should have stayed, in the
bush where we belong
I wonder when we made the change
was I being weak or strong
So for folks like me, from the bush,
I've reached this last conclusion
It would be better by far, to stay where
you are, avoid all this confusion
These are my feelings about retire-
ment, every word herein is true
But you must form your own opinion,
this is just one mans point of view.

The following poem was written by a bloke who, new to the ABPA, thought that he might contribute something and perhaps get some feedback. He doesn't produce a lot because he doesn't take the time to stop and write down the important things. Turning 55 next year, he intends to remedy that with an expectant attitude change; more likely he says, others will have to adjust their attitudes due to his rising LOL (lack of interest).

'Well, here goes nothing!' says he, looking forward to hearing from you and getting some feedback.

(Responses c/- Editor please).

'Railways' was written one summer morning as he commuted to work on an electric train.

RAILWAYS

by Mal McLean -

By the lee of the track where the old sleepers stack
In forests of long dead trees,
Armies of dandelions all sway in time
To the tune of some military breeze.

By the side of the road where the storm water flowed
Long decades of cast offs accrue.
Concrete and steel and cast iron and wheels
Yet blind are commuters and crew.

In the noon's hot daze the embankments ablaze,
Though the heads and stalks are bowed,
With nasturtiums entwined aside the steel lines
Afloat, like some colour bound cloud.

The old overbridge like some grey painted ridge
Stands clear against the sky.
Creaking old timbers are keeping the faith
Whilst millions of feet tramp on by.

Great engines of steel under ribbons and reels
Of endless lengths of cables
Are rushing and running along the great line
Compelled by the needs of the tables.

For the passengers passed from the first to the last
Ticket and turnstile and station,
The great silver trains roll on again.
The body and blood of a nation.

BUNGENDORE NSW POETS GATHERING

The 13th Annual Bungendore Poets Gathering will be held at the Bungendore Bowling Club on Saturday and Sunday 3rd & 4th of February as part of the Annual Country Music Muster.

Cooked breakfasts start at 7am followed at 8am with the open Bush Poetry Walk-up.

All are welcome, but if further information is required contact [Frank Daniel](mailto:Frank.Daniel@bigpond.net.au) on 02 6344 1477 or via email on fda70930@bigpond.net.au

It's all part of the 22nd Bungendore Country Muster.

Contact: Maureen Gordon P/F: 02 6238 0224
W: www.bushballadeers.com.au/bungendore.htm

Winner - Cooma Poetry Feast 2006

THE RHYMING ROMEO

© Dave Bowen - Mandurah WA

The women came from everywhere, from every country town
They'd travel in from homesteads to lay their blankets down
To sit and listen to him speak, to hear the things he wrote
And each would feel a teary eye, a breath caught in their throat

For it's true, he was their lover, at least in all their dreams
He walked with each one hand in hand beside the woodland streams

And whispered in their shell-like ears such words of sweet romance

As he guided them around the floor embraced in courtly dance

The rhyming romeo would raise an eyebrow now and then
Or tip a wink to right or left, for pause, and start again
Knowing well that every word, that each well-chosen phrase
Brought back a memory to the girls of treasured halcyon days

Reminded them of stolen looks, or more daringly a kiss
Oh yes, his words relit their fires, and fanned the flames of bliss
What would they give to have this man all to their very selves?
To lead them into forest glades where pixies and sweet elves

Prepared for them a leafy dell, a floral-laced boudoir
Fit only for a princess in a sylvan palace. Far
From Cinderella's chores, the drudge, the daily grind
The Poet Prince would take them, if only in their mind

His words would captivate each heart and make of it his own
While pulses raced and girls, red-faced, emitted with a moan
Their murmured sighs of lust and love, their happiness in capture
Oh would this moment never end, this all-pervading rapture

But all good things must end, they say, and all too soon the poet
Closed his eyes and took a bow, to finish off the show. It
Was the sweetest moment, for he held each lady there
And everyone, for just a second, whispered up a prayer

Of thanks, for giving of his time to share his mind and soul
His magic words that gave them joy, and made them all feel whole

A blessing on this Romeo, with his cunning lingual skills
For giving tongue to thoughts, that brought a paradise of thrills

As each one left at end of day, fulfilled in that fine hour
They took with them the echo of his words, with all the power
To keep them oh so happy and their hearts and minds aglow
And all with treasured memories of the rhyming romeo.

COUNCIL'S HELP WITH FESTIVAL

You would have read, in the last edition of this Newsletter, of the North Pine Bush Poets' Camp Oven Festival in August when again many Bush Poets entertained, competed in competition and renewed friendships.

We wish to acknowledge and thank the Pine Rivers Shire Council for their Grant of \$3000 which contributed to the success of the Festival. Without funding from the Council over many years the Festival would not have been a reality.

Ann Stallard
Secretary

THE GHOST OF FRED FISHER

© 2006 Evan Schnalle Rockhampton Qld.

Now I've heard it said by sceptics that my tale is just that,
an old yarn about a ghost on a rail where I once sat.
But I'll tell you what happened, and I know better than most,
'cause I'm Frederick George James Fisher, well, at least I'm
his ghost.

I travelled as a convict, from Portsmouth to New South
Wales,

it was a mournful journey beneath the billowing sails.
We never saw the sun before we'd arrived at the quay,
and land was a glorious sight after six months at sea.

Twenty-two hundred and seven days later I was free,
Well, I had a Ticket of Leave, so free as I could be.
I was granted thirty acres after I had been released,
on condition I go to church and report to the priest.
I obeyed the rules explicitly for nigh on four years,
Until I was taken down by one of my fellow peers.
Bill Brooker was a carpenter doing some work for me,
but I could see that the work he'd done wasn't worth his fee.

So when I gave him the money that I thought he was due,
he attacked me with his chisel and tried to run me through.
I stabbed him in self defence but I was thrown in the clink,
so I gave my neighbour George the authority in ink,
to farm my block like it was his own until I got out,
I now know that was a bad idea 'cause he was a lout.
But while I was in the gaol he looked after my place well,
he milked my Friesians and kept all my chooks fed for a
spell.

After my lag was over on the way back to the scrub,
I dropped in for a pint with the boys at the local pub.
I was in a hurry and could share only one drink with them,
and when I left the pub I walked into some real mayhem.
As I crossed the rickety bridge I was hit in the head,
then the cur beat me until I was well and truly dead.
He bashed my head in with a post and then he buried me,
up the creek, in a muddy marsh, where nobody would see.

Then I came back as a ghost to show a neighbouring mate,
where my body was lying in it's gruesome mangled state.
I thought John Farley could do with the twenty quid reward,
so I pointed out to him where my body had been stored.
A copper came 'round and searched the creek I had pointed
to,
and found my rotting corpse after the drying of the dew.
George had been spinning a yarn about me going abroad,
while I was up the creek and his tale had me overawed.

He reckoned I'd gone back to mother England late one night,
by sneaking on board a ship out of the governor's sight.
But when the cops found my body George Worrall's yarn
was checked,
and the cracks in his story made him the primary suspect.
Then they locked him up 'cause he was wearing my dacks
and socks,
he was hanged off the drop near Sydney harbour at The
Rocks.
Since George was executed I've played pranks 'round the
place,
'cause I can cause tomfoolery without leaving a trace.

NANDEWAR POETRY AWARDS

More than fifty
people took advantage
of the great
weather to attend the
Old Gaol ground on
September 30 for the
presentation of the
Nandewar Poetry
awards at Narrabri in
the NSW North
West.

Due to long distances
and the high
cost of travel most of
the finalists apologized
for their non-attendance
and as a result the
Highly Commended
entries were read by
Society members.

Third place went to Kym Eitell of Thangool Q. with
'The Man from up Tom Groggin' and was read by Lorraine
Palmer.

Max Pringle read the second place-getters poem
'Forsaken Dreams' by Ellis Campbell of Dubbo. Ellis took
out the first three places in last years competition.

'Rosie' written by Carol Heuchan of Cooranbong NSW
and presented by the author, held the audience enraptured,
some grabbing for their handkerchiefs as she related her
story of just one of the many horses that didn't come home
from the war.



But it's hard to chat with people when they all run away,
and if you just calmed down I'd love to hear about your day,
I switched the lights off in the town orchestra pit one night,
and I'm real sorry the folks weren't s'posed to get such a
fright.

In nineteen seventy-three, an old bridge rail from my creek,
was taken to the race track which I thought was pretty weak.
So five times I washed out the Campbelltown Picnic Races,
by causing rain which put a dampener on their airs and
graces.

My rail was moved and although it wasn't back in the mud,
it was taken from the track so I stopped their race day flood.
Now I try to just chew the fat with some city folk,
'cause I like to share a mag and love to hear a good joke.
So you can see I'm a nice bloke who just likes to have fun,
and about the race I knew the horse you'd backed would'na
won.
So if you ever see me, remember I'm here to stay,
and if you want, come up and chat, I'd love to say G'day.

(Macquarie Dictionary of Australian Slang)

take down - Phrase: to take advantage of. *lag* - noun: a term
of penal servitude. *drop* - noun: the gallows. *mag* - noun: a
chat.

The Best Non-Seller

by "Billy Tea"

The author's task was at an end,
His book was fairly out;
He looked to every faithful friend
(They said he'd thousands) now to send
It humming round about.

Days passed; his ear upon the ground
Poor Scribe caught not the hum,
He did not see the book around,
It did not bring a single pound,
The author's heart was glum.

Some fifty of his masterpiece
He'd sped gratuitous
For press reviews, and to decrease
Its bulk, from which he craved release
As from an incubus.

Time sped, and still the volumes lag
In terraces so neat.
Then, grown quite desp'rate, on a day
He took three hundred books away,
And set them in the street --

Three hundred books men should have prized
Where city's vortex spun,
And on the top a royal-sized,
Red notice set he, which advised
The public: "Please take one!"

Two days had passed, Scribe went once more
(Still desolate his mien),
To count the offered coies o'er.
Alas! the zinc-lined case now bore
Three hundred and fourteen!

First published in The Bulletin, 12 June 1919.



OUR LITTLE CHINA ROSE

A long journey was set in progress when Colin and Mandy Milligan of Benalla, Victoria, started the process of adoption from China with the Department of Human Services (Vic.) in August 2003.

Mandy and Colin have finally been allocated their little China Rose, her Chinese name is SUI Hua Jing, she was born 19/11/05. They will be travelling to China to pick her up in late December. Congratulations Mandy and Colin.

BUSH POETRY AT ITS BEST TAMWORTH 2007

It might be hard to believe that Tamworth is almost with us once again, and so too, the Traditional Bush Poets Breakfast at the Longyard Hotel hosted daily by Neil McArthur, The Naked Poets with Marco Gliori, Sex, Lies and Bush Poetry with Gary Fogarty, The Australian Bush Laureate Awards at the Town Hall with Jim Haynes and a host of celebrated poets and musicians, The Hunter Bush Poets, Trisha Anderson's Bush Poettes, and the Big Bush Brekkie Show at West Diggers.

And, if you're not happy with all of that, you can go to Blazes inside West's Leagues Club for the Best Bloody Bush Breakfast with the nude boot-scooter himself, Grant Luhrs.

With the ravages of time and a partially self inflicted deforestation programme (due to the trauma of sorting out a vast Longyard cast), Neil McArthur will be even less recognizable with his new hair-style (bald) added to his long list of character portrayals.

We can look forward to his performing of a visual and explosive Poetic Symphony of the Battle of Waterloo as well as Marco Gliori's One Man Strip Show and Shirley Friend's amazing Shearing Exhibition.

"We will be performing to entertain the public" says Neil, "and that's what it's all about; presenting a memorable morning of original, high quality entertainment to keep the masses coming back for more. Not just at the Longyard, but to Poetry shows Australia wide."

Trish Anderson will present her Bush Poettes Show at a new venue in 2007, (check the programmes) Showcasing all the 'lady poets' on Friday 26th January at 4pm. Trish will be appearing at the Longyard on the Tuesday, will host the Golden Damper Awards on Thursday and will be presenting Palma Rosa Poets at Wests on Friday 26th at 7.30pm

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BUSH POETS ASSOCIATION

Though relatively small in our performances. A special numbers, the South Australian thanks to the "old reliables" Bush Poets are an active lot with Heather and Ron Giles who regular activities and monthly came on both days. Heather and meetings. Doyen of the group, Ron never fail to come along to Maurie O'Brien sees to it that they are not forgotten and keeps our readers informed of their gatherings. Ron did some of Heather's poems – maybe we have an up and coming traditional poet here?

(From Maurie) Thanks to Bob and Beryl Magor the poets who came along on the weekend of 21st and 22nd have kindly invited us to have October to the Belair National our Christmas (in January) get Park for their anniversary celebrations. It was a great weekend together at their Myponga Beach home on Sunday 7th January and a great chance to perform 2007.

some poetry and promote our This is a magnificent venue and group and hopefully attract new is not to be missed. Please put members. . . The organisers had the date in your diaries now. given us our own display area I wish you and your families a and designated times to perform very happy Christmas. See you poetry in the "Big Top". We had at the Magor's. good numbers listening to all of

The Big Bush Brekky Shows are again in the air-conditioned comfort of the rebuilt upstairs auditorium at Wests Diggers - right in the middle of town. It's a great venue which holds just 350 people and the shows will again feature hilarious ventriloquist comedian Darren Carr every day, along with Paddy Ryan and Rustling Russell, guest comperes Amber Lawrence and Casey Watt and all the big stars of Country Music plus the regular features.

Last year tickets were hard to get and all shows sold out early so book to make sure by calling 02 6765 7588. Breakfast starts at 7am

The Best Bloody Bush Poets will run every morning in 'Blazes', inside West Tamworth League Club with a great line up of Bush Poets including John Best, Jack Drake, Gary Fogarty, Melanie Hall, Carol Heuchan, Bill Kearns, Garry Lowe, Bob Magor, Col Milligan, Greg North, Paddy Ryan & Noel Stallard - plus Angus & Cameron Young every day & host Grant Luhrs, the 'Nude Boot Scooting Man' of Wagga Wagga.

Every morning from 7.30 am the various Bush Poetry Clubs of Australia will present poets from their clubs, hosted by Carol Heuchan, in Blazes Auditorium at Wests.

Each morning in order from Saturday 20th we will see the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group, Singleton Writers, Hunter Bush Poets, North Pine Bush Poets, Gosford Bush Poets, The ABPA, Palma Rosa Poets, Free Expression and finally on Sunday 28th, Contemporary Poets.

With the Country Energy Poetry Competition running from Wed 24TH West Tamworth Leagues Club is now the Home of Bush Poetry in Tamworth during the festival.

Join the big line-up at the Tamworth Golf Club for daily and nightly shows featuring the Naked Poets and 'Poets of the Caribbean' nightly and 'Rawhide' during their day shows. (See calendar for times)

Gary Fogarty and the Sex, Lies and Poetry troupe are returning with a new theme for this year's night show - 'Healthy Living' featuring Gary Fogarty, Neil McArthur, John Major, Jack Drake and singer Adam Kilpatrick; plus titbits from previous years in their day-time show. (See poets calendar for times)

35 YEARS OF TAMWORTH

Strong interest is showing in Tamworth's 35th Country Music Festival and Awards to be staged at the Tamworth Regional Entertainment Centre (TREC) on Saturday 27th January 2007, country music's night of nights for the hotly contested Golden Guitar trophies.

Tourism Tamworth has been receiving inquiries about events ticket sales since early October, even though the official opening date for sales is traditionally 1st November.

Likewise, the 2007 Australian Bush Laureate Awards has received a record number of entries in the written and recorded works of Australian Poets, to be presented on Tuesday 23rd January. There are six categories in the Awards, four judged, one voted and one determined by the organisers from nominations received.

The four judged categories are Book of the Year, Original Verse Book of the Year, Album of the Year and Single Recorded Performance of the Year.

The voted category is being introduced this year and is for **Bush Poetry Performer of the Year** with voting taking place via the internet and print media.

The Australian Bush Laureate Awards were inaugurated at the Longyard Hotel in January 1996.

Bush Poetry was first introduced to the Tamworth festival in 1998 and has since grown beyond all expectations with as many as eight different venues attracting well over 100 performance poets to capacity houses

The Annual Australian Bush Laureate Awards concert will be held at Tamworth Town Hall at 2pm on Tuesday 23rd of January. This is the nation's premier Bush Poetry Event and sells out early, bookings should be made on 02 6755 4300. The show will be hosted by Jim Haynes who will be joined by Australia's best Bush Poets including Carol Heuchan, Noel Stallard, Angus and Cameron Young and Paddy Ryan plus the five finalists along with country music favourites Anne Kirkpatrick, Pete Denahy, Carter & Carter, Aleyce Simmons, Amber Lawrence and Katie Field.

NOW AVAILABLE:

2006 Bronze Swagman Book of Verse

The 2006 edition of the Bronze Swagman Book of Verse is now available through the Winton Tourist Promotion Association and includes the winning verse 'Ballad of Creamy Eclipse' written by acknowledged poet, Graham Fredriksen of Kilcoy, Queensland.

Graham is a prolific writer and has featured in many competitions. He was one of the bush poets who appeared on the Australian Bush Poets Awards album recorded in 2001 for Asthma NSW.

A Brief History:

The Winton Tourist Promotion Association was formed in October 1967, and because of the connection 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 Australian 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 publication 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 continuously since 1972, and produces a Book of Verse each year.

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

(See ad page 24)



THE GLADSTONE BAG

@ A Rogers SA 15/10/06

I was cleaning out the attic when I found the Gladstone bag
It was buried in a trunk of Grandpa's things
That was shipped back from the front -line when he died at Passchendaele
'Twas full of scented letters tied up with strings.
They were written in a hand that held the pen with gentle touch
And the letters, lines and strokes were straight and true,
They were written to a lover from a faithful heart at home
In a language and a way that lovers do.
I sat there reading softly in the dim light slanting down
From the dirty grimy window in the eaves
And I caught a glimpse of sadness as I read between the lines
For I know she hides a heart that sadly grieves.
She writes of springtime on the mountain where the flowers paint the land
Where the sun gets ever wanner every day,
Then she makes mention of the baby that grows within her womb
That was conceived on the night he went away.
In another envelope I find a snapshot fucked away,
'Tis a photo of a baby newly born
And written on the back of it, in same neat artistic hand
"Meet your lovely daughter. I have named her Dawn."
And I look there at the photo of my mother way back then
And weep for the father, I know she'll never see.
And still the hand that holds the pen hides the pain of loneliness
Tho' that aching heart is calling out to me.
At the bottom of the pile I found a letter edged in black
To tell the grieving widow of his fate,
with blazing gun he rushed a bunker spitting leaden balls of death,
He'd sacrificed his life to save a mate.
His name was mentioned in dispatches for a bravery award
"Tho' 'tis little thanks I know," is what was wrote.
And, "Please find enclosed a letter that we found on him that day
For I'm sure you'll want to have his final note."
Then I find another letter written in a different hand
And it bears the stains of battlefields long gone,
It tells of brutal fighting in trenches ever cold and wet
Where the troops are all pinned down and fired upon.
He says there's no escaping now and that his time has come
Falling bombs rain certain death down from the sky
He knows he'll not be coming home nor meet his little girl
So he's writing now to say his last goodbye.
I was cleaning out the attic when I found that Gladstone bag
And all those precious letters held inside.
All those treasured war- time letters penned by Grandma to my pa
From the day he left, up to the day he died.
That they were treasured is bespoken by the fact they're here today
And as well preserved as passing time allowed
And I'll keep them for my lifetime in that worn and scruffy bag,
They're the diaries of a soldier young and proud.



Claire Reynolds of Gloucester NSW
2006 Ladies NSW State Champion

NSW STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS Tenterfield October 2006

Tenterfield's Oracles of the Bush Committee happily hosted the Country Energy sponsored NSW Championships in 2006 (and will again in 2007!) With a full dance card the Championships were off to a great start 9am Sat morning with a crowd of 150 enjoying the ambience of Paul Petrie's Barn along with great poets and verse.

The verse flew thick and fast – Judges Noel Stallard, Janine Haig and Ron Wicks marked all with fairness and in good humour, Noel gave a few pointers on what the Judges were on the look out for in his final presentation, the information well received and of importance to the competitors!

Numbers were down in the Junior section, possibly the school holidays being a contributing factor.

The 2007 NSW Bush Poetry State Championships will be held over the weekend of October 6-7 at Tenterfield.

Results p.23

VALE: MERVYN LAWRENCE WEBSTER

It is with deep regret that we learn of the passing of another stalwart of the Bush Poetry fraternity.

Mervyn Webster Snr. passed away on November 17th in the Redcliffe Peninsula Hospital after a long bout with cancer.

Mervyn shared a love for bush poetry with his family and travelled to many competitions and outings with his son and daughter-in-law Merv and Chris Webster for many years and as part of their touring show from as far north as Camooweal down to Tamworth.

He was a member of the North Pine Bush Poets and often entertained folk on the Redcliffe Peninsula or surrounding suburbs and often performed at nursing homes or bowls clubs.

Our sincere condolences to Merv, Chris and family.



FOR ALL WE ARE

© Brian Beesley 2006

First prize: 'Inaugural Rolf Boldrewood Literary Awards 2006' which included \$600.00 plus a magnificent mounted bust of Rolf Boldrewood.

He's a foreman out of Britain; he's a son of Italy;
he's a pratie famined Irishman; an Asian refugee.
He's an exile from a red-flagged state of bourgeois pedigree;
he's a Chinese cook from Ballarat; an Aborigine.

She's the mother of an Anzac; she is Lawson's drover's wife;
she has fled the bombed out remnants of some European strife.

She arranges work and family to keep her children safe;
she is learning business management, three nights a week at TAFE.

They are out on active service keeping scorned civilians free;
they have joined to fight the evil of an Arab 'refugee';
they have trod the fields of glory and acquired sporting fame,
through a century of light and dark they stood and played the game.

Each one of them has moulded us to Federation's plan,
united in one commonwealth – we are Australian.
But in one hundred years from now will most Australians see
the land of opportunity that nurtured you and me?

We take too much for granted in these soft idyllic days,
forgetting much was sacrificed to win our carefree ways.
Although we fought for righteousness and shared the victors' spoil,
the blood we've shed in freedom's name, enriches foreign soil.

Will the ones who scream 'republic' have the wisdom or the will,
to put our nation first and make Australia stronger still?
Does their patriotic fervour have a deep resounding strain,
or bubble on the surface like their over-priced Champagne?

There are many proud Australians left uneasy with the taint
that because you're not republican, you can't be what you ain't.

But it needs a dignified approach before you'll have our sway,
without your disrespectful talk, through sips of Chardonnay.

For it isn't just good fortune that these past one hundred years
have seen our nation flourish, on the backs of pioneers,
who built our democratic life through stable government,
from honoured institutions which the mother country sent.

It is true she has exploited us and prospered from our land
but we grudgingly appreciate her firm and guiding hand.
Though we fiercely fight all-comers when we're playing out a 'Test',
don't you think it rather novel, it's for her we save our best?

We often criticise her for the way we got involved
in futile battle strategies her generals never solved,
but where the whitewashed headstones form a never-ending queue,
from Suvla Bay to Singapore – her Tommies lie there too.

And while it may be fashionable to speak ill of the Queen,
it's probably worth reasoning just how it might have been,
if other European states had colonised this shore –
you can bet your life there would have been unrest and civil war.

But like some nervous teenager before a 'schoolies' ball,
we are hyped up to believe we have no confidence at all.
Yet we hold most sporting trophies; Mr Samaranch revealed
our Olympics were the best there's been, both on and off the field.

And our worthy arts and sciences have captured world acclaim,
ever since the humble bushy faced the land and overcame
the problems which confronted him and 'fixed it up with wire',
just to keep the station humming like a well-tuned ladies choir.

Yes, the self-proclaimed 'elite' will always argue that we'll
be
nothing more than second rate, in some forgotten colony.
But the 'Statute of Westminster' clearly states that England's son
has been its own 'republic' now since nineteen-thirty-one.

No, we aren't intimidated 'cause our 'Head' is royalty,
we have grown with this arrangement and the proof is you
and me.

So when we are republic and replace the flag we wave,
remember how we travelled there, and keep what England gave.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

**THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE
Australian Bush Poets Association and
Election of Office Bearers
Will be held at St. Edwards Hall
Hillvue Road Tamworth
THURSDAY 25th January 2p.m.**

To test the waters a trout fisherman will often throw in a morsel of bait before actually casting his line. My poem 'The Wily Old Trout' follows the possible consequence of reaction from a trout's eye point of view.

THE WILY OLD TROUT

By Des Bennett

Winner,

Mt. Kembla Heritage Award 2006

The wily old trout was waiting,
perchance for a meal to float by,
for a worm fat and sleek
to fall into the creek,
a grasshopper, cricket, or fly.

But Autumn rains hadn't arrived,
and brooklets that pass in the stream,
just couldn't deliver,
so much as a sliver,
of morsel or titbit supreme.

The wily old trout was hungry,
and heavily pregnant with roe,
but the place where they'd hatch,
under wattle tree thatch,
was ten mile and two months to go.

Perhaps it was intuition,
or was it the rustle of grass,

on the bank overhead,
but no matter play dead,
and time off for danger will pass.

What's this - a grasshopper floating,
half kicking around in distress,
just too good to be true,
like a bolt from the blue,
she struck with a deadly impress.

The wily old trout was worried,
though feeling just slightly replete,
she now had this feeling,
a sense of revealing,
that someone else knew her retreat.

But wait - the sudden appearance,
up front at the top of the race,
of a small wriggle-ball,
disengaged from the wall,
a trap - or a meal to embrace?

No matter by observation,
she musedly watched it relay,
though quite strangely entwined,
the thought now came to mind,
that nibbles would not go astray.

But nibbles then went on and on,
so juicy and tasteful the bait,
in the form of shaslick,
but in fact a wormstick,
with a barb predestined by fate.

Then wham - a jag has connected,
by strike to her underside jaw,
unexpected or not,
she now faced the upshot,
she's hooked line and sinker for sure.

She writhed and she turned and she
twisted,
and headed quite deep for a snag,
but the keeper at back,
would allow her no slack,
he played her along on the drag.

The wily old trout was tiring,
she sensed that her number had spun,
but the call of the wild,
is almighty when riled,
she set herself one final run.

She dove with adrenaline rush,
to reach the deep root of a tree,
round and over she went,
in reaction hellbent,
as checkmate - she thrashed her way
free.

The wily old trout felt poorly,
her pride had an indent or two,
but when all's said and done,
had she not made that run,
her life she'd have paid as her due.

The Henry Lawson Society of NSW Inc
and Country Energy present

The 2007 Country Energy Leonard Teale Memorial Performance Poetry Award



First Prize \$1,000



and the coveted Henry Lawson Statuette sponsored
by the Land Newspaper

Entrants shall record, on audio cassette, a poem about an Australian subject, by the entrant or a poet of their choice
Finalists will be chosen from taped entries with final judging taking place, by live performance,
before a panel of judges on

Saturday 9th June 2007 at the Prince of Wales Opera House, Gulgong, NSW

**This competition is held in conjunction with Student Poetry/Short Story Awards
(Years 3-6 and Years 7-10)**

Adult Written Short Story Awards and Adult Written Poetry Awards.



For further details please send SSAE to
Henry Lawson Society of NSW Inc.
Literary Awards, PO Box 235, Gulgong NSW 2852
or email henrylawsongulgong@yahoo.com.au



Entries close 14th March 2007

MY BOOMERANG HOTEL

© Vivienne Ledley

"Where is the Boomerang Hotel?" they asked with eyes awide,
"We've never seen it advertised in any tourist guide.
"We've travelled through this country, we've trekked from coast to coast
We've crossed the desert Sturt explored, we've seen McGinty's ghost.

"While camping near the Cawnpore Hills we saw the Min Min light -
So eerie and uncanny as it faded in the night.
"We've searched for gold and sieved for gems in ancient river beds,
Where Nature's fervid turbulence with fiery beauty weds.

"We've fished for barramundi in the Gulf and at the Cape,
We've seen the town of Cowra where the prisoners made escape.
"We've been to Uluru, the Olgas, sailed across Bass Strait
Where gruesome tales are told of how the convicts met their fate.

"We've crossed the plain called Nullabor, we've visited Lake Eyre
Where bird life after flooding rains leaves nothing to compare.
"We've seen the billabong of which The Banjo wrote the words
That waltzed Matilda round the Globe, by which our souls are stirred.

"Rain forests of North Queensland where the leeches sucked our blood,
To remote, western properties of Brahman cattle stud.
"The gorges of the Kimberley, the pearling town of Broome
Whose azure waters cover depths where divers met their doom.

"But all throughout our travels 'neath Australia's Southern Cross
The Boomerang Hotel, my friend, we've never come across."
"The Boomerang Hotel," I said, "is easy to locate,
You'll find it just where'er you want in any Aussie State.

"My Boomerang Hotel is by a western waterhole
Whose beauty and serenity quite captivate my soul.
"Where river gums caress the land, where vibrant bird life teems,
Where each shade of the sunrise on the water softly gleams.

"Where I can pitch my tent and watch a pelican swim by,
Where I can boil my Billy and catch fish with bait or fly.
"This fav'rite spot of mine with which I have a love affair
I call my Boomerang Hotel and keep returning there.

"It's where I'd like to end my days, from city stress afar,
To camp amongst the river gums and native coolabahs.
"To ponder on this ancient land where Time has cast its spell -
Yes, here beside this waterhole's my Boomerang Hotel."

OVERDUE ACCOUNT

© Dan O'Donnell - Stafford Heights Q.

"You're doing well," the Doctor said, "You'll
outlast half the town!
The cancer's gone. Your heart is fine!" His
hands dug in his gown.

Old Tom listened, unconvinced. He knew his
friend from old.
For twenty years they'd sparred at chess -
close-matched when all was told.

But they differed greatly in their play, the
Doc daring, fearless, brisk,
while Tom was timidly conservative, and
rarely took a risk.

"You're kidding, Doc," Old Tom advanced.
"It's a bluff to raise my pluck.
I'll bet I die before you do. On that I'll bet a
buck!"

"Fiddlesticks!" the Doc replied: "but to ease
your foolish mind,
I'll take your bet. Now off you go! I've
things upon my mind!"

Each day that passed saw Tom progress, his
former health returning,
and with it in his heart of hearts, a debt to
Doc was burning,

He could hardly wait for their next game,
and planned some devilish moves.
He'd break the mould, and play attack, and
escape his well-worn grooves.

But before that day there came a call from
the Doctor's personal lawyer.
"Your friend has died," the lawyer said, "but
he left a message for ya!"

He handed Tom, with sombre face and hand
on nervous collar,
a note in shaky hand which read: "Dear
Tom, Don't forget my dollar!"

THE SEARCH IS ON

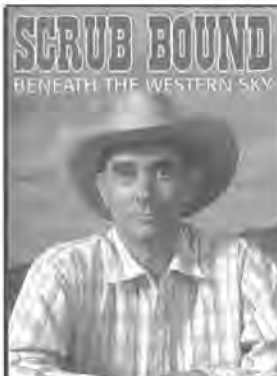
Coca-Cola

**& The Locomotive Hotel
TAMWORTH**

**\$1000.00 WINNER TAKE ALL
ORIGINAL BUSHPOET OF THE YEAR**
Heats From 11am to 1pm
Mon Jan 22nd, Tues 23rd, Wed 24th
Final - 11am to 1pm Thursday
25th

Competition Entries Taken At Door
Full Details:

Neil McArthur on (03) 53328833
email: macpoet@iprimus.com.au



NEW BOOK

A new book of original bush poetry has hit
the stands just in time for this December issue.

John Bishop of Tamworth NSW began
writing in 1977 after reviving an interest in
Australian history.

John was born and bred in the bush, grew
up on his parents grazing property 'Beefwood
Downs' west of Lightning Ridge. John has
experienced the 'school of life' and writes
varying styles and types of poetry relying on
spontaneity for stimulus. John is currently self

employed with his own Remedial Massage practice.

'Scrub Bound' can be purchased for \$13.50 posted from

John Bishop

102 Edward Street Tamworth NSW 2340

GIPPSLAND WATTLE SUCCESS

The inaugural Gippsland Wattle Written Competition attracted 152 entries from Australia and New Zealand.

The organizers regard it as being an outstanding success. The standard of entries was particularly high and gave the judges an unenviable task. The winning poem 'Gundungurra Man' by Greg North can be found on page 22.

ELLIS CAMPBELL TURNS 80

Congratulations Ellis! The bush poetry movement is most grateful for what you have contributed over the many years of your involvement. Your writing and performing skills have seen you win many competitions and in so doing have become an inspiration to younger poets. We poets are especially grateful for the excellent writing workshops you have given us through the ABPA Newsletter. For some of us what writing skills we have are attributable to the assistance you have provided. Thank you, we look forward to celebrating your 90th.

TRIBUTE TO ELLIS

by Noel Stallard

As writer of bush poetry I thought that I'd done well,
until I asked this Ellis bloke to edit. Holy Hell!
Like kamikaze mozzies suiciding through my work,
his red biro criss-crossed my words, free-wheeling, quite berserk.
He'd made more changes than transvestites make in their life time,
with stress and unstressed syllables, with metre and with rhyme.

"You'll never be a writer Noel, you just don't have the art
to translate through the written word, the feelings of your heart.
Your writing craft is sinking fast from leaking faulty rhyme,
and pumps on flooded scanning have been working overtime.
You lack that sense of metre, its consistency and flow.
Performing is your forte mate, CDs the way to go."

With ego like a punctured tyre, I could go two ways,
to spit the dummy, hit the roof, or cop this bloke's forays.
Thank God I took the latter for it changed my writing life.
I took on what he said to do, despite the mental strife.
For I'd been 'round enough to know what Ellis really shared,
was kindness and not cruelty that came from one who cared.

I wrote back to this master saying, "Thanks for that broadside,
my writing-boat's at water level but I'm still inside.
I am a stubborn bugger and wont sink without a fight,
so I'll take on what you have said, because I know you're right.
This kitchen colander will float 'cause what you've given me,
will patch this poet's craft so I can sail on any sea."

Well that was several years ago and I proudly recall,
the '05 Blackened Billy, in the Tamworth West Leagues Hall.
Where three of us sat proudly as the finalists that year;
'twas Alec Raymer, Ellis Campbell and myself in fear
that I would gain a place above my Master of the word;
but thankfully, the judge announced, the place I gained was Third.

Now Ann and I feel privileged that Maureen and Ellis are
among our special group of friends where Caring is the bar
by which we measure friendship and what dinkum mateship
means;
where we can share our little gems without pretentious screens.
And this birthday occasion is quite opportune to say,
"Congratulations Ellis! And good-on-yah-mate! Hurray!"

ELLIS CAMPBELL MORE THAN A POET

As readers of this magazine, Ellis is known to most of you for his poetic prowess. However to us, his family, he's much, much more. On the outside he is tough, a bushy who has shed his fair share of blood, sweat and tears while working the shearing sheds around Australia, timber cutting and trapping rabbits. His ability to write has allowed him to share some of his life's experiences with those that enjoy his poetry. But all of this you already know. There's much more to Ellis than just being a poet and performer – to us, as a husband, Dad and Pop, he's special because of the type of person he is.

Despite the tough exterior, he is a compassionate, soft, warm-hearted person to whom family and friends are everything. Nothing means more to him than knowing that his family are happy and healthy. As his family, of course we are all extremely proud of what he has achieved with his writing, however we are far more proud of how he goes about everything he does, with a positive attitude and friendly demeanour.

He was not the type of father that was feared by his children. Nor can I remember him being specifically strict or a disciplinarian. Having said that, as his kids we all seemed to know what was acceptable and what was not. Somehow he and Mum were able to teach us about boundaries, and to know right from wrong without having to scold, yell or punish (not very often anyway). We learnt respect for ourselves and others, learnt to be humble and unselfish. But all of this we learnt through observing Mum and Dad in their everyday lives – by following their lead - not by them telling us what we should do and how we should act. We learnt how to deal with adversity, to take advantage of good luck but not to dwell on bad luck, because just like everyone else we have to expect a share of both in our lifetimes.

Dad loved sport and was a good tennis player, something that the whole family enjoyed as we were growing up and still enjoy (either watching or playing) to this day. But for Dad it was more about the comradeship and enjoyment to be gained from the sport than winning. I would hate to try and estimate the amount of money and time that he and Mum invested in us as kids travelling around NSW to junior tennis tournaments – something we did continuously for over 10 years. Dad believed that if we were occupied, we wouldn't have time to become bored and would be too tired and busy to get ourselves into trouble. As it turned out, we didn't get into much trouble. Whether this was because of his strategy or some other reason, I guess we will never know. But I think his idea had a reasonable amount of merit and could be a valuable parenting tip in today's society.

He taught us to be independent, not to be jealous of others but instead to evaluate for ourselves what we want and what makes us happy. And that once we have worked that out, to strive for it, be the best that we can be and ultimately be proud of our own achievements.

He has let us make our own decisions, whether he thought they were good or bad. He would offer his opinion but it was always raised in a way that didn't ridicule us or make us feel as if what we were doing was wrong. Rather it was just something for us to consider and think about. And, in the event of poor decisions (which inevitably we all make from time to time), he has always been there when things didn't turn out as we had hoped. But again, his advice would simply be along the lines of 'learning from our mistakes' and 'putting it down to experience', rather than to boast 'I told you so':

I see different traits of Dad in different members of the family, not only in his children but also in his grandchildren. I guess that those traits were passed on to him by his parents and their parents before them. I just hope that these traits continue in future generations of our family.

He's not materialistic which is lucky because he never had very much growing up. To him, being happy and content is a far greater measure of success than any academic, sporting or professional achievement. To him, having a go and playing fair are attributes of a winner, not necessarily the individual who holds the trophy aloft at the end of the competition. When he's attended a festival somewhere, the things he talks about the most on his return are the people that were there and what a great time he and Mum have had in their company. Regardless of whether he wins something or not, he gets the greatest pleasure from feeling like the audience enjoyed his performance and that he entertained them. He admires many of the talented writers and performers that he has met along the way. He is interested in all sorts of people, their backgrounds and their lives. He doesn't pass judgement on people, but rather takes them as he finds them, once he gets to know them for himself.

He has achieved what he has through hard work and dedication.

When he wins, it is not the value of the trophy that is important but what it represents. He doesn't take anything he has for granted but is grateful for all he has. He gets great satisfaction from helping others. When someone that he has given writing tips to wins a competition, he's genuinely just as pleased for them as he would be had he won it himself.

He is a man of great integrity and strength. He talks of being shy as a kid with little self confidence. He tells us stories of being bullied and bashed by the other kids at school. But he doesn't hold a grudge or feel sorry for himself. Rather, he would simply make sure that he never inflicted that sort of hurt on anyone else.

Dad doesn't dwell on disappointments or complain when things don't go his way. You'll hear him say 'there's plenty worse off than me' and of course this is very true.

Despite turning 80 himself, we've often heard him describe someone as a 'poor old bugger' when some type of misfortune occurs. His concern could not be more genuine but it makes us smile when we find out that the 'poor old bugger' he is referring to is in fact twenty years his junior. His sense of humour is refreshing, he always has a joke or two up his sleeve, never crude or offensive, just funny and entertaining.

He's never believed that he is anything special. Being the centre of attention is not something that he is particularly comfortable with. Ironically, with the success he has had, he finds himself in this position, probably more often than he would like. But just like every other challenge that has presented itself to him throughout his 80 years, he has overcome his shyness and handles it with ease.

All of these things make him so special to us. We all love him so much



and feel privileged and proud to belong to him. He has touched so many other people throughout his life and will continue to do so as he heads towards 90, 100..... forever.

Carolyn Bainbrigge
Loving Daughter

Ellis Campbell is without doubt one of the most prolific writers in the country today. His work ranges from tales of days long gone to the present, finding situations of mirth or merriment. He finds solitude in his writing and adds a deeper touch to his serious poetry.

A winner of more literary competitions than can be counted, Ellis can be found at many of the festivals in Central Western NSW and is a regular at Tamworth Country Music Festival.

Reared at Tallawang near Dunedoo in NSW, Ellis went to work as a sleeper cutter at 13 years of age after the school closed down. He later became a shearer and after 33 years in the trade, along with timber cutting, fencing, rabbit trapping and horse breaking, retired to Dubbo where he was employed as a gardener at the local Hospital for a further 15 years.

Ellis has a very helpful 'Writers Tips' page in the Association's webpage www.abpa.org.au and on the Australian Bush Poetry site www.bushpoetry.com.a

GUNDUNGURRA MAN

© Gregory North July 2006 (See page

In the mountains there's a spirit, and I wish that I could hear it
whisp'ring answers to these puzzles that I scan.
Will these tantalising traces soon transform to empty spaces
that forget the ghost of Gundungurra Man?

August sunshine's gently warming where no clouds have
thought of forming
in the wondrous blue extending past my search.
Fancy sends my footsteps steering to a spacious, stoney clear-
ing,
where the atmosphere has presence – like a church.

Scrub wrens trill and tweet and twitter; lyrebird traipses
through the litter
and the breeze ekes out a gum tree's eerie creak.
Sodden edges, velvet mosses soaked by water as it crosses
silent sandstone it has stained to show the streak.

Sandstone rock that's bare and weathered with the bushland
closely tethered
to the edges where it scratches for a hold.
Tessellations, grooves, and banding of the ironstone – com-
manding
that it sit up proud to watch the view unfold.

And the view! Oh, what a treasure. All the world there at my
leisure.
There's the city in the distance. What a sight!
As I sit and gaze and ponder, my hands gently start to wander
over sandstone that's been formed by Nature's might.

Then my fingers find some grooving made by something
that's been moving
to and fro to form this finely sculptured dip.
Aboriginal axe grinding – well I need no more reminding –
these are precious as they fade with Nature's grip.

In the puddle there are others, workshops carved by Koori
brothers,
grinding basalt that was treasured by their clan.
Pools and channels catch the water, carved from rock, no
bricks or mortar.
What an artist you were, Gundungurra man!

Peering past the pool's reflection forms a tenuous connection
to a time that's lost forever in the past.
I can see you work and chatter of the things that really matter
–
fun and laughter while you share the skills that last.

Cannot hear your explanation – you're in my imagination,
mouthing words that nowadays no mortal hears.
But I have so many queries answered only in vague theories,
for your people's ways were lost down through the years.

Did this place have special meaning to the group you were
convening,
as you ground your basalt axehead in this groove?
Were the spirits with you, guiding, through the songs of birds
confiding
in the fragrant wattle blooms, that they approve?

These Boronia in flower have a scent to overpower.
What did you call them? I fear we'll never know.

Some self-righteous white explorer gave his own names to the
flora,
seeking not to learn, but simply overthrow.

Winter morning is a glory, but the night's a different story.
So, where did you sleep and how did you keep warm?
Did your arms enfold your lover; 'neath an overhang for cover
from the freezing air, the howling wind and storm?

Did you move to suit the seasons? Did your folk lore give you
reasons
for nomadic journeys through your tribal land?
Did the landmarks give direction? Did they aid in recollection
of instructions you were taught to understand?

Is that mountain in the distance linked with spirits' co-
existence
with your people and this ancient land of old?
Mount King George (to be respectful), but it's really so ne-
glectful
of ancestral names from dreamtime stories told.

Did you see the white man's labours, hear about them from
your neighbours
of the tribes whose land they spoiled in their quest?
Did you hear their cattle grazing, find their horse and dogs
amazing
as they slowly infiltrated further west?

Cockatoos squawk at a stranger, lyrebird shrieks to warn of
danger
and a wallaby takes off and pounds the ground.
Did the white man try persuasion? Was it simply an invasion?
Was resistance quelled by actions now renowned?

Did you feel you were forsaken by the spirits when they'd
taken
all your loved ones through disease the white man brought?
Did you scream in desperation at their shameful declaration,
herding ev'ryone to shantytowns like sport?

When you spent your final hours, was it here among the flow-
ers,
in the bushland where you first stood on your feet?
Did your body lie decaying – on a spot you'd once been play-
ing –
till a bushfire came and made the loop complete?

As the moss grows ever nearer, wind and water make it
clearer
that your grinding grooves will also pass, with time.
Will our mem'ries then be jaded when the evidence has faded,
of a culture that was snuffed out in its prime?

I am jolted from my dreaming by a jet with engines scream-
ing,
drowning out a fluting bird and creaking gum.
Still, the rocks continue weeping for the secrets they are keep-
ing
of a man whose legacy will soon succumb.

Yes, the mountains hold a spirit; how I wish that I could hear
it
whisp'ring answers to these puzzles that I scan.
Will these tantalising traces soon transform to empty spaces
that forget the ghost of Gundungurra man?

COMPETITION RESULTS

Dusty Swag Awards

Open Written Section

1st 'I Heard' M Yui - Seymour V
 2nd. 'Country Connection' - Joyce Alchin Corrimal NSW
 3rd. 'Cattle on the Road' - K Stewart, Kingslake V.
 Theme section. 1st *My Best Mate, Possum* VP Read, Bicton WA.
 2nd. *My Pet* D Goschnick, Alexandra V. 3rd. *A Tribute to Jilly* VP Read, WA.
 Under 18's. *He is my Pet, My Companion, My Friend*, B Turner, Tangambalanga V.
 Ripping Yarn. *A Cleaner Getaway* K Stewart, Kingslake.
 * * * * *

Harden-Murrumburra

Taste of Country Performance Competition - Overall winners

Gregory North, Linden NSW
 Jim Weatherstone, Calwell ACT
 Don Anderson, Leeton NSW
 Lance Parker, Griffith NSW
 Claire Thomsen, Cootamundra NSW
 Ted Webber, Young NSW
 * * * * *

NSW STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Tenterfield NSW 2006
LADIES CHAMPION
 Claire Reynolds
MEN'S CHAMPION
 Jimmy Brown

Women's Classical

1st Claire Reynolds - 2nd Gabby Colquhoun 3rd Kathy Edwards

Women's Contemporary

1st Claire Reynolds 2nd Gabby Colquhoun 3rd Cay Fletcher

Women's Original

1st Clair Reynolds 2nd Kathy Edwards 3rd Gabby Colquhoun

Men's Classical

1st Paddy O'Brien 2nd Dennis Scanlon 3rd Jimmy Brown

Men's Contemporary

1st Jimmy Brown 2nd Paddy O'Brien 3rd Graeme Johnson

Men's Original

1st Jimmy Brown 2nd Paddy O'Brien 3rd Graeme Johnson

Junior Champion - Antony Kuznir

Written Competition

1st Ken Dean - "Memories"
 2nd Zondrae King - "Beyond the City Lights"
 3rd Arthur Green - "Dreams of Hocus Pocus Schemes"
 * * * * *

Nandewar results

Written competition.
 1st Carol Heuchan *Rosie*
 2nd Ellis Campbell *Forgotten Dreams* 3rd. Kym Eitel *The Man From Up Tom Groggin*
 * * * * *

VICTORIAN STATE TITLES

Benalla Vic. 2006
LADIES CHAMPION,

Carol Heuchan
MEN'S CHAMPION

Ed Walker

Written Competition

Open winner David Campbell "Outback"
 2nd Ed Walker "The Big Bay Mare"
Junior Written
 Winner. Sarah Draper "My Basketball Journey" 2nd Monique Simms "The Down Under Disco"

Performance Competition:

Junior Champion: Sarah Draper
 Runner up: Naomi Frederick 3rd
 Christopher Draper

Women's Traditional

Carol Heuchan,

Women's Original

Carol Heuchan

Women's Contemporary

Claire Reynolds.

Men's Traditional

Ed Walker,

Men's Original

Col Milligan,

Men's Contemporary

Dennis Carstairs
 * * * * *

WALLA WALLA WAGON

WHEEL AWARD

Written competition
 1st. Joyce Alchin *The Ghosts of Naoetsu*
 2nd. Donald Crane
A Funny Breed of Cattle
 3rd. Joyce Alchin
Outback Celebration
 4th. Carol Heuchan *Fate*
 5th. Joyce Alchin *Deserted*
 6th. Kym Eitel *The Dingo Pup*
 * * * * *

THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS COMPETITION

Dalgety NSW

Open Serious:
 1st Kym Eitel - 'The Dingo Pup'
 2nd Kym Eitel - 'Lady Bushranger-Jessie Hickman' 3rd Lynne Hoyle - 'Kiandra's Gold'
 Humorous:
 1st Kym Eitel - 'Bazooka Bob & the Chicken Snatcher'
 2nd Lesley Dixon - 'The Crocheted Coathanger' 3rd Kym Eitel - 'The CWA Bakeoff Disaster'
 Secondary:
 1st Fleur Cribb - 'Come With Me'
 Primary: 1st Dean Miners - 'Drought Struck'

Equal 2nd Owen Pearson - 'The Monaro' 2nd Madison Page - 'Shearing time again'
 Equal 3rd Caitie Deveraux - 'The Farmers Day' 3rd Gabrielle Wallace - 'A Special Place'

Spin-A-Yarn:

1st Owen Pearson

Written Family Biography:

Equal 1st Shenae Golby &

Jaxon Jackson.
 * * * * *

GIPPSLAND WATTLE WRITING COMPETITION

First Prize \$1,000.00

Gundungurra Man - Gregory North
Second Prize \$250.00 Regan's Ride

David Campbell

Third Prize \$100.00 Dear Diary

Arthur Green

Highly Commended Certificates

The Man from up Tom Groggin

Kym Eitel

Outback David Campbell

Commended Certificates

Gippsland Wattle

V.P. Read

In Lasseter's Steps Arthur Green

The Ghosts of Naoetsu Joyce Alchin



The Search is on for the
Coca Cola
Locomotive Hotel
Original Bushpoet
of the Year
 for reciters of
ORIGINAL BUSH POETRY

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THE GUNDUNGURRA TRIBE

The Gundungurra tribe of Aborigines inhabited the southern and western parts of the Blue Mountains in NSW. Archaeological evidence suggests that they inhabited the area since at least 22,000 years ago - during the last ice age. Traces such as axe grinding grooves, rock engravings, cave paintings, stone arrangements and tool fragments can still be found in places throughout the mountains. Unfortunately, many of these are slowly disappearing. Source: "Blue Mountains Dreaming. The Aboriginal Heritage" Edited by Eugene Stockton, published by Three Sisters Publications 1993.



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- * Under 15's
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- * Duo Competition
- * One Minute Cup

Closing date 23rd June 2007

Competition Enquiries:

SSAE to:

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



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Closing date: June 1st 2007
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on the Muster Weekend)

Entry Forms:

Bush Lantern Coordinator
Bundaberg Poets' Society Inc.
PO Box 4281
BUNDABERG SOUTH. 4670

All phone or e.mail enquiries:
John & Sandy Lees
(Muster Co-ordinators)
07 41514631
lees@interworx.com.au

Dean Trevaskis
(Bush Lantern Co-ordinator)
07 41591705
dino123@dodo.com.au

Laree Chapman (Vice President)
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