

ABPA



Australian Bush Poets Association
Volume 26 No. 2 April/May 2020

Lest We Forget



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 @ Cafe on Queen, 15 Queen St. In the studio by the Balgalal Creek. 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 Old School House at Christ Church, 39 Rutledge St, Queanbeyan. Enter via Church Lane. 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.

Kuripia 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) 4155 1007 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" "Poets of the Park" meet at St Margaret's Church Hall in Sandgate, beside the primary. every 3rd Tuesday from 5-45 pm contact 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 11am 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

Perth 1st Friday monthly 7-9.30pm The Auditorium, 26 Plantation Drive, Bentley Park. Contact Rodger 0419 666 168 or Sue 0418 941 016

Albany 4th Tuesday monthly. Contact Peter 08 9844 6606

Bunbury 1st Monday even months 7pm. Rose Hotel. Contact Alan 0400 249 243 or Ian 0408 212 636

Geraldton 2nd Tuesday monthly. Beliar Caravan Park. Contact Roger 0427 625 181

Kalgoorlie 1st Wednesday monthly. Kalgoorlie Country Club. Contact Paul Browning 0416 171 809

Next Magazine Deadline is May 27th

ABPA Committee Members 2020

Executive:

President	– Tim Sheed	president@abpa.org.au
Vice-President	– Ray Essery	essery56m@bigpond.com
Secretary	– Meg Gordon	meggordon4@bigpond.com
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Tom McLveen		thepoetofoz@gmail.com

Non Committee Positions

Webmaster	Gregory North	web@abpa.org.au
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Facebook Editor	Jan Lewis	janlewis1@hotmail.com

ABPA Magazine Advertising Rates

ABN 17 145 367 949 ARBN: 104 032 126

Black and White Ads

Full page \$95
Half Page \$55
Quarter Page or less \$35

Full Colour Ads (Space limited)

Full Page \$240
Half Page \$140
Quarter Page not available

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, Word or PDF Format to editor@abpa.org.au

All payments to be made within 14 days to

The Treasurer - Christine Middleton

P.O. Box 357 Portarlington
Victoria 3223

treasurer@abpa.org.au

or via Direct Debit to ABPA Account

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BSB: 633000

Account: 154842108

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

Editorial



Send Submissions to editor@abpa.org.au

Well, what can I say? We are sailing through uncharted waters at present and have never experienced what is going on in this world during our life times.

Most performers are loosing shows day by day and those who rely on Bush Poetry for a living are suffering like the rest of Australia's workforce.

All I can say is keep your chins up (I've grown two extra ones) and keep writing, keep recording our journey through life in this country. Keep entering Written Competitions and support our craft and those Organisers still running Competitions where ever we can.

My hope is that, as Australians of all ages, we come out of this with a newfound respect for who we are, what we have, what we have been taking for granted and our respect for each other, our land and our planet.

Stay safe everyone and don't forget to ring your friends in the Bush Poetry circle and check in on one another.

Neil McArthur

For Magazine Submissions can you all please note.

Articles, Poems, Stories, etc. need to be submitted in either Word (.doc or .docx) format or PDF (.pdf) format. Old Publisher files and .odt and .windat files can not be used due to being outdated.

For Photos, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE send Pics that are of a high quality and most importantly IN FOCUS! A lot of readers tell me 'That photo was a bit blurry!'. But when receiving one photo from an event which has not been captured well, it does not matter what programs, filters etc. you put it through, it cannot miraculously be put in focus.

I appreciate all efforts of those members submitting to the magazine, so they are just a couple of important hints to help me publish your articles and poems with the respect that they deserve.

President's Report

Hello to you all.

We have a very positive start to the poetry year with a strong and cohesive committee consisting of the following office bearers:

Ray Essery, Vice President.

Meg Gordon, Secretary.

Christine Middleton, Treasurer.

Tom McIlveen and Manfred Vijars, Committee.

The following State Representatives are also full Committee Members:

Bill Kearns (NSW)

Irene Connor (WA)

Peter Frazer (QLD)

Jan Lewis (VIC)

The Treasurer has undertaken a major follow up of previous members and so far 67 have renewed their memberships, which is very heartening. We will be making annual follow up of members policy as clearly many people are keen to be members but need reminding.

A meeting of the Committee was held on the 25th of March to discuss our role in directly organizing competitions. It was decided that the Bush Poetry Competition that we run in conjunction with the Tamworth Country Music Festival will continue. Discussions as to the form that may take were that walkup style competitions and more workshops be held to give as many beginners as possible a chance to showcase themselves and learn through workshop participation.

As a result of an approach by Rotary Club of Orange preliminary discussions have been held with the organizing committee of The Banjo Paterson Australian Poetry Festival in Orange.

This is where Banjo Paterson was born and he is recognized as Australia's most famous and admired bush poet. Banjo Paterson's *Waltzing Matilda* is known worldwide. Many Australians can recite a string of his poems and his work has been converted to song and theatre.

Orange is keen to work with us to organize a major competition in 2021 and we are discussing having the ABPA National Poetry Championships there in conjunction with their festival.

The ABPA Committee believe this is a good fit because The Banjo Paterson Australian Poetry Festival is specifically a "Bush Poetry" Festival.

This festival was the 2019 winner of the Heritage and Culture Category of the New South Wales Tidy Towns Award for towns over twenty thousand people. Orange is a very attractive town with ample tourist attractions and accommodation options.

There is a very strong focus in the festival on participation by children and teenagers and this is core ABPA business in securing a healthy future for bush poetry in Australia.

The Banjo Paterson Australian Poetry Festival provides something for all age groups and the program includes bush poetry, poets breakfasts, school performances, professional entertainers, Banjo Paterson dinner and markets.

Their festival in 2021 is to be held between the 13th and 21st of February so put it in your diary and watch this magazine for updates throughout the year.

The ABPA Committee are excited with this new development.

I wish you all well through these difficult and trying times.

Tim Sheed, President



Hello Neil,

Is it possible to put a small call-out somewhere for a "Bruce Campbell" in the next magazine, if there is room? Bruce Campbell paid his subs in 2018 but received no magazines or badge for the following year because, apparently, there was no address or telephone number supplied. He must have just come through as a payment on the bank with no follow up with membership form or other details. I would like to chase him up and amend the records.

Cheers
ABPA Treasurer

Letters To The Editor

Dear Sir,

I would like to say a big thank-you to Janine Keating who set out to keep the Blackened Billy Verse Competition alive and succeeded magnificently this year. The event has moved from Tamworth to Orange and linked with the Banjo Paterson Australian Poetry Festival. The Award Ceremony was held at the elegant landmark of Duntry League Guest House, a very swish change of venue for our fine old Blackened Billy.

From 1991, when Bob Miller won with the rousing poem "The Aussie" to this year with Catherine Lee winning with her beautiful verse "The Wanderers". the Blackened Billy Verse Competition has been an incentive for people to raise the standard of bush poetry to the height of excellence we see today.

Without the efforts of Janine, we would not have had a Blackened Billy this year. For the people who decided to give it a miss, I am sorry, but that wasn't acceptable. I love positive people, people who get things done against all odds. And that is Janine.

I know Janine will be ready and raring to go again next year, but I would like to ask members of APBA to give her a hand. She really needs to get a team of enthusiastic helpers who can help her do all the organising from start to end. Janine lives in Queensland and Orange is a long way away, so members from the southern areas of NSW might like to think of offering assistance, and perhaps include the Banjo Paterson Australia Poetry Festival as a festival to enjoy and maybe participate in.

Tamworth Poetry Reading Group started the Blackened Billy and the Golden Damper but we are all too old to function as a group anymore, so we are delighted that Janine has shown the enthusiasm to keep the Billy going. We hope there is equal enthusiasm to also keep the Damper going as well. Both competitions have contributed a lot to Bush Poetry all over Australia. We hope there are members who are willing to pick up the batons and keep them going.

A very big thank you to Janine and her helpers.

Jan Morris
Life Member of ABPA

Thanks Jan, yes it is great to see such a prestigious Competition carried on. Lord knows we cannot afford to lose any more Competitions, let alone Poetry Groups around the country.

It is great to see one of our Members taking up the baton and putting so much time and effort into keeping it alive and thriving at Orange.

Congratulations, Janine and crew and we hope your efforts reap big rewards in the future.

Cheers
Neil

Hi Neil

Very disappointed to read that the members competition has been discontinued. I enjoyed the challenge of the given topic and opened the latest issue of the magazine looking eagerly for the next topic.

I sent an entry to the first competition then I read the winning entry (about the Holden car) and thought "I can never write anything that good so what's the use" but then I decided, nothing ventured, nothing gained so I did go on sending entries.

Maybe other members are more 'well off' than me, but I found the \$100 a good incentive.

Like you I find the lack of interest hard to understand.

Regards
Maureen Stahl

Thanks Maureen, yes it was disappointing, despite the entries we did manage to get being of a very high quality in general. I don't know what people are wanting from the Association in regards to trying to get people involved in opportunities, and yes, \$100 was not to be sneezed at. That is over two years Membership! But alas, the interest was not there. I certainly hope the interest in Bush Poetry generally is a lot more enthusiastic. Thanks for your own submissions and don't be disillusioned by others disinterest and keep on writing and submitting.

Cheers
Neil

The Stockman's Loss

© Catherine Lee, 2019

Winner Serious - King Of The Ranges 2020

The wind was attacking the branches of formerly flowering trees
that lined the distorted back fences, fragmented and brought to their knees.
Charred leaves rose and whirled in the dust storm, bleak sorrow and ruin now loomed,
and the curlews commenced with their crying
to warn in a way mystifying
of future destruction and chaos – a portent of everything doomed.

Akubra in shreds on his forehead, a sweat-ridden shirt round his neck,
the stockman attempted to whistle to keep his emotions in check,
consumed the remains of his damper, drank weak billy tea as he cried
to witness complete devastation
produced by intense conflagration
consuming the work of a lifetime—despairing at stock that had died.

"No more, please, no more!" Had God heard him? He howled at oblivious night.
"Have pity!" he roared to the distance, and cursed the malevolent blight.
His fingers caressing a trigger, but loath to abandon his dreams,
he sat all alone and surrounded
by carnage and wreckage unbounded,
reflecting upon the grim prospect, whilst plagued by those spine-chilling screams.

But hope did not come in the dawning, nor yet with the afternoon sun,
which burned with a merciless fury that no-one could try to outrun;
and into a smoke-clouded sunset, outlining the smouldering land,
heat bled with unending oppression
to add to his helpless depression;
intense, uncontrollable torment - no sign of respite near at hand.

He scanned the remains of his homestead and mourned the inferno's cruel trick,
the wasted results of his labour wrought hard with his shovel and pick.
He'd fought but now knew he was beaten, and lifting blank, desolate eyes
conceded defeat - first suppliant,
then suddenly, wildly defiant
began to sing out in his anger, Matilda, aloud to the skies.

Way out in the darkening bushland, the shortest of silences fell
as briefly some startled wild creatures paid heed to the depth of his hell.
His voice became stronger with passion, till finally hopelessness passed.
As curlews resumed their commotion,
with anguish as vast as the ocean
he fell to the ground spent and shattered - lay tragically breathing his last.

But still during dusk in the springtime, when copious flowering trees
are vibrant and verdant in moonlight, their blooms tossed about in the breeze,
renewal has come to the landscape and seasons have balanced the pain,
they say he is witnessed sojourning,
to celebrate lushness returning—
the stockman rides onto his station, applauding the coming of rain.



I was requested to write a poem for inclusion in the book, "Centenary of ANZAC" compiled by local Narrabri man and Vietnam Vet, Richard Barry. It details stories of soldiers from the North West of NSW and is beautifully presented. For his work with Vietnam Veterans and for his compilations of wartime literature Richard was awarded an OAM in this year's honours.

ABPA Member, Max Pringle also wrote a contribution to the book.

Yours in poetry Jacqui

The Winds of War

© Jacqui Warnock Narrabri 2019

Across the surging ocean wide, the winds of war did blow,
started by the guns that fired in far off Sarajevo.
Not winds to sail the ships or turn the windmills making power,
no breezy winds to scatter fluffy clouds at evening's hour,
nor bringing rain inducing clouds to quench the parched north-west,
but winds with dark foreboding change to herald world unrest.

The First World War for four long years in Europe soon would rage.
So many names of casualties would fill up History's page.
The black soil plains of Wee Waa and the verdant Bingara runs
gave up their greatest treasure in the husbands and the sons,
who marched away to destiny with duty on their mind –
Australia's contribution, those who went, those left behind.

From every home with picture of the King and Empire great,
from properties and townships, they would test the hands of fate.
Those men and women, fathers, sons, the parting lover's tears,
the desperate years to follow filled with mortal dread and fears,
With high hopes of adventure though, they'd left their homes and farms
and sailed for foreign shores to leave a homeland's empty arms.

A century has passed to numb the pain of loss that came,
We search the war memorials to find our soldier's name,
with knowledge that each life extinguished in that brutal war
had left bereft their loved ones here, who had but to endure
the loss of future, friends and love no Generals ever planned,
while generations later can but try to understand.

Yet still today, around the world, the winds of war will blow
and from our land the young and strong still heed that call to go.



2020 Banjo Paterson Australian Poetry Festival.

The Banjo Paterson Australian Poetry Festival has been held in Orange since the celebration of Banjo's 150th birthday in 2014. Organized by the Rotary Club of Orange and Orange360 the Festival has gradually grown and this year has been the best yet. The inclusion of the Blackened Billy, and other events, has been a winner and congratulations to Janine Keating for organizing these extra events.

The Festival was a continual food and poetry fest with breakfasts, brunches, lunches, BBQ's, afternoon teas, dinners and food and wine markets. There were plenty of opportunities for poetry with walk up's, poet's breakfasts, a full day of open mic and entertainment at the Yeoval Banjo Paterson-more than a poet museum, workshops, competitions with marvelous prizes or to just sit back and enjoy the skills of the featured poets.

This year's feature poets were Carol Heuchan and Gregory North. Carol keeping busy at feature events and Greg spent time at local schools sharing his love of entertaining and poetry skills. Great to see the end results when the kids performed at poets breakfasts each morning. Junior poetry is alive and well in Orange.

On Saturday 49 entrants, from primary school to open, competed for \$2850 of prize money and trophy's over a full day of competition. The open original poetry comp winner was Andrew Pulsford with "He Goes Missing". 2nd place went to Pa Kettle with "The Swing" and 3rd to Caroline Tuohey with "Whiskers and the Pinnacle Guinea Pig Races".

Thanks must go to the strong Queensland contingent who made the long trip and are helping to spread the word about this great festival. Orange is a beautiful city with a variety of accommodation, large retail sector and great restaurants and wineries. The festival is held around the date of Banjo Paterson's birthday on 17th February each so put it your diary for next year.

Jim Lamb

I've just returned from ten days at the Banjo Paterson Festival in Orange. How wonderful to recite poetry on the very spot where he spent his childhood years - looking at the same hills, the feeling of his closeness permeating the atmosphere. I also had the opportunity to catch up with poetry friends I hadn't seen for years.

Len Banks, the organiser, was wonderful and was MC for many of the functions, even giving us his original, super poems. The last day of the festival was certainly

a full one for me - starting with 'Poetry on the Pavers' beside the park, where Rotary put on the brekky. Then it was over to the Ex Servicemen's Club for a full day of judging,

heaps of great primary school children and right on through to the open competition. Greg North and I did a poem each then I dashed off to perform at Molong for 'A night on the Village Green', a wonderful venue where wining and dining (thanks to local) wineries, was superb. The the band was fabulous and there was even a dance floor much enjoyed by everyone.

I drove that night about an hour back to Orange to pack and be ready for one more gig before wending the weary way home, smiling at recalling the time celebrating the legend,

A. B. 'Banjo' Paterson.

I must tell you of one of those present. Les Smith came for several days, performed at the walk-ups - perfectly - and competed unassisted in the competition. His recitation at the breakfast on the Sunday, of the Spider from the Gwydir was brilliant. Oh, and did I mention that he turned one hundred and three last October?!

Cheers

Carol Heuchan



OUR FABULOUS FIREYS

© Kathy Edwards 23/12/19

When devastating fires take hold across our land
volunteers come out in force to lend a helping hand.
Emergency Services personnel are a unique type of breed
and always there to help us whenever there's a need.

What would we do without them? they're a blessing in disguise
where would we be without them? those heroic gals and guys.
Many of them know it's true that their own homes could be lost
yet they come to help their neighbours no matter what the cost.

Properties are threatened, and when all is done and said
they come to put those fires out on homesteads shacks and shed.
They are selfless and courageous, take their lives into their hands
called on at a moment's notice to protect houses stock and lands.

We see it on the telly and we hear it on the news
a wall of fire is approaching our fire fighting crews.
They are tired and exhausted from battling fires day and night
and with burning embers flying, is there no end in sight?

Then an aircraft drops retardant to help them battle through
they have all had expert training and know exactly what to do.
They battle all these fires and fight for all they're worth
but the flames are so ferocious, it's like a hell on earth.

They evacuate the residents make sure no-one's in harm's way
and then they're told the tragic news two mates have passed away.
Still they focus on these rescues when they feel that they could choke
and it's hard to see two feet in front with so much ash and smoke.

They won't give up, they don't know how, they're never ones to quit
and how heartbreaking hearing some fires were deliberately lit.
We see a traumatised koala with her joey on her back
fleeing from her burning home now battered, bleak and black.

Then a firey gives her water to cool her mouth so parched and dry
her instinct says he'll help her, there's no need to question why.
To call our fire fighters heroes is not just fantasy nor fable
It's true blue Aussie mateship supporting others when they're able.

Putting others' lives before their own, they do without a doubt
they are strong, courageous heroes, ones we could not live without.
We love our fire fighters, they keep our homes and family safe
Please God watch over and protect them they are the bravest of the brave.

From every grateful Aussie, although we have never met
we want to say we thank you, - we are forever in your debt.



*Our grandson Cody is stationed at Parramatta
with the NSW Fire and Rescue. I wrote the
poem with him in mind. The photo is Cody,
myself and husband John Edwards.*



Good Morning,

I have just been speaking with Mayor Gavin Baskett re events in Winton. The Winton Shire Council held an emergency meeting yesterday and with as much advice as possible made the difficult decision that all festivals and gatherings of people in Winton etc would be cancelled until 28th August 2020. The visitor attractions such as Waltzing Matilda Centre, Age of Dinosaurs will remain open and visitor experience managed. Hence the getting together for the 2020 Outback Writers Festival has been cancelled.

Here is how you can help:

Submit a short story to our Short Story Competition - see outbackwritersfestival.com.au **SHORT STORY COMP STILL GOING AHEAD**

Purchase a copy of any or all of the volumes 1-4 of the short stories already published - visit boolarongpress.com.au or outbackbooks.info All Royalties and profits from these sales goes to our club. Or send \$30 direct to Jeff Close, President, OWF, PO Box 116, Winton 4735 and I will post one out. Just tell me address and the year book you would like. You can direct credit as per the Membership Form and just email me.

Renew your membership - form available www.abpa.org.au. You can add a book purchase to the bottom of the form. **YOU CAN DIRECT DEPOSIT AND THEN EMAIL ME THE FORM** if that suits you

Plan to participate in the 2021 Outback Writers Festival 22,23 and 24th June 2021.

Winton (as well as other remote communities) is now going into 9 years of "trying times" after drought, floods and now the virus..

Thanks for your support as always.
Jeff Close
President 20 March 2020

2020 Oracles of the Bush – CANCELLED!

Over the last 9 months our committee has worked tirelessly in the lead up to Oracles of the Bush, 2020 and this is the hardest decision we have ever made.

After taking into consideration all information and advice around mass gatherings from the Australian Government and consultation with local authorities we fully appreciate the serious situation created by COVID-19. Our committee has a duty of care to protect the health and safety of our community and our customers. Consequently the 24th Oracles of the Bush is now cancelled. All ticket holders will be fully refunded and we are currently going through the logistics of refunds. Please be patient. If you have not heard from us by mid-April please contact us at oraclesofthebush@gmail.com

2021 will be 25 years since the first Oracles of the Bush event. Now we will combine 2020 with 2021 making the next Oracles event bigger and better than ever. The dates for 2021 are 25th to 28th March. Put them in your calendar.

Every member of our committee is genuinely sad to make this decision and we thank each and every sponsor, partner and patron for their support and we invite you to join us celebrate in 2021.

After the harsh effects our community has endured by way of drought and fire organisers were very excited to see Oracles 2020 experiencing the strongest bookings for a number of years. The event was set to provide much needed support to our struggling economy. Then along come some little germ!!

Keep checking our face book page for further updates re: written poetry competition, art competition, refunds etc.

Please share this post to help us notify everyone of the cancellation.

Thank you!

Here is a message from Noel and Ann Stallard.

Dear Verse for Vinnies Patrons,

This is to inform you that our April Verse for Vinnies Concert is cancelled due to the corona virus.

We will have to wait and see developments in the following months as to whether or not other concerts can proceed.

We hope you keep safe and well in this current medical crisis.

Heaps of love,

Noel & Ann

Unfortunately the 2020 Gulgong Henry Lawson Literary Awards have been cancelled due to consideration of inadvertent transmission of the Covid-19. Returns will be undertaken as soon as practicable.

I checked with Allan and he said that that includes the written competition.

Featured Poet - Jan Facey

Bundaberg Poets' Society

Originally from England, I had most of my education at Grammar school in London. On leaving I achieved several Oxford University GCE subjects, including English Literature and English Language. Following this, I worked for the Education Department for 5 years as a Local Government Officer.

My husband suggested we move to Australia and in 1969 we emigrated to Sydney. We then moved to the Gold Coast in 1971 and in only a few years, became naturalized Australians. I was always interested in learning and took many TAFE courses in a variety of subjects but my main interest was with creative writing. This continued with me attending many workshops and seminars at the Somerset College Celebration of Literature which is held for a week or so every year on the Gold Coast.

We then moved to near Bundaberg in 2001. I have had many hobbies and love travel, but I became involved with poetry in 2003, winning a novice award with my first competition in Bundaberg. The Bundaberg Poets' Society have been an enormous help to me. Because of my English city roots, I was so surprised that I won so many bush-poetry awards - including being Queensland Champion in 2009 and Australian Bush Poetry Performance Female Champion in 2010.

I've performed at many, many places including the Brisbane EKKA (Qld), the World Theatre in Charters Towers, the Tamworth Country Music Festival (NSW), and the Snowy River Festival (Victoria). Besides this, I've judged written and performance poetry and written and self-published five books – namely "Australian Feelings", "On the Lighter Side", "Let's Get Serious", "City to Bush" and "Playing with Verse", as well as having poetry in other anthologies. My next book is in the making.

In the last few years, I've addressed students at primary and high schools, and TAFE, as well as being on the local community radio and ABC radio with some recitals.

Now in my mid-seventies, I still live a busy life, somehow fitting in lots of travel - and poetry when I can! Diagnosed with cancer in 2016 but doing well and intending to live a long life, I want to pass on the skills I've learnt over the years, so now enjoy providing workshops and seminars on both written and performance poetry - and look forward to seeing you all again soon.



Read one of Jan's poems on the following page.

I wrote this poem many years ago but feel it's still relevant today. If you have lost everything, whether it's from a fire, flood, cyclone or anything else beyond your control, it IS a devastating situation. However, please look forward and hang on to the thought of being thankful that we are still alive and that we have those precious memories to keep in our minds.

The Cost of a Cyclone

© Jan Facey

The sky was blue and seas were calm.
I didn't think we'd come to harm
but through the night strong winds increased
and trees shared moans with those deceased –
good men who trod these shores before
and knew that danger lay in store.

I gathered up some food and light
and found some shelter for the night.
With children huddled by my chest
I disregarded all the rest –
our furniture and all we own –
possessions left! My mobile phone

Was close in case we needed help.
A dog then gave a startled yelp
as boughs of trees crashed through our roof.
The cyclone came with savage proof!
We cringed as metal flew above
and tightly clung to those we love.

Then winds became a thund'rous roar
and rattling came from ev'ry door.
We felt the whole place shift and shake.
Our house was just about to break
when all turned calm. We had survived!
The cyclone's eye had now arrived.

We waited for the wind to change
direction – feeling very strange.
An eerie stillness filled the air –
except for wails of deep despair
from neighbours who had lost their home –
and left their precious dog to roam.

Soon rumbling noises came once more.
We wondered what could be in store
as winds again began to howl
and creeping water, black and foul,
swept round our feet with swirling mud.
The ceiling fell – a crashing thud!

The rain, a horizontal force
was grey and dark. We saw a horse
fly past our door with startled ease.
We prayed above and begged, "God, please
now save us from this awful blast!"
This stinging deluge couldn't last.

But rain and strong winds still ensued
and flooded roads were then pursued
by rubbish, logs and sharp debris.
It wasn't finished yet, you see.
Electric lights had all gone out
and then we heard a lively shout.

"Do you need help in there?", he cried.
We grabbed his outstretched hand and sighed
then scrambled over bricks and steel
not noticing a bleeding heel,
a forehead cut and broken arm.
We were alive, so no real harm.

Our house was just a shattered mess.
We found a chair ... some toys ... one dress.
The rest was gone! We looked in shock
when seeing houses on our block
now flattened matchsticks, smeared with blood –
results of that horrendous flood.

Then tears welled up. I felt bereft
for not one photograph was left.
We missed the sentimental things –
the loving gifts, the precious rings –
those pieces of our lives now lost
to memory, that was the cost.



Great Aussie Reads

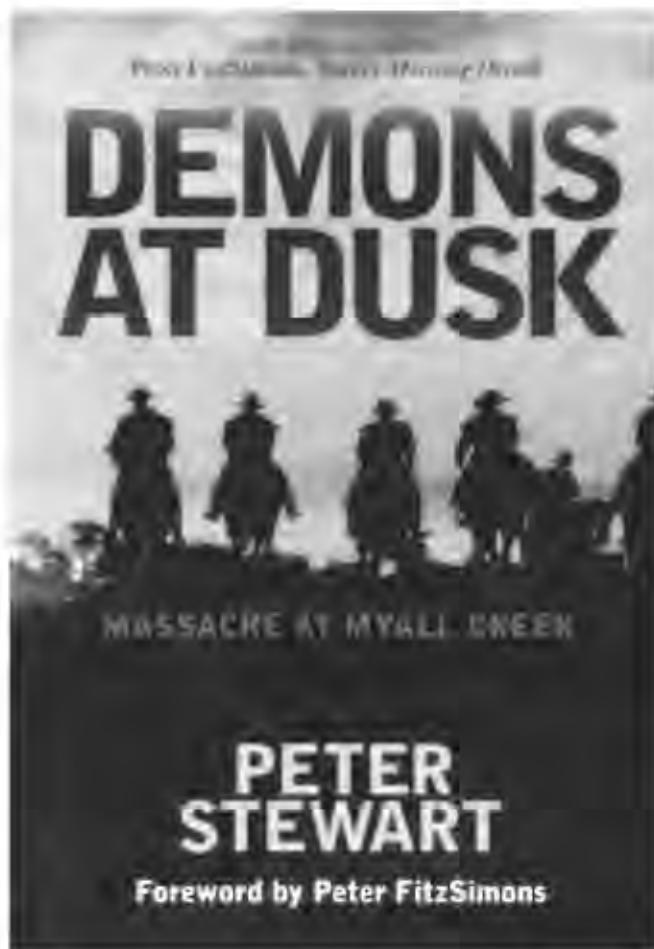
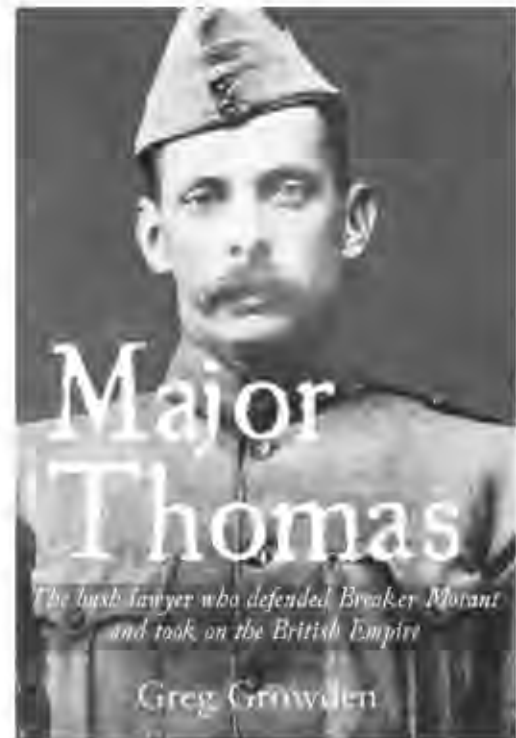


With Jack Drake

Bush Poetry aficionados are all familiar with the story of Breaker Morant- the flawed hero who died before a firing squad in the last stages of the Boer War. Morant and his mate Peter Handcock died at the hands of the British Army. Their co-accused, George Witton's, death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, but there was a fourth victim whose tale is told in *Major Thomas, the Bush Lawyer who Defended Breaker Morant and took on the British Empire* by Greg Growden (Affirm Press, 2019).

James Francis Thomas was a country solicitor from the northern NSW town of Tenterfield. Prior to the South African conflict, he had a thriving legal practice, owned and edited the Tenterfield Star newspaper, and was a leading citizen of the town who raised two regiments for service against the Boers. Pushed into providing what the British Army hoped would be an ineffectual defence for the Breaker and his co-accused, Thomas rose to the occasion. He came very close to upsetting General Kitchener's intention to set up scapegoats to cover his own war crimes. It was a forlorn hope for a simple country lawyer to take on the might of the military, and it broke James Thomas. After the war, he returned to Tenterfield becoming an eccentric misfit.

Greg Growden has made a great job of telling Thomas's story and *Major Thomas* is very well worth reading.



One of the most shameful episodes in Australia's history occurred on the evening of Sunday June 10th, 1838 when a gang of assigned convicts and ticket-of-leave men led by a squatter, slaughtered 28 men, women and children of the Weraerai people, at Myall Creek Station in the New England country west of Inverell.

There are quite a number of historical works dealing with the massacre but *Demons at Dusk* by Peter Stewart (Temple House, 2007) tells the story from a novelist's point of view.

Stewart's true historic characters leap off the page as the frontier days of the "land takers" are brought vividly to life.

What makes this book special, is that it is 100% historically accurate. The villains, victims and by-players are all represented by their real identities. This allows readers to experience history without having to wade through dry academic tomes.

With a foreword by Peter Fitzsimmons who read it in one sitting and claimed it as a work "every Australian should read", Peter Stewart's *Demons at Dusk* is a must for fans of our history.

It also serves to blast the myth of "peaceful settlement" that Australians have been fed by a long lasting conspiracy of government and tame historians until fairly recently. There can never be healing until the truth is out there and *Demons at Dusk* is a powerful advocate for just that.

Our Poetry Kids

with Brenda Joy

The Mansion that Time Forgot

by Grace Longhi

Ipswich Poetry Feast
Broderick Family Award
Equal First Prize ages 11-13 years

As the ink spread across the paper,
she stood once, a grand old tower,
first among all, with the corridors of power.
A dangerous spark flew and in time,
she crumbled,
consumed in flames, burnt
and down she tumbled.

Beauty was seen among
everyone who passed,
But now, in the pageant, her place is last.
Once, she was cared for, nourished and loved
but today, like a crippled hand, she is gloved.

Kings and queens once sat in her arms!
Gardens, music and dancing – oh what charms!
A smile and a song to all passing by,
now derelict, it seems all a terrible lie.

Oh why or why did she have to suffer?
Now the streets grow meaner and tougher.
I dream of the day she will be rebuilt
and last long,
Like glorious days past she will stand
tall and strong!

In the world, she was once
the most majestic spot.

But now, she is the mansion that time forgot.

Poem © 2018, Grace Longhi (at age 11)



**Grace
Longhi**

of Cairns
Queensland

"Hi! My name is Grace Longhi. I am 12 years old and in Year 6 at Holy Cross School, Trinity Park. Some of my hobbies include netball, baking and playing with friends. I have two dogs of very different sizes. I have a loving mum and dad and a 10 year old brother. I love to read true stories (that are interesting or surprising) and stories that are very imaginative. Some of my favourite reads are 'The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar' and 'Six More' by Roald Dahl, 'The Dirt Diary' by Anna Staniszewski, 'Moonlight Dreamer's' by Siobhan Curham and the 'Dragonkeeper' series by Carole Wilkinson.

"I got my inspiration for my poem 'The Mansion that Time Forgot' from a topic given to me and I thought of a small castle slowly crumbling away in an urban city, with people walking past each day. I enjoyed writing my poem very much and getting lots of helpful feedback from my teacher and peers."

Another winning poem in the Ipswich Poetry Feast 2018, from a talented pupil of the Holy Cross School Cairns.



All awarded poems from the Ipswich Poetry Feast have been pre-published on the festival's website – www.ipswichpoetryfeast.com.au

BOYUP BROOK COUNTRY MUSIC AND BUSH POETRY FESTIVAL 2020

This year's festival was one of the best. Headline musicians Adam Harvey, Graeme Connors and Amber Lawrence were well received as was story teller extraordinaire

JOE LYNCH with his wonderful Irish accent.

Four days of poetry started at the Tennis Club where club members put on a great breakfast and the crowd was entertained by various poets. Walk ups were encouraged and new poets had the opportunity to present their poems. Joe Lynch was introduced to Boyup Brook and he gave us a taste of what was to come over the next few days.

The rest of the day was devoted to workshops on writing and performing and the participants were encouraged to expand their minds and let imagination run wild before coming back to the topic. The writing purists would not like to hear that Joe encouraged writers to know the rules of rhyme and metre but it doesn't matter to occasionally break them, particularly for performance poetry.

Harvey Dickson's Country Music Centre (which leaves everyone spellbound with its unique decorations) was the scene for more music and poetry on Friday morning. Irish Joe took the audience on a tour of his very imaginative mind with tales as only an Irishman can.



Joe Lynch at Harvey Dicksons

Friday afternoon, in very hot conditions, the audience at the Tourist Centre Park in the middle of town were given another two hours of poetry with a great lineup of WA Bush Poet members.

At the Bowling Club on Saturday morning patrons were treated to two hours of very entertaining stories. This

with our famous brawl winner, year, the competition was by Joe Lynch and much hilarity State Champion, Roger Crack-

second place a tie between The Ute and Truck Muster parade on an old WWII jeep.



Joe and Ricky Lynch with Rob Gunn and driver in the street parade



Stinger Nettleton

Music Park on the banks of the Blackwood River. The music went on through the evening and only those who needed to be up early for the Poets Breakfast on Sunday morning reluctantly left before stumps.

The Music Park setting amongst the trees by the river in the early morning provides a wonderful atmosphere for Bush Poetry. The crowd had the opportunity to hear (via the excellent sound equipment) the poetry from all

corners of the park so no one had to be exposed to the sun when it gained intensity later in the morning.

In summing up the event, Boyup Brook has a great following in the music and poetry world and we are confident that Australia wide it is one of the best festivals to put on everyone's travelling itinerary.



POETS BRAWL Winner Roger Cracknell



New Poet Robyn Gibbs



Ray Jackson at the Bowling Club

event included the Poet's Brawl and Peg Vickers from Albany, absent this fierce. 20 great lines were provided resulted from the contributions. WA nell was the eventual winner with Bill Gordon and Greg Joass.

followed and poets were seen in the There were markets stall and street midday and then the music started in a magnificent bush setting at the



Christine Boulton at Abel Park



JOE LYNCH at the MUSIC PARK

MILTON SHOW 2020 POETRY EVENT

Saturday seventh of March 2020 saw a very successful performance poetry event at the Milton show and a total of 44 people took the stage and entertained the audience reciting a poem. The event had three separate competitions commencing at eight o'clock with a poets breakfast with walk up performances which attracted 14 contestants. The competition carried prize money to third place and the successful contestants were 1st Bob "Pa" Kettle 2nd Craig Green 3rd Andrew Pulsford.

The Ruth Davis Memorial Junior Poetry Speaking Competition commenced at 9:30 AM and attracted 15 junior contestants who, with out exception, performed brilliantly and were very entertaining. This competition carried prize money to third place and ribbons and mugs to sixth place and every child that went onto the stage and performed a poem received a book prize. The top six performers were

1st Jake Shea 2nd Aya Magnussen 3rd Lucas McDonald 4th Xavier Brooks 5th Willie Gray 6th Max Chard . The Open Poetry Speaking Competition had competitors from as far away as Queens land, Victoria, central New South Wales, South Coast and a good line-up of local people. The performances were of the highest standard and ranged from poems by Australia's iconic poets, modern contemporary poets and a good number of original works composed and performed by the poets themselves.

This competition commenced at 11 AM and finished at 1 PM and carried prize money plus ribbons and mugs to sixth place. The top six places were 1st Ken Potter 2nd Allan Stone 3rd Andrew Pulsford 4th Bob "Pa" Kettle 5th David Stanley 6th Jim Lamb.

A big thank you to the very capable people who assisted running this very successful event, with out their able help it just could not have happened. To the judges, Chris Woodland, Lurline Gainsford, Phillipa Holenkamp and Daniel Costello. Well done.

To Peter "Smokey" Dawson Thanks for the music ,Ken Tough who came all the way from Pretty Beach just to help out and Jonathon Travers who very ably ran and MC'd The junior event and finally the sponsors---Kenedy & Cook, Juggernaut Advisory, Milton Theatre, Ray White , Southern Man, Southern Bricks & Pavers, LJHooker, Ulladulla Lotteries & Souvenirs, OPSM, Beachside Pharmacy, Capital Chemist and RM Williams Publishing supplied the book prizes for the Juniors.



open comp performers Back Row l/r Ken Potter, Allan Stone, Andrew Pulsford, Bob 'Pa' Kettle, David Stanley, Jim Lamb – Front Row l/r Mark Thompson, Daniel Costello, Ralph Scrivens, Bill Childs, David Melville, Jonathon Travers, John Peel, Craige Green, Don Gray (John Davis MC)



Ziggy Gray, Lucas McDonald, William Gray, Jennifer Stein, Xavier Brooks, Charlie Sharrock, Arrabella Brooks, Mya Magnusson, Elana Rawson, Louis Reid, Jake Shea, Lucy Wells Max Chard, Mathew Reid, Jemina Chard



Poettes in the Pink Show

On Wednesday 22nd January 2020 the "Poettes" hosted their first fundraiser for the McGrath Foundation under the guidance of Marion Fitzgerald and Jacqui Warnock, and supported by a talented group of lady performers and writers who were in Tamworth for the Country Music Festival. No subject was off limits as the Poettes shared private stories of struggle and triumph, hilarious incidences of the female species, and a few "spots of education" as well.

Marion Fitzgerald kicked the show off with a tribute to Kym Eitel, who had lost her battle with breast cancer six years ago. Maggi Swain-Daley and Susan Ashton followed with humour and song respectively and Jacqui Warnock entertained and enticed the audience to buy raffle tickets in the enormous hamper-basket full of poetry product and female favourite things, including Kym Eitel's book, "For the Love of Horses", which Kym's family donated especially for the fundraiser. In addition, long-time supporter of the Poettes, Margaret Finucane, made a beautifully presented boiled fruit cake for the raffle.

Carolyn Maxfield gave a moving performance with beautifully written poems from her own experiences, whilst Rhonda Tallnash captivated the audience with her award winning poetry and humour. It was a delight to have Lynn Finedon continuing her involvement in the Poettes, as she has done for many, many years, and a more recent Poette, Marion Dreyer, wrapped up the show with another tribute to Kym Eitel, reciting the hilarious poem "Jelly Melons".

Net funds raised on the day from the show and raffle amounted to \$252, and with a further \$500 donated by Trisha Anderson from previous Poette shows, the total amount contributed to the McGrath Foundation was \$752. Thank you to all the ladies who freely gave their time and talent for this important fundraiser, and to all the supporters on



Poettes
L-R Marion Dreyer, Lynn Finedon, Maggi Swain-Daley, Marion Fitzgerald, Susan Ashton, Carolyn Maxfield, Jacqui Warnock. (Rhonda Tallnash missing from photograph)



BCMM

Fred Kock performing for the first time at 95 years. (photo by L. McCrimmon)

Poets Breakfast at BCMM.

Fires and heat may have shrunk the crowd but those able to attend had a great time at the 2020 Bungendore Country Music Muster. Campers started arriving on Monday the 27th of February for the five days of poet's breakfasts, busking and walk-ups preceding a great weekend of entertainment on the Greg Gordon Stage MC'd by Gary Fogarty.

This year we started out with only five poets but built to ten by Thursday and Friday. It's always pleasing to see first timers have a go but this year produced something special when 95 years old Fred Koch fronted the mic and recited for the very first time. He backed up again the next day and got a standing ovation for his efforts. We have seen and heard of older poets going around but Fred surely has to be the oldest novice. Fred was a building contractor and traveled around Australia in 1949. He said some of the roads were little more than two-wheel tracks through the Mitchell Grass and they put their vehicle on the old Ghan when it was powered by steam.

It had been a hot week but some relief arrived on Sunday with a welcome drop in temperature. The local RFS usually man the gate but were busy attending nearby fires so it was very pleasing to see volunteers and campers step up to help out. All volunteers did a great job in keeping the festival going and I can vouch for a lovely breakfast and meals each day.

The day and night walk-up session were well supported and the people's choice award, and inaugural Max Love trophy, went to Kerry Shaw. Next year we'll have to do something about a poetry award or trophy.

The Stan Coster Memorial Bush Ballard Awards were held on the Saturday night and results can be found on the BCMM Facebook page.

A big thanks to all poets who keep turning up, a diverse bunch and always entertaining. Keep this Festival in mind, straight after Tamworth, for 2021.

Jim Lamb.

I write by way of a plea for support.

There is a Govt. School west of Parkes in NSW about which I have written the attached - 'A Beating Heart'. Additional to the poem there is a lot of information on [www if you google 'Trundle Central School'](http://www.trundlecentral.nsw.edu.au).

The Principal, John Southon, is doing an extraordinary job. I have had email and phone communications with him when researching my narrative. The guy is like a breath of fresh air. His effort, his attitude, his dedication. Unreal.

The problem is he needs help. Generally it is up to him and his staff to sort that out but there are occasions when outsiders can contribute in a small way. If ABPA could publish my poem in your magazine it would be a big lift for the total school.

I am a member of ABPA and I am sure that the work would meet the guidelines you have for any poem.

Please believe me when I say this school is deserving of every consideration.

Many thanks,

Ross Rolley

A Beating Heart

A Poem by Ross Rolley.

Feb. 8th, 2020.a

For those who know broad-acre farms, the vista is not new:
the rolling plains of golden grains extend beyond eye-view.
The flood-lit 'headers' work all night to reap a valued crop
and store the spoils, safe in the bin, before the rain can drop.

The rural towns marked on the maps all boast a beating heart:
neglected long, that pulse will fade, best friends will drift apart.
This is decreed by people's faith, the daily toil and grind
of those who give their best and more, while craving peace of mind.

Extended drought will test men's will – that match is so unjust,
when burning sun can bake the ground and turn the soil to dust.
The country towns that face this threat are scattered far and wide:
they need support to make it through and out the wetter side.

The Aussie farmers know, so well, the cost of weather change,
from years of drought to roaring floods cascading down the range.
The absence of all water can destroy all self-respect,
can shatter dreams and paint their lives in tones of self-neglect.

The worst can be expected when good people have no goal,
as rules that serve survival need directions from a soul.
That conscious, warm, defining state pervades their private space:
a focal point - the local school - helps calm that tortured face,

There is a place, out Dubbo way, where crises are endured,
where Trundle School supplies the light, to show the way's assured.
The teachers gleaned, from student's tales, just how their people seek
to have a bath and don clean clothes – if only once a week.

The building of a laundry in the school ablutions block
set up a common meeting ground where locals choose to flock.
They do their chores and meet with those who share that stubborn streak,
to tame the drought, then take a swim in every swollen creek.

This arid, hot and savage land will never show remorse
for all the grief and damage caused by nature's brutal force.
Her victims learned of rich rewards for those who fought and won,
and are prepared to sweat and bleed beneath the scorching sun.

Trundle School supplies the light.

Poet's Note.

My memories are nostalgic, when I think back on school:

the teacher's voice, a lawyer cane, a vain attempt to rule;

the cracked, old, concrete cricket pitch, the smack of bat on ball,

the children's chatter in their class, the echoes down the hall.

Trundle Central School, in the central west region of New South Wales, has had to sell most of its sheep but Principal, John Southon, said they were not focusing on the negative impacts of the drought. "What we are doing very well is that we are remaining positive; we're not letting this drought pull us down," Mr Southon said. "We have kids who are working very long hours after school, they're feeding sheep, and they're taking on the pressures of their parents.

"We've socialised our country kids to be tough... they say 'there are kids worse off than us' but I don't believe that anymore. These kids are seeing death, dust storms... I want the kids to see Trundle Central School as an oasis in their life."

School Principal – Mr. John Southon. 'not letting this drought pull us down'.

The rolling plains of golden grains extend beyond eye-view.

When burning sun can bake the ground and turn the soil to dust.

The absence of all water can destroy all self-respect.

There is a place out Dubbo way where crises are endured.

J.F. Archibald

by Anthont Hammill

The importance of J.F. Archibald (1856-1919) in the founding of a national literature cannot be underestimated, and I like to call him The Father of Australian Literature. Born John Feltham Archibald in Geelong West, Victoria, as a Francophile he later changed his name to Jules Francois Archibald. Early in life he developed a passion for all aspects of publishing. Unable to break into the industry initially, he worked in various jobs including mining, and in places like the Palmer goldfield in North Queensland he grew to understand the character of the rugged bush battler and frontier life.

'Archie' as he came to be known, first broke into journalism at the Evening News in Sydney. In partnership with a senior journalist at the paper, John Haynes, they launched The Bulletin, a weekly paper, on the streets of Sydney on 31 January 1880, and the first edition of 3000 copies was a sellout; the second sold 4000. Archibald was not the only determining force behind the development of Bulletin policy, and others of critical influence were Henry Traill, William McLeod and James Edmond, and A.G. Stephens became the Literary editor of the famous Red Page. The Bulletin was a newspaper of the people and a uniting force; it had mass appeal, invited controversy and pulled no punches. Its themes were pro-Australia, pro-federation, republican, anti-British, pro-unions, protectionist, and, regrettably, White Australia (its masthead read 'Australia for the White Man'). It attacked politicians, capital punishment, the law's abuses, poverty, hypocrisy, and false Christians, and satirised and lampooned them through the pens of notable cartoonists like Phil May, Livingstone Hopkins ('Hop'), George Lambert and Norman Lindsay.

Archibald and Stephens invited contributors to write columns and paid them for their efforts. It was said that The Bulletin was a newspaper written by its readers. They endlessly encouraged writers of talent and gave a start to bush balladists like Paterson and Ogilvie, to many other poets such as Dorothea Mackellar and Mary Gilmore, to short story writers like Henry Lawson, Louis Becke and Steele Rudd, and to novelists like Miles Franklin and Joseph Furphy, and published many titles under their own imprint. It was inclusive, and treated bush and city people equally. It became known as the 'Bushman's Bible'. Its rise was meteoric and left dull, conventional newspapers in its wake. The Bulletin was flayed by conservatives as heretical and disloyal. The Times commented that it had educated bush Australia up to federation, and was the most important, and most dangerous influence on the bushman. 'Bully Day' in Kalgoorlie was commonly observed as a day off rather than Sunday. Bulletin contributors formed their own club in Sydney and often gathered at the Bulletin building at 214 George St.

Archibald as editor-in-chief kept a watchful eye on everything published, and described himself as a 'soler and heeler of paragraphs', and circulation hit 80 000 around the time Australia's population reached one million. The Bulletin was Archibald's life to the exclusion of all else. His marriage failed, and hypochondria and depression became his lot. In 1902 he handed over the editorship to Edmond and in 1906 was committed to Callan Park Asylum and discharged in 1910. He then lived the life of a leading citizen. In 1914 he sold his interest in The Bulletin, and died in 1919 leaving an estate of 90 000 pounds. He bequeathed to Sydney the Archibald Fountain in Hyde Park and to Australia the Archibald Prize for portraiture. Australia owes Archibald an enormous debt for the promotion and development of our national culture. The Bulletin closed in 2008.



Archibald with Henry Lawson

WHAT DO THEY GET OUT OF IT?

© Maureen Stahl

Today I read that someone had stuck needles in some fruit;
a senseless act but one that was not hard to execute.
What was the motivation for this stupid thing to do
and did the perpetrators stop to really think it through?

Didn't they comprehend the dreadful damage they would cause?
A needle could soon penetrate a hungry eater's jaws;
a swallowed needle surely would inflict horrific pain,
and from this vile and stupid act what did they hope to gain?

And did they think about the wastage they would bring about?
That batch of fruit would be recalled and then would be thrown out.
And did they spare a thought for the poor growers' toil and sweat;
these workers laboured long and hard for income they would get

I heard that someone vandalised the town's new sporting ground;
did 'wheelies' on the oval and went speeding round and round.
They made the ground unplayable then started on the shed;
they broke the windows, scrawled graffiti on the walls then fled.

What was their motivation to do damage and deface?
Was there a thought for those who worked so hard to get this place?
Who'd run so many cake stalls, endless raffles, choc'late drives,
to build this great facility to brighten people's lives.

Now they must organise another fund raising campaign
to make it usable. Meanwhile, what did the vandals gain?
What did they get out of it? Just a momentary buzz!
A burst of excitement! Is that what vandalising does?

What would the early settlers think if they came back today
and saw the wastage and destruction being wrought this way?
These folk who with determination battled floods and drought,
fought bushfires, suffered insect plagues and loneliness no doubt.

And what about the ones who fought and died to save our land?
I think they'd find this vandalism hard to understand.
They went off into battle, volunteers so young and brave;
this wanton damage now must see each turning in his grave.

I'm sure if they came back today they all would want to know
where's our ideals of 'Aussie mateship' that and 'a fair go'?

True Blue

By Hugh Allan

Well the heatwave that's been was like nothing we've seen,
bringing bushfires incredibly bad.
So much wildlife succumbed that the nation was numbed,
and the homes people lost left us sad.

Then the rain when it came—and it's always the same—
inundated the country so fast;
but the bonus has been all the gardens so green
and the dams that are filling at last.

With the bushfires controlled by the 'furies' so bold,
their relief was a pleasure to see;
and the help from abroad, while so great, we deplored
that they lost a few men, as did we.

But the drought is still there and the bush-folk must bear
any pain that may still lie ahead.
They've a long way to go and they all fairly know
that the future might not see them fed.

Yet we hope and we pray for a far better day
for the farmers who have no more stock,
and the crops that they've lost at incredible cost
caused emotions they just couldn't block.

Now the musical nights with their lasers and lights
brought in money beyond all belief;
entertainment was great as they played until late
for a nation in need of relief.

There were fund-raising games played by famous sports names,
for those folk on the point of despair;
and attended by crowds with their heads in the clouds
as they cheered for the players out there.

And the animal care that has helped to repair
many injured—with many more maimed—
using funds that came in they had many a win,
and their efforts were highly acclaimed.

So in bushfire and drought and in flood there's no doubt
that the Aussies will always come through;
and we'll stand side by side as we rise like the tide
with a spirit that's tough and true blue!

Results of the inaugural King of the Ranges Written Bush Poetry Competition 2020.

We had a great roll-up at the Bush Poets' Breakfast and walk-up where the results were announced, the Outback Heritage Trophy had Catherine Lee's name put on it. Several of the entrants did their poems and I read the winning Humorous and the winning Serious (and Overall Champion) poem.

There were over sixty entries and some great poems that just missed out due to technical errors or lacking perhaps a bit of 'wow' factor.. Thanks to all who gave it a go.

King of the Ranges at Murrurundi on the Upper Hunter, was again a fantastic event - three action packed days of true Aussie Horsemanship for the Challenge itself and lots of other attractions from whip cracking to dog high jumping to heavy horse events to wild goat races for the (brave) kids!

Don't miss it next year.

Carol Heuchan

BUSH POETRY COMES TO TASSIE

Gary Fogarty, Keith Lethbridge and Jack Drake went down to Tasmania to do a gig at Dodges Ferry near Hobart in February, 2020. It seems Tassie has not been exposed to Australian Bush Poetry as much as the mainland.

The organiser Cheryl Holmes, did a marvellous job and most of the people who attended were exposed to Bush Poetry for the first time. Cheryl was the person who started the Broome Poets Breakfast in Western Australia that has become an iconic event running continuously for over 20 years.

Keith "Cobber" Lethbridge, Gary and Jack worked their butts off to put on a show and the people who attended got a great sample of the art. The message they all got from the audience was that they had no idea that this kind of comedy in verse existed and they would be there if any events were planned in the future.

The Dodges Ferry event was a brave attempt to bring bush poetry to a new audience. "Cobber", Gary and Jack all left with the impression a positive start had been made and Bush Poetry has a future in the Apple Isle.

Photo....Poets' Transport Tasmania Style



G'day fellow performer,

As performers, it seems most of us have had our livelihoods cancelled due to Corona virus. I was sent the following link by a local group in the Blue Mountains with this introduction:

The Australian Music Industry Network (AMIN) and the Australian Festival Association have joined with industry partners to tally the impact of these impacts on Australians. If you have been impacted please click the link below so that they can measure the impact and advocate for support.

'I lost my gig' and numerous organisations are working hard to find ways to support people and businesses who have been affected. Please share this with anyone that you think might be impacted at this trying time.

Greg North

Zillah Williams

BOOK LAUNCH—a happy occasion

The launch of my book *The Bush Balladeer and other poems* took place at the Murrumbateman Country Inn in NSW on Sunday evening 23rd February 2020. The Murrumbateman Country Inn is a half-hour drive from Canberra and is the venue for the monthly meetings of the Murrumbateman Acoustic Music Club (MAMC) held on the last Sunday of the month.

The emphasis at the MAMC is, of course, on music—country songs and bush ballads with guitars, mouth organs, ukuleles and sometimes even a harp. But I had heard that it was okay to recite poetry there and so, full of trepidation, I got a lift with a friend, Graham, and turned up one evening prepared to face the music, so to speak. One of the things that made me nervous was that I expected that performers had to get up on stage—and I needed a 'walker' because of a mobility problem. How would I do it? I also thought that the performers would all be professionals and here was I, a complete amateur, facing an audience for the first time. But when I got there, I found that there were no stairs to negotiate—there was just a microphone set up at one end of the room. It helped, too, that Graham recognised Wal Brewer, the organiser, who greeted us at the door—it turned out they were old golf mates. I felt at home straight away and have been going there for almost four years.

There are usually about thirty-five people in the audience who, over a meal or coffee, are entertained with a mix of original songs and poems, as well as covers of well-remembered bush songs and popular songs from the past. Everyone is welcome to walk up and have a go, professional or not.

I can't remember what the poems were that I presented that first night, but I do remember the encouraging response of the audience. That encouragement has continued through the months, and the suggestion was made that I should put out a book of the poems I had written. So, through the editing and artistic skills of my two daughters, this finally happened in February this year.

As readers of this magazine will know, the definition of Bush Poetry given on the website of the Australian Bush Poets' Association is "metred and rhymed poetry about Australia, Australians and/or the Australian way of life." Most of the poems in the book fit the Bush Poetry category with at least two of them, *Bush Nurses of Australia* and *The Ballad of May Weir* having been set to music and recorded by bush balladeer Martin Bowland.

I get inspiration for a poem in various ways. Often it's a phrase I hear like "Keep it up, mate, keep it up"—the haunting response of the blind man in the poem *The Nursing Home* and "Thank you, Darlin'" which was what a busker said, without missing a beat, when I dropped a coin into his guitar case—resulting in the poem *The Busker*.

Sometimes it's inspiring acts of heroism or courage as in *The Stinson and Toc H*. Sometimes it's the sense of needing to tell a story such as in *Vortex* (about the 2003 fires in Canberra) or *Policeman of the Snowy* about Big Bev Wales from Yass. Sometimes it's thoughts about a place, such as in *Coleambally Dreaming* or *Minnamurra* or just the sound of a word like "ukulele"—the poem *Ukulele Lady*.

The book launch was a great success. It was fun! Wal Brewer had even written a song about me for the occasion! I gave a short talk and read out one of my favourite poems, *On Alison Bridge*, inspired by the ending of the Queensland drought in 2016—rather appropriate today with the arrival of good rainfall across the country at the moment.

Thank you, Wal and Kay Brewer and all those who support the Murrumbateman Acoustic Music Club for the opportunity given to me to present my bush poems. For those interested, *The Bush Balladeer* is available from Amazon and from bookstores.



Zillah Williams
March 3, 2020

Zillah signing a book for Kay Brewer

Treacle

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We was sittin' round the campfire
Drinkin' mugs of tea—
Old Bill who never said much
The jilleroo and me.

Bill and me were old mates,
But the jilleroo was new;
The boss had given her a job
To see what she could do.

She'd come up from the city
About a week before;
Although she hadn't learned to ride
She seemed to know the score.

I'd ate damper spread with treacle
And was feelin' quite replete,
Warm and gettin' sleepy
And studyin' my feet.

Then Bill he reached for his guitar
But the girl said "Please don't start.
Don't sing any bush songs—
A country singer broke my heart.

I'd hear him every Monday
In a country music show,
Mostly singing love songs
On my dad's old radio.

Well that put quite a damper—
If you'll excuse the pun
On further conversation;
It seemed to spoil our fun.

Bill kicked a log onto the fire
It shot out sparks and smoke;
I said he never talked much,
But he cleared his throat and spoke.

"This man, he up and left you?
It must've hurt to see him go."
She looked at Bill in some surprise—
"Oh, I never met him, no.

I sent a letter to him once
But being very shy
I didn't sign my name,
and so Of course got no reply."

Bill said, "I sang on air some time ago
In the country music game;
I always kept one letter
From the fan who left no name."

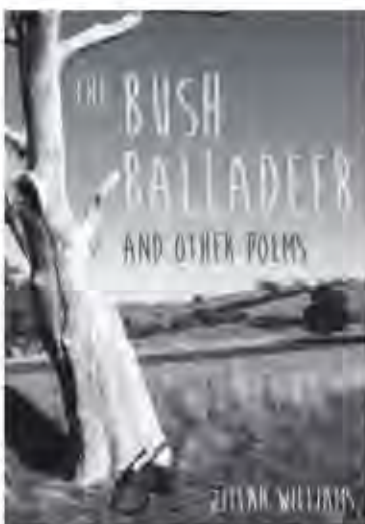
Well, I knew that Bill could sing a bit
And play his old guitar,
But he never told me he had been
A country music star!

Then he took out from his pocket
A well-thumbed envelope;
"Did you send this to me," he asked,
And in his voice—was hope.

The girl got up and took a look
"Yes", she said, "that's mine."
Her eyes got large with wonder—
"You kept it all this time?"

Well, after that they talked non-stop
For half the flamin' night;
He sang her all his love songs
Until the sky got light.

And I lay there and listened,
Still feelin' quite replete,
And heard him sing his love songs
While studyin' my feet.



The Bush Balladeer and other poems

by *Zillah Williams*

A collection of 52 original poems about life in Australia.
Some serious, some funny, all entertaining.

Buy online at Amazon or via your local bookshop.

For more info: zillahwilliams@gmail.com



.....and there amongst the mayhem, stood a figure, formed from failure.

Come follow me, we'll find the light, for my name is Australia.....

*Neil McArthur
(from Destiny's Road)*