

No.6. Vol.3. June. 1996.



The Australian



Bush Poets Association



Monthly
Newsletter

AUSTRALIAN BUSH POETS ASSOC.

P.O. BOX 77, DRAYTON NORTH, QLD. 4350

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National Country Music MUSTER

23, 24 & 25 August

— 1996 —

Don't let another year slip by

Phone 074 822 099

P.O. Box 616

Gympie Q.

The Camp Oven Bush Poetry Festival

31st Aug. - 1st Sept. 1996

North Pine Country Park

Petrie - Queensland

Enq: John Coutts 07 3886 1552

— Bush Laureate Awards January 1997 —

1. Published Original Australian Rhymed Verse (Book form)

2. Recorded Rhymed Verse (Cassette - CD)

**3. Heritage Award. (Publication - Emphasising Australian Heritage.
Historical- Geographical-Social)**

Product must be

published / released —

— Closes Nov- 3 1996 —

Nov 1 1995 — Nov 1 1996.

Send three copies of entries to

Golden Gumleaf Enterprises

112 Crescent Road

Hamilton Q. 4007

Entry fee \$10.00

BUSH TUCKER DAY TRUNDLE — NSW

Fun -Games -Music- Dance- Poetry

'Blue the Shearer' - Frank Daniel-

Peter Horan — The Bushwackers.

Saturday 17th. August 1996

(More info. later)

Presidents Letter. Dear ABPA members.

Another bigger, better, brighter and happier Fireside Festival is once more behind us. This year, as I see it, we have passed another great milestone in the forward movement of Bush Poetry. The popularity of Bush Poetry at Tamworths Longyard Hotel is ever increasing with most of the audience taking in the whole weekend, from 7pm. Friday night to 3pm. on the Sunday, and still they wanted more.

Greater media interest has been shown than ever before. Nick and Jill Erby recorded the 'Jim Haynes Best of the Bush Concert' live for future use in their radio productions; Jon Farkas of Capital News covered the whole weekend and is looking for more news and poetry from Association members. Country Update was also represented.

The John Derum workshop was most valuable to old and new poets alike, with many ideas and criticisms emanating from his wealth of knowledge. I thoroughly enjoyed John's performance on the Saturday night; and haven't stopped reading C.J. Dennis since.

Congratulations to Dave de Santi and all the Illawarra mob for the success of their inaugural Kiama folk festival on the long-week-end in June. Plenty of fun, music, dance and most of all, plenty of Bush Poetry for everyone..

In response to my letter of April, a number of people have been in touch with me in one way or another, with a couple of replies published.

Most were in favour of my views and I am grateful for their observations and their comments. Some went beyond the point that I tried to make.

The point that I made, and thought was clear at the time, was that a number of poets had complained to me that they were not availed the space or the time to perform at Jamberoo, many stating this to be true of other festivals.

I may have been misread when I said that competitions were to blame, where I really meant to emphasise the fact that the competitive nature derived from competitions was a problem. Some egos become inflated with wins in minor events.

In this issue we have a letter from Murray Hartin which contains some valuable points for consideration.

I do not entirely agree with his suggestion that competitions be left to newcomers alone. In my opinion, if we are to have competitions, we need Open Sections for the experienced poets, and it is absolutely necessary for organisers to ensure that they hold Novice competitions as well, and by all means where possible, Junior Competitions.

If competition is going to lead to national and International representation, we need our best. (Professional or amateur).

Some letters addressed to me, and some personal contacts, all stated that the

only time they are given a chance to perform is at a competition, where they have paid their entry fee and know that they will be called upon.

This I can see is true, but I wonder why these same people have not been given a hearing at other non-competitive venues.

I have seen many poets in competitions who are not at all in the calibre of some of the other contestants, and although they may in many cases benefit from the competition experience as I did, some have not improved at all in the time that I have been aware of them.

No hard feelings here, but some have it and some do not. I wish them all well and hope that they truly enjoy what they are doing. This is what it is all about as far as I am concerned.

The main thing is that we are having a lot of fun and that the Bush Poetry is making great leaps forward with many enterprising performers making waves in the entertainment business.

I advise those who are not over happy with the efforts of organisers to take a little look at the goings on behind the scenes before making too many criticisms. It is not all beer and skittles. Successful concerts and festivals are planned well in advance. Many performers expect to be given prime spots and only turn up on the day. It doesn't always work that way.

I think the air has been blueed enough with this issue. We should now call it quits and press on towards bigger and better things.

If problems still exist, write to the committees involved and offer positive suggestions and comment. They can only benefit from your input, and I am sure they will listen.

We can't all be winners, but let's be grinnerers any way.

Regards, *Frank Daniel.*

—oooo—oooo—

The new, exciting **Camp Oven Bush Poetry Festival** will be held from 31st August to 1st September, 1996 at the Country Music Hall, North Pine Country Park, Petrie, Qld.

Organised by the North Pine Bush Poets Group in association with the Pine Rivers Shire Council, this festival of performed Australian Bush Poetry, will include both competitive and non-competitive elements.

Competitions will be held in the following categories: Juniors; Nervous Novices; Open Humourous and Open Serious (male and female sections).

A Camp Oven Dinner will be held on the Saturday evening and a traditional Poets breakfasts will be held at 8.30am. Sunday.

For further information send stamped addressed envelope to The Organiser Camp Oven Bush Poetry Festival. P.O. Box 5070, Strathpine Qld. 4500

5

The McFie Clan Society of Australia has announced details of the fourth annual written poetry competition conducted by the society

Mr. Bob McPhee, the Queensland Vice President of the McFie Clan Society of Australia announced that this year the competition has been expanded from one to two sections.

The first section is the '**John Dunmore Lang Poetry Prize**'.

Each poem is required to have a Celtic - Australian theme, preferably accenting our pioneers from 1st. settlement to Federation.

The second and new section is the '**Will Ogilvie Poetry Prize**' for Traditional Bush Verse. Entries must have **good rhythm and rhyme** and have an Australian theme.

Entry forms are available from Bob McPhee — 8 Jahn Drive, Glenore Grove, Q.4342 (074 66 5269)

Prizemoney totals \$400.00 with prizes awarded to three places in each section.

Prize winners will be announced at the Cunnamulla - Eulo Opal Festival at the Shire Hall, Cunnamulla on the 12th September.

Entries close - 29th. July 1996.

—000000—

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Write - in
BUSH VERSE
COMPETITION
Closes 8th July 1996
P.O. BOX 40 SURAT Q. 4417
Phone 076 265 103

Cooktown. Qld. Late news to hand advises that the Inaugural Endeavour Festival at Cooktown in North Queensland was a roaring success. Bush Poet, Ray Essary from Mullumbimby NSW, was the guest of honour with singer Denis 'Dingo' Dryden on the programme. Ray says that a number of new and talented poets turned up at this festival and it looks like being a real goer for next year.

Coming event.

Bush Poets Turnout
CANOWINDRA NSW.

28 - 29 Sept. 1996.

Poets Smoko - Concert - Breakfast.
More news next month.

MONTO MUSE.

A group of poets from Bundaberg, Monto, Gin Gin and Nerang gathered at the Monto Golf Club on the first of June for a poet's evening and to announce the winners of the Monto Cream Can Awards for written verse.

If any proof is required as to the power of poetry and the love of Monto-vites for this form of entertainment, Then it could not have been shown better than when the Co-ordinator of the ten day festival infiltrated the poet evening after eleven o'clock to plead with the crowd to come along to the cabaret evening being held in the town as they had almost nobody in attendance, as the entire social circle of Monto had turned out to see the poets, and not one person left.

Considering that some of these poets were performing for the first time in public, and all poets donated their time and travel to the fund raising event for the local hospital, this was truly a great achievement.

The Monto Cream Can Awards were set up by the late master himself, Charlee Marshall, and I am convinced that he would have been tickled pink to have seen the turnout and quality performances by a group of mainly novice poets. Congratulations to all involved, and particular to Betsy Chape and husband Brian who organized the evening and the catering. Congratulations also to the winners of the written competition who were:

1st.. Ellis Campbell of DUBBO with 'The riding Tearaway'

2nd..Betsy Chape of MONTO with 'The Drink Driver.'

CHARLEE MARSHALL ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD.

Ron Stevens of DUBBO with 'Road Block'

Juniors: Hayley St Ledger & Amanda Kearn both of MONTO.

Neil McArthur.

QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY.....BRISBANE.

SUNDAY 4th AUGUST.....11am to 1pm.....BISTRO COURT.

PERFORMANCE POETRY.

with BOBBY MILLER, SHIRLEY FRIEND, GLENNIE PALMER
and BUCKLEY'S CHANCE.

FROM THE MAILBOX.

Dear members.

After reading several correspondences on the direction of Bush Poetry, I thought I might air my views. Although there is a need to keep alive the traditional works of our past masters, there is also a great need to create modern bush legends and write of modern folk-heroes that influence this country today.

True, there are not enough poets keeping traditional practices alive, in fact, I have not heard of one modern day poet hanging themselves with the lash of thier stock-whip, although, God help me, I have seen some who should give it serious consideration, But at the same time, there are works arising that will live on in our poetic archives for many a generation.

I agree with Marco's comments of just how many poems can be written about horses or snakes, etc. We must find new ground that is still in the vain of our pioneering bards, yet reflect life as we see it now and to put forth those positive attitudes of what it means to be Australian.

A separte section of traditional poetry which is aged over fifty years sounds like a step in the right direction, but please don't discount the quality of the work being produced today.

For those in doubt, just take the time out to read some of the work of Ellis Campbell of Dubbo, or for that matter, of the late Charlee Marshall.

Yours in poetic sincerity.

Neil McArthur

BUNDABERG. QLD.

CHARLIEVILLE BUSH BALLADEERS.

P.O. Box 146 CHARLIEVILLE QLD 4470.

Invite you to their inaugural Bush Poetry Competition in conjunction with the BOONGA WOONGAROO FESTIVAL.

31st AUGUST & 1ST SEPTEMBER 1996.

Compared by well known Australian Poet

Mr John Major.....BARALABA

All categories of performance poetry, Open male, open female, Novice male / female, Junior male / female, Most Humorous

WRITTEN COMP. CLOSSES 31st JULY 1996.

For Official entry forms, rules, program etc SEND S.A.S.E to;
DALE LEARD. 31 WILDIE ST CHARLIEVILLE QLD 4470.

Keith McKenry recites a poem; I WANT TO GO TO MORROW
Keith will be surprised to learn that some American plagiarized his poem in 1960. It is interesting to read what the American poet wrote, so students of poetry history can compare the two versions. The American words were printed in the Western Australian Railway Institute Magazine in 1960.

(Morrow, Ohio, U.S.A. is a small town about forty miles north of Columbus, in the central part of that state.

I WANT TO GO TO MORROW.

I started on a journey just about a week ago,
For the little town of Morrow, In the state of Ohio,
I never was a traveller, and really didn't know.
That Morrow had been ridiculed a century or so.

I went down to the station for my ticket, and applied
for trips regarding Morrow, not expecting to be guyed,
Said I; "My friend, I want to go to Morrow, and return,
Not later than tomorrow for I have no time to burn."

Said he, to me "Now let me see, if I have heard you right,
You want to go to Morrow and come back tomorrow night,
To go from here, to Morrow, and return is quite a way,
You should have gone to Morrow yesterday, and come back today.

If you started yesterday to Morrow, don't you see?
You could have gone to Morrow, and returned today at three,
The train that started yesterday, Now understand me right!
Today it gets to Morrow, and returns tomorrow night."

Said I; "My boy, it seems to me your talking through your hat,
Is there a town called Morrow on your line, Now tell me that?"

"There is." said he, "and take from me a quiet little tip,
To go from here to Morrow is a fourteen hour trip.
And the train that goes to Morrow, leaves today, 8.35,
And at half past ten tomorrow, is the time it should arrive.
Now, if from here to Morrow, is a fourteen hour jump.
Can you go today to Morrow, and come back today? You chump!"

Said I; "I want to go to Morrow, and can I go today?
And get to Morrow by tonight, if there is no delay?"

"Well, Well!" said he, "explain to me, and I've no more to say,
Can you go anywhere tomorrow, and come back today?
You should have started not today, but yesterday, you see,
So if you start to Morrow, leaving here today, your flat
You won't get into Morrow, till the day that follows that!
Now if you start today to Morrow, It's a cinch you'll land,
Tomorrow into Morrow, not today, you understand

For the train today to Morrow, If the schedule's right,
Will get you into Morrow, about tomorrow night,"

Said I; "I guess you know it all, but kindly let me say,
How can I go tomorrow, if I leave the town today?
For the train that goes to Morrow, is a mile upon it's way
I was so disappointed, I was mad enough to swear.
The train had gone to Morrow, and left me standing there,
No man was right in telling me, I was a howling Jay,
I didn't go to Morrow, So I guess I'll go today.

Western Australian Railway
Institute Magazine. 1960.
from Denis Kevans. WENTWORTH FALLS N.S.W.

GREETINGS FROM VICTORIA.

Firstly, thank you to the many people who gave me possitive feedback for the comments I made in last month's newsletter. It is gratifying to know so many appreciate it when you lay a few cards on the table.

Not a lot to report from Victoria. Once again I've been north of the border, mainly with the Man from Ironbark show. Yes it's still going strong, with several shows in Tamworth, then working my way south to Grenfell and on to Snowy river territory at Corryong and the delightful area of Greta. It was great to be performing in Grenfell except for the cold temperatures. My father, grandfather and great grandfather all lived at Grenfell. Lawson and Paterson also spent some time in the area, so, I have a special love for the area, and the hospitality of the Grenfell folk is second to none.

Thanks also to the Bush Poets who keep on turning up to show their support, including Noel Cutler, Bob Healey and Jan Lewis.

Noel Cutler, John Major, Gary Fogarty and John Philipson are set to take Victoria (and a little of NSW) by storm with their Poets in the Pub Gang tour commencing on the 22nd June.
(see elsewhere in magazine for full agenda).

Keep smiling, Geoffrey Graham (The Bealiba Bulladeer.)

This poem is based on a true story of Mary Watson, an early Australian settler, who, with her baby boy died of thirst while trying to escape from Aborigines.

GOODBYE. by Kacey Leard.

My boy is dying, I can feel it in my heart,
I've done my best to save him, I don't want us to part.
All we need is water, I wish that it would rain,
Just enough to wet his little head and ease his aching pain.

Many, many years ago I had a little dream,
Just to have a baby boy and hear his little scream,
Now all my hopes have vanished as he slowly fades away,
My wish for him is just to live to see another day.

Now his little eyes are closing, It's time to say goodbye,
I'll lay down here beside him and hope I quickly die.
(Winner: Primary section. Bronze Swagman.....Winton 96.

KYABRAM & DISTRICT BUSH VERSE GROUP.

The ABPA members that formed this group have held their first A.G.M. and now have 20 plus members from Kyabram, Echuca, Shepparton & Croydon. Meetings are held every 2 months. They have promoted shows recently of 'The Man from Ironbark' with Geoffrey Graham and a performance by Jim Haynes at the Plaza Theatre. The next effort will be in conjunction with the local Apex Club. An 'Around the Campfire' night on September 12th 96. (all welcome!) So if you are in the Kyabram district why not drop a line to the president Grahame 'Skew Wiff' Watt and help to support their efforts in bush poetry. K.D.B.V.G. RMB 2050 Kyabram Vic. 3620.

BALADRAMA

Full stage production of lighting and sound effects.

Australian yarns and bush poetry.

Anecdotal presentation in an Outback setting.

POETS IN THE PUB GANG.

**with, NOEL CUTLER, JOHN MAJOR, JOHN PHILIPSON
GARY FOGARTY.**

Wangarratta	22/6/96 (matinee)	Mullengandera	26/6/96
Maldon	22/6/96 (night)	Albury	27/6/96
Beechworth	23/6/96	Shepparton	28/6/96
Bright	24/6/96	Milawa	29/6/96

Info & Bookings: Noel Cutler.....(057) 273426.....



**THE NATIONAL COUNTRY MUSIC MUSTER
IS PROUDLY PRESENTED BY**

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FUN ? OR RIVALRY?"

Corry de Haas

It was my mate Charlee, who first introduced me to poetry through a little monthly magazine he put out, called 'SLOPE'.

Contributions came from all parts of the country and the one restriction Charlee put on us all: the poems had to be fun. From that monthly leaflet I gleaned some knowledge about writing verse and it wasn't long before I too started to compose my first serious efforts, much to Charlee's chagrin, who patiently fixed up my sometimes disastrous metre, not to mention my terrible scanning, all due to my Dutch background!

Through his encouragement I persevered and on attending my first Henry Lawson weekend in Gulgong 1991 I was hooked.

The Adelaide Folk Festival in 1992 opened up a whole new world for me and I thought all my Christmasses had come at once! A three day Celebration of verse, and to top it all saw me winning the Poetry Plaque at the poet's dinner with my poem 'Whispers of the Past'. With it safely secured in my bag I flew home; I didn't even need a plane!

Since that glorious one-time moment my husband and I have attended several festivals in Longreach, Tamworth, back to Gulgong once again, with me writing poetry ever since. Some good, some published, some for me alone. At all these gatherings I've always been welcomed.

Sure, there were some looks of ; "What's that Dutch-woman doing here?" which I understood. After all my background doesn't do much for Bush-verse! Since I shakely recited my work at that first poets breakfast, I have met some special people, and above all these weekends have been FUN. There were lots of laughter, sometimes a few tears, but true to life the two go to-gether.... I too consider these impromptu recitations the best part of the weekends.

Whats all this leading up to?.....Through Bush Poetry you have revived some precious part of your heritage. Of the time when people gathered around the fire and recited verse to while away the time on a cold winter-night. To be to-gether, to forget about their problems for an hour or so. I feel that 'To be together' are the key words here!

So, don't let a too competitive spirit spoil it all.

On several occasions Charlee spoke to me about some misgivings as to where the festivals were going.

As one friend wrote to me, "Poetry is a strange thing, and I can't really understand what it is.....but it has some weird magic, that goes through the meaning of the words into the feeling of the heart.... It brings those who love it very close together....."

AS Glenny Palmer said so beautifully in her poem: 'Legacy' and Gary Fogarty in his 'Those who shared the stage' All writers have a legacy to leave, there is room on stage for everybody!

THE CUP.

The air is crisp, the days are cool, and winters almost here,
And deep inside I feel the urge that haunts me every year;
For all across the states the festivals fire up
When poets come from near and far competing for the cup!

Cloncurry, somewhere in the west, is added to the list,
And it breaks my heart to think of all the others I have missed
For distances the way they seem are just too bloomin' far,
And what is worse, I'm sad to say, this lass don't drive a car!

It's not too long ago we flew to Longreach for the show,
And I feasted on the poems of the friends I came to know;
When proud performers of the bush stood up and spoke with zeal,
And put in words the very thoughts and harmony I feel.

Oh, yes, we went to Tamworth for "The poems 'round the fire,"
Which lit the flame of fantasy and urged me to aspire,
To greater words and greater rhymes than anyone could write,
So that in time I could take part MY verses to recite.....

Their very words awake me in the quiet hours of night,
And I'll compose the stanzas as creation takes flight;
And my words will echo those of yours, who stood upon the stage,
Until at last it's written down.... I filled another page.

This year however I'll miss out on laughter and a tear,
For my other half-determined man-is 'Gonna stay RIGHT HERE!
So poetry is out this time, no flying, or driving up,
For hubby is a soccer fan.... He'll watch the EURO CUP!!!!

Corry de Haas.

Helensvale QLD.

MOUNT ISA WRITERS ASSOCIATION INC. WRITERS COMPETITION 1996.

Short story 3000 words max. Non Fiction Article 2000 words max.
POETRY 120 LINES MAXIMUM.

Closing date31st JULY 1996 Entry fee
\$5 ADULT \$2 CHILD.

SEND BUSINE SIZE S.A.S.E. FOR RULES AND CONDITIONS.

TO; MIWA COMPETITION. MT ISA WRITERS ASSOC. INC.
P.O. Box 2781 MT ISA QUEENSLAND 4825.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

Dear sir,

It appears that people are beginning to philosophise on the meaning and purpose of Bush Verse. This debate, of course, is very healthy and good for the cause.

That's how democracy works, so I thought I might throw in my Two bob's worth with the enclosed piece of verse.

THE COMPETITION.

I don't like competitions, I'll not partake in strife,
For I enjoy my poetry and I've done it all my life,
I don't want fame and fortune or the burdon of great wealth,
For a poet is a poet when he's happy with himself.

I share my little talent with a few of my best friends,
They control my ego, though they try not to offend,
Some Ho & Hum and listen, whilst others take a pill,
I prattle on regardless 'till I think they've had their fill.

When I've finally finished, some yawn while others snore,
They don't applaud or comment or they know they'll get more.
They do not give me prizes but they mark me I believe,
I know that I'm a failure when they get up and leave.

Still I'm happy and contented, I could think of nothing worse
Than a life that's full of burden without the joy of verse,
Though rivalry is healthy, one-upmanship's not wise,
I'm happy with my poetry and I don't need a prize.

Rhubard. 96 c

editors note; This letter arrived with no return address
but it reflects the current discussion on performance
poetry and competitions.

"SKEW WIFF " KELLY.

Book of Bush Verse by Grahame Watt
And (new) Cassette Tape: 'SKEW WIFF' Verse & Yarns.
Book and Tape each \$13.50 Mailed.
Send to: G. WATT RMB 2050 KYABRAM Vic. 3620.

Profile.... Carmel Dunn. Carmel Dunn, born on the 22nd of March 1983, is the youngest child of Maureen and Tom Dunn of Warwick Qld.

She attended St. Marys School, Warwick for her primary education and is now in secondary school at Scots P.G.C. College.

Carmels first poetry recital was at a St. Vincent De Paul Christmas Party where she recited a couple of short poems taught by her grandfather.

In January 1994, her father purchased a **Mark Giori** cassette of bush poetry at Tamworth. Carmel was taken by this tape and '**Granny and the Snake**' was her favourite. She recited it at the Big Gympie Muster in 1994.

Members of the Warwick Country Music Club gave her much encouragement and she responded by learning a new poem every fortnight.

The W.C.M.C. annually holds a 'Star Search' competition and in 1994 the eleven year old Carmel placed second in the under 18 years section against all comers, dancers, singers and musicians alike.

In 1995 she won the 'Star Search' award reciting **Bobby Millers** great poem '**The Will**'. Carmel followed this up with wins in the junior sections at The Jondaryan (Qld) Woolshed Competition in 1994 and 1995.

At the Waltzing Matilda Centenary Celebrations at Winton, Qld. in 1994 she took out the Australian Junior Championships, and reached the finals in the Open Banjo Paterson Reciting at the same festival with 'Johnsons Antidote'.

Returning to Winton in April this year Carmel won the Junior reciting and also took out the **Little Swaggie Award** for written verse with her poem '**Sunset**'.

At thirteen years, Carmel is a much sought after local performer and has appeared at many functions, such as the Mayors Charity Concert, the Care for Kids Concert, Warwick Hospital Benefits, Senior Citizens and Friends in Action groups.

This year she was the guest speaker at the Quota Club changeover dinner and appeared with Marco at the opening of the St. Marys Art Exhibition.

Junior Theatre is a new love of Carmels and Rita McIvor trains her in speech and drama each week. The past two years have seen her attending the two-week summer schools at the McGregor College, Toowoomba University.

Appearances in 'The Best of the Bush' with Bob Miller, Gary Fogarty and Glenny Palmer and at the Quart Pot Gatherings in Brisbane have given Carmel a lot more exposure to some very receptive audiences.

This year in the **Australia Day Celebrations**, Carmel was announced the winner of the **Junior Citizen of the Year Award** in Warwick.

She extends her gratitude to the many Poets who have taken her under their wing for their support and encouragement.

The Sunset.

By Carmel Dunn.©

Have you ever seen a sunset
Where the golden colours blaze,
Have you ever humped Matilda
And lived by old bush ways.
Have you ever spent a peaceful night
Just staring at the stars,
Away from bustling city life
With its office blocks and cars.
When you live out in the country
The air you breath is pure,
The life you live is comfortable
You couldn't wish for more.
'Cept to live your life as best you can
And count your blessings all,
The land is hard; but you are strong
You'll battle through it all.
The scenic view, the wide brown land
So often parched with drought,
The seasons have no pattern there
No one can work them out.
There's drought and fiersome fires
And wind and flooding rain,
The farmer gives a little sigh
And plants his crops again.
Yes the farmers out there everywhere
Will toil and till the earth.
They love the land on which they live
And try to prove its worth.
So, have you ever seen a sunset
Where the golden colours blaze,
Have you ever humped Matilda
And spent many happy days —
Away in the outback;
Where the sky and mountains meet.
If you've never seen it's beauty,
Then you've missed out on a treat.

The Fireside Festival. 1996. The most successful **Fireside Festival** ever was conducted at the **Longyard Hotel, Tamworth** on the first weekend in June.

On the Friday night, Jim Haynes led the way through a very busy and tightly scheduled **'Poets in the Pub'** with such tried and true performers as Glenny Palmer, Shirley Friend, Bobby Miller, Gary Lowe, Ray Essary, Gary Fogarty, and John Philipson — featuring the Poets Brawl with Frank Daniel.

The 'Brawl' ended in an eventual dead heat with the winners being, Ray Essary of Mullumbimby NSW and Gary Fogarty of Millmerrin Q.

The next morning an open microphone session was compered by John Philipson where a number of new and not so new poets were given the chance to perform.

ABPA Secretary Ron Selby who made the long Coach trip down from Drayton Q. was among those performing.

Most impressive of the new voices found this year was Trevor Kuchel from Nerang Qld. We should hear a lot more of Trevor in the future.

From 11am a **'Kids' Concert'** proved that the future of Bush Poetry was in good hands as Carmel Dunn and Alli Ryan tied for first in the Secondary Schools section,

Paddy Ryan and Dianna Erby equal scored for first in the Senior Primary, whilst Catherine Payne and Danny Binns could not be separated in the Juniors.

Judge of the Junior section was none other than noted actor and poet John Derum from the Blue Mountains of NSW, who found it impossible to separate the young winners.

At Midday the **Yarn Event** (It only takes 60 minutes) had Frank Daniel busy finding the biggest liars in the Longyard. Again the judges, Doris and Des Lee, from Tenterfield came up with a tie and Kathy Edwards from Newcastle and John Philipson of Tamworth equal scored.

The **'Jim Haynes Best of the Bush Concert'** was held in the afternoon with Nick Erby as compere. This segment was recorded by Nick and Jill Irby for later use in their Hoedown Network programmes heard all over Australia. Regular listeners to the Jamboree should keep an ear open for more poetry news from Nick Erby. Featured artists were, Jim, Glenny, Shirley, John, the two Garys, Ray and Frank.

A great step forward for the Bush Poets; a sign they are being recognised as a true art form; as entertainers in their own right.

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The Weelabarabak CWA ladies held a delightful '**Afternoon Tea and Scones**' special. Glenly Palmer, Philipa Powell, Shirley Friend, Linda Scott and 'Jane Elahi' (Fogarty) romped through a great feat of poetry, song and dance, (the thumbs in pocket style)

Another hour of 'open mike' followed with some top performances under the whip of John Philipson.

The **Fireside Festival Galah Concert** and **Celebrity Night** was a big feature this year with two more poets being recognised and inducted to the **Wall of Renown** at the Longyard.

Gary Fogarty of Millmerrin Qld. and **Ray Essary** from Mullumbimby N.S.W. are now up there among the greats for all to see.

A special tribute to the late **Charlee Marshall** was given by Jim Haynes, Marion Fitzgerald, John Philipson and Frank Daniel.

A feature of the night was a special performance from John Derum, actor and poet.

John has a unique style of interpretation, and brought many C.J. Dennis characters to life, showing an entirely new perspective to poetry reading.

Sunday morning saw a well attended workshop conducted by John Derum.

Much of his experience in presentation and performance was unselfishly passed on to his enthusiastic class.

Queensland, led by Bobby Miller of Mungar (Qld) was victorious in the highly acclaimed **State of Origin** against N.S.W.

With Shirley Friend, Carmel Dunn, Trisha Anderson, Glennie Palmer and Gary Fogarty on his team, they were formidable combatants against the Cockroaches led by Frank Daniel, with John Philipson, Gary Lowe, Jim Haynes, Ray Essary and Graeme Johnson.

Referee (???) for this very important match was **Graham ('Skew-wiff Kelly') Watt** of Kyabram Vic. who immediately won the hearts of the NSW team when he announced that he didn't know the rules of Rugby League.

(Something will have to be done in future about using Mexicans for adjudicators.)

In all, the State of Origin was acclaimed by far the most enjoyable part of the weekend.

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Kiama Folk Festival report next month..... 000

From Murray Hartin...(excepts from a long letter). Judging by the correspondence within the pages of this magazine in recent issues there seems to be a bit of tension in the air in bush poetry circles regarding a number of subjects - value of competitions, the make-up of competitions, the spirit of the poetry movement, plagiarism, pressures etc.

What the bush poetry movement has experienced over the past ten years or so is what the medical fraternity would describe as growing pains. The success and expansion of bush poetry throughout Australia during this period is something all poets, administrators, competition organisers and supporters should be proud of.

I was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time in Tamworth in 1987 to pick up first place in the original section of the inaugural competition with John Philipson being a popular winner of the traditional category.

While John's win was richly deserved, anyone who was at the Longyard that year in June Smyth's back yard would recall the original finalists were a nervous collection of less than polished performers, I had a lot of friends in the audience and applause had a lot of bearing on the outcome.

The important aspect for me was not so much the winning, but the fact I had managed to make the final which provided the encouragement to keep going, to the point where I am battling away trying to make a full-time career of poetry in Sydney - it's a long hard slog but I am starting to make progress.

You may well ask "What's the bloody point?" There are a couple.

The first poetry in Tamworth as part of the Country Music Festival has come a long, long way since that January afternoon in 1987. I'm not familiar with the evolution of such events in other parts of the country, but at Tamworth, through the vision of Jim Haynes and June Smyth, the efforts of the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group and the talent of the Mark Glioris, Charlee Marshalls, Marion Fitzgeralds, Gertrude Skinners, John Philipsons et al, we soon had a nucleus of performers who warranted a lot more stage time. And the audiences demanded it. Thus was born the Bush Poets Breakfasts at the Longyard and eventually the June Fireside Festival.

The breakfast have progressed to a situation where Jim has had to limit the number of performers each morning. Done purely by way of practicality and logistics. It truly was a nightmare to organise.

Consequently, over the years many 'new voices' missed out or had limited opportunity. Some tended to air their displeasure publicly and there was an element of disharmony. What was the solution?

The truth is, nobody really knew. There was no precedent, no rule of thumb to go by. The crowds had become enormous, the number of 'talented poets' worthy of a five-minute spot had increased dramatically and yet there was no text book to tell us what to do next.

The use of the term 'talented poets' here is by no means elitist, but talent was a yardstick used to keep the Longyard breakfasts at a level of performance to which the audience had become accustomed.

It is fair to say these morning performances had developed from low-key, laid-back affairs where often the poets were the biggest part of the crowd to a point where the Longyard Breakfasts are now full-on concerts before audiences that have exceeded one thousand people.

To overcome the problem of people 'missing out' in Tamworth, the June Fireside Festival emerged, courtesy of Jim and June, with workshops, concerts and good fun for all and sundry.

In 1993, Mark Gliori, Bobby Miller and myself undertook a tour of Northern N.S.W. performing at many country centres. The crowds weren't great, we made a little money — which was a pleasant experience — and by the end of the tour we had quite a tight little show put together.

We didn't know what we were doing, again there was little or no precedent, we didn't know what to expect but we had a lot of fun and we learnt some valuable lessons. The point being, that we got out and had a go, tested the water, made some mistakes, and have since had a number of trips together, learning all the way and with different degrees of financial success. It was something we felt we had to do.

In January 1995, due to the aforementioned pressures on Jim, I, with a lot of help, conducted two night time shows at the Heritage theatre with nine poets featured. This year we cut back to four poets and a singer, which we thought provided a better balance. It was a tough job telling people that they weren't on the show this year and I had a better understanding of Jim's annual traumas as a result.

But if we look at Tamworth this year, there were two competitions, the Longyard Breakfasts, the CWA girls at the Retreat Theatre, and three separate shows at the Heritage Theatre, with Preachers Poets and Liars - Geoffrey Graham's Man from Ironbark show and his night time show featuring Noel Cutler, Bob Magor and Frank Daniel. That's a far cry from 1987.

Nobody has to miss out. But instead of complaining, get in and organise something as there is room for everybody.

It is my belief competitions should be for the non-professionals, the newcomers, the one-timers and the hobby poets as an avenue to help discover their craft. It is important for everyone to be given the opportunity to experience the thrill of making the final and thus provide the catalyst to go on to bigger and better things.

I can remember when Bobby Miller was too shy to recite. But he did get up, he did make the finals, and the metamorphosis of the 'Mungah Maggot' has been remarkable.

If competition organisers wish to stack their heats in order to have a final full of established poets then the Bobby Millers of the future miss the thrill of the final and maybe even lose the desire to push further with their craft.

You can't pit Lawson against Paterson, Ogilvie against Dennis, Gliori against Miller and expect to achieve a result that will please everyone and be without argument, so at an experienced level, in my view, competitions serve little purpose.

As Leigh Brown said in May, competitions are an all or nothing proposition for established poets and probably cause more stress and heartache than they're worth.

It's a personal decision, but I do believe established poets should at some time make the commitment to step aside from competitions to allow other poets the same opportunity that they have received.

We are all lucky enough to be part of the poetry resurgence. In many ways it can be seen as a new, or rediscovered, frontier in the world of entertainment.

Let's ensure the decisions we make and the paths we choose to take are for the benefit of all poets and for bush poetry in general - but don't be afraid to test the water.

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ON THE SICK LIST THIS MONTH.

Bill Hay has had another operation on his Knee and is in Ward 41 of the Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital in Brisbane and I'm sure all ABPA members will wish him a speedy recovery. editor.

1996

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