

ABPA

Australian Bush Poets Association

Magazine Volume 17 No. 7
December 2011 - January 2012

Volume 19 No: 8
December 2012 - Jan 2013

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

2013 Essential Energy Australian Bush Poets Association Bush Poetry Competition

featuring The ABPA "Golden Damper" Award Sponsored by ..



&



to be held at West Tamworth League Club, Phillip Street, West Tamworth
HEATS: Heats will be held on Tuesday 22nd, Thursday 24th & Friday 25th January
All heats begin from 10.30am
FINALS: Saturday 26th January starting at 8.30am

There are two sections:

1. **ORIGINAL** – Performers to perform their own original works
2. **ESTABLISHED** – Performing well known or traditional works.
Participants must not present their own work and must advise the original author's name (if not genuinely Anon.)

PERFORMANCE TIME: MAX. 6 MINUTES INCLUDING PREAMBLE
(Preamble simply sets the scene but does not attract points - so keep it short)

After each heat, selected contestants will be invited to participate in the Saturday Finals.

ENTRY FEE: \$5.00 PER SECTION

To enter the Competition, fill in the Entry Form attached, and forward to:
Co-ordinator, ABPA Golden Damper Competition
PO Box 701
MORNINGSIDE Qld 4170

TO BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN 7TH JANUARY 2013

Download your entry forms from ... <http://www.abpa.org.au/events.html>

Tamworth POETRY READING Group

Organisers of
**THE 2013 BLACKENED BILLY
VERSE COMPETITION**

ATTENTION WRITERS OF BUSH VERSE!

The Blackened Billy Verse Competition is regarded as one of the most prestigious BUSH POETRY competitions in Australia.

Writers of Bush verse are invited to compete.
First prize is \$600 plus the famous
BLACKENED BILLY TROPHY.
Second prize is \$300 and third \$200.

Bush poetry is a traditional type of verse written with rhyme and rhythm that reflects the Australian way of life. The genre has widened in recent years to encompass modern living in both the city and the bush.
Look for writing Tips on the Australian Bush Poets Assn website www.abpa.org.au

Tamworth Poetry Reading Group welcomes entries from new and old writers. Entry forms will be available from September 1. Write to Jan Morris PO Box 3001, West Tamworth NSW 2340 or email janmorris33@bigpond.com

Entries close November 30 and the winners will be announced at the Tamworth Country Music Festival in January 2012.

ABPA Magazine Advertising Rates

Full page \$80
Half Page \$40 (Row or Column)
Third Page \$30 (Row or Column)
Quarter Page or less \$20
Bookshelf \$5

Poets Calendar and Regular Events free (one line only)

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

Send all details in plain text or PDF Format to

editor@abpa.org.au

All payments to be made within 14 days to

The Treasurer
Kym Eitel
24 Sneddon Road
Limestone Creek
Qld. 4701

or via Direct Debit to
ABPA Account
Commonwealth Bank
BBS 064 433
A/C No. 1023 1528

Please put your Name/Club/Invoice as reference so the Treasurer can identify who the deposit is from.

President's Report



G'day
Footy finals have come and gone and now we're back into cricket season - AGAIN! It's not only Time that flies, it's the Years. Christmas is here once more and our hearts turn to Family and loved ones. We're also mindful of our Defence Forces, particularly Overseas and pray for their safety and speedy return.

Our hardworking treasurer Kym, is currently undergoing another intensive round of treatments. Given that the treatments are rather taxing, she needs a break from all her treasurer responsibilities so she can focus on her recovery. On behalf of the ABPA Executive and the Membership, I'd like to send our heartfelt wishes for a full and speedy recovery to Kym. Our thoughts are also with her family, Frank and the girls, at this time in support.

AGM
Our ABPA AGM will be held at 2:00pm on Wednesday 23rd at St Edwards Hall, Hillvue Road Tamworth. All positions on the ABPA Committee will be vacated and elections will be held. You will find "Nomination" and "Appointment of Proxy" forms attached as an insert in this edition.

Draft Strategic Plan
A copy of the draft ABPA Strategic Plan has also been added as an insert in this edition. This is a 'high level' document and is presented to the Membership for further fine tuning. All of the elements of the plan are derived from your input and suggestions in the recent survey.

The Strategic Planning Committee welcome your comments and input. Please forward them to me at manfred@abpa.org.au or by mail to, Strat Plan, Po Box 701 Morningside Qld 4170

ABPA Festival Float
By way of reminder the ABPA will be entering a float in the Procession on Saturday 26th. So any friends or family that may not be involved with the Golden Dampier Finals are invited to represent the ABPA in the Procession.

URGENT - ABPA Treasurer Needed
This is an URGENT call out to any member who can step into the role of Treasurer ASAP. Please contact me on Mob: 04111 60 510.

The Festive Season that we're in makes me reflect again.
So, my melancholy mood dictates that I take up the pen -
and wish us All a heartfelt Peace and ask that we recall
the object of this Season "Peace on Earth, Goodwill to ALL!"

Manfred.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ABPA

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 also required.

(a) Nominations must be in writing, signed by two members of the association and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate.

(b) Must be delivered to the Secretary of the Association at least 21 days before the date fixed for the holding of the Annual General Meeting at which the election is to take place.

(c) Nomination and proxy forms are available on request.

(d) Please send agenda items to the Secretary.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ABPA
Will be held at St Edwards Hall
Hillvue Road Tamworth
Wednesday 23rd January 201

Letters To The Editor

Dear ABPA Editor,

As the organiser of the Blackened Billy Verse Competition, I read David Campbell's article in the Oct-Nov 12 issue with great interest. I hadn't realised the minefield organisers can create with regard to previous publication. Fortunately, the Blackened Billy does not contribute to this complicated environment, as our rule regarding publication states, "Entries shall not have been previously published for the monetary gain of the author", which is exactly the sole requirement suggested by David.

The other matter that David mentions is the rule that states that entries must not have previously won a first, second, or third prize in any poetry competition. This is a rule in the Blackened Billy and, as David says, it is quite common.

Now I want to ask – Why? If a poem is so good, why shouldn't it be able to collect placings in a whole raft of competitions? What a credit to the author if a poem could be acknowledged as having won in several highly prestigious competitions.

There have been quite a few times when we have been asked to withdraw a poem submitted for the Blackened Billy because it has just won or been placed in another competition. That is such a shame, but these are our rules, and have been from the beginning. The Blackened Billy is one of the earliest competitions, and I am sure the first organisers thought the rule was a good one, perhaps because it gave more people a chance to win.

That thinking may not be appropriate these days, when there are so many competitions and so many talented writers around. I believe that excellence should be recognised.

I would like to open this up for discussion in the ABPA magazine. Comments from competitors and other competition organisers would be of great interest and may make the organising committee of the Blackened Billy Verse Competition consider changing this rule.

Jan Morris

re "Gary Fogarty's Ethical Issues, Oct-Nov 2012", item numbered 5. (I do corporate and society/association/group entertaining on request.) I agree wholeheartedly - here is my experience - can be printed in the magazine if you want to. Last year I was invited to entertain during the dinner at an annual meeting of a prominent rural group which held its Queensland convention in Kingaroy over three days. My fee is ridiculously low and for that I supply and perform an especially written poem directly pertaining to their industry group, for which I do a lot of research and validation. So, here I am doing my thing to an audience of well over 160 in between courses at 10pm. They were responding well, from what I could tell at that hour of the night. In the applause at the end, they also thanked me for 'being on the video they just took of me performing'. Well, I nearly fell through the floor. I'll be blown if I could see a video camera pointed at me. Nothing was pre-arranged with me for that to happen. I suppose that nearly in every gig I've done, that has happened, its just that some half inebriated person confessed to me that night and silly me became aware at long last. Heaven only knows what happened to me on that video, OR to the copies of the 'copyright' poem I supplied to them. That videoing of me was a 'no-brainer' and I am still reeling from it. Maybe you could get some ideas together to stop that happening, baring actually asking them not to, at time of engagement. It seems that someone in the audience is going to do it anyway with the use of almost invisible cameras on their phones. That time it was obvious that it was planned by the group to do it. Anxiously awaiting any solutions, without putting the client off-side.

I agree wholeheartedly (re - 'Gary Fogarty's Ethical Issues, Oct-Nov 2012, item numbered 2, para one) . But just how do you get in touch with the living poet to ask their permission if you do not know them or know where they live? As I've said, we don't do social media. Even if we did, how do we know if that poet is on it or on the air at the time. Is there some way that performers like me can get in touch with you at the ABPA to ask to be put in touch with the writer of the poem I want to learn, if they are a member. That could be done by postal mail to ensure that it remains discreet (avoids the clicking-on of emails to someone else) and to ensure that the writer actually receives the request. Yes, we believe in these-called snail mail. I often perform the works of living writers, but always, always say twice who wrote it and if he/she has any acclaim. I give the writer a good go. The audience remembers. I would be only too happy for you to tell me that it can be done through the ABPA and then send off my requests. Is this making too much work for the committee - I expect it would be. So what else can we do? Example - Last year I wanted to get in touch with Bessie Jennings. I looked through years of ABPA magazines, but to no avail. I found her poems, but not how to contact her. Eventually, Telstra helped me in a round-about route and I don't want to go through that again. If the writer is not listed in the phone book - as a lot of people aren't - what then?

Carol Hucheson

Dear ABPA Editor,

I am contacting you on behalf of the Fryer Library at the University of Queensland. Part of the Fryer Library's mission is to collect extensively in the area of Australian literature and poetry, including manuscript and archival material. To that end, the Library is interested in acquiring your Association's publications.

I recently came across a reference to your 2010 book *The Good Old Days: A Collection of Bush Verse* by Kathy Edwards and Frank Daniel but was unable to find it through any of our usual suppliers. Is it possible to purchase a copy from you directly? If not, can you please advise where I may be able to obtain a copy.

I noticed on your website that you publish a magazine. Could you please forward subscription details, and also advise if it is possible for the Fryer Library to acquire back issues.

I would appreciate if you could let me know the details of any other publications you have produced. I am sure they would be good additions to the Fryer collection as well.

Kind regards,

Amanda

p +61 7 334 56277 | f +61 7 3365 6676

www.library.uq.edu.au/fryer/

PRE NATIVITY

©Graham Fredriksen 1956-2010

A carpenter came with his concubine—
and heavy with child was she;
the innkeeper spake from his mug of wine:
"There's no place left in this place o' mine
for a couple the such as ye.

"All the rooms are full—and three to a bed—
and the worst time of the year;
'tis a job I have just t' keep them fed—
the cheese is done, and so is the bread,
and they've finished off the beer.

"'Tis the government's fault, as ye'd have t' know,
for they've called in a census, see;
now the village is full and to overflow,
swagmen and bagmen wherever ye go,
from all over the Back Countree.

"Cameleers in from the Further Out,
and shepherds from Way Beyond;
but that's what bureaucracy's all about—
they haven't a clue, and ye know there's nowt
we can do but sit and despond.

"But a roof ye need; well, I have t' say
there's only one place I know:
back up the track but a little way,
a barn there is where they bring the hay—
ye could bed down there, I trow.

Though ye may have t' share yere lodgings, ay,
with a cow and a sheep or two;
but I see ye've a donkey outside hard by,
so a few more animals shouldn't try
ye much when ye're makin' do.

"Ye take the third turn back on yere right—
there should be enough light t' see;
the stars are out, and they say last night
that a new star came—and ever so bright—
ah! but stars are just stars t' me.

"Well, I must be at it, I've mouths t' feed—
and soon ye'll have an extra one;
ay, ye shall, by the looks, indeed,
so be off with ye now, and Heaven speed—
and here's to a hearty son

MERRY CHRISTMAS SON

© 2012 Manfred Vijars

At Christmas time when just a lad
I'd hover 'round the kitchen
Smells of magic in the air,
my tastebuds would be twitchin'
Watching Mum mix cakes in bowls
her wooden spoon is clicking
She'd glance my way and with a laugh
the spoon was mine for licking!

... then with a grin, she'd say to me -
"Merry Christmas Son"

Cooking was her great delight
- some say it was her calling
And every Christmas was the same,
the table would be sprawling
With lots of goodies, lots of treats.
I'm playing with my cousins
Then from the chook-house running back,
I tripped and broke a dozen.

... she feigned anger, but still called out,
"Merry Christmas Son!"

The family grew as families do
with in-laws, pets and grandkids
Now little 'tackers' run amuck
- one knocked her box of jam-lids.
With all those Christmas treats it's hard
to stop small fingers picking.
But how things change, instead of me,
my kids now do the licking

... Still twinkling eyes would say to me,
"Merry Christmas Son."

And Mothers age, as Mothers must,
I made it there beside her
She found the strength to linger on,
I see now how our times were
Precious. I thought She'd live forever,
but She's gone.
I shed a tear amid the cheer for,
"Merry Christmas Son."
... I love you and I miss you, so -
"Merry Christmas - Mum"



OUR LOGO – “The Packhorse”

By Jack Drake



I must admit to being struck by a twinge of conscience when reading Neil's editorial in the last Newsletter. It has been a fair while since I made any contribution. I have always been rather pleased that a bush horseman with a packhorse at his side, became the official logo for the ABPA. Having recently become reinvolved with packing it occurred to me that a bit of information about the subject may be of interest to our members.

The humble packhorse wandered back into my life a few months ago after being asked by Cindy Fogarty if I would arrange a demonstration of packing for the Millmerran Camp Oven Festival. All of a sudden I was re-living a part of my life that had been pretty much past tense for quite a while. For a start, I had no pack saddles or bags, but this was solved thanks to two good friends who had been patiently waiting for me to build them a pack outfit for about ten years.

Since giving up horses as my main source of income in 2001, my saddlery workshop had been quietly gathering dust and cobwebs. I got some leather, hardware and saddle lining together, spent a full day overhauling and sharpening my long neglected tools, and over the next month, built a brand new packsaddle and leather pack bags. I got together with my daughter Vicki who is a professional horse trainer. I did the talking. Vicki did the riding and leading, and we had a great time putting on three packhorse demos for the crowds at Millmerran on October 6th and 7th.

From the time mankind first domesticated animals, he began using them to carry loads. From native Americans using dogs as beasts of burden, right up to the use of elephants in Asia, the pack animal is probably the oldest method of cartage aside from humans backpacking, known to man. Horses, donkeys, mules, llamas, camels, oxen and buffalo have all carried mankind's belongings.

The Australian tradition of the packhorse goes back to European settlement. Our first really successful explorers were the ones who gave up trying to negotiate the Aussie bush with drays and carts, and loaded their gear on pack animals. Ludwig Leichhardt, Augustus Gregory and John Forrest were amongst our best and they used packs on their long traverses. Some remote mines in mountainous North Queensland hauled all their ore to the smelters by packhorse and mule with massive teams in excess of 300 animals. In 1886 Andy Wolfgang left Georgetown in Queensland for the Kimberly gold rush in Western Australia with 140 packhorses loaded with stores for the miners.

Station stock camps and droving plants carried their gear by packhorse although most drovers in the more settled 'inside' country used carts or wagonettes. The long distance, store cattle drovers who brought big mobs out of the north and west to the railheads and fattening properties, almost exclusively used packs. This gave them the mobility to follow the grass. When stock routes were eaten out, the road mobs could travel wherever there was feed for the cattle and horses. Some drovers did use wagonettes but the packsaddles and bags were always carried with them. If they had to, they could leave the vehicle for later collection and load the packs to negotiate country that prohibited wheeled travel.

Almost every rural district had a packhorse mail service in the early days when the mailman and his patient charges brought welcome letters and 'The Bushman's Bible', the Sydney Bulletin with its bush poetry and prose to eager readers. To me, the member of the packhorse-using fraternity most suggested by our logo, is the bagman. A bagman was a sort of upmarket swaggie who travelled Australia's tracks and by ways with a saddle horse and a few pack animals - usually an itinerant worker. The bagman and in the odd instance, bagwoman, had a much more preferable existence than the footslogging swagman. They were not limited by what they could carry on their person so a few more luxuries were available to the bagman including a better supply of tucker than the old ten, ten, two and a quarter (ten pounds each of flour and meat, two pounds of sugar and a quarter pound of tea) that was the standard issue to travellers in by gone times. They could carry things like salt to cure meat, a few extra cooking utensils, a change or two of clothing, an axe to make firewood gathering much simpler and a firearm to make feeding themselves less of a struggle.

It is easy to imagine poetry being composed and recited in a bagman's camp while the fire blazed cheerfully and a nice piece of beef or mutton discretely obtained without the squatter's knowledge or consent, sizzled in the rolled iron Bedourie style camp oven. The main requirement when loading a packhorse is to have the loads on either side evenly balanced. If one bag is heavier than the other, the packsaddle will lean to the heavy side and possibly roll right round beneath the belly. Even if the load does not roll, a badly balanced load will cause sore backs and girth galls. Heavy loads can be carried over short distances but a horse that is travelling for several hours should not be expected to carry more than 100 kilograms. Where a rider can balance himself on a horse, packs are an inert load. Dead weight is harder to carry and long distance packers never put more than 40 kilos each side, usually with a rolled swag laid across the saddle as a top load. They would finally strap the Bedourie oven or a nest of flat sided billycans, on top of the swag. An axe and shovel could be hung from the saddle hooks on each side and the pack bags loaded on top of them.

My own experience with packhorses began as a young bloke in New Zealand when I went to work on high country stations at the age of 17. The big sheep runs in the foothills of the southern alps were far too steep and rugged for riding horses and the musterers walked their beats and gathered the mountain merinos with dogs. Each musterer would have between four and seven sheep dogs - silent, gathering dogs known as 'heading dogs' that would run to the lead of mobs and work them back towards the shepherd, and noisy barking 'huntaways' that pushed the sheep down the mountainsides to where the person on the bottom beat in the valley would gather them into a steadily increasing mob as each day's mustering progressed.

Because of the climate in the Shaky Isles, the practice of sleeping out as followed by Australian stock camps, was not possible. Musterers camped in huts like stockmen did in the Snowy Mountains. Many huts were in such inaccessible places that the material to build them was carted in by packhorse and every mustering camp that could not be reached by a vehicle, was supplied by a team of four to six packhorses. I also packed salt licks for stock, fencing gear, building materials and deer and feral pig carcasses when meat hunting was a lucrative occupation during the 1960s with wild shot venison bringing almost \$2 per kilogram.

All in all, the packhorse had a great influence on the settlement of Australia and as such is a very worthy emblem of the Australian Bush Poets Association.

The HUMBLE PACKHORSE

© Jack Drake 1.10.2012

The packs are on and loaded and the sursingles are drawn.
They string out from the homestead with its manicured lawn.
No more long rests in the paddock, lazy hours to shake and stamp.
Now it's gibber plains and Gidgee, lugging loads to cattle camps.

He wasn't often pretty - not a show pony like some,
And at times he was a rebel, slinging loads to kingdom come.
Heavy shouldered, hairy legged, still he sings his song again.
Footfalls.... steady rhythm. Clashing camp warethe refrain.

So salute the humble packhorse who trod pads since way back when,
Carting tucker, swags and camp gear for the horse plant and the men.
Helping open up Australia steering long and dusty tracks
As he shouldered the advancement of a nation on his back.



Vicki Brennan and Jack Drake demonstrating packing at the 2012 Australian Camp Oven Festival, Millmerran, Qld.

A MAKER of EMPIRE

Will Ogilvie

A patient, honest, kindly friend
The packhorse plodded down the years,
Content his humble life to spend
In toil to aid the pioneers,
Before the swagman and his load,
Before the wagon and the train,
He trampled out the dusty road
And trod the dry road in again.

He bore the first prospector's pan,
The first surveyor's tent and gear;
With Sturt and Mitchell led the van
O'er plains of Doubt, through scrubs of Fear.
When foremen swarmed about the track
The danger-circled path he kept,
And bore the blankets on his back
Of watchful men who seldom slept.

In the grey dust of moving herds
He tugged at dawn the golden grass,
While through the mist like phantom birds
He saw the great white bullocks pass.
In the cool creek at noon he splashed,
Or drank at eve from brackish wells;
All day his swinging camp-ware clashed,
All night his bell among the bells.

Before the engine's throb and thrust,
Before the humming of the wires,
This overlander, swathed in dust,
Across the last dim range retires.
Yet those who know shall not forget
That North and Westward, rod by rod,
He saw the conquering camp-fires set
And broke the track an Empire trod.

Folks, here's a chance to put together a piece on your favourite poet – be they well-known or obscure. Get on Google, pick the eyes out of a biography, try to find a photo and submit one or two of their better poems and send the lot in and we'll sort through them.

Try to keep the bio under 500 words and if people are interested they can look up more on the internet.

For this month's magazine Muz Hartin has had a look at English-born "Canadian" POET Robert Service who he believes, internationally, is closest in style and content to the Paterson/Lawson genre.

According to Muz – "It's like Banjo had a cousin in the Yukon."

From Wikipedia

Robert William Service (January 16, 1874 – September 11, 1958) was a poet and writer who has often been called "the Bard of the Yukon".

Service is best known for his poems "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" and "The Cremation of Sam McGee", from his first book, *Songs of a Sourdough* (1907; also published as *The Spell of the Yukon and Other Verses*). "These humorous tales in verse were considered doggerel by the literary set, yet remain extremely popular to this day.

Early life

Robert W. Service was born in Preston, Lancashire, England,[4] the first of ten children. His father, also Robert Service, was a banker from Kilwinning, Scotland, who had been transferred to England.

After leaving school[Service joined the Commercial Bank of Scotland which would later become the Royal Bank of Scotland. He was writing at this time and reportedly already "selling his verses". He was also reading poetry: Browning, Keats, Tennyson, and Thackeray.

Service moved to Canada at the age of 21 and travelled to Vancouver Island, British Columbia with his Buffalo Bill outfit and dreams of becoming a cowboy. He drifted around western North America, "wandering from California to British Columbia," taking and quitting a series of jobs: "Starving in Mexico, residing in a California bordello, farming on Vancouver Island and pursuing unrequited love in Vancouver." This sometimes required him to leech off his parent's Scottish neighbors and friends who had previously immigrated to Canada.

In 1899 Service was a store clerk in Cowichan Bay, British Columbia. He mentioned to a customer (Charles H. Gibbons, editor of the *Victoria Daily Colonist*) that he wrote verses, with the result that six poems by "R.S." on the Boer Wars had appeared in the *Colonist* by July 1900[– including "The March of the Dead" that would later appear in his first book. (Service's brother Alick was a prisoner of the Boers at the time, having been captured on November 15, 1899, alongside Winston Churchill.)

Down on his luck in 1903, Service was hired by a Canadian Bank of Commerce branch in Victoria, British Columbia, using his Commercial Bank letter of reference. Throughout this period, Service continued writing and saving his verses: "more than a third of the poems in his first volume had been written before he moved north in 1904."

Yukon period

Whitehorse was a frontier town, less than ten years old. Located on the Yukon River at the White Horse Rapids, it had begun in 1897 as a campground for prospectors on their way to Dawson City to join the Klondike Gold Rush. The railroad that Service rode in on, the White Pass and Yukon Route, had reached Whitehorse only in 1900.

Settling in, "Service dreamed and listened to the stories of the great gold rush." He also "took part in the extremely active Whitehorse social life. As was popular at the time he recited at concerts – things like 'Casey at the Bat' and 'Gunga Din', but they were getting stale."

One day (Service later wrote), while pondering what to recite at an upcoming church concert he met E.J. "Stroller" White, editor of the *Whitehorse Star*. White suggested: "Why don't you write a poem for it? Give us something about our own bit of earth. We sure would appreciate it. There's a rich paystreak waiting for someone to work. Why don't you go in and stake it?" Returning from a walk one Saturday night, Service heard the sounds of revelry from a saloon, and the phrase "A bunch of the boys were whooping it up" popped into his head. Inspired, he ran to the bank to write it down (almost being shot as a burglar), and by the next morning "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" was complete.

"A month or so later he heard a gold rush yarn from a Dawson mining man about a fellow who cremated his pal." He spent the night walking in the woods composing "The Cremation of Sam McGee", and wrote it down from memory the next day.[1]

One remarkable thing about both of Service's best-known ballads is how easily he wrote them. When writing about composing "The Shooting of Dan McGrew", 'easy' was exactly the word he used: "For it came so easy to me in my excited state that I was amazed at my facility. It was as if someone was whispering in my ear." [1] And this was just after someone had tried to shoot him. He continued: "As I wrote stanza after stanza, the story seemed to evolve itself. It was a marvelous experience. Before I crawled into my bed at five in the morning, my ballad was in the bag."

Service himself did not call his work poetry. "'Verse, not poetry, is what I was after ... something the man in the street would take notice of and the sweet old lady would paste in her album; something the schoolboy would spout and the fellow in the pub would quote. Yet I never wrote to please anyone but myself; it just happened. I belonged to the simple folks whom I liked to please."

THE SHOOTING OF DAN MCGREW

©Robert Service

A bunch of the boys were whooping it up in the Malamute saloon;
The kid that handles the music-box was hitting a rag-time tune;
Back of the bar, in a solo game, sat Dangerous Dan McGrew,
And watching his luck was his light-o'-love, the lady that's known as Lou.
When out of the night, which was fifty below, and into the din and glare,
There stumbled a miner fresh from the creeks, dog-dirty, and loaded for bear.
He looked like a man with a foot in the grave and scarcely the strength of a louse,
Yet he tilted a poke of dust on the bar, and he called for drinks for the house.
There was none could place the stranger's face, though we searched ourselves for a clue;
But we drank his health, and the last to drink was Dangerous Dan McGrew.
There's men that somehow just grip your eyes, and hold them hard like a spell;
And such was he, and he looked to me like a man who had lived in hell;
With a face most hair, and the dreary stare of a dog whose day is done,
As he watered the green stuff in his glass, and the drops fell one by one.
Then I got to figgering who he was, and wondering what he'd do,
And I turned my head — and there watching him was the lady that's known as Lou.
His eyes went rubbering round the room, and he seemed in a kind of daze,
Till at last that old piano fell in the way of his wandering gaze.
The rag-time kid was having a drink; there was no one else on the stool,
So the stranger stumbles across the room, and flops down there like a fool.
In a buckskin shirt that was glazed with dirt he sat, and I saw him sway,
Then he clutched the keys with his talon hands — my God! but that man could play.
Were you ever out in the Great Alone, when the moon was awful clear,
And the icy mountains hemmed you in with a silence you most could hear;
With only the howl of a timber wolf, and you camped there in the cold,
A half-dead thing in a stark, dead world, clean mad for the muck called gold;
While high overhead, green, yellow, and red, the North Lights swept in bars? —
Then you've a hunch what the music meant . . . hunger and might and the stars.
And hunger not of the belly kind, that's banished with bacon and beans,
But the gnawing hunger of lonely men for a home and all that it means;
For a fireside far from the cares that are, four walls and a roof above;
But oh! so cramful of cosy joy, and crowded with a woman's love —
A woman dearer than all the world, and true as Heaven is true —
(God! how ghastly she looks through her rouge, — the lady that's known as Lou.)
Then on a sudden the music changed, so soft that you scarce could hear;
But you felt that your life had been looted clean of all that it once held dear;
That someone had stolen the woman you loved; that her love was a devil's lie;
That your guts were gone, and the best for you was to crawl away and die.
'Twas the crowning cry of a heart's despair, and it thrilled you through and through —
"I guess I'll make it a spread misere," said Dangerous Dan McGrew.
The music almost dies away . . . then it burst like a pent-up flood;
And it seemed to say, "Repay, repay," and my eyes were blind with blood.
The thought came back of an ancient wrong, and it stung like a frozen lash,
And the lust awoke to kill, to kill . . . then the music stopped with a crash,
And the stranger turned, and his eyes they burned in a most peculiar way;
In a buckskin shirt that was glazed with dirt he sat, and I saw him sway;
Then his lips went in in a kind of grin, and he spoke, and his voice was calm,
And "Boys," says he, "you don't know me, and none of you care a damn;
But I want to state, and my words are straight, and I'll bet my poke they're true,
That one of you is a hound of hell . . . and that one is Dan McGrew."
Then I ducked my head and the lights went out, and two guns blazed in the dark;
And a woman screamed, and the lights went up, and two men lay stiff and stark.
Pitched on his head, and pumped full of lead, was Dangerous Dan McGrew,
While the man from the creeks lay clutched to the breast of the lady that's known as Lou.
These are the simple facts of the case, and I guess I ought to know.
They say that the stranger was crazed with "hooch," and I'm not denying it's so.
I'm not so wise as the lawyer guys, but strictly between us two —
The woman that kissed him — and pinched his poke — was the lady known as Lou.

Christmas Poems For Children

Stephen Whiteside

The Year We Hosted Christmas

Well, we've hosted the Olympics. We have our own Grand Prix.
We'll have the soccer World Cup too, one day. Just wait and see,
But have you heard the story ('cause it isn't widely known)
Of how we hosted Christmas once, and made it all our own?

Now Santa's at the North Pole, right? We all know this is true. Well,
once we made an offer - hospitality "True Blue".

We'd place him in a humpy in the mulga back of Burke,
And Santa said he thought the plan would be a mighty lurk!

We said, "Don't bring the reindeer. They will struggle in the heat..
We'll provide a team of bullocks. You will find they can't be beat.
Leave the padded suit behind. You've likely heard reports.
You'll only need a singlet, and a baggy pair of shorts.

"You'd better bring the elves, too. We know you've lots of work.
There isn't much technology the other side of Burke.
Don't fear we'll blow your cover. The population's thin.
It really will not matter if your hammers make a din."

So Santa came in January. He had a holiday,
Then he brought his elves, all his gear, and settled down to stay. He
found conditions challenging - the heat, the dust, the flies,
But we gave him an Akubra hat to help him shield his eyes.

And as he worked and worked beneath the unforgiving sun,
He sweated off a lot of weight, and found when year was done He
was like a wiry stockman, for his skin had turned to brown, And
nobody'd have recognised him if he'd come to town.

At last the time arrived for him to pack his sleigh and leave.
He didn't want to leave our land. He paused a while to grieve.
He loved our sunburnt country, but duty called, of course,
So he mustered all the bullocks. (Yes, he'd learnt to ride a horse!)

So wiry Santa Stockman, he headed off once more,
On Christmas Eve to hand out gifts on every distant shore.
The bullocks did a mighty job. Their task, indeed, was large,
For they towed a second sleigh, just like a Murray River barge

Which carried all the elves, you see. They wouldn't stay behind
(Though we offered them a special trip, and said we didn't mind).
The bullocks did so well, in fact, we let him keep the team.
He said the sleigh, with them up front, just handled like a dream.

In time, he said, they grew a long thick coat to insulate
Them from the frozen polar clime. He said they looked just great,
And if by chance you catch a glimpse above your window sill
Of Santa's sleigh you'll see, in fact, it's pulled by bullocks still!

© Stephen Whiteside 20.12.08

Santa's Aussie Sail

The night was drawing to a close. Along the eastern sky
The softest, palest haze of light declared that dawn was nigh.
Donner's tongue was lolling. Blitzen's best was best.
Prancer's eyes were rolling, and Vixen breathing fast.

"They're just not going to make it!" Underneath his breath
Santa muttered grimly. "I can't flog the beasts to death!
I haven't reached Australia yet. What am I to do?"
The sky lit up a little more. The coast-line came in view.

He lost a little altitude. Too fast approached the day.
He saw a little sailing boat bobbing in the bay.
A fresh breeze whipped up white-caps. Conditions looked just prime,
For he knew he'd need to hurry in his battle against time.

"This is beaut," said Santa, "I'll be finished in a snatch."
He took his presents from the sleigh, and tossed them down the hatch.
He put the reindeer down beside a bunch of kangaroo,
And then he headed off, to bring some gifts to me and you.

Back and forth he tacked his craft, tossing parcels high.
Down through people's chimneys presents tumbled from the sky.
He charged across the north coast, then he sizzled down the east,
For a boat will never tire, see, unlike a living beast.

He flew across Bass Strait, with his spinnaker held high
(And he smashed the "Sydney Hobart" record too, just by the by).
He charged around Tasmania, then he headed north again,
And still, from up on high, did a flood of presents rain.

He back-tracked to Mallacoota, and then he headed west.
(Santa Claus or Matthew Flinders? Tell me, who was best?)
He dashed across the Bight, and then he headed north at Leeuwin,
And all the while, behind his stern, a mighty wake was spewin'.

He raced past Perth and Ningaloo, and Melville Island, too,
Until he reached his reindeer near that bunch of kangaroo.
They were now well rested, so he moored the boat once more,
Then he grabbed the last few gifts, and rowed the tender to the shore.

They headed for the Centre for, although he is a star
With a mighty throwing arm, he couldn't toss the gifts THAT far,
And just as he was finished, yes, the moment he shot through
And headed for the far North Pole, dawn broke at Uluru.

So that, then, is the narrative of Santa's Aussie sail.
Next year he brought more reindeer, so his mission couldn't fail,
And the owners of the boat knew not their contribution grand,
Though they never could explain their tender lying on the sand!

© Stephen Whiteside 12.12.08

Young Writer Of The Month

Jackson Dowling

Whether living on a Station in rural Australia, or travelling the deserted plains of the Oodnadatta Track, inspiration can come in a flood to the imaginative grasp of the Poet.

And so it can be seen in the creative writings of Year 5 School Of The Air student, Jackson Dowling, who also attends mainstream classes each Friday at Hay Public Primary School.

Jackson lives on Merritop Station, 132kms North West of Hay NSW and recently travelled across the Oodnadatta Track with his Mum, Dad and brother Harrison, keeping a journal of his travels along the way, as they soaked up the wondrous sights and sounds of our unique Australian Outback landscape.

After constructing his poem drawn from his observations from the trip, his teacher at Hay Public Primary School, Mrs. Cullenward, Jackson and other students were persuaded to have their poems entered in the recent 5 Rivers Festival Poetry Competition.

Jackson's poem, 'The Drought' was awarded first place in the Year 5 Section. He drew his inspiration for the poem from the images he perceived as they drove out to remote 'Lake Eyre'. We hope to hear and read more of Jackson's Poetry offerings in coming years, and we are sure that given his surroundings, lifestyle and taste for travelling Australia, inspiration will flow through to his pen and many more wonderful poems will emerge.

Congratulations Jackson.

The Drought

© Jackson Dowling 2012

The land is dry and dusty
The waterholes once flowing with
fresh, clear water.
Now dry and cracked like a wrinkly old chip.
The barren land is dotted with sand dunes
The clay pans are covered with salt
It is hot day and night.
Cattle surround the waterholes
Pumped by the underground bores.
Their haunches stand out like mountain ranges
on a desert plain.
Trees and bushes are dying.
Dingoes are struggling to survive.
They have to walk further to get water.
Everything is trying to get shelter.
Everything is sweltering and dying.



The Big Avoca Do

Plans are already well underway for the 3rd Annual Big Avoca Do, to be held at the Shire Hall in Avoca, a small town in Central Victoria, on March 23rd 2013.

The Big Avoca Do is the brainchild of Victorian Bush Poet Col Driscoll and local Bush Poetry enthusiast Bruce Field as a way of bringing the community together for a fun night out. Along the way they raise funds for local causes. In fact the first 2 shows have raised over \$10,000 for flood recovery and the local Kindergarten upgrade and next year they hope to raise over \$5,000 for the Avoca Mens Shed.

But it's not just about raising money; it's also about raising the profile of Bush Poetry within the Pyrenees region of Victoria. With guest Poets such as Neil McArthur, Ray Essery and Bush Balladeer Errol Gray amongst the big names to grace the stage over the last 2 years, the locals are fast becoming addicted to the spoken word. Throw in musicians such as Dennis O'Keefe, Jill Meehan, Maria Ford and Graeme Coates and you have the recipe for a very successful show.

Col has also created the 'Pyrenees Poet Written Bush Poetry Competition' aimed at encouraging the locals to try their hand at writing a poem or two. The finalists get the opportunity to recite their works on stage at the Big Avoca Do, much to the delight of the encouraging crowd. A trophy and cash prizes are also up for grabs.

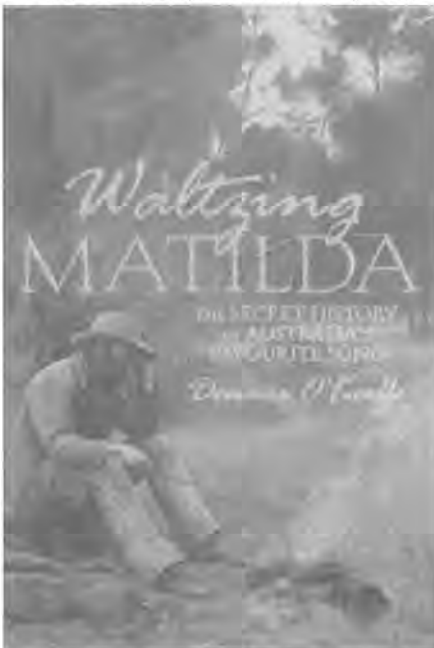
And to add to the momentum, local businessman Steve Donaldson has started up the Avoca Music Festival on the same weekend, providing Col and his guest poets with an opportunity to perform a Poets Breakfast to festival goers on the Sunday morning.

2013 promises to be another ripper show with a top line up of local and interstate artists including Gary Fogarty, Col Milligan and musician Greg Storer on the Bill. Of course Col and Neil McArthur will be there to keep things on the road. It's good to see that Bush Poetry is alive and well in Victoria.

For further info contact Col at myfire@colindriscollbushpoet.com.au

WALTZING MATILDA

The Secret History of Australia's Favourite Song
Dennis O'Keefe, Allen & Unwin, 2012



The Big Avoca Do team from 2012
Ray Essery, Neil McArthur, Dennis O'Keefe, Errol Gray, Jill Meehan, Col Driscoll

This book took a long time to reach publication, but it was worth the wait. Many years of dedicated research and the passionate, thoughtful interest of Dennis O'Keefe has produced an Australian publication of great importance.

This book is a lot more than the poem and subsequent song versions that evolved from Banjo Paterson and Christina Macpherson. It is about the history and development of the Australian character, the painful and slow birth of the trade union movement, the hardships endured by the squatter class and the tactics of both groups, and how close we came to experiencing the worst war of all, a civil war. It contains elements of violence, arson and murder. It is also a story of romance, both in human and nationalistic senses. The personalities of many of the key players in the story are covered in detail, much of it obtained from direct descendants through personal interviews conducted by the author. Apparently the Banjo was quite a lad with the ladies!

Dennis O'Keefe's *Waltzing Matilda* covers a wide spectrum of Australian politics, folklore and history and I believe it is a book that should take a prominent position on the bookshelf of Australian literature. It is essential reading for all Australians be they school students, those seeking information on our history and folklore, and for those that already have a profound knowledge of our heritage. As the blurb says, 'Waltzing Matilda is as important to Australian culture as the Eureka Stockade and Ned Kelly'. (Reviewed by Chris Woodland 25/5/12.)

MEL & SUSIE ON TOUR

Melanie Hall gives us an update on Mel and Susie on Tour

So, Mel, you and Susie are "On Tour"?

Mel: Well it's better than saying we've got no bookings

So what do you do about that?

Mel: We book and spruik. We book a hall in a town then spruik it up with the locals and hope we get an audience

And what has been the highlight of the tour so far?

Mel: Well, in one town we actually had an audience! No, I'm kidding, it's gone really well considering we are boldly going where no sensible poet has gone before. We hope that we are introducing new audiences to the joys of bush poetry. In other years we have relied on contacts we made in Winton but this year we branched out to places where we had no contacts, just us and a show and high hopes

What have been your favorite places on this trip?

Mel: I got to recite Paterson's 'Come By Chance' at the Come By Chance Picnic Races. It has always been a favorite poem of mine so I was thrilled to do it on race day.

This tour has been a kind of Poets Heritage Tour; we've taken in lots of places that have great poetical significance. We performed in Nevertire, and of course Lawson wrote "Jack Dunn of Nevertire" and we did a concert in Narromine. Paterson made Narromine famous with "The City of Dreadful Thirst". Banjo also wrote about Walgett, not just the obvious reference in 'Mulga Bill' but also "A Walgett Episode", "Fur and Feathers" and "Been There Before". We stayed in Yeoval where Paterson spent his early years at Buckinbah, and Orange where Paterson was born. We performed at the Cooee Festival in Gildangra where Ron Stevens recited Brenda Joy's winning poems, and we got to explore the wonderful Warumbungles.

But I have to admit my favorite place so far was at the start of this tour when we spent a month in Lightning Ridge after the Gympie Muster. Neither of us knew what to expect and we both fell in love with The Ridge. We were doing a show every night at the Opal Caravan Park and that left plenty of time to explore the Ridge and meet some of its famous characters. Every bloke has a beard. Every nationality on earth is represented and it really feels like everyone is welcome. We saw the Black Hand, met the Black Queen but we never found a black opal!

I'm glad we got to stay in Dubbo for a while; we did a concert and some local ABC. We also visited with Ellis and Maureen Campbell and it was great to see Ellis looking and sounding great. We went to the zoo but we were hesitant to do a show in case they put us on after the monkeys and people thought it was an encore.

The year ends for us with concerts in South Sydney, Billimari (near Canowindra) and Coolamon then we'll have a break on Susie's favorite river, the Murrumbidgee.

Where do you head to in 2013?

Mel: We start the year in Parkes at the Elvis Festival. We'll do a show in the showgrounds for 8 days leading up to the festival then we're on the main stage Thursday and Friday afternoon and back to the showgrounds for matinee shows over the weekend. Susie is madly writing more Elvis spoofs and trying to lose some weight so she fits into her Elvis costume. Then we're off to Tamworth and the Longyard.

By February we'll be in Gosford, Newcastle, Singleton and Maitland. In March we're up to Uralla, Armidale and Glen Innes then we begin April with Oracles of the Bush in Tenterfield with Marco and we're back over the border to Beaudesert for the Lions Club, a fundraiser in Monogorilby, Noel Stallard's "Poets Mates" in Brisbane and a caravan rally further north, then we're back to Winton for the winter months, May to September.

You certainly do lots of kilometres

Mel: We've found that we have to plan a tour and stick to it. If you say yes to events that are outside the route then you end up doing thousands of extra miles for not too big a reward. We'd prefer to work every weekend and rigidly stick to a planned tour route. After all that travelling, it's great to get back to Winton and stop for a while where we're plugged in and charging! We perform while we're there but it's also a great place to write and run new material, and of course we have to plan the next leg of the never-ending tour, it will be Victoria next spring and summer, I'm really looking forward to it.

Details of Mel and Susie on Tour concerts are on their website www.melandsusieontour.com.au or on facebook Mel and Susie on Tour



HUNTER POETS POETRYFEST 2012 AND RESULTS OF THE NSW WRITTEN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS 2012

The PoetryFest 2012 weekend began Friday afternoon with arrivals catching up or getting to know newcomers. The initial organised activity was designed to get everyone involved, it was the "Walk Up" where poems are presented by anyone who is willing to recite. The audience participation was a prelude to a wonderful concert of poetry and song presented by Pat Drummond, Noel Stallard, Peter Mace and Carol Heuchan.

Our first meal for the weekend, dinner Friday evening was the first of the wonderful meals provided throughout the weekend by the Albion Park Camp Oven Cooking Club.

The evening continued well into the night with audience participation in "Game On", aimed at improving the poet's vocabulary through fast paced word games. One minute cup titles were also available during the evening. The "One Minute Cup" is open to all attendees who select a random title for a poem to be written for presentation in a competition on Sunday morning. The title "One Minute Cup" refers to the requirement to recite the poem within a time frame of one minute.

Poet's Walk Ups continued during breakfast at 7.30 as a prelude to Saturday's workshops. Noel Stallard condensed a 3 hour lesson on writing poetry into a hectic but wonderfully informative session which ran overtime due to the interest and audience interaction. Lake Macquarie Fellowship of Australia Writers Jan and Lynda then did a double act on the "Perils of Punctuation" and "Grammatical Glitches". Followed by Milton and Carol presenting a session on "getting inspired" with the central message being, "write about what you know" and everyone has things that inspire them as an individual. After Devonshire or Yorkshire teas there were three sessions on publishing and marketing and pitfalls and intricacies of the industry including local publishing, publishing on demand and to cyberspace and e-books. Pat Drummond then took us through lyrics and song writing as a craft requiring structure, a story and an ending. Afternoon sessions by Noel Stallard on "Doing it out loud" a performance workshop and Anita Reed on voice production and interactive performance were enjoyable and informative for all amateur poets. Saturday evening included one of the highlights of the weekend, the announcement of the winners in the 2012 New South Wales

Written Poetry Championships. Two categories are included in poetry competitions, serious and humorous, and from the two, an overall champion is chosen by the Australian Bush Poetry Association accredited judges. Following the championship formalities a relaxing and most enjoyable concert session dubbed "A Swag of Aussie Madness, Verse and Song" topped off an exceptional day.

7.30, Sunday morning provided another opportunity with walk ups at the poet's breakfast prior to the One Minute Cup competition. Noel Stallard then presented a session on "Poetry for Children". The first of two confronting sessions on the day followed, where amateur poets could have their written poems critiqued by the professional judges thereby providing direct feedback on their work and providing suggestions on how they can improve their writing. The two subsequent sessions covered the why, when, who and how of recording your work and marketing the poetry and you. Another constructive word game was the lead in to the second confronting session for the amateur poets by way of a critique session on walk ups or performance. This session provided the amateur poets the opportunity to obtain immediate feedback from the professionals on their performance and recital skills with the emphasis on positive constructive feedback of options to take away and work on for the future. The weekend came to a close after a round table general discussion session. The poets consensus was that they had enjoyed a fantastic weekend combining a unique learning experience with entertainment, companionship and enjoyable socialising.

A booking was arranged for PoetryFest 2013 and as soon as the details of the weekend and NSW Championships are finalised planning will begin for twelve months' time.

RESULTS OF THE NSW WRITTEN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS 2012

RESULTS - NSW WRITTEN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS 2012.

OVERALL CHAMPION – David Campbell – ‘My Son’

SERIOUS CATEGORY:

- 1st David Campbell – ‘My Son’
- 2nd Brenda Joy – ‘Call of thee Kimberley’
- 3rd Tom Mcllveen – ‘Eureka’s Mine Still Smoulders’
- 4th Brenda Joy – ‘Closure’
- 5th Tom Mcllveen – ‘Kathleen’

HUMOROUS CATEGORY:

- 1st B.J.Stirling – ‘The Eulogy’
- 2nd Mal Beveridge – ‘Night Nookie’
- 3rd David Campbell – ‘The Fools Upon The Hill’
- 4th Tom Mcllveen – ‘When Irish Eyes Are Smiling’
- 5th Yvonne Harper – ‘Tennis Idle’

Thank you to all the entrants, we had a wonderful response to the championships receiving entries from all the eastern Australian states including Tasmania, also Western Australia, Northern Territory and New Zealand as well as an entry being posted from Thailand. To those of you who took the opportunity to have the judges critique your work we trust the comments were helpful and assist in improving your work and furthering your enthusiasm for the wonderful world of Australian Bush Poetry. We must also extend a huge thank you to the judges for their efforts in critiquing and scoring the many entries we received.

Kind Regards

Trevor Harragon



DIFFERENT METRES IN THE SAME POEM - Philip R Rush

I would think that all of us who write poetry, especially bush poetry, nearly always use the same metre and/or form in any one poem, and often have a favourite metre and/or form we use for most of our poems. However, it is sometimes useful to use different metres and/or form in the one poem, for it can add both emphasis and interest to the reader or listener (or performer!). C J Dennis uses two different metres and verse forms in his poem 'A Song of Rain' (from 'Backblock Ballads') and effective it is indeed! Here are the first two verses.

*Because a little vagrant wind veered south from China Sea;
Or else because a sunspot stirred; and yet again, maybe
Because some idle God in play breathed on an errant cloud,
The heads of twice two million folk in gratitude are bowed.*

*Patter, patter... Boolcoomatta,
Adelaide and Oodnadatta,
Pepegoona, parched and dry
Laugh beneath a dripping sky.
Riverina's thirsting plain
Knows the benison of rain.
Ararat and Arkaroola
Render thanks with Tantanoola
For the blessings they are gaining,
And it's raining – raining – raining!*

And so on for another eight verses.

Over the years I have written a number of poems where I have used both different metres and/or verse forms in the same poem. The one below is one I often recite when giving a performance – and a difficult one it is to remember! And, by the way, the change of metre probably reduces the potential boredom of such a poem!

HOW DOES A FARMER FILL IN HIS DAY?

*We came to the city to take in a play,
And stopped at a pub for a meal on the way.
"Some blokes have it easy," I heard someone say.
"How does a farmer fill in his day?"*

*I rose from my seat, and then, face to face,
I decided to put this young bloke in his place.
"You ask how a farmer fills in his time;
I'll answer your question, and answer in rhyme."*

*"How does a farmer fill in his day?
Mostly, my son, it's work and no play.
I'm up every morning before it is light,
And often I'm working far into the night."*

*The chap interrupted, "Oh! Come off it, Blue!
You can't tell me a farmer's got that much to do."
The room became quiet, all eyes in the crowd
Were looking at us as I started aloud.*

*"There's welding and digging,
And sawing and snigging,
And building and nailing,
And fencing and baling,
And cutting and lopping,
And pruning and cropping,
And picking and packing,
And raking and stacking,
And slashing and turning,
And stubble needs burning;
There's lifting and humping,
And spraying and pumping,
And ploughing and tearing,
For soil needs preparing;*

*There's planting and stripping,
And herding and dipping;
Animals freighting,
Commodities crating;
There's milking and feeding,
And grooming and weeding;
And droving and drenching,
And marking and trenching,
And cleaning and clearing,
And sweeping and shearing,
And drafting and mixing,
And greasing and fixing.*

*There's hoeing and sowing and mowing and showing,
And mending and wending and sending and tending.
There's draining and straining, and dogs that need training;
Furrowing, harvesting, marketing, harrowing,
Mustering, hammering, sharpening, barrowing,
Fertilising, merchandising, irrigating, cultivating,
Immunising, fumigating, separating, operating."*

*I paused; and the folk in the room all applauded,
And my answer, in rhyme, was duly rewarded;
For the chap spoke again, "I'll buy you a drink;
You've more than answered my question, I think!"*

from "Australian Poems that would Stun a Sheep"
© Philip R Rush 1994)

DIFFERENT METRES IN THE SAME POEM - Philip R Rush (Continued)

Before I finish with some verses from another poem I wrote which incorporated two different metres, I would suggest that you, the reader, consider what subject or subjects would be suitable for a poem which includes different metres or forms, or both, and, once you have come to some conclusion, see if you can write one successfully!

The following few verses are from a poem in 'More than Nine Lives' – a book which contains forty-nine poems about cats which I wrote, and the ABC published in book and audio form nearly twenty years ago. The poem has seventeen verses, and I won't print them all here, but the story begins with this verse –

*There's a house in our street that's completely deserted,
Except for hundreds of cats.
I believe that the building will soon be converted
Into several self-contained flats.*

*All the residents in the street are fed up with the cats – and the noise and smell is quite overpowering –so
There's no doubt we need a lasting solution;
The cats are increasing each day.
We've heard that the Council passed some resolution,
But hasn't the money to pay.*

*Change of metre –
There are tabby cats and shabby cats, there's pedigrees and strays,
There are brown cats and downy cats, and blacks, and whites, and greys;
There are tiny cats and shiny cats, enormous cats, as well,
Satanic cats and manic cats straight from the pits of Hell.
And two more verses of various other cats, all of which are –
On the chimney and verandah, at the window, by the door,
In the laundry and verandah, on the tiled bathroom floor.
Cats on ledges, shelves and cupboards, on the mantelpieces, too,
In the bath and in the basin, even some up on the loo!
And more lines in a similar vein, followed by-
Three months now have passed – by cats I am smitten
Beyond my worst nightmares and dreams.
The Council won't answer the letters I've written,
They don't want to know, so it seems.*

*My neighbours have all packed their goods and their chattels,
I'm the only one left in the street.
The cats, through a number of desperate battles,
Made all of my neighbours retreat,
The next three verses tell of me locked in my house – determined not to give up. However, the cats break in through the roof, and
the ceiling starts to give way, and I know there is nothing I can do to save myself, and the poem ends with –
I wish that I had with my neighbours departed,
But now I'm a victim of pride.
Who will record how I came to be martyred?
And who will record how I died?*

May your imagination and writing continue to flourish, and, for those with books to sell, may your sales only increase!
Phil Rush

For more exercises in Creative Meter and Lateral Thinking, feel welcome to come to the Forums at

www.abpa.org.net.au

and join in the Writing Workshops, where our ABPA Member, Maureen K Clifford, sets weekly homework topics for all to join in, post, and comment on and be commented on re. their poetic offerings. The Community is friendly, helpful and very supportive. Maureen is forever working hard at giving new topics weekly and we both thank and congratulate her on her efforts and dedication.

There is also a Forum thread available for Collaboration, where members join to add a verse to a 'Never Ending Poem'.

There are also Threads for posting your work and having fellow members critique or give advice on improving your poetry, as well as many other threads on General Poetry Banter and Events and Results plus much more.

Membership is free to the Web Site so come in and join the fun and interaction.

www.abpa.org.net.au

POETRY CHARACTERS - EDDIE DALTON

*Susan Carcary continues her series on those wonderful folk who make bush poetry events happen.
From Victoria: Eddie Dalton*

Eddie Dalton has been supporting bush poetry for 30 years. Eddie, at 72, has retired now but used to work in a teachers college. One day he penned a few verses for a colleague's farewell. The verse ended up framed in the staffroom, and Eddie's writing career began.

"Someone at work suggested I go to poetry readings, I'd never heard of them but I looked in the Age and found readings listed at the back so I went along" says Eddie. "I loved it, the encouragement, the fellowship and the history".

Eddie formed the Gippsland Bush Poetry Club with his mate Denis Carstairs. Denis and Eddie were both instrumental in organising the Mulwala Australian Bush Poetry Championships.

Eddie was also a great mate of Alan Gregory, the Word Warrior, who sadly passed away a few years ago. Alan and Eddie ran the Art House Poetry on Monday nights, and, as a member of the Melbourne Poets Union, they assisted with organising the poets' events during the Year of the Outback

Eddie, from Oakleigh in Victoria, has regularly attended many poetry events including the Maldon Folk Festival, Tamworth and of course The Man from Snowy River Festival in Corryong, where he is a regular volunteer, or an 'invaluable helper' as described by Jan Lewis. "Eddie helps with everything, timekeeping, collating, anything we need, thank goodness he comes along every year" said Jan, "and best of all, he's just a wonderful bloke"



Eddie Dalton At Corryong 2012

Join in our Forum Chat or post your poems for others to enjoy at
www.abpa.org.au

VERSE – FOR – VINNIES

Noel Stallard

Since the collapse of the Palma Rosa Poets at Hamilton in March 2010 there was, over the ensuing months, no regular substitute venue for lovers of bush poetry in Brisbane.

In an attempt to address this neglect a new venue was launched on the 31 July 2011.

Verse for Vinnies, is a project of Noel and Ann Stallard who are providing lovers of Australian Poetry the opportunity to enjoy professional recitals of the works of traditional poets like Banjo Paterson, Henry Lawson, C.J. Dennis and John O'Brien as well as poems of modern authors. These concerts are held at 1.30pm on the last Sunday of every second month in the Mary Mackillop Centre at 67 Dawson Parade, Grovely. This modern Centre has comfortable seating, PA system, air conditioning, wheelchair access and adequate parking facilities.

The professional performing poets are from interstate along with local professionals who perform with Noel, who is a resident of Arana Hills. Since the initial concert in 2011 poets who have performed would include, Gary Fogarty, Ray Essery, John Best, Geoff Sharp, Greg North, Wally Finch, Cay & Barry Ellem, Anita Reed, Ron Liekefett, Kevin Dean, Manfred Vijars and Trisha Anderson.

The beneficiary of these concerts is St Vincent de Paul Society, who has received from the eight concerts since 2011, more than \$9 000. Different poets perform at each concert so the patrons not only get a variety of entertainers, a wide range of our Australian poetry but also contribute towards the relief of the disadvantaged of the Hills District.

We are able to give our patrons the bi-monthly concert programmes through regular mail as well as email and our audiences have ranged from 80 to 140. Admission is \$15 which allows our audiences to enjoy nearly two hours of entertainment as well as Ann's generous home-made afternoon tea which is served around 3.15pm.

In 2013 our poets will be (February 24) Jim Haynes; (April 28) Melanie Hall & Susie Carcary; (June 30) Carol Heuchan; (July 28) Greg North; (September 29) Jack Drake; (November 24) Maria Forde. Should any poets wish to be considered in the 2014 programme please contact Noel on (07) 33513221 or email: noel@noelstallard.com

A Sad Farewell to 'The Old Fella'

If you ever had the good fortune to meet John Norman at Tamworth or a bush poetry festival, you knew instantly that he was a great bloke with a huge heart and a huge smile. You'd like him immediately, caught up in his enthusiasm for poetry and songwriting.

Many of us were still in shock after hearing of John's cancer diagnosis in late August, and we're reeling yet at the news of John's untimely death in early November 2012.

John and his wonderful wife Kath were regulars at Bundy, Tamworth, Tenterfield and many other festivals. John loved his poetry but I think he loved his guitar more. His prolific songwriting talent has left behind a wealth of songs that John liked to describe as 'pure country', songs such as 'The Darling River Bed', 'So Long Slim' and a song that John was especially proud of, 'Father and his Son'

John Norman's songs have been sung by lots of CM artists including Russell Hinton, Noel Simonsen, Bruce Laverder, Barry Glasby, Peter Dransfield and Denise Brooks. John felt he was just on the cusp at Tamworth, his songs were out there and singers were after his authentic country attitude and heartfelt lyrics. John was really proud that country singers wanted to record his poems and songs. They are a fitting legacy and tribute to a great bloke who will be sorely missed in the bush poetry world. Our heartfelt sympathies go to Kath and the kids, we're thinking of you while we're humming "The Darling River Bed".

Vale John Norman



TENTERFIELD 2013 ORACLES OF THE BUSH

Calling all poets!

Tenterfield Oracles of the Bush is recognised as one of the highpoints of the bush poetry calendar, offering prize money equal to any poetry event in Australia – including the Australian Bush Poetry Championships.

It's time to start planning your visit.

Organisation is well under way for Oracles of the Bush 2013, which will be held from April 4 to 7 in the beautiful setting of Tenterfield in autumn.

Poets are invited to enter the famous Looming Legend competition, a strongly contested event which has helped launch the reputations of many poets.

The prize for performance of the best original unpublished work is more than \$1000. In 2013, the poet who wins the best performance of a previously published work by other poets takes home \$600, with a runners-up prize of \$200.

Performers who have not previously entered state championships or the Looming Legend competition are eligible for the Novice Prize – the Patsy Award.

This year, the rules have changed slightly. Poets can now perform their own previously published works – but only once during the festival.

Those who enter the performance sections will find they can immerse themselves in a world of bush poetry over the many events held during Oracles of the Bush.

The festival kicks off on Thursday night with a dinner to celebrate the year's Oracles Legend, a Tenterfield person celebrated for their contribution to the community.

On Friday morning there is a breakfast, children's concert, the opening of the arts and crafts display, the opening of the historic Centenary Museum's display and the first of the looming legend heats.

Friday night is one of the highlights of Oracles – the Bling in the Bush ball, where people dress up in their very glitziest outfits.

There are a number of breakfasts attended by poets on Saturday morning, markets at the Railway Station Museum, lunches, Looming Legend heats and the renowned Poets' Concert held on Saturday night. This concert includes performances by the professional poets who also act as judges across the weekend.

The Poets' Brawl at Jubilee Park is held on Sunday morning where you can bring your own chair and listen, or even compete on the spot ahead of the grand final of the Looming Legend.

But as well as those who are willing to get up and perform, Oracles of the Bush encourages poets to enter the written sections.

Adult poets can enter either poems with a humorous theme, or poetry that celebrates a typically Australian character or any other bush theme. Prizes of \$400 are offered for each adult section.

There are also prizes for children's written entries, with entry open to children from infants up to secondary school students.

Visit oraclesofthebush.com for further details. Group bookings are welcome.

Oracles of the Bush Tenterfield is also now on Facebook.



Tenterfield's Oracles of the Bush Committee finds inspiration for the district's premier event in the spirit and character of the region's people, places, history and scenic beauty. Each year the committee honours a worthy local person by naming them 'Oracles of the Bush Local Legend'. Their choice for 2009 is Keith Willcocks (pictured above). Our volunteer members are keen to embrace fresh ideas from other community organisations who share the vision of working together to create an event that is truly unique for both visitors and locals.

Vale Patti Ainsworth

The town of Tenterfield is poorer for the loss of Patti Ainsworth. Patti passed away in October 2012 after a long battle with cancer. Patti will be known to many of you as the face of Oracles of the Bush, an annual bush poetry and community event in Tenterfield.

Who could forget Patti and the Yellow Shirts and their unique air hostess routine at the start of Oracles each year? Patti and her husband Phil were involved with Oracles from its inception. It is now in its 14th year. Patti was brilliant at promoting the event through her work at the Tenterfield Visitor Information Centre.

Promoting Tenterfield was still on Patti's mind even as her illness progressed, Phil says that when they visited Patti during her chemo, all of the other patients were reading brochures about Tenterfield.

Oracles is a well-attended and well-loved event. Patti's wonderful efforts to promote bush poetry and community spirit will live on through the festival.

Bert Pullen Releases New Book

PROUDLY AUSTRALIAN
by Bert Pullen

Bert will be launching his 3rd book, 'Proudly Australian' at the Tamworth Country Music Festival in 2013. The book is dedicated to his parents who were fair dinkum, proud Australian battlers.

The book launch will mark the 50 years anniversary of his Mother's passing. She was admitted to The Tamworth Base Hospital on the Australian day weekend 1963, with chronic asthma, and sadly passed away on 29/01/1963.

The book includes 21 originals and illustrated with six coloured photographs. One of his poems relates to the second fleet of which he is a descendant. It also includes poems relating to current issues and our country's evolving and recent history.

A balance of humorous and serious works relating to Australia and Australians. Most important this book defines what Bert and many Australians believe is a fair dinkum Australian.



Cost \$15 including postage.
Available from

Bert Pullen
Po. Box 6026
Westdale NSW. 2340

I JULIAN.

*I don't know what's the fuss about ?
(With this Julian Assange bloke),
He's just a Dinkum Aussie,
An' it really is a joke.
He simply stated somethin'
That I know all about.
You see! I'm over eighty,
An' I suffer from the 'Gout',
He said "The Poms won't let me "GO",
An' I don't think it's right,
For I know all about them "Wiki-leaks",
I had three of them last night!"*

"Skew Wiff" Watt.

Dedicated to my mother who passed away 29/01/1963 age 42.

A Country Girl

My Mum, she was a country girl, she was raised in the nor-west,
And she would give most things a burl and would rise to any test.

She'd try her hand to anything from knitting to pluck a chook,
I've seen her make a stock whip ring and she was a champion cook.

She could get the old car to start from the bonnet to beneath,
Then with her giving outreach heart, she would comfort those in grief.

But no way you would take her on, she would beat you all the way,
There's one thing that you could count on, she would have the final say.

To milk 'Old Millie' in the yard and pump water from the bore,
I know that Mum had toiled too hard, then to die so premature.

I miss my Mum until this day and much strength her spirit gives,
And for years since she passed away, her bush ways in me still lives.

© Albert Pullen 2012.

Cervantes Art Festival 2012

Written Poetry Results

A huge thank you to everyone who entered our competition, and my apologies for taking so long to get the full results/judges comments out to you.

This year, due to our regular judge being off overseas, we introduced a new judge for the competition. He is one of WA's most well-known bush poets, who has won both written and performance competitions over the many years he has been involved in bush poetry. However, due to a large workload, he was unable to offer comments on individual poems – he has just given me the winning places as judged.

As normal, all poems were sent to him with no identification, so all remained anonymous to him. (You will understand why I re-enforce this when you read the results!)

Junior Competition

Winner: A Miscellany of Blue – Hannah Nugent – Toowoomba. QLD
2nd Place – Camping – Elizabeth Lotfall, Tiwi. NT
3rd Place – My Country – William Matheson. Humula NSW

OPEN COMPETITION

1st Place – The Pub At Cripple Creek – Terry Piggott, Canning Vale. WA
2nd Place – A Bloke Called Basil – Terry Piggott, Canning Vale WA
3rd Place – When You and I Were Boys, Old Friend – Terry Piggott, Canning Vale WA
4th Place – The Wanderer – Terry Piggott, Canning Vale WA

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email:- rkvall51@tpg.com.au or Mobile 0439 256 332
\$25 - (inc. Postage)

THE SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS EVE

(© Vic Jefferies - 2002.)

The hour was late - the house was quiet
blessed silence reigned supreme,
till through that warm December night
sped the nemesis of my dream.

"Daaad! There is someone on the roof,
I can hear him walking round.
Dad, listen there's the proof,
he's making a jingling sound!"

"Please go to sleep young Jimmy
there is no one up above.
Now go to sleep dear Jimmy,
lest you test your father's love."

"Daaad! I just saw a reindeer's face -
there's another one going past!
I think they have found our place,
I think Santa's here at last!"

"There are no reindeer out there son,
it is the shadows of the trees,
so go to sleep my darling one,
Father's asking nicely, plee-ease."

"Daaad!" "What is it little Jimmy,
now why is it that you call?"
"Dad, I need to do a wee
but there's someone in the hall!"

"That would make five wees or more
since I sent you off to bed,
I suggest you commence to snore -
Father's face is turning red!"

"Daaa..." "I'll spiflicate him Mary!
If once more I hear him say...."
"You cannot spiflicate him Harry -
well at least not on Christmas Day."

At last the Sandman won the fight
and closed little Jimmy's eyes,
and we slept for the rest of the night,
at least till the sun began to rise!

Then came the sound of muffled glee,
of fingers fumbling with paper and string
of "Oohs!" and "Aahs!" and "Golly Gee!
He's brought me everything!"

Then as I stumbled from my bed
towards the shining Christmas tree,
I found a strange note that said,
"Please accept my apology.

Now we have so much to do
we have to travel very fast
so we started our run with you
instead of leaving you till last.

Sorry about the sleep you lost
and the noise made by the sleigh;
just consider it part of the cost
for the smiles of your boy today.

And Dad, sometimes a little noise
is worth the loss of one night's sleep,
when it's caused by girls and boys
creating memories for us to keep."

Vic Jefferies

WINNERS TIMBER FESTIVAL POETRY COMP 2012

Congratulations to all the successful poets in The Southern Shoalhaven Timber Festival open Written Bush Poetry Competition.

The standard was very high and a very satisfying number of entries were received.

The successful Writers are

1ST	Bessie Jennings	In The Sleeper Cutting Days
2ND	Carol Heuchan	Rich Mans Trinket
3RD	Bessie Jennings	Coolongolook Bullocky
4TH	Yvonne Harper	Grains of Sand
5TH	Tom McIlveen	Eureka Mine Still Smolders
6TH	Robyn Sykes	The Colostrum of History

Thank You to all the poets who supported this comp. The festival will be on again next year as at this point in time it is envisaged that it will be a annual event here. there will be a bush poetry comp again but the organisers have not yet decided what the format will be although I am expecting the rules will be modified some however we shall have to wait and see.

Regards to all
John Davis

BEAUDESERT BUSH BARDS POETRY WRITING WORKSHOP

Beginners and experienced poets wishing to improve their writing skills
are invited to attend a one day workshop on writing with rhyme and metre

with award winning poet

Brenda Joy



On Saturday, 16th February, 2013 from 10am.

At the Arts & Information Centre, Enterprise Drive, Beaudesert.Qld.

Adults—\$20. Year 11 and 12 Students —free. Sausage sizzle lunch

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL Phone Judy 07 3297 6894 or Pamela 07 5541 2662

2013 18th BUNDY BUSH POETRY MUSTER 2013

JULY 5TH - 6TH - 7TH
at

ACROSS THE WAVES SPORTS CLUB
MILLER STREET
BUNDABERG

Performance Competitions

- Open (Male & Female)
- Intermediate
- Novice
- Junior Categories (U/ 8 Yrs. & 8 Yrs to U/16 Yrs.)
- Yarn Spinning
- Duo Competition
- One Minute Cup



Competition Enquiries & Entry Forms

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

BUSH LANTERN AWARD - WRITTEN COMPETITION FOR BUSH VERSE

ALSO

BUSH LANTERN AWARD - JUNIOR CATEGORY (Primary & Secondary School Students)

- **Closing date** for written competitions May 31st, 2013. Results announced on July 7th at Presentation of trophies Muster week-end.

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

All phone or e.mail enquiries:

Sandy Lees (Muster Co-ordinator) .. 07 41514631 or leesjds1@yahoo.com.au
Edna Harvey (President) .. 07 41597198 or edna_harvey@hotmail.com
Jayson Russell (Vice-President) .. 07 41550778 or blanata@bigpond.net.au
OR ... ABPA website



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



Regular Monthly Events

NSW

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

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

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

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

QUEENSLAND

North Pine Bush Poet Group meet from 9am on 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month at the True Blue Cafe, Kurwongbah

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

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

Kilcoy Unplugged - 7pm 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at Kilcoy Bowling Club, 11 Royston St. Kilcoy. \$2 donation Contact John (07) 54651743

Bundaberg Poets Society Inc. 2nd Saturday of the month. Rum City Silver Band Hall, Targo Street. Contact Jason (07)41550778 or Sandy (07)41514631

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

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

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

Shorncliffe Cafe On The Park - 3rd Monday of the month from 6pm, 6 Park Pde, Shorncliffe. Contact Peter (07)32676204

Victoria

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

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

Top of the Murray Poets and Bush Storytellers (TOMPABS) meet Monthly (mostly Tuesdays in Corryong) for writing workshops Monthly on 3rd Sunday for Music and Poetry at Maurie Foun's 'Poets' Paradise' also for ukelele, accordion, Older Day Care entertainment etc. If you're up our way, contact Jan Lewis (02) 60774332

WA

Albany Bush Poets Group 4th Tuesday of each month. Contact Peter 98446606
Geraldton Growers Market Poetry Gig - 2nd Saturday of month. Contact Catherine 0409200153
West Kimberley Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners - 1st Sunday of the Month at Broome RSL Contact Peter 0407770053

1st Friday at the RSL Club, Fred Bell Pde, East Victoria Park at 7pm. Contact Dave 0438341256 or Terry 0894588887.