

# ARPA

The Australian Bush Poets Association Inc.



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December 2009 -  
January 2010

Magazine - (since 1994)

We wish you a  
**Merry Christmas**  
& a **Happy New Year**

## A BUSH CHRISTMAS

The sun burns hotly thro' the gums  
As down the road old Rogan comes —  
The hatter from the lonely hut  
Beside the track to Woollybutt.  
He likes to spend his Christmas with us  
here.

He says a man gets sort of strange  
Living alone without a change,  
Gets sort of settled in his way;  
And so he comes each Christmas day  
To share a bite of tucker and a beer.

Dad and the boys have nought to do,  
Except a stray odd job or two.  
Along the fence or in the yard,  
"It ain't a day for workin' hard."  
Says Dad, "One day a year don't matter  
much."

And then dishevelled, hot and red,  
Mum, thro' the doorway puts her head  
And says, "This Christmas cooking, My!  
The sun's near fit for cooking by."  
Upon her word she never did see such.

"Your fault," says Dad, "you know it is.  
Plum puddin'! on a day like this,  
And roasted turkeys! Spare me days,  
I can't get over women's ways.  
In climates such as this the thing's all  
wrong.

A bit of cold corned beef an' bread  
Would do us very well instead."  
Then Rogan said, "You're right; it's hot.  
It makes a feller drink a lot."

And Dad gets up and says, "Well, come  
along."

The dinner's served -- full bite and sup.  
"Come on," says Mum, "Now all sit up."  
The meal takes on a festive air;  
And even father eats his share  
And passes up his plate to have some  
more.

He laughs and says it's Christmas time,  
"That's cookin', Mum. The stuffin's prime."  
But Rogan pauses once to praise,  
Then eats as tho' he'd starved for days.  
And pitches turkey bones outside the  
door.

The sun burns hotly thro' the gums,  
The chirping of the locusts comes  
Across the paddocks, parched and grey.  
"Whew!" wheezes Father. "What a day!"  
And sheds his vest. For coats no man  
had need.

Then Rogan shoves his plate aside  
And sighs, as sated men have sighed,  
At many boards in many climes  
On many other Christmas times.  
"By gum!" he says, "That was a slap-up  
feed!"

Then, with his black pipe well alight,  
Old Rogan brings the kids delight  
By telling o'er again his yarns  
Of Christmas tide 'mid English barns  
When he was, long ago, a farmer's boy.

His old eyes glisten as he sees  
Half glimpses of old memories,  
Of whitened fields and winter snows,  
And yuletide logs and mistletoes,  
And all that half-forgotten, hallowed  
joy.

The children listen, mouths agape,  
And see a land with no escape  
For biting cold and snow and frost --  
A land to all earth's brightness lost,  
A strange and freakish Christmas land  
to them.

But Rogan, with his dim old eyes  
Grown far away and strangely wise  
Talks on; and pauses but to ask  
"Ain't there a drop more in that cask?"  
And father nods; but Mother says  
"Ahem!"

The sun slants redly thro' the gums  
As quietly the evening comes,  
And Rogan gets his old grey mare,  
That matches well his own grey hair,  
And rides away into the setting sun.  
"Ah, well," says Dad. "I got to say  
I never spent a lazier day.  
We ought to get that top fence wired."  
"My!" sighs poor Mum. "But I am tired!  
An' all that washing up still to be  
done."

C J Dennis 1931

STOP PRESS!



**The Bush Slam** featuring our own Carol Heuchan will air on ABC television at 8:00 pm on Tuesday 29th December, 2009. HG Nelson will host the six part series.  
**The Australian Poetry Slam** final at the Sydney Opera House will see Gregory North battle it out with a 2 minute poem on Thursday 3rd December, 2009. The event will be recorded by ABC Local Radio for later airing.

# This Goodbye

Mathew McLoughlin. Blue Mountains NSW  
Winner: NSW Bush Poetry Championships — Morisset

I shall speak; before I stand to meet the mourners' eyes  
from borrowed pulpit drifting in your wake;  
the tacit truth that left unsaid, from death would slowly rise  
to haunt the memories time will not forsake.

Let all words withheld in spite fall gently into place,  
let every shrug and grunt become a tome.  
Let boredom feigned rewind and dance as joy across my face.  
Let judgement call another's spirit home.

Chase me back to run again those wild imagined ways  
not once denied from infant through to man.  
Spare fading eyes a final spark, their light of old to blaze  
the trails of hope we marched at freedom's van.

Shod with love, I've walked unmarked by proof's demanding glare  
the roads of learning one must walk alone.  
Though failure's miles guard wisdom's inch, your faith has let me dare,  
the doubt to which the self is ever prone.

Know this name, our bond and word, will stay upon the tongues  
of those who speak, of those who've earned respect.  
And though I fear the fall from grace that courts such lofty rungs,  
no trembling hand will hawking eye detect.

All who mourn, believe alone of every mortal blow,  
theirs to be the cruelest ever dealt.  
Yet equal is the pain of loss all parted come to know,  
while hotly burns indulgent pity's welt.

Face with pride the days returned that mill at judgement's gate,  
they all shall pass with honour, joined as life.  
And hearts that bend will hold the strain of creeping sorrow's weight,  
then harden to the blade of grieving's knife.

This goodbye must stand as stone, defiant in the face,  
of melancholy future's nagging pleas.  
And you must rest eternal 'neath the warmth of its embrace,  
no smear of grey regret on midnight's breeze.

Not in death or at its door should peace be left to dawn  
on setting sons and daughters far from youth,  
and not by death will living's joy from life be ever torn;  
your peace awaits, mine lies within this truth.

2010  
**THE 2009  
BLACKENED BILLY  
VERSE COMPETITION  
for written works**

**Prize-money \$900  
plus the famous  
Blackened Billy Trophy**

**CLOSING DATE:  
30th November 2009**

Winners announced at the  
**Country Energy Tamworth  
Bush Poetry Competition  
January 22nd 2010**

Entry forms from  
**janmorris@northnet.com.au**  
or send a SSAE to  
**PO Box 3001  
West Tamworth 2340**

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**THE 2010  
TAMWORTH  
COUNTRY ENERGY  
BUSH POETRY  
COMPETITION**

**Performance Competition**  
In Blazes Auditorium  
**West Tamworth  
Leagues Club**

Heats: Tues 19th,  
Thurs 21st & Fri 22nd January  
**Finals: Sat. 23 January '10**  
**Golden Damper Awards**  
to winners of  
**Original & Traditional sections  
plus Cash Prizes for all Finalists**

**Entry forms now available**  
Send SSAE to  
**Jan Morris, PO Box 3001  
West Tamworth 2340**

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The A.G.M. will be held at St Edwards Hall, Hillvue Road, Tamworth  
at 2.00 p.m. on Thursday 21st January 2010.**

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) Nominations must be delivered to the Secretary of the

Association at least 7 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. The following Office Bearers positions are required to be filled.  
President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Three Committee members, and a delegate for each State.

## PRESIDENTS REPORT



G'day Members,

The end of this year sees a significant reshuffle of the executive of the ABPA. It is unfortunate that three of us are retiring from our roles at the same time but it does give the new team more freedom to achieve the goals they see as important. Members I again appeal to you to seriously consider the Executive Positions of President, Treasurer and Secretary. While I have appealed to many experienced poets to take up these roles I appear to have had little to no success. Without an elected Executive, the ABPA can not operate. Too many benefits have been achieved for the Bush Poetry Movement by too many hard working Executives over the past fifteen years to see it slip away because present members are not willing to take on these roles. We have all benefited from these achievements and now is the time to consider giving something back by way of administration. I beg you not to allow these positions to be left vacant at the AGM and by so doing create a crisis in the organisation.

To Marg and Ed I extend my gratitude and congratulations on the roles of Treasurer and Secretary that you have so faithfully and effectively fulfilled. Ed has had the position of Secretary since 2002 and Marg has had the Treasurer's role since 2006. The three of us, with Frank and the various committee members over the years, have attempted to improve the conditions for writers, performers and supporters of the bush poetry movement. How successful we have been is not for us to judge but what is irrefutable is Frank Daniel's success with the Modern Newsletter and Andy Schnalle's facilitation of the website. These communication processes have been outstanding successes. They have enabled members to publish their poetry, read the best

writings of modern poets, be informed of the lives and times of early Australian writers and interact with opinions and ideas of current members. As for other innovations I can assure you that whatever we did was motivated by the desire to enhance bush poetry for members and audiences who, in their ever increasing numbers, continue to enjoy what the modern poet presents.

As this report goes to the Editor in November I ask your prayers and concern for the health of several of our members. Marg Parmenter is undergoing chemo treatment for cancer. Ed is waiting on reports on three melanomas he has had removed and Frank has had to have the recent shunt he had inserted replaced. Because of their ill health Marg and Ed will not be coming to Tamworth in January so I will present their respective reports at the AGM. Gary Fogarty is also having major surgery on his back which has troubled him for years and Ray Halliday is suffering from a bleed on the brain. We wish these members a speedy recovery from their ill health.

Recently I received some interesting suggestions that you should consider. One concerned Written Competitions. The suggestion is that, the closing date of a Written Competition determines the eligibility of a poem being submitted. This would mean that if a poem was successful in another competition before this closing date then this poem would be deemed ineligible.

Another suggestion was to have a State or National Conference. This would not be a competition but rather a talk-fest where members could debate what works well in the organisation, what need to be improved and future goals to be achieved. Workshops on writing skills, performance skills, publishing, advertising and running festivals could also be part of such a conference.

A vinyl ABPA banner has been produced with the idea that at major gatherings such as festivals and Tamworth we have something to signal who we are. By applying to the new Secretary this banner could be sent to respective festivals.

You should receive with this newsletter a flyer that will enable you to renew your membership and if relevant your public liability insurance. We encourage you to do this promptly as it is these funds that allow the organisation to function.

## Walk-up Showcase Concert St Edwards Hall Hillvue Road Tamworth

Presented by  
Edward and Margaret Parmenter  
Phone 6652 3716  
Email: [coffsmixture@hotmail.net.au](mailto:coffsmixture@hotmail.net.au)  
Monday 18th January  
1:30 pm to 4:30 pm  
Compere Noel Stallard.  
Wednesday 20th January  
1:30 pm to 4:30 pm  
Compere Frank Daniel  
Interested performers please  
contact Ed Parmenter

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**PERSONS  
INTERESTED  
IN FILLING PROPOSED  
COMMITTEE POSITIONS  
SHOULD CONTACT  
THE SECRETARY  
EDWARD PARMENTER  
FOR  
APPLICATION FORMS  
WHICH WILL BE  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING  
At St. Edwards Hall  
Thursday 21st  
JANUARY  
2010**

Finally I wish to express my gratitude for the support that the committee, and you the members, have given me over the past four years and I can assure you that I will continue to be very active in promoting our bush poetry.

With gratitude,

# The NSW Open Bush Poetry State Championships

The NSW Open Bush Poetry Championships at Morisset 16-18 October were a rousing success for competitors, audience and organisers alike.

Competitors got together for a meet-and-greet on Friday night and received their folders complete with draw, program, wristband, concert and dinners tickets, no small indication of the kind of organisation that was part of the whole event.

A Gala concert – A Swag of Aussie Humour, Verse and Song – starring Jim Haynes, Garry Lowe, Brian Bell and Carol Heuchan, was thoroughly enjoyed by the sizeable audience.

Sponsors this year included Morisset Country Club, Eraring Power Station, Morisset Specsavers, Ducks Crossing Restaurant, Pernot Rickard Winery (Poets Corner), Lakes Mail, Newcastle & Hunter Valley Folk Club and J & C. Hill Automotive. A last minute grant from the NSW Department of Tourism ensured the financial success of the event and took the pressure off the hard working committee.

Saturday morning started with the Preliminary event, an innovation of Hunter Bush Poets. It was felt that many of our members had won one (probably local) competition, which would have put them out of a Novice but were somewhat daunted by an open State Championship. The Preliminary was for poets who have not won more than three firsts in any competition/s and was very well supported.

The competition was hot and strong right from the beginning with relative newcomers giving some outstanding

performances.

As not all poets entered all sections, the contest for the Overall Champion Male was between Peter Mace, Ron Brown, Gregory North and Terry Regan and for the ladies it was going to be between Kathy Edwards, Claire Reynolds, Heather Searles, Jenny Markwell and Brenda Joy from Charters Towers.

Greg had an unfortunate hitch in his first poem which put him on the back foot from the start. He and Terry (the consummate competitor) battled it out with Greg making a superb final run. With the Rank Order method again being utilised this year (which Carol explained again to all present) Terry just pipped Greg to become the 2009 NSW Open Performance Champion (Male) and the recipient of the beautiful hand crafted rosewood trophy by Ted Wallace. Claire Reynolds (by a point) defeated Kathy Edwards to take the Champion Female and also the Hunter Bush Poets special trophy for the Club Member of the Year. This is a very special trophy crafted from timber and quartz from the grounds of the school attended by Henry Lawson.

Carol Heuchan judged and did a critique for every one of the huge stack of entries for the written. Carol's insistence (from some year's back) that there should be a section for both serious and humorous in written competitions to encourage humorous poems to also be well crafted has proved beneficial she feels. There were more entries this time in the Humorous section and many were of very high quality both story and structure.

Carol commented that the winning

poems from each section were "chalk and cheese" but each quite remarkable. Caroline Eldridge-Alfronzetti's "The Romance Writing Ringer from Roo Creek" a well crafted, cleverly funny poem with a very Australian flavour.

Milton Taylor was close with a couple of typically Milton outrageous pieces. The serious went to a poet who is new to the scene, Matt McLaughlin from the Blue Mountains. His poem "This Goodbye" is very deep, perhaps abstract in part and Carol felt it moved more into literary circles than the usual bush poetry. Extraordinarily meaningful and written from the heart, its quality could not be overlooked and it pipped the ever successful Max Merckenschlager's entry. The overall Champion was Caroline Eldridge-Alfronzetti, who will receive the magnificent rosewood stationery box hand crafted by Ted Wallace. [See poem page 16]

Sunday morning, weary poets and followers were treated to a totally uplifting hilarious morning – and a scrumptious brekky! The one minute cup was won by Bob Sanders with a hysterical bit of nonsense on the topic "Whacko!"

Hunter Bush Poets thank the ABPA for granting them the opportunity to run the Championships for the past two years. Despite a bit of a reluctant start, the Club have thrown themselves into all aspects and feel it really broadened the members' outlook on the bush poetry scene and brought them all together to thoroughly enjoy a feast of bush poetry at its best. We wish Dunedoo a successful NSW Championship for next year.

Carol Heuchan

## Bessie Jennings

Bessie Jennings has been actively involved with ABPA since 2000, has won awards in written & performance competitions; has performed at Poets Breakfasts in Tamworth, Bundaberg and other centres. She performs regularly at the monthly walk-up concert of the Hastings Macleay Bush Poets group (1pm, 2nd Saturday of every month, in the Senior Citizens facility). She has published 4 books of verse:

'GROUNDED! — Recitable Rhymes for Aussie Kids'

'BEATING 'ROUND THE BUSH'  
'The DEADPAN BEDPAN Book'  
'STAND UP AND ROCK THE BOAT',  
plus a CD 'The Best of Bessie'.

Frank Jennings, her friend for 62 years and husband of 12 years, seldom performs and never writes poetry, but maintains a lifelong interest in world affairs since he was thrust into the Prime Minister's Department and worked closely with 3 PMs — Menzies, Holt and Gorton. He is a keen advocate for U3A (University of the 3rd Age) which he says gave his life meaning and purpose in his later years.

Both Bessie and Frank have been tutors in Port Macquarie-Hastings U3A since its

inception. This is a voluntary, non-profit organisation for over-50s. It offers low-cost education (with no exams and no formal entry requirements) plus friendly social interaction. Frank tutors a large class in current affairs ('Behind the Headlines'). Bessie convenes a small 'Beginner Writers' group and this term will present a short course in Communication Skills and one in Bush Poetry (which will conclude with a walk-up concert supported by other local Bush Poets group members.) She hopes one of the outcomes will be an influx of new members for the ABPA and her local group.

# 2009 VICTORIAN OPEN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Victorian Open Bush Poetry Championships were held over the weekend of 16-18 October 2009 at the Benalla Bowls Club.

The weekend began with an Australian concert that included the inaugural Yarn-spinning competition. Sue Gleeson compered this concert and did a great job. The Yarn-spinning competition proved to be a worthy addition to the program; there were good crowds on hand to watch and the quality of the yarns presented was first-class. Ed Walker was the winner, just in front of Chris Canty.

Saturday morning kicked off with a poets' breakfast, hosted by Ed Walker. As a possible first with poets' breakfasts, it was a "bring your own breakfast" poets' breakfast.

This was followed by the Original Poem section of the competition. The scene was set for what was to come during the rest of the weekend – the quality of the performances was again to a very high standard. In the Men's, John Peel finished as the winner with his performance of "The True Story of the Kelly Gang". Lynne Frederick was the winner of this section of the Women's for the second year running with her poem, "Mr Ninety-eight Percent" – a poem that is likely to be a very popular one for her in the future. A new performer, Edwina Barber from Kyneton was the Novice winner, with "A Day at the Trots".

After the lunch break, competition resumed with the Original Song section. Hairdresser and Benalla-based farmer, Jim Carlisle was the winner with his song, "My First Day in the Salon", a humorous account of his first day as a hairdresser.

Following the Original Song, the Traditional Poem section was then contested. The interesting part about this section of the competition this year was the dominance of Henry Lawson poems. There were six Lawson poems to only four of Paterson's. Again the standard was very high. The Women's section of the competition was taken out by Betty Walton with Henry Lawson's "The Squatter's Daughter". Jim Brown's performance of Will Ogilvie's "The Overlanders" earned him first place in the Men's. Edwina Barber was the winner of the Novice with Banjo's "Mulga Bill's Bicycle". Tom O'Connor's performance of CJ Dennis's "La-De-La Lane" earned him the Intermediate prize.

A second Australian concert was held on Saturday night. It was a chance for the

competitors to see that the judges know their stuff when it comes to performing. All of the poetry and music judges performed during the concert. Maurie Foun compered the first part of the concert and was followed by the two lovely ladies from Fountain Lakes, Kath and Kim. The Other Song section was contested during the concert. Reg Phillips proved a very worthy winner with "Where Country Is". Reg Phillips was the overall champion in the Music section, with Jim Carlisle finishing as the runner-up.

Sunday morning's poets' breakfast was hosted by John Peel and Annette Roberts, again a "bring your own breakfast" poets' breakfast. The poets' breakfasts on both days were both good, no-pressure affairs for budding poets to get up and perform.

The Contemporary section of the competition kicked off at 10am on Sunday morning. A great selection of modern poems were performed by the performers and as with the previous sections, to a very high standard. The Women's winner was Molly Sparks with the Anonymous poem, "Ode to a Mammogram". Noel Bull's brilliant performance of Murray Hartin's "Rain from Nowhere" earned him the Men's top prize as well as the Novice prize in this section – it was a great first-time win.

After lunch, competition resumed with the junior sections. It was great to see such a good number of junior performers this year. In the primary section, there were a total of nine performers – the best representation of juniors at the Victorian Championships since the inception of the VBPA. The winner of the primary school section (Kindergarten to Year 6) was Bradley O'Meara with Banjo Paterson's "Clancy of the Overflow". The winner of the secondary school section (Year 7 to Year 12 and Under 19) was Naomi Frederick.

Ed Walker and Lynne Frederick were the respective men's and women's open champions, with John Peel and Annette Roberts the respective runners-up.

Reg Phillips was the compere over the weekend for all of the poetry sections and he did a great job of keeping the competitions moving and keeping the audience entertained between performers while the judges were finalising their judging sheets.

The judges of the competition over the weekend were Jan Lewis, Bill O'Connor and Col Drischoll in the yarn-spinning; Col

Milligan, Col Drischoll and Maggie Murphy in the poetry; and Maggie Murphy, Eileen McPhillips and Jim Brown in the music. All of the judges did a brilliant job considering how difficult it must have been to separate competitors based on the quality of the performances.

All of the performance competitors in this year's championships are to be praised for giving their all in the competition. The standard this year was fantastic, all are to be congratulated, regardless of where they were placed.

It was great to find out that some of the crowd had travelled great distances to attend the championships – there were some that came from as far away as Brisbane.

Poems in the Open Written section were received from all over Australia and the writers need to be congratulated on the high standard of their work. David Campbell had the difficult task of finding the winners of these sections of the competition. In the open section, dual champions were Ron Stevens and Ellis Campbell, both of Dubbo NSW. Both were very different poems; Ron's "Cutting Back" a humorous poem with a killer punch line and Ellis's "Beechley Calling" a very moving poem. For those that asked for a critique, David put a great amount of work into giving good, constructive comments to help them improve their writing.

The Junior sections received the best response seen since the formation of the VBPA. In one of these sections, there was an entry from as far away as the UK. The Kindergarten to Year 4 section was won by Ruby Salter of Harcourt with her humorous poem, "The Dingo". In the Year 5 to Year 6 section, the winner was Emma McGregor with her very imaginative poem, "The Legend of Silver Arrow". Naomi Frederick added another junior title under her belt with her historical poem, "The Eureka Stockade" in the Year 7 to Year 12 section of the competition.

Congratulations also need to go out to all of the junior written competitors for the high standard of their work.

The Victorian Open Bush Poetry Championships will be held next year over the weekend of 15-17 October. Please add this date to your calendar as you are bound to be attending a fantastic weekend of entertainment.

John Peel, Assistant Secretary VBPA

## Bush Poetry for U3A

Last term, ABPA member Bessie Jennings spoke to her local U3A (University of the Third Age) Australian History class, about Australian Bush Poetry. She told them about the regular monthly local walk-up concert (2nd Saturday of every month) in the Senior Citizens facility. She has been asked to run a class on Bush Poetry for this term, and thirteen people have enrolled. They'll meet at 1pm on three consecutive Monday

afternoons, starting 2nd November.

Some members of Hastings-Macleay Bush Poets group will join in for the final session on 16th November, putting on a walk-up concert which they hope will motivate some of the people to join their group and the ABPA. Mary Kemp (from Kempsey), Col Jarrett and Rod Worthing are just part of the line-up so far.

## Parkes Elvis Festival Poets Breakfast Competition 2010

Mmmm...What's Bush Poetry got to do a bunch of middle aged blokes who get their kicks dressing up as "Elvis the Pelvis" once a year? Well, there is a connection...read on. Festival organizers Bob & Anne Steele were long time Bush Poetry devotees & followers (Bob being an avid performer himself) when the idea struck them that a Bush Poetry Competition about "The King" would add something different & unusual to the Parkes Elvis Festival agenda.

So in 2009 (with the assistance of "The Rhymer from Ryde") the Inaugural "Elvis Poet's Breakfast Competition" was launched. The Town Bowling Club presented a 'slap-up' meal guaranteed to add a few calories to any waistline as "The Rhymer" went about introducing the good folks of Parkes to some Traditional good old fashioned "Aussie" verse.

Eager competitors then threw their 'hat in the ring' as the Prime TV cameras whirled to catch all the action. Males & Females of all ages pledged their love to Elvis through verse as a 'bumper' crowd looked on. The popularity of the event inspired Bob & Anne to give it another run in 2010.

The competition is judged on both the poems written & performance merits (the poem does not necessarily have to be memorized—it can be read on the morning of judging). Sections are Original Serious & Original Comedy and must contain lyrics relating

to Elvis, Priscilla, The Parkes Elvis Festival in general or any event held at the Festival. Entries for next year's "Brekky" must be received by 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009 and the author must be available on the day of competition, Thurs 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2010.

So folks, let's get to it! See you there. (Entry forms available from the Festival's Website):  
www.parkeselvisfestival.com.au

If you fancy you're a poet and you'd like to let folks know it, and you have a love of Elvis (He's the King).  
There's a Breakfast out in Parkes you can go to for a lark.  
To our competition all your poems bring.  
There's \$300 bucks in prizes and there'll be the odd surprises, like the Rhymer from West Ryde (He's our MC).  
Come and see out "E.T.A's". Sing & dance for 4 whole days.  
It's the most amazing sight you'll ever see.

\*\*\*\*\*  
(E.T.A's: Elvis Tribute Artists)  
© Graeme Johnson 1133 Victoria Road, West Ryde, NSW, 2114

## AUSTRALIAN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS 2009

What a successful Australian Bush Poetry Championships Festival! We had poets from as far away as New Zealand, spectators from Canada and all mainland states of Australia and a huge number of people from the Moreton Bay and Greater Brisbane Area.

We started with the Junior Sections with the young people performing extra well, including five-year-old Felicity Swan from Nundah and the Australian Junior Bush Poetry Performance

Champion is Sebastian Gelenke from Upper Coomera. All the youngsters performed well and were a credit to themselves and their teachers.

All the judges and experienced poets stated that the quality of the performances were the highest they have ever seen and the excellent performances by Greg North of Linden, NSW and Susan Carcary of Maclean, NSW saw them crowned the Male and Female Australian Bush Poetry Performance Champions of 2009. Our

own Kevin Dean from Strathpine attained a third place in the Modern Male Section with the other winners and placegetters scattered around Queensland, NSW, Victoria and New Zealand.

The Gala Concert featuring John Best, Zita Horton, Milton Taylor and Marco Giori was sold out weeks ahead of the event and the overflow crowd was treated to a wonderful night of entertainment.

We had six poets at the Festival who were over eighty years young and we presented them with our Living Treasures Certificate — Betty Walton, Ross Keppel, Maxine Ireland, Ellis Campbell, Mary Hodgson and Alec Allitt (as pictured at left).

The Australian Bush Poetry Championships will be held elsewhere next year and the North Pine Bush Poets will return to hosting the Camp Oven Festival as it has done in the past at the same time of the year (20th, 21st and 22nd August, 2010).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the competitors, the judges, the North pine Committee and members and the great audiences we had at all sessions. Without any of these people we could not have had such a successful and an enjoyable time. Cay Ellem, President of North Pine Bush Poets

*Opposite: Prize winners at championships*



# Ann & Noel Stallard



Ann and Noel live in Arana Hills, Brisbane and have been married for 34 years. Their son Joe and daughter-in-law Lynda, both teachers, have a one-year-old son Tom, and daughter Liz and son-in-law Mark, both in the Police Service, are expecting their first child in March.

Noel's Irish grandmother told his mother when he was seven years old that, "Noel should be on the stage." After 35 years of teaching Noel went on the stage as an entertainer with bush poetry. For the past eleven years he has been involved with a variety of activities associated with bush poetry. After getting accreditation from the Performing Arts division of the Queensland Education Department, he went throughout Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria performing the bush poetry for students. Initially, Noel concentrated on the works of the pioneer poet John O'Brien, but then broadened his performance base with works of Paterson, Lawson, C.J. Dennis as well as modern writers and his own works. Success in competitions helped to lift his performance profile and he became a regular performer at festivals and organisations looking for Australian entertainment. With the assistance of successful writers like Ellis Campbell, Noel gradually built up his writing skills in this genre of bush poetry. He enjoys the opportunity to judge performance and writing competitions and to share what skills he may have accrued with others. In 2006 Noel took on the Presidency of the ABPA and with the respective

committees attempted to improve the conditions surrounding the competitions in written and performance bush poetry. How successful this has been will be for others to judge but it did raise alternative processes to assist those involved in these competitions.

Ann worked initially in the Commonwealth Bank and then moved into nursing. She found the nursing career very satisfying and established a group of nursing friends that still meet on regular occasions. After marrying Noel she exchanged her nursing career for that of motherhood and working under the banner of various volunteer organisations.

In recent years she has been of great assistance to Noel, constructing performance props and travelling with him to the various bush poetry festivals. Like so many partners of bush poets, she is one of those unsung heroes who never look into the spotlights, but makes sure that her mate does. Ann has been Treasurer of the North Pine Bush Poets for three years ensuring that the financial details of organising the annual Camp Oven Festival and two Australian Bush Poetry Championships ran smoothly. Each Wednesday she is a volunteer at the Mater Hospital, playing with children while their mothers wait for doctor appointments.

Both Ann and Noel are the driving force behind the The John O'Brien Incorporation's vision of constructing a 1.5 million dollar John O'Brien Centre to be attached to the current Visitors Centre

at Narrandera. In recent months, after three years of bureaucratic wrangling, they had a break through with the local Council. The Council approved their architect, Joe Martin's design for the building. This design, coupled with the exciting internal display designs provided by Mental Media from Sydney, will ensure that this multi-media presentation of the poetry and the life of John O'Brien will fittingly celebrate the contribution this pioneer poet made to the annals of Australian poetry. Both the architect and display designers are confident that by the end of December we will have produced a Prospectus that will give the public, Government Agencies and commercial enterprises a clear picture of not only what this Centre will look like, both outside and within, but the costs and time lines involved in its construction. In addition to the capital costs of construction Council requires the John O'Brien Incorporation to have \$100,000 in reserve before the business opens. Most of the \$48,000 that has been raised to date will cover the initial costs of the architect and display designers' research and designs to the Prospectus stage. As well as chasing the \$1.5 million from government and business, Noel and Ann will be spending the next eighteen months travelling the country with performances of bush poetry in order to raise the Council's \$100,000 requirement. Any help that bush poets can give to assist Noel and Ann in this fund raising will be much appreciated.



# Inaugural BUSH POET'S BREAKFAST *Village Fair @ Comboyne*

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September turned out to be a perfect day for the inaugural Bush Poet's Breakfast at the annual Village Fair @ Comboyne on the mid-north coast of NSW. Twenty poets performed a variety of traditional and contemporary poems and the MC for the function, Chris Woodland, was pleased with the range and quality of the reciters. The future of Australian recitations is definitely in good hands with the likes of a young lady by the name of Courtney Degenars from Wingham, who did a splendid rendition of Mark O'Connor's *Wentworth Falls at Evening*. It was unfortunate that time did not permit another example of her presentations, as was hoped. A more mature reciter, Ian Fisher, also of Wingham, truly captured the Australian tradition with his own poem, *The Bogan in the Spring*, recalling his earlier life in the outback [see below].

David Billingham from Taree won second prize with *The Pioneers* written by an early settler of the Comboyne district, Dave Smith. Kathy Edwards of Newcastle received a good reception with *The Cheeky Casanova*, as did Ernie Sharkey of Beechwood with Lawson's *Knocked Up*.

Jean Hegarty of Pappinbarra won the competition with a fine rendition of Paterson's *The Travelling Post Office*. It was Jean's first attempt at a poets' breakfast and it is amazing that she only began rehearsing the poem two days before the event! [See Jean's interesting preamble opposite]

Other poets who attended and contributed to the day were: Pat Green (Port Macquarie), Elle Rose (Wauchope), Frith and Allen Peters (Wellington; formerly of Byabarra), George Hegarty (Pappinbarra), Rodney Fisher (Comboyne), Jim Hull (Wingham), David West (Comboyne), Chris Dacre

(Byabarra), Charles Paton (Comboyne) and John Grono (Lansdowne).

Village fair organiser Graham Caldersmith of Comboyne finished the breakfast with one of his own compositions, *The Pharaoh from Monaro*. Most agreed that it would have been a difficult act to follow, as it was a top performance: very animated, colourfully risqué, graphic, faultlessly presented and extremely humorous. Fortunately, Graham, as an organiser, was not eligible to be included in the competition.

Unfortunately the occasion had to finish on time to allow the following choirs their allotted time; unfortunate, as most reciters were hoping to present another poem. This first poet's breakfast for Comboyne received more support than previously thought, which means that the organisers are already planning a bigger and better event for the future.  
Chris Woodland.



Chris Woodland

Courtney Degenars

Ian Fisher

Kathy Edwards

Graham Caldersmith

photos thanks to Ian McKenzie

## *The Bogan in the Spring*

I've lately had this yearning, like an ache that won't relent;  
It haunts me day and night and makes me sad.  
I long to see the country where my feckless youth was spent —  
To see again the wondrous world I had.  
And I'll get there, don't dispute it, but I'm waiting on the rains.  
When my mind's made up I mostly do the thing  
That it's set on, and I'll be there on the glorious western plains —  
And I'll see again the Bogan in the spring.

I won't go out in drought time. Oh, the memories come again,  
Of sheep and cattle dying and the waters drying fast,  
Of despair on people's faces, of longing for the rain.  
No, I won't dredge up those memories from the past.  
I'll pick a boomer season with the cattle fat and sleek.  
Such a sight will cause the saddest soul to sing —  
To see the wild flowers blooming is the sight I really seek,  
When I'm back there, on the Bogan, in the spring.

The miles of paper daisies are like snow upon the ground,  
They rustle when your horse's hooves brush through,  
The pink sweet peas — we loved them — and the lilies that we found,  
The yellow dandelions and bluebells, too.  
I've never seen such colour as those wild flowers all ablaze.  
But I really think the fragrance is the thing.  
I can lift my head and smell it — it will delight me all my days,  
And it's out there, on the Bogan, in the spring.

I'll make my camp by coolabahs that line a river bend,  
And the fragrance from my fire will take me back;  
When as kids we caught the yabbies, fat and fighting till the last  
And we cooked them in the quart pot, old and black.  
We caught the yellow bellies and with ancient twenty-twos,  
We stalked the wily wood-duck and the thing  
Was to take home a pair of black ducks to the family's loud acclaim.  
Gold edged days, on the Bogan, in the spring.

We used to follow 'roo-dogs on the blue flyer kangaroo,  
On our bush bred ponies, always mad to go;  
Neither creek nor six wire fences would halt our wild pursuit —  
And break-neck speed the only pace we knew.  
How we used to scour the lignums for the wild pigs there in hordes,  
And the glory of the chase made young hearts sing.  
With our dogs and old pea-rifles we annihilated quite a few —  
But they'll be still there, on the Bogan, in the spring.

Long years now separate me. Near two score I'd roughly say.  
But it's vivid, like a film, in recall.  
The scene of kindly people and the lifestyle that we shared —  
And the importance of the river overall.  
I will soon be there to see them, though the old ones will be gone,  
I'll be welcomed for the memories I bring,  
By my kind, western people — I will see them all again,  
When I'm out there, on the Bogan, in the Spring.

A poem by Ian Fisher (80 in 2009) of Wingham.



In 'Eighty Great Poems' by Geoff Page—he mentions that 'The Travelling Post Office' is one of only two Australian ballads included in John Leonard's classic Oxford anthology 'Seven Centuries of Poetry in English'.

My intro to *The Travelling Post Office* was:

When I was at school, admittedly over fifty years ago, we studied a lot of poetry, but very little of it was Australian.

*The mail train crossing the border  
Bringing the cheque and the postal order  
Letters for the rich, letters for the poor  
The shop at the corner and the girl next door...*

was firmly in Britain, along with the daffodils, London Bridge, the highwayman and the cherry tree. Even A B Paterson's *Clancy of the Overflow* didn't rate a mention!

A chap by the name of John Leonard compiled, for Oxford, an anthology titled *Seven Centuries of Poetry in English*. Only two Australian ballads made the cut; one, *The Travelling Post Office* not only speaks of a letter, and a train, but more besides. First published in *The Bulletin* magazine in 1894, it speaks to me of nostalgia for the idyllic pastoral life. Superimposed on that fantasy is the reality of the vast outback. What was the other Australian ballad to appear in the anthology? You would guess one penned by Henry Lawson, but

perhaps you wouldn't pick: *Middleton's Rouseabout*.

Jean Hegarty, Pappinbarra NSW



## HARDEN'ED POETRY

Congratulations and thanks to Connie McFadyen for running another successful night of bush poetry at Harden.

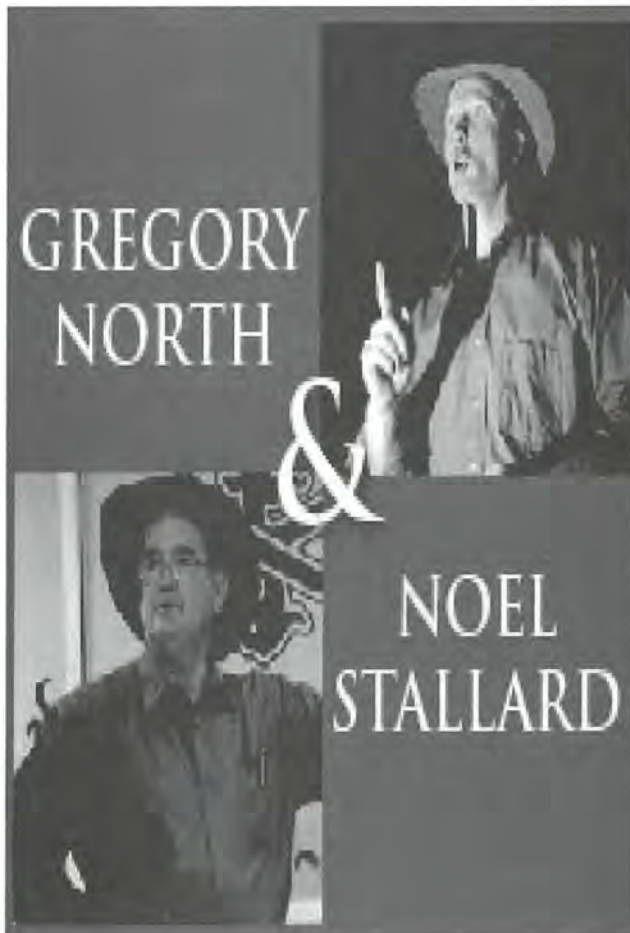
Competitors and locals alike were united in wishing Frank Daniel a speedy recovery and his presence was sorely missed. Frank was ably represented by Melanie Hall of Townsville who was conveniently passing by and who

brought her unique brand of humour and far north Queensland observations of NSW.

Ten poets from SW NSW competed for the \$2000 prize money. They were: Lance Parker, John Davis, Robyn Sykes, Ted Webber, Garry Lowe, Lorraine McCrimmond, Greg North, Allan Stone, Greg Broderick and Susan Carcary. Each poet performed a serious and a humorous poem and both sections were of a very high standard. Harden Rotary Club provided a terrific meal and raised

several thousand dollars for their community work. Thanks to the three judges: Kim Johnson, Stewart Bruce and Terry Norwood and congratulations to all the winners. The poetry continued on Sunday morning with a fun poets breakfast at Stocks Native Nursery. Thanks to Lorraine Brown and Irene and Ben Stocks for a super brekkie, and thanks also to Connie and local Rotarians for supporting the craft of bush poetry..

Susan Carcary



## BUSH POETS TRIBUTE CONCERT TO THE POETRY OF

DENIS KEVANS BRUCE SIMPSON JOHN O'BRIEN



TUES 19TH, WED 20TH & FRI 22ND JANUARY, 8PM  
ST. EDWARD'S HALL - TICKETS \$10 AT THE DOOR

# PROTECT OUR BUSH POETRY

V.P. READ © 2009 HC — Cooe March comp 2009

I find it quite amazing when the poets of the Push  
tell me there's no use writing 'bout the life out in the Bush.  
They say that times have changed now, and we've no more yarns to  
tell;

no drovers pushing cattle, and no drought with all its hell.  
They prate that helicopters have replaced the man and horse,  
that Yamahas do musters, and keep woollies on their course.  
And they are quite unyielding when they air erroneous views,  
yet call themselves 'Bush Poets'. It makes me blow a fuse.

Some judges are no better when a competition's run.  
They give awards for poetry that never should have won.  
A bush ode's what they asked for, yet the winners use the themes  
'bout Mother's Day, tooth fairies, and a five-year-old's quaint  
dreams.

The work may be well written; there is no disputing that,  
but calling it 'Bush' poetry! It really knocks me flat.  
The urban poets get cranky when I state my point of view.  
They claim it's denigration of the style of work they do.

They just can't grasp the concept of what I have said above.  
There's many who revile me, and say I should get the shove.  
But some of us old poets see the desecration done  
when odes about a mammogram wins Tamworth's Number One.  
Bush poets' groups have published work they're passing off as  
'Bush',

but it's Australian Poetry 'bout people and the Push.  
Some competitions classify the genres they prefer.  
'Bush'; 'Open', 'War' and 'Humorous', and ban you if you err.

I reckon we should recognise four sections of our art,  
for every genre has it's special message to impart.  
I've heard it said: 'There's no more bush, the old ways have died out;  
you won't see swaggies anymore, or meet a roustabout.  
The stock routes are deserted now; no hopefuls pan for gold.  
There's no more yarns 'bout Crooked Mick, or reprobates of old.'  
I stare at them too stunned to speak, I can't believe my ears.  
The rubbish that they prattle truly drives a man to tears.

Three hours' drive away from Perth I visit my friends' farm,  
and wander over drought-scarred land, and witness all the harm.  
The dams are dry, the food is scarce, and times are really tough.  
My friends have often said to me, "We've really had enough.  
We lost a lot of sheep this year, and storms have wrecked the crop,  
and when the rainstorms come at last, they never seem to stop.  
No matter what the season is; we never get ahead,  
we're always paying last year's bills, are always in the red."

I watch the shearers in the shed, the pressers at the bin;  
the cursing sounds the same to me; I love the smell and din.  
I do the rounds when lambs are due, and try to do my share;  
we strip the dead lambs of their skins for orphans needing care.  
Late afternoon we drop the hay for gaunt and bony sheep,  
Sometimes I see a dying ewe, which always makes me weep.  
I watch my friend bend over her to end her misery,  
So, don't tell me that 'Bush' is dead when this, and more, I see.

When country racing day comes round, I'm up there like a shot.  
We spend the weekend at the pub, because it gets quite hot.  
Then off we go on Saturday to see the races run;  
Wild brumbies bolt around the track; the publican's fine dun.  
The dust cloud hides the goings on that happen 'neath its veil,  
and some take short cuts through the bush, which causes quite a wail.  
The woolshed dance is held that night; the trophies handed out.  
And they tell me there's no more bush! They really need a clout.

On Sunday the Gymkhana's held, and crikey! What a din!  
We do the old three-legg-ed race, and do a discus spin.  
The children dive into the dam that's mostly mud and slime,  
while we drink at the makeshift bar and have a real good time.  
As evening falls, the track is cleared and the rodeo's on;  
it hasn't changed since I was young. And they tell me it's gone!  
Old-timers sit around their fires and yarn about their youth  
when they went droving way up north. Boy! some sure stretch the  
truth!

There has to be a stoush or two, but no one suffers much.  
The country copper rounds them up and locks them in the hutch  
to sober up and reminisce about the life they've led;  
some moaning quite pathetically and nursing a sore head.  
On Sunday night, we all pack up, and take off up the track  
in battered utes, on motor bikes; some on a station hack.  
We get up at the crack of dawn to do our daily chores  
of mustering or shearing, dagging sheep or checking bores.

So this then, is 'Bush' poetry, it's such a unique craft,  
and anyone who says it's not is absolutely daft.  
The 'Open' poems I've mentioned, are indeed not to be scorned,  
from great imaginations these word images are spawned.  
It's sad to see the smut that's crept into our work today.  
Old masters, who we all revere, would have a lot to say.  
I ask you, why use 'Bush' at all when bush is not the theme?  
To be a top 'Bush' poet, all you have to do is dream.



2009 MFSR Recital: Barry Tiffen 2<sup>nd</sup>, John Peel Winner, Maurie Foun 3<sup>rd</sup>



2009 School perf. winners: Alex & Isabel Cribb, 'Mulga Bill'

# 2010 AUSTRALIAN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS



Hosted By

Bundaberg Poets' Society Inc. — Queensland

At Brothers Sports Club Inc., Takalvan Street, Bundaberg.

## Performance Competitions

- Under 8 – Recite favourite poem
- 8 Years to Under 16 Years
- Open – Traditional, Modern & Original
- Novice – Traditional, Modern & Original
- Billy Hay Memorial Yarn Spinning
- Duo Competition
- One Minute Cup

♦ *No Intermediate Category in 2010 due to National Australian Championships*

## **BUSH LANTERN AWARD - Written Competition for bush Verse**

**ALSO**

## **BUSH LANTERN AWARD - Junior Category**

(Primary & Secondary School Students)

**Closing date for written competitions**

**21st May 21<sup>st</sup> 2010.** Results announced on July 11<sup>th</sup> at National Australian Bush Poetry Championship week-end.

Winners contacted prior to week-end.

## Performance Enquiries

SSAE to:

The Co-ordinator

Bundaberg Poets' Society Inc

PO Box 4281

BUNDABERG Qld 4670

**Closing date for Competition**

**18th June 2010**



Entry forms: SSAE to

Bush Lantern Co-ordinator

Bundaberg Poets' Society Inc.,

PO Box 4281

BUNDABERG SOUTH Qld 4670

### **All phone or email enquiries:**

Sandy Lees (*Muster Co-ordinator*) 07 41514631 or lees@fastel.com.au

Dean Collins (*Bush Lantern Co-ordinator*) 07 41591705 or nutbutts@gmail.com

Jayson Russell 0411 360 922 or blanata@bigpond.net.au

**Entry Forms** also available on ABPA website: [abpa.org.au/bushpoetry/entry.htm](http://abpa.org.au/bushpoetry/entry.htm)

## **MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER BUSH FESTIVAL**

### **Where Legends Perform!**

Since 1995 we've celebrated Banjo's famous poem with the real scenery and dinki-di bush folk putting on a unique show including the 'Challenge' horse competition to find the modern 'Man from Snowy River'.

### *FUN & OLD FASHIONED FRIENDLINESS in the Poets' Camp*

The Poetry and Music program keeps to the Aussie 'Bush' theme. \$5000 prizemoney for written & performed poetry, song & yarns – entries close 12<sup>th</sup> Feb, and walkups for poets & musos at Banjo's Block, pubs and cafes as well.

Corryong is a small town where 500 volunteers get behind this important annual event which combines horsemanship, poetry and music.

Jack Riley is central to the festival and most of it revolves around him or his alleged feats (some believe he was the 'man' in the MFSR poem).

Look at the website to see who'll be there!

Half-price weekend wristbands are available to volunteers, to be paid for before the festival.

To be added to our database, phone or email the Festival Office:

**02 6076 1992, [info@bushfestival.com.au](mailto:info@bushfestival.com.au)**

or log on [www.bushfestival.com](http://www.bushfestival.com) or Jan Lewis 02 6077 4332

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

My writing to you is prompted by the letter "Heart and Soul" from Maureen and Tom Stonham, which appeared in the Oct – Nov 2009 edition of the ABPA Magazine, a letter in which the Stonhams take issue with poetry competition judging, and the questionable quality of a particular award-winning poem.

The 'poem' to which Maureen and Tom refer [ABPA Magazine Aug – Sept 2009] is, in my experience of reading the Magazine over the past two years, the most striking example of a poor poem being rewarded by a competition judge. For all the reasons pointed out by the Stonhams, it appears to be, at best, a significant collection of points and ideas awaiting a recognizable, consistent, poetic form.

More to the point though, as indicated by Maureen and Tom, this poem is only one example of a number of defective, award-winning poems printed in the Magazine in recent times. If consistent rhythm is a defining criterion, at least two more examples appear in the same edition of the Magazine. And one doesn't have to work back through many

editions for the list of 'flawed' award winners to grow substantially. In reading these poems, it's hard not to conclude that much judging focuses principally on the 'cleverness' and 'originality' of the topic with considerably less weighting devoted to the skills associated with poetry writing. In his letter to the editor [ABPA Magazine Oct – Nov 2009], Ellis Campbell addresses eloquently the issue of competition judging criteria and processes, and judges might do well to follow his advice.

I thank the Stonhams for their fortitude and resolve in raising these concerns about competition judging, and for their call for consistent application of the criteria which constitute authentic Australian bush poetry. However, I do not share the Stonhams' confidence that printing the "list of recommended judges" [the ABPA Judges List] will necessarily improve the situation in the near future. A quick scan will reveal to anyone that not all of the listed judges whose poetry has appeared in the Magazine over the past two years are apparently capable of sustaining consistent rhythm themselves. Perhaps this is a situation we shouldn't find surprising though: having your name

included on the Judge's List appears to be merely a matter of letting the President know you feel your name should be added [see the President's Report ABPA Magazine June – July 2009]. This is hardly a quality assured approach to making appointments, nor one likely to guarantee high standards in judging. Maybe it's time for the ABPA to reconsider some of its processes. Without such a move, we are unlikely to see any easing of the concern of the Stonhams, and others, about inferior quality poetry being perceived by novice writers as appropriate standards of excellence for competition success and publication.

Perhaps it's time also for the ABPA to consider the establishment of "The Journal of Australian Bush Poetry" [as distinct from the ABPA Magazine which, of necessity, serves a different purpose as the voice of the ABPA and its basic form of communication with its membership] for the ongoing publication of exemplary work. A properly constituted professional journal, with appropriately qualified editorial and review personnel at the helm, could set the desired standards to which all could aspire.

Terry Norwood, Young NSW 2594

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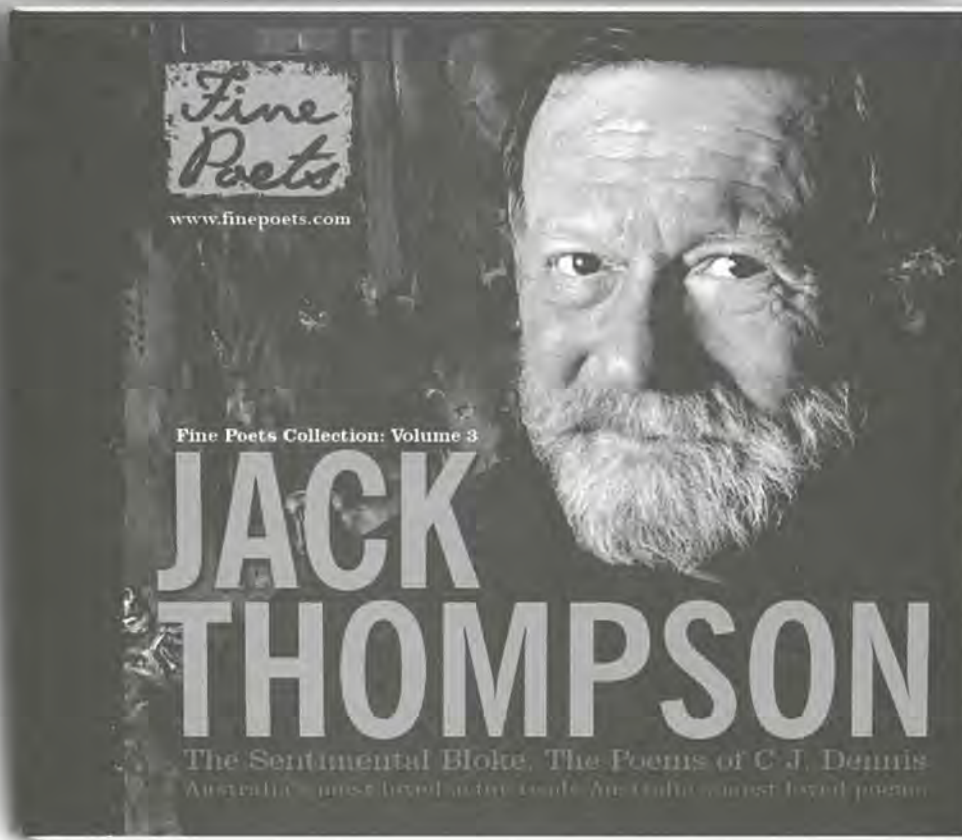
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## BUSH VERSE

Keith Lethbridge. Western Australia.

A fortnight ago, a young lady I know  
Respectfully asked me whether  
I could give her a clue, or a pointer or two,  
On stringing bush verse together.

You have to get rhyme that matches each time,  
And a rhythm right through to the end.  
If it works and you know it, you'll be a bush poet,  
And that's quite an honour, my friend.

So get working on it, a ballad or sonnet,  
It doesn't much matter to me.  
You won't be a failure, 'cause here in Australia  
We cherish our bush poetry.

You might set the scene at the Ord River scheme,  
Where wonderful tales are told,  
Or write of the man who travels the land,  
In search of a nugget of gold.

You could throw in a horse and some cattle of course,  
Or a kid that gets bit by a snake;

A woman alone in a bush shanty home,  
With only a damper to bake.

A shearer, a cook, a hero, a sook,  
A gentleman down on his luck,  
A road-working crew and a swaggie or two,  
Or a widow who handles a truck.

The bold pioneers of earlier years  
Each had a fine story to tell;  
The reckless bushranger, the slow talking stranger  
The broken down squatter as well.

That old mongrel dog chained up to a log,  
I call him the poet's best friend.  
There'd be thousands drowned if he wasn't around  
To rescue them right at the end.

If it's straight from the heart, you've made a good start,  
And you're probably onto a winner,  
But if all else fails, don't run off the rails  
You might make a great yarn spinner.

**Wedding Bells** rang for Jayson & Lee Russell from the Bundaberg Poets' Society on October 21st, 2009. Jayson is the vice-president of the club and also drives around town in his maxi taxi with signwriting on the back window advertising the club meetings.



Pictured left to right are: John & Sandy Lees, Kevin & Edna Harvey (club member & marriage celebrant), Lee & Jayson, Jan Facey, Maureen & Reg Outen with Lee Miller seated in front.

**ABPA member David Campbell wins first prize in national poetry competition.**

David Campbell of Beaumaris, Victoria, has been presented with first prize in the Australian Unity Bryan Kelleher Literary Award. The award is in its second year and received more than 500 entries from all over Australia, up from some 330 entries last year.

David won the award for his bush poem *The White Ribbon*, a thoughtful poem about an old bushie who sits with his dying dog and reflects on an event that cost him the love of his life many years before. He still has the white ribbon from her hair to remember her by.

David, who received second and third prize in the Literary Award last year, said that he particularly likes traditional rhyming poetry because its strong oral tradition, grounded in the work of Australian poets such as Henry Lawson, makes it a powerful medium for telling a story.

"Poetry should be written to be read aloud," said David.

"Traditional bush poetry allows a wide variety of emotions—from humour through to pathos and despair—to be expressed very effectively," he said.

Noel Stallard, president of the Australian Bush Poets Association and one of the judges of the competition says that David's poem appeals to a wide range of our senses.

"David creates an appropriate, reflective mood for this theme of 'lost love' and the clever use of words enables him to sustain this mood to the conclusion

of the poem," Noel says.

"David seems very conscious of the importance of structure in expressing an incident and is very precise with the use of consistent metre and accurate rhyme that ensures the ideas, events and emotions being expressed flow uninterrupted for the reader—congratulations, this was a pleasure to read."

For Australian Unity Chairman Alan Castleman, the Literary Award, which now receives more entries than any other bush poetry competition, provides an opportunity for Australian Unity to celebrate Australian bush poetry. Mr Castleman believes that there is clearly great interest in our bush poetry and in Australian heritage.

"Australian Unity has a long and proud history of supporting Australian heritage and culture.

"Our national competition allows us to honour and preserve the style of verse made famous by Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson so that it can be enjoyed by future generations.

"David's poem epitomises bush poetry and I congratulate him on his winning entry."

**About Bryan Kelleher**

Bryan Kelleher was a long-standing member of the Australian Natives' Association, one of Australian Unity's predecessor organisations. Bryan was passionate about acknowledging and honouring Australian achievements. He

was regular contributor to *Anapress* and was the author of many booklets, writing on a range of topics including Australian constitutional reform, ANA literature, art and science awards and Australian poetry.

For further information on the Australian Unity Bryan Kelleher Literary Award, please contact Amy McAlister on (03) 8682 6768 or [amcalister@australianunity.com.au](mailto:amcalister@australianunity.com.au)

David can be contacted on 03 9583 2736

**Full List of Winners**

- 1st Prize David Campbell of Beaumaris, VIC for *The White Ribbon*
- 2nd Prize Dean Trevasakis of Ocean Shores, NSW for *The Battle Worn Campaigner*
- 3rd Prize Keith Gardner (deceased), VIC for *Cobbers*
- HC Catherine Clarke of Mona Vale, NSW for *A Bushman's Last Farewell*
- HC Ed Walker of Narre Warren VIC for *Unsung and Silent*
- HC Marty Langenberg of Bell Post Hill VIC for *Life's Extremes*
- Young Achiever Award Isabelle Urbano of Box Hill North, VIC for *Australian Identity on the Goldfields*
- Young Achiever Award Laura Johnston of Illawong, NSW for *City Dwelling Lot*
- Young Achiever Award Georgina Ryan of Barooga, VIC for *The Woes of a Farmer*



25th Anniversary  
**ILLAWARRA**  
**FOLK FESTIVAL**  
 14-17 January 2010



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[www.illawarrafolkfestival.com.au](http://www.illawarrafolkfestival.com.au)

**A MUSICAL ESCAPE**

Situated amid rainforest at the base of the Illawarra escarpment sits the Jamberoo Valley Lodge. The lodge is a favourite haunt for weddings, get away from the 'rat-race' weekends and marriages.

It is also fast gaining a reputation as the ambient site for the annual one day music festival, 'Folk in the Foothills' conducted by the Illawarra Folk Club.

This year's festival was held on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October and was hailed by many as being the best one ever.

The poets headed by funnyman Jim Haynes and local Viv Sawyer started the proceedings

The soldier stood and faced God,  
 Which must always come to pass.  
 He hoped his shoes were shining,  
 Just as brightly as his brass.

'Step forward now, you soldier,  
 How shall I deal with you ?  
 Have you always turned the other cheek ?  
 To My Church have you been true?'

The soldier squared his shoulders and said,  
 'No, Lord, I guess I ain't.  
 Because those of us who carry guns,  
 Can't always be a saint.

I've had to work most Sundays,  
 And at times my talk was tough.  
 And sometimes I've been violent,  
 Because the world is awfully rough.

But, I never took a penny,  
 That wasn't mine to keep...  
 Though I worked a lot of overtime,  
 When the bills got just too steep.

And I never passed a cry for help,  
 Though at times I shook with fear.  
 And sometimes, God, forgive me,  
 I've wept unmanly tears.

I know I don't deserve a place,  
 Among the people here.  
 They never wanted me around,  
 Except to calm their fears.

If you've a place for me here, Lord,  
 It needn't be so grand.  
 I never expected or had too much,  
 But if you don't, I'll understand.

There was a silence all around the throne,  
 Where the saints had often trod.  
 As the soldier waited quietly,  
 For the judgment of his God.

'Step forward now, you soldier,  
 You've borne your burdens well.  
 Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets,  
 You've done your time in Hell.'

*Submitted by Carol Reffold The "Patchwork Poet"*

with a poets breakfast at 8.30am in the grove and then the other four venues kicked into action with 17 acts from a wide variety of genres all displaying their unique styles.

The iconic Ted Egan headed a cast that included, songstress, Ami Williamson, The Big bear of Boogie, Pugsley Buzzard, the incisive politics of Alistair Hulett, the Scottish singer Allan Johnston and the unclassifiable Doc Jones Lecherie Orchestra. For the traditionalists there was Dance band No Such Thing, Wongawilli, John Broomhall Trio, Jason and Chloe, Melanie Dyer, Alan Musgrove and the Watsername Band,

Racznwaters and the youth band, Replay. The world musicians and dancers were looked after too with Sydney's Serbian Dancers, the Maltese group Skorba, Tribal Jewels Bellydancers and the ever popular Welsh Choir.

Great food and drink were enjoyed and the whole day finished up with a massive concert where audience and performers intermingled their voices in popular and well known songs with the festival musicians providing the background.

What a great event!

Russell Hannah

Banana Shire Council has slotted the **2010 Charlee Marshall Bush Poetry Competition** into the Australia Day celebrations to be held in Biloela, Queensland. Information is available online at [www.banana.qld.gov.au](http://www.banana.qld.gov.au). You might see Trevor Shaw there, who won second place in last year's competition with the following poem:

**AFTERMATH** *Trevor Shaw*

There's no movement on the station; eerie silence; not a sound.  
 Small wisps of smoke rise calmly, through the scene:  
 devastated, blackened landscape, from the tree stumps to the ground,  
 with a pile of rubble, where the house had been.

All the greenness of the gardens; all the painted walls and rooves,  
 now reduced to different categories of char.  
 Buckled sheets of corrugation, soot and blisters in the grooves,  
 partly camouflage the melted family car.

Gone forever are the stockyards – turned to ash each post and rail  
 by the fierceness of the fire-balls, and the heat.  
 While the remnants of the bound'ry pose, in architectural *braille*,  
 the playing ground on which one must compete.

There's no sign of living live-stock. Roasted corpses tell the tale  
 of the energy released, when fires swept through.  
 No chances for survival – not on hill, in creek nor vale.  
 Death had dealt her hand, before they even knew.

We are conscious of the casualties: the deaths, the burnt and maimed;  
 the houses lost; and many townships razed.

We are conscious of the lightning strikes, and those who must be  
 blamed  
 for evil acts. We're stunned, dismayed, amazed.

And we cannot find the vocab that expresses how we feel.  
 "Compassion" is emotion, and a word.  
 We've nearly been defeated by an enemy unreal,  
 but surrender, to our minds, has not occurred.

For the folks who toiled before us, who established something grand,  
 rebuilding has to be the way to go.  
 The spirit of the pioneers will again transform this land,  
 though progress will be tedious and slow.

And movement on the station will be evident again,  
 founded on this phrase: "*Lest we forget*".  
 As we turn the first sods over, through our memories and pain,  
 we'll grit our teeth ... for we're not beaten yet!

# The Romance-Writing Ringer from Roo Creek

Now, Bob Brown was a ringer and a strapping one at that. He stood six two with shearers' stoop, and that without his hat. But Bob held close a secret, one he feared would bring him shame: he penned romantic novels under his late grandma's name.

And while Bob was no Shakespeare (as I'm sure he would confess) as 'Annie Pike', each year he sold two books to Cupid Press. His heart-sick heroines and hunky heroes in demand, each manuscript he penned would net him almost twenty grand.

Now, if you've ever worked beside those tough men trading blow with blow of gnashing clippers, then of course, my friend, you know that writing sappy stories wasn't something 'real' blokes did, so Bob had never let on that he earned an extra quid.

One Thursday, though, two journalists had driven into town to prove the whisper turning book-world circles upside down – that Annie Pike, the author, was Roo Creek-based and a *man!* And so they started sleuthing 'round, as only jourmos can.

They bribed the only newsagent to help the man to think of any local bloke who bought a lot of printer ink. They flirted with the postmistress, although she had crossed eyes, and learned who bought pre-paid 'post packs' (the ones in A4 size).

By Saturday, that cunning pair had fair betrayed poor Bob and left Roo Creek in haste to get the jump on their next job. The grapevine-guarantee the whole town knew, filled Bob with dread. He braced himself for fallout due on Monday in the shed.

And, true to form, the shearers bombed poor Bob with cutting quips, some greeting him with batting lids and 'kissy kissy' lips. While one young lad, a whey-faced rascal known to him a Mike drew hoots when bidding him to 'Pass the tar brush, please, Miss Pike.'

Oh yes, those blokes felt smug – they'd always known that Bob was queer.

What kind of man went home most nights before at *least* one beer? But they weren't feeling quite so bright when suddenly old Bob was seen by their own women-folk as Roo Creek's new heart-throb.

Though rather a good-looking chap, he'd always got tongue-tied when dating women through the years. No matter how he tried, Bob's skill with words on paper and in life weren't one accord – nerves struck the poor sod speechless and potential girlfriends bored.

To pen such books though, Bob knew what they wanted, girls could tell.

And, by their calculations, he'd be worth a bit as well. The perfect male he was – a strong, successful, strapping bloke in touch with his own female side (and one who rarely spoke!)

And when they made comparisons, most women were afraid their unromantic other-halves just didn't make the grade.

The single men grew furious and took rejection hard when female friends began to vie for writer-Bob's regard.

And in each homestead in Roo Creek, the husbands didn't like to share their beds, *ménage-a-trois*, with wifie and a 'Pike'. Nocturnal nudges futile, all wives read 'till late, I'm told, each lapping up Bob's true romance, and putting sex on hold.

Quite soon the town reached crisis point; the men could take no more and met *en mass* inside the pub. Their ranting reached a roar as head to head they argued what the best approach would be to win their women back. It seemed they never would agree.

But, after many hours, and slurring badly as he spoke, one self-appointed spokesman rose, a grey-haired senior bloke. He said: "I've 'eard, to win, you've gotta beat foe at their game. And so, men, I propose, to take on Bob, we do the same.

"It won't be easy, but to break his strong romantic spell, I say that we should jump right in and write some mush as well!" The sozzled bods fell silent, bar the sniggers of a few. "Now, come on lads," the oldie urged. "What else can we chaps do?"

"That ladies love blokes brave with words just cannot be ignored. Remember, too, they say the pen is stronger than the sword. I recommend we call it quits and go home straight away and try to pen a few short lines before the break of day."

That's just what those blokes did, although with some degree of doubt; most finding it like pulling teeth to get the right words out. But perseverance paid and by the dawn each *did* compose a love verse, or the starting of a heart-felt piece of prose.

Young Dianne Timbs near fainted when her boofy hubby, Trev, gave up his next day footy game; read 'Ode to Di' instead. Although the rhymes were clangers and the metre wasn't right, Dianne was so impressed that he got lucky *twice* that night.

And all the other fellows found their effort struck a chord – each grinning like hyenas from its rather nice reward. Quite soon, they burnt the midnight oil each romance-writing shift, all sleep deprived, yet satisfied. (I think you catch my drift).

But soon it came to pass that every man, bar one or two had realized that they enjoyed the writing process too. No longer was a romance-writer ripe for ridicule, the pastime, unofficially, decreed one that was 'cool'.

Now authors have a kudos once reserved for gods of sport. So, what of Bob Brown, you may ask? I'm happy to report he's everybody's hero; runs a thriving writing club that meets each second Thursday in the back room of the pub..

© Carolyn Eldridge-Alfonzetti  
2009 NSW Open Written Champion



Carolyn  
Eldridge-  
Alfonzetti

## LAUGHTER CLUBS *Bessie Jennings*

They're setting up these Laughter Clubs  
all over this vast continent.  
The Management is confident  
the timing of it's provident.

But now I think it's pertinent  
that I enquire of Management,  
'Is lots of laughter really meant  
to help if you're incontinent?'

I've set a funny precedent.  
(Perhaps my sense of humour's bent?)  
I've wet myself, so please relent!  
I should have gone before I went.

My pelvic floor must be content.  
Tell every lady, child and gent:  
'First spend a penny', to prevent  
an inconvenient accident.



# Snowy River Festival Dalgety

A *HUGE* thank you to everyone that helped make the Snowy River Festival Bush Poetry so special.

It was a jam packed schedule with poets breakfasts, walk-up comps., Open mics, workshops and a variety of performances by the amazing Carol Heuchan who was on the go from dawn until dusk.

My heartfelt thanks to Carol who was the consummate professional and lots of fun to

work with!

We had some fabulous visiting and local poets who figured in the performance results. Thank you all for travelling near and far to be with us.

It was great to see first-time writers and reciters comfortable enough to get up on stage with some of Australia's best Bush Poetry talent in a laid back open air venue on the banks of the iconic Snowy River.

Congratulations and thanks to all our winners and entrants and of course our sponsor Sharon from 'Snowprint Bookshop Jindabyne' for her generosity and continuing support of Bush Poetry.

We look forward to seeing you again in 2010!

*Lee Taylor-Friend*

SRF Bush Poetry coordinator

## The Road Scholar

Max Merckenschlager

Snowy River Festival Open Written Winning Poem

Out the back of Bourke and yonder, where the station cattle wander, chewing mindlessly on withered stems between sporadic rains, lived a whipstick elder-brother with his siblings and his mother, who'd an 'intellectual problem' that was not from lack of brains.

Now his dad, a roving worker – the essential back o' Bourker – was a rare and welcome visitor who handled all their bills; poking branding irons in fires, stringing fences up with pliers, cut 'n' drafting, crutch 'n' mulesing, in a saddlebag of skills.

It befell his mum to teach them – sometimes threaten or beseech them – for their lessons drew out painfully as children dreamt of play. But with opened book for learning, vacant thoughts would keep returning, so the lad fell into wandering for most of every day.

Cinching tight his favoured hacker, he'd become a lonely tracker, follow signs of stock to water, then regrease the windmill's gland. And destructive ferals rooting often blessed his sights for shooting; there was bacon on their table, hung and butchered by his hand.

All the bushland birds, he knew 'em – songs and habits, he'd accrue 'em – filed in matter laying latent under wavy locks and hat.

He could read the changing weather, fashion whips from rawhide leather, muster breakaways unaided lost in gully, scrub or flat.

Then disturbing information reached the Board of Education, that a child deprived of schooling had been heard of in the bush. There was need for intervention – a psychologist's attention – for a pedagogic expert knew which buttons one should push.

Sadly, nothing done could change him; they decided to 'de-range' him,

so the family was shifted to a fibro hut in Bourke. But his schooling lessons faltered as his legal status altered, and he left to make a living where you're measured by your work:

sometimes classing wool or shearing – he'd a spell at mallee clearing, and a year of trucking road trains from the Centre to the South, felling Mountain Ash as logger, checking Dingo Fence as dogger, setting lines to capture Mullyow that run the Murray's mouth.

Not a one for tie or collar, this redoubtable road scholar, though his thirst for understanding matched the brightest of his peers; there was never task that floored him, idle chitter-chatter bored him, and he earned a reputation as a man beyond his years.

Now he manages a station, where his self-made education doesn't hinder those decisions which are part of daily life. He's a listener, a guider and a consummate provider, for his outback bush community, his kids and loving wife.

## Mid-Coast Sundowners Schools Poetry Competition

Presentation day for the Tenth Annual Mid-Coast Sundowners Bush Poets Competition for primary school students was held at The Loop Hall, Tuncurry, on Sunday morning, 27th September 2009.

What a delight it was to listen to 20 prize-winning young poets reading aloud their own poems, good imaginative poems on a wide range of topics. What a thrill to hear the strong rhythm and rhyme of real bush poetry being presented with such youthful enthusiasm.

A highlight of the morning was the audience. Even those who could not get a seat in the over-flowing hall became virtually an interactive part of the whole show through the incredibly healthy response, the warm, overwhelming support and the friendly cheerful encouragement they gave every

performer.

A new format was introduced this year. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 only competed against their own age group for the 5 prizes, each of \$35, awarded in this section. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 only competed against their own age group for 15 prizes each of \$35.

We thank all the schools that supported the competition but make special mention of Bungwhal, Hallidays Point, Tuncurry and Stratford primary schools for the outstanding quality of their pupils' poems.

Our thanks also go to Cay and Barry Ellem, well-known bush poetry champions from Queensland, who entertained us with humorous poems appropriate to the age of the youthful audience.

And we thank Ray Halliday who not only judged the competition so well but also

recited a poem that the kids loved.

But above all we must thank our generous sponsors, Country Energy and Harrison, Main & McArthur. Because of their financial support we are able to run the competition without charging an entry fee and this results in a high level of pupil participation.

Many thanks to Greg North for his helpful written hints for the students and to Frank Atchison, our MC, who was at his best keeping the audience involved and putting the young students at ease before they recited their poems. Finally, congratulations to Reid "Rusty" Begg who organised it all and even managed to get a new PA system to work without a hitch. Thanks from the Mid-Coast Sundowners.

# Advice For Your Waterworks

## Bessie Jennings

This year I found myself consulting the 'Incontinence Nurse' and was prompted to write for her (and her clients). It all seems very timely, in this 'Decade of Clear Water'.

Every day if you are wise  
you'll do this special exercise:  
lift the pelvic floor below—  
pull it up, then let it go—  
three times fast, then three times slow.  
Do the set three times a day  
when at home, or work or play.

Drink just water, if you're thirsting.  
Sip, until your bladder's bursting—  
not on coffee, coke or tea.  
(It's the caffeine makes you pee—  
it irritates the bladder, see?)  
Caffeine's called a 'diuretic'  
but the end result's pathetic.

Irritated bladders leak  
just because they're slack and weak.  
Don't keep running to the loo

'just in case!' and all  
day through.  
That's a foolish thing  
to do,  
for it makes your  
bladder shrink.  
Wait till 'busting'! Stop  
and think.

Many of us get a fright  
if we're wakened in  
the night  
and on 'automatic  
pilot'

habit takes us to the toilet  
lest we wet the bed, or soil it;  
but I've got my bladder trained  
to hold on, as I've explained.

Now my bladder's waterwise,  
through this special exercise:  
lift the pelvic floor below—  
pull it up, then let it go—  
three times fast, then three times slow.  
That's the drill, three times a day  
when at home, or work or play.



## Poet's by the Sea Harrington NSW

29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010  
Top Entertainment at Top Venues  
*all with water views*



Bill Kearns, Susie Carcary, John Lloyd, Melanie Hall, & Ken Lindsay,  
special guest Carmel Lloyd  
plus

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(Written & Performance Categories)

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For more details:

[www.poetsbythesea.com](http://www.poetsbythesea.com)

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## DREAMING IN THE SILENCE, 1918

© Ron Stevens 2009. 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize Cooee March section, Gilgandra Coo-ee Festival '09

Late November, do you reckon  
we will soon be heading home,  
after weeks of sorting corpses  
to inter in bloodied loam?

Or perhaps be stuck in England  
till the brass can find us berth  
on a trooper bound down-under  
to the greatest land on earth?

The majority of *Cooees*  
here in Flanders would agree  
that Australia, young and healthy,  
is the place they'd rather be.  
We've respect for Mother England,  
to whose aid we'd shouldered arms,  
after tramping miles to Sydney  
from our outback towns and farms.

We've admired the British Tommies,  
as we shared their gore and pain;  
but their leaders valued polish,  
while ignoring thousands slain.  
By comparison, our Monash  
had meticulously planned  
an assault reducing losses  
from the troops in his command.

It was hard to trust the silence  
when the guns were put on hold.  
When the heat of battle passes,  
your ideas run deep and cold.  
Did my bullets rip the innards  
of that lately buried Hun?  
Would he best me as a comrade,  
as a father or a son?

But such questions fall unanswered  
in this tortured countryside,  
where the rats and lice have flourished,  
as *the great adventure* died.

I've survived and Fritz is buried,  
as the marshals keep the score;  
just a simple plus and minus  
for the human cost of war.

Yet a count of killed and wounded  
from the *Cooees* in this fray  
takes no measure of the anguish  
down beside the Castlereagh  
and the volunteering stages  
all along the *Cooee* route.  
There are black-shawled mothers sobbing,  
grim-faced fathers grieving, mute.

They will never be invited,  
when the victors plan the peace,  
when they re-arrange the borders  
and agree what lands to seize.  
More's the pity, for if parents  
who have given up their sons  
had a say in future problems,  
there might be no need for guns.

Let the kings give up their places  
for young Fritz's mum and dad,  
and field-marshalls be excluded  
for poor Tommy's orphaned lad.  
With all pompous statesmen banished  
from that vital peace venue,  
we'd avoid the nightmare prospect  
of a Great War Number Two.

## EDEN

Beneath the weeping willow tree,  
the wattle and the gum,  
cool clear waters ceaselessly  
flow, where bush creatures come.

Where silver ash reach to the sky  
from the mountain side,  
where time has endlessly passed by  
and many secrets hide.

The first beams of the morning sun  
fall gently on the leaves,  
and light the path where waters run  
down to the timeless seas.

A ghostly mist hangs o'er the ground,  
autumn leaves lay nigh,  
the curlews call the only sound  
as wildlife scamper by.

Whether rain or flood, heat or  
drought,  
this Eden never changes –  
unlike the land farther out  
beyond the mountain ranges.

Here is an earthly paradise  
untouched by human hand,  
hid from the gaze of prying eyes  
since God's first command.

Within our hearts we'll e'er behold  
the mountains, streams and bowers –  
no matter what the future holds  
for this land of ours.

© Harold Meston 2009

Kym Eitel and Jennifer Haig

Where did  
they find  
headless  
camels?  
*Ed*

# COMPETITION RESULTS

## 2009 HUNTER BUSH POETS

### ANNUAL BUSH POETRY COMPETITION & NSW BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

#### NSW Dept of Tourism Open Written Champion:

Carolyn Eldridge-Alfonzetti  
Written Serious:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Matthew McLoughlan  
2<sup>nd</sup> Max Merckenschlager  
3<sup>rd</sup> Terrence Piggot  
VH Commended Neville Briggs

#### Written Humorous:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Carolyn Eldridge-Alfonzetti;  
2<sup>nd</sup> Milton Taylor;  
3<sup>rd</sup> Carolyn Eldridge-Alfonzetti

#### NSW Dept of Tourism – Open Female

Performance Champion:

Claire Reynolds

#### NSW Dept of Tourism – Open Male Performance Champion:

Terry Regan

#### 2009 Hunter Bush Poets

##### Club Champion:

Claire Reynolds

##### Hunter Bush Poets

##### Preliminary Event:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Robert Markwell  
2<sup>nd</sup> Ken Tough  
3<sup>rd</sup> Lois Sanders

#### Pernod Ricard (Poets Corner Wines) Women's Classical:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Brenda Joy  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kathy Edwards  
3<sup>rd</sup> Claire Reynolds

#### Morisset Country Club

##### Men's Classical:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Terry Regan  
2<sup>nd</sup> Peter Mace  
3<sup>rd</sup> Ken Tough

#### Eraring Energy Women's

##### Modern Traditional:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Claire Reynolds  
2<sup>nd</sup> Brenda Joy  
3<sup>rd</sup> Kathy Edwards

#### Eraring Energy Men's

##### Modern Traditional:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Terry Regan  
2<sup>nd</sup> Gregory North  
3<sup>rd</sup> Peter Mace

#### Newcastle & Hunter Valley

##### Folk Club Women's

##### Original Serious:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Kathy Edwards  
2<sup>nd</sup> Claire Reynolds  
3<sup>rd</sup> Heather Searles

#### Lakes Mail Newspaper

##### Men's Original Serious:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Gregory North  
2<sup>nd</sup> Peter Mace  
3<sup>rd</sup> Terry Regan

#### Ducks Crossing Restaurant

##### Women's Original

##### Humorous:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Claire Reynolds  
2<sup>nd</sup> Heather Searles  
3<sup>rd</sup> Brenda Joy

#### Specsavers Morisset Men's

##### Original Humorous:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Gregory North  
2<sup>nd</sup> Terry Regan  
3<sup>rd</sup> Neville Briggs

## VICTORIAN OPEN BUSH POETRY

### CHAMPIONSHIPS 2009

#### RESULTS SUMMARY

##### Open Yarn Spinning

Champion Ed Walker, Narre Warren VIC – “The Letter”

Runner-up: Chris Canty, Longwood VIC – “The Bull Bar”

Third: Betty Walton, Tintalra VIC – “The Remarkable Pig”

Encouragement: Ken Jones, Bendigo VIC – “Tough Bullockies”

##### Open Bush Poetry

##### Performance Champions

Men's Champion: Ed Walker, Narre Warren VIC

Men's Runner-up: John Peel, Batlow NSW

Women's Champion: Lynne Frederick, Marong VIC

Women's Runner-up: Annette Roberts, Bellbridge VIC

##### Men's Open Original

##### Performance:

John Peel, Batlow NSW – “The True Story of the Kelly Gang”

Ed Walker, Narre Warren VIC – “Double Vision”

Jim Brown, Heathmont VIC – “Fromelles”

##### Women's Open Original

##### Performance:

Lynne Frederick, Marong VIC – “Mr Ninety-eight Percent”

Carol Reffold, Riddell's Creek VIC – “Gran's Quilt”

Annette Roberts, Bellbridge VIC – “War of the Roses”

##### Men's Open Traditional

##### Performance:

Jim Brown, Heathmont VIC – “The Overlander” (Will Ogilvie)

Ed Walker, Narre Warren VIC – “Bill” (Henry Lawson)

John Peel, Batlow NSW – “When Your Pants Begin To Go” (Henry Lawson)

##### Women's Open Traditional

##### Performance:

Betty Walton, Tintalra VIC – “The Squatter's Daughter” (Henry Lawson)

Annette Roberts, Bellbridge VIC – “Said Hanrahan” (PJ Hartigan/John O'Brien)

Lynne Frederick, Marong VIC – “Clancy of the Overflow” (AB Paterson)

##### Men's Open Contemporary

##### Performance:

Noel Bull, Musk VIC – “Rain from Nowhere” (Murray Hartin)

Jack O'Connor, Shepparton VIC – “Pale Rider” (David Campbell)

Ed Walker, Narre Warren VIC – “Gold Star” (Bruce Simpson)

##### Women's Open

##### Contemporary

##### Performance:

Molly Sparks, Kyabram VIC – “Ode to a Mammagram” (Anonymous)

Carol Reffold, Riddell's Creek VIC – “Lazy Jack” (Bill Scott)

Edwina Barber, Kyneton VIC – “The War” (Harold Humble)

##### Novice Original

##### Performance:

Edwina Barber, Kyneton VIC – “A Day at the Trots”

Novice Traditional Performance:

Edwina Barber, Kyneton VIC – “Mulga Bill's Bicycle” (AB Paterson)

## Novice Contemporary

### Performance:

Noel Bull, Musk VIC – “Rain from Nowhere” (Murray Hartin)

### Intermediate Performance:

Tom O'Connor, Swan Hill VIC – “La-De-La Lane” (CJ Dennis)

### Ross Noble Encouragement

#### Awards:

Ken Jones, Bendigo VIC  
Norm Deumer, North Harcourt VIC

#### Open Written:

Equal First: Ron Stevens, Dubbo NSW – “Cutting Back”

Equal First: Ellis Campbell, Dubbo NSW – “Beechley Calling”

Highly Commended: Max Merckenschlager, Murray Bridge SA – “Black Rebel”

Highly Commended: Matt McLoughlin, Springwood NSW – “This Goodbye”

### Junior Performance

#### Kindergarten to Year 6:

Bradley O'Meara, Glenrowan VIC – “Clancy of the Overflow” (AB Paterson)

Ruby Mahon, West Benalla VIC – “Clancy of the Overflow” (AB Paterson)

Tyler Cleal, Wangaratta VIC – “Mary's Frog” (Grahame Watt)

#### Junior Performance Year 7 to 12:

Naomi Frederick, Marong VIC – “The Geebung Polo Club” (AB Paterson)

#### Junior Written

##### Kindergarten to Year 4:

Ruby Salter, Harcourt Valley VIC – “The Dingo”

Daniel Deumer, Harcourt Valley VIC – “An Australian Poem”

Tayla Brown, Lockwood VIC – “Lilly, My Cat”

Special Mention: Maddison Ashby, Lockwood VIC

Special Mention: Narissa Short, Lockwood VIC

##### Junior Written Year 5 to Year 6:

Emma McGregor, Strathfieldsaye VIC –

## COMPETITION RESULTS Continued...

"The Legend of Silver Arrow"  
Elizabeth Hoysted, Benalla VIC – "Wednesday Blues"  
Jemima McKenna, Langley VIC – "Faces in the Mud"  
Highly Commended: Reece Wheelhouse, Bridgewater VIC – "My Pa's Dog Jed"  
Special Mention: Amelia Mentiplay-Smith, Benalla VIC  
Special Mention: Carly Scholes, Bridgewater VIC  
Special Mention: Taylah Mangan, Bridgewater VIC  
Special Mention: Hannah May Robinson, Benalla VIC  
Special Mention: Julia Dann, Benalla VIC  
**Junior Written: Year 7 to Year 12**  
Naomi Frederick, Marong VIC – "The Eureka Stockade"  
Sarah Walters, Bendigo VIC – "Oh What a Life"  
Violet MacDonald, Charlbury, Oxon UK – "It's Good for the Farmers"  
Highly Commended: Jessica Walters, Bendigo VIC – "Bird's Eye View"  
Special Mention: Laura Powell, Bendigo VIC  
**Best Junior Free Verse Poem** (though not a free verse competition, it was felt that this poem was deserving of an award)  
Dylan Sammut, Benalla VIC – "The Sounds of Silence" (Year 5 student)  
**Emerging Writer Award** (though not a short story competition, it was felt that this short story was deserving of an award):  
Breanna Merrin, Lockwood VIC – "The Bushes" (Year 3 student)  
**Australian Song Champion:**  
Reg Phillips, Lavington NSW  
Runner-up: Jim Carlisle, Benalla VIC  
**Original Song:**  
Jim Carlisle, Benalla VIC – "My First Day in the

Salon"  
Reg Phillips, Lavington NSW – "A Song for Dad"  
Betty Walton, Tintalra VIC – "The Little Irish Bloke"  
**Other Song:**  
Reg Phillips, Lavington NSW – "Where Country Is"  
John Peel, Batlow NSW – "When the Rain Tumbles Down in July"  
Jim Carlisle, Benalla VIC – "Woman on the Land"

### SNOWY RIVER FESTIVAL Dalgety

**Written PRIMARY Kindy**  
HC: Jack Crispin (SMGS)—*The Ant*  
**YR 1**  
HC: Taneesha Griffiths (SMGS) *Zush's Bush*  
Casey Buckley (SMGS) *The Clever Ant*  
**YR 2**  
HC OVERALL: Jeremiah Murphy (Dalgety P.S) *Red Back Spider* (book prize).  
SC: Georgia Heeley (Dalgety PS) *Ponies*  
SC: Lola Timewell (SMGS) *City and Bush*  
**YR 3/4**  
HC: Elliot Pearson (Dalgety PS) *The Koala*  
HC: Breanna Arnold (Jindabyne CS) *The Stock-Men*  
SC: Isabella Evans (Jindabyne CS) *Emotional Poems*  
**YR 5/6**  
HC: Tamika Dykstra (SMGS) *Me and Old Horse Tim*  
HC: Sean Richards (SMGS) *A Winters Day*  
3<sup>rd</sup> Rebekah Batson (yr 3 Jindabyne CS) *A poem for the flowers, trees and birds*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Joshua Matthews (yr 6 SMGS) *A Remote Land*  
1<sup>st</sup> Rachel Hukins (yr 5 Jindabyne CS) *Our High Country Hideaway*  
**SECONDARY**  
HC Jacqui Webster (Yr 7 SMGS) *The*

*Remembrance* (book prize)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Rebecca Lindsay (Yr 12 SMGS) *Somewhere...*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sabrina Mower (Yr 7 SMGS) *Nan's House*  
1<sup>st</sup> Allie Smith (Yr 9 SMGS) *Snow*

### OPEN

Commended: Max Merckenschlager (SA) *Making Murrundi*  
HC: Max Merckenschlager (SA) *Fury's Feast*  
3<sup>rd</sup> Kevin McFadden (NSW Cooma) *A Landowner's Lament*  
2<sup>nd</sup> David Campbell (VIC) *The Man From Down In Melbourne*  
1<sup>st</sup> Max Merckenschlager (SA) *The Road Scholar*

### Walk-up Performance Competition

**Spin-a-yarn**  
1<sup>st</sup> John Davis (Sat. & Sun.)

**Serious Poem**  
1<sup>st</sup> Peter Mace (Sat. & Sun.)

**Humorous Poem**  
1<sup>st</sup> Gary Cullen (Saturday)  
Equal 1<sup>st</sup> John Peel and Peter Mace (Shared prize Sunday)

**Aussie Song**  
1<sup>st</sup> John Peel (Sat. & Sun.)

**Encouragement Awards**  
Margaret Rose (Book Prize)  
Keith Patrech (Book Prize)  
Lawrence Rushton (Book Prize)  
Louise Young (Book Prize)  
Ruth Davis (Book Prize)  
Les Feltham (Bar Voucher)  
Geoff Cochrane (Bar Voucher)

### 'A TASTE OF COUNTRY' held in Harden Saturday 31st October, 2009.

There were two sections plus a poets brawl.

#### Serious:

1st Susan Carcary  
2nd Gregory North  
3rd Ted Webber  
HC Robyn Sykes  
HC Lance Parker  
HC Greg Broderick

#### Humorous:

1st Gregory North

2nd Susan Carcary  
3rd Garry Lowe  
HC Ted Webber  
HC Robyn Sykes  
HC Greg Broderick  
**One-minute Brawl**  
1st Lance Parker  
Equal 2nd Garry Lowe, Gregory North



Lance Parker of Griffith

### WALLA WALLA WAGON WHEEL AWARD

1st Arthur Green (Warana Qld.)—*For Always and Forever*  
2nd T E Piggott (Canningvale WA)—*The Old Mine*  
3rd TE Piggott (Canningvale WA)—*The Christmas Gift*  
HC Brenda Joy (Charters Towers Qld.)—*The Sheik of the Scrubby*  
HC Arthur Green (Warana Qld.)—*Shadows in the Mist*  
HC Arthur Green (Warana Qld.)—*The Shopaholic's Curse*



Arthur Green of Warana Qld

## The Australian Bush Poets Association Inc.

(Established 1994)

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Arbn 104 032 126

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**Deadline** for copy: 20th day of the month preceding the month of issue.

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

## ADVERTISING RATES

1/3 Column \$10.00

2/3 Column \$15.00

Full Column \$20.00

Half Page \$40.00

Book Shelf \$ 5.00

Poet's Calendar and Regular Events free. (One line only) - Poets Calendar Booklet free. (Deadlines Apr 30 and Oct 30)

To allay costs, copy regarding a festival or event would be appreciated if accompanied by a paid advertisement.

**Terms strictly C.O.D. with ad.**

Send details in plain text along with payment to: The Editor.

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email: [editor@abpa.org.au](mailto:editor@abpa.org.au)

Ph. 02 6344 1477

## Celtic & Chinese Tin Miners Revue Bush Poetry Competition

Celebrating the rich & unique heritage of the tin mining era in the NSW Northern Tablelands

**Performance competition**

**Saturday 13th March 2010**

at the Commercial Hotel Deepwater

**\$1,000 prizemoney**

for best traditional poem relating in any way to mining in Australia

**No entry fee**

Poets breakfast Saturday 7:00 am

Competition 10:00 am

Evening function with performance

winners presenting their poems.

**Written competition**

**\$500 prizemoney**

\$5 each entry. 2 themes:

- Celtic-Australian relating to the early days of tin mining
- Mysterious Australia—unusual sightings eg UFOs, strange animals such as the mysterious Emmaville Panther, Yowies, Chestnuts etc.

Entries close mid February

More information next issue, or visit:

[www.deepwaterpoetrycompetition.com](http://www.deepwaterpoetrycompetition.com)

**Bob McPhee**

Northern Tablelands Irish Association

PO Box 31 Deepwater NSW 2371

Ph/Fax 02 6734 6202

**Perform LIVE**  
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live performances by emerging word artists  
writerstent.com

## Reminder

Your ABPA Membership is

**Due 1st January 2010**

**\$30.00**

for 12 months

All members please ensure that your current email address (if applicable) is enclosed. Many addresses on the ABPA database are no longer current.

**Public Liability Insurance**

for performing poets

**Premium Due 1st January 2010**

**\$70.00**

for 12 months

Send your payment made out to Australian Bush Poets Association, to

**ABPA Treasurer**

**1 Avenue Street**

**Coffs harbour NSW 2450**

# THE SWAGLESS SWAGGIE

(1957) *Edward Harrington*

This happened many years ago  
Before the bush was cleared,  
When every man was six foot high  
And wore a flowing beard.  
One very hot and windy day,  
Along the old coach road,  
Towards Joe Murphy's halfway house  
A bearded bushman strode.

He was a huge and heavy man,  
Well over six foot high,  
An old slouch hat was on his head,  
And murder in his eye.  
No billy can was in his hand,  
No heavy swag he bore,  
But deep and awful were the oaths  
That swagless swaggie swore.

At last he reached the shanty door.  
Into the bar he burst.  
He dumped his hat upon the floor,  
And cursed and cursed and cursed.  
A neighboring shed had just cut out;  
The bar was nearly full  
Of shearers and of bullockies  
Who'd come to cart the wool.

They were a rough and ready lot,  
The bushmen gathered there,  
But every man was stricken dumb,  
To hear the stranger swear.  
He cursed the bush, he cursed mankind,  
The whole wide universe.  
It froze their very blood to hear  
That swagless swaggie curse.

Joe Murphy seized an empty pot  
And filled it brimming full.  
The stranger raised it to his lips  
And took a mighty pull.  
This seemed to cool him down a bit;  
He finished off the ale,  
And to the crowd around the bar  
He told his awful tale.

"I met the Ben Hall gang," he said,  
"The blankards stuck me up!  
They pinched me billy, pinched me  
swag,  
And pinched me flamin' pup!  
They turned me pockets inside out,  
And took me only quid!  
I never thought they'd pinch me pipe,  
But swelp me gawd they did!

I spoke to 'em as man to man,  
I said I'd fight 'em all;  
I would have broke O'Mealleys neck,  
And tanned the hide of Hall.  
They only laughed, and said good-bye,  
And rode away to brag  
Of how they stuck a swaggie up  
And robbed him of his swag.

"I never done 'em any harm,  
I thought 'em decent chaps.  
But now I wouldn't raise a hand  
To save 'em from the traps.  
I'm finished with the bush for good,  
I'm off to Wagga town  
Where they won't stick a swaggie up  
Or take a swaggie down.

The bushmen were a decent lot,  
As bushmen mostly are.  
They filled the stranger up with beer;  
The hat went round the bar,  
The shearers threw some blankets in  
To make another swag,  
The rousers gave a billy can  
And brand new tucker bag.

Joe Murphy gave a meerschaum pipe  
He hadn't smoked for years.  
The stranger was too full of words,  
His eyes were dim with tears.  
The ringer shouted drinks all round  
And then, to top it up,  
The babbling brook, the shearers cook,  
Gave him a kelpie pup.

Next day, an hour before the dawn,  
The stranger took the track  
Complete with pup and billy can,  
His swag upon his back.  
Along the most forsaken roads,  
Intent on dodging graft,  
He headed for the Great North West,  
And laughed, and laughed and laughed.



**Edward 'Ted' Harrington** was born on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1895 to Phillip Henry and Margaret (nee O'Brien). His early youth was spent on his father's wheat property at Pine Lodge Creek, near Shepparton, Victoria. It was here that Ted composed his first poem at the age of nine as part of a competition between the two siblings to see who could write the most impressive verse.

Phillip Harrington expected that his sons would assist on the farm but for Ted, there were always other priorities. He'd often leave the horse and plough in the middle of the paddock so he could write down what was in his mind straight away, and if his father found them or came upon a half milked cow or a half-sown crop he'd be quite annoyed.

Ted, after a family move to a newer selection near Colbinabbin, went to school at Wanalta, (Joseph Furphy's '...  
the schoolhouse on the plain') and

contributed poems to the Rushworth Chronicle under the pseudonym of 'A Wanalta Schoolboy'. He left school at fourteen years of age, his education completed, but was always known 'to be reading'.

With the onset of World War I, Edward enlisted for active service in 1917, joining the Fourth Light Horse Division and saw service in Palestine. He was in the Charge of Beersheba, the siege of Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley campaign (Ess-Alt) and the final Battle of Damascus.

After The War, like many returned servicemen, for many reasons, Ted was never able to settle back into his old life again. He returned to the family selection but his health had suffered greatly and he spent six months at the Caulfield Military Hospital before being trained as a plasterer as part of the

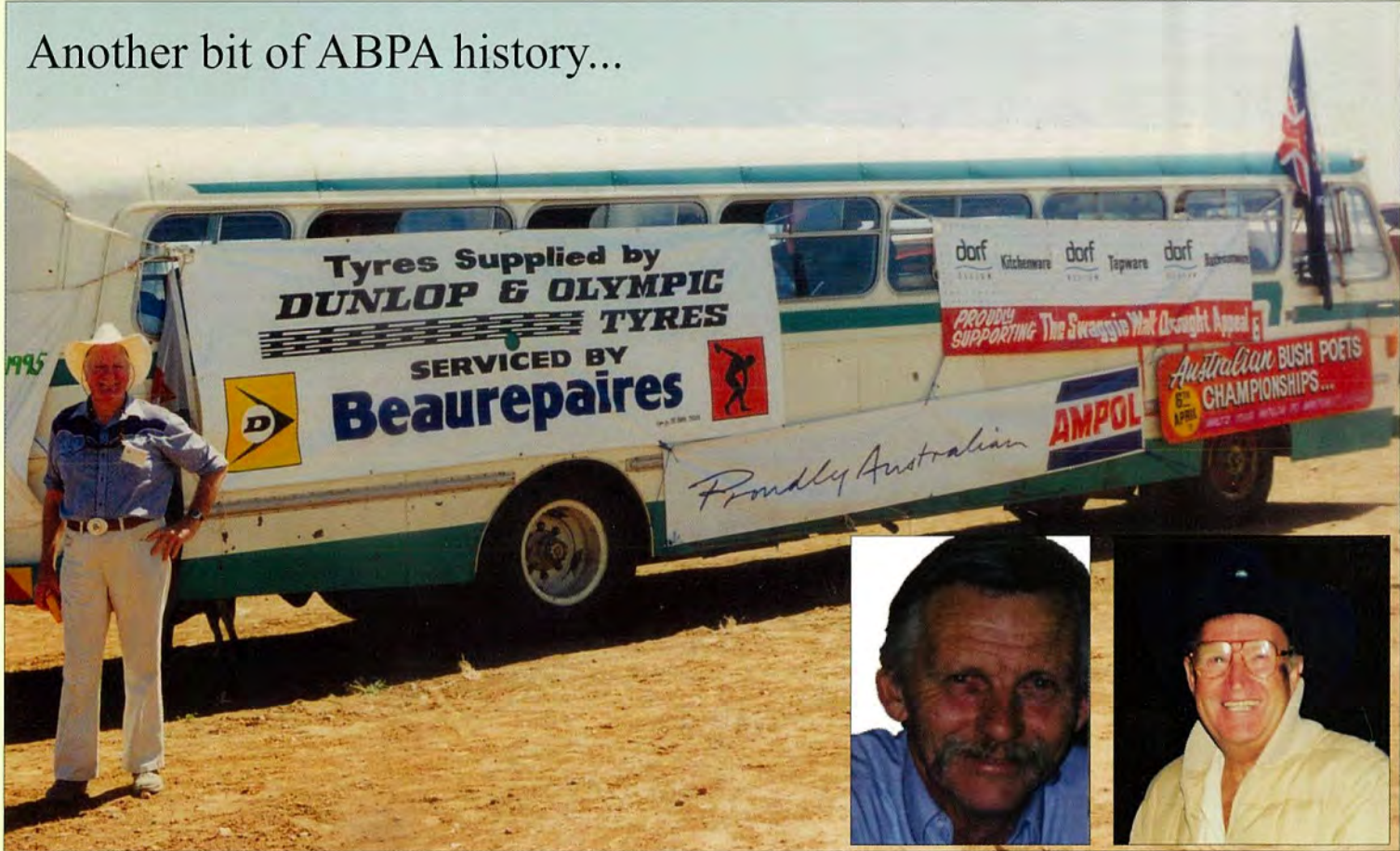
Repatriation Department's Vocational Guidance Scheme. He moved between the city and the country staying with various family members and even working as a rouseabout and drover...but always continued writing.

He never recovered from his war service mentally. physically or spiritually and retained a certain bitterness, that other ex-serviceman in all three wars have written of, that the society he returned to transformed itself into something that he did not feel he had fought for.

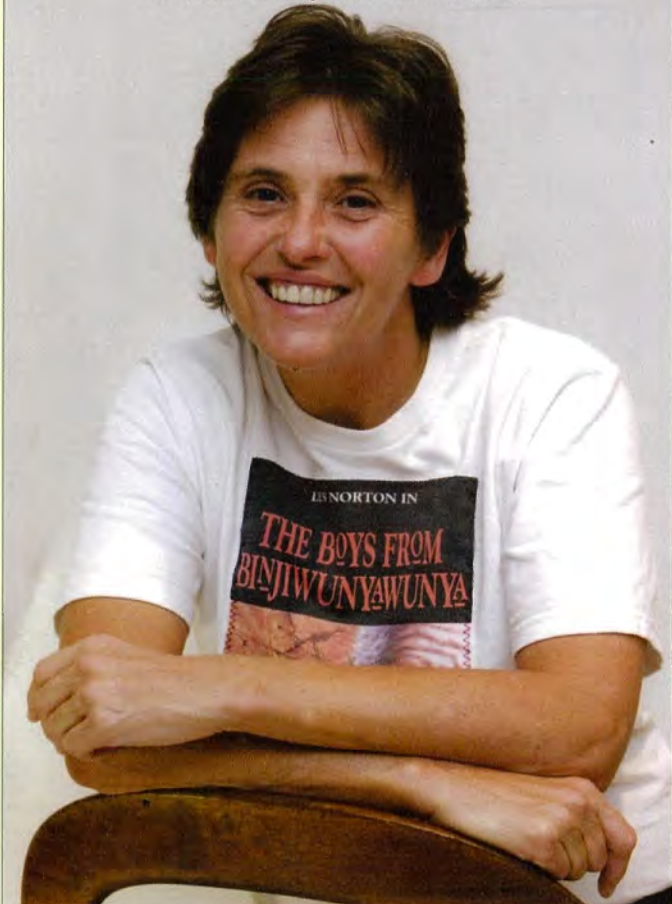
He died in 1965.



Another bit of ABPA history...



Current Australian Female Champion Bush Poet  
Susan Carcary of Maclean NSW



Billy Hay pictured with the poets bus as used in 1995 for the poets trek from Cairns to Winton via Brisbane to the Waltzing Matilda Centenary Celebrations. Pictured also, inaugural Secretary/Treasurer Ron Selby and President Mervyn 'Bluey' Bostock

My thanks to Gregory North for assisting with the production of this issue  
Editor Frank Daniel



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