



Tamworth Roundup 2019

THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER 2019

4TH - 7TH
APRIL

THE MAN FROM
SNOWY RIVER
BUSH FESTIVAL
Campy, Rustic
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2019 ABPA WRITTEN AND PERFORMANCE VICTORIAN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

ABPA ORIGINAL, HUMOROUS AND SERIOUS CONTEMPORARY AND CLASSICAL SECTIONS; OPEN, NOVICE AND JUNIOR CLASSES; RECITING THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER; YARNSPINNING AND 3 POETS' BREAKFASTS
DOWNLOAD ENTRY FORMS FROM THE WEBSITE FROM EARLY DECEMBER OR CONTACT JAN LEWIS

02 6076 1992 | events@bushfestival.com.au

BUSHFESTIVAL.COM.AU



Gulgong Henry Lawson Society of N.S.W.

2017 Literary Awards

Performance Poetry Competition — \$1,000 First Prize & a Henry Lawson bronze Statuette, and also a Written Verse Competition — \$500 First Prize & a Henry Lawson bronze Statuette
Total Prizemoney of over \$3000, and in the Emerging Sections, a \$200 First prize, and a Loaded Dog bronzed statuette.



Entries close 27th March 2017.

Contact for entry forms-

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

Email - henrylawsongulgong@yahoo.com.au

Facebook: *Gulgong Henry Lawson Centre*

Ph Kevin 0263741944

Presentations at the
Gulgong Henry Lawson Heritage Festival
June Long Weekend 9 - 12 June, 2017

GULGONG HENRY LAWSON LITERARY AWARDS

Plans are well under way for the 2017 Gulgong Henry Lawson Literary Awards.

Entry forms are available at the Henry Lawson Centre, 147 Mayne St, Gulgong; or can be downloaded from the web site, henrylawsongulgong@yahoo.com.au (click on Events).

Entries close on March 27th, 2017.

The Leonard Teale Performance Poetry, proudly sponsored by Moolarben Coal with \$1,000 first prize and a Henry Lawson statuette, is the highlight event of the Literary Awards finalised on the Saturday night of the June Long Weekend at the Gulgong Prince of Wales Opera House, where the final 10 performers "strut their stuff" in front of an audience of about 100 people, and 3 judges.

The Written Poetry, has a first prize of \$500 and also a Henry Lawson statuette.

There is also an Emerging Poet's Award in both Performance and Written Sections, to encourage up and coming poets who have not won a 1st prize in a major literary awards.

These sections have traditionally been entered by adults, but High School students are welcome to enter, and over the years students have won 1st prizes in the Open and Emerging Sections, and also some 2nd, 3rd, H/C and Commended Awards.

Entries come from all over Australia, and occasionally from overseas, but don't let this discourage you from entering in this fine competition.

For enquiries email: henrylawsongulgong@yahoo.com.au, or phone Kevin & Jan Robson (Literary Awards Co-ordinators) on 63741944.

Australia Day Honours for ABPA Members!

MEDAL (OAM) OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA IN THE GENERAL DIVISION

Mr Noel Bernard STALLARD, Chermside QLD 4032

For service to literature.

Mr Stallard is an Australian Bush Poet and Entertainer.

Australian Bush Poets Association

- President, 2006-2009.
- Former other Office Bearer positions.

North Pines Bush Poets

- Former President, twice.
- Office Bearer and Committee Member.
- Conducts 'Verse for Vinnies' (recitals of Australian Bush Poetry), St Vincent de Paul Society, Queensland and Northern Territory, since 2012.
- Recites poetry for Rotary and Lions Clubs, retirement villages around Brisbane, corporate functions, conference workshops for writing and performing Bush Poetry; and school children, Australia wide.

Other

- Deputy Principal and Teacher, primary and secondary schools, Brisbane Catholic Education, Queensland, 1970-1998.

Author

- 'Aussie Verse: Make it What You Want' (Arana Hills, Heritage Poetry, 2010)
- 'See what I see in the Sea' (Arana Hills, self-published, 2009)
- 'The Bush Animals Band' (Arana Hills, Heritage Poetry, 2008)
- 'Let's Laugh till we Die', CD of Aussie Bush Poetry
- 'Chalk Dust and Bull Dust' (Arana Hills, self-published, 2001)

Awards and recognition includes:

- Recipient, Book of the Year, Australian Bush Laureate Awards, for 'Aussie Verse: Make It What You Want!', 2012.
- Recipient, Judith Hosier Heritage Award, for 'his work in promoting Australian verse to children', Australian Bush Laureate Awards, 2011.
- Recipient, Best Children's Poem of the Year, Australian Bush Laureate Awards, for children's book 'The Bush Animals Band', 2009.
- Winner, Male, Australian Bush Poet Championships, Mulwala, 2003.
- Recipient, Golden Damper Award, for 'Bush Poetry', Tamworth Country Music Festival and Australian Bush Poets Association, 2003.
- Recipient, 2 Golden Damper Awards, for 'Bush Poetry', Tamworth Country Music Festival and Australian Bush Poets Association, 2002.
- First Place Winner, for 'Written Bush Poetry', John O'Brien Festival, Narrandera.



Noel Stallard



Jeff Close

MEDAL (OAM) OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA IN THE GENERAL DIVISION

Mr Jeffrey Raymond CLOSE, Hampton QLD 4352

For service to the communities of Crows Nest and Winton.

Crow's Nest and District Tourist and Progress Association

- President, 1997-2017.
- Member, since 1982.
- Progressive Community Crow's Nest
- Inaugural Chairman, 10 years.
- Director, current.
- Member, since 1999.

Winton Outback Festival

- Vice-President, since 2012.
- Treasurer, 1977-1981.
- Member, since 1977.

Other

- Owner, Rhonda's Refits, Toowoomba, current.
- Teacher, Winton and Crow's Nest, Education Queensland.
- Inaugural Treasurer, Hampton and District Association and Food Art Festival.
- Chair, Outback Writers' Festival, 4 years
- Member, Winton and District Historical Society and Museum, current.
- Member, Winton Tourist and Progress Association, current.
- Board Member and Chairman, Waltzing Matilda Centre, current.
- Former Member, Hampton Progress Association.
- Honorary Coordinator, Bronze Award for Bush Verse, Winton.
- Honorary Coordinator, Junior Bush Poetry Performance Competition, Winton.
- Honorary Coordinator, Bush Poets Breakfast, annual fundraiser, Crow's Nest.
- Co-ordinator, Crow's Nest Show Camp, passing on show skills to a new generation, 5 years.
- Co-ordinator, free community whip cracking schools.
- Volunteer Announcer at local shows and rodeos.
- Justice of the Peace, since 1997.

Awards and Recognition include:

- Australia Day Citizens Award, Crow's Nest and Winton.

Outgoing President's Report



Let me start by thanking the ABPA Membership for supporting me as President for the last 12 months, I considered it an honour and a privilege. I would especially like to thank those members who communicated with me during the year, this gave me a beneficial insight into the thoughts, wishes and ambitions of Members of all levels. Regardless of if I agreed with you or not, I did listen, and your opinions and reasoning guided my own actions and ideas throughout the year.

Let me also thank all members of the Committee this year, for the work they have done. I am proud of what we were able to accomplish.

Meg Gordon as Secretary - Janine Keating as Treasurer (and a special thank you to Carol Hutchenson who filled this position for the first three months) - Ray Essery as Vice President - Committee Members:- Bill Gordon, Max Pringle Tom McIlveen and Bob Kettle - State Reps:- Mick Martin (Qld) - Rob Christmas & Bill Kearns (NSW) - Jan Lewis (Vic) - Irene Conner (WA) - Kevin McCarthy (NT)

I would also like to thank:- Greg North for his work as Website Editor and also he and David Kitchen (who is not even a member) for the work they did when we changed our Internet Provider. Neil McArthur whose work as Magazine Editor continues to see the magazine rated as the single most beneficial return our members get for their annual fee. Jan Lewis who has done a great job as Facebook Editor. Brenda Joy Pritchard for her work as Promotional Officer, and also Mick Martin who is monitoring the role so Committee can be better informed on the role. Hal & Brenda Pritchard - who approached the ABPA with a proposal for running the Blackened Billy Written Competition in 2019.

My personal thanks to Rhonda Tallnash. During the year issues arose where we needed to know what had been done by the previous Committee, Rhonda went out of her way to assist.

Thanks, to Penny Broun, who is standing down from the two positions, Public Officer & Returning Officer, that she has held for years. Penny has been a helpful, efficient, cheerful and smiling contributor to the ABPA.

Thank you to those who served on various Sub -Committee's this the year. Reviewing the Performance Competition Judging Sheet (Jack Drake, Marco Gliori, Gary Fogarty). Reviewing the Written Competition Judging Sheet (Mal Beverage, Will Moody, Terry Piggot). Reviewing the Guidelines (Jack Drake, Bill Gordon, Marion Fitzgerald)

The year has seen us make some fundamental changes to the ABPA Rules and regulations, and while these changes will serve the ABPA membership well into the future, change is never easy and seldom occurs without criticism. It'd be overly optimistic to expect every member to agree 100% with the decisions made, certainly not every decision went the way I myself wanted. I do ask that each and every member give the changes a chance.

During the year we Revised, and improved the following:- The Competition Guidelines - The Performance Bush Poetry Adjudication Sheet -The Written Bush Poetry Adjudication Sheet -The Yarnspinning Adjudication Sheet.

We developed Guidelines for:- Running a Bush Poetry Show - Walk-up Bush Poetry Events. We moved from a Rank Order Judging System to a simpler and equally fair Aggregate Score System.

These new documents are available on our Website, where for the 1st time Event Organisers will be given the choice of Shows, Competitions or Walk-up Events, eliminating the heavily Competition biased information available previously. This should in no way be taken to indicate that Committee does not support competitions, but we think it's time we supported ALL aspects of bush poetry equally.

The other major change, and maybe the most controversial, was the abolishment of the Judges Lists. This decision was heavily debated and not taken lightly. The reasons behind the removal of these lists are as follows:-

1. There is absolutely NO evidence that winning Competitions makes anybody a better judge.
2. Qualifying requirements for inclusion on the lists appears to have changed from 2 wins to 3 wins over the years, and this change seems to have occurred between Committee meetings.
3. Individuals were included on these lists without meeting the conditions.
4. Individuals were not included despite meeting all the conditions.
5. Individuals were included on lists without ever applying to go on them.
6. Individuals were removed from lists with no reason being given.
7. Conditions for inclusion as a Judge discriminated against poets who had retired from competitions many years ago and also those who chose never to enter competitions.
8. The Lists were only open to members of the ABPA. We wish to be an outward looking and inclusive Assn, inward looking Associations all eventually implode.

It was obvious the Lists were so corrupted as to be of no worth to the credibility of our Association.

Due to the work of our Qld State Rep, Mick Martin, we're happy to welcome a new and vibrant group of poets based in Toowoomba. A couple of other new groups are in the embryo stage and we hope to hear more about this next year. Also thanks mainly to Mick, we have promotional Bumper Stickers which are available to members at \$5 each, this first run will be used to determine which slogans are most popular.

As per our Treasurers report, the ABPA is in a healthy financial position. We should use this money to promote Bush Poetry and/or provide opportunities for members to enhance their skills.

Those who attended our Special General Meeting are aware we have faced a significant issue in regards to our Constitution and that meeting was just the first step in addressing this. Now the issue has come to light, it needs to be addressed and the 2019 Committee should undergo a full Constitution review. Our Strategic Plan is outdated and badly needs to be revisited as well.

It became apparent a significant number of Gig opportunities per year come in via the ABPA Website/Committee and that in the past these Gigs had been allocated to a select few. For this reason we instigated the Survey as a 1st step in attempting to develop a workable and fair system of dealing with these enquiries. Unfortunately the response was poor. It is now up to members to monitor the distribution of these opportunities and demand a fair allocation. Our QLD Rep Mick Martin received 16 gig requests this year, took zero of these for himself and allocated them all based on poet location and experience. Well done Mick, you have set the standard.

Other Committee decisions during the year included the decision to run both the Blackened Billy and the Golden Damper Competitions again in 2019. In fairness to all ABPA Members, Committee made the decision that if we were not prepared to pay our Judges and Comperes at industry rates, that we had no right to pay prizemoney. This situation was blatantly unfair and should, under no circumstances, be revisited in the future. The paying of prizemoney with ABPA funds should be only in correlation to the payment for professional services.

Committee received expressions of interest and agreed the following Poetry groups be granted the rights to host State Championships in 2019:- Logan Bush Poets QLD - WA Bush Poets WA - Man From Snowy River Festival VIC.

We appreciate the dedication and drive of all these groups and wish them the very best of success and we will support them financially in line with previous contributions.

Finally, a quick look at our future;

We have a great product! - We have, as always, some extremely talented and dedicated people among our membership! - We have a fairly strong financial situation!

However, the ABPA is under extreme pressure, our membership numbers are plummeting, we are losing 10 - 12% of our membership a year due to ageing issues alone, this means we need to recruit approximately 30 new members a year, just to stay static. We are sitting at roughly 135 members today. Bush Poetry popularity is also in decline. There are a few isolated exceptions like the WA Bush Poets.

The easy answer is to blame this on the aging demographic of our audience and the natural ebb and flow of popularity of all art forms. But they are simply excuses and we can reverse these trends

We need to change our attitude. What we have been doing in the ABPA has not worked, and is not working for us now, to continue to do the same things and expect a better result is paramount to stupidity.

The modern revival of Bush Poetry was under way and thriving before the ABPA was formed, before the majority of our competitions started, and before we had the ABPA and all its rules and regulations. Since the formation of the ABPA, every time we encountered a problem we simply added a new rule or regulation, and we have become addicted. We refuse to look at other alternative solutions. We also encouraged the increase in prizemoney to a level where it encourages poets to build their career in Competitions and never back themselves to move to a more professional level.

Individual poets presenting poetry and performances that were relative and entertaining for our audience drove the modern revival and has continued to attract new audiences. Their success has dragged us all along for a wonderful ride and our competitions, walk up opportunities, written poetry and the like, have all prospered as a result.

Simply, we need to get back to what made us popular, and reduce our rules and regulations to a minimum so they no longer present a roadblock to the advancement of our most talented poets. The ABPA should use its resources in providing learning opportunities aimed at increasing the skills of our members and encouraging them to write for the benefit of our audience, rather than for ourselves. To achieve this we must first, chose our Committees carefully.

Unfortunately, in the latter part of the last year a committee member took it upon themselves to override a committee decision. As much as I would love to run for President again this year, I cannot bring myself to work with anyone so unethical, and will therefore not be standing again.

I'm proud of what we, as a Committee, achieved this year on behalf of our members. While not every decision this year went the way I wanted, I am proud of the fact that each time I cast a vote, I asked myself one simple question, "What is best for the ABPA?"; and I voted accordingly. I'm also proud that every member, and every Committee member was given ample opportunity to express their opinions and argue those opinions. I'd encourage all members to be more active in the ABPA and express your opinions at every opportunity.

I remain passionate about Bush Poetry, I wish the new Committee and all members the very best for the coming year and again, 'Thank You' for the trust you placed in me by allowing me to be President for the last 12 months.

Gary Fogarty (Outgoing President)

Tamworth Golden Damper Awards

The new title, new venue and new trophy for the Tamworth Golden Damper proved very acceptable to members, competitors, and audiences. The many problems surrounding this year's competition eventually sorted themselves out. The lack of entry in the gig guide (not our fault) proved that our audience found us regardless. Road signs and flyers around town compensated and we learnt which was the most cost effective advertising.

Last minute executive decisions had to be made due to a couple of reviews that were held by ABPA Committee during the year, some which didn't make it to the website (our webmaster took a well deserved holiday).

The committee had to be very conscious of time as some days our events were squeezed in between balladeer events (the GD Finals and the Poettes was a classic case here).

Good attendance for our first day events gave us cause to hope that the week may succeed despite our initial hassles and fears that change brings about. The new venue was very much appreciated by our audience with wonderful air conditioning and delicious food supplied by the parishioners of South Side Uniting Church. It is a very intimate and comfortable place, easy to find with ample parking and also on the bus route.

A big issue for the co-ordinator was the number of late entries. On arriving in Tamworth a decision almost needed to be made to cancel heats of Golden Damper and just have one session (heat/final) due to lack of entries (one Thursday event only had 3 entrants). Walk up participants were encouraged to enter the GD and we eventually found enough competitors to have a successful competition. Members are urged to consider putting entries in WELL IN ADVANCE so the co ordinator can have the event planned before the rush of Tamworth week. Entry forms were on the website some months before and participants need to know whether their preferred day for performance can be obtained.

Congratulations to our finalists and winners:

ORIGINAL Finalists - Bob Kettle (Goodna Qld), Tom McIlveen (Port Macquarie NSW), Jacqui Warnock (Narrabri NSW), Mick Martin (Clontarf Qld), David Stanley (Armidale NSW) and Max Pringle (Narrabri NSW)

ESTABLISHED Finalists - Marion Dreyer (Woy Woy NSW), Jacqui Warnock (Narrabri NSW), Bob Kettle (Goodna Qld), Tom McIlveen (Port Macquarie NSW), Joey Reedy (Wallabada NSW), Leo Huyghbaert (Gold Coast Qld)

WINNERS ORIGINAL— 1st Jacqui Warnock (The Garage Door)
2nd David Stanley (The Dog Fight)
3rd Max Pringle (You Useless)

WINNERS ESTABLISHED— 1st Joey Reedy (Coastal Complications—Jack Drake)
2nd Jacqui Warnock (141 Cream Cowrie Shells—Noel Stallard)
3rd Bob Kettle (Rain From Nowhere—Murray Hartin)



From left - Max Pringle, Joey Reedy, Bob Kettle, Jacqui Warnock, Leo Huyghbaert, David Stanley and Marion Dreyer

Frank Daniels Walk Up Award

To see the board fill rapidly with names and the new venue (Southside Uni ng Church) start to fill with audience, indicated to the Committee that this was a popular and necessary event in our Tamworth program. We saw a number of new faces and others that had been first timers last year coming back with honed performance skills and featuring in the awards this year. Our future is secure with this enthusiasm being displayed. The 6 minute time limit and encouragement of original work will make this event even more popular with writers/performers in the future.



Winners in Frank Daniels Walk up Awards.
Caroline Maxfield (Taree NSW) 2nd, Bob "Pa" Kettle (Goodna Qld) Winner, Greg Dunn (Winston Hills NSW) 3rd

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

The following Resolutions were passed at the Special General Meeting prior to APBA AGM on Wednesday 23rd January 2019:

The secretary must at least 21 days before the date fixed for the holding of any general meeting, give a notice to every member specifying the place, date and time of the meeting and the nature of the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting.

The Committee is to consist of

President

Vice president

Treasurer

Secretary

3 ordinary members

1 representative from each State and Territory

A person applying for membership (of ABPA) must complete the appropriate membership Form and forward such form and the nominated Annual Membership Fee to the Treasurer. The Treasurer will refer the Application to the Committee at the next Committee Meeting where committee will approve or reject the application. As soon as practicable after the committee makes that determination, the Secretary must

- notify the applicant in writing, that the committee approved or rejected the application, and
- if the application was rejected, notify the Treasurer to refund the Annual Membership Fee or
- if the application is approved, notify the Treasurer to enter the applicants name and details in the register of members

ABPA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING the following people were elected to the ABPA Committee:

President (Vacant)

Vice President — Ray Essery — Moved Mick Martin, Manfred Vijars (elected)

Secretary — Meg Gordon — Moved Mick Martin, Bob Kettle (elected)

Treasurer — Janine Keating — Moved Bill Gordon, Bob Kettle (elected)

Committee — Bob Kettle — Moved Bill Gordon, Lyn Finedon (elected)

Manfred Vijars volunteered and was seconded by Jacqui Warnock (elected)

Neil McArthur — Moved Ray Essery, Gary Fogarty

Public Officer/Returning Officer — Greg North

As the position of President has not been filled, it now becomes a casual vacancy. Members are invited to put names forward to Committee by 20th February of potential candidates for the position when a vote will be taken at the next committee meeting.

Rex and The Blazer

© Doug Hutcheson

Always going the distance and pulling his weight was the whole of his creed and his might.
On the farm sinking tanks, in the bush snagging logs, Blazer made a magnificent sight.
Blazer - horse among horses, Rex - man among men,
With the team they crossed Queensland and crossed it again
Finding work when the season was right.

On the dry Diamantina they lifted baled wool from the shed on a hard-bitten run
With a Shire horse team and a saddlebacked dray where their record was seventeen ton.
Then turned back to the Downs and the harvester's flail
Shipping oceans of wheat from the farm to the rail
Through the dust and the pitiless sun.

Rex's team was a legend of heavy-horse teams and a byword where bullockys drank,
While himself was a man to be counted with those who by nature are top of their rank.
Heavy horses loved Rex with his heart of a lion,
Heavy work forged in Blazer a will of pure iron:
Man and beast neither faltered nor shrank.

There's a town on the Condamine not far below where the team jobbed an ironbark mill.
When the timber cut out and the contract was done all the roads and the stations were still.
For the drought was a curse and a blight on the land,
Rex could not find a job for the strength of his hand
While the feed turned to dust on their hill.

On a morning when all the earth's anvil was struck by the hammer of Thor from the sky,
Rex had harnessed his team to the dray once again, for the spring on their hill had run dry.
With a mouthful of dead bitter grass for a feed
Blazer bullied the team from his place in the lead:
Weary steps, but his head was held high.

As they entered the town noon had passed - by an hour - and the road was a shimmering haze
Where the farrier needed no forge for his trade for the road was as hot as his blaze.
Rex called out to them all "We make for the coast road
And we have to run light, so I'm seeking no load" -
But the danger was there in his gaze.

It was Cunningham's Gap where they came to their grief where the road down the pass is a track.
Rex had hitched a great log to the dray as a brake and used long reins to hold the team back.
On a steep muddy pinch Blazer stumbled and slid
And the team bolted off when they felt the dray skid
While the brake-log felled Rex with a crack.

It is said, on a darkling night, moonless and crisp, you can hear Blazer's swingle chains ring
As the ghost of the team thunders down to the death which the rocks in the gorge were to bring.
The lost voice of Rex calling "Up, Blazer, get on!"
Is an echo half heard in the dawn, then is gone -
As the Bell-birds are starting to sing.



The Townsville Bush Poetry Mates are into the swing for 2019 starting off with entertaining a sell-out crowd of 90 guests at the Heritage Tea Rooms, Hervey's Range, (about 30 minutes out of Townsville) for an Australia Day Bush Poets Breakfast. It was a very successful fundraiser for the Lions Club of Townsville. 8 poets entertained the crowd, and as usual we were very well received. Kathy Priestley, our red headed rat bag, was the MC trying to keep us up to the job but sometimes it takes us to try and keep her in line. The Mates have decided to do another concert this year after many requests so it is happening again on 30th March at the Carlton Theatre, Carlyle Gardens. Hopefully we get another sell-out crowd (250) like we had in 2016. The proceeds from this one will go to the Qld. Drought Relief Fund. We have dates for 3 of our local nursing homes booked for the year averaging 3 visits over 2 months. Also have confirmed bookings for yearly events - Dam Fine Rally in June, and Toomby's Wonderland in August. Health problems have hit a few of our members over the past 12 months but hopefully 2019 will be a better year. As most clubs, we are always looking for new members and there seem to be a few in the pipeline so hopefully we will see a few new faces at our first meeting in February.

Rhyl Graham TBPM Inc.



Dear Gary Fogarty, and ABPA Committee,

Congratulations in making the decision to supply some funding to the new Toowoomba bush poetry group to help it get started. I hope more new groups are started with this 'Chook Raffle' assistance. This particular use of especially-raised ABPA funds is exactly the type of thing that the proceeds of the Chook Raffles is intended to further and encourage bush poetry in the community.

It makes me feel a lot better knowing that the aim of holding the Chook Raffles is starting to happen. It will look great on the Treasurers Annual Report to see the actual amount of the Toowoomba funding itemised as withdrawn from the ABPA Investment Account to offset the \$4,000.00 total raised from the Chook Raffles in 2017.

I was starting to feel a bit guilty that the marketing and intended use of the Chook Raffles proceeds was not true and honest as is required by the Gambling Board.

Thank you all, and best wishes for Christmas and 2019,
Carol Hutcheson Immediate past ABPA Treasurer.

BUSH POETRY AT TAMWORTH

I was encouraged by Gosford Bush Poets to enter competitions to help improve my poetry. As I was going to Tamworth Music Festival I decided to enter the Golden Damper Awards while I was there. I have only just gained confidence in my reciting ability so the last thing I expected to do was get to the final of the awards. Well guess what, I made it to the final. My recital of Kym Eitle's Jelly Melons was the best I had ever recited it, I couldn't believe how well I performed. I think it must have been my competitive streak kicking in.

I also recited 3 times in the Frank Daniels Walk ups and again in the "Ladies day in Tamworth" Bush Poettes. I gained so much confidence from these performances and was encouraged by many other poets to keep performing at poetry competitions.

There was a workshop on Yarn Spinning by Ray Essery, whom I had never heard before and I am now his biggest fan. The other workshop was on Writing humorous poetry by Tom McIlveen and Bill Kearns and I got a lot out of this workshop and was able to talk to Bill while we were having lunch.

I met lots of poets whose poetry I had heard but never met, as well as lots of other Poets competing in the competitions. I even attended the AGM! What an amazing few days I had at Tamworth.

I would like to thank all the wonderful Committee members who work so hard all year round to put these competitions together so we lovers of Bush Poetry can compete. There is concern that not enough people are entering the Golden Damper, so why not put your skills to the test and enter the competitions that are organised for Bush poets. It would be sad to see a competition like the Golden Damper fail due to lack of support.

I now feel part of a family of Bush poets from all over Australia instead of just my local Bush Poets Club. Thank you ABPA for this wonderful experience.

Marion Dreyer
Gosford Bush Poets



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WA

W.A. Bush Poets



& Yarnspinners Assn.

VALE— DAVE SMITH



I have written previously about the wonderful and inspiring family we have discovered as we became involved in Bush Poetry. Recently we lost one of our closest friends from that group. Dave Smith lost his battle with the big C, but he did so with the style and dignity we have come to know and respect.

Dave was passionate about his poetry, never missing an opportunity to share his talents whenever possible. I have shared the stage with Dave from Esperance to Perenjori, from a Bunbury Primary School to Boyup Brook, and enjoyed every minute of it. But it was as a Yarnspinner that Dave shone. In 2011 and again in 2016 Dave was WA Champion Yarnspinner. He loved telling us stories about the antics of his great grandchildren as much as the yarns that had his audiences enthralled. Dave used to quote one of Australia's best known yarnspinners, Frank Daniel – "Only half the lies I tell are the truth."

Dave was a valued and willing committee member of WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinners who took it upon himself to make the trophies for our State Championships held every November in Toodyay. This year he made two extra trophies for the Silver Quill, our written competition. He knew he would not be around for the job next year. When I collected the plaques for this year, the manager of Elite Graphics was full of praise for the quality and design of our Trophies. Thank you Dave for a job well done.

I join all members who knew and loved Dave, in expressing our deepest condolences to Elaine, their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. We are all the poorer for Dave's passing, but all the richer for having had the privilege of knowing him and sharing the journey.

Bill Gordon, President WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinners Assoc

Perth's Crystal Swan, managed by **Peter Dinon**, is proud to partner with the WA Bush Poets & Yarn Spinners Assoc. to provide the inaugural evening of

"Bush Poetry & Yarn Spinning on the Swan" during the 2019 FRINGE WORLD FESTIVAL

The Perth city skyline provides the backdrop as we cruise along the beautiful Swan River with local bush poets spinning their yarns.



The Crystal Swan will be open for boarding from **6.30pm** and the performances are scheduled to run from **7pm to 8pm**.

First event: **Thursday 31st January**— Poets featured are **Peter Nettleton, Cobber Lethbridge, James Fitzpatrick and John Hayes**.

Second Event: **Thursday 7th February**— Poets featured are: **Bill Gordon, Roger Cracknell, Barry Higgins, Rob Gunn**.

Competition Results

More results can be found on our website www.abpa.org.au
Result preferences for Magazine given to our Advertisers.

2019 ABPA BLACKENED BILLY WRITTEN COMPETITION RESULTS

1st	My Father's Voice	- David Campbell
2nd	A Precious Chance	- Shelley Hansen
3rd	Dear Henry	- Shelley Hansen
4th	Highly Commended	The Stockman's Choice - Kay Gorring
5th	Highly Commended	Gentlemen Heroes - Catherine Lee
6th	Highly Commended	Among my Souvenirs - Shelley Hansen
7th	Highly Commended	The Darkest Side of Hell - Tom McIlveen
8th	Commended	Pappinbarra Dreamtime - Tom McIlveen
9th	Commended	Kelly's Corner - Heather Knight
10th	Commended	Honour their Spirit - Helen Harvey

JUDGES' COMMENTS RE THE 2019 BLACKENED BILLY WRITTEN COMPETITION

As usual, subjects in the 2019 Blackened Billy were wide ranging from War to Outback with evocative and lyrical poems bringing to life the characters and situations of our past with poets being the preservers of our cultural heritage. This year, however, it was also gratifying to see so many poems expressing the concerns of modern-day Australians who are faced with 'universal' issues such as climate change, cyber bullying, teenage suicide, refugees, pollution, degradation of the Earth, organ transplant, child and women abuse... These showed our poets being the social commentators of our times.

Some poems portrayed beauty, some horror, some were humorous but all entries portrayed an aspect of Australia, Australians and the Australian way of life.

It was particularly heartening to learn that there were so many poets new to the competition circuit entering the Blackened Billy this year. If you have not been successful in this very high standard arena, please do not be dissuaded from entering your poems elsewhere particularly where there are novice sections for those who have not previously won a competition.

Particularly with respect to one of the twin pillars of our craft, i.e. Metre, a minor 'glitch' in technique, if detected and rectified early, can mean the difference between success and disappointment. Many newcomers sought critiques and this, and seeking the advice of successful poets through workshops or approach, is recommended as all the current major award-winning poets have been guided in some way by those further along the developmental scale.

Thank you to the ABPA for supporting this year's Blackened Billy and thank you to everyone who entered and to fellow judges Brian Langley and John Peel and to the co-ordinators Max Pringle and Hal Pritchard who volunteered their time and expertise to enable this most iconic and prestigious Australian Bush Poetry competition to continue.

Brenda Joy, Brian Langley, John Peel
ABPA Blackened Billy Judges

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Next Magazine Deadline is March 26th

BATHERS NOT BOOTS

© Maureen Stahl

Lord Howe, an island paradise that we saw between rain showers.
We were there when it was winter, when plants were devoid of flowers.
We picnicked on lovely beaches; we ate our sandwiches and fruits
while wearing our Gore-tex rain coats and our big heavy hiking boots.

In Tasmania in autumn rain held off but it wasn't hot;
our boots were still necessary as we hiked to each beauty spot.
In New Zealand it was chilly, in coats and boots we had to be,
but I didn't mind the weather, there was so much for us to see.

Spring found us in the Grampians. It rained and we even had snow.
We found the ground wet and muddy with puddles wherever we'd go.
We spent the week in our raincoats with thick socks and boots on our feet.
Oh how I longed for some sunshine; fine weather would be such a treat.

They'd had floods in Mallacoota when we spent a holiday there.
Grey stormy skies were depressing and I knew what I'd have to wear.
A warm jumper would be needed, a snug scarf round my neck and then
my Gore-tex, my hat and my gloves and my hiking boots yet again.

I want to go on a holiday without taking hiking boots.
I want to pack shorts and tee-shirts, sandals, sun hats and bathing suits.
I want to wake up and feel warm, look up at blue sky and see sun;
spend leisurely days on the beach then splash in the waves and have fun.
I want to spend time in the pool, swim and slide down some water shutes.
I want to have holidays in bathers instead of hiking boots.



The North Pine Bush Poets

© Peter Hasenkamp

If one fine day your
Wandering round
The markets in Old
Petrie Town

And if you think you've
Seen enough
Or are a little
Out of puff

Then you should maybe
Take a break
And grab a drink and
Philly steak

And head down to Coutt's
Cottage where
You'll find some people
Gathered there

And there you'll hear
Some poetry
From Aussie champs and
Such as me

But something else that
I should tell
And you should know of
This as well

It's, should you show a
Bit of wit
You'll be a North Pine
BUSH POET.

Epistle of the Apostles

© John (Uncle P.J.) Raine.

Out in wilds of Apollo bay
where the scrub turns its collars to the gale
blowing in from the ocean and whipping up spray
in your face like salt laden hale

you'll find the apostles, steadfast and true
with their trousers rolled up to their knees
standing shin deep in the icy, cold blue
praying for an end to the breeze

but the wind still prevails
and it rips at the sails
of the waves as they crash through the bight
to unravel the socks
of those pious old rocks
they roar with a fiendish delight.

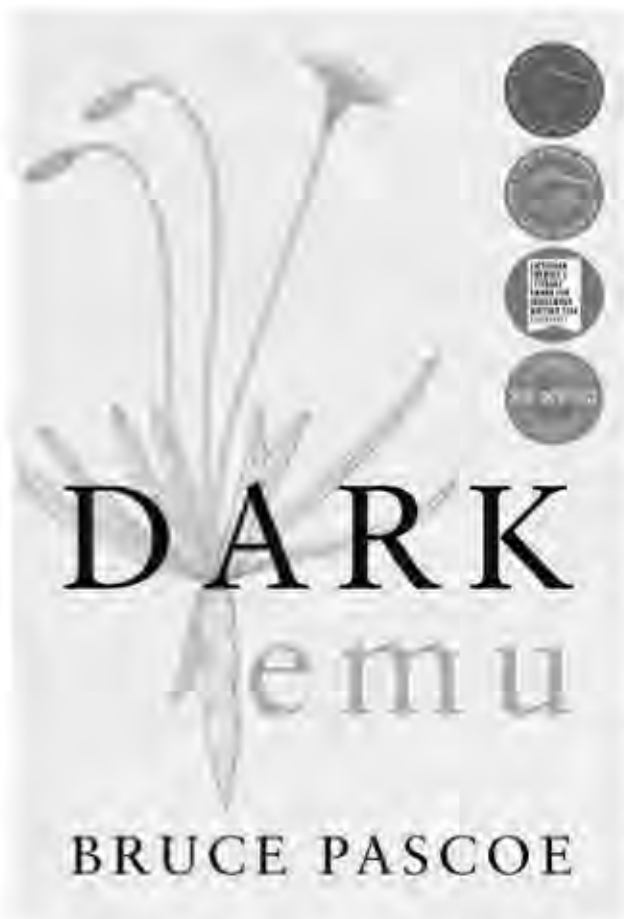
they wash and they wear
and they dig and they delve
at the toes of those obelisks, divine
and they win, for they dare
for, once, there were twelve
apostles, but now, only nine

still maintain their vigil and gaze to the lea
searching for soles that are lost.
those soles that challenged the wind and the sea
and paid the ultimate cost.

or, are they looking back at that shoreline, receding
of which they were once part, and wishing
to be reunited as in times long preceding
NAH! I think they're just fishing....

Great Aussie Reads

with Jack Drake



Every once in a while you pick up on a book that changes your entire outlook. This happened to me on a family outing to North Stradbroke Island when our daughter-in-law lent us a copy of *Dark Emu* by Bruce Pascoe (Magabala Books 2014)

I could not put it down as all the stereotyped facets of Aboriginal culture I had assumed to be correct, were dissolved by Pascoe's meticulous research and compelling writing. He quotes extracts from letters, journals and diaries of the very first explorers who ventured inland.

Australia's indigenous people were not simple hunter gatherers. In Bruce Pascoe's own words "They did build houses, did build dams, did sow, irrigate and till the land, did alter the course of rivers, did sew their clothes and did construct a system of pan-continental government that generated peace and prosperity."

We have been conditioned to consider Aboriginal people pre-colonisation, as nomadic wanderers who moved through their tribal lands from yam patch to kangaroo or fishing grounds doing little more than survive on what was easily available.

Dark Emu will change all that. Indigenous Australians could well pre-date the Egyptians who have been credited as the first bakers, by 15,000 years. They constructed stone drafting yards that kangaroos were driven through in organised drives to separate chosen animals for slaughter and allow breeding stock and young to return to the wild.

They practised sophisticated aquaculture. The Brewarrina Fish Traps are very likely to be the oldest man-made structure on earth. They planted extensive grain and yam fields and managed them in a totally sustainable manner and they established permanent villages and towns.

Dark Emu by Bruce Pascoe is a book that should be read by all Australians. One of the best reads ever!

Advocates of political correctness, humourless wowsers and nit picking historians will simply hate "Girt - The unauthorised history of Australia" by David Hunt (Schwartz Publishing Pty Ltd 2013).

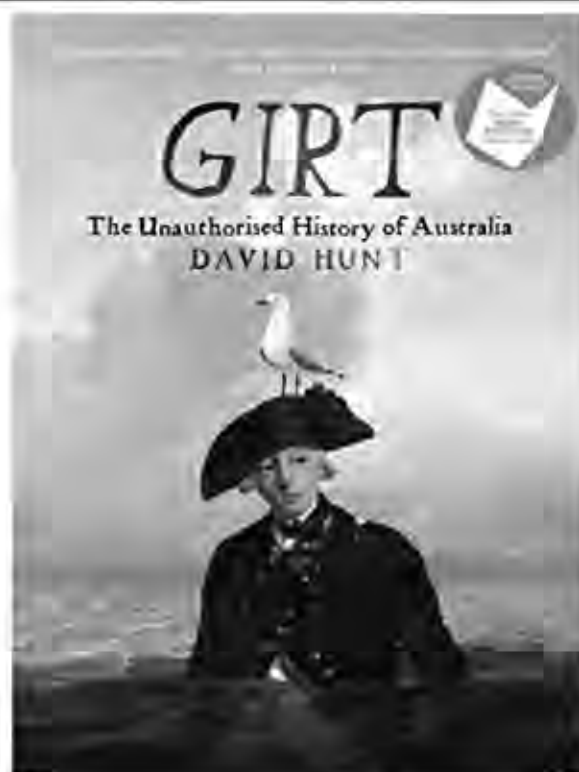
I loved it! While assiduously researching dry historical data for an upcoming book, I regularly took time out to clear my head with a chapter of *Girt*.

David Hunt is satirical, cynical and as funny as hell. I chuckled, chortled, guffawed and giggled my way through this delightfully irreverent work which conveys an entirely new slant on Australian history.

Take for example Hunt's description of Sydney's rum rebellion. 'The colonists celebrated Bligh's downfall with an all night party, burning effigies of the bastard, tucking into giant platters of freshly roasted sheep and drinking vast quantities of rum.'

Some find it disturbing that these events took place on Australia Day, but celebrating the national holiday with fighting, disrespect for authority, a barbie and a piss-up? You can't get more Australian than that!

See what I mean? Get yourself 'Girted' at the first opportunity. You'd be mad if you didn't and there is a volume 2. I can't wait to get my hands on that.



Jack Drake

More great Aussie reads at www.outbackbooks.info

BRUCE FORBES SIMPSON

Currently the 95 year old Bruce Simpson is in Embracia, a nursing home in Woodford Qld. Although Bruce is virtually blind, hard of hearing and stubborn as a mule he can still mentally run rings around most of us. Recently Marion Fitzgerald, Trisha Anderson and myself did a tribute concert to The Life and Times of the Aussie Drover as seen through the poems of Bruce Simpson. The characters and stories that Bruce shares with his readers and listeners are uniquely Australian. You can smell the bush, hear and see the cattle and when he describes a cattle rush at night you can feel the adrenalin rush through both the rider and the night horse as they attempt to ring the spooked cattle.

One of the poems Marion recited was the first time this poem, From the West has ever been recited. I can confidently say that for Bruce only "wrote" this last year when he was 94. I use the word "wrote" cautiously for he provided me with one of the most extraordinary experiences of my life.

Bruce had rung me to request if I had a tape recorder as he had a new poem that he wanted to enter in the Bronze Swagman Written Competition. You could imagine my mental confusion as to how this "blind" man could have a new poem. What followed was that he dictated to me, for an hour and a half, 70 metered and rhymed verses of this not previously written poem, From the West.

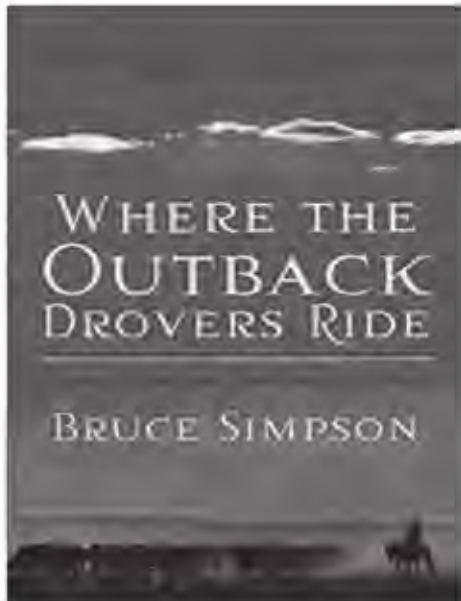
The whole poem came from his memory in perfect sequence from start to finish. Subsequently I typed up the poem. Two days later he rang me to say that he wanted to make some changes before I sent it off to the competition. He was awarded a highly Commended in the 2017 Bronze Swagman Competition.

The major concern Bruce has is that current and future generations will not be informed about the significant contribution the pioneer drovers made when droving huge herds of cattle from the Kimberleys, across the Northern Territory to the rail heads in Queensland and New South Wales.

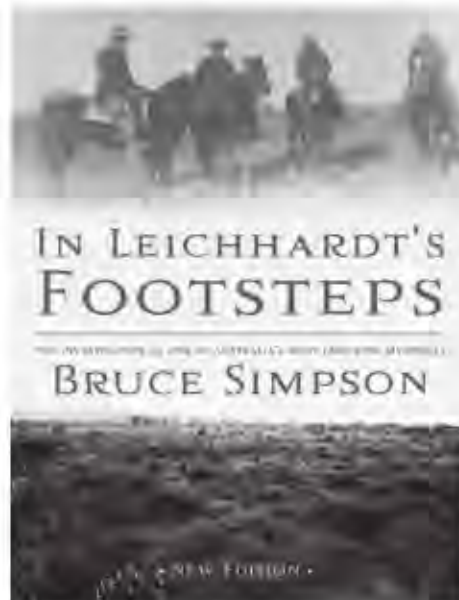
I have assured him that whenever I perform in schools or to the general public I will always do a Bruce Simpson poem. Marion and I hope to bring our tribute show, The Life and Times of the Aussie Drover as seen through the poems of Bruce Simpson to Tamworth in January.

After many years of being out-of-print Bruce has recently decided to have three of his major books republished. He has made me his "sales manager". We have also had printed more of his CD that won the 2010 Bush Laureate CD of the Year Award. This can be purchased for \$20 plus \$3 P/P. Unfortunately the cost of mailing Where the Outback Drovers Ride is \$14.

Noel Stallard



\$25 plus \$14 Postage and Handling



\$20 plus \$3 Postage and Handling



\$20 plus \$9 Postage and Handling

Mailing Address Noel Stallard 265/28 The Boulevard Chermside Qld 4032

Apologies to both Bruce and Noel for the poor presentation of this Ad in the previous Magazine. The Editor takes full responsibility and hopes that this Ad will rectify the problem and promote the writings of one of Australia's finest and most original and true Australian Bush Poets.

REBUILDING THE ROCK

© Robyn Sykes

Her body is paper, the scissors are drugs.
Her strength – once a rock – now is sand.
“I need some more tablets.” The doctor just shrugs
as Lorraine lifts a vibrating hand.

“Oh life in town suits you,” he says. It’s a lie.
The air in her cottage is stale:
her armchair, TV, daytime soaps, volume high.
Mike and Joy bring the milk, eggs and mail.

Lorraine tells her children: “You don’t understand.
You’re busy with lambs on the farm.
The Mogadon, Endone and mum’s helping hand,
good old Valium, won’t do me harm.”

But injury masked is not injury healed.
The drugs are a stern CEO.
With profits, not people, the deal is soon sealed;
and Lorraine is the last one to know.

Repeated repeats. Get your fix in a script!
The doctor’s mouse clicks, ups the dose.
The end is in sight. Yes, a crib in a crypt.
She pulls back, but she’s bub-to-breast close.

The memories flood of big musters on plains;
the shimmer of heat-dust on sheep;
the pulse of the hoof-beats, the slap of the reins;
and the husband for whom they still weep.

The nausea grabs, hot and cold, wet and dry.
Her mind does the carousel waltz,
with mirrors and whistles and horses that fly.
Sweet relief is a pill. She defaults.

A rock is eroded by water and wind,
the storm-surge from cloudbanks of pain.
A brain is a hostage to pills when they’re pinned
to mad dreams of unlocking the chain.

Her wounds – are they physical, mental or both?
What matter? They stab the same sting.
Alone in her bedroom, she’s tempted. She’s loath
to go on, but her children both ring.

“I’m coming to town in the morning,” says Mike.
“We’ve shorn all the wool from each ewe.
We’ll go out for coffee or lunch if you like.”
What he meant was, I’m thinking of you.

“Oh Mum, we’re beside you, keep fighting,” says Joy.
“Come live with us out on Kildare.
“There’s plenty of room and we’ll never annoy
you. Our Grandies are gems we can share.”

To reconstruct rock from the sand of her strength
is harder than water to wine.
Is such a force found in the galaxy’s length?
She embraces the foot of the shrine.

Her body is paper, the scissors are drugs.
There’s progress rebuilding the rock,
one grain at a time, with her family’s hugs,
as Lorraine finds the key to the lock.

Seeing The Light

© Doc Bland 2018

The poet looked around and felt so glad to have survived
the journey to the Afterlife and, now that he’d arrived,
he felt that he should ask if there’s a poets’ meeting place.
An angel laughed: “You poets rarely reach a state of grace.
Most poets do not get this far – they all commit the crime
of underestimating the importance of good rhyme.
In recent times, they haven’t even learned the metre trick.
That’s something guaranteed to get on old St Peter’s wick.

“St Peter in his lifetime was a competition judge
and, as you can imagine, from the rules he will not budge.
So what you need to do now, if you want to make the grade,
is write a great bush poem so our worst fears are allayed.
But I should caution you about a standard we have here:
As well as metre and good rhyme, it must be very clear
the language invokes piety and leaves us in no doubt
the writer has a pure soul and a heart that is devout.”

The angel handed him a quill he took from his own wing,
a golden pot of ink and parchment made of hell-cat skin.
The poet sat and contemplated, time seemed to stand still.
He hoped the words would form themselves and flow into the quill.
“Oh, can I find it in me to write lines that are so pure
I won’t be kicked outside again to knock on Heaven’s door?”
The poet’s mind was scrambled - what to write to pass this test?
He thought about the bush poets whom he’d considered best.

“Is Paterson’s ghost here right now, did Lawson pass the gates?
Did Oglivie write poems that St Peter really hates?
Does CJ Dennis have the knack, could Murray point the way?
Did any of them write a poem the saints would feel okay?
Is there a model I could use, masters to emulate?
Should I reflect on olden times or be more up-to-date?”
Perhaps an ode to tv shows, or politics, or sports?
I wish they had a manual or such to guide my thoughts.”

What could he write about here that had not been done before?
Soon scrunched up bits of parchment built up on the marble floor,
Bereft of poignant topics from his old life back on Earth,
He tried to focus on the things that angels felt of worth.
He could not write of seraphs, and clouds were not his style,
so letting go a mournful sigh, he sat still for a while.
He looked around for inspiration – then, he saw The Light!
He wrote a poem two words long: it simply read, ‘Quite bright!’



Our Poetry Kids

with Brenda Joy



Snowflakes

1st Place, 2018
Milton Uladulla, NSW,
Junior Written Bush Poetry
Competition

As gentle as a feather
spinning floating in the sky.
Drifting dropping dancing
shimmering like a butterfly.

Varying shades of blue
landing softly on the ground.
Cascading calmly colliding,
falling without sound.

Slowly drifting with the breeze,
lightly catch it in your hand.
Swish swosh sway,
watch it softly land.

I fall and spread my angel wings,
snow and snowflakes drop on my face.
Gliding, glowing, glancing,
this has been a really great place.

I watch them fall from in my house,
this has been a really good sight.
Spectacular, special, sparkling,
it's been a long day; time to turn off the light

Nothing To Fear

2nd Place, 2018 Milton Uladulla, NSW,
Junior Written Bush Poetry Competition

A dark stormy night, all alone at home,
a crash outside I'm forced to go and roam.
Creaking floor boards, smashing rain,
I hear a bang on the windowpane.

The streetlights flutter the lightning strikes
the flames are rising from our burning bikes.
Shadows across the moonlit sky,
the howl of the wind rushing on by.

I shiver, it's creepy, my hair stands on end.
I hear the dogs whimper –
my poor little friend.
They're howling they're crying
they want to come in
He's dashing, he's dancing
then crashes into the bin.

This storm is a nightmare like no other
I wish I could see my father and mother.
I crawl to the telephone and dial the number
but all I hear is the loud crack of thunder.

I've shut all the curtains but now take a peek,
I'm searching for answers that only I seek.
The crashing the clanking –
It all has gone quiet
my eyes can't believe it,
the sky is all starry and bright.

No need for nerves no need to fear it,
At first I was petrified to move or go near it
I am a champion, a survivor,
I am oh such a hero,
At night home alone, what's there to spook, not a
thing, zilch and zero.



Both poems © 2018 Zara Clegg (at age 9)

This is the second year in a row that Zara
has taken out first prize in this competi-
tion. In 2017 she won it with her poem
Disco Duck

Around The Tamworth Poetry Traps

Poets Showcase and Step-Up Show 2019

Well the Tamworth festival is done and dusted for another year. The Poets Showcase Breakfasts and Step-Up Shows again drew appreciative crowds to the wonderfully comfortable Frog & Toad venue, and our poets outdid themselves in entertaining the public.

Thanks to our Step-Up poets who again proved their worth and produced a few pleasant surprises, with young Joey Reedy warming up for his win later in the week in the Golden Dampers with a potential laden performance, while at the other end of the spectrum 88 years young poet, Brian Fallon, had us all rolling on the floor in laughter. Thanks to Mick Martin, Jaqui Warnock, Bill Gordon, Manfred Vijars, Kylie Adams Collier, Davis Elson, David Melville, Paul Flemming, Trevor Stewart and Noel Bull for sharing the stage with me and bringing their A-Game.

Our Showcased poets, Jack Drake, Errol Gray, Bill Kearns, Marion Fitzgerald, Ray Essery and Paddy Obrien were all rock solid and professional as usual. Paddy was promoted from the Step-Up ranks to the main show and did himself proud by helping us send our audiences away happy. Our door attendant, raffle selling, PR lady, Cindy was again the glue holding everything together.

Our audiences this year were made up of some familiar old faces and some enthusiastic newcomers. They all deserve the biggest thanks, as it is these people and their preparedness to pay for quality entertainment that support our genre and ensure we all have a future in Bush Poetry.



Gary Fogarty



Another great year of shows at The Rhymer's Round-Up, featuring Noel Bull, Graeme Johnson, John Peel, Pat Drummond and Greg North.



Rayleen Essery hams it up at the Poettes Show with Trish Anderson and Marion Fitzgerald



Mick Martin presents the Golden Dampers Trophies he made to winners Joey Reedy and Jacqui Warnock



Neil McArthur, Greg Champion and Errol Gray preparing to take the stage at the Longyard Poets Breakfast.



Longyard Crowd enjoying another Ratbag Show!



Crowd enjoying the Golden Dampers Heats

Longyard Bush Poets Breakfasts Roundup

The crowds continue to turn up and support our Bush Poets Breakfasts at the Longyard Hotel during the Tamworth Country Music Festival and none went home dissatisfied!

With a great mix of Comic Poets, Singers and the Stand-Up genius of Alan Glover thrown in, it was always going to be hard to miss the mark. Although the crowds have dropped marginally from the haydays of a few years back, the crowds are, on average, more consistent over the entire nine days.

Marco Giori was once again at his finest, and along with Murray Hartin and Alan Glover, turned up purely to perform at the Longyard, which is a great honour for the Longyard stage!

Our Comedy musicians were on fire once more with Errol Gray leading the charge and with a bottemless swag of original songs, never has to repeat himself. Greg Champion was again one of our popular entertainers and the PC Rebel Dave Prior also was at his best.

Our Poets were absolutely at their best again with John Lloyd, Greg North, Col Milligan, Bill Kearns, Paddy O'Brien, Gary Fogarty, Ray Essery and Therese Proust firing along on different mornings with all new material.

And a big thank you to Prousty! No words can describe the pride we have in our long-time Longyard stalwart who is fighting a very big fight with brain cancer and yet stepped up to the plate on seven days to not miss a beat and keep the audience in stitches! We all wish him the best with his treatment and hope to see him back again next year.

And also a BIG Thank You to my wife, Colleen, whom without, I probably wouldn't make it out of bed to get to the shows, let alone get everything running so smoothly for the artists every morning.

The Longyard Breakfasts prides itself on being able to deliver nine different two hour shows over nine days of the Festival, a feat that is unchallenged at Tamworth and seems to be the secret of the success of the shows. It also depends on bringing through new faces from time to time and keeping things fresh. We gained a new young member of the team this year in 12 year old Joey Reedy who showed up a lot of seasoned veterans on his mornings! Now the search continues for some comic female poets who write original material and can fit into the team as well. This will happen, just a matter of getting around and watching what I can given the small amount of Festivals and Competitions we have left to bring artists through.

So now it's onto next year, with the Breakfasts already booked in for 2020, my 30th year at Tamworth, and a vision of improving and streamlining the show for audiences both regular and new.



Greg Champion



Joey Reedy



Neil McArthur

Cheers
Neil McArthur



My Father's Voice

© David Campbell

Winner, 2019 Blackened Billy Award



You cannot know the struggle to survive,
the things we did
to feed us all and simply stay alive
and earn a quid
when jobs were scarce in those depression years,
a time when laughter couldn't banish tears,
a window was a hessian sack,
and home a dirt-floor timber shack.

The red-soil plains where dust storms cloud the sky,
that's where we played,
a wilderness so barren, bleak and dry,
and yet we stayed,
not letting all the hardship get us down
although we lived a long way out of town,
refusing handouts, far too proud,
my parents resolute, unbowed.

He pauses then, and in his weathered face
I see the past,
a fleeting instant, just the merest trace,
a moment cast
in memory from times so long ago,
but suddenly it's gone, yet even though
that life has well and truly died,
he lives it still, down deep inside.

But there is more, for then he looks at me,
his eyes ablaze,
and all I want to do is turn and flee
that piercing gaze
as it strikes icy terror in my heart.
Those days were bad, he says, a world apart,
but they were nothing, truth to tell,
before New Guinea's gates of Hell.

Ravines and razorbacks stretched out of sight,
a sea of green,
with kunai grass full seven feet in height,
a nightmare scene
of narrow leaves as sharp as any blade
and steaming jungle where our boots decayed
in clinging mud on brutal slopes
that sapped our strength and shattered hopes.

Each minute sudden death was very near,
a constant threat
that meant we always had to live with fear
I can't forget,
not even now, a rifle as my friend
through days and nights, just waiting for the end
in non-stop, soaking monsoon rains,
while dreaming of the red-soil plains.

Can you imagine what it's like to die
a thousand times?
And yet to live, to daily wonder why
such dreadful crimes
were perpetrated in that ghastly war
that words can't tell the awful things I saw
when men are trained to maim and kill,
sheer horror that can haunt me still.

He pauses once again, then takes my hand:
Please listen, son,
I simply need to know you understand
my race is run,
and, though the passing years have left their mark,
I hope the future will not be so dark
if only lessons that we've learned
are heeded and not blindly spurned.

What happens next requires some common sense
and careful thought,
the courage that is needed to commence
the things we ought
to do to try and save this fragile earth,
for, of the wars since man was given birth,
there's one we simply cannot lose,
but time is short, and you must choose.

The current generation must decide
what moves to make
so thoughtless ignorance can't override
the need to take
the path that science is proposing now,
the necessary measures that allow
our ailing planet to survive,
and, more importantly, to thrive.

If long-term climate plans do not prevail
then all is lost.
The politicians simply cannot fail,
or else the cost
of all the wars we've waged across the world
since time began, and all the flags unfurled
with promises of faith and trust
will be no more than clouds of dust.

At ninety-five my father passed away,
but not at peace,
for through his final days I heard him say
he could not cease
believing sacrifices were in vain,
for, to the very end, the sad refrain
from daily television news
just reinforced how much we'd lose.

So in my eulogy for him I used
the life he led
to warn that failure means we'll be accused
in years ahead
of crimes far worse than any seen before,
not even on the battlefields of war.
It resonates, my father's voice:
Act now, while there is still a choice.

Victorian Bush Poetry Performance Championships at MFSR Bush Festival 4 – 7th April, 2019

On the first weekend in April, the mountains around Corryong are set to ring with thousands of Banjo Paterson fans, entrants and participants at the Man from Snowy River Bush Festival with amazing horse and community events. From Thursday to Sunday, there'll be hardly a time when somebody, somewhere in Corryong is not reciting a poem or singing a song....and we encourage you to try many of the different components of our fantastic authentic bush gathering.

If you're a Bush Poetry competitor, it's an opportunity, and if you're just wanting to experience it, roll up and enjoy renditions of some of Australia's favourite poems, yarns and songs of life, lame ducks and locals. BYO chair to Banjo's Block outside or the Lions Youth Hall inside, on Strzelecki Way, the Poetry and Bush Music base camp at the festival. Our judging team includes Graeme Johnson the Rhymer from Ryde, Brenda Joy and Hal Pritchard, Carol Reffold joined by Geoffrey Graham and his brother Ralph.

Victorian Bush Poetry Performance Championships commence 7pm Friday with Original Serious poems, Saturday will see Classical and Modern sections squeezed in around the Street Parade, in the evening, Original Humorous, and a closing concert whilst Sunday will feature the Novice, Yarnspinning Championship and 'One Minute' poetry competition. Jan will email entry forms to those on her list or download from www.bushfestival.com.au from early December or ring festival office to post one to you.

Our Bush Poetry Programme has 3 Poet's Breakfasts, a Thurs afternoon concert including Victorian Junior Championships and our usual 'Meet & Greet' evening at the "Bottom Pub". Friday has two options to see the Re-enactment with the 'Anzac Remembrance' concert & Heritage Parade and the 'Man from Snowy River' Recital competition.

There are prizes for women and men most sections, plus Overall Champion Matilda and Clancy Awards winning a season ticket to the National Folk Festival. There is a limit of one entry per person per section with a \$10 entry fee. Please note, there will be no Jack Riley Heritage Award until 2020

For the MFSR Recital comp, three finalists will be reciting Banjo Paterson's famous poem on Friday night at Banjo's Block, the poets' home base. The official version of the poem is on the website.

The Written Serious "Silver Brumby" and Humorous "Corryong Larrikin" sections are judged before the Festival with a limit of 3 entries per section per person at \$10 per entry.

Around the campfire, get ready for some ridgy-didge camp-fire entertainment at Banjo's Block, where most poetry and music events are held. Once the instruments are tuned up, there'll be singing and playing well into the night, and the billy will be on the boil. Unplugged campfire musicians welcome all weekend.

At Poetry and Music events at our Bush Festival you can experience friendly country hospitality and spectacular beauty of the high country in autumn. You might get caught up in the magic of it all and start reciting bush poetry, singing campfire songs, and do a bit of yarn-spinning yourself.

ABPA Original, Humorous and Serious; Contemporary and Classical sections.

Open, Novice and Junior classes; Yarnspinning and 3 Poets' Breakfasts.

Entry forms available <http://www.bushfestival.com.au> closes 8th Feb

or contact Jan Lewis 0260774332 or janlewis1@hotmail.com

Poetry Event Manager – Jan Lewis email: info@vbpma.com.au www.facebook.com/groups/vicpoets/

IMPORTANT FESTIVAL INFORMATION

4 day wristband is required to use festival camping MFSR Bush Festival Office 02 60761992

Festival Website, Wristbands, Camping, Volunteering, FAQ and Program: at www.bushfestival.com.au

Weekend Passes: 4 day Full Festival Pass is \$160 at the gate or \$150 for a Comm. Concession holder.

Volunteers: Limited volunteer poetry team places are available through Jan Lewis (\$45)

Poets Camping 6m x 9m \$165 near Banjo's Block. POET SPECIAL! ring MFSR OFFICE 02601992

Clancy's Overflow camping two cars max 10m x 9m is \$120 - 500m from Banjo's Block. BOOK ONLINE

Other camping options Ring Tourist Info Centre on 0260762277.

Sad Breaking News.

Message from Carol Reffold who has withdrawn from MFSR festival as she is receiving chemotherapy treatment from Peter McCallum Clinic, Melbourne.

"To all my Poet mates - remember all the good times we have had and all the laughs.

Please support me with texts, messages, songs and poems etc but most of all please pray for my family that this chapter of our lives is an easy one."

Carol xx



JOHN SHAW NEILSON

by Anthony Hammill

Several top Australian poets, regardless of the genre or style that won them acclaim, were unable to resist the lure of creating bush verse (metred and rhymed, distinctly Australian themed) if only in one or two instances.

Shaw Neilson (1872-1942) was Australia's greatest writer of lyric verse (short, musical, emotional). Born in Penola, South Australia, of Scottish ancestry, his family moved to the Wimmera district of Victoria in 1881 to take up a selection on poor land that did not return a decent living, so the family moved to Nhill in 1889. Shaw received only a rudimentary education, and spent most of his life working as a labourer. One of the books he possessed in his youth, and doubtlessly his inspiration, was the lyric poetry of Scotland's national bard, Robert Burns. Neilson's themes are delicately centred around nature, love, and life and death.

Afflicted by failing eyesight, Neilson published several books of verse, his talent having been recognised and promoted by A.G. Stephens of *The Bulletin*, and he received unstinting praise from fellow poets like Christopher Brennan and Judith Wright. Eventually he was granted a small literary pension and a job as an attendant at the office of the Victorian Country Roads Board. Today a bronze sculpture of Neilson stands in the Footscray library in Melbourne, and a monument to him was erected in Nhill. Several of his poems have been set to music and a play written on his life and work. My favourite poem is 'May'.

Neilson's outstanding bush poem is 'The Sundowner', and it is in my opinion biting satirical, though others have called it light or humorous verse; judge for yourself. It concerns a swagman, Old Tom, who was known to Neilson. Regardless of intent, Neilson has crafted a beautiful piece of work.

The Sundowner

© John Shaw Neilson

I know not when this tiresome man
With his shrewd, sable billy-can
And his unwashed democracy
His boomed-up pilgrimage began.

Sometimes he wandered far outback
On a precarious tucker track;
Sometimes he lacked necessities
No gentleman would like to lack.

Tall was the grass, I understand,
When the old Squatter ruled the land.
Why were the conquerors kind to him?
Ah, the wax matches in his hand!

Where bullockies with oaths intense
Made of the dragged-up trees a fence,
Gambling with scorpions he rolled
His swag, conspicuous, immense.

In the full splendour of his power
Rarely he touched one mile an hour,
Dawdling at sundown, history says,
For the pint pannikin of flour.

Seldom he worked; he was, I fear,
Unreasonably slow and dear;
Little he earned, and that he spent
Deliberately drinking beer.

Cheerful, sorefooted child of chance
Swiftly we knew him at a glance;
Boastful and self-compassionate,
Australia's interstate romance.*

Shall he not live in robust rhyme,
Soliloquies and odes sublime?
Strictly between ourselves, he was
A rare old humbug all the time.

In many a book of bushland dim
Mopokes shall give him greeting grim;
The old swans pottering in the reeds
Shall pass the time of day to him.

On many a page our friend shall take
Small sticks his evening fire to make;
Shedding his waistcoat, he shall mix
On its smooth back his Johnny cake.

Mid the dry leaves and silvery bark
Often at nightfall will he park
Close to a homeless creek, and hear
The bunyip paddling in the dark.



May

© John Shaw Neilson

*Shyly the silver-hatted mushrooms make
Soft entrance through,
And undelivered lovers, half awake,
Hear noises in the dew.*

*Yellow in all the earth and in the skies,
The world would seem
Faint as a widow mourning with soft eyes
And falling into a dream.*

*Up the long hill I see the snow plough leave
Furrows of brown;
Dim is the day and beautiful: I grieve
To see the sun go down.*

*But there are suns a many for mine eyes
Day after day:
Delightful in grave greenery they rise,
Red oranges in May.*

FITZROY RIVER

© Keith Leithbridge

Oh when I die, don't bury me,
Just spread my ashes by a boab tree,
Then tell those ringers on the black-soil plains
That the Fitzroy River ran through my veins.

Well I was born in a far off land
Where the fields are green and the mountains grand,
But now I roam on the black-soil plains
And the Fitzroy River runs through my veins.
My skin was white as the driven snow
But I changed complexion many years ago,
From the dusty winds and the summer rains,
While the Fitzroy River runs through my veins.

The season's over and the cattle gone,
The cheques are wasted so the men move on,
The camps are empty but the dream remains,
And the Fitzroy River runs through my veins.
I've got no woman and I've got no son,
No home to turn to when the work is done,
So I'll keep on singing those bush refrains
While the Fitzroy River runs through my veins.

And when I die, don't bury me,
Just spread my ashes by a boab tree,
Then tell those ringers on the black-soil plains
That the Fitzroy River ran through my veins.

Some call me crazy, but I don't care,
I'm more contented than a millionaire
So I thank the Lord if I've got no brains,
And the Fitzroy River runs through my veins.
I eat my damper and I drink my tea,
With zebra finches for company.
Nobody loses and nobody gains,
And the Fitzroy River runs through my veins.

The nights are lonely but I'm here to stay,
No bars to hold me, no bills to pay,
No woman scolds me, no boss complains,
And the Fitzroy River runs through my veins.
And when I die, don't bury me,
Just spread my ashes by a boab tree,
Then tell those ringers on the black-soil plains
That the Fitzroy River ran through my veins.

Armada. February 11, 2013

Seeing The Light

© Doc Bland 2018

The poet looked around and felt so glad to have survived
the journey to the Afterlife and, now that he'd arrived,
he felt that he should ask if there's a poets' meeting place.
An angel laughed: "You poets rarely reach a state of grace.
Most poets do not get this far – they all commit the crime
of underestimating the importance of good rhyme.
In recent times, they haven't even learned the metre trick.
That's something guaranteed to get on old St Peter's wick.

"St Peter in his lifetime was a competition judge
and, as you can imagine, from the rules he will not budge.
So what you need to do now, if you want to make the grade,
is write a great bush poem so our worst fears are allayed.
But I should caution you about a standard we have here:
As well as metre and good rhyme, it must be very clear
the language invokes piety and leaves us in no doubt
the writer has a pure soul and a heart that is devout."

The angel handed him a quill he took from his own wing,
a golden pot of ink and parchment made of hell-cat skin.
The poet sat and contemplated, time seemed to stand still.
He hoped the words would form themselves and flow into the quill.
"Oh, can I find it in me to write lines that are so pure
I won't be kicked outside again to knock on Heaven's door?"
The poet's mind was scrambled - what to write to pass this test?
He thought about the bush poets whom he'd considered best.

"Is Paterson's ghost here right now, did Lawson pass the gates?
Did Oglivie write poems that St Peter really hates?
Does CJ Dennis have the knack, could Murray point the way?
Did any of them write a poem the saints would feel okay?
Is there a model I could use, masters to emulate?
Should I reflect on olden times or be more up-to-date?"
Perhaps an ode to tv shows, or politics, or sports?
I wish they had a manual or such to guide my thoughts."

What could he write about here that had not been done before?
Soon scrunched up bits of parchment built up on the marble floor.
Bereft of poignant topics from his old life back on Earth,
He tried to focus on the things that angels felt of worth.
He could not write of seraphs, and clouds were not his style,
so letting go a mournful sigh, he sat still for a while.
He looked around for inspiration – then, he saw The Light!
He wrote a poem two words long: it simply read, 'Quite bright!'



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MILTON SHOW SOCIETY BUSH POETRY

8am Bush Poets Breakfast with Walk Ups With A Difference

Prizes 1st \$100 2nd \$60 3rd \$40

Entrants may recite or sing unaccompanied (no music)

Open Performance Competition to start at 11am
at the Milton Show Sat 2nd March 2019

Open Comp carries a total of \$1500 Prize Money
1st \$600 2nd \$350 3rd \$250
plus 3 Highly Commended prizes of \$100 each

Maximum of 15 Performers accepted on First In First Served Basis
Entries postmarked no later than 8th February 2019

Entry Fee \$15

Entries to Potery Coordinator, John Davis
37 George Avenue
Kings Point NSW 2539

Poems can be Serious or Light-Hearted, and Classical, Contemporary or Original
Complimentary Tea and Coffee will be available from the venue.
Download Entry Form from ABPA Website at www.abpa.org.au or
www.showdayonline.com and follow the prompts.
or Contact John Davis at above address or call 02 44552013
or email jda76436@bigpond.net.au



Oracles of the Bush 2019

The 23rd Oracles of the Bush will come alive in Tenterfield from the 5th to 7th April, 2019. Purposely timed to be held when Tenterfield is ablaze with glorious autumn colours you are invited to join like minded Aussies for this boutique bush poetry event.

The program is packed with intimate breakfasts, lunches and open air venues where you can mingle with the professional poets and fellow patrons. Marco Gliori will lead the team of performers this year. You are guaranteed of a wonderful weekend of entertainment as Marco is joined by Neil McArthur, Mel Hall and Susie Carcary and the cheeky balladeer Errol Gray. This year the theme of Oracles is 'Aussie Mates' and this talented line up of performers are renowned for their Aussie mate ship and humour which will set the tone of the weekend. Over the 4 days they will perform individually at various venues and come together on Saturday night to present the major concert.

Oracles of the Bush also provides a platform for budding writers and performers to participate in the Looming Legends Poetry competitions. The competitions are open to adults and juniors and prizes for 2019 exceed \$3000 plus trophies. Details of the competition are available on our web site: www.oraclesofthebush.com

Our poets and balladeer will be performing in clubs, art galleries, museums, national parks and parklands, country sheds, caravan parks and the historic railway station. There is also a unique Twilight Race Meeting on Friday night to kick start the weekend. You are invited to frock up for an evening of fun and laughter. Have a little flutter, cheer on the jockeys and be part of the fashions of the field.

Ticketing and program information is available on our website and our face book page. For general enquiries email: oraclesofthebush@gmail.com or phone 0484 904 553. Pre-purchased tickets are essential for all catered events.

We look forward to welcoming you to Tenterfield in April!



Tenterfield Oracles of the Bush

Bush Poetry Festival

5th to 7th April, 2019

Featuring

**Marco Gliori, Neil McArthur, Mel Hall,
Susie Carcary & Errol Gray**



Written and Performance Poetry Competitions
www.oraclesofthebush.com

Regular Monthly Events

NSW

Illawarra Breakfast Poets meet every Wednesday at 7am at Marco Polo facility at Woonona. Ample parking, everyone welcome.

"Laggan Bush Poets." 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 Bush Poetry Group meets fortnightly 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month at 1pm in the Pioneer Room, Senior Citizens centre south end of Gunster St, Port Macquarie. Contact Bill Yates 6583 3360, Barbara 6584 0208 or Bessie 6583 5255.

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.

Wombat Bush Poets meet at 1.30 pm at the Young Hotel for poetry, music and open mic. Last Sunday of even months except December. Contact Ted Webber 0459 707 728

QUEENSLAND

North Pine Bush Poets Group meet at the rear of Couatts Cottage, Old Petrie Town, Dayboro Road Kurwongbah, on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of every month from nine a.m. to twelve noon. Contact the President Ian on 0427212461 or the Secretary Mal on 0417765226.

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 Jayson (07) 41550778 Edna 0428 574 651 or Sandy (07) 41514631.

Beaudesert Bush Bards meet on the **Second** 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.

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

Shorncliff "Poets of the Park" meet at St Margaret's Church Hall in Sandgate, beside the primary. every 3rd Tuesday from 5-45 pm cocontact 042 15 14 555

Townsville Bush Poetry Mates Inc meet every first Tuesday of the month at Aitkenvale Library Meeting Room at 7:00pm. 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

Logan Performance Bush Poets - meet 2nd Sunday of every month, 9 to 11 am at the Beenleigh Historical Village, 205 Mains Road Beenleigh. All Welcome. Breakfast available Ring Gerry 0499942922.

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, crn 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