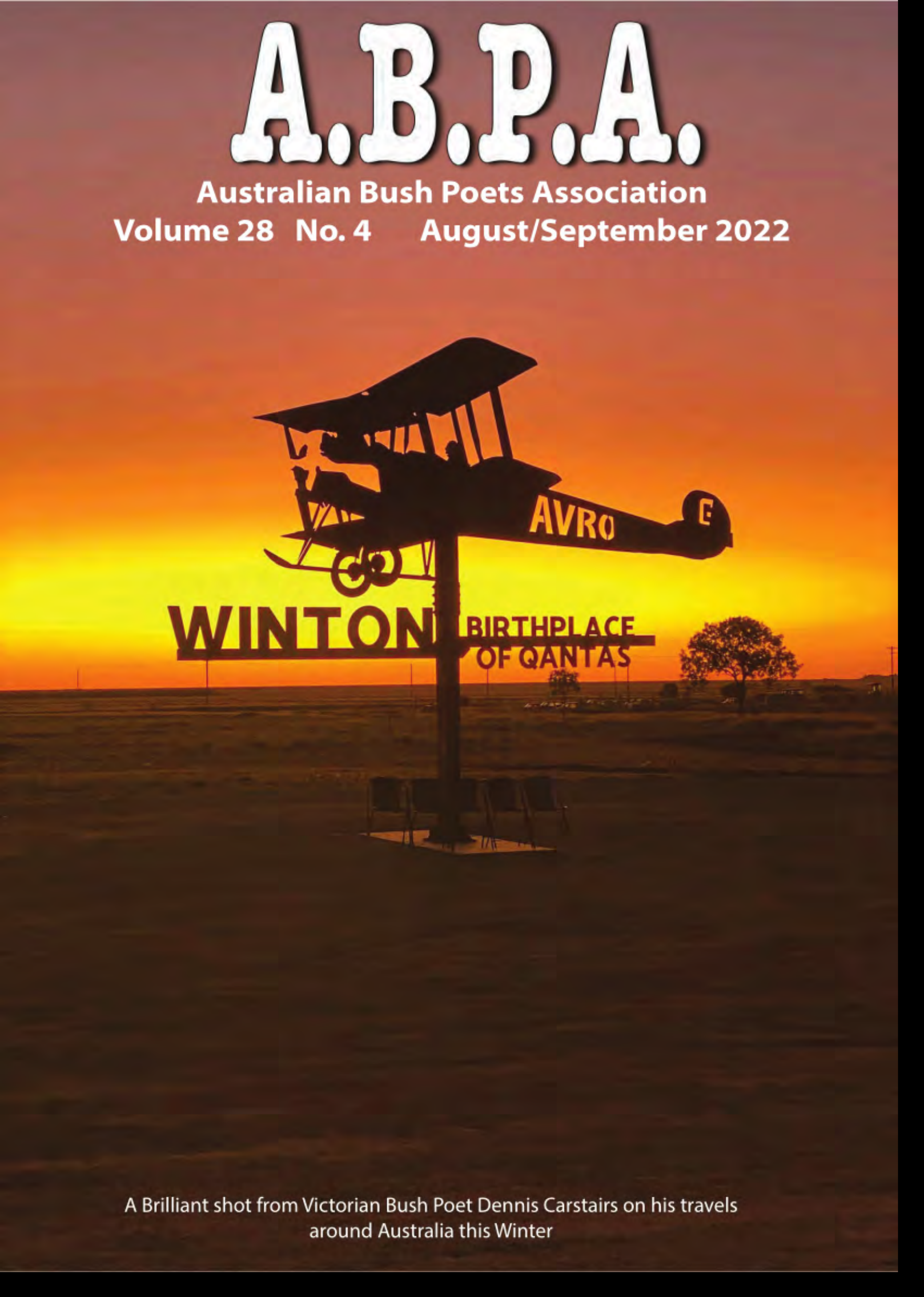
# A.B.P.A.

Australian Bush Poets Association
Volume 28 No. 4 August/September 2022




A Brilliant shot from Victorian Bush Poet Dennis Carstairs on his travels around Australia this Winter

All Welcome For A Fun Weekend

Trophies & Medals

Worthwhile Cash Prizes

Logan Performance Poets

Present

# The Queensland Bush Poetry Championship in Beenleigh

on the 9th, 10th, 11th September

City of Logan

**JUDGES**

**Gregory North**
**Graeme Johnson**
**Sandra Harle**

Information and entry forms see events on ABPA website or Ring
Gerry: 0499942922

**9th Beenleigh Historical Village-6pm sausage-sizzle 7.30 show with Greg North**
**10th Competition -Pheonix Ensemble Theatre- 9-4pm Beenleigh Show**
**11th Wind-Down -Beenleigh Historical Village -Fun day**

**Thanks go to Melissa McMahon M.P. Linus Power M.P. The Hon Cameron Dick M.P. Bert Van Manen M.P. Beenleigh Bendigo Bank. Australian Bush Poets Assoc. Members and Friends of Logan Performance Bush Poets.**

Hi All, and welcome to the second half of 2022. Last Issue I printed a Letter To The Editor from Member Gary Fogarty which caused a lot of debate, but only a couple of responses.

As Editor, it is up to me to stay neutral on these topics, suffice to say, that I am concerned for the future of the ABPA as I am receiving very little to publish. I appreciate those who have taken time to submit their material to me for publication and I am sure the Members appreciate it as well. A special thanks to those who rally to keep alive the memories of Poets past, as with John Best. Noel Stellard and Mick Martin supplied wonderful poems in honour of John.

But, other than that, as a 'Poetry' Association', I received three ( yes - 3) poems in the last two months for publication. Luckily I had a couple of Poets who earlier sent some additional poems so I have a little backlog for future Editions. But not one award winning poem from our many, many Competitions. I am not sure if all our Members who write have suddenly stopped, decided not to share their words with others, or are purely in it to win Competitions, but sadly there we have it.

I will continue to publish the relevant articles I am sent, and will suffer the embarrassment of having to fill a page with one of my own poems or an old Paterson poem, or such, to try to balance content, but I simply now leave it up to the Members. What direction are you hoping to see our Association move forward in? Or has the Printed Media run it's course in our 'Literary' field? As much as some make harsh judgements on our Performing Poets, at least we are out there sharing our craft with every day Australians, despite the critisism we seem to get from certain Bush Poetry corners.

I would also like to give a shout out to the likes of Greg North, Mal & Susie, Bob Pacey, Errol Gray as well as all the other poets entertaining and taking our craft to the Public via residencies in Caravan Parks over the Winter, And also to all those Performers who entertained at the Outback Masters Golf event again this year. Where and Who you take Bush Poetry to is the true nature of our Storytelling.

# ABPA Committee Members 2022

***Executive:***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| President | – Tim Sheed | president@abpa.org.au |
| Vice-President | – Ray Essery | essery56rm@bigpond.com |
| Secretary | – Meg Gordon | meggordon4@bigpond.com |
| Treasurer | – Christine Middleton | treasurer@abpa.org.au |

***Members on Committee:***

| | |
|---|---|
| Manfred Vijars | manfred@rocketfrog.com.au |
| Tom McILveen | thepoetofoz@gmail.com |
| David Stanley | |

***State Reps***

Peter Frazer (Qld)
Bill Kearns (NSW)
Jan Lewis (Vic)
Irene Conner (WA)

***Non Committee Positions***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Webmaster | Gregory North | web@abpa.org.au |
| Magazine Editor | Neil McArthur | macpoet58@gmail.com |
| Facebook Editor | Jan Lewis | janlewis1@hotmail.com |

## *ABPA Magazine Advertising Rates*

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# Next Magazine Deadline is September 27th 2022

# President's Report

Some time ago the Committee of ABPA voted unanimously to make Ray Essery a life member for his tireless work over many years promoting and performing Australian bush poetry.
Ray has been Vice President and a committee member from the time the Association was formed.
Due to travel commitments by Ray and others I asked Gary Fogarty to make the announcement at a recent festival (see elsewhere in this edition).
Our Webmaster Greg North has been doing very good work on making our website more user friendly, particularly for hand held devices. The register of performing poets available for hire was updated as we found that many of the registered poets were not actually members of ABPA. That has now been rectified.
Plans for the National Bush Poetry Performance Competition are proceeding well and will be taking place at Orange NSW in February 2023 after years of delay (see elsewhere in this edition).
Our organization currently has a membership of approximately 230 and we are hoping to increase this as things slowly return to normal.
The digitization of our past magazines is proceeding slowly due to illness but it is proceeding.

Tim Sheed
President ABPA

## 2023 BANJO PATERSON AUSTRALIAN POETRY FESTIVAL
## 17 to 26 February 2023

The program for the Festival in Orange, NSW, is developing with the highlight being the National Bush Poetry Performance Championships. These will be run by the ABPA and guidelines are available on the ABPA website. Entries will be open as soon as the entry forms have been developed, but plans are for 4 categories (Original Humorous, Original Serious, Modern and Traditional) with a $10 entry fee for each category and prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each category, as well as an overall National Champion.

The National Championships will be held at the Orange Ex Services Club on Thursday and Friday 23 and 24 February 2023.

The Rotary Club of Orange is organising two additional competitions to be held on Saturday 25 February – a Youth poetry performance competition and an open performance competition for those poets who do not enter the National Championships. To avoid confusion, poets cannot enter this open competition if they are in the National Championships.

The Festival begins with a celebration of Banjo's birthday on Friday 17 February 2023 and runs through to Sunday 26 February 2023. There will be about 20 events over that time and at least 7 opportunities for walk-up performances in pubs, wineries and open air at breakfast, lunch and evening events.

Please spread the word to poets, grey nomads, families and friends – entertainment from the best bush poets in Australia is only one reason to come to Orange next February – it is also a lovely place to visit with beautiful scenery, wineries, restaurants, villages and history.

Len Banks
Rotary Club of Orange

***A new-look ABPA website is now live. abpa.org.au***

The main reason for the upgrade was to make it easier to view on phones and tablets. The text is now larger and the hyper-links more visible.
Please check it out on various devices and let the webmaster, Greg North, know of any problems, errors or suggestions via email: web@abpa.org.au. You can drag in the side of your browser to see how it changes with smaller screens too.
It has roughly the same layout as the previous site. However, after discussions, the Forum link is now in the right-hand side-bar and Find a Poet (formerly Register of Modern Bush Poets) is on the top menu bar.

The Multimedia page looks better than the old one with videos embedded. Suggestions for additions would be welcomed.

You may need to perform a forced refresh on your browser to see the new site. On PCs hold down the Crtl key and press the F5 key at the top of your keyboard.

See what you think.
Greg North

# Vale John Best

Thanks to Mick Martin for permission to print

John Best, nick name "Long John"

An extraordinary fellow and real character. He said what he meant and he meant what he said.
He was quick to defend and quick to condemn. He saw things as black and white most of the time.
He was a poet, a raconteur, a Husband, a dad, a mate and a mentor. He loved the stage and he loved the lime light. No one ever called John a shrinking violet!
I knew him many things but the stand out attribute was that he believed in everyone getting their moment in the sun, get out there and have a go, more on that later...
He always joked that he was more than "winter underwear". long Johns

He was born in 1938 in Kent England and only went back once. Too blinky cold he reckoned.
He had two sisters who loved their little brother, they did teach him a few things about irony and humour even in those early years like, chocolate is not always chocolate if it's in a red cardboard box with white lettering on it . laxettes did give him a good run for his money, a tough lesson for a 4 year old who couldn't read but who loved chocolate. Here Johnny, eat up, we are full so they're all yours..
He got his own back on them and tormented both mercilessly, when he got married his ever patient wife Glenny assumed that role. He would wake her up at any time of night to try out a new poem or a joke he might have conjured up. He always thought that was a good test because if Glenny laughed at 3 am it was a ripper result. Glenny has always been a strong supporter and trapsed all over the country in support of John's poetry and stage work.
Having left home at 15 to join the air force John was transferred all around the world, he held that military stance until very recently, he was tall and he stood tall. There wasn't a doorway in the whole barracks that didn't have a dent courtesy of his forehead which might explain a few things now tat we think about. In the air force John learned lots, he learned that drinking spirits made you the funniest bloke in the room.. at least for a while. His actual career in the air force saw him finish as an NCO in charge of ejection seats. He was never going to make it as a pilot, there was never a plane built that would accommodate his considerable height. He reckoned 6 foot thirteen and a half was a stretch and you would see that wry smile looking up through a slightly wonky eye brough. He always a twinkle in his eye.

He asked me to come and visit him in hospital a week ago and he was telling me a bout a bloke we both knew. He said, "mmmm, I took an instant dislike to him, well" he said, "I thought it would save time"

He left the air force and applied for several jobs, he said I had two options in the end, a store manager for KFC and a job in the marketing section of the Fairfax group. "I went for the second option taking the offer The Greater Australian Permanent Building Society. I started on Monday morning, Monday afternoon they collapsed. No more job! "Ah well, money isn't everything! Just as well" he said! He got a Government job at the Weighbridges checking trucks and weighing trucks, he liked that job, it had rules, he liked rules..

He was very, very tall and could not afford a car after the A30 Austin gave up the ghost. It is hard to imagine a less suitable car for a guy like John. They are tiny little things. He bought a miniscule Honda 50 scooter to get to work. He painted the picture; a massive praying mantis perched on a babies toy sized scooter riding flat out with trucks whizzing past him at 100 kph while all he could get out of the scooter was 60, maybe it was the head wind, he laughed at his hair raising exploits and said, it had to be done though mate, I had to feed the family.

He and Glenny did it tough in those early years, John worked 3 jobs and Glenny worked as well. They were saving to get a house and to do te best for the kids. He said "if you don't need a lot to be happy, we should have been bloody ecstatic"

He was called to the boss's office thinking some misdemeanour must have caught up with him and was expecting to be sacked, instead he was informed he would be receiving a gong at the Australia Day Awards for his many years of service. He told his mate that he couldn't give a hoot about that rubbish but was convinced to go and accept it "with your history mate you had better take every accolade they throw your way, it's hard to sack someone with one hand and pin a medal on them with the other" he would have accepted the award with that wry smile as usual.

John was never shy, he was very proud of his work in the Transport Department disability sector. He said "I asked the questions the others weren't game to ask, they thought they were on the way up, I knew I was on the way out"

John was really proud of his girls Sam and Kylie, he often bragged about how they were high achievers and that he taught them most of what they knew, "maybe Glenny helped a bit but it was probably all me, me, me!"

John loved to be on stage, John and Pattie Coutts started the North Pine Bush Poets at the same time as John retired so he slotted straight in. He was a natural! John owned the stage when he was delivering his poetry. He was a prolific writer and loved humour. He would deliver hilarious poems with not a single chuckle or smile. He was a bit of a "Chips Rafferty" John encouraged more poets than anyone I know, he would say that starting late was OK. "Don't worry being a late bloomer as long as you don't miss the flower show"

John travelled far and wide with his poetry. He worked at Winton caravan park which has a different name now, Ruly might know about that I think. He won a trip to Elko Nevada in the USA to represent Australia at the Cowboy Poets muster and they loved him, he paved the way for many more Australian USA visits and many strong friendships were forged.

We started doing some farmer assistance things when the recent droufght was at it's worst. John swore me to secrecy and I guess it's OK now to say that he was the first to approach me with an envelope of cash saying "I know what it's like to do it tough, give this to a farmer who needs it" "oh, one more thing, don't tell anyone I gave it"

It was only last week he told me " I'm on my way out, when I go, don't let em say I was nice"

"Of course not mate, I wouldn't let em say that!"

Wanting to lighten the mood he said "pass that comb will ya mate" I did , he said "see this comb?, my mate gave me this comb, he had it for 22 years, he had been bald for 10 of them, he gave it to me which surprised me, he said "yeah mate, I couldn't part with it" wry smile..

John could make an audience cry, he could make them laugh, he could take them on a journey through the outback swatting imaginary flies and he could do this without them leaving their seats. He mastered the art of the word and encouraged others to do the same.

He had many "Best friends" naturally he would given his name was John Best. He will be missed and never replaced. He was "the best"

# JOHN - LONG JOHN - LONG JOHN BEST

Written for and read at John's Funeral by Noel Stellard OAM May 2022

I don't know of his childhood in England, of his siblings his mum and his dad,
or the days when he courted his Glenny, or those Air Force adventures he had.
There'll be others who know of those details, embellishment 's sure to occur,
though I doubt no one knows the full story, behind John the Best pro-vocateur.

For with words he could grab your attention, what he wrote was the envy of peers,
though renowned is our John for his humour but at times he could move you to tears.
Like his heart wrenching verse about Tasha, family dog upon whom he would dote,
or that cricket we're asked to hold gently, while a lump gathers there in your throat.

Many times I have said to him sagely, "You're too smart with your erudite words,
for that scholarly verse you're expressing, will be lost on us common-folk-nerds.
"But more often than not he succeeded, when his humour and pathos began, t
hen we mortals just listened in envy at rambunctious applause from each fan.

And we North Pine Bush Poets are grateful, that this John was a part of our crews,
He's been President, been on committee, helping folk with our fund-raising dos.
If we needed someone to be funny, he's the go-to-man then for a joke.
He will find the incongruous somewhere and we'ld laugh with this humorous bloke.

Some might say he is handsome, I wouldn't, for a worn, rugged visage he had,
but when six-foot six John was performing, charisma just oozed from this lad.
And he had that rapport with his listeners, with his long gangly form, oh so tall,
and that voice, with its drawl was infectious, and demanded attention from all.

And if ever you've travelled with Johnny, you will know what I'm going to say,
he's hilarious with his descriptions, of what ever might come on the way.
For he has that sharp wit so insightful, the incongruous always he'd find,
but he'd rarely recant a decision, "I'm infallible", he would swear blind.

Twenty eighteen's the year I'll remember, there was Ann, Johnny, Glenny and I,
and the previous night in New Zealand a Kiwi we happened to spy.
Well next day in broad daylight John's driving, shouts aloud "There's a Kiwi, back there!
""Don't be stupid", says Glenny directly, "for the Kiwi's nocturnal and rare."

"Well I tell you, you three doubting drongos, that it was a real Kiwi for sure.
And we're gunna go back and I'll show yah". So a u-turn he did for a tour.
Well it certainly wasn't a Kiwi but our John he would have the last say.
"No! that wasn't the bird that I spotted, for the Kiwi I saw flew away."

John and I had this ongoing contest when we travelled the aim was to see,
which of us that some stranger remembered, who recalled some of our poetry.
Now while several had made our acquaintance, I was forging ahead in the score
But the crème de la crème came in Longreach when we went striding through a pub's door.

Then the barmaid with voice of a banshee, holled out as she stopped pouring beer,
"Oh my God! Oh my God! Mister Stallard! Oh my God! Mister Stallard your here."
John just couldn't believe that in Longreach this bloke Stallard gets greeted as "God".
His response came as, "Bugger, you bastard. You bugger, you bastard, you sod."

If there's one thing I'll say about Johnny, and of this I will say without fail
he's the bloke that I'd want there beside me, whatsoever this life might entail.
He encapsulates friendship and matehip, he's that dinky-die kind of a bloke,
He'll support you in projects that matter and the failures he'll turn into joke.

But I doubt they'll award him a Sainthood, for religion he clearly dispelled,
but it's Glenny whose saithood is certain, for her tolerance and patience excelled.
I believe when a bloke deserves honour, we don't wait for the bugger to die,
but we tell him while he can still hear us, even if there's a tear in the eye.

And this verse he did hear twenty-twenty, so he knew how we valued his life,
his hilarious, quirky charisma, that at times he allowed to run rife.
And although there is much I've omitted, what you've got is enough to tell you,
That this John was a man of distinction, we were privileged and proud that we knew.

# The Yellow Bin Job

© John Best

See some Crims aren't over clever, don't possess a lot of nouse,
So when Jim the Crim from Brunswick, saw on telly that a house,
That had a Yellow Bin outside, indicated no one's home,
He thought, you beaut, fuelled up the ute, and he commenced to roam.

Jim's luck, or lack of it, I s'pose, had led him to our town,
Which had wound up almost gutted, when the embers tumbled down,
So swiftly had the Red Steer run, on its race from hell to us,
That only one street had survived, and the only bloke there, Gus.

For the rest had bailed, who'd blame 'em, most had seen this all before,
But Gus had blown his pension cheque, and had passed out on the floor.
Next door neighbour guessed he'd hopped it, so put Gus's bin outside,
When Gus awoke saw flame and smoke, I'm in Hell, I must a died.

Then he realised his error, as his brain began to clear,
He'd heard about the Yellow Bins and he mused what have we here.
A stranger strolling down the road, like he didn't give a hoot,
Armed with two TVs, a laptop, why this bastard's here to loot.

Though no Angel, Gus had listed, all the low life he had met,
And had figured that a looter was as low as one could get.
No, his town did not deserve this, had more than its share of woe
Shaky Gus the old Roo Shooter, knew this mongrel had to go.

Trembling limbs and emphysema, aren't much help when you take aim,
But young Gus would top the tally, way back in the culling game.
And the top rail and the fence post, steadied, nullified his sway
Gently Gus caressed the trigger, squeezed, the looter went away.

Seems the tip caught fire soon after, how or why nobody cares,
Burnout ute and unknown person, no one knew, not one of theirs.
Two TV's and lonely laptop, welcomed back into the fold,
How they wound up on the front porch, is a tale that won't be told.

Yellow bins are for recycling, who would treat a looter thus?
No, The Tip's the place for rubbish, on that, I agree with Gus.
But he had a sense of humour, and I visualise him still,
Stuck on his Bin a sign that read, Shooters 1 v Looters nil!

# Don't Tell 'em I Was Nice

## *(Long John Best – through another's eyes.)*

© Mick Martin 1-6-2022

My breathing's getting harder and I know my time is near.
Some things a distant memory, but there's some, I see them clear,
like when we left old England, mum and sisters all in tow,
with hopes and dreams a plenty, land of hope we did not know.

I worked and trained and pondered. Would a war take me away?
And if they sent me packing there was little I could say…
Malaysia, hot and sweaty, not a place I'd choose to live,
I thought I'd see a medic, I was leaking like a sieve.

Then home a married soldier, trained in engineering feats.
Ah well, it kept me thinking and it kept me off the streets.
My wife a loyal helper, helped me working, things were tough.
She woulda, shoulda, coulda but she never said, "Enough"!

They say I was a mentor, helped and made some folks feel great,
I doubt it, that was normal in my lofty acting state.
I'd mates like Milton Taylor, countless more, I missed them all.
I wonder, will I see them, when I enter through that wall.

You know I had my favoured, those who made my life complete.
So many, countless hundreds, made my happy heart skip beats.
Two shiela's in the mulga, seems they made it under ground,
And Greg a faithful poet, we would see him northward bound.

My girls, I love you dearly, Sam and Kylie made me proud,
And Glenny, it was you who helped me say things clear and loud.
And if I somehow manage for another go at life,
I think I'd likely copy all the fun and all the strife.

So now it's time to wander, in the cosmos, who knows where?
I'll send a smokie postcard if they let me send one there.
Don't say I was an angel, all things sweet and all things spice,
and never, never, never say that Long John Best was …"nice"

## *Long John Best*

Gregory North, June 2022.

Well, as they say, he's now at rest
and maybe he's an honoured guest,
although some there might feel distressed
and others may not be impressed

but he'd just see it as a quest
to win them over with his zest
or inclinations to molest
(to that much we can all attest!)

In many ways John was the best:
for dry and witty jokes and jest
then making sure you were impressed
and proudly beating on his chest,

for bad-taste gear in which he dressed
containing spuds that could go west,
for showing plights of those repressed
and pointing out just who'd transgressed,

for brutal honesty expressed,
responding to each help request,
for being a complaining pest
and love for dogs he effervesced.

For all these things I loved John Best.

*Two very reflective and insightful Award-Winning Poems.*
*Congratulations*
*Layne and Finn.*

# Our Poetry Kids

## with Brenda Joy

### A QUIET PLACE
**by Layne Warde**

Winner, 2021 Betty Olle Junior Poetry,
Kyabram, Victoria

Out in the bush where the wind blows gently,
out in the bush were the cockys caw reliantly,
there is a place where the dingos play,
A place where the Kangaroos bounce all day,
A quiet place,
A calm place.

If you follow the row of ghostly gums
past the bee hives of three as they hum,
follow the sweet-smelling wattle breeze,
and the bottle brush, alive with bees,
There's a quiet place
A calm place.

Follow the sound of warbling Magpies,
beyond these birds lies a surprise.
A whole dozen of Wallabies,
grazing around as they please,
In a quiet place,
A calm place.

Past the campfire with the billy atop,
past ol' farmer Joe's corn crop,
further along past the sunbathing goannas,
past the emu's who need to learn manners,
There's a quiet place,
A calm place

Past the swagmen as they sleep deeply,
beyond the cliff face that drops off steeply.
Where the bush thickens wildly,
after the night noises settle mildly,
There's a quiet place,
A calm place.

In the quiet place all is calm.
No sound of a tractor at a nearby farm.
No chitter chatter of an emu,
Zeros worries or relief's that make you say 'Phew!'
In a quiet place,
A calm place.

© 2021 Layne Warde (at age 12)

### WISE BEYOND MY YEARS
**by Finn Mulvogue**

Winner, Ipswich District Teacher Librarian Award
11-13 years at the 2021 Ipswich Poetry Feast

I stand on the edge,
the horizon spreads before me
the wind hits my face, I feel like I am free.
The beauty of my country, the colours of my land
come and share it with me,
come and take my hand.

Let us journey on together, let us fly, let us soar,
walk the land of our ancestors,
breathe life into our core.
The rain hits the desert sands,
the rivers start to flow.
See the green of the rainforest,
as the plants begin to grow.

The sunlight filters to the ground,
the land comes alive.
If we care for country, we can make it thrive.
Take my hand, and come with me,
our journey has begun.
Bask in the glow of our love,
warm our faces by the sun.

For we may not always be right,
we may not all be free
but together as one, we take a stand,
open our eyes, and see.
Let us stand up for injustice, let us close the gap.
If you cut the tree, it will bleed its sap

The fires they are burning, wilder than before,
our human hands have created this,
we need to heal the sore.
The earth she is crying,
she is warming and distressed.
We need to act together now,
not wait until we're pressed

I am a child, but I am strong,
I am willing to take a stand.
I hold the knowledge of my ancestors;
I want to heal my land.
Let me dream, let me speak, let me cry my tears
I will try to lead you, wise beyond my years.

© 2022 Finn Mulvogue (at age 11 )

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WA

## THE BUSH POETS BREAKFAST IN DERBY

W.A. Bush Poets & Yarnspinners Assn.

It all happened in Derby! What a great time WA Bush Poets had after a six week sojourn north promoting our Bush Poets Breakfast and Bush Poetry in general.

Derby as usual welcomed us as they do all visitors to their very remote town. Locals support and appreciate those who bring events and those who take time to stop and experience this unique town.

Experiencing the Race Day with all the glamorous attire for males and females of all ages and enjoying the fun filled day of family events (including foot races) is a must for travellers to put in their travel plans

Local poet Dave Morrell

Erin Park ABC Broome Presented her own poem

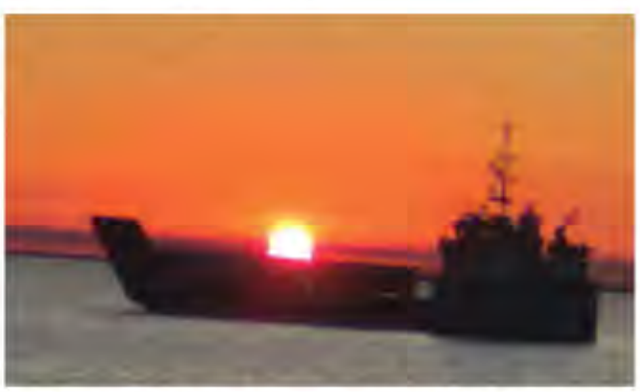
(above) Eddie Williams Broome ABC interviews WA Poets Keith Lethbridge and Peter Nettleton

(left) WA Poet Chris Taylor made the trip to Derby for the Festival

Colin Pigram and Richard Rose provided musical entertainment with their distinct Kimberley sound

Jane Cochrane provided the photos of the Festival and Peter Nettleton performed with great humour

'Mr Kimberley' Sam Lovell, Keith Lethbridge, Jerome Bridge, Ivan Bridge from Halls Creek and Peter Nettleton



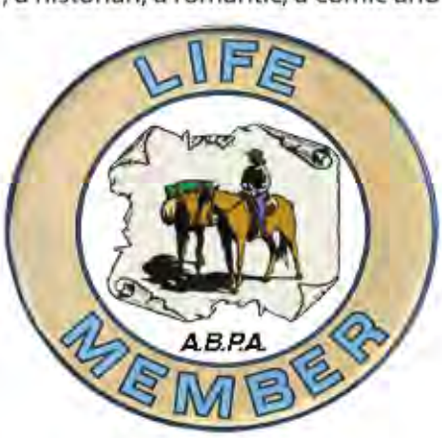
Plenty of amazing sunsets in the Kimberley

Alan Aitken and Bill Gordon enjoyed the races with friends Joy and Diane

# Ray Essery – ABPA Life Membership

The audience at this years "Yellowbelly Festival" in St George, got a little bit more than they were expecting when Bush Poet, Ray Essery was presented with Life Membership of the Australian Bush Poets Association.
Ray, a Festival favourite, was taken completely by surprise when his fellow Bush Poet and good mate, Gary Fogarty, asked him to remain on stage following his final set of the Festival. Gary then performed a poem he had written for Rays book, "One Hell Of A Ride ", before letting the audience know of Ray's unselfish contribution to the ABPA over a career of nearly 30 years, including his ongoing role as Vice President.
The plan had been put in place the day before when President, Tin Sheed, placed a phone call to Gary Fogarty informing him of a unanimous decision by the ABPA Committee to bestow Life membership on Ray. With the tyranny of distance making it difficult to arrange for Tim to be on hand at one of Ray's gigs, it was decided to ask former President, Gary, to make the presentation.
In accepting his Life membership, a visibly emotional Ray Essery, expressed his surprise and his gratitude to be honoured in this way.
There is no doubt that this honour was well deserved and the ABPA Committee is to be congratulated for recognising the huge contribution that Ray has made over many years.

Ray Essery is without doubt one of the most highly regarded performing Bush Poets in Australia today.
After arriving on the entertainment scene in the early 90's Ray has worked hard at enhancing his natural abilities as a story teller by developing an 'on stage' persona that represents his life's journey. This 'North Coast' poet can leave his audiences in stiches with hilarious tales that reflect his years as a dairy farmer, Navy man and Sydney pub manager. Likewise he can dig deep into the kitbag of his family memories to deliver heartfelt recollections of his early life, taking his audiences on a nostalgic journey back to a time when life on the North Coast was just a little less complicated.
Ray Essery is a bit like..... well..... like Ray Essery, he is unique, a genuine original, it is hard to imagine anyone else delivering Ray's original poems with anywhere near the same impact. That same keen sense of history that is reflected in his own writing comes to the fore again when his respectful interpretations champion the works of some early North Coast poets.
Ray's early performing career was littered with winning performances in major competitions and his recorded works, both individual and as a member of the highly successful 'Naked Poets', have been rewarded with multiple Aust Bush Laureate Awards.
This mischievous, loveable larrikin is equally at home performing at any of Australia's major Festivals as he is entertaining at a corporate event. Ray Essery is a storyteller, a historian, a romantic, a comic and above all else, an entertainer.



# *A Whip Across His Shoulder*

© Ross Rolley

A whip across his shoulder and a twinkle in his eye,
beloved horse and faithful dog, on them he could rely
to take a dreamer far and wide while building on a name
that farmers, bankers, pollies learned was steeped in rural fame.

Sir Sidney Herbert Kidman – he was born at Athelstone:
from humble, English farming stock, a mighty man had grown.
A softly-spoken, honest soul who scorned vulgarity,
he loathed all waste and groomed his will to stem disparity.

Aged thirteen years, 'The Kid' left home, he did not say goodbye:
his quest to find his brother, George, beneath some Aussie sky.
A one-eyed horse, a worn old saddle, five bob to his name –
those worldly goods he used to build vast wealth and wide acclaim.

Sid grew to be a bush wise lad with wild, ambitious dreams,
to be a man of some repute, to master droving teams.
He yearned to ride a big, black horse across vast grazing land
and stock his country, mile on mile, with cattle of his brand.

He knew he faced a daunting task, a fiery, vicious foe;
but, always, he had found a way to make ideas grow.
Some painful, early lessons warned: be wise – avoid the drink.
Do not surrender, worship water – watch and learn and think.

Sid's peers and teachers taught him that pure water has no smell,
no colour, taste or charm of note, no feature to excel.
Ignoring this had been his saviour over many years
when murky, running water was like music to his ears.

Clean water has no odour? That's not true of summer rains
when, after months of searing heat, the storms are on the plains.
The Red Gum's cleansing perfume tells that winter time is nigh,
while other native blooms will herald ending of the dry.

Sid's visions were of cattle camps and sleeping under stars,
of endless, open grazing lands and rippling river bars:
of settling mobs of cattle down upon the moonlit plains,
then resting well when lulled to sleep by jingling hobble chains.

He savoured sights of majesty – a sunset's molten stream,
but never knew a twilight time – that softly dappled beam.
He knew arrays of hue and light most could not comprehend;
wide, blazing floods of blood-red skies that ran for months on end.

'The Kid' as he was fondly known, worked hard and wore the jokes:
he often rode alone for days, like all the station blokes.
He watched, he learned and gained those skills that served him fair and true
until, at last, he cut the ties and bade the boss 'adieu'.

One meet, he rode a leggy horse – he did not know his name.
He won the Squatter's Plate, by far, a jockey's purse to claim.
The effort earned the winning hoop a pup and ten-pound note,
the cash to buy an agile roan of stamp and shining coat.

'The Kid' became 'The Cattle King' as if decreed by fate
to build an empire with the goal to graze in every State.
Sid ventured out and life progressed on business he secured;
his word a bond and guarantee that credence was assured.

*Sir Sidney Herbert Kidman - 1927*

In June of Eighteen Eighty-Five, our Sidney took a bride
a teacher lass named Isabel who schooled her man with pride.
They travelled all around Australia, four times over-seas,
while, in between, their children grew beneath Kapunda's trees.

In Nineteen Thirty-Five, Sid died: his time on earth was done.
His life was honoured with a Knighthood – Nineteen Twenty-One.
He left one son and three fine daughters to his loyal wife
who knew their worldly wealth was blessed by altruistic life.

Domestic stock and distant stations bear the Kidman brand.
Australian people should salute a legend of this land,
should recognise how fine he was and pay him due respect:
accept the challenge, show Sir Sid, his faith had been correct.

*'...wide, blazing floods of blood-red skies that ran for months on end.'*

# CROQUET

© Len Banks

I went along one afternoon
to learn to play croquet.
Looks simple watching from the side;
more difficult to play.

Sometimes you play in teams of two,
sometimes it's one on one.
You aim to hit a ball through hoops;
get seven and you've won.

Each player has a wooden mallet
to suit their size and strength,
with weighted head and handle grip
cut perfectly to length.

Some have fancy metal bits,
gold lettering, the lot.
But even from the finest club
can come a lousy shot.

So that's the gear, now for the rules.
It's like golf without a tee;
like snooker without a table top;
like bowls without bended knee.

It has the challenges of chess,
thinking several moves ahead;
and remembering that it's yellow follows
black which follows red.

So that's the basics, ready to play.
First a coin is tossed.
The winner plays with blue and black;
red and yellow if you lost.

Shaping up for the first big hit.
We're playing Golf Croquet.
With a back swing up at shoulder height,
I'm reminded that's not the way.

You stalk the ball and line it up;
steady as you hold her.
The back swing is between the legs;
push forward with the shoulders.

I've lined it up at hoop number one,
ready for a score.
I thought I had the perfect shot,
but watch the player before.

Given the chance, he'll knock me away
with a stop shot, just to be mean,
so his ball takes over my good spot
and my ball's off the green.

It looks like an aggressive game.
Bash the opponent's ball away.
But if you're clever you may get
a hoop from a ricochet.

That's called "in off", but there's a chance
you'll hit the opponent through.
Of course they get the point for that
and sarcastically say "thank you".

I see the players carry pegs.
At first I wondered why.
They mark the hoops at which you've hung
your opponents out to dry.

And there are penalties to watch;
some faults you have to learn,
like double tap and hit wrong ball.
For those you miss a turn.

There are some hazards in this game;
some can be predicted.
Look at the age of those on the court.
Exhaustion is self inflicted.

A ball can travel at 40 klicks
across the short mown grass
and do some damage to ankles and shins.
It's best to let it pass.

There is a target for every shot
that requires perfect direction.
It may be to move an opponent's ball,
which depends on a good connection.

It may be to stop on a certain spot
To set up for your next go,
Or to block your opponent from their next shot;
So it can't be too fast or slow.

So a combination of power and aim,
is the skill you need for croquet;
and if you can't go through the hoop
attack the next ball to play.

And have fun.

# "THE VOLCANIC VINDALOO."

© Peter White

My favourite Indian take-away, owned by Vinyl Patel,
is "Curry In A Hurry" and it's doing really well.
His wife, Maneera, helps out there. She's a terrific cook.
It's popular for dining in, so you always have to book.

I don't know how it started but both call me 'Mister Pete'.
To all of us in town they're Vin and Neera on Main Street.
Vin and I talk Cricket while my Korma is prepared.
I like a mild curry. To try their hot ones I've not dared.

" 'Mister Pete' you always order a Korma or a Tikka.
If you want some flavour you can get it so much quicker.
Try a curry with some heat. It is good for you.
I am telling you to sample my most famous Vindaloo."

"Next time you are coming in, try this dish by Neera.
It is not for the faint-hearted. I can't be any clearer.
With the curry there is yoghurt, raita, steamed basmati
as well as mango chutney, pappadum and chapati."

"I'll do for you a special deal if you give it a try.
I am charging only half the price and I am telling why.
Some clients like their curry hot, much hotter than we make.
We need to find out how much heat our customers can take."

"So, 'Mister Pete', we will try it out on you.
We haven't got a name for this brand new Vindaloo.
After you have tried it you'll suggest to us a name."
I said, "All right, Vin. It's a deal. Tell Neera that I'm game."

A fortnight passed. That night I felt that I could go a curry.
So off I went to Main Street to "Curry In A Hurry".
When I walked in Vin said to me, "Good evening 'Mister Pete'.
I am hoping you are coming in for a Vindaloo to eat."

I said, "Vin your special deal is what I'm here for."
In half an hour Neera came out through the kitchen door.
I don't think I'd seen so much food in all my life.
I didn't have a clue it would cause me so much strife.

I spread the food out on my table; what a tempting sight.
The aroma was enticing so I sampled my first bite.
I soon became aware that the after-taste was hot.
I dithered over whether I should finish it or not.

In hindsight, Vin's fiery curry, I should have binned.
But I carried on throwing caution to the wind.

FLAMIN' HELL!

My eyes began to water and my nose began to run.
My red, sweating face looked like I'd had a dose of sun.
Even the chilled raita thickly spread on pappadum
couldn't halt the flames attacking tongue and gum.
Then suddenly my small and large intestine both rebelled
and they worked in unison 'til this demon was expelled.

The hottest food I'd ever eaten there wasn't any doubt.
It got even hotter making its way through and out.
Pain from top to bottom, I nursed a sore head and behind.
And all the while a song by Johnny Cash played in my mind.

His lyrics of a ring burning with a constant flame
suggested for Vin's Vindaloo a rather fitting name.
I spent a restless night in bed as I tossed and turned
and every single part of me continually burned.

Next morning I was seedy when I walked into their place
to report to Vin and Neera. Pain still showing on my face.
I knew that I was still as sick as the proverbial dog.
Then Vin's lilting voice filtered through my mental fog.

"Goodness gracious, 'Mister Pete'. What is wrong with you?
Are you telling me the cause of this was our Vindaloo?
I am hoping you are better soon. That is my fervent wish.
But tell me, 'Mister Pete', have you a name for our new dish?"

I had a noticeable tremor in my fingers and my hips.
I found it difficult to speak with swollen tongue and lips.
I said, "Have I got a name for you, Vin, my old mate.
It's "The Johnny Cash Special", a volcano on a plate!"

# The Springtime it Brings on the Shearing

Researched ans Submitted by Stephen Whiteside

'The Springtime it Brings on the Shearing' is the sixth song on Burl Ives' 1953 record, '9 Australian Folk Songs.' It has been recorded by many people since then, including Lionel Long, Gary Shearston, Martyn Wyndham-Read and the Bushwackers.

The song describes how the shearers are the heroes of the hour at the height of the shearing season, splashing money around carelessly. Once the shearing is finished for the year, however, you will generally find them camped on the banks of a river, living an extremely frugal existence.

A number of writers point out that the words have been taken from a poem, 'The Wallaby Track', by E. J. Overbury. For example, the second verse of the poem begins:

***With a ragged old swag on his shoulder,***
***And a billy or pot in his hand,***
***'Twould astonish the new-chum beholder***
***To see how he'll traverse the land.***

The second verse of 'The Springtime it Brings on the Shearing' reads as follows:

***With a ragged old swag on my shoulder***
***And a billy quart-pot in my hand,***
***And I'll tell you we'll 'stonish the new-chum***
***To see how we travel the land.***

'The Wallaby Track' was first published in the Creswick and Clunes Advertiser, in 1865. (By way of historical context, Banjo Paterson was born the year before, in 1864, and Henry Lawson two years later in 1867. Dame Mary Gilmore was born in the same year. This is also probably the year when Ned Kelly, at the age of ten or eleven, rescued the seven-year-old Richard Shelton from drowning in Hughes Creek in Avenel, Victoria.)

Creswick and Clunes are two old Victorian gold mining towns in central Victoria. They are not far apart, and are often considered together. Creswick is perhaps best known as being the birthplace of the Australian painter and writer, Norman Lindsay. Clunes' principal claim to fame these days is that it hosts the annual 'Clunes Booktown Festival.'

Overbury also wrote two other well-known poems, 'The Public by the Way' and 'The Loafer's Club.'

Overbury also published a collection of his poetry, 'Bush Poems', in 1865. In 1999 Red Rooster Press published 'Two Goldfield Balladists', edited by Hugh Anderson. The balladists were W. W. Coxon and E. J. Overbury, and the book comprises two small, old books: 'Coxon's Comic Songster' and Overbury's 'Bush Poems.'

Overbury wrote a preface to his book, with his tongue firmly in his cheek. It reads as follows:

The great object I have in view publishing this little book is, if possible, to make a little money by it. If the purchaser obtains six-pennyworth of amusement from it, the benefit will be mutual. Like all virgin authors, I naturally expect that it will permeate through all classes of society, not only in this country, but in the most distant parts of the earth - that it may even cause some sensation amongst the crowned heads of Europe, and be recognised by the "Great Panjandrum" himself. Under these circumstances, I am willing to declare "The right of translation is not reserved."

Anderson wrote an extensive introduction to 'Two Goldfield Balladists.' He tells us that "...Overbury was born in Scotland about 1830, and arrived as a cabin passenger on the Anne Cropper in May 1853, aged 22 years..."

He goes on to say that Overbury spent most of his time in Australia employed by the Anderson brothers - James, John and William. He also rented his home from them. The Andersons were based in the gold fields of central Victoria, and their primary business was supplying timber for the deep leads. When local supplies were exhausted, tramways were laid deep into the Wombat State Forest. Their empire continued to grow, and they became involved in land speculation and agriculture. They built a five-storey flour mill in nearby Smeaton, which still stands today. (Overbury wrote his 'Preface' from Smeaton.)

Hugh Anderson makes the point that there is some confusion about Overbury's middle name, as it is sometimes given as 'Irvine'. Dr Graeme Skinner confirms that his middle name was indeed 'Irvine', and the initial 'J' is therefore an error. Skinner also tells us that Overbury was born in Westbury, Wiltshire (via Bath), England, on 5 September 1830. Information provided by Skinner is far more detailed, and also much more recent, than that provided by Anderson, so I am inclined to think it is also more accurate.

Eight years after 'Bush Poems' was published, in 1873, Overbury wrote a letter to The Australasian newspaper in Melbourne. He was now in Glengower, not far from Smeaton. The letter was published in part, with an editorial response, in The Australasian, Saturday 8 August 1873, on page 16. He is complaining about a man - whom he names (but the editor chooses not to) - who is making minimal changes to Overbury's work, and passing it off as his own.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

"E. J. Overbury" (Glengower) - This correspondent writes to us to give satisfactory proof that he is "the real author of the songs termed the 'Wallaby Track,' 'The Public by the Way,' 'Jack and I,'" &c, and in support of his claim gives the names of a good many respectable gentlemen as references. We regret that we are not familiar with the compositions themselves. He says "the songs themselves are certainly not worth much notice grammatically speaking. No doubt error abounds in them to a large extent. But the working classes in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland appreciate them, and I do not believe that a party who calls himself _____ should intentionally rob me of that little approach to fame that I am certainly due. Mr. _____ represents himself as the author of all these songs. He attends in shearing time every station that can possibly lie in his route. He partially makes a parody by calling 'The Public by the Way,' 'The Shanty by the Way,' but every word in it except the change of substantives is mine. The same with the 'Wallaby Track,' and as time, and ignorance, and dishonesty advance, I fear that others of my own composition may suffer the same fate." We are sorry to learn that Mr. Overbury, like other men of creative genius, suffers from the competition of plagiarists. He may, however, take it as a proof of his popularity when his songs are acceptable even in their altered and plagiarised form. We trust that as time advances ignorance and dishonesty will not advance too, and that his rival minstrel will come to rely on songs of his own production.

it is clear the editor has little respect for Overbury. He does not know his poems, and refers to him sarcastically as a 'creative genius.' Overbury had the last laugh, of course, with his words now immortalised in 'The Springtime it Brings on the Shearing.' His rival also achieved some long-term success, however. 'The Public by the Way' is now better known as 'The Shanty by the Way.'

Hugh Anderson tells us that Overbury died in Creswick Hospital on 22nd February 1898. The local papers noted the death of "an old resident of Smeaton." The records of the Smeaton cemetery referred to him as "the local bush poet."

I can find no information at all about the tune to 'The Springtime it Brings on the Shearing'. To my ear, it sounds quite similar to 'The Dying Stockman'.

# *CATCH-CRY OF A NATION*

© Neil McArthur

As they dozed inside their Stockade on that warm December morn,
No Miner ever dreamed about the legend being born;
As they woke to cries of "Joe!" and faced the bayonet and gun,
Ensuing death was heralding, "Eureka has begun!"

For such a small uprising which was violently suppressed,
The players in this unjust war could hazard not a guess
That a Miner's fight for justice, could breed such inspiration,
Yet "Eureka - Bloody Beauty!" is the catch-cry of our Nation.

Folks argue over where the battle happened on that day,
A mile here or there is just irrelevant, I say;
It's the Spirit which incited all those Miners, old and young,
Who stood up for their rights, and died, but somehow still had won

From up atop the Free Trade Hill, the History of our Land
Watched down upon the gallant band who fought so undermanned;
It watched a wounded Lalor walk, when all his hopes seemed lost
And blood seeped to the white stars of his hallowed Southern Cross.

Within our blood, it surges still, the courage shown that day,
To overcome such daunting odds is now our social way;
The mettle of those Miners drives us through our history,
And "Eureka - Bloody Beauty!" is our call of victory.

Be it Bradman carving hundreds which would win the Ashes back,
Or Phar Lap scorching up the turf of Melbourne's Cup Day track:
That Patriotic tingle caused the stiffest cove to cry
"Eureka - Bloody Beauty!" as a tear came to their eye.

The people of the world rejoiced when war came to an end,
For such a horror to abate, seemed hard to comprehend;
In different tongues around the world they cheered the peace at hand,
While "Eureka - Bloody Beauty!" echoed through our Southern Land.

It was heard there at Gallipoli amongst the fighting's din,
But who can rein the brave heart of a young Australian in ?
And those that died did boldly, like the Miners of the past,
For the Spirit of Eureka stood beside them 'till the last.

The heart of an Australian is made of pure gold,
Emblazoned with the Southern Cross, which makes us game and bold;
It was passed to us through history by Lalor's gallant gang,
"Eureka - Bloody Beauty!" - it's our verbal boomerang.

When worker's rights were challenged and the Unions flexed their arms,
When Governments gave into 'little people' on their farms;
Whenever we drew victory from steel jaws of defeat,
"Eureka - Bloody Beauty!" rang through each Australian street.

You'll hear it from the farmers when a downpour soothes the drought,
You'll hear it on a payday from an outback Roustabout;
Or down in Southern Cities when our Summer breaks the chill,
"Eureka - Bloody Beauty!" - bred from near the Free Trade Hill.

It strikes like liquid lightning in our patriotic veins
Each time we see our flag ahoist at each Olympic Games;
A legacy, Australian, from the 'fields of Ballaarat,
"Eureka - Bloody Beauty!" - but there's more to it than that.

The next time that you raise your fist and call Eureka's name,
Be it when you've struck it lucky or your team has won the game;
Recall it's true foundations - how those Miners made their stand,
"EUREKA - Bloody beauty!" - it was they who freed this land!

# LETTER TO EDITOR

Tom McILveen (0417251287)

Doomsday predictors can often trigger the very same destiny, that they are predicting. This has been apparent many times throughout history. Negativity is sadly more contagious than positivity. Talk something down enough, and even the most idealistic optimist will begin to doubt the truth.

Despite allegations of plummeting membership , The ABPA is alive and well, with a current membership of 235 members. Not too bad, I would think, taking all factors into consideration. To quote Henry Lawson...

"Let the darkest side of the past be dark, and only the good recall" Let us not dwell on the negatives.

Any supposed experienced poets who have cut ties with the ABPA, because their advice was ignored, will hopefully reply in turn to the Editor and voice their concerns and advice in a public forum.

Bush Poetry did indeed make a revival in the late 80's and early 90's in Tamworth, thanks mostly to Marco Gliori, Murray Hartin, Bobby Miller, Shirley Friend, Ray Essery and Pat Drummond. They were indeed the pioneers of the new wave, and laid the platform for many more to follow and build on.

Like all new waves, the timing was right. And they proved to be the right people in the right place at the right time. If Bush Poetry crowds are waning in recent years, (as in deed I believe they are), then it is not because of the quality, passion or capability of modern day performers. There are many contemporary, so called non-professional Performing Poets around the traps today that could easily hold their own on any national or world stage, given the opportunity.

Fads , fashions and genres are fickle, and over time this has been proven. Paterson, Lawson and Dennis arrived on the scene almost simultaneously. Was it synchronicity or coincidence or fate?

I believe that they were the right people in the right place at the right time. Paterson himself encapsulated it perfectly in a statement he made ....'In all museums throughout the world one may see plaster casts of footprints of weird animals, footprints preserved for posterity, not because the animals were particularly good of their sort, but because they had the luck to walk on the lava while it was cooling. There is just a faint hope that something of the same sort may happen to us.'

Paul McCartney, John Lennon, George and Ringo, came together in Liverpool in the 60's to produce music that we will very likely never see the equal of again. The wave has broken. The music has been created and the song has been sung. So too with our beloved craft ...Australian Traditional Bush Poetry.

We aspire to write as well as the great masters before us, but alas, we don't. Why not? I believe it is because that wave has broken and we are in a new wave. We must bide our time and look for change and pre-empt the new wave. Bards and Minstrels have been an integral part of our culture since time immemorial and despite the fact that technology is taking many things from us, I believe Poetry, Music and the Performance Arts will never fade away. They are merely morphing as all things must, and so too must we, if we are to be part of the new wave.

Modern day audiences like variety. Technology has changed and shortened our attention spans. If we are not immediately engaged with a television interview, news item, movie or face-book post, we will swipe the screen or change the channel. So too with a performance. It must have variety to hold an audience...Humorous Yarn Spinning, Story Telling, Poetry and Music, are a great combination, and with a little spice added to the mix, they become more digestible.

Let us not lower our standards and prohibit our finest written poets from competing. If Lawson and Paterson were encouraged NOT to submit poems to the Bulletin, to allow lesser writers publication space, then who knows how many of their classic poems may never have been written. Written Traditional Australian Bush Poetry, in perfect meter and rhyme, is without a doubt the toughest and most challenging of all writing genres. There are only a handful of writers in Australia today, and indeed the world, who can write at this level. I would say to all those disgruntled, aspiring poets who want to lower the standard of technically perfect poetry... create a new genre of Performance Poetry. Please don't lower our standards and take away our technically perfect poetry. Paterson and Lawson would never forgive you. And if we are patient and bide our time, from somewhere deep within the musings of our modern day bards...a new masterpiece will emerge.

Tom McILveen.

In response to Gary's letter, I would like to make a few comments.

Have you heard of Slam Poetry, or been to a Slam competition? I hasten to say that unlike Bush Poetry It is not exactly family friendly with many expletives and virtually anything goes. The National competitions are sponsored by the individual State Libraries and are usually held at a local library. The number of poets competing can vary between 10 to 20 contestants and they must register up to an hour before the competition commences. Once this limit is reached no one else can compete or perform. A poem must be original, written in the past 12 months and can be either read or recited within 2 minutes, The contestant must reside in the State or Territory in which he/she is performing and the topic can be anything the performer envisages, such as a letter to someone, a protest, a story, a yarn etc. The MC will throw five objects into the audience, they could be lollies such as Minties or Fantales. Whoever these objects land near then they are deemed to be the five judges. No poetry qualifications are required of these judges. After each performance the scores out of ten to a decimal point are held high on a board by the judges still sitting in the audience for all to see. Scores are deducted if the contestant goes over time. The top and bottom scores are eliminated and the remaining three are averaged out. The winner and runner up from each local venue compete against the finalists from each of the venues in their State. In NSW it has been held at the State Library in Sydney. Then two finalists from each State or Territory compete in a Grand Final. I believe that the rules now are that it must be a new poem for the Final and then the Grand Final. The above is what I recollect from attending and competing in a Slam contest many years ago in which I won the heat and then the NSW State final and I am proud to say it was with a humorous Bush poem. As I said before, anything goes! All this is merely food for thought. I have been a member of the ABPA since the early 1990s and am a dedicated bush poet not a Slammer! Maybe the ABPA could do with some sponsorship. Is Jerry Harvey a Bush poet fan?

Yours sincerely
Kathy Edwards.

After a few false starts, a few change of venue's and the Big C putting a spanner in the works, the Wombat Bush Poets are back in action.

7 poets, including 2 newbies, performed to an appreciative audience of about 50 on the last Sunday of June. Great to see some familiar faces in the crowd but even more pleasing to see heaps of new faces enjoying the afternoon's entertainment of a good variety of poetry and music

Now performing at the recently refurbished Commercial Hotel, Young, at 2pm on the last Sunday of every 2nd month. Our next outing is on the 28th of August and all are welcome.

---

Hi Neil..these are shots from our recent Bush Poets shows here in Port Macquarie....of Bill Kearns...Peter Mace...Dave Melville...and Tom McILveen and Susan Ashton.....performing at the inaugural BOOTS AND BEACH FESTIVAL....WHICH IS A new Country Music Festival here in Port Macquarie...big crowds attended to see big name performers, headed by Lee Kernaghan...The following day we performed at the Loal Heritage DOUGLAS VALE WINERY here in Port Macquarie, which is a fully restored and maintained Heritage site here in the heart of town...with outdoor stage and great atmosphere.

We managed to get on board with the recent, inaugural BOOTS & BEACH COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL run here in Port Macquarie...Headlined by Lee Kernaghan and various well known Country Music artists...fans turned up in droves despite the mud and rain. It was Woodstock all over again!! Country style.

We were allocated an area under the big stage where Bill Kearns, Peter Mace and David Melville, all in magnificent form, performed poetry and spun yarns...Susan Ashton and myself hosted and threw in a few songs whilst Lee Kernaghan was still out of earshot...It is to become an annual event here in Port Macquarie, and hopefully the seed has been sown. We are endeavouring to draw younger Country Music fans to the Bush Poetry performances and will certainly be back next year bigger and better and wiser for the experience.

Tom Mcilveen.

# *Letter to the Editor.*

I would like to commend Gary Fogarty in pointing out some of the facts that are governing difficulties in the ABPA at present, as stated in the last issue of ABPA magazine.

The vibrancy however of the ABPA depends upon the activities of the membership, those who are prepared to put their hands up and make things happen. Poets, poet groups are encouraged and invited to organise their own activities according to what they want from Bush Poetry. The change cannot come from ABPA alone, the committee are facilitators and give guidelines. ABPA cannot dictate how event organisers run their shows, they are aware of their local desires and needs.

The "top" poets as Gary describes them have complained before about ABPA not doing anything for them and I don't think that will stop. He fails to mention that they have the opportunity to promote their events through the magazine and get a discounted insurance premium for themselves. They also have access to names of upcoming poets who have succeeded in competitions if they are looking for new poets to include in their performances. I observed that a young poet has again appeared on the stage at Tamworth after getting first noticed at the Golden Damper event. Another event at Tamworth this year also had some new poets in the lineup. Some "top" poets are encouraging new talent, why aren't more doing that? Why is this a failure of ABPA? We ran the Golden Damper. What else is expected?

I remain convinced that a new look can only come from members/groups putting forward constructive suggestions in the holding of events that will encourage more entertaining programs with the assistance of the ABPA. If a group could organise a weekend/day for a series of workshops with notable presenters/top poets, emerging performers who are looking for guidance, I am sure they would find support from the Committee.

The difficulties governing the ABPA at present exists when too many people just sit back "and let someone else do it" and then still complain that it hasn't been done the right way.
Those who may agree with Gary on the issues he has raised, where were you when the AGM was held? Very few people zoomed in and no one challenged the positions on the committee. If you are that keen on seeing change you should have made more of an effort to have your say then.

Come forward now with concrete ideas, events, workshops that you would like to see happen. Get a local team together, find a venue, get sponsorship, look up poets in your area that could assist/perform/judge (their profiles are on the website). WA Bush Poets have just had another successful Poet's Breakfast in Derby with 7 poets who travelled up and 3 local poets and yarnspinners. We had a local committee who we could liaise with from down south, local sponsors who were willing to see something happening in their town. Promotion started months in advance. It is not that hard! We are finding now in our travels that we don't have to explain what Bush Poetry is as much as we used to, people are putting our events in their travel plans.
If everyone could actively get out there and promote Bush Poetry, even in a small way, at caravan parks, Australia Day events, Probus Clubs etc., our industry can only get better and bigger.
Members who are out and about doing events/gigs should be supporting our magazine more with interesting articles/profiles, events that poets are performing in around the country (we should take a look at the Balladeers Magazine and see the wealth of information there). It has already been stated that members value the magazine above all else. Why don't we recognise this and use it as an avenue to get more people interested?
Our Facebook page is also not well supported and if we are going to attract a younger membership/audience we should be using that as an avenue also. Why aren't all the Poet groups linked to ABPA fb? Why isn't this a place of sharing and communicating?

Our web page also should be a place of sharing. I know Greg is happy to put up any articles that are sent but he can't drag things out of the air! Revamping our web page is not only going to make people post more articles either, members have to want to promote our association.

How long has it been since anyone has organised workshops? Workshops were not part of Tamworth Golden Damper until I introduced it a few years ago. I know covid has been the reason for a while but a move was made to hold workshops on line but after initial notification not much was heard. There was a lot happening musically but not much from poets. There was an opportunity going begging for workshops then; poets just went to ground. Is this the fault of ABPA? Or was everyone sitting back and waiting for someone else to do it. WA has had a workshop at every State Championship event since we moved to Toodyay. Sometimes it has been a visiting poet, sometimes it has been a musician and even a yarnspinner.
I feel these are the things that are going to make ABPA more attractive, relevant and interesting than just be doing the same old same old all over again. Everyone has to be passionate about promotion of poetry, our genre and our association or we will continue to be dull and uninviting.

Regards Meg Gordon.

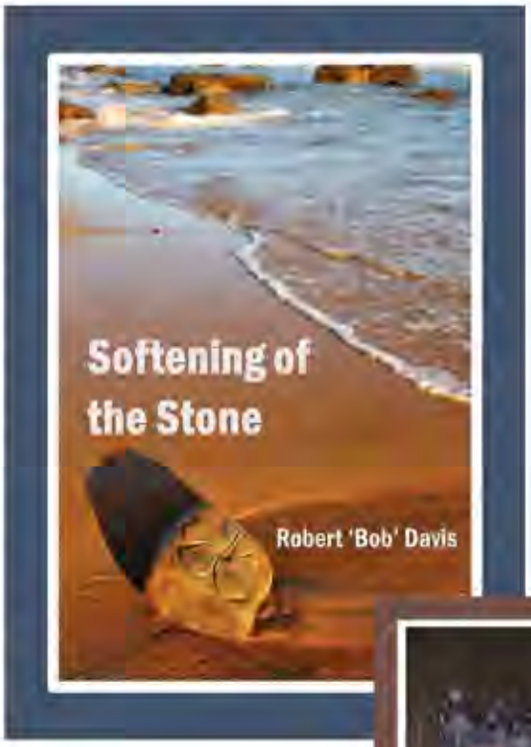
**Editor's Note*

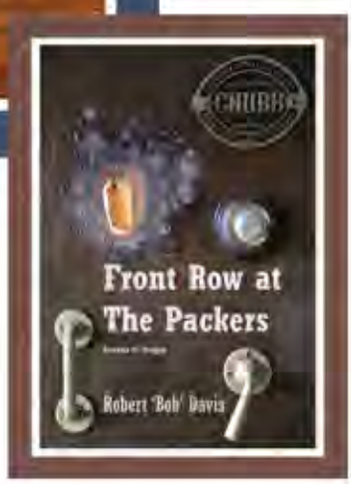
*in defence ot these 'other venues' young Poet, Joey Reedy, was performing at the Longyard Hotel Bush Poets Breakfasts long before entering the Golden Damper, a Competition he won and then had Members calling for his disqulification. That ruling on age was finally changed in May 2022. He was not first noticed at the Golden Damper Awards by any means.*

# Softening of the Stone

My poetry conveys the idyllic conditions under which we live in Australia extending from the wonderful natural beauty of our varied diverse terrain to the people and native animals which call it home. Covering all the seasons of our exceptional climate and the brutal harshness of natural disasters, which we may endure. Showcased are our amazing and interesting unique birds and animals and their contribution to Australia's mosaic of life. Featured are many activities: adventures, sporting and hobby interests enjoyed during our leisure time. Also covered are many places of interest with unique geographic features. Detailed are varied interesting aspects of our way of life and wistful reflections on bygone ways and days. Recollections on life from childhood, through work and leisure experiences, and later life, colour the width and depth expressed in subjects I have selected. It is with great pride I present my collection of poetry with its strong Aussie flavour.

***Robert Davis***




Order your copy: Davis2021books@hotmail.com
Include your name and address and
Deposit: $25 postage included BSB 062 692 Acc 4750 7454

PS: My book 'Front Row at the Packers' is yet to be published, however, those interested follow the above instructions and mention you would like a copy and I will send to you.

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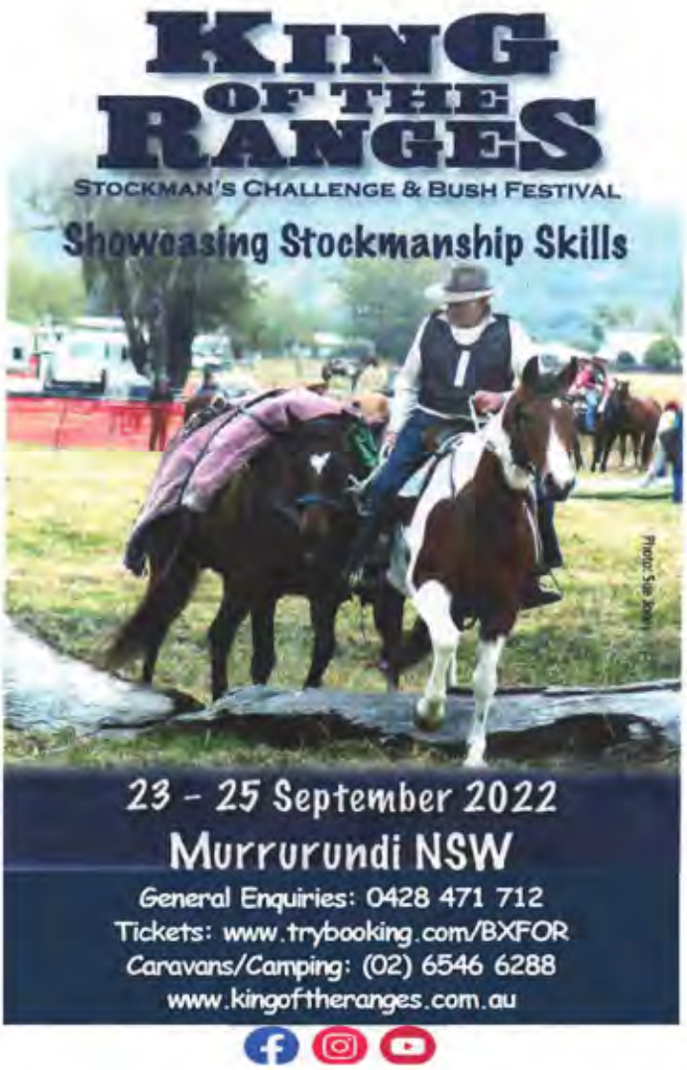
## THE 'BETTY OLLE' POETRY AWARD

"WRITTEN COMPETITION"

- For traditional Australian rhyming poetry with an Australian theme.
- Open and Junior (12 years and under) sections.
- Open section - First Prize $500 plus trophy.
  Runner-up $200 plus certificate.
- Junior section - First Prize $100 plus trophy.
  Runner-up $50 plus certificate.
- Entry fee - Open $15 per entry form (2 poems)
- Entry fee - Junior section - free.
- Closing date - 31th August 2022.
- Entry forms and conditions of entry available from the ABPA website - events and results page.
- Conducted by the Kyabram Bush Verse Group in memory of foundation member Betty Olle.

The aim of the Betty Olle Poetry Award is to provide an opportunity for poets to share their work, to encourage the writing of new work, to acknowledge the skills of our junior poets, and to keep the spirit of Bush Poetry alive.




New for 2022

# KOTR PERFORMANCE BUSH POETRY COMPETITION

**A.B.P.A. Rules**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Original** | **1st $200** | **2nd $50** | **3rd $30** |
| **Non-Original** | **1st $200** | **2nd $50** | **3rd $30** |

***PLUS! Best Performance overall will have their name engraved on a new bronze trophy statue donated by Carol Heuchan***

**Competition will take place from 7.30am during the Poets' Breakfast Sunday 25th September**

**Entry $10 per section** **Entries close 11th September**

**Kay Seath (KOTR) 17/28 Deaves Road, Cooranbong 2265**

**OR scan form and email :** kaysie2@hotmail.com Enq: 0416 262399

**Fees by Direct Deposit: King of the Ranges Stockman's Challenge Inc**
**BSB 932-000 A/C 428437 Ref: Name/Poetry**
*(NB Bank does not accept initials KOTR)*

Receipt allows entry to Festival for day of competition only (Sunday 25th)

Performance competition for Adults 18 years and over (A.B.P.A Rules)

Original ☐ Non-Original ☐ TOTAL FEES: ☐
*(Traditional or with author's permission)*

Name.....

Address.....

Email.....Phone.....

## Gympie Music Muster 2022 Poets and Storytellers

Peter Cap and Muz Hartin

Marco Gliori

Pixie Jenkins

Neil McArthur

**Brekky Shows**
**Thursday – Sunday**
**Muster Club—8.30AM**
***Laugh ya Guts out***

Bob Condon

## ***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 furtherd-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, cm. Mann and Erina Streets Gosford. All welcome. Contact Vic Jefferies 0425252212 or Peter Mace (02)-4369356
**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
**Katoomba Poets in the Pub** 2nd Sunday 2pm at Blackburn's Family Hotel. All forms poetry, free entry. Contact Denis Rice 0459 794 785.
**Singleton Bush Poets.** Meet at the Albion Hotel, John StreetSingleton. 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 Coutts 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) 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
**Toowoomba Bush Poets**-meet on the second Saturday of the month at the Toowoomba Library meeting rooms from 10am -12. Contact Peter 0401130636.
**Townsville Bush Poetry Mates Inc** meet every the first Saturday of every month at 1pm at Aitkenvale Library Meeting Room at 7:00pm. Loads of fun. All welcome. Contact Barry on 0487 195 156
**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..

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**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 work-shops, 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.Bendigo Club, 22 Park St, Strathdale (Bendigo) 1pm to 4pm. Contacts: Geoffrey Graham 0412725470 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
Mansfield Bush Poets Group - Second Tuesday of the month 1pm - 3pm, Mansfield Library. Contact Val Kirley 0400 654 596

**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