

A.B.P.A.



Volume 22 No. 1
February/March 2016

Australian Bush Poets Association



TAMWORTH WRAP UP 2016



21st BUNDY BUSH POETRY MUSTER 2016
July 1st - 2nd - 3rd
Across the Waves Sports Club, 1 Miller Street, Bundaberg.



Jack Drake

Special Guest Poets

Glenny Palmer

Noel Stallard

Presentation of the Queensland Written Championship - Bush Lantern Award for Bush Verse 2016

Cash prizes and trophies in each category.



Performance Competition
 Open (men & women separate categories)
 Intermediate, Novice, Juniors (*U/7 yrs, 7 yrs to 12 yrs & 13 yrs to 17 yrs*)
 Duo Performances, Yarn Spinning & One Minute Cup

CONCERT TICKETS
 Saturday Night \$15-00 pp
 Prior purchase advisable

Bush Lantern Award 2016 Written Competition for Bush Verse

ALSO

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

Closing date: May 20th, 2016

FREE Poetry Workshop

Jack Drake will be conducting a *FREE* poetry workshop in the Sails Function at Across the Waves Sports Club on Thursday, June 30th from 10.30 a.m. until 12.30 p.m.

All phone or email enquiries:-

Sandy Lees - 07 41514631 or leesjds1@yahoo.com.au
 Edna Harvey - 0 428574651 or edna_harvey@hotmail.com
 Jayson Russell - 07 41550778 or blanata@bigpond.net.au

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

Total Prize Money Over \$5000

DUNEDOO Bush Poetry Festival

3rd - 6th March 2016



THURSDAY 3RD MARCH
 6pm - Dunedoo Jubilee Hall
 Meet & Greet - BBQ available - Brawl Titles available

FRIDAY 4TH MARCH
 9am - Bus Tour
 Bring own lunch - cost \$15 - Bookings required
 4pm - Sports Club - Intermediate Competition
 7pm - Sports Club - Yarn Spinning Competition

SATURDAY 5TH MARCH
 8am - Central School Hall
 Classical - Female
 Classical - Male
 Original - Serious - Female
 Original - Serious - Male
 Contemporary - Female
 Contemporary - Male
 7pm - Central School Hall
 Original - Humorous - Female
 Original - Humorous - Male
 Entertainment by professional poets
 Bookings required - Supper provided
 cost \$25 per person (poets free & partners \$10)

SUNDAY 6TH MARCH
 8am - Dunedoo Jubilee Hall
 Brawls at Breakfast

BOOKINGS AND FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

1300 4444
 46 (07) 4984 8191 (week) 8499 388 518 (week) 4984 8191 (week)
 Email: info@bushpoetryfestival.com.au

RECOMMENDATION

Travis Mayer 02 6375 1113
 Andrew Dunn 0800 02 6375 1113 or 0428 777 218
 West Coasting 0800 02 6375 1113 or 0428 704 700
 Sharon Ross 0275 1509 or 0428 834 503
 Dunedoo 07461 82 6375 1460
 Dunedoo Caravan Park - 02 6375 1450
 Showground or Jubilee Leagues Club



EDITORIAL



Well, the year in Bush Poetry has kicked off with a huge Tamworth CMF, where Bush Poetry again showed what an integral part of the Festival it has become. With record crowds at The Longyard and great numbers at the Golden Damper Awards, St. Edwards and the Rhymers Roundup, as well as a solid start to Gary Fogarty's new venue at the Econo Lodge, there is much to look forward to in future years!

I would like to both congratulate and welcome all our new Committee Members (a full list is below on this page) and wish them all the best in the upcoming year.

It was great to meet up with so many Poets at Tamworth, from all states of Australia, and it was a pleasure to see the exuberance shown towards the future of both competition and Festival Poetry and the future is looking bright from the West Coast to the East.

On a personal level, it was both humbling and exciting to see record crowds pour through the gates at The Longyard Bush Poets Breakfasts and to see all the booked artists on fire and entertaining the crowds as never before. How on earth I can ever get a group together to top it, I have no idea, but planning is already in progress and the success of this year will go a long way towards encouraging crowds to attend Bush Poetry events whenever they come across them.

And so we venture in to 2016 as a very strong Association and will continue to uphold the proud tradition of Bush Poetry by taking it to both the hardened fans and the uninitiated and build on the foundations that so many Bush Poets, both alive and departed, have spent so much time in forging in past years.. Although, as a footnote, we really do need someone to put their hand up as Treasurer. All enquiries can be directed to the president or secretary.

Happy writing and performing to all and safe travels!
Neil McArthur editor@abpa.org.au

NOTE:- Next Magazine Deadline for submissions is March 25th

ABPA Committee Members 2014

Executive:

President	-- Bill Yates	president@abpa.org.au
Vice-President	-- Tom McIlveen	portalarms@hotmail.com
Secretary	-- Rhonda Tallnash	secretary@abpa.org.au
Treasurer	-- (To Be Confirmed)	treasurer@abpa.org.au

Members on Committee:

...John Peel	peel_jg@hotmail.com
...Robyn Sykes	robysykespoet@gmail.com
...Carol Reffold	patchworkpoet@hotmail.com

ABPA State Delegates:

NSW	-- Rob Christmas	r_e_christmas@yahoo.com
Queensland	-- Cay Ellem	cayandbarry@gmail.com
South Australia	-- Bob Magor	bobmagor@chariot.net.au
Tasmania	-- Phillip Rush	auspoems@bigpond.com
Victoria	-- Jan Lewis	info@vbpma.com.au
West Australia	-- Irene Conner	iconner21@wn.com.au

ABPA Editor	-- Neil McArthur	editor@abpa.org.au
Web Administrator	-- Greg North	web@abpa.org.au

AUSTRALIAN BUSH POETS ASSOCIATION

**Proudly Supporting The Cerebral Palsy League
Through Magazine Printing**

ABPA Magazine Advertising

Rates

Black and White Ads

Full page \$80
Half Page \$40
Quarter Page or less \$20

Full Colour Ads (Space limited)

Full Page \$200
Half Page \$100
Quarter Page or less \$60

Poets Calendar and Regular Events free (one or two lines 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 @ treasurer@abpa.org.au
or via Direct Debit to ABPA Account
Bendigo Bank
BSB: 633000

Account: 154842108

*Please put your name/club/invoice as
reference so Treasurer can identify who the
deposit is from.*

Outgoing President's Report

During the last two years that I have been President of the ABPA, we have had many highlights and also many sad times. Of the latter, the passing over of so many of our founding members has meant a lot of heartache for us all. We owe it to these wonderful pioneers of the new era of bush poetry, to ensure that the ABPA maintains a strong bond for those who follow, love or are yet to find out about our uniquely Australian, multi-faceted genre.

Across many different areas, the ABPA provides a network of communication and support, to suit all tastes. From the printed magazine to the website, to the external poetry outlets that feed in to and feed out from our association, the ABPA has much to offer to all.

As outlined in our promotional brochure, our printed magazine features poetry information, news and views, previews and reports on poetry events and competitions throughout Australia, advertises opportunities, products and services, displays interesting information and photos of members both amateur and professional, past and present and is a wonderful record of bush poetry and poets. This is the heart of the body of bush poetry and the gift that members receive. The achievements of the ABPA and its members is archived through the National and State Library systems.

Our website showcases modern poets and performers, lists poetry events, competitions and festivals, displays award winning poems and yarns, provides writing and performing techniques, contains bush poetry competition resources and links to others socially and instructively through the Forum and Facebook social media.

The ABPA lists and circulates information to individuals, clubs and organisations and generally ties everything together for the greater good of all.

In addition, the ABPA provides standardised procedures for organising and running festivals and competitions through its very comprehensive Competition Package. We are delighted that all championship organisers and the majority of ABPA approved clubs and organisations, are only too willing to basically abide by the guidelines inherent in the package. These are aimed to ensure that both performers and writers are aware of how they are being assessed and that there is a uniformity of expectations and outcomes around the nation.

The ABPA inputs in monetary token and expertise to national and state championships giving the opportunity for poets to compete and grow from the sharing of their skills through advanced level contest and concert. These events also allow for an Australia-wide fellowship of poets and supporters at all levels of development.

The ABPA also provides a Public Liability Insurance policy to its members which, for \$100, gives individuals extensive individual accident coverage – a very important and necessary facility.

Aside from this insurance and the magazine (which only goes out to members), most of the above services are offered free to anyone who wishes to avail themselves of the opportunity to take from what the ABPA has to offer. It may be said, through this generosity that there is little need for anyone to join the ABPA in order to benefit from this diversity of gifts and there are some who would willingly take without contribution back. However, the ABPA can only continue to fulfil its important Strategic Plan goal, to be '...the peak body for Bush Poetry in Australia...', if it has sufficient membership to enable it to fund the contributions it makes to the overall bush poetry movement. If the ABPA does not remain viable, then bush poetry loses its most vital unifying outlet.

There are many functioning bush poetry clubs which offer their members the opportunity for poetic and social interaction at a local level. The ABPA gives support to these clubs in all the ways outlined above but, in return, it needs the support of these clubs to continue functioning. As I see it, the ABPA is the hub and the clubs are the spokes in the wheel. It is not a 'them and us' situation – the 'them' is the 'us'. Events held by clubs can lead to an increase in club membership, but they do not automatically result in attendees/newcomers seeing the bigger picture and consequently also becoming ABPA members. I do urge those clubs who are not already doing so, to adopt the universal attitude that what is done for the ABPA comes back in what the ABPA can do for you. Simple acts such as displaying the ABPA promotional brochures at functions, can help to ensure the continuation and growth of your Association. For those clubs who are already adopting this approach thank you from us all. Each spoke that joins the rim to the hub is contributing to the expansion of the love of Australian culture and heritage through yarn-spinning and storytelling in poetry with rhyme and metre.

The ABPA relies on voluntary administrators and we are each very grateful for the roles that others play in keeping our organisation running and vibrant. Personally, I sincerely thank the ABPA outgoing committee and all those members who have helped in each and every way during my tenure as President and I extend a heartfelt hope that the ABPA will prosper and grow into the future. I welcome, applaud and support all those who will be making contribution to this aim.

In poetry Hal

President's Report



Greetings to all fellow ABPA members and bards throughout Australia. I would firstly like to introduce myself, and to share with you my vision for the upcoming year in regards to my role as incoming president. Although I have not had the pleasure of meeting our outgoing president Hal Pritchard in person, I would like to take this opportunity to thank him on behalf of all ABPA members for his wonderful contribution to our organisation and indeed to Australian Bush Poetry overall, during the years of 2014 and 2015.

He has left me with a big pair of shoes to fill and I am looking forward to the challenge of leading the ABPA for the next twelve months.

I would like to welcome my fellow committee members Vice President Tom McIlveen, Secretary Rhonda Tallnash and State Reps Cay Ellem, Rob Christmas, Irene Conner, Jan Lewis, Phillip Rush, Bob Magor, Lance Lawrence, Robyn Sykes and John Peel, as well as Magazine Editor Neil McArthur and Web Administrator Greg North.

As I am currently unknown to many of the members throughout Australia, I would like to tell you a little about myself and my background...I am country born and bred, having been raised on various dairy farms in the Manning Valley (near Taree NSW mid northcoast), namely Tipperary, Bobin, Cedar Party and Central Landsdowne, where I remained until the age of 10 years.

We then moved to Taree, where I attended school from 4th Grade onwards. I was to later become president of Taree Junior Farmers Association and was a member of Taree Old Bar Surf Club.

At the age of fifteen I joined the Railway as a DP Clerk in 1955 and later worked my way up to become a train driver, achieving a long term childhood dream and ambition.

Before becoming a driver, I was initially a fireman on the Locos from the age of 17 years. I spent a short time at Taree, then Moree, Broadmeadow in Newcastle, and then Ivanhoe as an appointed fireman. Ivanhoe is in the far west of NSW, where, when not working on the railway, I spent much of my time on a sheep property, learning all aspects of farming sheep, from droving through to crutching and shearing. It was here that I first started to develop a deep love for the Australian bush and the outback way of life.

I was then transferred to Sydney, where I met my wife to be, and married in 1963 and was appointed driver on the Sydney electric trains. I drove trains for the next thirteen years before being promoted to Travelling Inspector at Bathurst and later Chief Inspector at Junee. We left Bathurst upon my retirement and headed north seeking fairer, warmer climes in Alstonville, in the northern rivers district of NSW. We then moved to Port Macquarie in 2002 to join family here, where I met Tom McIlveen at the local Toastmasters Club. I had been a toastmaster for many years previously and was introduced to the wonderful world of bush poetry through Tom. He invited me along to his local group here, which I have been attending regularly ever since for the past several years. I have a deep rooted passion and love of bush poetry. I am a keen performing poet and have been well and truly bitten by the bush poetry bug. I am looking forward to meeting many of my fellow sufferers in my upcoming year as president and intend to get out amongst you and attend as many of the events as possible.

Having recently lost my beloved wife, who was also my best friend, to pancreatic cancer, I am determined to immerse myself in the world of bush poetry this year, and will be attending Dunedoo and hopefully other upcoming events where I am looking forward to meeting many of you.

I wish you all a happy, healthy 2016.

Bill Yates.

TREASURER REQUIRED

The ABPA is in deperate need of a new Treasurer. If you are a current member and would like to help out with this position, it would be greatly appreciated. Our outgoing Treasurer, Greg North, who be only to happy to help out with the transition to this position. The role of treasurer is pivotal to our Association, but also one which can be a very rewarding position. So if you have the time and the confidence that you can help out our Committee in this matter then please contact either the president@abpa.org.au or else secretary@abpa.org.au

BOND OF LOVE

BY BRENDA JOY
Winner 2016 Blackened Billy
Tamworth CMF

Do I see my own reflection
in a movement or a smile,
do I dare to ask for circumstance of birth
to again receive rejection
through the facts of the denial
while I question if the endless search has worth?

I have had the same reaction
in a thousand varied ways
as I've scanned the unknown faces in the crowd,
never gaining satisfaction
from repeated interplays
as each linking possibility was scoured.

And although there's celebration
that we've passed the stigma now
(persecution of the girls whose babes were born
in an era of negation
where, without a wedding vow,
they were sacrificed to lash of public scorn) ...

...yet, I almost envy others
who have birthed in later years
since society took on a humane view
that decrees, unmarried mothers
are not victimised to tears
and not forced to face the torment I've been through.

Oh, the bond of love had woken,
though I'd barely had a sight
of your tiny hands and precious little face.
I just felt my heart was broken
and I cried all through the night
left alone in aftermath of my 'disgrace'.

I was forced to leave without you
and the only proof of birth –
a certificate denoting, 'female child'.
That was all I knew about you;
all my pregnancy was worth
was a single sheet on which my name was filed.

And the silence lasted, ever,
while my heart was left to mourn
in an atmosphere of secrecy and pain.
It was agony to never
tell a soul that you'd been born
and to know I would not see my babe again.

Lines of love lie deep inside us,
underneath the masks we wear
infiltrating through the fabric of our life,
and our 'guilts' return to chide us
through the coal seam scores we bear
so I took my darkness forth to role as wife.

And the times when I miscarried
were like punishments I owed
to the attitude of shame I'd come to learn,
while the loving man I married
saw his happiness erode
when he couldn't nullify my inner yearn.

All my hopes have cast asunder
for my quest has been in vain.
I will never be a part of who you are
and I'm destined still to wonder,
as the welts of life ingrain –
did belief in my rejection leave a scar?

Did you think I'd just forget you,
did you think the choice was mine;
can a bloodline sever through a social wrong?
Darling, though I barely met you
in my heart our souls entwine
where all mother-daughter harmonies belong.

There I hold you and caress you;
there we share our special bond
in an inner world of dreams that's just as real.
How I pray that God may bless you
and in realms that lie beyond,
may you know the depth of mother-love I feel.

Judges Comment:- A beautifully written, but tragic story about the stigma attached to unmarried mothers in past years. The descriptions of sorrow and heartfelt loss are palpable in this vivid story of a mother's deprivation of her child. Alternate rhyme was well handled, the text was of suitable length and the tone was maintained from the heart-wrenching first verse to the last. A worthy winner of the Blackened Billy for 2016.

Children of the Anzacs

© Catherine Lee

The crosses line the hillsides where heroic southern sons
rest peacefully where once was heard the thunder of the guns;
back then the beach was strewn with both the living and the dead,
and searchlights raked the sky while shrapnel ruptured overhead.

Where once the soldiers battled from each overcrowded trench
with countless foes on every side amidst disgusting stench,
diseases, endless flies, harsh weather, lack of decent food,
the atmosphere is tranquil now, with poignancy imbued.

Gallipoli is beautiful, the landscape lies at peace—
from terrible hostilities came ultimate release.
In April there is blossom lining jagged cliffs and shore
where cries of wounded, dying men are lingering no more.

Where once they trod the vale of death and learnt such fear and pain
that those who made it home were never truly young again,
the verdant grasses, iris and forget-me-not now grows,
while blackbird song is heard above the cemetery rows.

This site once seemed a cesspit from the very depths of hell,
where troops of many nations bravely suffered, fought and fell—
yet gazing all around us at the coming of the dawn,
we mark it as the spot the Anzac character was born.

With fortitude and loyalty that earned them high esteem,
Australians and Kiwis fought as one united team,
inherent pioneering nature coursing through their veins
creating Anzac legend—and their legacy remains.

It's felt in schools and workplace and on sports fields everywhere—
this drive, endurance, humour, sense of comradeship we share;
a quality no obstacle or hardship ever quells,
conceived upon these foreign shores within the Dardanelles.

It's there when times are tough and people lend a helping hand—
exists when Mother Nature spews her wrath upon the land;
it rides throughout the bush, inhabits cities far and wide,
and sits on every barstool when we yarn, recall, confide.

Though underneath the Turkish soil battalions of them lie,
their spirit burns within us and we'll never let it die;
we owe our lives and liberty to those beneath our feet,
so this is now intrinsic and by no means knows defeat.

Without a word they passed the torch for all of us to bear—
we raise it high within our hearts, a trait beyond compare.
Forever we'll remember those in dark, eternal sleep—
we're children of the Anzacs, and our heritage runs deep.



ROADSIDE PIZZA

©Tom McIlveen

Have you ever been so hungry you could eat a Shetland pony,
and regurgitate his saddle for dessert?
I was driving down the highway with an old familiar crony,
when the road had changed from bitumen to dirt.

He was whining, whinging, moaning, and then constantly complaining
that we should have stopped to eat an hour ago!
With my empty stomach growling and my patience slowly waning,
I could feel an ulcer forming down below.

We were ninety K's from Forster, stuck behind an Eighteen Wheeler,
when I noticed what appeared to be a sign.
It had claimed to be the only stop this side of Bulladelah,
and invited us to... 'Come inside and dine!'

Feeling somewhat apprehensive, but unable to resist it,
I consented and decided to abide.
It was dingy, dark and gloomy and we'd very nearly missed it,
as we climbed the stairs to take a peek inside.

There were cups and saucers scattered on an old bedraggled table,
and a plate of something putrid on the floor.
I was thinking that the Shetland could have used it as his stable,
with a lick of paint and half a bale of straw.

From behind a faded curtain we could hear the piercing voices
of the owner and his rowdy next of kin.
We were studying the menu with its unfamiliar choices,
when he opened up the door to let us in.

He suggested that we try his Roadside Pizza with a serving
of potatoes baked in fresh goanna oil,
and because I'd found his kitchen sanitation most unnerving
I'd insisted mine be wrapped in silver foil!

As I watched him roll the pizza dough, I felt my stomach churning
at the thought of where his grimy hands had been.
They were covered in abrasions, which undoubtedly were turning
into festered sores and fully blown gangrene.

There was cottonwool and bandaids on each lacerated finger
and another wrapped around his little toe.
I was praying that the scabs and cotton bandages would linger
long enough to keep from falling in the dough.

Trying not to sound facetious, I had asked about his patches
and was told he'd been assaulted by a roo.
He had woken up in hospital, with bruises, lumps and scratches,
and a doctor's bill already overdue.

He'd been out collecting road-kill for his Labrador Retriever,
when he saw the kangaroo beside the road.
He had started to approach it with a butcher's hook and cleaver,
when the roo had upped and started to explode.

It had woken from its slumber, throwing wicked kicks and punches,
which had landed with precise exactitude,
and the last thing he'd remembered, was the sound of thumping crunches,
which had left him broken, bleeding and subdued.

As I scoffed the tasty pizza down, I couldn't help but wonder,
what had happened to the rabid kangaroo.
Had it ended up as cutlets in some culinary blunder,
or as pizza in a Roadside barbeque?

When I took a peek inside his grimy Kelvinator chiller,
I could see the decomposing last remains
of a dozen road-kill victims, he'd collected for his grill,
which were dripping fat and clogging up his drains.

There were sulphur crested cockatoos in dingy cardboard boxes...
with a pink galah, a bilby and a rat.
In amongst the crows and bandicoots and battered flying foxes
was a platypus, a possum and a bat.

My discerning duodenum had begun to groan and grumble
when I realised what 'Roadside' had implied.
I could feel my last resolve begin to shrivel up and crumble,
as my stomach started turning like a tide.

When I noticed bandaids missing from his mutilated finger,
my despair had turned to misery and woe.
They had seemingly disbanded and refused to stick and linger
long enough to keep from falling in the dough.

I began to puke and palpitate, disgorging what I'd swallowed,
in a tidal surge of pre-digested spew.
There were feathers, claws and gristle and some whiskers closely followed
by a bandaid soaked in ruminated goo.

As I stumbled to the toilets I could hear the frantic moaning
of my old familiar crony on the floor.
He was praying to the porcelain, that God would be condoning
him for lingering behind the toilet door.

When you're ninety K's from Forster, stuck behind an Eighteen Wheeler,
and you notice what appears to be a sign;
don't believe that it's the only stop this side of Bulladelah...
and don't ever stop to 'Go inside and dine!'



Longyard Hotel Bush Poets Breakfasts

Well, what more can I say than 'Thank You' to both the performers and the audiences who attended the breakfasts at The Longyard Hotel in Tamworth this year. Full houses on most mornings spoke for themselves! It was great to see regulars such as Marco Gliori, Ray Essery, Murray Hartin, Bill Kearns, Prousty, Brad Maclean and co putting on such stirring brackets to keep the crowds rolling in the aisles, which has now become the premier comedy venue in Tamworth, and dare I say the biggest and best Poets Breakfasts in Australia. Just how we manage to go one better next year is still unknown, but planning has already begun.

Our Balladeers, Errol Grey and Dave Prior added a great distraction from the spoken word and had them laughing hard throughout their brackets for the Festival. It was great to see 'Lynnie The Lip' Tarring in full flight as one of our only two female representatives (along with Terese Proust) and the return of Gary Fogarty, Greg North and Peter Mace added volumes to the program.

The Longyard Hotel Bush Poets breakfasts have now been going for over thirty years and next year will be my tenth year at the helm. It seems to have gone very fast, but it has been humbling to see the increased crowds every year as well as the constant improvement in the shows with everybody performing so fluently and to such a high standard and so interactively. I could only have but dreamed of the shows ever attracting such a large and loyal audience and am very thankful to those who came before me and established the Longyard Breakfasts as the premier Poets Show at Tamworth. (along with Terese Proust) and the return of Gary Fogarty, Greg North and Peter Mace added volumes to the program.

I heard this year a discussion that the Longyard Breakfasts were 'closed shop' which irked me a little, as I am always on the lookout for new talent to add to the lineup. It is just that it is hard to find new original performers to compliment an already established show and originality and comedy have without doubt been the key to the show's success in recent years. Many poets are still performing the works of other poets, many who are already on the show, and this makes it very hard to place them in such a lineup.

And so it's onward and upwards next year, and if you see me sitting in your audience throughout the year it may well be you who I am looking at, so be on your best behaviour!

Neil McArthur

TAMWORTH ST EDWARDS HALL WALK UPS 2016

Walk-ups at St Edwards Hall were held once again during country music week in Tamworth this year, and were once again an outstanding success! Momentum through word of mouth has continued from previous years. We were extremely well supported by most of the visiting and local poets, as well as members of the general public, who turned up each day to listen to the performing poets, with a few even getting up to have a go themselves.

It was a wonderful opportunity for anybody who wanted to gain experience performing in front of an audience, and for performing poets to try out new poems. Thank you to all who contributed and gave unselfishly of their time and talent.

A big thankyou to our stalwart supporter Greg North for the use of your PA system throughout the week. Also thankyou to Greg, Robyn Sykes, Jason Roweth, Ray Essery, Pat Drummond, Noel Bull, John Peel, Cay Ellem, Jack Drake and Peter Mace for mc'ing on various days.

Thankyou to our legendary performers who generously put on a veritable extravaganza of entertainment for the Wednesday night ABPA fund raising concert. Namely Pat Drummond, Jason Roweth, Ray Essery, Greg North, Neil McArthur, Robyn Sykes and Johnny Peel. What a concert it was! A superb mix of yarn spinning, poetry and music by the masters of their craft.

Trish Anderson run the Ladies' Poettes again this year on Friday afternoon, which was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

I have picked up a few pointers from this year's festival on how to better promote the walk-ups for next year. Instead of listing performers' names in the gig guide, I have realised that we will get more interest from the public by simply advertising the name... 'BUSH POETRY WALKUPS'. I tried to list BUSH POETJoe Bloggs...but it prints out by default the name of the poet only. I have also planned to be a little more proactive next year with flyers to be distributed to various locations around town... primarily the downtown INFORMATION CENTRE, where promotional flyers are left on display, to be distributed to all visitors passing through.

Ray Essery has suggested to me that we could run a PERFORMING POETS BASH next year where we charge \$5 entry fee, and poets compete in daily heats to qualify for the final showdown... for prize money and trophy. Winners of daily heats would be judged by the audience, as would the overall winner of the final bash. Ray and myself will donate a trophy and contribute to the prize money, in addition to the door takings.

Thank you once again, to all of you who supported us this year and rest assured we will be back next year in Tamworth, bigger and better than ever!

Tom McLveen.

Golden Guitar Award for Poet Manfred Vijars

My foray into Country Music began in 2008 when I submitted a lyric, "Saddle By the Door", to the Tamworth Songwriters Association (TSA) Songwriters awards. It won. The following year, my song "Strum", co-written with Shaza Leigh, took out the Contemporary Country Song of the Year award. Since then a number of artists have recorded my lyrics.

I'm a great fan of the co-write as my guitar playing is, well, average. My rationale for the co-write is two-fold. One, I have no aspirations of being a Country Music star, no-one has heard of my anyway. And two, if an artist has a stake in the song, then it has a greater chance of being recorded.

I firmly believe that Bush Poets are best placed to write great lyrics because of our fundamental disciplines. We have a well founded understanding and practice of rhyme and metre and therefore know best how to "Break the Rules". I realised early that it's folly to be too precious about 'words' while involved in lyrics, but rather have a holistic view with a focus on the result - learning the process and enjoying the ride.

Allan Caswell and I were both performers at the 2015 Australian Bush Laureate Awards, where Pixie Jenkins suggested we should Write together. So we did. Several times in fact. Last year we got together three times, it was a great dynamic and a lot of fun. We managed to build ten pieces, already taken up by various artists. Initially I sent Allan my poem "Final Muster" where he cobbled it into a song and added the music. This piece retitled, "One Last Muster" won the 2016 CMAA Golden Guitar for Bush Ballad of the year.

No, I haven't abandoned Bush Poetry. I still enjoy writing and look for any opportunity to present our works on different platforms, audio-visual, digital - anything to get our works into the modern arena. Our craft of poetry is relevant and has a place in mainstream culture because it is uniquely Australian, and Bush Poets are, the Keepers of the Culture.



Manfred Vijars

Poet's Showcase Breakfasts – Tamworth Wrap-Up

With so much competition, especially from 'free to the public' shows, the Tamworth Country Music Festival can prove a very difficult place to launch any new show. With this in mind I was more than pleased with the results of the brand new 'Poets Showcase Breakfasts', with many, many positives. Yes, of course we would have liked to have attracted bigger crowds, what show wouldn't, but those who did come were glowing in their praise of the concept, the venue, the pricing and the quality of the poets showcased.

I need to thank the poets, Murray Hartin, Ray Essery, Peter Capp, Jack Drake, Bill Kearns, Errol Gray & Dave Proust who agreed to be part of this new concept and performed out of their skins, also Ted Egan, Grant Luhrs (who also did a great job on sound) and the talented Kylie Castle for their cameo contributions. Thanks to all members of the poetry community who were not part of the show but turned up to support us, your unselfish contribution did not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

The management and staff at the Econo Lodge could not have been more accommodating and it is a great venue to perform at. Gerhardt and his team are already planning improvements for next year with a new up-market breakfast menu, more visible advertising and other ideas on the table for discussion.

While the dust is still settling and next year's Festival a ways off, it does look at this stage that we will be there again next year. The crowds we attracted were large enough to provide a solid base to build on, large enough to ensure all poets received payment for their services and large enough to convince me that the show will work in the longer term. I will be re-tweaking my advertising, giving careful consideration to extending the show to 2 hours and maybe adding a few surprises that will hopefully keep the show fresh and innovative.

Gary Fogarty

THE WIND FROM ULURU

© Martin J Mulholland

It was just past the middle of summer
Sizzling hot and dry
You could smell the vapours of eucalypt
From those forest gums in the bush

As for the grass lands out on the flat
With it's stubble, saltbush and the odd scrubby gum
Well it seemed the cyclones from the top end
Had taken all the rain required there

Now the farmers; they hadn't had many good days
The drought was long and harsh
It was 11am forty two degrees
And it was blowing a gale from Uluru

Geez I wish we had rain with lightning the day before
Instead of just the wind and the dust
It struck a pine that slowly smouldered all night
The spotter plane missed it on it's first morning flight
Because later that morning it just flared alight
And it was blowing a gale from Uluru

It was difficult to see because the dust was all around
That powder from a long standing drought
But when the tower spotted smoke through the haze in the distance
The word was soon broadcast about

Fire sirens sounded tankers started to roll
Volunteers were on call to be turned out
It was already thirty hectares raging out of control
And that fire was spotting way out

By the time the first truck got there
The front was one K wide
The call came through you better say a prayer
And attack it from the side

And from the sky it looked like a triangle
Fanning out far and wide
It was about to hit the grasslands
Those pines had nowhere to hide

Well the brigades were all set and ready
To close in from sides and rear
But almost every one of them
(just briefly), paused in fear

When a flame two footy fields long
And half as high with a roar you'd rarely hear
Lept out of those pines at a rate of knots
It's a worry to be anywhere near

The wind started to gust in many directions
Oah for goodness sake don't lose it
Protect life first no matter the cost
This blaze has a will to abuse it

And the willy willy winds took the flames far away
Even other places had fires lit
Emergency crews were stretched beyond belief
By the time that blaze hit the eucalypt
And it was blowing a gale from Uluru

The flames crowned through heads of those forest gums
As the smoke heat and dust choked the air
Then the embers would drop from the treetops
To the canopy floor and just flare

Now that inferno kept on raging
Right into the night until all the locals were aware
That not far from town you could see the glow
And a cool wind change become a pair

The wind change hit with such a force
The sparks gust straight into town
The brigades were out to protect where they could
But sometimes the flames would go around

Buildings flared up from that radiant heat
Many were razed to the ground
Then the wind turned and it went back on itself
While the countries grief was profound

That breeze was cooler coming in off the sea
The hope was that it would last
And that it did plus it bought rain too
Allowing crews to go about their task

Of dousing the flames and cooling the hot spots
Heaps of them worked hard and fast
Backed by men woman and youth behind the scenes
Willing to support this hard task
And a cooler wind was blowing back towards Uluru

Well, let's spare a thought for the life that's been lost
It doesn't hurt to even shed a tear
And the flora the fauna the livestock and the crop
Seems to battle on again year after year

And every now and then we get a time like this
When the days events don't bring much cheer
But there's a spirit throughout the land forever willing to lend a hand
It's a spirit often shown by the volunteer

And then the wind had settled down from around Uluru
And then the wind had settled down from around Uluru

Our Poetry Kids

THE WESTERN BRUMBY

©2015, Grace Gannon (at age 10)

The western brumby in all his glory ruled the outback plains...

By day the horse was shaded, by trees of pale green,
by night the beast galloped, through shadows, tall and lean.
But when the moon reached its highest point the horse's eyes flared,
for what he was about to do was something no one else dared.
With pounding hooves, and loud snorts, the brumby ran wild and fast
over lands so dry, bare and very, very vast.
But soon the horse came to a halt, as he reached the mountain blue.
Why he was going to do this, only he knew.
He galloped up the mountain at an extraordinary pace
for when he stopped, he was at the mountain's highest place.
The beast stared down the mountain's range
then he made a fierce call, that sounded low and strange.
Then the horse sprinted down the mountain, kicking up pebbles as he went
swerving gumtrees full of flames, which across his path bent.
Finally he stopped, at the mountain's very foot.
And away ran the western brumby, through a burnt forest, full of soot.

HAPPY EASTER

© 2012 Ashleigh Druett, (at age 9)

We went to church dressed up all fine,
now back at home it's party time.
Decorating eggs in our ways that's arty,
our house was the best ever Easter Party.
My Mum hides the eggs in the craziest places.
The kids are excited, it's like it's the races.
Grandpa comes dressed up as a bunny,
he says he's the tooth fairy, just to be funny
But we don't forget this sad, sad day
when our lord (the Christ) was taken away.
Though we still have fun, we want the kid's life new,
but a better word for it is a life to renew.

A POEM ABOUT MYSELF

© 2012 Ashleigh Druett, (at age 9)

I love the flowers in the earth
I love the money and what it's worth
I love the breeze that's in the air
I love the rules and how it's fair
I love the chairs that make me rest
I love my family from my chest
I love the feeling of something new
I love the sky and how it's blue
I love my world, I love my life
I love how it is all so perfectly right.

N.B. The three poems above were previously published in Young XpresSion 2015.

John Dengate

To honour the late John Dengate and his inclusion in the street namings of Canberra (article on page 21 of this issue), I saw it only fitting to include a couple of my favourite Dengate ditties.

LANES OF WOOLLOOMOOLOO

© John Dengate

Oh, then who's your mate, my Johnny lad,
so drunk he can hardly stand
With his eyeballs staring so wildly
and his violently shaking hand?
His name is not for the naming,
but his story I'll tell you true;
He's a child of the great depression
from the lanes of Woolloomooloo.

Reared on bread and dripping
And on dollops of dole plum jam,
He dodged the police and his father's boot
And his fare on the city tram.
Mustered in the militia
on the wharves of Woolloomooloo,
Fought disease and the Japanese
In the summer of '42.

Never you mind his shaking hand
Or his strangely twisted mouth;
He was cut off at Templeton's Crossing
When the Japs came swarming south,
He wept and prayed in the jungle
And God to his prayers was deaf:
Chocko! Retreat on your bleeding feet,
And where was the A.I.F.?

You'll find him now in Bell's Hotel
Or round by the Domain;
You'll find him under a Moreton Bay,
Sleeping it off in the rain,
You'll find him wandering William Street
Without any work to do,
He's a child of the great depression
from the lanes of Woolloomooloo.

He's a hollow, dirty derelict,
abandoned by the fates;
His soul's at Templeton's Crossing
With his dead militia mates,
White lady is his mistress,
They fornicate and woo,
Spawning blind oblivion
in the lanes of Woolloomooloo.

John's notes give:

Templeton's Crossing: New Guinea battlefield

Chocko: Chocolate soldier – derisive term for militiaman (An Australian soldier who had not volunteered for the A.I.F)

White Lady: Methylated spirits and lemonade.

Terrorist Song

©John Dengate 2003

Tune: Knickerbocker Line

As I was walking down the road, he suddenly appeared:
A bloody turbaned Moslem with a big Bin Laden beard;
I asked, "Are you a terrorist, is that your bloody lurk?"
He said, "No, I'm a carpenter, I'm on my way to work."

Chorus

I watched him, tracked him, rang up A.S.I.O.
I dobbed him into Alan Jones on talk-back radio.
I may not be a beauty and I don't have any sense
But, by God, I know my duty to the national defence!

They're going to bomb the Harbour Bridge then quiet as a mouse,
They'll sneak up with explosives and blow up the Opera House.
They're going to blow up Murphy's pub. I've heard about the plot...
I hope they get the pokies 'cause I'm losing quite a lot.

There's terrorism everywhere; it makes a man afraid...
I'm buying a machine gun and I'll build a barricade.
You'll have to know the password if you come and visit me.
Shoot first, ask questions later mate, that's my philosophy.

My Aunty May's eccentric; "You're paranoid," she said.
She doesn't believe the terrorists are underneath the bed.
She reckons it's "hysteria"... I don't know what she meant...
She said she's far more frightened of the Federal Government.

John Howard will protect us, he is very strong and brave;
He's passing legislation that will make you all behave!
You won't be facing Mecca on that silly bloody mat
You'll all be Church of England, Abdul, cogitate on that!

Final Chorus

Watch them, track them...



GREAT AUSSIE READS

with Jack Drake

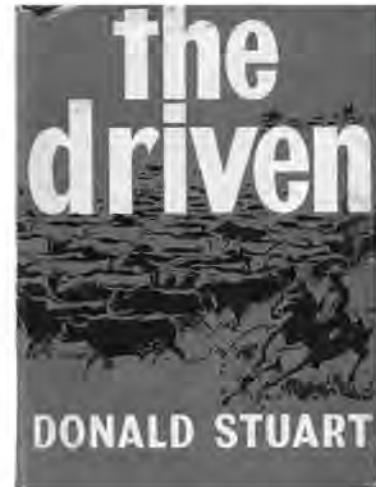


The Driven, a novel by Donald Stuart (Georgian House 1961), is the story of a droving trip. Donald Stuart has made a marvellous job of telling his story from the point of view of all its characters.

Set in the great depression of the 1930s, its central character, a young bagman travelling alone with three horses, obtains work with a mob of store bullocks bound for the railhead. Stuart has cunningly crafted his tale to include the point of view of all the droves participants and their interaction with each other....the young central character, the Boss Drover (a hard, embittered widower), the Aboriginal stockmen and the cattle themselves.

The Driven is essentially a character study set against the day to day routine of a travelling mob through the ever changing Australian Outback. During the long slow drive, all the characters reflect on their past lives and the circumstances that brought them to this point.

The Driven is one of my favourite novels and in my opinion anyway, definitely a Great Aussie Read.



It is always a pleasure to see some of our members turning their hands to other writings as well as poetry. When I got my hands on "Cops, Crocs and Leopard-skin Jocks" by Bob Magor, (self published 2011) I couldn't put it down.

Roy Wright, Bob's central character in this biography, could certainly not be considered a role model. If fact if Roy Wright had grown up in Victoria a bit over a century ago, Mrs. Kelly would never have let that nice young Ned play with him.

Habitual criminal, regular guest in numerous penal institutions, burglar, safe cracker, dope grower and legendary territory barramundi poacher, Roy Wright blustered and bludgeoned his way through life with supreme disregard for the laws society prefers us mere mortals to abide by.

Roy however, did exactly as he liked with a certain panache and style that cemented his reputation as a notorious, if not entirely lovable, larrikin in the Top End. As Bob Magor tells us, nearly everyone who was around during Roy's salad days as the Territory's most notorious poacher, has a story or two about 'Wrighty'.

Roy Wright eventually achieved at least semi legitimacy as a Mud Crab fisherman to the east of Darwin and it was there that Bob tracked him down and got his amazing story.

The further I got into Cops, Crocs and Leopard-skin Jocks, the more I was reminded of a character I have researched who inhabited that same country a hundred years before Roy Wright. Jim Campbell, the cattle duffer, fled east of Katherine into the coastal country just ahead of the law and while the police knew where he was, they didn't worry too much as they had him yarded in a remote region where he couldn't cause trouble. I imagine officialdom in Darwin felt the same way about 'Wrighty' when he was finally forced into keeping out of the way and going straight (within reason) by tightened laws and improved communications in the last decades of the 20th Century.

Bob has done a great job telling the story of a roguish non-conformist who lived life by his own rules. Cops, Crocs and Leopard-skin Jocks is a great read told by an Aussie in warts and all Australian.

Jack Drake

More great Aussie reads at
www.outbackbooks.info

'The Best Bloody Buys'

© 2010 Glenn Palmer

'The Monaro'

One "best bloody buy" the old man got was a good'un. A GTS Monaro, yeller and black, with really evil mags, and blacked out windows. She was the original model; the one with the slippery-slide rear end. Her pistons had been bored out, and she had a Waggett cam and twin pipes. Fair dinkum, you had to ride the clutch on idle...or she'd snuff it. This was a problem for the old man, especially if he was trying on a three point turn. Being the genius he was, he invented the twenty-three point turn to just turn the flamin' thing around. So, being the efficient little thing that I was...it fell to me to drive her, because I was the only one who could.

Back then, I was about 25, and had all my parts still in their desirable places (before gravity took over) and very long red hair that billowed out of the window as I sailed happily up the road, with the Beach Boys giving off good vibrations at a zillion decibels. I also had two baby seats in the back. You couldn't see them much because of the blacked out windows, so my street cred remained intact. I still suffer remorse for the industrial deafness I must have inadvertently inflicted upon my babies in the back seat. I now counter-balance that guilt with the love of music that they also acquired from me.

Soo... I had a perpetual problem while sitting at traffic lights. The Munro would shiver back and forth as I rode the clutch, just looking like she wanted to "have a go" and every hot to trot hoon that sat beside her thought I was up for it. So they'd rev and rev and wink and drool at me and pray for the green light. Now I had to tear through the gears pretty quickly so the Waggett cam didn't shoot through the head. I wish I had a quid for every bewildered neanderthal that I left sitting at the lights...wondering what the hell just happened.

A ridgy-didge "best bloody buy" was that Monaro!

I had another slight problem once though, when I nearly ran the Police Commissioner down, in Adelaide Street in the city. He sent a bloody great burly copper around home who told me to be in The Commissioner's office the next day. I duly complied...as you do.

"Young lady, why didn't you stop when I sung out to you on that zebra crossing yesterday?"

"Oh, Mr Bischoff, if I was to stop for every man that called out to me, I'd never get where I was going." (purr purr)

True story. Troo! They all are. A bit of a worry that.



Competition Results

ABPA Golden Damper Bush Poetry Performance Competition 2016

Sponsored by West Tamworth Leagues Club

Original

First Tom McIlveen Port Macquarie, NSW
Second Garry Lowe Tara, Qld.
Third Caroline Tuohey Darlington Point, NSW

Other Finalists: Lance Lawrence, Max Pringle, Claire Reynolds, Rhonda Tallnash, John Peel, Bob 'Pa' Kettle.

Established

First Jason Roweth Milthorpe, NSW
Second Sue Pearce Tumut, NSW
Third Cay Ellem Woorim, Qld

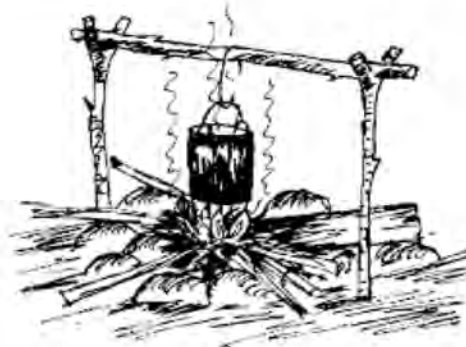
Other Finalists: Claire Reynolds, Lyn Tarring, Tom McIlveen

THE BLACKENED BILLY VERSE COMPETITION 2016 Results

1st Prize: Bond of Love.....Brenda Joy.....Charters Towers Qld
2nd Prize: Fallen Majesty.....Catherine Lee....Tungmahamek Bangkok
3rd Prize: Bobby's Return.....Tom McIlveen....Port Macquarie NSW

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Billy Crowe.....Leonie Parker...Brassall Qld
The Long Dusty Road.....Terry Piggott.....Lynwood WA
The Letter Home.....Tom McIlveen....Port Macquarie NSW
Accordin' Ter RoseShelley Hansen. Maryborough Qld
The Ugly City Street.....Terry Piggott.....Lynwood WA
Sealed With A Kiss.....Tom McIlveen....Port Macquarie NSW
I Rather Like The City At My Door.....Mal Beveridge...North Lakes Qld
The Day That Mum Cooked Elvis.....Leonie Parker....Brassall Qld
A Message From An Anzac's Grave. .Ron Stevens.....Dubbo NSW
Jack, My Friend.....Shelley Hansen. Maryborough Qld



ABPA WA WRITTEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2015 OPEN SERIOUS

1st Terry Piggott The Last Frontier
H.C. ...Shelley Hansen Qld... Song of the Seasons
H.C. ...David Campbell... A Last Goodbye
COM. ...Terry Piggott WA... Along the Canning Track
COM. ...Tom McIlveen NSW... Bobby's Return
COM. ...Tom McIlveen NSW... We were Soldiers

OPEN HUMOROUS

1st Terry Piggott WA Droving Grasshoppers
H.C. Peter Blyth WA..... Basil's Irish Stew

OVERALL WA CHAMPION POET -- TERRY PIGGOTT

NOVICE CATEGORY

1st ...Tony Green WA... King of the Colourbond Castle
H.C. ...John Dooley Qld No Job for a Shearer
COM. ...John Dooley Qld.....The Drover, his Mare and the Dingo
COM. ...Carolyn Carvalho WA... Jack and Blue

Local Avon Valley Resident

1st ...Carolyn Carvalho WA...We Shut the Door on City Life

ABPA WA Performance CHAMPIONSHIPS 2015

Novice Original — 1st Rob Gunn, 2nd June Eastwood
Novice Other— 1st Rob Gunn

Roadwise Competition— 1st Meg Gordon (reading a Bill Gordon poem), 2nd Bill Gordon,
3rd Victoria Brown (her poem was read by Cliff Simpson)

Classic Reader— 1st Meg Gordon, 2nd Nancy Coe, 3rd Elaine Smith

Yarnspinning— 1st Cobber Lethbridge, 2nd Peter Blyth, 3rd John Hayes

Modern— 1st Cobber Lethbridge, 2nd Peter Blyth, John Hayes

Traditional— 1st Cobber Lethbridge, 2nd Peter Nettleton, 3rd John Hayes

Original Serious— 1st Cobber Lethbridge, 2nd Peter Blyth, 3rd Brian Langley

Original Humorous— 1st Cobber Lethbridge, 2nd Peter Blyth, 3rd Brian Langley

Droving Grasshoppers

© T.E. Piggott

The strangest job I ever had was at a place called Jildaree,
while rounding up Grass Hoppers in the plague of ninety three.
And there were millions of the mongrels chomping any green that shows;
they're hungry little bludgers too, as everybody knows,

They'd started heading for the wheat-belt with the grain crops in their sights,
which cost a thousand Cockies there a lot of sleepless nights.
I quickly then devised a plan to make them head the other way,
I still think it was brilliant now - despite what others say.

I got a hundred Crop dusters to paint a massive strip of green,
where even up in outer space they say it could be seen.
The strip led to an outback salt lake, off in country hot and dry
and there with any sort of luck, the little sods should die.

And for awhile it went like clockwork and it really worked a treat,
for soon there wasn't anything those blighters wouldn't eat.
It seemed that something in the paint had caused the hoppers to mutate
and now their bodies could digest all sorts of things they ate.

They mowed down all the trees and bushes - plus the odd homestead or two
and there was one occasion when they chomped an outside loo.
A shearer's cook had taken residence just as a swarm moved through,
then in a flash the Loo had gone and all his clothes had too.

And then one day disaster struck when sheep were painted by mistake
and from that moment onwards then, we all began to quake.
For once they got a taste for meat there was no way to hold them back,
and cats and dogs and chooks and such became a tasty snack.

There seemed no way of stopping them and things were getting out of hand.
as anything that's in their path was stripped clean of the land.
They'd started out as tiny insects but were now the size of birds
and left the country barren as they roamed about in herds

We came across a mob of cattle near some buildings by a track
and did those stockmen scarper in the face of that attack.
There must have been a thousand head there, when the hoppers reached the sl
then like a flock of winged piranha, tore those cows to shreds.

By then we were quite desperate; the situation really dire,
we even contemplated setting half the state on fire.
There seemed no way of stopping them as to the south those mutants hopped,
with this year's crop as good as gone unless the sods were stopped.

And then I saw how it must be; although the cockies would protest,
we'd sacrifice some crop to help exterminate the pest.
I'd use again the crop-dusters to go and spray the wheat with salt
and with a river just beyond I'd bring this to a halt,

They stripped the wheat in no time flat but soon there came an awful thirst,
That forced them to the river; boy you should've heard them burst.
the water caused the wheat to swell and it was just like world war three,
with bits of hoppers ricocheting off the trees near me.

You'd think I'd be a hero now despite the loss of wheat and trees,
but cockies are a whinging mob and really hard to please.
I'd saved them from disaster and enriched their soil with hopper dung,
yet there were some who'd cursed me; others thought I should be hung.



The Swaggies Torment

©Colin Driscoll 2/15

I was tramping out there on the Barcoo
On my way to the next shearin shed
When I stumbled upon the sun bleached bones
Of a swaggie who'd just dropped down dead

By himself way out there in the outback
A lonely and sad way to die
And clenched in his hand was the reason my friends
His old water bag had run dry

There was no telling who this old fella was
There was no union card to be found
In the old leather purse that lay by his side
Half decayed back into the ground

What remained of his swag just crumbled to dust
As I tried to move it aside
And an old pocket watch all pitted with rust
Had stopped ticking hours after he'd died

The clothes that he'd worn were now just tattered rags
Ravaged by sun, wind and heat
And a half empty bottle of Old Borer Port
Lay right where it fell at his feet

I looked at that half empty bottle
Which I thought was a strange thing at first
If he still had half a bottle to drink
Why the hell did this bloke die of thirst

But no use me asking the question
Cos this bloke was in no shape to tell
But to die here of thirst without drinkin it first
Jeez he must have been goin through hell

I buried his bones on the plains where they lay
Cos that was the least I could do
Then I pulled the stop from his Old Borer Port
And said "Well my old mate, here's to you".

Then I shouldered my swag and got going
To make up the hours I'd lost
When I set up my camp in the last rays of light
Twenty miles of the Barcoo I'd crossed

And that night the stars in the great southern sky
Shone as brightly as I'd ever seen
And I toasted the old bloke that I never knew
And the good bloke that he might have been

I broke camp early next mornin
I picked up my swag off the ground
Then I finished my Swaggies breakfast
A piss and a good look around

Then I walked in the cool of the morning
A good twenty miles down the track
Til I stumbled upon the same bloody grave
So I turned myself round and walked back

When I got back to where I had started
The sun was beginning to set
I'd spend the whole bloody day walkin
And I hadn't gone anywhere yet

So I made an important decision
I'd roll out my swag and retire
And it's then that I started regretting
The fact that I'd pissed on my fire

See I'd run myself right out of matches
Cos when I start drinkin I smoke
And I'd gone through a fair bit of Havelock
Whilst drinkin a toast to that bloke

Now as everyone knows in the outback
The nights can be bitterly cold
So I took a good swig of the Old Borer Port
An old Bushies trick I'd been told

They say if you're cold on the outside
Then a good slug of whiskey or wine
Will warm ya guts up on the inside
And that's what the port did to mine

And it started to work in an instant
That old Borer Port was good muck
So I took one more swig for good measure
Then another small sip for good luck

Then I curled myself up with Matilda
Preparing to sleep safe and sound
But before I did I grabbed a big stick
And drew an arrow right there on the ground

But when I awoke the next mornin
About half an hour after dawn
I sat in my swag just scratchin my head
As I stared at the arrow I'd drawn

I'd forgotten that I'd even drawn it
What the bloody hell did it mean
Was it pointing the way I was going to go
Or pointing the way that I'd been

I sat there in total confusion
A man could go crazy I thought
Then the old penny dropped and straight up I hopped
And I tipped out the last of that port.

AUSSIE WAR HORSE

From darkness and warmth to the chill of a morn and the glimmer of light on closed eyes
I welcome the rasp of a tongue cleaning me, I take my first breath, try to rise
But these legs for so long have been tucked close to me, and at first just can't help me to stand
But my dam steadies me with her muzzle and soon I am drinking her milk as God planned

I didn't know then I was pledged to become one of the Light Horse Brigade
But at two years of age they took me away, believing I could make the grade
For six months I was taught to both trust and obey those who trained me to answer their call
To stand or to gallop, scale hillsides or creeks, quickly rise if I happened to fall

I would carry my rider and all of his gear and be ready for his next command
My training was tough but I relished the job and lived to obey each demand
Assigned to one soldier my confidence grew and soon we performed as a team
And developed a bond which would last through the war and cope with conditions extreme

No matter what noise, be it cannon or storm I would take each 'kaboom' in my stride
Till they knew I was ready to serve overseas and they winched me aboard for the ride
Long days spent at sea were quite hard to endure but at last my hooves stood on firm ground
'Welcome to Egypt' my Man said to me, and then 'We're Gallipoli bound'

But the orders were changed and dismounted they served, the casualties were quite appalling
But my man survived, and together we went to Beersheba - our allies were calling
For six hundred men and their horses to fight, regain Gaza and settle the score
So we all played our part in turning the tide and the glory of winning the war

But many were lost, both the men and their mounts and the horrors too hard to disclose
With cannon and rifles then aiming at us, just with rifles our riders opposed
The memories surely would haunt those who lived as they saw out the rest of their days
But for now we could share some good times free of fear and relax in that land's desert haze

My rider, my friend shared his dreams with me then, his thoughts of returning back home
He vowed when he got there he'd never depart, not be tempted to cut ties and roam
He looked into my eyes, said I'd proven my worth as companion, not just as his mount
But one secret he kept, one he couldn't reveal, a problem he couldn't surmount

He must have known then that those horses which lived through those brief but such terrible years
Would not be returning back home with their men, and I guess that's what brought him to tears
For the thought of the life we would have in this land, beasts of burden, mistreated, abused
Made the Light Horsemen vow such an undeserved fate for their horses could not be excused

One last time my friend took me to our special place, peace meaning no risk of attacks
Stroked my face and my neck, told me how much he cared, then had me lie down and relax
His rifle was placed on my head where the path of the bullet would be swift and true
He then whispered softly 'Forgive me please mate, I wouldn't be here but for you.'

In a moment, once more I was warm and secure, in a paddock of grass fresh and green
And my dam wandered over and welcomed me home, 'Son I'm proud of you, so brave you've been'
I hoped that my soldier, the friend that I loved, would know I was safe and secure
And the mateship we'd forged and the battles we'd won, would ever and ever endure.

by Barbara Nelson (25 April 2013)Biggenden, Qld

LONELY IS THE CAMPFIRE

© T.E. Piggott

Winner 2015 Bronze Swagman Award

His old camp ovens on the coals to slowly cook the stew
and on the side the billy boils to make a bushman's brew.
He sits back thinking of the past; the good times and the bad,
recalling all the ups and downs that through the years he'd had.

Where once he'd dreamt of mates and gold those thoughts have long since flown,
instead he thinks of chances missed in all these years alone.
His youthful days were filled with fun and life had been a blast,
he'd thought that it would never end - how quick that time had passed.

Old age had seemed a long way off no need to worry then,
for there'd be time to settle down and be like other men.
And though he'd known some girls back then too soon they used to part,
there'd only been one girl he'd met, who really touched his heart.

A smile lights up his weathered face with thoughts of Peggy Lou,
a girl he's loved for fifty years although she never knew.
A brush of lips upon his cheek and promise in her eyes,
yet foolishly he'd walked away and missed the greatest prize.

He breaks the spell to move some coals to keep the heat just right,
then looks up to the heavens where the stars are shining bright.
Although he loves this peaceful life there's something missing now
and loneliness a stranger once has found a chink somehow.

He wonders when this mood will pass for surely it can't last
and tells himself the face that haunts belongs back in the past.
He missed his chance he knows that now and rues mistakes then made,
for youth is such a fleeting thing - if only he had stayed!

He'd had a choice when still quite young to turn his life around
and love can be a fickle thing for some like him he's found.
He'd never felt the same again for any other girl,
to touch her hand was all it took to set his heart awchirl.

So many years have since passed by, yet still she's on his mind
and loneliness now stalks his camps and can't be left behind .
He stokes the fire and checks the meal and pours a mug of tea,
then watches shadows from the flames dance on a nearby tree.

And though he's lived alone for years and loved the bushman's life,
he senses now the loneliness of those without a wife.
No one to share your secrets with; or mateship to enjoy;
he'll never be a hero to his little girl or boy.

Alone there in the wilderness his thoughts drift on and on,
reliving all the memories of things that are long gone.
An old man now who ponders where his life had gone astray
and all the while the billy boils his mind now far away.



Big Avoca Do

The Big Avoca Do is back again on March 19th 2016 and promises to be another ripsnorter of a show.

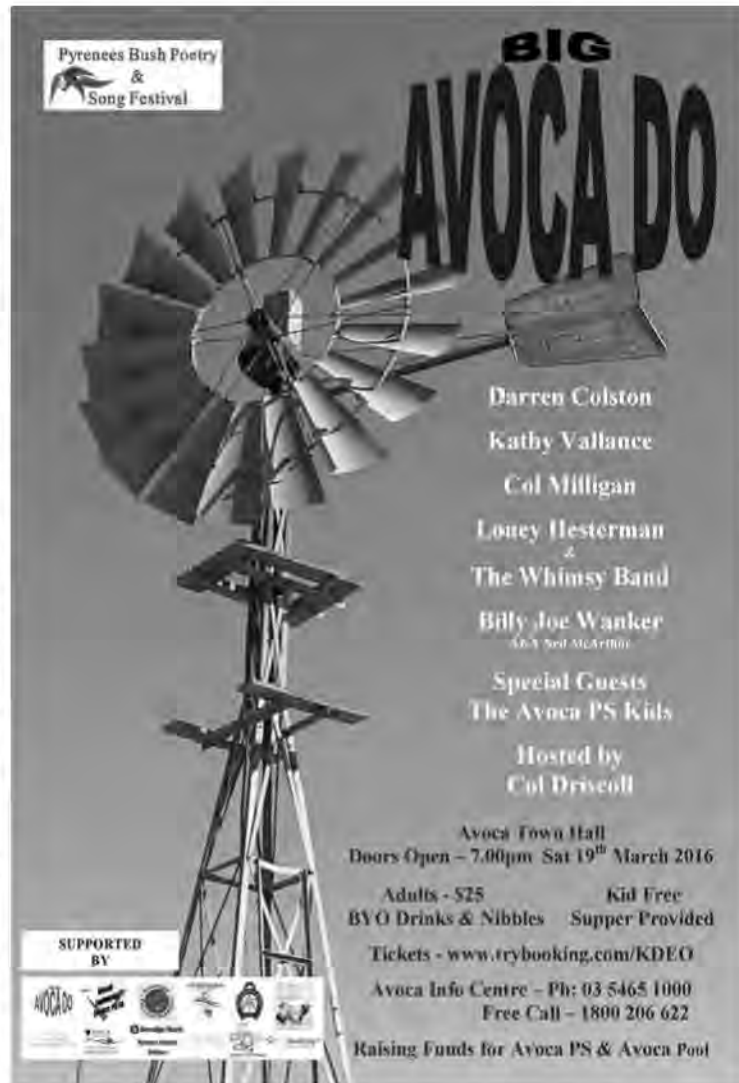
This year the focus is on local artists, with the only interstate performer being Darren Colston from Albury. Darren is back by popular demand, having wooed the locals at last year's event, especially with his rousing and heartfelt rendition of the late Noel Watson's version of Waltzing Matilda. Noel, who sang the song at the 1988 AFL Grand Final, was a long time and much loved member of the Avoca community.

Joining Darren will be Bush Poets Kathy Vallance from St Arnaud and Col Milligan from Benalla. Both have performed at the Big Avoca Do in previous years and will be welcomed back with open arms.

Louey Hesterman and Cora Brown have both been to Avoca before in a band called Cora and the Crop Brothers. They are also both members of the cast of the musical play 'The Man They Call The Banjo' in which local Bush Poet Col Driscoll plays the role of The Swagman. The play was a sell out when it was staged in Avoca 2 years ago. Louey has recently recorded many of his original songs written over his extensive musical career, and is now touring with his band called 'Whimsy' which also includes the amazing talents of Irishmen Cyril Moran and Christy Cooney.

Neil McArthur will be back again, this time as his alter ego, country music legend Billy Joe Wanker, and the night will be hosted by Col Driscoll, who will be assisting the Avoca Primary School Kids with the opening poem of the show.

There'll be raffles and door prizes on the night, and funds raised will assist the Avoca Primary School and the Avoca Swimming Pool. So if you're down around the Pyrenees Shire in March, drop in and shout yourselves to a great night of Aussie entertainment at the Big Avoca Do. Tickets are available at www.trybooking.com/KDEO



Pyrenees Bush Poetry & Song Festival


BIG AVOCA DO

Darren Colston
Kathy Vallance
Col Milligan
Louey Hesterman & The Whimsy Band
Billy Joe Wanker
Special Guests
The Avoca PS Kids
Hosted by
Col Driscoll

Avoca Town Hall
Doors Open - 7.00pm Sat 19th March 2016

Adults - \$25 Kid Free
BYO Drinks & Nibbles Supper Provided
Tickets - www.trybooking.com/KDEO
Avoca Info Centre - Ph: 03 5465 1000
Free Call - 1800 206 622
Raising Funds for Avoca PS & Avoca Pool

SUPPORTED BY



John Dentate Has A Street Named After Him

John Dentate has had a street named after him in the new Canberra suburb of Moncrieff. I can hear John saying "They must have run out of bloody politicians!" Organized by his wife Dale Dengate, it's a Crescent that runs off Slim Dusty Circuit and sits amongst many other well-known Australian musicians and it was for John's contribution to Australian song and music.

The official citation reads:

NAME: Dentate Crescent

ORIGIN: John Robert Dentate (1938-2013)

SIGNIFICANCE: Music - folk singer and songwriter

John Dentate was a musician, singer-songwriter in the Australian tradition and folk style. His prodigious output of songs, verse and satire gave unique insight into Australian life with his comments on social and political events.

Since the 1960's, with his wry comments and brilliant wit and as a generous, knowledgeable teacher, he had an immense influence on numerous performers and writers.

John Dentate won several awards for his writing and accolades for his performances at folk festivals, being known as one of their national folk treasures. In 1980, John was awarded Life Membership of the NSW Folk Federation's Bush Music Club.



With thanks to Trad & Now Magazine

Yass Show Poetry

featuring a just-for-the-fun-of-it

Poets' Breakfast

8.30 - 10.30am

Sunday April 10, 2016

at the

Shearing Pavilion, Yass Showground.

Junior Competition – best presented poem and encouragement award for reading/performing own poem.

Junior entry forms at www.abpa.org.au or www.yassshow.org.au

For more information contact Robyn Sykes

robynsykespoet@gmail.com, PO Box 100, Binalong NSW 2584 (02) 6227 4377

Come along – just for the fun of it!

Maldon Folk Festival Report

42nd Maldon Folk Festival

From October 30 to November 2nd, the Maldon Folk Festival was held in Victoria. This year there were three Poets Brekkys held in the 'Wild Temptations Cafe Courtyard'. Saturday morning's show was forced indoors due to a thunderstorm but didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the audience.

Sunday and Monday were held in sunny weather with a good mixture of featured Poets as well as walk-up adults and children. Poets in attendance were from Victoria, NSW and two from WA.

The Audiences have slowly been increasing and now these shows have a very loyal following of approximately 40 to 50 people a day.

This years shows were MC'd by Noel Bull, Geoffrey W. Graham, The Rhymer From Ryde, Graems Johnson and Maldon Bush Poet Marty Mulholland. Bush Poetry is certainly alive and kicking in Maldon!

The 14th annual National Cherry Festival Bush Poets Competition

was conducted at the Young Golf Club in early December. Entrants attended from various parts of the State and Victoria. The standard of the performances was arguably the best there has been and is a credit to those poets.

Guest artist this year and a member of the panel of judges, was former Australian Poets Performance champion, Peter Mace and he was ably assisted by two locals.

A special feature at this year's event was the donation, by Margaret Cunningham, of the Harold Cunningham Memorial Trophies. These were given for the best performed serious poem, won by Rhonda Tallnash, the best light hearted poem, won by Garry Lowe and at the Sunday morning poets breakfast, the best junior performance, won by Annalese Rothe, while Rorey Steele received the Encouragement Award.

We are very grateful to Margaret for her kind and thoughtful donation, honouring the time that she and Harold spent attending Poet's functions.

At the conclusion of the poet's performances, Peter Mace entertained a delighted audience in his customary manner and we thank him for being our special guest.

As is always the case, the newly crowned National Cherry Queen, Kate Edwards, was in attendance and presented the awards, much to the delight of the older male poets, who were awarded with a kiss.

Special thanks must go to Mary and John Wark, "Tyronne Orchards" for their generosity in donating a box of cherries to each contestant.

The Sunday morning poet's breakfast was held at Anderson Park, where the local Donges IGA staff provided breakfast. A large crowd was in attendance and they were entertained by Des Kelly, with his guitar and singing, until the poets swung into action. Twenty poets took part in a morning of great entertainment, plus four junior poets.

Now, the results of the National Cherry Festival Bush Poet's Competition, being judged over two rounds, where they had to perform a serious and light hearted poem and they were ;

First – Rhonda Tallnash – Violet Town, Victoria

Second – Ralph Scrivens – Wollongong

Third – Alan Stone – Kangaroo Valley

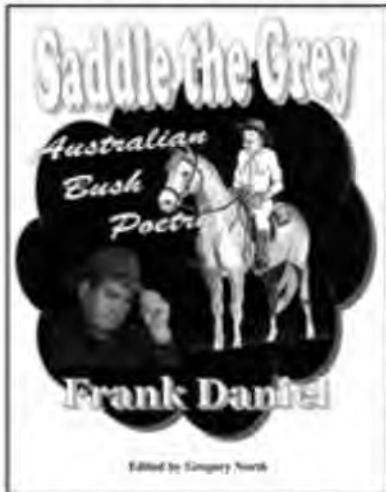
Highly Commended – Caroline Touhey – Darlington Point

Highly Commended – Jason Roweth – Millthorpe

We wish to thank all those who participated for travelling and making this, one of the best performance nights ever.

Frank Daniel

new book now available



**\$20
posted**
or see
**Special Package
Deals below**

Previously
unpublished poems
and yarns plus some
you've never heard
before!

Proudly presenting Australian Champion Yarn Spinner and Bush Poet, the late Frank Daniel's last collection of original yarns and bush poetry. Edited by Gregory North. Frank was a great entertainer, presenting traditional Australian culture to audiences across the country for over twenty years. He appeared at all the major festivals and compered bush poetry events with his laid back country style and a touch of the blamey from his Irish ancestry. The book includes mostly previously unpublished poems and yarns. Some Frank recited regularly and some have never before seen the light of day!

This dinkum Aussie's unique narrative writing skills provide a glimpse into the past as well as into modern issues. His home-spun humour and laconic wit make this a great read. Be warned though, as he always said,

"Only half the lies I tell are the truth!"

The Book is A5 size, 128 pages and includes the poems: Saddle the Grey, The Whips Have Long Ceased Cracking, Out for a Duck, Anthrax, The Princess and the Frog, Guess What, Miss!, Keeping Score With Nancy, Poets Never Say Goodbye and many others never before seen and yarns: How We Lost Hopkins, Travelling Abroad, A Pound For The Bull, Two-Bob to Central, The Wheat Dumper, Mrs Ward.

Special package deals:

New book + CD \$27 posted

Saddle the Grey new release book + Saddle the Grey audio CD (2003).

New + first book \$30 posted

Saddle the Grey new release book + Bush Yarns and Poetry - Frank's first book (released 1995, cover may have slight scuffing).

New + first book + CD + CD \$44 posted

Saddle the Grey new release book + Bush Yarns and Poetry book (released 1995, cover may have slight scuffing) + Saddle the Grey audio CD (2003) + Chuckin' Rocks audio CD (1999). **Only While Stocks Last!**

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Gulgong Henry Lawson Society of N.S.W.

2016 Literary Awards

Written Verse Competition and
Performance Poetry

Total Prizemoney of over \$3,000 and a statuette of Henry
Lawson, donated by The Land for open sections,
with Loaded Dog statues for the Emerging sections.



Entries close 27th March 2016.

Contact for entry forms-

Web: www.henrylawsongulgong.org.au (Download)

Email - henrylawsongulgong@yahoo.com.au

Ph Kevin 0263741944 Fax 0263 742400

Presentations at the
Gulgong Henry Lawson Heritage Festival
June Long Weekend 10 - 13 June, 2016

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

The Queanbeyan Bush Poets meet at 7pm on the fourth Thursday of the month in the Casuarina Room at the RB Smith Community Centre, Crawford Street, (opposite the Council Chambers). Contact Laurie McDonald on 02 6253 9856

Port Macquarie Minstrels, Poets and Balladeers meet fortnightly; 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month at 1pm in the Pioneer Room, Senior Citizens Hall south end of Munster St, Port Macquarie. Contact Tom McIlveen 0417 251287

2nd Sunday - 2:00 pm Poetry at the Pub Katoomba Blackburn's Family Hotel. All forms poetry, free entry. Contact Denis Rice 02 4782 6623 tdrice3@southernphone.com.au

SINGLETON BUSH POETS. Meet at the Albion Hotel, John Street Singleton. 7pm on the first Tuesday of each month. Contact Neville Briggs 02 65711398.

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 :- Manfred - 0411 160510 or Cay - 07 34083219.

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

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

Bundaberg Poets Society Inc. 2nd Saturday of the month. Rum City Silver Band Hall, Targo Street. Contact Edna 0428 574 651; 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 Inc meet every first Tuesday of the month at Aitkenvale Library Meeting Room at 7:00pm. They also meet at Bellevue Hotel, Allen Street, South Townsville, every third Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm for 'Pub Grub' and 7:00pm for 'Walk-Up' poetry. Loads of fun. All welcome.

Bribie Island Bush Poets meet at 6.30 pm on the 4th Monday of each month in the Conference Room of the Blue Pacific Hotel, Woorim on Bribie Island. Contact Cay - 07 34083219.

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 7104 or Ken Jones 03 5441 5121

Henry Lawson Memorial & Literary Society Inc. - Meet third Saturday each month/except January. Monastery Hall St. rear St. Francis Church, Lonsdale street. Melbourne. All Welcome. From 1-30pm till 4-00 pm. Contact: Maree Stapledon: 0408 100 896

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.

AUSTRALIAN BUSH POETS

If you wish to find out more about the Australian Bush Poets Association, or if you are not already a member of the ABPA and wish to become one, please go to the our Website www.abpa.org.au to download a membership form, or contact the Secretary secretary@abpa.org.au