

# ABPA

Australian Bush Poets Association  
Volume 29 No. 6 December/January 2023/24



*Christmas 2023 Edition*





# **The Famous Longyard Bush Poets Breakfasts**

***Longyard Hotel  
Goonoo Goonoo Room***



***TCMF January 2024***

**Featuring  
Australia's Finest and  
Funniest Storytellers**

**Hosted by Neil McArthur and featuring Marco Giori, Gary Fogarty,  
Murray Hartin, Ray Essery, Errol Grey, Alan Glover, Rhonda Tallnash, Joey  
Reedy, Bill Kearns plus Special Guests**

***Sat 20th, Sun 21st, Tues 23rd Wed 24th, Thurs 25th Frid 26th and Sat 27th***

**\$15 per head**

**Breakfast Available**

**Tickets can be prebooked at Bottleshop and venue or available at door**

# President's Report

It has been a busy time for bush poetry over the last couple of months with the most recent event being the New South Wales Bush Poetry Competition in Guyra.

Prior to Guyra the, Western Australian Bush Poetry Championships were held in Toodyay in early November and were well received.

The Victorian Bush Poets and Musicians Association had a get together at Broken Creek near Benalla and it was a fun weekend. Those attending commented that it was nice occasionally having a party without competition and all said that they would attend any such future events. The combination of music and poetry at a get together such as that creates a more fun event.

Speaking of music, we have just returned from a short trip to Bedourie in western Queensland conducting ukelele workshops for the children from the small schools at Birdsville, Windorah, Jundah and Stonehenge.

The children are brought to Bedourie with the prime aim of teaching them to swim. The small town has a wonderful undercover pool and the program is called Splash and Arts. The program is run over three days and the kids camp in the town hall which is huge. There were a total of forty five participants and they loved it. The workshops culminated in a swimming carnival and concert where the kids could show what they had learnt.

Tamworth is the next big festival and the ABPA will be conducting the Frank Daniels Awards again in the same vein as last time.

The Victorian Bush Poetry Championship will be held in 2024 in conjunction with The Man From Snowy River Festival in Corryong on the eleventh to the fourteenth of April.

Poets breakfasts are a core part of most country music festivals and bush poetry is as well loved and received as it ever has been.



Onwards and Upwards for  
Bush Poetry  
Tim Sheed

## ABPA Magazine Advertising Rates

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### Black and White Ads

Full page \$95

Half Page \$55

Quarter Page or less \$35

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Quarter Page not available

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President	-- Tim Sheed	president@abpa.org.au
Vice-President	-- David Stanley	dstanle5@outlook.com
Secretary	-- Meg Gordon	meggordon4@bigpond.com
Treasurer	-- Christine Middleton	treasurer@abpa.org.au

### Members on Committee:

Manfred Vijars	manfred@rocketfrog.com.au
Tom McLveen	thepoetofoz@gmail.com
Ray Essery	raymondessery@gmail.com

### State Reps

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### Non Committee Positions

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

### **Poets Calendar and Regular Events free (one or two lines only)**

To help offset costs, articles regarding a festival or event would be appreciated if accompanied by a paid Ad. Send all details in plain text, Word or PDF Format to [editor@abpa.org.au](mailto:editor@abpa.org.au)

All payments to be made within 14 days to

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## **Next Magazine Deadline is January 31st 2024**



# Where the Men of Endurance Ride

© Brenda Joy

Winner 2023 King of the Ranges Bush Poetry Competition, Murrurundi, NSW

In our Outback land, swept by desert sand  
where the bones of the beasts lie bleached,  
here the south wind's wail moans a lonely tale  
of a goal that was never reached.  
This is where he died, where the bull oaks sighed  
and the howl of the dingo mourned,  
on the droving trail to the southern rail  
where ambitions of men were scorned.

What had brought him here to absorb the fear  
that the fire of the camp allays?  
Did the cattle bells cast their haunting spells  
over saddle-sore weary days?  
Had the night-watch song where all dreams belong  
lured this drifter to leave his home,  
to become a part of Australia's heart  
where the lovers of freedom roam?

We can't really learn just what made him yearn  
to traverse through this wide expanse,  
yet the desert speaks to a soul that seeks  
like the strains of a lost romance,  
for its spirit cries under cobalt skies  
that expand over gibber plains...  
in the song-line sound of the blood-tinged ground  
where the Dreamtime of myths remains...

...in the early dawn of a silent morn  
when a palette of pastel tone  
paints the wave like sands as the light expands  
to the ridge monoliths enthrone...  
when the land's ablaze in the sunset's rays  
as the orb and horizon meet...  
when the rising moon brings a heart in tune  
with the rhythm of Outback's beat.

Modern rovers quest in the land out west  
for the solitude drovers knew  
so as time and means fuel adventure's schemes  
empty places are all too few.  
But as season's chill stirs an eerie thrill  
from a resonance deep within,  
here a sense of awe, seldom felt before,  
permeates through our pit-stop din

I can almost hear in the atmosphere  
from the stones where his bones now lie,  
that this drover's free where he loved to be  
in his realm of the endless sky.  
So we leave him there in the pristine air  
to the peace that his spirit's found  
for our wheels intrude on the mystic mood  
that exudes from his sacred ground.

Storytellers weave from the threads that leave  
them to feel what our forebears faced  
and each eulogy is a legacy  
to the lives hardy souls embraced.  
On Australia's page, so the droving age  
is a part of our nation's pride.  
Though the era's past, yet the legends last  
where the men of endurance ride.



# Emerging Shadows

© Tom McLveen

*Traditional Verse Winner- Sutherland Shire Literary Competition 2023*

"Come and walk beside me brother, come and take a stroll with me,  
on a road less travelled and less understood.  
Let me show you things that ordinary people never see  
on suburban streets beyond their neighbourhood.  
Come and walk a mile in battered shoes with soles as bare as those  
who emerge like hungry shadows from the street.  
They are vacant eyed and draped in someone else's shabby clothes,  
wearing someone's battered shoes upon their feet.

If you stop awhile and gaze into the pool of vacant eyes,  
you may see a memory that stirs within;  
for behind the faded curtain and the dingy, grey disguise,  
there's a soul that bears an unforgotten sin.  
If you look a little deeper you will see emotion there -  
a reflection of what was and could have been.  
Could it be regret or shame concealed behind that vacant stare,  
for the boy who ruled the streets at seventeen?

He was once a fearless hooligan – the king of Sydney Town,  
and was known from Caringbah to La Perouse.  
Though he'd had no throne or royalty, he'd worn the kingdom's crown,  
till he'd hocked it for amphetamines and booze.  
If you drop a coin into his jar he'll conjure up a smile  
and begin to blow a tune for you and dance.  
With his rusty old harmonica he'll warble for while,  
and then disappear into another trance.

Come and meet the quirky lady who emerges right on cue  
from behind a shroud of plastic bags and lace.  
She was once a wife and mother, and a ballerina too...  
in another world, another time and place.  
You might think that she's peculiar, a little odd perhaps...  
in her battered shoes and multicoloured rags.  
She is scavenging for cigarettes and rotting kitchen scraps,  
from a garbage filled with empty cans and bags."

They reminded me of someone from my early childhood days...  
could it be a faded memory of me?  
Or perhaps another shadow seen emerging from the haze -  
a reflection of what was and what could be?  
I have walked a mile in battered shoes and tasted bitter wine,  
on forgotten streets beyond my neighbourhood.  
I have walked with those whose journeys were on steeper paths than mine -  
on the road less travelled and least understood.



## JUDGE'S COMMENT

This poem displays an assured use of rhyme and scansion – the reader can relax in the knowledge that they're in good hands. Within this secure structure, an interesting narrative skilfully unfolds, including imagery that is both vivid and instantly familiar. The poet makes good use of colloquial language, and the poem is all the more moving for not being at all sentimental.

## AUTHOR'S COMMENT

I am absolutely thrilled and honoured to win this very prestigious award, and would like to sincerely thank Sutherland Shire for supporting, fostering and encouraging Australian poets and writers. My poem EMERGING SHADOWS, was inspired by a recent trip to Sydney, where we got to walk the streets of Sydney's CBD.

I was shocked to find homeless people literally living on the street, so far removed from life as we know it here in Port Macquarie. One man in particular, inspired me to write this poem, as I established a rapport with him by dropping a coin into his jar. He momentarily looked into my eyes to thank me, and in that moment I realised that he had once been somebody's brother, father, husband, son or friend.

# Best Dog

© 2023 Helen Harvey,

Winner of Drovers Camp Assn Inc Bronze Spur Award 2023

There's many a tale that old bushmen have told in the sheds, or on far distant tracks; around glowing campfires, when talk mostly turns to good horses, or working dog cracks. As flames dim to coals, you can hear the same tales that arrive about good ones they've seen, but always, it ends in agreement that one stands apart as the best dog there's been.

They say that a puppy old Ben had espied with some people just travelling by, was bought on that day, because he had believed in the spark he had seen in its eye. The man was endowed with the knowledge to train a young pup, with no need for constraints. The bonds were so strong with the canine and man that he never had use for restraints.

He called the pup Sailor, but would not admit that the Kelpie was close to his heart, and each day was spent with the puppy, and soon, it was seldom that they were apart. So, right from the start their connection was strong, and the bond grew in strength with each year. The man was so subtle with whistles he gave, or commands which were soft, but so clear.

The pup followed Ben and was one sniff away, from wherever he happened to be. So, years rolled on by and young Sailor had turned out to be the best sheep dog you'd see. The man with his Kelpie worked most days with stock on the stations, or outer bush tracks, till soon they were known as an unrivalled pair, and at top of the working team cracks.

One day when the Manager had been away, and had learned that dog trials were in town, he acted on impulse and entered them in, and had written both of their names down. So, Saturday came and they sat in the shade, while the other teams worked in their turn, but Sailor just lay near the tree next to Ben, and as if there was nothing to learn.

The scoring was high with some good work displayed, for one Kelpie had earned ninety-five. "A tough one to beat," said old Ben to himself, but a good dog called Floss would arrive to work like a champion, skillful and smooth, 'round the course for a ninety-eight score, as Ben wished in vain, he could somehow reverse his dog's age, back to when he was four.

A hush had descended and fell on the crowd as the final pair walked in that day. The man who was stooped with his hair nearly white, and the Kelpie with whiskers of grey; but had the crowd noticed, then they would have seen the blue eyes, that were clouded with age, and ears pricked alert, so he heard every word that his master had used to engage.

"I know you will do the best job that you can," said old Ben, and then walked to the start. The way that the pair stuck together, so close, had indeed captured everyone's heart. Three sheep were together at opposite ends of the grounds, where the man and dog stood. "Go way back now Sailor." Their time had begun, as old Ben hoped things went as they should.

The Kelpie was swift as he cast way out wide, then had stopped on Ben's whistle to wait; as if by telepathy, guided them straight on a line to his master and mate. The man walked around with the three sheep behind, while the dog had stayed working the rear, then, paused at the race that the sheep must go through, and unaided by Ben, standing near.

The leader then baulked, as it looked to escape, but had seen the fierce glint in the eye, of Sailor, who checked the reaction it showed, so had blocked it before it could try. He may lose a point at the time, Ben had thought, but dismissed it and praised the dog, then walked straight to the bridge that the sheep had to cross, as he talked to old Sailor again.

The crossing was faultless, so it would attract a good score for a perfect display. Now Ben was excited how Sailor had worked, and had felt optimistic that day. Ahead was the pen, and the last of the tasks, where the Kelpie would need all his will to yard the three smoothly, without any fuss, as full proof of his working dog skill.

The crowd fell to silence, as Sailor appeared to now work in a class of his own. He glided so smoothly as Ben gave commands, and his brilliance had surely been shown. Two sheep had been penned, but the third one ducked out to the edge of the penning yard wing; as quick as a flash the dog had turned it back, as applause swept around the show ring.

The man closed the gate on the sheep that were penned, but had known in his heart, they had lost. A slightest mistake at this level would see them pay dearly, and would bring a cost. The crowd had erupted with whistles and cheers as the man, and his canine walked out. Ben fondled the ears of old Sailor and said, "you are still the best boy that's about."

The scores were announced on the loudspeaker then, with old Sailor just one point behind. The younger dog Floss had come first on the day, which had made him the champion kind. "You got ninety-seven, old boy here today," as his weathered hands smoothed out the lay of hairs that were greying, and showing the years "but we missed by a point here today."

The owner of Floss made his way through the crowd to the tree, where the man and dog sat. They spoke for a while, shared a yarn and a smile, bid goodbye with a tip of each hat. He made his way back to the crowd, but before he could speak, he had stifled some tears. "You saw that old Kelpie and how he had worked - well, he's been blind for nearly two years."





# A Change of Heart

© Catherine Lee

Winner Bush Poetry section of the Laura Literary Awards competition 2023

The Northern Lights shone eerily that bitter, frigid night  
and winter winds came blustering to penetrate and bite.  
With snow predicted for the tops I wasn't feeling cheered—  
my Doona, Ugg boots, Driz-a-Bone had swiftly reappeared.  
The campfire's merry crackling was at least a heartening sound—  
its dancing flames illuminated shadows all around,  
creating an enchanting ambience that emphasized  
a sense of timeless beauty, whilst the heavens mesmerised.  
Reflecting on my sordid task, I skulled another beer—  
the job I'd picked up recently with orders crystal clear.

"They're pests and just destroy the land, it's true without a doubt.  
Just shoot 'em, mate, don't muck around - we need to wipe 'em out!"  
The troop would gather in the dawn; for now, was only three—  
just Billy Smith and Big Red Murphy, Bob Kincaid and me.  
I really hadn't wanted this repugnant ugly job,  
yet needed cash, so grudgingly accepted it from Bob.  
My mettle would be tested, I was pushed to see it through—  
despite my qualms I braced myself for what I had to do.  
Some say they threaten wildlife, wreck the rivers and the plain,  
while others say they're scapegoats, we should let them all remain....

A sudden movement in the trees revealed two eyes of brown!  
I reached towards my weapon while I tried to stare him down.  
But something stayed my hand because he didn't try to run,  
just held my gaze as if to force my focus from the gun.  
Unlikely though it sounds, he seemed perceptive and serene—  
most regal and impressive beast I thought I'd ever seen.  
Then gradually I realised that he was not alone;  
at least six others stood behind, their bodies still as stone.  
The brumbies' hides were coated with a sheen of silver frost.  
My finger stayed the trigger as I counted up the cost.

The sight they made was wonderful, held frozen there in time.  
Annihilating such a gift of nature seemed a crime!  
Big Red was wild. He swore and hissed, "That's not the way it's done!  
A sitting target! Get your act together - fire that gun!"  
I couldn't do it - sorrow filled my very soul with shame  
I'd ever thought to add the act of culling to my name.  
I fixed him with defiant stare and knew I'd not obey.  
"I tell you I won't do it mate; I don't care what you say.  
These beasts aren't hurting anyone, such slaughter can't be right—  
a sanctuary would make a better answer to their plight!"

I held the horse's eyes in almost mystical commune,  
at peace within the moment underneath the gibbous moon.  
My choice was made. Some things are worth far more than just a buck.  
I held my breath, esteeming his magnificence and pluck.  
Then suddenly he dipped his head and shook his silvered mane—  
a burst of frosty spray appeared like glistening drops of rain.  
He turned towards the others in a signal to retreat—  
they followed his command as he exhaled and stamped his feet.  
My admiration knew no bounds - this vision so impressed  
that deep within my spirit came conviction I'd been blessed.



# Conscripted Conflict

© Robert Davis

Vietnam War 50th Anniversary 2023

Young and green, standing tall and lean,  
Conscripted to battles unseen,  
In jeans and keen, headed to the obscene,  
Where things are mean, a war machine.

Young men enlist with closed fists,  
Loved ones kissed and will be missed,  
All to assist whilst the enemy persist,  
Do one's best to resist and seek to desist.

Without fear, volunteer for the sphere,  
They hear the unwanted approaches near,  
Not long if unabated they will appear,  
Up to the brave to make them disappear.

Into action, fighting with ignited might,  
Trying to remove the blight before in sight,  
Supported by belief in what is right,  
Attack the conflict with venom and spite.

Deafening moans, chiming sirens of warning,  
Wailing shells, metallic blasts greet morning,  
Metal pings and rings rattle and whistle,  
Thump, thump, stuttering rapid fire, hairs bristle.

Hot metal whistles through cold, crisp air,  
Smashing men and machine without care,  
Silence! Then sight of smoke puffs filling the air,  
Flashing weapons, acrid smell drowns atmosphere.

Smell of burnt sulphur's acrid bite,  
Signature of the blight's fight,  
Bombshells like bells ring out a death knell,  
Raising hell, some brave wishing farewell.

Fears and tears among the brave,  
Injury or close shave or one's grave,  
A shockwave, but it is peace we crave,  
At risk is the peace they're trying to save.

All hold steadfast, fighting abates at last,  
Skies may be overcast and spirits downcast,  
The toll of battle leaving all aghast,  
Through bullet and blast, all held fast.

Sun now shiny, things are bright,  
Would be a delight, but some robbed of sight,  
Chance to take breath and revive,  
Being thankful just to be alive and survive.

Where once young men in jeans were found,  
A saga of conscripted courage forever unbound,  
In battles unforeseen, they stood their ground,  
Legends carved in time, their valour renowned.





This month we have two more successful poems from the Cloncurry Poetry Prize (Junior) 2023. The theme was 'Outback Heroes' [cloncurryprize@cloncurry.qld.gov.au](mailto:cloncurryprize@cloncurry.qld.gov.au)



### **H.C. 2023 Cloncurry Junior RED DIRT HEROES by Kali Poch**

The car began to slow down, it was a 60 zone,  
Welcome to Cloncurry! - a new sign was just shown.  
Traversed thousands of kilometres;  
finally the outback is here,  
The sweet, homely red, maroon colours making it clear.  
Chucking off our thongs, we head to play in the dirt,  
The only way we'd stop - was when our feet hurt!  
Cloncurry was the place to be!  
The air felt fresh, the bird song free,  
What was here you didn't love,  
The roads, dams, sunset, all of the above,  
There's only one thing that puts Cloncurry  
on another level,  
The people! (And the Leichhardt special...)  
Not your ordinary outback mob,  
warriors they are, extra tough and on the job!

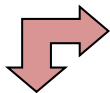
Through pouring days and massive floods,  
Everyone was stuck in mud.  
The flood had taken most of the cattle,  
they all know that it was a battle.  
Hand in hand we'll get there,  
nothing we can't fix, and there's nothing we can't bear.  
We're as tough as tough can get,  
working hard - we live in sweat!  
The loving community, always with their willing attitude,  
a town full of heroes, every single one.  
It's love in which you're lured,  
The kindness, care and honour they display,  
Over the years and everyday.

The Flying Doctors' Service gave us their wings,  
always here, when we'd ring.  
It all started when John Flynn,  
brought Cloncurry, into sight  
He's still with us on a twenty dollar note,  
that's him alright!

Right here in Cloncurry, there  
are heroes everywhere –  
The teachers with their words of wisdom,  
dedication in their heart,  
Striving for us to be our best, until we finally depart.  
The check-out workers, serving at the shops,  
your tasks are much appreciated,  
the hard work doesn't stop.  
To all the Councillors and staff,  
for making Cloncurry a great place,  
Helping to benefit our town, people and home –  
with such grace.

# Our Poetry Kids

with Brenda Joy



To all the busy doctors and nurses,  
For healing the sores and hurt - and pandemic bursts,  
and to all the mums and dads,  
for the true love and strength you gave,  
and always understand.

The Elders who keep us in harmony,  
reminding that land is Mother Nature.  
Historic district society who reminds us of our past.

Stories have yet to be written,  
Cloncurry's times have not passed.  
But as the Sun starts to fade at the end of each day,  
the glowing Moon begins to rise,  
colours beginning to play,  
You realise - this town, these skies, is where you fit in,  
in our little town, making such a big difference,  
but we've only started to begin.

© 2023, Kali Poch (at age 12 )

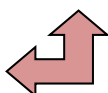
### **H.C. 2023 Cloncurry Junior DRY by Grace Huang**

On a dry, red day  
Burnt sienna, cracked clay  
Gums clinging onto the face of nature  
No tears from the creator  
The earth was dry.  
Copper iron gold  
The threadbare earth grew old  
With no water to revive it  
There was only the sound of silence  
And still the earth was dry.

A cloud or two  
Speckle the midday view  
Zero percent chance of rain  
Says the forecast again  
The outback was dry.  
The sky goes dark  
Overhead flies a lark  
It's not just the night  
Farmer's delight  
But still the earth was dry.

Adam's ale  
Slithers down the vale  
It starts to thunder  
A bushie's wonder  
The earth was no longer dry.  
Monsoon's present to us  
Ground no longer rough  
The billabong is full  
All thanks to you  
The earth was alive.

© 2023 @ Grace Huang (at age 11)



Cervantes.  
.Toodyay

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WA

## W.A. Bush Poets



& Yarnspinners Assn.



**WA State Champions**

(l to r) **Christine Boulton Overall Champion**

**Greg Joass and Bill Gordon**

**Joint Champion Yarnspinners**



**Original Serious Winners**

(l to r) **Peter Nettleton third, Christine**

**Boulton second Irene Conner first**



**Original Humorous Winners**

(l to r) **Rob Gunn and Christine Boulton equal second,**

**Roger Cracknell first**



**Traditional and Modern Winners**

(l to r) **Greg Joass third, Bill Gordon second,**

**Christine Boulton first**



Official presentation of **WA State Championship Awards** held in Toodyay with Shire President **Mick McKeon** with judges **Jeff Swain** (Perth), **Jim Lamb** (Young) and **Peter Blyth** (Albany) with WA President **Bill Gordon**



Poets who performed at recent **60th Anniversary** of the gazetting of township of **Cervantes**.

**Bill Gordon, Meg Gordon, Alan Aitken, Irene Conner** with **Cobber Lethbridge** and **Stinger Nettleton** in front.



# "'Twas the Night Before Christmas - A Parody."

© Peter White

'Twas the night before Christmas, grandkids making noise,  
talking excitedly of chocolates and toys.  
Our stockings were hung on our fake Christmas tree.  
Living in Queensland, there is no chimney.

Exuberant grandkids still noisy in bed,  
"Go to sleep now or no presents," I said.  
Mum in her nightie and me in my shorts  
settled down in the lounge room to have a few Ports.

All of a sudden out front came a clatter.  
I got up to see just what was the matter.  
Out of my chair to the window I flew  
to see what had caused this hullabaloo.

A full moon that night. So brightly it shone.  
I was able to see what the light fell upon.  
Extricating himself from my overturned bin  
Was my neighbour, Jim Wilson, sozzled agin.

Through the window I called, "Hey, Jim. What the hell!  
Pick up my bin and the rubbish as well."  
"I will in the morning," my neighbour replied.  
He couldn't stand upright however he tried.

So he crawled to his front door and tried every key  
but the door wouldn't open. Bewildered was he.  
It looked like he'd sleep on the doormat all night.  
He'd not feel a thing. He was really that 'tight'.

I took him a blanket and then tucked him in.  
I picked up the rubbish to put in my bin.  
Now very late, Mum and I both retired.  
But sleep wouldn't come. I was totally 'wired'.

I decided to play a trick upon Jim  
and put my Santa Claus costume on him.  
He didn't stir once, just gave a loud snore.  
He'd not been this "Brahms and Liszt" before.

I woke in the morning to a knock at my door.  
I looked at my clock. It was six twenty-four.  
Standing outside dressed as Santa was Jim.  
I couldn't help having a go at him.

"Hello there, Santa." I said, "lost your way?  
Where did you park your reindeer and sleigh?"  
"I came over," said Jim, "to pick up your bin,  
but I see the rubbish is already in."

"What happened last night? Look how I'm dressed"  
"You were really quite drunk and totally stressed.  
You needed to sleep it off there at your door.  
I covered you up That's what neighbours are for."

"I dressed you as Santa so you'd not cause alarm.  
You may be confused but I meant you no harm.  
You must face the music so home you must go."  
"Merry Christmas," said Jim, "and HO-BLOODY-HO!"





## BANJO PATERSON

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YEOVAL in CENTRAL WESTERN NSW



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Email: [alf@mulgabillfestival.com.au](mailto:alf@mulgabillfestival.com.au)  
43 Forbes Street, Yeoval NSW 2868  
Enquiries: 0427 208913 | 0458 464190



# **FOLLOW THE PATH TO MORE EFFECTIVE WRITING**

*with*  
**Irene Dalgety Timpone**

## **AMBIGUITY –** **WAYS TO RECOGNISE THIS HINDRANCE TO CLEAR WRITING,** **AND METHODS FOR AVOIDANCE OF THE PROBLEMS CAUSED**

There was a time, within the scope of my memory, when writers for the BBC were known to have lost their jobs for incorrect punctuation, faulty sentence construction and the misuse of pronouns. There was a reason for this. Incorrect and careless writing led to ambiguity, and the aim of the BBC – and the ABC at that time – was not to deceive the public, but to deliver the truth as closely as possible. That small piece of wisdom came, almost verbatim, from my Senior English teacher who inspired me to become a writer, even if mainly about literature, and initiated my long-term habit of collecting ‘howlers’ from the media and best-selling authors.

You will not doubt me when I report that my collection of erroneous writing has exploded since WOKE writing habits have begun to thrive in Universities and the media. I can also report that the fewer-and-farther-between items I collected in more literary times are more subtle and elegant than those of more recent times.

In case you are wondering what relevance my ramblings might have to writers and presenters of Bush Poetry, and to writers of Australian Short Stories, let me assure you that the relevance level is very high, indeed.



### **WHAT IS AMBIGUITY?**

Ambiguity’ is the term used to describe the lack of clarity in the meaning of written or spoken sentences. This problem is more commonly found in prose than in poetry; but Bush Poetry, with its strong narrative component, offers plenty of opportunity for the problem to flourish. Writer familiarity is possibly the greatest cause of ambiguity in Bush Verse. You know the old saying; ‘Familiarity breeds contempt.’ The writer knows very well the narrative line and the characters – knows, thoroughly, the who, how, where, when, why of the poem, therefore, questions about who is who or what is what do not arise. The reader, especially a first-time reader, or listener, can easily be ‘caught’ by the incidence of ambiguity due to pronoun confusion, punctuation misuse and imprecise wording of sentences.

If ambiguity occurs in prose, for example, in a Short Story, the reader can pause, read the sentence again, work out the cause of hesitation, and continue on with no real problem. Poetry is not so forgiving, particularly in the case of Poetry Presentation. A glitch in the understanding of the audience often means an ongoing problem with the interpretation, and a failure to come fully to terms with the poem.

#### **THE CAUSES OF AMBIGUITY:**

Confusion caused by careless use of pronouns is the most common cause of ambiguity; but this is compounded by inadequate punctuation and by faulty sentence construction.

A pronoun is a part of speech that can stand instead of a particular noun. As far as I am concerned, we need only deal with masculine, feminine and neutral pronouns – ‘he, she, they, it’ and all the other singular and plural pronouns that align with each of those genders. Ambiguity could be overcome by using the noun at all times. “The cat sat next to the cat’s bowl, waiting for the cat’s dinner to be provided by the cat’s servant.” How stilted that sounds! It is easy to understand why pronouns came to be. They offer relief from awkward repetition. Now, for a special mention of the neutral pronoun, ‘it’. My students were allowed to use the word only after they had scoured every available resource to find a more meaningful replacement. Try to remove ‘it’ from your writing, and remember that the word is a pronoun with the possessive form ‘its’ – no apostrophe.

A comfortable combination of both nouns and pronouns is what the writer must aim to achieve. In so doing, however, the writer must consider this recommendation: In any new paragraph of prose, or new stanza of a poem, the identifying name, noun or noun equivalent must be mentioned before the relevant pronoun is used. There are wonderful examples of this in “The Man from Snowy River”, with Harrison, Clancy of the Overflow, and ‘one’ being introduced to the reader before any pronoun or the noun equivalents, ‘the old man’, ‘no better horseman’ and ‘a stripling’. Possible problems with pronouns are prevented by the fact that the characters are separated, at first description, from other highlighted individuals and are not treated in a group setting.



# **FOLLOW THE PATH TO MORE EFFECTIVE WRITING**

*Continued.....*

Banjo Paterson would not have fluked this particular feature of his poem. Most poems of note are the outcome of comprehensive planning and frequent editing. For Short Stories and narrative poems, especially the long ones, I suggest that the writer think carefully about the choice of characters – unless the poem is based on historical facts and characters. Select characters who can readily be identified by gender, age, appearance, height, manner of speech, personality. When selecting names, do not choose names that end in 's' as this leads to potential punctuation errors involving the apostrophe for possessive case. There is also awkwardness of sound to be considered.

One very important rule that all writers should remember is this one which deals with sentence construction, a major problem behind ambiguity: In any sentence, every phrase or clause must be placed as close as possible to the word to which it actively refers.

Example: The driver sat in his darkened car, finishing a cigarette; and he then lowered the window and tossed it out of the car.

At this point, I will mention something I have probably touched upon before – the use of six-line or eight-line stanzas for the writing of Bush Poetry, especially where a long narrative is involved. Four-line stanzas are fine for poems of no more than 60 – 72 lines. They are excellent in the case of humorous poems intended for oral presentation. They do, however, present more problems with pronouns and with the use of words such as 'and, but, or, then, so' at the beginning of lines – and, especially as the first word of a four-line stanza.

If Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson were here today, they would delight in the fact that writers are no longer bound to the problematic rule of beginning every new line of a poem with a capital letter. Capital letters should be used only where they fall into place at the beginning of a sentence, and for the names of people and animals, countries, towns, titles, ships, and words of Biblical and religious reference. Poems are much easier to write, recite, read, understand, learn and assess if the modern trend is followed.

Happy writing!

*Irene Dalgety Timpone*

## **EXAMPLES OF AMBIGUITY**

Can you work out what is wrong with each of the following?

Examples from the 1990s – from the BBC:

Today, Prince Charles is expected to thank staff at the Paris hospital that tried for two hours to save Princess Diana's life before returning to England with her body.

Last night, a well-known London car thief drove a stolen car to Victoria Station which he later dumped along the road to Dover. At a crucial point in the trial, the Prosecution Lawyer asked the accused: "Is the man you saw on the night of the murder leaning over the body in the courtroom today?"

Examples from more recent times – Australian media:

DEAD MAN STABBED – The body of a man who had been stabbed to death was found deceased not far from his home.

Australian Navy Officers who had been monitoring the vessel sabotaged by asylum seekers had repaired the boat's engine after it was seen floundering in International waters.

Now, for the dreaded pronoun problem:

Colin Granger and Jason Jones are both under suspicion. He is also the biological brother to his adopted sister, Angela. After a thirty - year search, she now knew that she had been looking for the man who had murdered her mother so she could stop him from killing again.



# EASTER WEEKEND

© Irene Timponi

Winner 2023 NSW Bush Poetry Championship – Humorous Section

One Easter break, some years ago, my brothers, Slim and Snow,  
did not arrive in time for Friday brunch.  
Now, this was most unusual, as Easter visits go:  
they'd come on Thursday, stay till Tuesday lunch.

Poor Mum was quite upset by this – went into panic mode –  
and sent me out to see what I could find,  
envisioned both her precious boys capsized along the road,  
and almost lost her ever-loving mind.

A phone call to the Cop Shop soon put every fear at rest.  
We heard the pair had ended up in jail,  
and there they'd stay till Tuesday when, in court, they could attest,  
and be released if they were granted bail.

Meanwhile, the local lock-up would keep both the lads confined,  
or so the worthy Sergeant seemed to think.  
He'd charged them both with drunkenness. They hadn't seemed to mind,  
perhaps because they'd had too much to drink.

Then Sarge explained conditions to prevail the next few days –  
no outside food, no visitors could call.  
Mum's boys, alone, might contemplate their sad and sorry ways,  
while tucked up tight for five long days, in all.

Sarge felt that he was justified in locking up that pair:  
they'd slipped between the cracks ten times, before.  
He couldn't see the high-fives and the wicked winks they'd share.  
He chuckled as he slammed the prison door.

The lock-up there, at Gilberton, was built the outback style –  
the cell on posts a metre from the ground.  
The lads surveyed surroundings with a calculated guile,  
saw bars to keep all inmates safe and sound.

The time has come to tell you that, while locked up, once before,  
the boys had hatched a very clever plan.  
By rendering 'removeable' a section of the floor,  
they'd made an exit for a skinny man.

On Thursday night, the Sergeant brought a healthy meal for two,  
with milk to quench their ever-present thirst;  
but, strangely, they refused to eat. Now, that was something new:  
"We're hunger-striking, Sarge – bet that's a first."

The poor man took the meals away: he felt a sense of dread,  
guessed they'd devised a very cunning plot.  
A stupid five-day hunger-strike would hardly leave them dead;  
but he would cop all blame, as sure as not.

The lights went out at ten to nine. Snow chose the bottom bunk,  
and said he'd take a very welcome nap.  
In darkness, Slim then raised loose boards, and heard a muffled thunk,  
while making room to slide down through the gap.

Slim used the bright, full Easter Moon while dodging, tree to tree,  
and ended up outside the Pub's back door.  
His mate, the cook, expecting him – yes, that was plain to see –  
provided him with food and drink, galore.

The precious load was carried back with watchfulness and care.  
Slim passed the bundles, through the hole, to Snow.  
They spent the night imbibing well, and eating their fair share,  
then bundling all the rubbish, set to go.

By daylight, Slim had hidden all the evidence away:  
he'd stashed the refuse deep in nearby bins,  
except for all the bottles which, to make the poor man's day,  
he'd tossed in Sarge's garden, for his sins.

And so began the ritual that ended Monday night.  
The prisoners grew weaker, day by day,  
or so it seemed to Sarge, poor chap, beside himself with fright,  
expecting Slim, perhaps, might pass away.

The end of their incarceration clearly seemed in sight.  
The Judge, as was his habit, gave them bail.  
The Sergeant said: "You two, clear off!" as was their legal right,  
then hurried back to disinfect the jail.

That night, Sarge visited the pub. He thought he'd celebrate  
the victory he felt he'd squarely won.  
He knew that there were questions he must still investigate;  
but he'd soon find the answers, and be done.

He downed a few, with friends of his, and spoke with hearty voice:  
"I volunteer to pay this evening's bill."  
He knew it was his turn to shout – he really had no choice –  
so sauntered down towards the hotel till.

The Publican held back a grin: "You're heading home then, Sarge?  
I need to give you this before you go –  
the Hotel's detailed invoice. There's a quite extensive charge  
for five days food and drink for Slim and Snow.

I didn't charge delivery. That didn't seem quite fair.  
You'd run up such a generous amount.  
I guessed you had a sentimental soft spot for that pair,  
and took your Easter cheer into account."

Well, Sarge propped like a startled steer, and shook his woolly head:  
he couldn't take in what he had just heard.  
"I'll kill that pair," he muttered, "They are both as good as dead!"  
He hurried off without another word...

***He must have found them hard to catch – or so it seems to me.  
They certainly did live to tell the tale,  
and though the Sergeant tried, for weeks, to work out what transpired,  
he never found the weakness in his jail.***



# 'The Woman On Top'

© Harry Donnelly 2-11-23

What a memory to behold, Melbourne Cup day...2015,  
this cup, held so prestigiously — the likes we've never seen.  
A horse, completely friendless in the betting 'cross the land,  
a jockey born and bred with a gifted riding hand.

What happened on that Tuesday reached much further than the post,  
the birth of cultural change — not just from coast to coast.  
A world-wide acclamation driving women to the fore,  
an example set on hallowed turf to even up the score.

Michelle...the youngest daughter of the Payne clan, raised by Dad,  
exemplified so naturally what the 'real' world never had.  
The trainer, yes...a genius — the horse, more second string,  
the ride, by one lone woman changed the way we look at things.

A 'man's world' roped and wrangled in three minutes-twenty flat,  
boy's-clubs 'cross the nation felt first tremors — matter of fact.  
Jockeys from all over had brought their International fame,  
all tactically dismembered by one girl's strategic game.

On our racing's greatest stage...the field of 24 was off,  
that long and fearsome Flemington straight brought many a nervous cough.  
This cup — run ever so slowly had the hot-shots out the back,  
all smoking their pipes and waiting...to be dragged ahead in fact.

One, had saved her inches, on the fence midfield alone,  
the girl from Ballarat inched forward quietly — in the zone.  
Perfectly placed on entering the straight...and not a penny spent,  
with patient, guiding, softness of hand, pulled out and — off she went!

She had saved the energy of the horse, as only great jockeys can,  
as stylish a ride you'd witness — took the voice from many a man.  
Ever since that glorious happening, doors opened for women in sport,  
more and more walked through those doors with eventually...full support.

This girl from country Victoria would never take credit for all,  
but the movement surged tremendously through her own true guts and gall.  
Michelle's now part of history...though, not just for that one ride,  
but for every girl still dreaming, heads held high — with heartfelt pride.



# What I Like About Poetry

© Phil McManus

*Trying to write a rap slam of poetry ABC radio competition, like Ben Zephaniah that I heard in England. 2008.*

What I like about Poetry is its various forms, the written word transformed, performing.  
The poet is the fool, with writing as a tool, and words are his structural calling.  
It has so many faces, stories over the ages, by sages, of situations and places.  
Poetry is the conduit to portray the multi stories of cultural human races.

What I like about poetry is you can be satirical, factual, serious, or funny,  
A poet is the muse who has thoughts reassembled, compiled and without money.  
Rhyme, rhythm, spoken or sung, now we have poetry with music, called rap.  
Poetry is the passion from within, that deals with all of ---- life's crap.

What I like about poetry is to create my world of observation and thought,  
Fantasy in the real world of make believe, at a particular time now caught.  
The cloak of reason, where the pen stands mighty against the sword,  
Poverty and passion, money, and greed where's the common sense in the accord.

Now on this Earth, what is a human worth, as we rape the land, take stock.  
Will he take a turn to turn back the clock, or just be the shag on a rock.  
What I like about poetry is a means to an end, and who is really your friend,  
On this supersonic highway of mans destruction, carrying us onto life's end.

## Attrition at War

Not a word is said, when we read the dead  
On Anzac monuments spread everywhere.  
Some are grand, that cover this vast land  
Others are windswept, without any care .

Just think of the cause, as one does pause  
And thank them with a word.  
It won't take you long, to hear their song  
When the bugle blows are heard.

You will find a plaque, ever so stark  
As a reminder of those who perished.  
You will find a name, without known fame  
Whose deeds live in loved ones cherished.

They left behind, all family and kind  
To create a living tradition.  
They gave their souls, now honorary rolls  
In fields where they held position.

Others must know, of the deeds they did sow  
Reading their ultimate petition.  
Too many now forget, to pay their respect  
For the souls of a general's attrition.

They were lads that night, taking up the fight  
Making this grand ANZAC tradition.  
So, remember them, and thank them,  
As the sun sets on this, a final mission.

*This was written after listening to the ABC's Documentary on a General Haigh from the first World War and on how he spent men's lives to win a pocket that he held for a Month and then retreated. The place Passchendaele France His attrition rate was 5000 men a day.*



# Bush Poets Breakfast

with MUSIC  
& YARNSPINNING



★ **Followed by Open Mic / Walk-Up**  
**Frank Daniel COMPETITION**  
**for TROPHIES and PRIZE MONEY \$\$** ★

<b>West Tamworth Bowlo</b> <b>Breakfast on Sale</b> <b>Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> — Sat 27<sup>th</sup> January</b> <b>0830—1030am</b> Doors Open 0800 <b>ENTRY \$10</b>	<b>Frank Daniel</b> <b>Competition</b> <b>Tues 23<sup>rd</sup>, Thurs 25<sup>th</sup>,</b> <b>Fri 26<sup>th</sup> 1030—1130am</b> <b>FREE ENTRY</b>
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\*Ray Essery \*Bill Kearns \*Greg North  
 \*Geoffrey Graham \*Paddy O'Brien



MUSIC by Tom & Susan  
SPECIAL GUEST Pat Drummond



**Hosted by Tom McIlveen 0417 251 287**

## **TAMWORTH WEST BOWLO BUSH POETS BREAKFAST to host FRANK DANIEL COMPETITION AGAIN**

Bush Poets' Breakfast show will be on again at West Tamworth Bowling Club for next month's upcoming Tamworth Country Music Festival. Tom McIlveen and Susan Ashton will be hosting the show to include the Frank Daniel Walkup Award with trophies and prize money. This award originated in Tamworth several years ago and was the brain child of Ray Essery, who donated the 1st trophy and part of the prize money. The

competition attracted a large cross section of new poets, who have gone on to compete and win in various performance competitions throughout the country, establishing themselves as performing poets of note. It has always been Ray's intention to foster and encourage new performing poets coming to Tamworth, and I intend to do my utmost to support him in this.

We are now endeavouring to keep the spirit of performance poetry competition alive in Tamworth, by continuing the Frank Daniel Awards. We encourage new and established poets to share their skills on the stage, or to assist in the administration of daily competitions.

The Bush Poets Breakfast Variety Show at West Tamworth Bowling Club will have a similar line up to last year. Hosted by Tom McIlveen and Susan Ashton who will provide music for variety in between performances... featuring Ray Essery, Bill Kearns, Greg North, Geoffrey Graham, Paddy O'Brien and others. Special guest Pat Drummond will entertain us with his unique blend of music and storytelling.

Commencing Monday the 22nd January at 830am to 1030am, it will run daily till Saturday 27th January inclusive. The Frank Daniel Walkup Awards will commence immediately after the Poets Breakfast Show on Tuesday 23rd January, commencing at 1030am ...then Thursday 25th January...1030am, with the finals and awards on Friday 26th January at 1030am.

Expressions of interest and enquiries to be directed to Tom McIlveen:  
 Email: [thepoetofoz@gmail.com](mailto:thepoetofoz@gmail.com) or Phone: 0417251287

# "A FROG'S VIEW OF CHRISTMAS"

© Glenny Palmer 2004

I'm a frog and by nature my job is to croak,  
I've been stuck in the dry dusty clay, it's a joke,  
but the Humans put signs up, "Please pray for the rain",  
so despite my sore throat I got croaking again.

Yes, I yodeled and croaked 'til my vocal chords strained,  
and then.... hallelujah! it finally rained.

Then the more that I croaked, well the more that it rained,  
'til I held the award for "Best Croaker" ordained,  
and the rivers all flooded, we even had hail,  
and I backstroked and breaststroked and flipped like a whale.

Now my skin is much greener, like new Brussels sprouts,  
I'm quite sure I'm the best looking frog hereabouts.  
And Oh! what a Christmas my talents will bring  
for the poor dowdy Humans, at last they can sing.

They can play in the puddles and roll in the mud,  
and laugh like I do when they fall with a thud,  
They can hide in their grass that's now two metre's tall,  
Oh! what joy and what fun I've provided for all.

But the Humans, (strange creatures, I can't work them out),  
are putting up signs saying, "Pray for the drought."  
It's really too much for my little green brain,  
When they get what they pray for, they whine and complain.

So this Christmas I think I'll give Humans away,  
I'll invite all my friends to come frolic and play,  
tadpoles and turtles, mosquitoes, (yum) too,  
and even a toad, ('though we frequently blue).

'Cause isn't that what Christmas Day is meant for?  
to settle old scores and throw open your door  
to let gratitude in, for the gifts we are given,  
be they rain, hail or sun, they're our blessings from Hivven.  
..... (so I can't spell...I'm a frog!)



# SANTA'S TRAVELLING THE MILKY WAY

©Tony Caswell (TC The Goodna Gunna) 26/11/2008

Santa Claus is coming to town  
Well, that's what I've been told  
He's coming from the top of the World  
From a place they call The North Pole

He plans to visit every country  
One being the Land of Oz, Australia  
And because he has the Aussie Spirit  
Santa never dreams of failure

He's read all the letters and cards  
The elves have filled his magic sleigh  
And he has told his reindeers  
"Tonight we're travelling the Milky Way"

"Australia is a big land" he said  
Where Natures beauty will never cease  
It's filled with people from many Nations  
Who wish to enjoy freedom and peace"

He knows where everybody lives  
Each gunyah, unit, caravan and house  
And when the reindeers land on your roof  
They land as quietly as a mouse

So parents, put your children to bed  
And make sure they are sound asleep  
Because when Santa does his magic  
No one's allowed to take a peek

And children, if you want Santa to come  
There's something you have to do  
That is to be happy, polite and good  
Then on Christmas Day, there'll be a gift for you





# WHEN SANTA VISITS OZ

© Peter White, Eagleby, 2020

We know that Santa lives and works at the North Pole  
And Christmas there is Winter time, cold with snow and sleet.  
But in Oz it's Summer and Santa, poor old soul,  
If dressed in his Winter gear, would severely overheat.

He dresses for the weather when he comes down Aussie way  
And doesn't wear a fur-lined cap upon his head.  
He packs away his Winter suit and boots for another day  
And dons his singlet, shorts, thongs and Akubra, all in red.

For company on this lengthy trip comes Alf his senior elf.  
The two of them each enjoy the very different scene.  
The first time Santa made the trip he came all by himself,  
But Australia is the loneliest country he had ever seen.

His sleigh is worse than useless here so it is left behind.  
His reindeer are all snuggled up in his well-stocked byre.  
Santa keeps a wagon here and to pull it he will find  
A team of local harness-broken boomers he can hire.

Alf first applies some axle grease to cut down on the noise.  
Then they hitch the boomer team to the wagon tongue.  
Both of them then load up all the many sacks of toys,  
And several canvas water-bags at the front are hung.

To protect their precious load they use a Poly Tarp  
And tie it firmly to the sides with a "Truckie's Hitch".  
With "Santa Red" and "Poly Blue" their Christmas rig looks sharp.  
To begin their journey, Santa gives the reins a twitch.

Now he and Alf will pass the time talking on their rounds.  
From the north which is in the middle of "The Wet",  
To the south and east and west his boomer eight-hitch bounds.  
Alf makes sure that not one child will Santa Claus forget.

The weather here is quite extreme with floods or searing heat.  
It's enough to make poor Santa feel a bit unhinged.  
"You seem disconcerted, Santa", Alf said from his seat.  
"You would be too," said Santa, "if your beard was bushfire singed!"

Every household will ensure that they leave enough  
Snacks for Santa and his team on the eve of Christmas Day.  
They leave a long-neck "coldie" and a slice of good plum duff,  
And for the boomers it's not carrots but fine alfalfa hay.

Right across this wide brown land every Christmas Eve  
Alf helps Santa with his gifts for every Aussie child.  
Through the door on the verandah Santa will enter and leave.  
"The chimneys are too narrow. You'd get stuck," Alf said and smiled.

They stop to have a smoko break and brew a billy of tea.  
From the Esky Alf removes a pack of corned beef 'sangers'.  
Santa said, "Alf, please pass the sauce to me.  
What a pity we've no time to fry some eggs and 'bangers'."

Smoko over off they go to finish up their job.  
Way out here the roads are rough the wagon starts to shake.  
They pass a herd of feral goats, a hundred in the mob.  
They have to move along apace with dawn about to break.

Past Windora, Coober Pedy, Dimboola, Oodnadatta,  
From Goondiwindi to Dunedoo, Mudgee and Corryong,  
Beyond Coolgardie by Tarraleah, to Robe and Wangaratta,  
Darwin, Alice Springs and not forgetting Wonglepong.

From Kowanyama to Thargomindah, Geraldton and Bright,  
Like Lucky Starr, Alf and Santa have been everywhere.  
From Gilgandra to Billinudgel travelling through the night,  
Alf and Santa spreading joy for all of us to share.

From Meekatharra to Cootamundra, Boggabilla and Bourke,  
From Kununurra to Wilcannia, Roma and Deloraine,  
They carry on, hour by hour, to finalise their work,  
Returning to the point of their departure once again.

Santa shouts Alf a beer in a XXXX tin,  
Saying, "So that our journey goes without a hitch,  
Let's swap our thongs for jandals and we'll pack a chilly-bin,  
And visit the Aussies' Kiwi cousins, just across the ditch."





# MY CASSETTE

© Col Elliott

There's one task some of us must face, every time we roam,  
Whether we are in a caravan or motorhome.  
It's not a chore that anyone would cheerfully embrace.  
You know where this is heading; I can see it on your face.

The word cassette to you might mean an old, outmoded thing.  
An obsolete recording system; hear your favourites sing.  
A little plastic object you would push into the dash,  
Then settle back, enjoy the mellow tones of Johnny Cash.

Or Buddy Holly or the Delltones, names from years ago.  
Music from our past that always helped the good times flow.  
The cassette that I'm thinking of is quite important too.  
It's the little plastic tank that is essential for your loo.

Lots of RV's have them, they're a civilising touch.  
To have to take that lonely walk at night was just too much.  
And yes, there is a downside, and it's not a lot of fun.  
Every day or two you go and do what must be done.

The dump point isn't like a barbie, that is very clear.  
Not a place to hang around and yarn and have a beer.  
I like to miss the rush hour so at times I have to plan.  
I do what's necessary, then I'm straight back to our 'van.



I think it's cute that our cassette has little plastic wheels.  
And a handle that extends so that it follows at my heels.  
It doesn't want to stop and sniff and maybe have a wee.  
It's more compliant than a dog, which quite appeals to me.

I don't say cassette-walking will become the latest craze,  
But there would be no food or vet bills, would there? Happy days!  
So, if you're feeling lonely and you think you need a pet,  
Go to your local camping store and order a cassette.

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## 2024 BANJO PATERSON AUSTRALIAN POETRY FESTIVAL 17 to 25 February 2024

Put the dates in your diary for the 2024 Banjo Paterson Festival in Orange NSW and the surrounding villages of the Cabonne Shire. The festival will start with a gala day to celebrate Banjo's birthday on Saturday 17 February and will feature walk-up opportunities for performers throughout the following week. There will be a return of our poetry performance competition as we had it before COVID and the National Championships of 2023. This includes both youth and adult sections with poets performing their own original poems. See the ABPA website for the competition details and entry form. Entries close on 12 February and the competition will be in Orange on Friday 23 February 2024. A full festival program will be available soon, but you can be sure of the day of entertainment at Yeoval, poetry Brawl at Molong, visit to historic sites, walk-ups at the Cargo Inn and a Rotary market with more being organised.

Len Banks  
Rotary Club of Orange

### PLEASE NOTE

We have made a couple of small changes to the rules for the poetry competition associated with the 2024 Banjo Paterson Australian Poetry Festival, so attached is an amended information sheet. There is no change to the entry form. These changes have been made in response to feedback from poets. They are:

Section 6 now reads: "The maximum presentation time is 8 minutes per entry for the Open Class and 5 minutes per entry for the other classes (preamble and postscript are included in the time limit)."

Section 11 now reads: "Poems performed in previous Banjo Paterson Australian Poetry Competitions, Orange, must not be entered in this 2024 competition. Poets that have placed (1st, 2nd, or 3rd) in any poetry competition in the previous 2 years cannot perform the same winning poems in this 2024 competition, as it aims to foster original poetry and support novice or new performers in all categories - competing poets should exercise integrity in this matter."

The updated Program is currently being printed and will be on the Orange360 website in the next couple of weeks.

[www.orange360.com.au](http://www.orange360.com.au)

# POETRY ON THE MOUNTAIN IN GUYRA

The A.B.P.A NSW CHAMPIONSHIPS in Guyra over the weekend of 18th and 19th November, were a resounding success. Poets came from not only NSW, but from as far afield as northern Queensland and southern Victoria, to compete for the coveted, inaugural 'POET OF THE MOUNTAIN' trophy and title.

It truly was a memorable gathering of the bards, and a pilgrimage the likes of which Guyra had never witnessed before. (Even the legendary Guyra Ghost was amazed !!) As Molly Meldrum used to say ... 'do yourself a favour', if you haven't been to the 'Australian Poetry Hall of Fame' in Guyra, then put it on your next outback itinerary and bucket list...it is absolutely amazing!

The proprietor and host James 'Thundercloud' Warren, is the absolute walking, talking epitome of a poet on a mission. He lives and breathes poetry, and is a wonderful ambassador for our beloved craft. He has established a museum and collection of Poetry books, artifacts and memorabilia, that is second to none. It is the perfect venue for a performance competition... an old heritage local theatre hall, complete with raised stage and upper wings.

Contestants, judges and audience were catered for by James's in house cafe and coffee bar, with barbecued breakfast and lunch available on site. Well attended performance and writing workshops were run on Thursday and Friday by myself, and judges Ray Essery, Bill Kearns and Robyn Sykes.

Thanks to the diligence of our wonderful administrators, collators and timekeepers... Susan Ashton and Mary O'Brien and others, all events run as smoothly as clockwork. Mornings began with Poets' Breakfast walk-ups and the traditional one minute Poetry comp, which was won by Debbie Berryman, who truly was in fine form and relishing the high country air after travelling up from the big smoke of Sydney.

The Saturday night Rhymers' Variety Show was hosted by myself and Susan Ashton to an appreciative audience, providing musical interludes between performances by the three judges: Ray Essery, Bill Kearns and Robyn Sykes, who were all, as usual, in magnificent form, after a trying day of very intensive judging. Sunday's awards' announcements saw the overall 'Poet of the Mountain' trophy awarded to Paddy O'Brien. Runner up in second place was Debbie Berryman. Andrew Pulsford won TRADITIONAL, followed by Paddy and Debbie. MODERN was won by Paddy, followed by Jenny Markwell and David Stanley, ORIGINAL SERIOUS... by Paddy, followed by Debbie and Caroline Toohey, ORIGINAL HUMOROUS by Debbie followed by David Stanley and Peter Frazer. NSW WRITTEN CHAMPION ...and winner of Serious was David Judge..2nd place in SERIOUS was Catherine Lee, with 3rd Place to Glenny Palmer. Winner of Humorous was Irene Timpone, with 2nd and 3rd places to Brenda Joy.

Following the awards, an extraordinary weekend was culminated in the induction of Ray, Bill and Robyn into The Australian Poetry Hall of Fame, and commemorated by a magnificently sketched portrait by (the man of many talents...) James Warren. It now hangs in pride of place on the wall and is the perfect memorial to an unforgettable weekend, and to three of our finest bards.

Tom McIlveen.



Presentation by Tom McIlveen & James Warren, of Guyra's POET OF THE MOUNTAIN trophy to Paddy O'Brien and runner up Debbie Berryman, with other category winners and place-getters.



Ray Essery, Robyn Sykes and Bill Kearns taking a well earned break from judging duties.



Tom, Ray, Robyn, Susan and Bill



Magnificently sketched portraits of Ray, Robyn & Bill, inducted into, and to be hung in pride of place at the AUSTRALIAN POETRY HALL OF FAME in Guyra.

# CHRISTMAS EVE ON THE F3

© B.J. (Beryl) Stirling

Winner, 2013 Humorous Section Snowy Mountains Muster, Jindabyne NSW.

It's late Christmas Eve and Mary's in labour;  
She rings for the ambulance, yells to her neighbour  
"Hey Di, look for Joe, will you? Canvass the pubs.  
Or maybe he's boozing at one of the clubs,  
And tell him he's needed. The kid's on the way!  
Oh Jeeze! Who'd of thought he'd be born Christmas Day!"

Now Joe's with his mates, but he's thinking he oughta  
Be home with the missus, be there to support her.  
She might need him soon, she was due yesterday  
And if he's not there, well, there'll be hell to pay.  
But when he expresses this thoughtful decision,  
His mates, with one voice, utter howls of derision.

"Well, one for the road then, it's my round," says Joe,  
But, after that, best I should get up and go",  
Which he does, weaving out on his unsteady feet,  
Gets into the car, makes it onto the street,  
Chucks a U-ey and finds himself back on the highway,  
While singing discordantly: "I did it my way!"

Now Di, Mary's neighbour, has searched near and far.  
Has yet to find Joe but has met in each bar,  
Sundry friends and relations and shared the odd drop  
Of bourbon, Campari and iced Passion Pop.  
Now, it's well known her driving is always erratic  
But tonight, on the highway, it's melodramatic.

She finally finds Joe. Runs up his backside,  
And this of course launches a traffic landslide.  
When an oil tanker skews and spills half its load  
And the ambulance swerves, so it runs off the road.  
And to cap it, with traffic lanes all now impeded,  
Poor Mary is pushing. A midwife is needed.

The ambulance driver, though very well trained,  
Becomes very soon just a mite overstrained,  
When a second bub follows the first, then one more  
And he shouts to his mate: "Oh my God! There are four!  
It's out of my league and I'm starting to worry.  
Send for the chopper and tell them to hurry!"

It comes from the East and it lights up the night  
As it searches to find the emergency site,  
While a U.F.O spotter completes the equation  
Deciding this signals a Martian invasion!  
Informs Alan Jones, the P.M. and Bob Brown  
And the media circus rolls into the town.

And now through a broken down fence come five llamas,  
A furious farmer in flannel pyjamas,  
A prize Brahman bull and a couple of cows,  
Some sheep, a blue heeler and several sows,  
While seventy bikies now surge through the rubble  
Bandidos, Hells Angels, all looking for trouble.



And just when it seems that it couldn't get worse  
The copper in charge, looking up, starts to curse,  
For to add to the pile-up that's blocking the highway  
There's been a collision up there in the sky way.  
And fragments of chopper rain down on his head –  
Startled reindeer, gift vouchers; an old bloke in red.

Now Joe becomes conscious and finds he's alive  
Though the car is a write off and not fit to drive,  
While Di, sobered up, crawls from under an airbag  
Assesses the damage and seizes her handbag,  
Shouts: "Joe? We're in trouble! Let's get the hell out!  
There are dozens of coppers all swarming about.

They're looking for some one to put in the frame  
And seem to think, God knows why, we are to blame!  
Perhaps we should both of us spend the New Year  
Somewhere rather less crowded, a long way from here."  
So baulked of their prey, the law in their stead,  
Arrested and locked up the old bloke in red.

So Christmas was cancelled I'm sorry to say  
But next year we'll celebrate 'Mary's Quads Day'  
With everything costing us four times as dear,  
Including all nutriment, petrol and beer  
And the G.S.T's rising to forty per cent,  
To make up the losses from last years event.



## **Regular Monthly Events**

### **NSW**

**Laggan Bush Poets.** The Laggan Pub, Laggan NSW. The 1st Wednesday of every month, starting at 7.30pm. For further details contact Mike or Elaine on (02) 4837 3397

**Gosford Bush Poets** meet at 7pm the last Wednesday of every month at the Gosford Hotel, crn. Mann and Erina Streets Gosford. All welcome. Contact Vic Jefferies 0425252212 or Peter Mace (02)-4369356

**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

**POETRY IN THE VINES PORT MACQUARIE...**the 4th Sunday of the month at Douglas Vale Winery. 235.Oxley Highway, (next to Westport School)...Port Macquarie. Contact Tom Mcilveen Ph..0417251287

**Katoomba Poets in the Pub** 22nd Sunday 2pm at Blackburn's Family Hotel. All forms poetry, free entry. Contact Greg North 0425 210 083.

**Singleton Bush Poets.** Meet at the Albion Hotel, John Street Singleton. 7pm on the first Tuesday of each month. Contact Neville Briggs 02 65711398.

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

**Australian Poetry Hall of Fame- Guyra** Wednesday Words Open Mic Poetry 6:30pm every Wednesday. 144 Bradley St, Guyra Contact James Warren 0423 478 656 [www.australianpoetryhalloffame.com.au](http://www.australianpoetryhalloffame.com.au) (Free RV camping at the Lagoon)

### **QUEENSLAND**

**Toowoomba Bush Poets** meet on the second Saturday of each month at the meeting rooms in the Toowoomba library. We meet between 10 am and midday, Read..write..recite or listen .... Everyone is welcome. Contact Peter Frazer 0401130636.

**North Pine Bush Poets Group** Open Mic- Visitors welcome! Pine River Men's Shed, Old Petrie Town, Dayboro Road Kurwongbah- 1st and 3rd Sundays of most months 9a.m. –12 noon. Contact Mal on 0417765226 or Howard on 0431689054.

**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. For these social poetry afternoons please contact Jayson on (07) 4155 1007 or Sandy (07) 4151 4631 for venue details.

**Beaudesert Bush Bards** meet on the **Second** Friday of each month from 9.30am at the Beaudesert Arts & information Centre, Mt.Lindesay H'way, Beaudesert. Phone 07 5541 2662 or 3272 4535.

**Russell Island Writers Circle** - 2nd Thursday of the month at 9.30 am. St. Peters Church Hall (Next to IGA). \$2 donation. Contact Trish (07)34091542

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

**Townsville Bush Poetry Mates Inc. BUSH POETRY MATES Inc.** meet monthly at the Aitkenvale Library meeting room. For information on current day & times, please phone Barry on 0487 195 156. Visitors always welcome. Come along and join our group.

**Bribie Island Bush Poets** meet at 6.30 pm on the 4th Monday of each month in the Conference Room of the Blue Pacific Hotel, Woorim on Bribie Island. Contact Cay - 07 34083219

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

### **Victoria**

**Kyabram Bush Verse Group** – Second Sunday of every even numbered month at the Kyabram Town Hall 199-209 Allan Street Kyabram. Enter via rear door off the Bradley Street Car Park 2pm. Contact Mick Coventry 0427 522097.

**Gippsland Bush Poets** meet Monthly, 7.30pm on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the RSL Hall in Hood St. Rosedale

**Top of the Murray Poets and Bush Storytellers (TOMPABS)** meet Monthly (mostly Tuesdays in Corryong) for writing workshops, Monthly on 3rd Sunday for Music and Poetry at Maurie Foun's 'Poets' Paradise'. Contact Jan Lewis (02) 60774332

**Bendigo Goldfields Bush Poets** Mostly third Sundays in even numbered months except December when first Sunday. Bendigo Club, 22 Park St, Strathdale (Bendigo) 1pm to 4pm. Contact: Colin Carrington 0401 076 085.

**Henry Lawson Memorial & Literary Society Inc.** – Meet third Saturday each month/except January. Ross House 247-251 Flinders Lane 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

11 -14th  
APRIL, 2024



## 2024 Victorian Bush Poetry Championships

**Competitions:** \$3500 (overall total prize pool) Performance-Classical, Modern, Original Serious, Original Humorous, Yarnspinning, Novice, Man from Snowy River Recitation, One Minute Poem. Written-Original Serious & Comedy + 3 Poet's Breakfasts, Anzac Tribute Show, Campfire/Singalong sessions etc. Featured Poets: Geoffrey Graham, The Rhymer from Ryde, Tim Sheed, John Peel Entry Forms & conditions from the ABPA & Bush Festival websites in Dec 2023 Enq 02 6076 1992 [events@bushfestival.com.au](mailto:events@bushfestival.com.au) [www.bushfestival.com.au](http://www.bushfestival.com.au)

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## ***Bush Poetry at the Man from Snowy River Bush Festival 2024*** ***Thurs 11th-Sun 14th April*** **RETURN OF THE VICTORIAN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS**

"The Hills are alive, with the sound of....." well, not music, but good old fashioned 'Aussie Bush Verse' & song as the Victorian Bush Poetry Championships spring back to life in the heartlands of the rugged Snowy Mountains.

The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival (held annually in Corryong Victoria) will be the shining host of the Championships next year, welcoming back the 'creme de la creme' of Australian Bush Poets to strut their stuff and enthral audiences with their consummate skills as they search to line their pockets with the **\$3,500** in prizemoney on offer at this exciting event.

All the regular Performance Championship sections will be on offer in which competitors vie to show their skills over a range of subject matter including Classical, Modern, Original Serious & Original Comedy. (Males & Females are judged separately in these sections). In addition, there will also be Yarnspinning & Novice competitions as well. (Males & females judged together).

In honour of the great A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson Friday nights competitions kick off with our 'Man from Snowy River Recitation' section where 3 x pre-selected poets grapple for the title of 'Best Recitation' of 'Banjo's classic piece. But wait! There's more! Yes, 'The Carol Reffold Memorial One Minute Cup' will also take place on Sunday lunchtime and Friday hosts the 'Anzac Remembrance Concert' in the RSL Club Hall.

No, we haven't forgotten our writers. The 'Silver Brumby' (Original Serious) & Corryong Larrikin (Original Humorous) written sections are also being held and will be judged pre-festival as per usual.

'Walk-ups'. There'll be 'Walk-ups' aplenty with 3 x Poet's Breakfasts hosted by those rascals "The Rhymer from Ryde" & his sidekick Matthew Hollis. Never fear there'll be time to sit back & relax as well with Kevin McCarthy & Simon Dillon hosting the 'Singalong Campfire Sessions' late into the night on 'Banjo's Block'.

Senior Judge & Assistant Poetry Events Manager Graeme Johnson will be joined by "Featured Poets" Geoffrey W. Graham, The Rhymer from Ryde, Tim Sheed & John Peel who will also assist him on the various judging panels as well.

Get in quick with those entries folks as there are section limits in the performance sections and we wouldn't want anybody to miss out! Entries close 29th Feb, 2024.

Entry forms and further information will become available during December on the following websites.

[www.bushfestival.com.au](http://www.bushfestival.com.au)  
[www.abpa.org.au](http://www.abpa.org.au)