



A.B.P.A.

Australian Bush Poets
Association
Volume 20 No.1
February/March 2014

Looking Back Over 20 Years of Bush Poetry



Queensland Bush Poetry Performance Championship

In conjunction with

19TH BUNDY BUSH POETRY MUSTER

JULY
4TH, 5TH & 6TH, 2014

JULY
4TH, 5TH & 6TH, 2014

Across the Waves Sports Club Inc.
1 Miller Street
BUNDABERG.

Special Guest Poets

Greg North

Bob Magor

Noel Stallard

Presentation of Bush
Lantern Award for
Written Verse 2014
Sunday, July 6th.

Cash prizes and
trophies in each
category.

Performance Competition

Open (men & women separate categories)
Intermediate, Novice, Juniors (*U/8 yrs & 8 yrs to U/16 yrs*)
Duo Performances, Yarn Spinning
& One Minute Cup

Bush Lantern Award 2014 - Written Competition for Bush Verse

ALSO

Bush Lantern Award – Junior Category - Primary & Secondary School Students



Closing date: May 23rd, 2014

FREE Poetry Workshop

In conjunction with the Bundy Bush Poetry Muster week-end Greg North will conduct a children's story telling session on Tuesday July 1st in the Bundaberg Library and a **FREE** poetry workshop in a venue to be advised on Thursday July 3rd from 10.00 a.m. to noon.

All phone or e.mail enquiries:

Sandy Lees – 07 41514631
leesjds1@yahoo.com.au

Edna Harvey – 07 41597198
edna_harvey@hotmail.com

Jayson Russell – 07 41550778
blanata@bigpond.net.au

Entry Forms

SSAE to

Performance Poetry Co-ordinator *or*
Bush Lantern Co-ordinator
(*whichever applicable*)
Bundaberg Poets' Society Inc.
PO Box 4281
BUNDABERG SOUTH. 4670

Entry forms also available from
Bush Poets website
www.abpa.org.au



**Find and Like our new
ABPA Facebook Page.
Australian Bush Poets Association**

Also find and join us on the World Wide Web

www.abpa.org.au

EDITORIAL



A big Happy Twentieth Birthday to the A.B.P.A.!! And what a ride it has been over the last Twenty years. To help celebrate our Anniversary, I have employed the help of one of our most pivotal members over that time, Frank Daniels. Frank has been Editor, President, Vice-President and held many other Committee positions, (many at the same time!) and I can think of no one who could compile a history of the A.B.P.A. as well and as completely as Frank could. We will be running a four page article in each of the 2014 magazines to cover this. Thanks Frank, I am sure every member will delight in reading these articles.

At the 2014 AGM held at St. Edwards Hall during the Tamworth Country Music Festival, a new Committee was voted in. This is covered in our new Presidents Report in this magazine. Welcome aboard one and all. A very big thanks to outgoing President Manfred, who did not put his hand up for re-election and will now have time to pursue his Poetry and Song Writing endeavours. A big thanks to Manfred for all he has done, which was an enormous amount, during his four years as President and keeping the A.B.P.A. moving towards future success with his implementations. Good luck from all in the A.B.P.A. Manfred.

Also a big thanks to outgoing Treasurer, Kym Eitel, who has done a magnificent job and my rock for so long. Kym is suffering ill-health and Greg North stood in when Kym was unable to continue. We wish her well with both her health and future Poetry endeavours. Gonna miss you, Kym. Nobody could kick my bum into gear like you could. Thanks so much.

I am hoping to implement a couple of new additions to the magazine this year, including coloured Ads. Of course the cost for these Ads will be higher and space for them will be on a first in basis. I will run this past the Committee and will most likely start, if agreed to, from the next Magazine.

I would really like to once again focus on a Children's section, which I was originally running, but submissions dried up, so if you have any young writers in your area who you believe need recognition, then please put forward a submission. Also any articles on writing/performing or teaching children poetry would be greatly appreciated.

The closing date for the next magazine will be March 31st and that magazine will be our Anzac Day issue, so relevant submissions would be greatly appreciated.

This issue also contains a wrap up of some Tamworth Poetry Events and a few results. Unfortunately, some organisers did not send anything to publish, re the success of their shows and some organisers have sent no results from Comps held over the past couple of months, so sadly things such as these cannot be passed onto you, the members. From now on, ALL results need to be sent to Carol Reffold, as decided by the Committee. Her address is in the New Committee details on page 7

Our thoughts, are with John Major and his family as John's wife Joy battles serious illness. Our thoughts also with the family of member David Williams from Benella, who passed away recently. Also to those other members battling illness or coming to terms with a loss over the past year.

So now it's onwards and upwards and I look forward to working with our new Committee and also hearing from you, our members, as to what you would like to see to improve the magazine. As always, I can be contacted at

editor@abpa.org.au

Neil McArthur

(Cover Photo by Colleen McArthur)

Also a reminder that all membership renewals should have been sent in and paid for by now. Back copies will not include last years Christmas edition as this years Christmas edition is included in the 2014 membership.

If you would like to join in with other members on the forums, or just read their poetry or participate in the workshops or just check up on upcoming events or results of competitions then come along to our website
www.abpa.org.au

ABPA Magazine Advertising Rates

Full page \$80

Half Page \$40

Quarter Page or less \$20

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 Ad.

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 Greg North - 5 Dryandra Place

Linden NSW 2778

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.

Outgoing President's Report



President Annual and Exit report

Summers in our part of the Globe are seldom boring affairs. This season we're having blasting heatwaves and flaring bush-fires. Of course our thoughts at this time, are turned to the many who are in the service of our communities, the volunteers and professionals, and we give our heartfelt thanks to their dedication.

Our thoughts are also with those of our group who are ill, in various stages of recovery, and those no longer among us. We mourn the passing of Glori O'Brien, Peter Hine and John Dengate, and we wish comfort for all who have lost their loved ones this last year. Our tireless treasurer Kymmie, has had to relinquish her position due to ongoing battles with her health. She is in the good care and support of husband Frank and the girls, and I know our collective thoughts are with her in wishing a speedy recovery. Greg North has stepped in for Kym and hit the ground running, thank you Greg.

The ABPA Committee met four times in 2013 (one was an ad. hoc. meeting).

The sub-committee for the ABPA Strategic Plan (Gary Fogarty and Maggie Daley) completed their work earlier in the year and the plan has been published on the web-site. The link can be found on the ABPA home page. The sub-committee for the "ABPA Guidelines for Competition", headed by Graeme Johnson, has been on hold and will resume in the new year.

Our membership, as at the beginning of December was 384.

Reminder emails to existing members midway through the year and membership renewals inserted into the magazine ALONG WITH Christmas Gift subscriptions in the December edition.

Our Group PLI has been renewed with Elders for 2014 and the cost to performers remains at \$100.

During the year two ABPA State Championships were held, one in Corryong Victoria, hosted by the "Man from Snowy River Bush Festival" who included the Victorian Bush Poetry Championships.

The other, ABPA State Championship was held in Townsville Qld. hosted by the "Townsville Bush Poetry Mates"

Kilcoy Unplugged Poetry Group in Queensland sadly wound up and donated their residual funds, \$2600, to the ABPA. The funds were gratefully accepted, tinged with sadness not just for the loss of a club, but this was the group Graham Fredriksen and Pat Markey started.

With the loss of some clubs and others contracting, we need to seriously look at our collective longevity. Performance competitions would once attract many participants as well as supporters - they don't anymore. I believe that a different approach to our festivals is needed so they become true 'festivals' and Inclusive.

In the face of all that, Bush Poetry is still exciting, it was a joy to be involved with the Winton Junior Festival. There were over 300 performances of poetry by the kids from remote Queensland - AND they enjoyed themselves.

At the Queensland Poetry Slam semi-finals, our 'rhymsters' held their own, well done Bob Pacey. And at the Woodford "Slam vs. Raw(Rhymsters)", the Rhymsters - Shirley Friend, Murray Hartin, Peter Capp and Ron Barratt (Overseas guest performer) won! Good crowds were at all those events.

This last year we also embraced the digital world more fully. We now have our ABPA YouTube Channel as well as our own ABPA Facebook page. Maureen Clifford is the administrator of the Facebook page, take a look. In the short time it has been up almost 500 have registered their interest in bush poetry. Maureen also publishes a digital poetry magazine for the Australian Times, <http://www.theaustraliatimes.com/> reaching out digitally to a wider world of poetry enthusiasts, and in the process, helping to keep our culture alive.

Speaking earlier, of those in service to their communities, we also acknowledge our Active Service Personnel. To that end 20 copies of every issue are sent to our active Service Men and women in Afghanistan. Good news is that they will be returning soon, however if anyone would like to send goodwill mail or packages, this is the address for Afghanistan...

Goodwill Mail
AFPO 60
Middle East Operations
Australian Defence Force NSW 2890

As you may be aware, I will not be raising my hand for another year. It is time, I feel, to hand over to someone fresh, with new ideas to take the ABPA forward.

It's been four years, and looking back it's gratifying to see our many small accomplishments.

There were rumblings of discontent with the Australian Bush Laureates for many years. We now have in place an ABPA - ABLA agreement addressing issues raised at the time.

We conducted a comprehensive survey of the membership in 2012. The response exceeded expectations and we were able to quantify what was suspected. We were also able to define hopes and aspirations of the wider membership. As a result we have been able to map a plan into the future for our association.

A sub-committee was set up to definitively determine, where we are, where we want to get to, and what it will take to get there. The result was the ABPA Strategic Management Plan. The plan is available to the membership via the ABPA home page.

Once it was too difficult to hold regular committee meetings outside Tamworth other than by phone or email. Now we meet regularly via Skype. Skype is 'enabling' technology, even though the connectivity is sometimes a tad challenging, but at least we are together in a virtual room where we can interact in ongoing conversation and conduct ABPA business.

As well as the web-site and forum we now have a You Tube Channel where members can post videos of their performances. We also have a Facebook presence that broadens our exposure to the wider world via this social media.

We value our history, so when approached by the National Archive for permission to archive our website, it was granted. They now archive the ABPA Web-site from time to time as a "web-site of cultural significance"

After many years as editor of our Magazine Frank Daniel's health dictated that he should take it easy ... Magazine from the June-July 2012 edition was picked up by Neil MacArthur who managed to score a win-win by contracting the Cerebral Palsy League for our printing. Thereby putting our magazine money back into the community.

2012 the ABPA was approached by the Tamworth Reading Group to take over the running of the "Golden Dampier" competition which had been running for 21 years. A call for volunteers Graeme Johnson raised his hand. This will be the second year under the ABPA banner.

The ABPA ran a float for the first time in the 2013 Tamworth Cavalcade. The ABPA On Parade. Thanks to Tom McIlveen and helpers we hope this will be a regular inclusion into the parade for many years to come.

The one thing that is missing in our association is recognition of 'excellence' in Performance. Our writers have the ABLA, yet our performance poets attract the great crowds and do much to promote our craft, yet have no real Award celebrating excellence. I believe this is an important issue and one, I hope, the new executive will take up.

Thank you to the Executive, Committee, State reps, and sub-committees for your input and efforts throughout 2013. And thank you to the Membership for your encouragement and support throughout my tenure.

I wish every success to the new Executive and Committee in their endeavours to ensure that the ABPA will still be here, and relevant, in 50 years time.

May we keep our Culture strong,

Cheers,

Manfred.

President's Report



Thank you for electing me as President of the ABPA. Although I am currently just coming to grips with the fact that two weeks ago this appointment was the furthest thing from my mind, I am looking forward to working with you all to serve the best interests of the ABPA.

I am not a poet but, along with the new Committee (listed below), I am passionate about helping to preserve and expand on the wonderful heritage of poetry with accurate rhyme and metre about Australians, Australia and the Australian way of life and about the ABPA's crucial role in this connection.

Administration of the ABPA is a co-operative venture and all ideas and suggestions are most welcome. Whilst I am responsible overall, Greg North for all Treasury matters and Brenda Joy for Secretarial, each Committee member has agreed to take on one or more roles for overseeing the smooth running of a particular aspect of the organization. Therefore, enquiries re a specific area may be directed as follows:-

Gregory North	--	Web administration and legalities
Graeme Johnson	--	Guidelines and judging sheets for performance and written competitions
Brenda Joy	--	archives/award winning written poetry
John Peel	--	co-coordinator of events at St Edward's Hall
Robyn Sykes	--	(area to be allocated later)
Carol Reffold	--	collation and recording of information re written and performance competition events and results.

State Delegates have agreed to co-operate in any way needed with organizers of ABPA State or National performance or written competitions in their particular state.

Other specific duties will be allocated as the Committee decides and as the need arises.

At the AGM there was unanimous support for Neil McArthur to continue serving in his role of newsletter Editor. It is a time-consuming task and one which Neil has handled extremely well. The Committee thanks him for continuing in this capacity.

As the past President, Manfred Vajirs also took on responsibility for the running of the ABPA Website. He has now turned this over to Greg North who is the new Webmaster. The Committee thanks Manfred for his service in this function and wishes him well in the many pursuits that have been put on hold due to the demands of both the Presidency and the site.

To support the Magazine and the Website, Carol Reffold (new Committee member) will be collecting information regarding dates for events and subsequent results for both performance and written competitions to pass to the Editor and Webmaster for publication. To assist this process, it would be appreciated if organisers could send brief calendar details (not Ads) for upcoming events, and official results through to Carol.

In conclusion, on behalf of the incoming Committee, I offer sincere thanks to Manfred Vajirs as retiring President for the considerable contribution he has made to the ABPA during his three year term of office and to all those who have served in an elected or voluntary capacity to help promote the bush poetry movement.

With your help and input, for this phase of the ABPA's 'coming of age', your Committee looks forward to an exciting and progressive twenty-first year.

In poetry,
Hal Pritchard

Meet Your New A.B.P.A. Committee

ABPA Committee Members 2014

Executive:

President	--	Hal Pritchard	hal@abpa.org.au
Vice-President	--	Graeme Johnson	therhymerfromryde@bigpond.com
Secretary	--	Brenda-Joy Pritchard	secretary@abpa.org.au
Treasurer	--	Gregory North	treasurer@abpa.org.au
Members on Committee:			
...John Peel			peel_jg@hotmail.com
...Robyn Sykes			rdsykes2@bigpond.com
...Carol Reffold			patchworkpoet@hotmail.com
ABPA State Delegates:			
NSW	--	Tom McIlveen	portalarms@gmail.com
Queensland	--	Wally Finch	wmbear1@bigpond.com
South Australia	--	to be confirmed	
Tasmania	--	Phillip Rush	auspoems@bigpond.com
Victoria	--	Jan Lewis	lintonandjan@poetfarm.com.au
West Australia	--	Irene Connor	iconnor21@wn.com.au
ABPA Editor	--	Neil McArthur	editor@abpa.org.au
Web Administrator	--	Greg North	(subject to change-over currently proceeding)

The Blackened Billy Verse Competition 2014

1st Prize: Remember?

Milton Taylor
126 Cullenbenbong Road
Hartley NSW 2790

2nd Prize: For Love of the Sea

Catherine Lee
Tungmahamek
Bangkok 10120

3rd Prize: Clothes Maketh the Man

Milton Taylor
126 Cullenbenbong Road
Hartley NSW 2790

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Farewell My Love Terry Piggott
PO Box 1127 Canning Vale WA 6970

A Farmer's Reply V.P.Read
108 Harris Street Bicton WA 6157

Jimmy Tom McIlveen
16 Teraglin Road Port Macquarie NSW 2444

Odds-On Jan Foster
7 Janmar Court Grovedale VIC 3216

The Trouble and Strife Jan Foster
7 Janmar Court Grovedale VIC 3216

The Music Teacher Shelley Hansen
99 lindah Road West Maryborough QLD 4650

Three Out of Ten Kevin Pye
12 Lang Street Mudgee NSW 2850

A Shadow on the Water David Campbell
1 Spicer Street Beaumaris VIC 3193

Wallace, Dot and Croc Milton Taylor
126 Cullenbenbong Road Hartley NSW 2790

The Lady of the Grand Mal Beveridge
23 Cramb Street Bracken Ridge QLD 4017



Holding Ned Kelly's Horse

He could have named so many things – the list was long, and wide.
He had achieved so much to justify a sense of pride
In self, yet what he claimed to be his greatest, proudest boast
Has prompted anger in a few, and simply baffled most.

His father came from Prussia, and he took his family
To the green and fertile farmlands that surround Jerilderie.
He felt no great affection for the rich men on the land.
They had mostly come from England, and they boasted bloodlines grand.

Ned Kelly was a horse thief. This was widely understood.
He'd steal his stock in Gippsland, and he'd sell them as he could
On the north side of the mountains, then again he'd do the same,
And sell them on the south side – quite a profitable game.

They were mostly squatters' horses, and the father of our John
Was happy to acquire them, and strap his saddles on.
Ned Kelly was a hero to the battlers, sore oppressed.
His actions got things going, his charisma did the rest.

Ned Kelly and his mates turned up in small Jerilderie.
It was one part brutal hold-up. It was two parts joyful spree.
Events were wild and dangerous, but in their crazy course,
Ned Kelly asked our John – a boy – to briefly hold his horse.

We hear the name "John Monash", and we think of many things.
Down through our noble history, his reputation sings,
And yet his proudest act came not from intellect or force.
'Twas that briefest, softest moment when he held Ned Kelly's horse.

I Watch a Lot of YouTube

I watch a lot of YouTube. It's a concert in your home.
I can sit in my pyjamas, with my hair that needs a comb.
I can see the world's best musos strut their stuff upon the stage.
I can trawl through any genre, any singer, any age.

It's the live stuff I like best, as the band belts out a song
To a happy, cheering, waving, swaying, joyful, loving throng,
For I feel that I am with them – at that venue, in that club;
On that oval, in that parkland, in that 'smoke and whiskey' pub.

But you know what I like best? Though I love the singer's face,
And the close-ups of the blokes who play the drum-kit and the bass,
And the sheila on the banjo, and her cousin on the pipes,
And the concertina player with his suit of fancy stripes,

It's the audience that gets me. It's their look of simple joy;
It's the grins on man and woman, and on teenage girl and boy;
It's that happy rapt, distraction, it's the wrinkled, smiling eyes,
As though all of them, just briefly, have become so very wise.

Yet what I love still more is when the camera comes to rest
On a single face, enchanted, for a moment. Yes, that's best.
When they don't know someone's watching, and a deep emotion's caught.
That's a prize of rarest value that cannot be sold or bought.

They might be looking happy, or they might look slightly sad;
They might just look reflective. Someone's mum, or someone's dad,
Someone's son or someone's daughter, and you know you'll never know,
But it's honest, and it's truthful. It's the best part of the show.

Yes, I watch a lot of YouTube, and it takes me to a sphere
Where I can write a poem, like as how I've writ one here.
I enjoy the great throng thrilling, but for me the sweetest part
Is when I watch one person...and I gaze into their heart.

Children's Poems by Stephen Whiteside



Reflections On Travelling To Western Australia

They say in Perth the sun sets on the ocean.
That seems to be a most unlikely notion,
For the sun against the water
Would result in wholesale slaughter,
An ungodly mess, and general commotion.

The sun is very hot, as all must know.
The waters, on the other hand, that flow
In the ocean are quite cool,
So it's plain to any fool,
If the sun and sea should match it, blow for blow,

The sun would simply vanish clean from sight,
Or else the sea would boil overnight,
And evaporate as steam.
It's a quaint, but stupid dream
To suggest the two could mix. It can't be right.

Still, I think I'll stay back eastward, if you please.
The hike in fear's quite a few degrees.
I get sufficient fright
From my window every night
As I watch the sun set just behind the trees!

You Can't Get Pies at Kevington

You can't get pies at Kevington.
It's too far down the road.
You can buy pies at Jamieson.
They get a constant load,
And also at Mt. Buller
They frequently are stowed,
But you can't get pies at Kevington.
It's too far down the road.

Wood's Point doesn't get them.
Nor does Gaffneys' Creek.
Both these tiny mining towns
Must turn the other cheek.
The outlook at the A1
Is exceptionally bleak,
And you can't get pies at Kevington.
It's too far down the road.

Mansfield gets a ton of pies –
As many as they need.
They truck them up the highway
With efficiency and speed.
Bonnie Doon and Yarck and Yea
From pielessness are freed,
But you can't get pies at Kevington.
It's too far down the road.

THE BLACKENED BILLY VERSE COMPETITION 2014

Judge's Comments

Entries for this year realised two hundred and twenty two, which was extremely good, and shows that writers are still keen to enter the major competitions. I was very impressed this year with the standard of excellence and it is constantly difficult in these circumstances to select the ultimate winners. But it is a healthy situation and indicates that the creative ability is certainly there.

Over my fourteen years as adjudicator, I think this year's entries were possibly of the highest standard that I have experienced. This leads to the sad situation of discarding many entries which would receive high acclaim in any competition. In fact about twenty five in all. And it is not easy to discard entries of such excellence, and is detrimental to my blood pressure as well. I trust that those who missed out will forgive me.

Once again, thank you to Jan Morris for her capable organisation of the Blackened Billy for 2014.

FIRST PLACE: REMEMBER! by MILTON TAYLOR, Hartley, NSW

I was emotionally moved by this sensitive narrative, which outlines the cold, hard facts of the dreaded enemy – dementia, and the subsequent mental effect on family and nursing staff. The writer has penned the story in simple prose, but is able to convey this stark and emotional situation with a great deal of skill and clever combination of dialogue and theme.

A worthy winner of the Blackened Billy for 2014.

SECOND PLACE: FOR LOVE OF THE SEA by CATHERINE LEE Tungmahamek, Bangkok

This is the work of a gifted picture writer, and is a lyrical description of one of the magnificent wonders of the world. The entry contains an almost perfect formulation of descriptive phrasing and syntax. Many facets of the sea are outlined in detail. I could almost feel the power and feel the enigma, as the description is absorbed. Congratulations on a fine entry.

THIRD PLACE: CLOTHES MAKETH THE MAN by MILTON TAYLOR Hartley, NSW

I really enjoyed this clever little story and the way it was written. The prose is witty and well constructed to suit the occasion. The writer has created the story with finesse and skill, building to the "punch line", which to say the least, must have been painful. I was impressed by the clever use of lyrical phrasing to allow the story to bounce along with good timing. Congratulations on your entry.

Keith Jones

2014 Golden Damper Awards

Established (Traditional or Modern)

1st Lyn Tarring, Townsville Qld

2nd Paddy O'Brien, Murwillumbah NSW

3rd Gabby Colquhoun, Gloucester NSW

Original

1st Brian Langley, St James WA

2nd John Peel, Tumut NSW

3rd Tom McIlveen, Port Macquarie NSW



Townsville Poet, Lyn Tarring made her first trip to Tamworth and took out first prize as well as slaying audiences at the Longyard Hotel. Congratulations, Lyn

The White Man's Way

David Campbell

Winner: Published Poem of the Year at the 2014 Australian Bush Laureate Awards in Tamworth

We have heard their voices crying as the land is slowly dying,
and we bow before the strength of nature's might.
We have scorned their quiet yearning as we've set the forests
burning,
and begun our fateful journey into night.
We have built another city with our hearts devoid of pity,
and ignored their fading culture day by day.
We have wrecked and torn asunder, taken beauty as our plunder;
in Australia it is called 'the white man's way'.

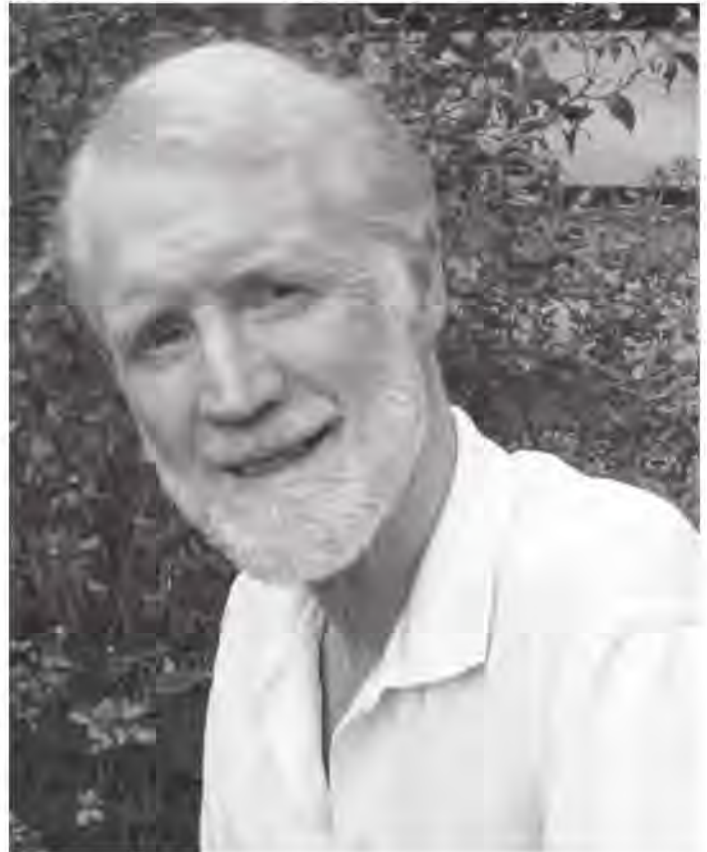
Through the turning of the seasons we have always found the
reasons
to explain our many futile, stubborn stands,
yet the blindness of our thinking sees us obstinately sinking
in the windstorm of the desert's shifting sands.
For the thunderclouds are forming in the face of global warming
as the weather fluctuates between extremes;
from a hurricane's destruction to the Arctic's ice reduction
we are witnessing the end of all our dreams.

As pollution fouls the water, native species suffer slaughter
at the hands of fools who have no thought or care
for a future we should cherish because we, as well, could perish
in the suffocating smog that chokes the air.
For a coal-fired power station, while the focus of our nation,
is a danger to the future that we crave,
as it drains the last resources from our dwindling water courses
and unravels all the promises we gave.

Now another vital factor is a nuclear reactor,
which some politicians claim will save the day,
but the dangers are so many that it's hard to see how any
thinking person could accept the price we'd pay.
Seeking power generation at the risk of radiation
is an answer that should multiply our fears,
for Chernobyl's shadow lingers as its silent, deadly fingers
will continue touching lives for countless years.

In our ceaseless quest for glory we've forgotten nature's story,
and we've turned our backs on lessons from the past.
In a high-tech revolution we might find a brief solution,
but the chances are the miracle won't last.
For the long-term consequences often conquer our defences
and create a problem we had not foreseen,
so another innovation is devised for our salvation,
and we never pause to think what might have been.

With our energy consumption there is always the assumption
that we'll find another way to forge ahead,
that the earth will yield its treasure for our never-ending pleasure
and ensure the human race is clothed and fed.
But there's no sense of proportion, we're abandoning all caution,
and we're pushing nature's boundaries too far.
We are primitive and savage as we slash and gouge and ravage,
and a paradise becomes an ugly scar.



We have lost all comprehension of the balance and dimension
that has kept our planet self-sustained through time;
now our ruthless desecration and severe deforestation
are a testament to mankind's greatest crime.
There is so much that we're losing, and it's all of our own choosing,
in the sea and in the air and on the land,
as our reckless, headstrong madness brings a universal sadness
at the damage being wrought by human hand.

Is it too late to be changing? Are there ways of rearranging
our priorities about the way we live?
Can we calm the raging weather and decide to work together,
so we learn that we must take less than we give?
Will we see the forests growing and the rivers overflowing,
and the sky a bright translucent shade of blue?
Is there courage, is there passion, can we find the will to fashion
our existence in the way that we must do?

To have any chance of winning we must make a new beginning,
and it brings a burden each of us must share,
or a future generation will be faced with devastation
and an ecosystem far beyond repair.
On some bleak and sunless morning, man will face a final dawning
in a starkly barren landscape, cold and grey,
when a feeble voice will mutter and a wasted hand will flutter
as it writes our epitaph: 'the white man's way'.

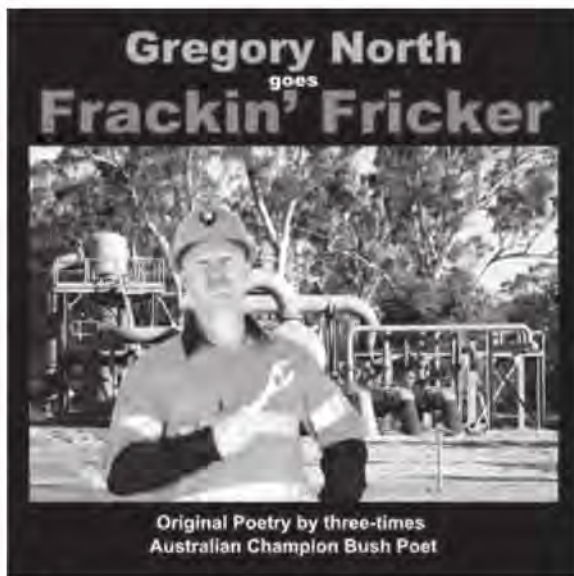
David Campbell wins Book of the Year and Published Poem of the Year at the 2014 Australian Bush Laureate Awards in Tamworth



Riders on the Wind:

104 pages; 40 award-winning poems (including Poem of the Year) plus photos. Also an e-book and CD. Book only: \$23 (inc. postage); Book + CD: \$33 (inc. postage); e-book: \$9.99. Book/CD via:

camwriter@hotmail.com or 1 Spicer Street, Beaumaris, Vic., 3193 or mobile 0400 468 500. Download the e-book (Kindle, Kobo or Apple) at: www.campbellwriter.com/books



Australian Bush Laureate Awards Album of the Year and Single Recorded Performance of the Year

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Australian Bush Laureate Awards, Tamworth 21st January 2014

Book of the Year:

David Campbell, Beaumaris Vic "Riders On The Wind"

Published Poem of the Year

David Campbell, Beaumaris Vic "The White Man's Way"

Album of the Year

Gregory North, Linden NSW "Frackin' Fricker"

Single Recorded Performance of the Year

Gregory North, Linden NSW "Frackin' Fricker"

Traditional Song Lyric of the Year

Norma O'Hara Murphy, Bony Mountain Qld "Gilbert, O'Meally & Hall"

Contemporary Song Lyric of the Year

Lee Kernaghan, Garth Porter and Colin Buchanan "Flying With The King"

Judith Hosier Award

Trisha Anderson, Hendra Qld

Unique to Our Island Nation

©Ross Knudsen

A song of nature's wildlife stirs thoughts of fascination
Our amazing land of differences, unique to our island nation.
The many natural wonders, to outsiders we can boast
Of the snowy mountain centre to the windy surf-bound coast.
Our climate is predictable, we've never had a storm
We seldom have a bushfire and cyclones rarely form.
Be out there and enjoy them, the crocodile and turtle
Witness awe and splendour at our flowering banksia myrtle.
In fact it's just Utopia, keep reading, you'll agree
You'll experience the sheer delight with careful scrutiny.

Snowgums line the Cooper Creek on banks of clay and sand
Ghostgums veil the snowy peaks up high on alpine land.
The wedge-tailed eagle soars above, a coat of grey and red
The feathered kangaroo stands tall, a sulphur crest upon its head.
The dingo and koala have scales and like to sing
You'll see the emu countrywide in flocks and on the wing.
Crocodiles, snakes and lizards stay warm with thickened fur
And the laughing pygmy possum and the brush-tail would concur.
The pelican is tiny and has legs of red and green
That feathered kangaroo is by far the weirdest they have seen.

The Barrier Reef is plentiful, in essence it's a zoo
The flying fish are a sight to see when you visit Uluru!
The rarest bird to hiss and spit is of course the old magpie
In summer when the snow lies deep they migrate and they are shy.
When diving in the great Lake Eyre you may view the great white shark
It has glowing luminescence in depths where the lake is dark.
Bandicoots and bilbies come in shades of glistening blue
And the seals you see on the Great Divide also visit Kakadu.
Ulysses is the colourful cod, it abounds our southern shore
I have more to tell of Aussie life, would you like to hear some more?

Our magnificent singing wombat will delight with songs and tunes
Similar to the albatross that soars the desert dunes.
The colourful bats of the Flinders Range are numbered by the score
While goannas swim the rivers that drain the Nullarbor.
The lyrebird of the dry outback has a colour of lush green turf
And spoonbills, galahs and lorikeets are often seen in surf.
The dusky hues of the echidna are lost amid the jungle
Let's not forget the Tassie Devil whose home is the Bungle Bungles.
This song of nature's wildlife stirs thoughts of fascination
Our amazing land of differences, unique to our island nation.

www.abpa.org.au
come and participate
in our website forums!

Lovely Lies

© Robyn Sykes

The church was packed like sandwiches, and boy, we got it straight:
if we don't tell the truth then we won't squeeze through heaven's gate.
In fervent supplication I engraved it on my heart
and knelt to promise Jesus I was now his work of art.

I crossed my heart in sacred oath to die before I'd lie;
whatever the temptation, I would hoist my conscience high.
I polished up my halo and my harp, but down the street
Miss Brown was walking Buster, both immaculate and neat.

She gripped my fingers tightly, saying, "Rob dear, how are you?"
My promise was in danger but I bravely saw it through.
Instead of saying "Well, thank you," I didn't fudge a bit.
"I'm crook with flaming gastro and my sex-life's up the pit.

"I guzzled so much wine last night, I'm scared of what I'll hear,
then compromised my health again with slivovitz and beer."
She looked as if she'd slap me and said, "Drinking is a sin,"
then wiped her dainty fingers, flung the tissue in a bin.

My mother's friend of 50 years, her dedicated chum,
then tottered off to gossip, to describe how I was scum.
I reassured my trembling self of treasures piling high,
where truth retains a value, in my mansion in the sky.

My mother's rage was so intense it splattered like a blot.
"You didn't have to detail all the orgies and the pot."
Her judgements left temptation ringing loudly in my ear;
oh Satan, get behind me, for the truth I will not fear!

My buddy phoned an invitation asking me to tea.
"I've bought a little skirt," she said, "now come in here and see.
I really want the truth, you know," she smacked me with a kiss,
"I'm nervous of my bum... does it look big in stuff like this?"

She asked, so I informed her, and because she was my friend
I blurted the entire tale, not stopping till the end.
Not only did her bum look big, her muffin roll hung down,
her hair would suit a monkey and her make-up fit a clown.

Her eyes were icy glaciers, her words were sprays of mace;
she shoved me out the door before she slammed it in my face.
Our dinner was forgotten as our friendship fell in flames;
instead of seeking truth, she called me "pig" and other names.

I called the priest and begged a resolution for my plight -
"When truth will burn like hades you can bet there'll be a fight!"
"You silly girl," he spluttered. "Lies are white as well as black.
The white lies lead to heaven, it's the black ones cause the flak.

"I'm colour blind!" I shouted. "How am I supposed to tell?
Do lies come like a rainbow, maybe tangerine as well?"
"The white ones," he said patiently, "are told to save a friend
the pain of knowing truths they'd rather plasticise and bend."

Then finally I understood; for purity to grow,
we simply have to judge how much our friends will want to know.
I tell you that's not easy, for your friends will lie to you
and say they want the truth, but it will only cause a blue.

When someone asks you, "How are you?" say, "Well thanks, how are you?"
for most don't give a fig about your health or point of view.
And if a lady questions the dimensions of her bum,
a lie will save your bacon; if you can't lie, just play dumb.

The Australian Bush Poets Association

A compilation of the history of the ABPA

gleaned from the pages of the associations magazines and meetings since 1994

by FRANK DANIEL



It is difficult to find one word that adequately describes Mervyn Bostock but the term larrikin may come close. He was a member of a pioneering Queensland family, a champion Bull-fighter, a light-heavyweight boxer, a poet, a raconteur, and a rodeo-clown with the Australian Rough-Riders Association. He was part of a small group of bush poets who contributed to the resurrection of bush poetry in Australia early in the 1990s.

'Bluey' was the founder and inaugural President of the Australian Bush Poets Association. On Saturday the 28th of January 1994, at the Imperial Hotel Tamworth, Bluey invited interested persons who wished to be involved, to remain after the bush poetry competition finals. He outlined his vision of the need for a unifying representative association for Bush Poets. At this inaugural meeting a steering committee was elected to form the Australian Bush Poets Association. Mervyn 'Bluey' Bostock of Wynnum Q. was elected as Acting President and Ron Selby of Drayton Q. as Sec/Treasurer. Executive members were. Max Jarrott, Killarney Q. and Geoffrey Graham, Bealiba Vic.

'Bluey' Bostock was nominated for the Queenslander of the year award in 1995 for his involvement in charitable work for over 30 years, and ran as a candidate in the 1998 state elections in the electorate of Cleveland in Queensland. He lived most of his life in Wynnum. Q.

Mervyn Edward Dundee 'Bluey' Bostock passed away in Brisbane on 29th September 2008 aged 75.

The inaugural Secretary/Treasurer was Ron Selby of Drayton North, which is on the southern end of the City of Toowoomba, on the famous Queensland Darling Downs. Ron also filled the position of Editor of the association's, then, Monthly Newsletter



BLUEY BOSTOCK

Regular subscriptions to the magazine came from the likes of Neil Carrol (Hipshot); 'I was watching my granddaughter texting a message to one of her friends on her mobile phone, and I was fascinated by the coordination of her mind and fingers.

But this use of letters for words is not new by any means, and the following poem appeared in my weekly column in The Brewarrina News in the early 'sixties: Hipshot.

EMILY

*O! MLE, what XTC
I always feel when UIC.
I used to gaze in LN'S eyes.
For LC I gave countless sighs.
For KT too ... and LNR
I was a keen competitor.
But they are now non -NTT's,
for you XL then all UC.
No other girl could FRB,
as XLNT as MLE!*



GERTRUDE SKINNER

The Australian Bush Poets Association
Logo: designed by Pam Blackman, 1994.

INAUGURAL MEETING ABPA

28th January 1994

The meeting was opened at 12.45pm
Those present at the meeting were:

Mervyn Bostock – Cairns Q.
Ron Selby – Drayton Q.
Geoffrey Graham – Bealiba V.
Bob Magor – Myponga SA
Tiny Hall – Tamworth NSW
Reid Begg – Forster NSW
Pauline Begg – Forster NSW
Bob Miller – Mungar Q.
B. McConnell – Sheldon Q.
John Major – Baralaba Q.
Campbell Irving – Truro SA
Ray Essery – Mullumbimby NSW
Carmel Randle – Preston Q.
P. Roberts – Tamworth NSW
Doug Broad – Cooma NSW
S. Edwards – Bilgola Plateau NSW
Janet Obrien-Vise – Rockhampton Q.
Ron Selby – Drayton Q.
Max Jarrott – Killarney Q.
Johnny Johanson – Wynnum Q.
Noel Cutler – Milawa V.
Frank Daniel – Canowindra NSW
John Rennick – Forbes NSW
B. Dickman – Chinchilla Q.
John Philipson – Tamworth NSW
Phillipa Powell – Tamworth NSW
David Walker – Forbes NSW
Billy Hay – Chinchilla Q.
Ron Bates – Gatton Q.
Of those 29 present only 22 paid up as inaugural members.

A POETS CONFESSION

by Unknown

"Hello! I'm sure you know me,
I'm a poet, widely read,
you would have read my poems,
they are 'classics' it is said.
I'm the most prolific writer
on the bush verse writing scene,
and the critics all agree,
I'm the best that's ever been.
My work is in anthologies
from the East out to the West,
and Paterson and Lawson
are really second best.
My poems are outstanding,
you could say they 'stand alone',
and I always use the 'nom-de-plume'
of 'Author Unknown'.

Bush Poetry History



MARION FITZGERALD

My very first visit to the Tamworth Country Music Festival was in January 1988, and the sole reason why I decided to go was because I had read in the Festival Programme that there would be an 'Australian Bush Poetry Competition' and it would be compered by James Blundell.

James had won Starmaker the year before in 1987 and in 1988 was nominated for a Gold Guitar for Best New Talent, which he won – so James was a big drawcard for the Poetry Competition. It was sponsored by Kentucky Fried Chicken, and organised by the Tamworth Poetry Group (their first bush poetry competition I believe).

The Tamworth Poetry Group consisted of Maureen Quickenden (convener), Charles Snell, Charles Moffet, John Bishop, Cliff and Judith Hathaway, Ketih and Cynthia Jones, (I'm not sure if Phillipa Powell was part of it at that time).

There were two awards/sections, original section and Traditional Section. The same as there is today. The heats were held in the car park of Kentucky Fried Chicken and commenced on Wednesday through to Friday at a lunchtime – I think it started about Midday.

Kentucky Fried Chicken had a stage mounted in the corner of the carpark closest to the Highway. Although they had a good sound system, the noise of the busy highway traffic was very interfering, plus there was no shade for the audience in the sweltering sun.

James was an excellent compere, concentrating on yarn spinning and poetry himself for the occasion and was getting a lot of media attention because of his

Gold Guitar nomination, hence each day saw a substantial crowd at the poetry heats despite the unfavourable venue.

The finals were held on Saturday after the grand parade, but with the threat of thunderstorms, it was decided to move the whole show across the road to a hall. (Something like the Presbyterian Hall) That venue was much cooler, but the rain pelted down so hard on the tin roof that you could hardly hear the performers. The judges during the heats of the poetry were members of the Tamworth Poetry Group.

On finals day they had a panel of new judges, one of them being Ian Slack-Smith (later, member for Gwydir) and famous for his very funny poetry books called the Cubaroo Tales, and poetry recitations.

Some of the competitors I recall were John Philipson, Gertrude Skinner, Marion Fitzgerald, Phil Godfrey, Dave Dunbar, I think Phillipa Powell, and some of the members of the poetry group, like John Bishop, and Col Newsome. And possibly Keith Garvey. Marion Fitzgerald won the Original Section and I'm sure John Philipson won the traditional.

Gertrude Skinner was 75 that year and had only started writing humorous poetry five years before hand – mainly based on her days at Mungindi as a stockman's wife. However her most famous poem at the time was 'The Avocado' Poem which she is most associated with.

Phil Godfrey and Dave Dunbar were the first of the real 'Larrikins' I believe – they did a lot of slap-stick bush comedy together, and while Dave was hilarious on the Dave and Mabel yarns, Phil strung some very funny poems together, the most memorable being 'Classical Gas'. They both came from Armidale and were seldom seen apart.

John Philipson was a master reciter of the Traditional poet and had a huge repertoire from the serious to the humorous. I could tell that it was a life-long interest of his, and hadn't just picked it up in the last few years.

That year (1988) was my very first poetry competition and my very first performance of poetry apart from spots in college reviews at Ag College a few years before. However winning the original section at Tamworth that year changed all that and by the time I returned to Moree (where I was working) after the Tamworth country music festival, news had leaked out, and within days I was booked (much to my dismay) by the Evening View Club to recite at their function that week.

Over the next few weeks, bookings came in from Rotary Clubs, Apex Clubs,



MARCO GLIORI

Lions Clubs, and every charity event and organization around town – quite unexpected and I was quite unprepared for all that attention, especially when I only had a handful of poems I had written – hence the pressure was on me to write more and more poems and that's how my introduction into performing bush poetry started – when all I wanted was to see James Blundell.

It was at the 1988 festival that I first met Murray Hartin – he was a reporter for the Northern Daily Leader at the time. Murray was not involved in the poetry competition in 1988 (he was more reporting on it) but told me that he (and another fellow who's name I can't recall) 'tried to start off a poetry competition in the paddock behind the Longyard the previous year 1987' They were his words – from the sound of it they didn't have any sponsorship but were just a keen bunch of bards who wanted to try and attract other bards who were at the festival and have a good time.

Although it turned out to be only a one-off due to the out-of-the-way venue in a hot dusty paddock, and perhaps wasn't even a crowd pleaser, it certainly did bring poets together who were to form the backbone of performing poets in Tamworth – John Philipson, Phil Godfrey and Dave Dunbar were the performers and competitors along with Murray that first year behind the Longyard (Keith Garvey and Col Newsome could also have been there)

In 1989 I returned to Tamworth Country Music Festival to compete in the Bush Poetry Competition. The Tamworth Poetry Group had now engaged the sponsorship of the Imperial Hotel and it was held on a stage in the car park of the hotel.



BOBBY MILLER

A shady annexe was over the stage but still the audience sat in the sweltering heat. However despite this it was very well attended and competition was strong with performers coming from further afield. I won the original section, Greg Barklimore from Cobar came second, I think John Philipson won the Traditional section. My first prize was \$5 in an envelope but at the time I didn't imagine how valuable that \$5 would become to me, and when I look back it was more valuable than having a beautifully hand crafted Golden Dampier Award on my shelf.

Little did I know it at the time, but members of the Stockman's Hall of Fame were in the audience at the finals searching for talent to represent them at the Elko Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Nevada in January the following year, 1990. I was certainly not aware of this until 9 months later in October 1989 when I received a letter from Hal Cannon, of the Western Folklife Center, Salt Lake City USA. It was an invitation to perform at the Elko Gathering in January 1990 along with five other entertainers to honour the Australian stockman.

Over the next few months and after accepting the invitation, the stockman's hall of fame contacted me and made my travel arrangements and it was then that it was revealed that my success at Tamworth and my rural background was the reason I was selected. I was very honoured to join other entertainers who were very well known and respected in the music industry – Ted Egan and Nerys Evans, Bruce Simpson, (a boss-drover of Sir Sydney Kidman and highly respected heritage poet) Bill Gunn, (Reciter of traditional works – Ogilvie and Banjo Paterson and a previous manager of large cattle stations in Northern Australia); Ranald Chandler – deputy chairman of the ASHOF and also a reciter of traditional poets such as Longfellow and Dorothea McKellar.

The tour included five days of performing at the Elko Poetry Gathering, which also coincided with Australia Day and

shows at the Cowboy Hall of Fame, Oklahoma, the Gene Autry Museum, Los Angeles, and various other venues during the two weeks tour.

During my trip away in America, which coincided with Tamworth Country Music Festival 1990 I was to learn that there was new kid on the block – an unknown policeman from Warwick Qld who won the Original section with 'Granny and the Snake'.

Hence the introduction of Mark Gliori – and who I believe created a new image for the bush poets generally – he was young, good looking, clean cut and had a very engaging presence on stage. Mark (who later became known as Marco) was a poet to remember, and by the time I finally got to meet him in November 1990 at the first Drover's Reunion in Longreach, I knew why everyone was talking about him.

In 1991 I was invited to Compere the Bush Poetry finals at the Tamworth Country Music Festival and recall Marco's splendid performance and again winning the original section.

However I recall presenting the winner of the Blackened Billy Award for written verse that yearand talk about the shy, winner and a grinner – it was Bobby Miller from Maryborough with his poem about Australia, --- 'have you ever seen a sunset' --- and he recited it on receiving his award and was an instant hit. I knew then that with Marco and Bobby on the scene, bush poetry was heading into an exciting time.

In 1992 Jim Haynes collected a few of us poets together after arranging with June Smythe of the Longyard Hotel to borrow the front bar room off the verandah for performing bush poetry in the early morning.

It was not a competition and did not clash with the Imperial competition which continued on year after year in the lunch-time spot.

In fact each of the venues enhanced each other, being the only poetry venues in town for the festival.

Performers in 1992 at the Longyard were Jim Haynes, Marco Gliori, Bobby Miller, John Philipson, Marion Fitzgerald, Murray Hartin, Gertrude Skinner, Charlee Marshall, Col Newsome (and 'Blue the Shearer', (Col Wilson).

It ran for about 4 days in 1992 and by the last day the little bar-room was filled to capacity with eager poetry fans.

So in 1993 June Smythe gave us the Goonoo Goonoo Room and also served breakfast for the audience – hence the first real Bush Poets Breakfast began, hosted by Jim Haynes. It ran for 5 days up to and over the long-week-end of the festival.

The first fireside festival started in June 1993, led by Jim Haynes.



JIM HAYNES

November

by Charlee Marshall

If I should die upon a day like this,
November music in the wind's soft tune;
November lawns still jewelled from the
kiss
of dewdrops, scattered by November's
moon.

If I should leave this life on such a day
I'd leave a dream my soul could still re-
member,
for heaven cant be very far away
from here ... my friends... my garden.. my
November.

What better way to spend Eternity!
A million years ahead to reminisce;
a timeless time from tears and pain set free,
if death should find me on a day like this.
Weep not that I have wandered from the
scene,
but join me in my thanks that I have been.

There are no further mountains I should
climb;
the setting sun shines with a softer light.
I am an instrument of place and time,
an evening shadow of a day once bright;
and though I know, alas, there will be those
whose hearts will not be with me at the
last,

but write instead 'I love you' on a rose,
and toss it as the hearse is driven past.
I hope these vacant words will make
amends
to empty arms and lips I cannot kiss;
for how could I leave sorrow to my friends
if I should die upon a day like this?
They will not weep, if only they remember
I've found a life that always is ...

November.

MURRAY HARTIN

In 1987 'Muz' was the winner of the first performance competition held in Tamworth, the forerunner of many to come and the start of the resurgence of bush poetry as we know it today.

The contest was organized by the Tamworth Poetry Group and conducted from the back of a truck at the Longyard Hotel.

Two performance poems were required to enter each section of this competition and Murray won the original section with his poem about the drought, 'Rural Facts' written in 1983 and 'The Ballad of Kev Koala and Ring-tail Pete' written on the day of the finals.

In this and future issues we will be featuring many of the bush poets and some of the events that developed the resurgence of traditional bush poetry as an entertainment art form and the eventual start of the ABPA Inc.



Issue No. 1. Volume 1. (Feb. 1994) was compiled and published by the Secretary - Treasurer - Editor Mr. **Ron Selby** of Drayton Qld. within a week of the inauguration of the association. The inaugural meeting was held on 26th January 1994 when an interim committee was formed. The association consisted of twenty-two financial members. Convener and major force behind the formation of the ABPA was Mervyn Bostock of Cairns Q.

The inaugural meeting was held at the Imperial Hotel following the finals of the Bush Poets Competition. Poets successful at this competition were (Original) Mark Gliori, Warwick Q., Ray Essery, Mullumbimby NSW and Bob Miller of Mungar Q. The Traditional section was taken out by Ray Essery, Noel Cutler, Milawa V and Geoffrey Graham Bealiba V. During the Country Music Festival bush poets gained even greater recognition than in previous years when three of Australia's best were invited for the first time to perform at the Australia Day concert. Around 12,000 rose to give a standing ovation when Queenslander Bob Miller recited

his original poem 'What Makes a True Australian'.

In the second issue of our monthly newsletter an elated editor, Ron Selby, proudly announced that we were making great inroads as an association with membership having doubled to 42 within a few weeks, and an influx of news and material, poems and suggestions piling up in his small home office. Word was spreading quickly and newspapers nationally were spreading the word and creating a lot of interest.

Geoffrey Graham, the Victorian Publicity Officer subscribed to the news with his 'Breadcrumbs from the Bulladeer' and noted collector of songs, poems, stories and yarns, Bill Scott opened with a two page article on Poets and People.

Mark Gliori's win at the 'Impy' was his fourth in succession, his winning poem entitled 'Queenie' was closely challenged when only five points separated the first three. The first of many ABPA members to follow in his footsteps as a writer and subscriber was Blackened Billy winner, **Ron Stevens**, then of Hornsby NSW, with his poem Tourist Guide, an epic about the plight of outback Koori youth. (March '94)

The Land and Queensland Country Life sponsored Henry Lawson Literary Awards announced \$2,000.00 in prize-money for short stories and poetry, including juvenile events.

ABC Radio's David Anderson interviewed Merv Bostock en-route to his home in Cairns with a request to follow up with more news and poetry. This was followed by half page write ups in the North Queensland Register (Townsville) and the Courier Mail again with requests for more poetry.



John Philipson had a life-long interest in Australian Bush Poetry and was a master reciter of the Traditional poets with a huge repertoire from the serious to the humorous.

At the original Longyard performance competition (held on the back of a truck in 1987) John won the Traditional section taking home a book of Australian Folklore for his effort. The judge then being Jonathon King, noted historian and inveterate re-enactment organizer. ('Waltzing Matilda' Centenary, Winton 1995; 'The Man from Snowy River', Corryong 1995).

John played a vital part in the bush poetry events at the Longyard.

John was born in Leeton in the Riverina, developed a love of Australian Poetry as a kid in the thirties, and was noted for his reciting and yarn-spinning throughout his life.

He made many bus tours around Australia as resident story teller and reciter with Hannafords Tamworth Coaches. He died in July 1997, a month short of his seventieth birthday.

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Vol 1 No. 5 The next meeting of the ABPA was held in the Old Brewery adjacent to the Longyard Hotel during the fourth Fireside Festival which was conducted by Jim Haynes in June.

It was at these Fireside Festivals that the Longyard Wall of Renown was established. (Later known as the Longyard Legends.) Inducted in 1994 was Bobby Miller, Col Wilson (Blue the Shearer) and the late Ted Simpson.

Special guest at the meeting was Dr. Jonathon King who outlined preparations for the Centenary of Waltzing Matilda celebrations planned for Winton in April 1995 and an open invitation for ABPA participation. Projected events included the Waltzing Matilda Award for bush poetry with ten days of poetry leading up a Final and the Swaggies Walks into Winton.

It was moved at this meeting that the 1995 Australian Championships be held during the Winton Celebrations. Marco Gliori and Jim Haynes (pictured) assisted the executive in forming a sub-committee.

TAMWORTH POETS' WALKUPS AT ST EDWARDS HALL

Wow ! what a festival it was this year ! Bush Poetry is well and truly alive in Tamworth! Saint Edward's Hall walk-ups proved very popular again, as the momentum, which started last year, continued to roll on from word of mouth and listings advertised in the gig guide. We had people turning up who had never seen a bush poets show before, and they stayed for the whole afternoon, thoroughly enjoying the performances by our seasoned veterans and novices alike.

Johnny Peel kicked us off on the first Saturday and Sunday afternoons, and then on Monday, we had the wonderful unprecedented combination of Greg North, Jack Drake and Pat Drummond, mc'ing, reciting and introducing the walk-ups. This proved hugely popular!! They put on a great show and anybody attending, got their money's worth a hundred times over, for the cost of a gold coin donation.

The gold coin donations at the door covered our rent for the hall. On the Thursday afternoon, Ray Essery kicked us off with his usual rustic, dairy charm and wit, and milked many a laugh from another full house. We started running out of chairs, and nearly had them standing in the aisles !! Geoffrey Graham, Greg North and Peter Mace added to an extravaganza of entertainment, and a good time was had by one and all. Word of mouth is spreading amongst the visitors to the festival and we are filling up the hall with visitors and poets alike.

Saturday after the golden damper finals, we had our final session at the hall, and as Peter Mace had to leave town early, I asked Dave Proust and his beautiful wife to come over and help out Jack Drake and Johnny Peel with the mc'g. They provided us with a wonderful husband verses wife skit which had the audience in stitches. Jack Drake finished off with his usual popular unique style, and had us all enthralled for the rest of the afternoon, as he contributed to entertaining us between walk-ups from the crowd. Thank you to all of the performers who unselfishly gave up their valuable time, from heavy schedules and contributed to the running of the walk-ups for me. You were all outstanding, and no doubt we will get bigger and better crowds next year as the word spreads !!!! I believe this is beneficial to our craft overall as we encourage festival visitors to come along to a free show and experience what bush poetry is all about. Once they get a taste for it, they will attend other bush poetry shows, whilst in town and spread the word amongst other visitors and peers. Thank you also, to all of the poets who came along to support us, and no doubt next year will be bigger and better than ever !!!

Tom McIlveen



Full House at St. Edward's Hall watching the Bush Poetry Walk-Ups



Trish Anderson leading the Lady Poettes at st Edwards hall with her zany sense of humour and eternal wit. There was a wonderful turn up by the ladies on Friay this year at tamworth for their traditional annual afternoon of poetry and again a hugh turnout of Bush Poetry fans supported the Poettes Show .

The day we met the man who shook the hand of The Banjo

We met the man Reid (Rusty) Begg from Tuncurry who'd met Banjo when he was only ten years old. He was in primary school in Orange at the time and had been selected by the principal because of his ability to recite bush poetry verbatim. He was given the privilege of shaking Mr. Paterson's hand and welcoming him to their school. Reid remembers Banjo as a tall, impressive, smiling man with a firm handshake, who had immediately put him at ease. He wasn't fully aware at the time of just how significant this brief encounter was to be and the influence that this legendary man, who died 3 years later in 1941, would come to have on his life. Reid continued to have a passion for bush poetry throughout his life and with his late wife Pauleen was to become a founding member of the ABPA. Reid's passion is to promote Australian traditional poetry amongst primary school students and continues to do special to this day.

Tom McIlveen



The Longyard Poets Breakfasts 2014

Hard to believe that the 2014 TCMF has finished already! Day upon day of 40 degree weather failed to temper the enthusiasm of the crowds which filled the famous Goonoo Goonoo Room at the Longyard Hotel. (Three full houses and most of the other days were close) paid testament to the fact that Bush Poetry as a Comedy Medium will forever pull huge crowds. A distinct increase in young people turning up for the shows was extremely encouraging also, and great for the future of the performing craft.

Each Day, Australia's oldest Bush Poet's Breakfast Venue served up a smorgasbord of Australia's premier Performing Bush Poets. Old hands such as Ray Essery, Marco Gliori, Murray Hartin, Prousty, Jack Drake, Bill Kearns, Greg North etc. stood aside first time performers Lyn Tarring, Kathie Priestly and Rhonda Tallnash, while two of the Longyards favourite performers from the past again made a return to the stage, Glenny Palmer and Greg Scott. Our Comedy Musos Dave Prior and Errol Gray were exceptional, while stand-up comic/poet/balladeer Brad Maclean, again showed why he is such a great performer to have on board. Garry Lowe, Col Driscoll, Geoffrey Graham and co. continued to slay the crowds and working as compare and organiser, myself and Colleen could not have asked for a better crew to work with. Big thanks to my 'right hand man' Raymondo Essery, who would be one of the best performers and most professional and wisest head in the business at present.

The feeling of belonging, trust in material, audience acceptance of our material, and an overall relaxed and stress free feeling 'out back' before taking the stage, is hopefully contributing to some of the brilliant brackets we witnessed this year!

Next year is already booked in and another crew will be put together around September, with one of the main aims next year being to try to boost the female performance numbers, as there seems to be a lack of female performers around at the moment which is at odds with the increase in numbers and quality of the females in competition, although hopefully it will transform itself over the next few years.

Again, a big thanks to all involved for making Tamworth 2014 one of the most successful yet and setting the agenda for expectations in years to come!



Dave Prior



Brad Maclean



Glenny Palmer



Marco Gliori



Ray Essery



Peter Capp



Prousty



Col Driscoll



Neil McArthur

Getting ready to fire up the show for Australia Day, with wife Colleen and niece Adri.



Revving up yet another full house in the Goonoo Goonoo Room at the Longyard.

Chilling out at the Longyard, waiting to take the Stage.

A.B.P.A. Accredited Judges

Poets currently on the ABPA Accredited PERFORMANCE Competition Judges list :-

Tricia Anderson, Brian Bell, John Best, Susan Carcary, Frank Daniel, Raymond Essery, Gary Fogarty, Janine Haig, Melanie Hall, Carol Heuchan, Zita Horan, Graeme Johnson, Brenda Joy, Zondrae King, Ron Liekefett, Gregory North, Glenny Palmer, John Peel, Noel Stallard, Robyn Sykes, Milton Taylor, Manfred Vijars.

Poets currently on the ABPA Accredited WRITTEN Competition Judges list :-

Brian Beesley, David Campbell, Ken Dean, Kym Eitel, Janine Haig, Carol Heuchan, Graeme Johnson, Brenda Joy, Bob Magor, Max Merckenschlager, Gregory North, Glenny Palmer, Noel Stallard, Ron Stevens, Beryl Stirling, Robyn Sykes, Milton Taylor, Manfred Vijars, Veronica Weal.

Not Just the Drovers Horse

(c) Brian Langley 11/3/2006

You may sing of the drover's companion
That carried him far, far from home.
For months at a time they would travel,
Together the country they'd roam.
As they moved all the sheep and the cattle
To places the grasses grow sweet;
Then moving them down to the saleyards,
All fat so there'll be lots of meat.

You may tell of the sure footed pony
As he raced down the mountains at speed;
As one with the stockman who rode him;
Together, the man and his steed.
As they followed the wild bush horses
Through scrub where no horses should go.
Crashing their way through the mulga,
Where the Snowy and Jindabyne flow.

You may write of the thoroughbred racer,
As he surges away from the gate
Then settles to run the full distance,
With a burst at full speed down the straight.
To take on the favourite and beat him;
To win by a very short nose.
It's races like that that are legends,
That are set down in poems and prose.

But for all of the telling of stories
Of the horses the jockeys ride hard,
And those of the drovers out droving
And the stock horses down at the yard.
There's many whose roles are forgotten
With hardly a mention at all,
They too are the ones we should sing of,
They too helped our country stand tall.

There's others whose deeds are remembered
But their riders got most accolades;
The special breed known as the waler
That carried the light horse brigades
Into battle in far distant places;
Left to rot in the fields where they fell.
For them, no retirement to pasture,
Just a long one-way trip into hell.

And the horses that moved goods and people
'Tween the coast and the towns far away;
Pulling the coaches and wagons
Day after day after day.
Cross endless wide plains, dry and dusty,
Up mountain tracks, rocky and steep,
Through mud two foot deep on the flood plains,
Cross rivers where waters run deep.

Then think of the thousands of farmers
Who started from scratch on this land;
With just one or two horses to help him,
Pulling stumps from the clay and the sand.
And the river flats, fertile and loamy
When they're seeded right after the flood;
Think of the poor farmers horses,
Dragging ploughs through the paddocks of mud.

And the horses out deep in the forest
Hauling the logs to the mills;
Cleats on their shoes to stop slipping
As they struggle to climb up the hills.
And those on the pumps and the windlass
Of the mines that go deep in the ground;
Forever they trudge in small circles
Around and around and around.

And those in the cities, forgotten;
That delivered the milk and the bread.
No rest for these horses, no pastures
Just work, til the day they dropped dead.
And then there's the ones we don't think of
With a task that was done out of sight;
Pulling their cart loads of sewage,
Through cities and towns in the night.

So when you read stories of horses;
The famous, the fast, the adored;
Think too, of the ones, long forgotten,
The ones that the books have ignored.
For they, like the thousands of people
With names not remembered at all;
They too are the one's we should sing of
They too helped our country stand tall.

Poems From The Land Of The Long White Cloud

Those Bitter Days

©Mike McPhee

In our Twentieth year, it is wonderful to receive poems from overseas members. Australia has always had a wonderful affiliation with our New Zealand neighbours, so I was pleased when I received these couple of poems from member Mike McPhee. I hope you enjoy them. I certainly did.

The General Grant

©Mike McPhee

Here's Captain Loughlin's mournful chant,
there's gold on board the General Grant;
there's gold on board his long lost ship,
and sixty men watch over it.

His helmsmen fought the wheel that night,
it broke their ribs then took their lives
and sixty men were swept away
off Auckland Island's Welcome Bay.

Just fifteen made the rocky shore,
condemned to starve, both rich and poor;
no summer in that southern clime,
and winter lasts a good long time.

Four men tried to sail away,
but Auckland Island made them pay,
and all those left in the bitter cold
cursed the Island and the gold.

So all you dreamers listen now,
those sixty men still guard it well
and if you seek the General's prize,
you're forfeit to the Auckland Isles.

Yes Captain Loughlin and his men
suggest you think, and think again;
proceed south to break the curse
and you'll face shipwreck, death and worse.

That's Captain Loughlin's mournful chant,
there's gold on board the General Grant;
there's gold on board his long lost ship
and sixty men watch over it.

They grew up free in the Catlins valleys,
McLennan, Katea and Caberfeidh.
Farewelled their sisters and their brothers,
joined their mates and marched away.
All volunteers for King and Country;
all destined for those bitter days.

Take your bayonet, your pack and rifle,
board a troopship painted dismal gray;
for the sea of mud and the bloody trenches,
Hell on Earth and Judgement Day.
And there's no way back to the Catlins valleys,
there's no escape from those bitter days.

The ground rose up and the earth exploded,
machine-guns swept them all away;
and telegrams flew around the Catlins,
casualty lists, communiqués.
Their father's hearts were bruised and broken,
and mother's wept in those bitter days.

Then the army called for reinforcements,
McLennan, Katea and Caberfeidh.
So it's farewell to their younger brothers,
sign up, fall-in, and march away.
Hold back your tears and smile bravely,
sorrow and loss in those bitter days.

Shell-shock, wounds and death consumed them,
by gas and bomb and hand grenade
and our burial parties cursed the generals
as they lay our dead in vast arrays,
and when at last the guns fell silent,
few survived those bitter days.

Now daffodils grow and cattle wander,
at McLennan, Katea and Caberfeidh
and Catlins men lie dead and buried
in cold French fields and Belgian clay.
And we've carved their names in polished marble
to remind us of those bitter days.

Do you see much of your mates and brothers?
Do you all rest easy in your graves?
Do you keep an eye on the Catlins Valleys?
Do you share a yarn on Anzac Day?
And you probably don't need me to tell you
what happened in the Depression days.
Your parents couldn't cope without you,
with your sisters married and gone away.

And your family farms were sold at auction,
with no reserve and come what may.
Clearing sales in the middle of winter,
bargain prices in those bitter days.

SIX RED MARBLES

© Glenny Palmer 2005

The kitchen was warm with the embers of toil
and the love of a family denied;
the widow McCreedy with all of her brood
huddled closely together, inside.

Inside where the merciless fingers of ice
clawed and scratched through the cracks in the wall,
in the old wooden hut, six small faces looked up
to a mother, who stood proud and tall.

In their eyes a sad pleading that slashed at her heart,
as they each clutched an empty tin bowl,
there was soup for one mother, or six little ones,
so cruel hunger took one more night's toll.

The oldest was Joseph, a strapping young lad
with the strength of his father implied,
but Joseph knew well that the status of 'widow'
presumed to defend his mum's pride.

And always a good son, he toiled like a man,
and he stood as a husband would stand;
from daylight to sunset he tended the fields,
where he harvested gifts from the land.

His only respite was that time every week
after church, when he'd be just a boy;
with his mates from the town simple games they would play,
a small hand full of marbles, their joy.

Then Joseph would wander the main street of town,
with such wonderful sights to behold,
but he craved more the meat in old Barnaby's Butchers
than bracelets and rings made of gold.

Then the sun that warmed all the McCreedys became
overshadowed by clouds on their sill,
when Joseph returned from the fields that dark day,
to a mother who'd been taken ill.

It was clear to the boy that she needed the strength
only good country beef could provide,
so he sought out old Barnaby's butchery shop,
and he gingerly walked on inside.

Old Barnaby had the demeanour it seems
that's exclusive to butchers world wide,
his ruddy red cheeks rumbled 'round as he smiled,
"Well, good day to you Joseph," he cried.

The black and white apron strained valiantly
to defend Mr Barnaby's girth,
while Joseph just shuffled interminably
as he wondered how much meat was worth.

"Would you have any scraps, Mr Barnaby sir,
I could boil in a broth for my Ma?"
Old Barnaby smeared some more blood on his apron,
and scratched on his chin and said "Aah.....

...no scraps I'm a-feared, but those chops would be fine,"
Mister Barnaby said, with a wink.
"But how much are they?" poor young Joseph enquired,
to which Barnaby said, "Let me think...

...Just what do you have in your pocket, young man?"
(and a handful of marbles appeared.)
"I'd swap you my meat for your marbles", he said,
"but not one of them's red, I'm a-feared..."

...I tell you what Joseph, I'll make you a deal,
you can take home these chops for your tea,
and when you get hold of a marble that's red,
you can give that red marble to me."

Well, Joseph was just about up on cloud nine,
but he left with a worrying frown,
a marble that's red wasn't easy to find,
and he'd never let Barnaby down.

In the fullness of time Joseph ventured again
into Barnaby's, hesitantly,
and the dealing proceeded with more bags of meat,
'til his red marble debt grew to three.

As the years rolled along the McCreedys matured
into fine men, and young women too;
they buried their mother, and made their own ways,
as the wheel of life orders we do.

And over those years Joseph's debt had accrued
to the weight of six marbles of red,
and he always enquired where such jewels could be
found,
in each place that his pathway had led.

In a little bush town, mourners gathered around
in a dimly lit parlour of grace;
candles flickered farewell to old Barnaby
lying at peace, in the casket of lace.

His bride kissed his brow in her final farewell,
then a young man appeared by the chest,
as they lowered the lid, all the candles lit up
six red marbles, adorning his vest.

This poem won The Man From Snowy River
"Silver Brumby Award" in 2006

Barcroft Boake

Barcroft Henry Thomas Boake was born in Sydney in 1866, the eldest son of Barcroft Capel Boake and Florence Eva Clarke. His father (Barcroft was an Irish family name) ran a photography business from his studio at 330 George Street, Sydney. Young Barcroft's childhood was spent in Sydney, and for two years in Noumea, where he spent time with a friend of the family. When living in North Sydney, which was then mainly bush, he had to ride his pony to Milson's Point before going to school across the harbour. Later he was to be described "a good horseman, and a first class bushman" and it was said "he looked infinitely better on a horse than off."

Barcroft had four younger sisters, Adelaide, Violet, Clare and Evie. Photographs of his family have been included on Hugh's site. When he was thirteen Barcroft's mother died in childbirth and his grandmother took over her role in the household. One of Adelaide's children, Doris Kerr, later became a published author, writing under the pseudonym of Capel Boake. Barcroft trained as a surveyor in Sydney before taking up a surveyor's assistant position in 1886, based at Rocklands Farm, near Adaminaby in the Monaro district of New South Wales. He spent two happy years in this district, becoming friends with the McKeahnie family, and in particular their two daughters, Jean and May. Their brother Charlie, who features in some of Barcroft's poems, was an excellent horseman and was said to be one of the men on whom Banjo Paterson based the Man from Snowy River. Barcroft's experiences at this time, which were later to feature in his poems, included chasing brumbies in the Snowy Mountains and skiing at Kiandra. At the end of his term at Rocklands, Barcroft headed north to seek adventure and work as a stockman and a drover. He initially worked on a sheep station at Trangie (near Narromine) then headed north again, droving cattle on the main Queensland/Victoria stock route from the Diamantina and then working at Burrembilla Station, near Cunnamulla, in Western New South Wales.

On returning to Bathurst in 1890 he lost all his savings when his droving boss splurged his cheque in a drunken spree. He had little choice but to return to surveying in the Riverina where he began to write poetry based on his bush experiences. His work first appeared in the Sydney Mail in 1890, and in 1891 his first verses were published in the Bulletin. This was the beginning of a brief but productive period in which many of his poems were published in the Bulletin.

In December 1891, at the end of his term of engagement in the Riverina, he returned to Sydney where he was caught by the effects of the 1891-1893 financial depression. His grandmother was dying and his father's photography business had failed. After four months of being unable to find any work, and not long after apparently receiving news that "his best girl" was going to be married, he took his own life. Ten days after disappearing from his home he was found hanging by the lash of his stock-whip on the shore of Sydney Harbour at Folly Point, not far from where he used to live as a child.

The story of Barcroft's brief but interesting life is told in the form of a novel in Hugh Capel's book, "Where the Dead Men Lie, The Story of Barcroft Boake, Bush Poet of the Monaro."; While the story cannot be entirely "true" historically, it is told in a way that seeks to be true to the spirit of what happened. The nature of Barcroft's relationships with the McKeahnie girls is a key feature in this story. In 1896 Barcroft's father wrote a detailed Memoir about his son. A copy of this interesting document is included on Hugh's site. A G Stephens drew substantially on this Memoir when wrote his own Memoir, included in the 1897 edited collection of Barcroft's poems.

Where the Dead Men Lie

(Banjo Paterson thought this was one of Barcroft's first class works)

Out on the wastes of the "Never Never,"
That's where the dead men lie,
There where the heat-waves dance forever,
That's where the dead men lie;
That's where the Earth's lov'd sons are keeping
endless tryst - not the west wind sweeping
feverish pinions, can wake their sleeping -
Out where the dead men lie!

Where brown Summer and Death have mated,
That's where the dead men lie,
Loving with fiery lust unsated,
That's where the dead men lie;
Out where the grinning skulls bleach whitely,
Under the saltbush sparkling brightly,
Out where the wild dogs chorus nightly,
That's where the dead men lie.

Deep in the yellow, flowing river,
That's where the dead men lie,
Under the banks where the shadows quiver,
That's where the dead men lie;
Where the platypus twists and doubles,
leaving a trail of tiny bubbles;
Rid at last of their earthly troubles,
That's where the dead men lie.

East and backward pale faces turning,
That's how the dead men lie;
Gaunt arms stretched with a voiceless yearning,
That's how the dead men lie;
Oft in the fragrant hush of nooning,
Hearing again their mother's crooning,
Wrapt for aye in a dreadful swooning,
That's how the dead men lie.

Nought but the hand of Night can free them;
That's when the dead men fly;
Only the frightened cattle see them -
See the dead men go by;
Cloven hoofs beating out one measure,
Bidding the stockman know no leisure,
That's when the dead men take their pleasure,
That's when the dead men fly.

Ask, too, the never-sleeping drover,
He sees the dead pass by,
Hearing them call to their friends - the plover,
Hearing the dead men cry.
Seeing their faces stealing, stealing,
Hearing their laughter pealing, pealing,
Watching their grey forms wheeling, wheeling
Round where the cattle lie.

Strangled by thirst and fierce privation -
That's how the dead men die
Out on "Moneygrub's" furthest station,
That's how the dead men die;
Hardfaced greybeards, youngsters callow,
Some mounds cared for, some left fallow,
Some deep down, yet others shallow,
Some having but the sky.

"Moneygrub" as he sips his claret
Looks with complacent eye
Down at his watch-chain, eighteen-carat,
There in his club hard by:
Recks not that every link is stamped with
Names of the men whose limbs are cramped with
Too long lying in grave-mould, camped with
Death where the dead men lie.

G'day Manfred,

Reading through the recent President's Report, it was sad to hear that Kilcoy Unplugged was winding up. It was a popular and very friendly place.

I had only been there once in 2010 and was lucky enough to spend a few days before hand out on Graham Fredricksen's property.

While travelling through some of his rough high country, we pulled up at a set of yards and an old Stockman's Hut (you have probably been there also). Inside, on the wall was a dusty old painting of a Ballerina. It certainly seemed to be a bit out of place way out there in the bush.

I thought that you and also other ABPA members might enjoy my ballad I call 'The Ballerina'.

Lynden Baxter

The Ballerina

©Lynden Baxter

There is peace in the valley, a Somerset dawn
And my eyes to the misty grey mountains are drawn
To a place that the red deer have claimed as theirs only
To an old Stockman's hut where a girl's waiting lonely.

Lost my way in those hills and I camped for the night
In that broken down hut. Soon my campfire burned bright
On the wall was a picture in an old tarnished frame
Of a dancer, ballerina, a girl with no name.

*Ballerina, wallflower, your exquisite beauty
Long trapped in a frame, stockman's hut, high country
Hear the red stag a-calling you, high in the bloodwood
And the ghosts of lost bushmen your rough company
Ballerina, wallflower, will you dance with me?*

In the soft, yellow light of the flickering flame
I was drawn to the dancer, the girl with no name
And I wiped way the dust of the long lonely years
And I glanced her true beauty and it brought me to tears

And I wondered just how she came to be there
Abandoned, deserted, I felt her despair
Did she hold in her heart a lost bushman's dream?
Was their story foretold in the dark mountain stream?

*Ballerina, wallflower, your exquisite beauty
Long trapped in a frame, stockman's hut, high country
Hear the red stag a-calling you, high in the bloodwood
And the ghosts of lost bushmen your rough company
Ballerina, wallflower, will you dance with me?*

In the glow of the fire I see in my mind
All the stockmen and drovers this world left behind
And there deep in the embers I looked for her sign
But the years had broken the true storyline

And then I hear her say, a Poet would come
A bush boy who marched to a bit different drum
And his beautiful words, they would set her free
And she'd dance forever in his high country

*Ballerina, wallflower, your exquisite beauty
Long trapped in a frame, stockman's hut, high country
Hear the red stag a-calling you, high in the bloodwood
And the ghosts of lost bushmen your rough company
Ballerina, wallflower, will you dance with me?*

Oh' so cold was the dawn wind as homeward I start
Still the words of the dancer encircle my heart
And I see the red stag high on the ridge
And my hope is her Poet can build her a bridge

There is peace in the valley, a Somerset dawn
And my eyes to the misty grey mountains are drawn
To a place that the red deer have claimed as theirs only
To an old Stockman's hut where a girl's waiting lonely

To a place that the red deer have claimed as theirs only
To an old Stockman's hut where a girl's waiting lonely



Tips On Beating Writers Block

Meditation and Writing

By Geoff Jefferson

Sometimes, a writer's mind can dissolve into a sea of text and letters that have no meaning at all. Meditation and writing are two things that should go hand in hand. Meditation is one thing that writers can use to clear their minds. Writing is hard work, and it is important to keep in mind that it is mentally fatiguing. Never let anyone tell you it is easy!

Meditation serves many purposes, but the chief ones include relaxing and training the mind to see clearly and analytically. One theory suggests that meditation does not have a goal, but is instead a technique, a tool. If it is a tool, it is a powerful one, and not only can it relax you and bring you back to your center, it can serve as a tool to help with your writing, as well.

The meditation technique known as visualization is also a powerful one for the writing process. When you visualize something, you picture it in your head, taking your time and imagining every detail. You attempt to make the picture in your head as real as possible. Of course, making words come to life for their audience is part of what writing is all about. Once a writer can visualize something coming to life in their own mind, it is a short jump to making it happen for an audience.

Meditation also serves as "stretching" for your brain. Most writers learn that reading is exercise for your mind. Reading gives you things for consideration and contemplation, and lets you reflect on it and compare it to your own writing. Meditation can be used as a way to get your brain ready for that. Have you ever read a page and had no idea what it said? When you meditate, you enhance your ability to focus, and digest what you read. The link between meditation and writing is a strong one, and allows you to reflect carefully on what you want to be saying.

One method that a writer can use for stimulating thought and deliberation is free writing. When you're blocked on a story point, or just can't crank out another line of your movie script, put your project away and get a fresh sheet of paper or open a new document on your computer. Then, just for five minutes, write whatever gibberish comes to mind. Don't stop, don't go back to read what you've written, just write. First, this exercise acts much the way guided meditation does. By opening your mind, you can clear away the detritus that was stopping you from writing. Take a look at the writing you have created and you might be amazed at what your mind will create when it doesn't have to go through an elaborate editing process.

With a little bit of thought, you can bring your writing to life through meditation. This is a powerful tool that you can use at any location and at any time.



| EXHALE worry ... and INHALE peace.
| RELEASE tension ... and ACCEPT tranquility.
| BREATHE OUT fear ... and BREATHE IN courage.
| LET GO OF all anger ... and WELCOME love.
| RELEASE my sadness ... and RECEIVE joy.

Writing can be a powerful meditation practice, helping us to integrate our active mind with the mind of meditation. By using it as a process of inquiry, it can help us track our progress in loosening attachments and habitual states of mind even as it sharpens our ability to attend to the present moment. As little as 10 minutes of writing practice a day can reap great benefits.

Those who have a regular meditation practice can simply add the writing immediately following it, and those who find it difficult to do traditional meditation will find this practice fruitful as the writing gives your busy mind something to do, curbing your restlessness as you cultivate awareness of your overall experience. Writers will particularly find this practice beneficial, as the resulting free writes will be rich with ideas and images to seed further work.

All you need to get started is a timer, notebook and pen. The practice can be done in five simple steps:

- 1. Begin by settling into a contemplative space of silence by taking a minimum of 21 conscious breaths** -- or sitting in stillness for 5–15 minutes with your attention lightly on your breath, body sensations, or sounds in the room. Notice the atmosphere of your mind -- whether soft and spacious or grim and tight -- and set the intention to cultivate an atmosphere of warmth and openness toward yourself and your experience.
- 2. Set the timer for 10 minutes and free write without stopping, beginning with the prompt "Right now..."** Don't stop to reflect, edit, try to make sense or write a "piece." Simply finish the sentence and keep going until you run out of things to say, then write the prompt again and finish the sentence, and so on, until the timer goes off. You don't need to write fast -- just without pausing to think. Be willing to let the words surprise you: The idea is to relax your mind so that you can source the layer under your discursive thoughts -- though it is not "wrong" to write your conscious thoughts and feelings if they are dominating. In fact, there is no way to do it wrong.
- 3. When the timer goes off, take a few breaths and then read aloud what you wrote, listening deeply to yourself.** Try to resist the temptation to read it back in your head -- even whispering it aloud makes a difference. Notice what your mind does when you read it back -- expectations, fears, pleasures and judgments will likely arise. Allow them to be just as they are in an atmosphere of warmth and openness. You might jot a few notes on what you notice at the end of your piece for later reference.
- 4. Now scan through the writing and underline any phrases, sentences or sections that strike you as particularly alive or that intrigue you for some reason -- you don't need to know why.** Any of these fragments can be used as a prompt for another piece of timed writing, either now or in your next session. When you do use these fragments as prompts, remember that you can always return to the prompt "Right now..." at any time while doing a timed writing. This is the fundamental prompt for this practice.
- 5. At the end of the session, share the benefits of the practice** by making the wish that whatever insight you gained produce positive effects for yourself and all beings touched by you. You'll be surprised at how quickly and effortlessly a thick pile of freewrites will accumulate if you do this practice daily. From time to time, you can go through and re-read what you've underlined, noticing themes, modes of thinking, or repetitive thoughts.

As long as you are faithful to doing at least 21 conscious breaths before writing and sincerely setting your intention to cultivate warmth and openness toward yourself, you will notice over time that these writings evolve and are quite different than journal entries or ruminations. The intention brought to the writing creates the conditions where insights can arise as you uncover hidden obstacles and unwind your judging mind into greater warmth, spaciousness and acceptance of your writing and your experience. Keep at it and you will begin sourcing the work more and more from spontaneous presence.

The practice can be done anywhere, and varying location and time of day when using the prompt "Right now..." can give you a fascinating glimpse into yourself as you go about your life, whether you sit for ten minutes with pen and paper under a tree or in a waiting room, in a hospital or at your kitchen table, at a posh resort or in a Bombay slum.

Yass Show Poets Breakfast

starts 8.30am Sunday March 16 at our

new venue

the Shearing Pavilion

Yass Showground.

Entries for the performance section of the Yass Show Poetry Competition close on

Monday February 24.

(Written entries closed February 10.)

Entry forms at www.abpa.org.au or www.yassshow.org.au

For more information contact Robyn Sykes

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Come along and hear some great poetry!

Robyn Sykes - *Voices Of The Fire*



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02 62274377

Save the date!

The 2014 Binalong Banjo Bush Poetry Prize
will also serve as the

NSW Performance Championships.

All welcome to come to Binalong,
home of Banjo Paterson's childhood school,

September 12-14.

Details to follow.

Contact Robyn Sykes for information

robinsykespoet@gmail.com

PO Box 100, Binalong NSW 2584

(02) 6227 4377





THE BIG
AVOCADO
2014



Another raucous night of Bush Poetry, Comedy and Bush Ballads
Featuring...



Neil McArthur

Susie Carcary

Colin Driscoll

Melanie Hall

Crop Brothers

*Raising funds for local causes
&
Raising the spirits of local people*

Avoca Shire Hall
7.00pm Saturday 22nd March 2014

Admission - \$25.00pp

BYO Drinks & Nibbles, Supper Provided

Tickets via  www.trybooking.com/DENR

Or The Avoca Information Centre - Ph: 1800 206622

Proudly supported by...



THE BIG
AVOCADO

The Big Avoca Do is back for its 4th
big year in March.

Col Driscoll has mustered together another great line up of artists to entertain the Pyrenees locals. As with previous years, this year's event will raise funds to assist the local community.

Around \$15,000 has been raised over the last 3 years, providing funding for flood recovery, the local Kindergarten rebuild and extensions to the Avoca Mens Shed.

But as Col Driscoll says, "It's not all about the money. The Big Avoca Do also provides top class entertainment to a community that struggles with the day to day issues of living in the bush".

"These people work bloody hard to carve out a living. If we can take their minds off interest rates, drought, overdrafts and other problems for just one night, then that's a good thing. It gives the locals the chance to sit back, have a laugh and share a beer or a cuppa with their friends and family".

This year's line up includes Col, Neil McArthur, Mel Hall & Susie Carcary. The music on the night will be provided by a newly formed Bush/Celtic band called Cora & The Crop Brothers consisting of Felix Meagher, Cora Brown, Louie Hesterman and Ewan Baker.

"I work with these four fine people in the play 'The Man they call The Banjo', which is based on a book by Dennis O'Keeffe about the history behind the penning of Waltzing Matilda. They are exceptionally talented people in their own right and outstanding when you throw them all together. The crowd are in for something different this year. We might even push the tables back and have a bush dance at the end of the show".

The Big Avoca Do. Raising funds for local causes, raising the spirits of local people.



Big Avoca Do
Organiser,
Col Driscoll

COLIN DRISCOLL BUSH POET
&
THE COMMERCIAL HOTEL
MOONAMBIEL
PROUDLY PRESENT

Poets @ The Pub

COME ALONG AND ENJOY A GREAT AFTERNOON OF
BUSH POETRY, COMEDY AND BUSH BALLADS

FEATURING

COL DRISCOLL - THE PYRENEES POET
NEIL MCARTHUR - THE RATBAG OF RHYME
MEL & SUSIE - THE 2 SHORT SHEILAS
(ALL THE WAY FROM WINTON IN QLD)
AND
CORA & THE CROP BROTHERS

YOU NEVER KNOW WHO ELSE MIGHT DROP IN

Moonambiel Pub
Sunday 23rd March 2014

Admission - Adult \$15.00pp - *Bookings essential

Show Tickets via  www.trybooking.com/EFXI
or contact Col Driscoll - Ph: 0419558924
Email - myfine@colindriscollbushpoet.com.au

Lunch available from 12.00pm - *Bookings essential - Ph: 0354672273

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

Milton Ulladulla Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners Group First Sunday Every Month at Ex Servos Club Ulladulla 2pm start visitors welcome contact John Davis 02 44552013

Binalong - A Brush with Poetry @ Black Swan Wine Bar and Gallery. last Sunday of every odd month (except January), 2-4pm Open mic. Contact Robyn Sykes 02 6227 4377

QUEENSLAND

North Pine Bush Poet Group meet from 9am on 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month at The Distillery - North Pine Hotel, Old Petrie Town, Dayboro Rd. Petrie Contact :- John 07 38862660 or Noel 07 33513221

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

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

Bundaberg Poets Society Inc. 2nd Saturday of the month. Rum City Silver Band Hall, Targo Street. Contact Edna (07) 41597198; Jayson (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, Redcliffe. 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 Kevin Dean (07) 38810986

Townsville Bush Poetry Mates for adults is 7:00pm on the first of the month and 3:45 for children at the Aitkenvale Library, Aitkenvale Townsville.

Victoria

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

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

Top of the Murray Poets and Bush Storytellers (TOMPABS) meet Monthly (mostly Tuesdays in Corryong) for writing workshops, Monthly on 3rd Sunday for Music and Poetry at Maurie Foun's 'Poets' Paradise'. Contact Jan Lewis (02) 60774332

Bendigo Goldfields Bush Poets - Third Sunday even numbered months, except December when second Sunday. Newmarket Hotel, cnr Nolan St & Strickland Rd, Bendigo 1.30pm to 4.30pm. Contacts: Geoffrey Graham 03 5446 3739 or Ken Jones 03 5441 5121

WA

Albany Bush Poets Group 4th Tuesday of each month. Contact Peter 98446606

Perth monthly muster, 1st Friday of each month 7pm - 9.30pm at The Auditorium, 26 Plantation Drive Bentley Park 6102 Contact Dave 0438341256 or Terry 0894588887.