

Uralla Bowlo 2010 Performance Bush Poetry Competition

The sun was out, the birds were chirping, and the town was a flurry... however inside all was silent as Bill Upjohn – the MC began “Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, Poet’s and visitors, to the Uralla Bowlo Inaugural Performance Bush Poetry Competition!”

It is surprising where a Bush Poetry Competition might spring from! Uralla is situated high on the northern tablelands of New South Wales and is midway between Sydney and Brisbane on the New England Highway and just over two hour’s drive from the coast along the beautiful Waterfall Way.

Uralla has a population of around 2,300 and is known as a haven for crafts people and artists. Uralla is a relaxed country village with fantastic modern and hearty dining, bakeries and cafés. The days of the gold rushes have been replaced with the relaxing atmosphere of bookshops, antique shops, tearooms and coffee lounges. Attractions are endless with numerous museums, historical buildings and of course a repertoire of “Captain Thunderbolt” landmarks.

On Saturday 30th October, the Uralla Bowlo hosted a Performance Bush Poetry Competition in conjunction with the town’s annual festival – The Thunderbolt Festival. The competition consisted of five categories broken in to morning and afternoon sessions, in which both young and old nominated to perform, some for the very first time!

The morning session comprised of:

1st Bush Poetry Competition – Open Original Works

2nd Bush Poetry Competition – Open Classical Traditional Works

The afternoon session comprised of:

3rd Bush Poetry Competition – Primary School Section

4th Bush Poetry Competition – High School Section

5th Bush Poetry Competition – Open Adult Novice Section

A total of seventeen entrants competed in the morning session and nine entrants competed in the afternoon session.

The competition was judged by several notable talents including: Julian Croft, who has been a judge of the Tamworth Country Music Festival Bush Poetry Competition for the past 20 years; Jack Bedson who is a poet, children's picture book writer and bibliographer with *Don't Get Burnt* and *Sheep Dogs* his best-selling children's picture books; and several other notable authors, performers and poets, and of course the town Mayor!

Competition was solid and the entrants were of the highest quality, with many of them competing at competitions regularly and performing as a source of income (and enjoyment as well!) Audiences were treated to a mix of serious and humorous poems. Topics encompassed everything from the old rivers to the social setting of the Aussie barbeque. Both men and women owned the stage and captured the audience with their engaging recitals of tales and stories both of recent and long ago times. The range of poets included the old faithfuls and lesser known authors.

With over \$1000 in prizemoney, the results from the competition were as follows:

1st Bush Poetry Competition - Open Original Works

Pete Harding *Boys at the Barby*

Roderick Williams *Murrumbidgee Dreaming*

Cheryl Nolan *The Lady from the Government*

2nd Bush Poetry Competition – Open Classical Traditional Works

Roderick Williams *The Death of Ben Hall* Will O'Gilvie
Lisa Quast *Honeymooning from the Country* John O'Brien
John Davis *Riding of the Rebel* Will O'Gilvie

3rd Bush Poetry Competition – Primary School Section

Bronte Bourke *Get the Dog* Bronte Bourke
Kate Rummery *The Cattle Dog Revenge* Jack Drake
Amy Jarvis *Mulga Bills Bicycle* Banjo Paterson

4th Bush Poetry Competition – High School Section

Sally Rummery *Turbulence*
Lenita Gill *My Country* Dorothea Mackellar
Cameron Kelly *Andy's Gone With Cattle* Henry Lawson

5th Bush Poetry Competition – Open Adult Novice Section

Albert Pullen *When Grandpa went to Church*

A great day was had by all and the competition seemed to be a huge success. We witnessed local school children write, recite and perform poetry for the first time... we witnessed well versed performers entertain the audience from start to finish, and we witnessed entrants travel from far and wide to participate.

We wish to personally thank all those people who offered invaluable knowledge, hints and tips based on personal experiences and industry information that assisted us to shape and conduct a successful Poetry Competition!

Congratulations to the winners, thanks to one and all, and we'll see you next year!

Kelly Walters
Uralla Bowlo Events Coordinator