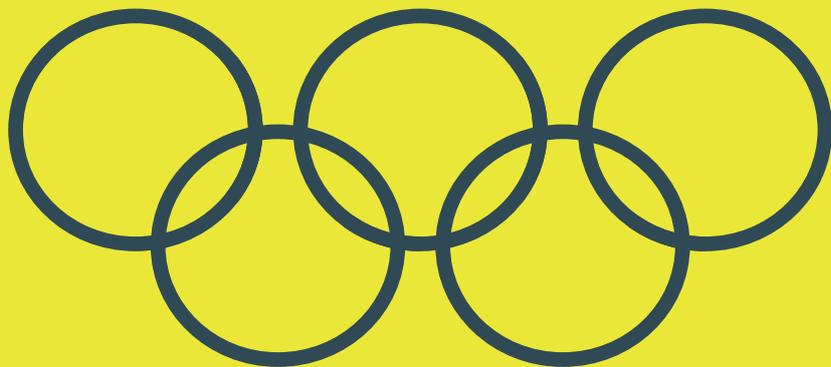


A B P A

Australian Bush Poets Association
Volume 30 No. 4 August/September 2024



From The Editor's Desk

G'day and welcome to another issue of the ABPA Magazine. Just to address a couple of issues raised over the past few months. I was queried as to why I include write-ups of events I have performed at and don't include reviews of some other Festivals.

I know our Members like to keep up to date on Bush Poetry Events around Australia and so I like to let them know of the ones I have attended. To put it simply. I do not receive write ups on many of our Bush Poetry events and cannot write articles at a guess, for I am bound to get details and results incorrect and, as per usual, suffer the wrath of the organisers. Also, please keep articles and photo content at a reasonable level. Some submissions demand three to four pages. And also please try to get Festival Reports in on time or else they become somewhat redundant.

If I am not given submissions, I cannot include them. I have been asking, constantly for submissions and many have answered, but many more have not.

It's always a pleasure to receive Meg Gordon's regular write up from the West Australian Bush Poetry scene and from this month, Peter Frazer has started his 'Queensland Calling' page to inform Members of our Northern events. I would love to dedicate a page to other States if someone thinks they can find time to collate one. I am more than happy to help with Logos, layout, etc for anyone who does. Perhaps consult the State Rep as to how best approach this.

A big thanks also, to Brenda Joy for her regular submissions of our Children's Poetry. Also to Irene Timpone for her regular FOLLOW THE PATH TO MORE EFFECTIVE WRITING. Both are popular additions to our Magazine.

Some other Poets contribute regularly, but I battle at times, to try to chase up winning Competition Poems to share with our members, which is a bit disheartening.

So POETRY, POETRY, POETRY! Our usual contributors do a fantastic job of sending in their works, but I struggle for a backlog of Poems so I can keep the magazine fresh and diverse. It's great to receive submissions such as Book Reviews, Poetry Group News, and Competitions for Members. It all helps for making a more interesting reading experience as well as showing that our genre is alive and well.

I wish not to have to keep falling back on the need to publish Banjo and Henry poem, as to fill the empty space, when I know how many excellent poets we have amongst our Membership.

We are not a very big Association these days, but lets try our hardest to keep alive our genre of Australian Bush Poetry to pass on to both our keen followers and future generations.

Cheers and Happy Writing
Neil McArthur
ABPA Editor



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

THE 'BETTY OLLE' POETRY AWARD

- For traditional Australian rhyming poetry with an Australian theme.
- Open and Junior (12 years and under) sections.
- Open section - First Prize \$500 plus trophy.
Runner-up \$200 plus certificate.
- Junior section - First Prize \$100 plus trophy.
Runner-up \$50 plus certificate.
- Entry fee - Open \$15 per entry form (2 poems)
- Entry fee - Junior section - free.
- Closing date - 31th August 2024.
- Entry forms and conditions of entry available from the ABPA website - events and results page.
- Conducted by the Kyabram Bush Verse Group in memory of foundation member Betty Olle.

President's Report

It has been a cold winter where we are but spring is now beckoning and we are heading up to Camooweal for the Bush Drivers camp shortly.

It has just come to my attention that the date of the WA bush poets State Competition has been changed and will now commence on Friday the 8th of November 2024.

The committee is discussing how and where to organize a National Bush Poetry Competition for 2025.

The committee is currently pursuing some funding opportunities for the development of the spoken word. Ideas discussed have been the funding of professional development activities for ABPA members and/or a second collection of poems from the past and present members.

The committee is also currently seeking organisers to trial our new draft rubric for judging both written and spoken competitions. Please contact David Stanley directly (dstanle5@outlook.com) for further information.



Onwards and Upwards for
Bush Poetry
Tim Sheed

ABPA Magazine Advertising Rates

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Quarter Page or less \$35

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Quarter Page not available

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

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

All payments to be made within 14 days to

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

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Bill Kearns (NSW)
Jan Lewis (Vic)
Irene Conner (WA)



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Next Magazine Deadline is September 27th 2024

PHANTOM RIDER

© Tom McLveen

Winning Poem Bronze Swagman Award 2024

In the foothills of Uralla, somewhere south of Armidale,
there's a set of stones that stand beside the road.
They have stood for fifty thousand years above the lonely trail,
and have offered many travellers abode.

When the moon is full, a shadow creeps along the trail at night,
on a ghostly steed, unreined and free to run.
As it nears The Stones, the silhouette converges with the light,
and then disappears into the rising sun.

But an eerie presence lingers long beyond the break of dawn,
and it loiters like an unforgotten sin...
and although the phantom rider and his ghostly steed have gone,
there is still a presence lingering within.

If you listen very carefully, you'll hear a haunting sound,
and you'll realise that you are not alone.
As your mind begins to wander, and your heart begins to pound,
you may hear a voice from deep within the stone.

"I'm the shadow that appears before the moon begins to wane,
and I speak for those whose spirits linger here.
There is one who comes alone at night, to ride the trail again –
as he did in glory days of yesteryear.

He was once a noted bushranger – notorious in fact,
(or at least that's what the local legends say).
And although the dice were loaded and the odds against him stacked,
he could always find another card to play.

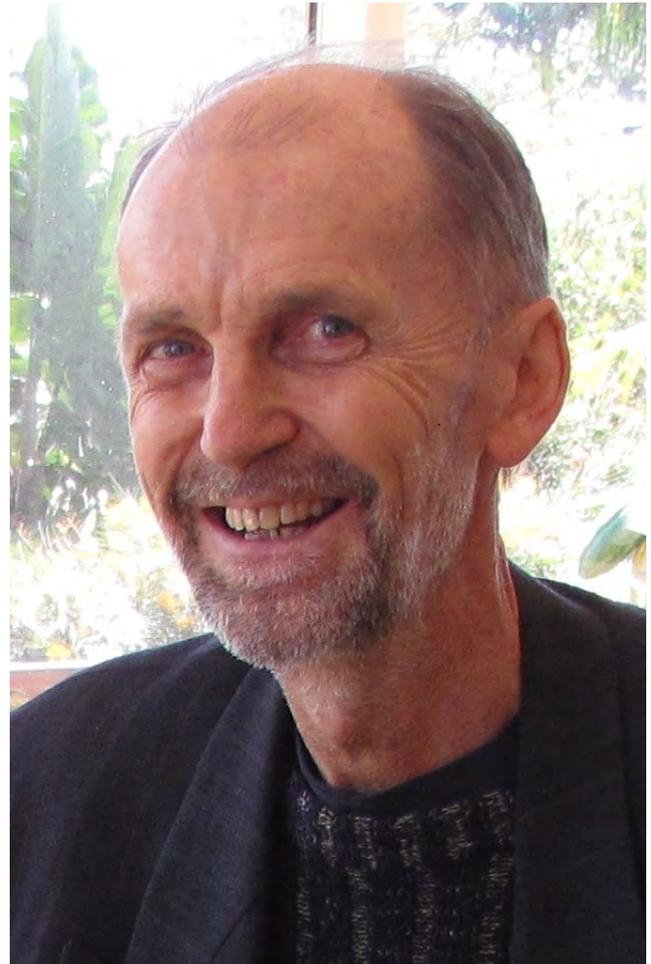
He had come from hardy convict stock, who'd known the guilt and shame
of a sin that lingers long beyond its time...
and although his tainted pedigree was probably to blame –
he was destined to pursue a life of crime.

He was christened Fred'rick Wordsworth Ward, as if to compensate
for a lack of kin and English pedigree...
but despite his fancy name he soon was drawn towards his fate –
like a moth towards a flame he cannot see.

It began with stolen station stock, a head or two at first -
he would drive a mob and single out a few.
He was just another wayward lad, a petty thief at worst,
till they locked him up in Sydney's 'Cockatoo'.

It was there the Devil taught him how to roll a loaded dice,
and to doubt what every righteous man believes.
It was there he learnt the ancient art of wickedness and vice,
in a prison filled with murderers and thieves.

When he'd flown the coop from Cockatoo he'd felt a burning yen
to be freed of iron cuffs and prison bars.
So he made a vow that they would never take him back again –
and he swore it to the rising moon and stars.



PHANTOM RIDER.....continued

© Tom McIlveen

Winning Poem Bronze Swagman Award 2024

When the gods that favoured bushrangers had heard his silent plea,
they had granted him asylum from The Law.
But the freedom he was seeking wasn't ever meant to be,
and was destined to be sought for evermore.

For they hounded him from Sydney Town to northern New South Wales,
and then southward down across The Great Divide,
till he'd lost them in the mountains through the long and winding trails,
where a bushman could just disappear and hide.

They were troopers from the city and were useless in the scrub,
and were mostly non-colonial and green.
They were more inclined to patronise the tavern or the pub –
than to hunt some fleeting ghost they'd never seen.

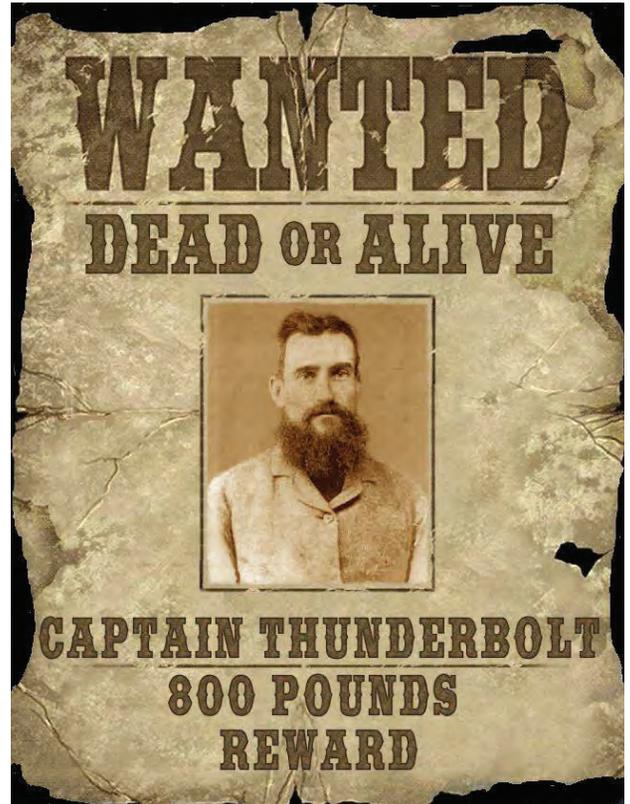
As he ventured north, he'd suddenly decided on a whim,
to adopt a more extraordinary name.
So he'd chosen Captain Thunderbolt, a fitting pseudonym,
for achieving notoriety and fame.

As the legend grew, his name would soon become immortalised
in the sacred scrolls of history's elite...
and the scribes that once rejected him had duly recognised
that his destiny was finally complete.

It was here beside The Stones, The Captain made his final stand,
in the marshy reeds along Kentucky Creek.
It was here the famous bushranger had played his final hand,
in a brutal, fatal game of hide and seek.

T'was a trooper from Uralla who had dealt the final card
from a scene befitting such an epilogue.
He had found the wily bushranger alone and off his guard,
and had shot him down as though a rabid dog."

When the moon is full, a shadow creeps along the trail at night,
on a ghostly steed, unreined and free to run.
As it nears The Stones a thunderbolt converges with the light
and then disappears into the rising sun.



Winton Business & Tourism Assoc Inc and the Bronze Swagman Committee are thrilled to congratulate the following recipients of the 2024 Bronze Swagman Award:
Winner - Tom McIlveen, Port Macquarie, NSW
Runner-up - Glenny Palmer, Jimboomba, Qld
Third prize - Jean O'Connell Memorial Award - Keith 'Cobber' Lethbridge, Armadale, WA
Highly Commended - Mal Beveridge, North Lakes, Qld
Highly Commended - David Judge, Bendigo, Vic
Highly Commended - James Kent, Port Fairy, Vic
The Tim Borthwick Award - Terry Byrne, Parramatta, NSW

LIDIA

A Poem by Edwina Smith ©

Way up North
Where forest gums grow
Lidia waits and thinks
Grasping a branch
Seen only by chance
Perhaps if she blinks

Amongst the trees
Is where she lives
For most of the day and night
She comes down to feed
Or when there's a need
And basks in morning light

She hunts on the ground
Where insects are found
Watching from way up a tree
A beetle crawls by
Which catches her eye
It scuttles along to flee

Lidia scamps down
To snatch some lunch
A meal well in view
But wouldn't you know
She encounters a foe
To pass or pursue

No time to hide
She opens up wide
And spits a nasty hiss
Standing her ground
With a frightful sound
Such courage as this!

Locked in a stare
Neither could bare
To scrap or to slip
Lidia knows what to do
There's plan number two
Her tail is nature's whip!

But that's not enough
She'll need more bluff
To make herself look bigger
Knowing the drill
She fluffs up her frill
A very timely trigger



A second to spare
Neither will dare
To lunge or to bite
Lidia's made to deceive
Then take her leave
Departing in full flight

A fiery display
She then runs away
With a rapid retreat
Look at her go!
Outpacing her foe
Sprinting on two feet

She runs up a tree
All safe and sound
But didn't catch her dinner
With tricks up her sleeve
So hard to believe
Lidia's come through a winner

Blending right in
Against the bark
She can wait and see
Watching the ground
Where insects are found
The place for her to be

High on a branch
She hopes for a chance
To catch a meal today
Below there's a rustle
She's ready to tussle
Luck has come her way

Down she flies in pursuit
Lidia now gives chase
But she's far too swift and strong
So easily wins the race
A centipede! What a feed!
It's really been her day
Up the tree to wait and see
And that's where she'll stay

A couple of poems by our regular contributor and the author of 7 Volumes of the
'Softening The Stone' series of original Poetry.

Robert B. Davis

Malarkey

© Robert B. Davis

Babble, balderdash, drivel, foolishness, poppycock, prattle, bunk.
Rattle and hum, of pedantic beats on the drum of humdrum junk.
Bureaucratic bleats, box-ticking feats, common sense defeats,
Confined within the square,
Where originality doesn't dare!

Hiding behind bureaucracy, no judgement, no discretion,
No intelligence required to make a decision.
Rote diction avoiding friction and opinion,
Beware of cavilling objections,
And pedant's constriction.

A symphony of nonsense, a cacophony of sound,
Sanity's sense is nowhere to be found.
The spirit of flair snuffed out in despair,
Mirth of the task starkly laid bare.

The gavel of gobbledegook rules with might,
Logic's light is lost in plain sight.
Break free from the chains of charade,
The pompous parade, pompously displayed.

Dance to the tune of truth, clear and loud,
Lift the fog of farce, remove the shroud.
Balderdash and drivel, a chorus of lies,
Foolishness and poppycock blind wise eyes.

Bureaucracy's fortress, grey and old,
No judgement, no discretion, sterile and cold.
Confined within the square, no room to roam,
Originality stifled, left to die alone.

Where creativity is a risk too great,
The dreamers, the thinkers, must navigate,
Spark the embers of inspiration,
And steer away from stagnation.



Combat Cameraman

A tribute to Damien Parer

© Robert B. Davis

In frames of war, he captured souls,
A cameraman amid thundering rolls.
From a priesthood's path to lens' embrace,
Damien Parer set a steadfast pace.

With Max Dupain's eye, he learned to see,
The world in shades of bravery.
Through Middle East's unforgiving sand,
His camera shook in his trembling hand.

In 1942, the Pacific war, called his name;
By ship, launch, on foot through jungle, he came.
The soldier's story, both still and in motion,
Became his mission, his deep devotion.

Instruments of war, with a sinister grace,
Planes, tanks, and guns in a deadly race.
New Guinea's jungles, harsh and dense,
First shown through his courageous lens.

On the Kokoda Track, amidst the strife,
He filmed the brutal dance of life.
Equipment lost, yet film rolls saved,
A hero's tale, through celluloid engraved.

'Kokoda Front Line!' brought home the fight,
An Oscar winner, in its harrowing light.
The Fuzzy-Wuzzy's care, the soldiers' pain,
All immortalised in Parer's frame.

Returning home in '44, to love and life anew,
Married, then with US Marines, the battle grew.
In Guam's heat, against the Japanese tide,
Close to the action, where heroes died.

Facing the troops, with the enemy behind,
His lens unyielding, his spirit unconfined.
Machine-gun fire took his life's breath away,
Yet his legacy lives, in every frame, every day.

He missed his son's birth, just six months away.
His vision, his art, are here to stay.
The 'Battle of Guam', a film award did claim,
Posthumous honour, eternal flame.

Damien Parer, your lens did frame,
The soul of war, the human name.
Rich and complex, your work does endure,
Enriching Australian life and its culture.



Queensland Bush Poetry News

with Peter Frazer

Queensland Bush Poetry has really been on the boil recently with events large and small being held across the state. While numerous smaller events and club events were organised across the state, the following will give you a taste of what has been happening in the Sunshine state recently.

- **April** saw a number of very successful events such as the "Outback River Lights festival", at Cunnamulla, followed closely by the Boondooma Homestead's "Spirit of the Bush Festival". Large crowds enjoyed the music, Bush Poetry and comradery over a number of days at both events, with professionals, intermediate and novice poets rubbing shoulders as they shared their craft.
- **In May**, the "Capella Country Music" festival followed by "Jamo's Bouldy Bush bash", at Boldercombe, once again drew the crowds, with a number of great poets including Gary Fogarty and Ray Essery flying the flag. Gary Fogarty then rounded the month off with an energetic performance at the Miles show.
- **June** saw the 2024 Primary Poetry Performance Competition, held in Brisbane, organised and run by Noel Stallard and his wife Ann. With competitors each performing a poem by an Australian author. The standard was exceptional and the top 13 students will perform at the upcoming "Verse for Vinnies", (V4V) concert on 28th July. Some will then go on to compete in Student Performance category of the EKKA in August. Noel and Ann run 6 Verse for Vinnies concerts each year, with professional poets like Ray Essery etc invited to perform.
- Next the "Outback Writers Festival", run by Geoff Close and his crew was once again held at the Waltzing Matilda Centre, Winton, in Queensland north western heartland. Greg North kept the crowd entertained, doing a sterling job at the microphone.
- Also in **June**, well known Bush poet, Mick Martin entertained the crowds at Winton roadhouse Cabins and Caravan Park for several days, with some great Bush poetry and yarns.
- Not to be outdone, St George, in South West Queensland held it's famous "Yellow Belly Festival", founded by the late Keith Jamieson, and now proudly continued by his wife Alisha Smith. Gary Fogarty and his able side kick Ray Essery kept the crowd entertained.
- In **July**, the Thargomindah country music festival will kick things off on the 15-21 July where patrons are in for some fun and laughter as Marco Giori will be treading the boards on the 20-21 July.

Upcoming events to note:-

- The old coach staging post, **Stone House at Moore**, just west of Brisbane will hold their fantastic 2 day Bush Poets and Balladeers festival on the 27-28 July. There will be walk-ups and a poet's breakfast followed by a very insightful writer's workshop, run by Australian Champion and international bush poet Gary Fogarty. Free camping is available nearby at Moore and Linville. For details google "Friends of Stone house" or email peterfrazeracn@gmail.com.
- The **Brisbane Ekka** bush poetry is on again between 10-18 August and is absolutely thriving. David Fegan ex Courier Mail editor and Noel Stallard have both joined the team bringing with them very different sets of skills, contacts and ideas. Once again we have great sponsorship, with main sponsor, Caravanning Queensland continuing their fantastic support. We have exciting new trophies, with Akubra donating their expensive top quality hats for first place section winners. Generous prize money is on offer with an invitation to perform in the arena from "the box" during the day and winners are invited to perform at the wool stand during the daily shows.
- Ron Leckerfeldt will MC during the competitions with Trisha Anderson lending her wise advice and guidance after so many years of Ekka bush poetry management. This is going to be the most exciting Ekka bush poetry so far
- **Boondooma Homestead**. Is running "Scots in the Bush" again on 16-25 August. Google "Scots in the Bush" for details.
- **LINVILLE BUSH POETS BASH**. Is on again this year at Linville via Moore on the 6th, 7th and 8th September. "Mates with mates having a good laugh and sharing a good time". Some accommodation is available at Linville Hotel (54247280), at local B&BS and at nearby Kilcoy. Great free camp park is directly across the road with toilets and showers, tent camping is also encouraged.. Contact Peter Frazer peterfrazeracn@gmail.com
- V4V... "**Verse for Vinnies**", September and November concerts run by Noel Stallard and his wife Ann, will be run in Brisbane and will feature guest performers such as Greg North, Rupert McCall, and Noel Stallard. All profits from these concerts go to St Vinnies charity to assist the needy. Round of Applause Noel and Ann, ABPA salutes you for your efforts.

Welcome aboard!!

It is with great pleasure that we welcome our newest Queensland Bush Poetry club to the fold. "**Bay Poets**" from **Hervey Bay** have just had their third monthly get together and it seems bound for success. It is obvious that the Hervey Bay area has a unique mix of people as half the people who attend come purely to listen and enjoy the poetry. This is a fabulous outcome. Under the guiding hand of founding member and well known Bush poet Mick Martin, the numbers have grown rapidly. There are performing gigs coming in already with plans to extend the poetry meetings to doing writing/performing workshops. The group is very fortunate to have the wonderful Jan Facey, Australian Bronze Swagman winner and a very successful poet over the years. The group meet each 4th Saturday morning from 9 am at the radio station community rooms in Hervey Bay, call 0421514555 Mick for information

Our Poetry Kids

with Brenda Joy

Thank you to Mrs Catherine Stewart from the Citipointe Christian College in Carindale, near Brisbane, Queensland for these delightful poems from students in years 4 and 5 inspired by the theme of *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants* taken literally.

Standing on the Shoulders of a Giant by Leah Chin

If I was standing on the shoulders of a giant, I would see everything probably even my head.

I wish I could experience this dangerous heist, but what if I fall onto a big round ball?

Even if I didn't I would still get hurt, lying on the dirt with not much at all.

But wait, how would I climb, 'cause he is a giant so high? I'd jump and jump but just can't get up, so I just wish I could fly way up high.

Maybe I should forget it, because it would be hard, only 'cause to climb, well, he may have a guard.

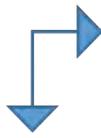
So I may not try, because I could get fried. So I should just get rid of it, 'cause I'd probably get hit.

© Leah Chin 2024 (at age 8)

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants by Sean Seo

As I stood on the shoulder of a giant, it was quite the opposite of silent. They were punching here and there, as they were fighting everywhere!

It wasn't a pretty scene, cause to each other they were mean, Blood oozed as they walked, to take a break as they talked.



As they had a rest, I had not seen the best. for they were too violent, and I like activities that are silent.

© Sean Seo 2024 (at age 10)

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants by Lucas Han

Standing on the shoulders of giants, the sun sets quietly.

Standing on the shoulders of giants, the view immerses me.

The sun, a bright orange, shines through the dense trees. The forest is very thick, with monsters prowling within it.

The giant sways as if moving around, and I fall, scream and jump. The view was good without a doubt, but left me with a bump.

I end up in a hospital, with stitches in my head. I ask the doctor, what's going on, but he groans to me with dread.

I only want to say this once. Other doctors asked me before. "You only fell off a giant, no scar, nothing more."

I think this doctor's mental, to think a scar's nothing more. I get a bad bruise, and end up in hospital, this is way more than "...nothing more".

I think I've had enough with giants, ghastly beasts they are. If I were you, I'd definitely agree, the view's not worth a scar.

© Lucas Han 2024 (at age 10)





VALE
PEG VICKERS

VALE

PETER "Stinger" NETTLETON

It is with great sadness we farewelled fellow poet Stinger Nettleton in early June. Peter was a foundation member of WA Bush Poets and Yarnspinners Association and over the years held the offices of President, Vice President and Secretary. Stinger was more than a bush poet. He was an entertainer in every sense of the word. A noted thespian, his talent for acting shone through in his delivery of poems, yarns and songs. He won the **Rusty Christensen Trophy for Yarnspinning at Toodyay in 2021.**

"The show must go on" was Peter's motto right till the end. At DownUnder Country Music Festival this year (March) at the Poet's Breakfast, he took the microphone it was Stinger of old in spite of the fact that he could barely move around.

WA poets were well represented at his funeral and Roger Cracknell paid a fitting tribute on behalf of our association. We extend our sincere condolences to Peter's partner and soulmate, Jane Cochrane.

Everybody's favourite poet, **Peg Vickers**, passed away on Tuesday 23rd July at the age of 91. Peg was an outstanding writer and her short humorous poems were legendary. She published several small books of poems, many featuring Grandpa and his exploits. She recently combined these books with previously unpublished poems in a book she titled **"I Made The Buggers Laugh"**.

Peg won many awards for her poetry including **WA Original Humorous 2011** and **Yarnspinning at the Australian Championships in Toodyay in 2017**, but it was in the poet's brawl that Peg excelled with her ability to lead one in a certain direction only to give a poem a twist that no-one saw coming. Peg also gained recognition in the **Bronze Swagman written competition** with poems published in their anthology and receiving a commendation for a poem. Peg's performance style could best be described as "minimalistic". She didn't need expression or actions, her words did it all and had the audience in stitches. Peg's poetry will live on through some of our current poets who regularly perform her works, much to her delight.

Peg was a talented artist and from humble beginnings on a farm in Mount Barker WA, Peg endured a hard life until finally released to allow her creative talents to emerge and flourish. It has been a real pleasure to have known Peg and to have shared so much with her.

Peg we salute you.

ANNUAL DERBY BUSH POET'S BREAKFAST

The **Derby Bush Poet's Breakfast** has once again come under the control of the CWA. For the last three years the WA Bush Poet's and Yarnspinners Association has kept this festival going but are pleased that it is once again in local hands.

Under perfect skies and shady trees locals and visitors alike were treated to some very entertaining poetry and yarns from poets near and far ably led by **MC Alan Aitken**.

Local legends **Sam Lovell** and **Ivan Bridge** related stories and poems of the droving days in the Kimberley as did local vet **Dave Morrell**. Local poets **Cheryl Russ** (with a wonderful presentation of well known CJ Dennis poem "The Play") and **Robyn Maher** also contributed.

South Australian poet **Bob Magor** made a return visit and thrilled the audience with his hilarious tales.

Bill and Meg Gordon made the journey north once more and enjoyed sitting back and watching the locals put together a great program. They also enjoyed the previous day at Derby Races with Bob and Beryl Magor.



Bob Magor



DERBY BUSH POET'S BREAKFAST

BOGONG

I'm Harry. I'm a Bogong Moth. I'm feeling quite confused.
Migration paths are different from the ones ancestors used.
"Keep the moon on your left shoulder" me grandpa told me dad
but moons keep multiplying and the whole damn world's gone mad.

You try to do what they all did to reach the breeding ground
but get stuck on some mini moon just going round and round!
It's on a pole to light a street where you'll end up I fear
finally flying up your bum where you'll just disappear.

Or else you strike those mobile moons that hurtle round in pairs
down highways that in dreamtime, were never even there!
You swing left to get round one and it seems to work until
Whack! You're smashed to Bogong bits in a radiator grill!

And square moons are a bugger when you strike them in the night.
You're flying round a human house to try and reach the light.
There are little moons behind them where no moon is s'posed to be.
Then you smash into a force field you can't even bloody see.

Now visiting the breeding ground is vital to our race
but if we keep on hitting moons we'll vanish without trace.
Should Bogong Moths ignore the urge when reproduction calls
or suffer through the agony of obsolete mothballs?

So no more sex and no more moths would seem to be the choice.
Not exactly what it takes to make a moth rejoice.
But mate, I am a genius. I really must confess.
The breed is saved. We all got laid. I've got a GPS.

Jack Drake © 25.5.2023



Catching up with the Legend himself at the 2024 Tenterfield Oracles Of The Bush
From Left, Greg North, Bill Kearns, Jack Drake, Neil McArthur and Marion Fitzgerald

FOLLOW THE PATH TO MORE EFFECTIVE WRITING

with
Irene Dalgety Timpone



CREATING CHARACTER

Irrespective of literary genre, the creation of credible character is the most demanding test of the skills of any writer. The novel genre presents no restrictions of time, line or word number; so the writer has the freedom to reveal as much, or as little, of a character as is required. The reader should be able to walk away from a novel with a clear picture of the characters, the principal characters, in particular. An observant and sensitive reader should be able to discuss any major character at all levels – physical, emotional, psychological and moral. If the reader cannot do this, there is a problem. Either the reader was not discerning enough; or the writer was not sufficiently explicit and effective. More than likely, any problem relates to both.

Writers of Narrative verse and Short Stories do not have the overriding freedoms of the novelist. They are limited in their efforts with both narrative and characterisation by a lack of time to expand fully all aspects of their chosen genre. The Bush Poets among us are even further inhibited by the constant demands of rhyme and metre and the resultant reduction of our vocabulary choice. I choose not to mention all those subject areas we are no longer allowed to address for fear of offending someone. These limitations severely affect the overall standard of diction, the natural flow of narrative and the writer's ability to capture nuances of character. Therein, lies my personal tendency, as a Bush Poet, to avoid complicated metric and rhyming patterns in order to focus on narrative and characterisation. Once again, I reiterate that Bush Poetry, with the restrictive demands of consistent rhyme and metre, is possibly the most difficult of all poetry genres to write. Possibly, however, this genre is the most rewarding.

Why am I always so concerned with narrative and character? I am often asked this question, and I never hesitate to give my response. My love of Bush Verse and the Short Stories of the Australian Bush owes its origin to my early childhood when I was irredeemably influenced by my mother, Anne Dalgety and by Amy Smith of Herberton, my teacher for several years. Their lessons about Australian Bush literature, especially the works of the Masters, Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson were my initial inspiration as a writer. I always hoped that I would be able to emulate the Masters in some way. What do I remember most of their writings in both poetry and prose? Their use of metre and rhyme? No. Their stories and the characters who brought those tales to life? Yes!

Once again, in this Magazine, I make reference to the 2022 publication, "Beyond Lawson", compiled by Leigh Hay and Mike Coventry. The book can be described as a unique collection of some of Australia's foremost Bush and Free Verse poets who were inspired by the works of Henry Lawson, and who offered submissions for the purpose of a commemorative anthology. Many of our well-known ABPA story-tellers were featured in the final selection of poems of which the vast majority were strongly narrative in style. At the same time, many of those poems can be held up as excellent examples of characterisation. Notable story-tellers included were David Campbell, Kay Goring, Catherine Lee, David Judge and Peter O'Shaughnessy. You can check out the works of these talented writers on the ABPA website, then consider, for yourself, how important are the qualities of narrative and characterisation to these award-winning writers.

Never forget that Narrative and Characterisation are the key features of Performance Poetry. These features are intrinsically bound together in such high quality Bush Poems as Lawson's "The Sliprails and the Spur" and "Sweeney", and in Paterson's "The Man from Snowy River" and "The Man from Ironbark". For most readers, the stories are deemed the most memorable; but I believe the characters are far better at surviving the test of time. Who could possibly forget Spencer's McDougal or his dog, Pincher? Who could forget the drover's wife or the loaded dog?

One of my favourite Bush Poetry reference books is Bush Ballads of Australia, a collection by Currawong Press. As expected, the anthology contains Bush Ballads by the best-known of our traditional Bush Poets. The poems are divided into different categories: Horsemen; Drovers and Stockmen; The Shearers; Bush Characters; The Outback; Bushrangers; and Miners and Diggers. This, alone, indicates the significance of 'characters' – and each character has a story, or part of a story, to tell. Contemporary writers do not have to confine themselves to the character list above. We need to look at twenty-first century equivalents of those memorable people. The present-day miner is a very different character from those who worked essentially with pick and shovel. Imagine the scope for narrative and character in that technological world, today. Farming and grazing have also changed greatly with an almost entirely new landscape to be explored and described. We need to write about the world and characters around us now!

FOLLOW THE PATH TO MORE EFFECTIVE WRITING

Continued.....

Planning is a most essential part of all creative writing:

When creating a character for a poem or Short Story, a writer needs to be very familiar with that character before the words begin to unfold – before the story begins to take shape. Characters must be pre-planned in every detail because of the tight interrelationship of narrative and characterisation. Characters must be planned out with credibility foremost in mind. Above all, if the character is to achieve the high level of integrity that is essential in the creation of a memorable character, the actions and words of that character must always remain true to the writer's original vision of that character. If a character changes radically in the course of the action of any writing genre, there must be a clear justification for the change. In a novel, there is all the time and room necessary for the changes to be made. This does not apply to the scripts of 'Soapies' where anything can happen. In the Short Story and Bush Poem, that is not the case. Remember that, even in literature, leopards are not supposed to change their spots. Remember, too, that in the short genres, everything you write must contribute towards essential content and the forward movement of the action. There is no room for anything extraneous to those purposes so the writer must learn to condense, control and cull.

Characters can be developed in several ways, not only independently, but also with interaction and reaction:

- Omniscient vision of the writer who sees all, hears all, knows all, and understands all;
- Physical description – make this distinctive;
- Self-disclosure – words, thoughts, actions, reactions. This will also include what characters reveal about themselves in their observations of the other characters;
- Observations made by other characters – their words, thoughts actions, reactions and interactions as expressed to themselves or to others;
- The writer's delineation of inter-relationships – these need to be clear and uncomplicated..

Try this out in an analysis of a well-known character from a Henry Lawson Short Story or one of the classic Bush Poems. Even more relevant, look at Tom McIlveen's "Delhi Calling" and see how Tom uses self-disclosure to sum up the character of the protagonist. I identified with the character immediately. That sense of immediacy defines a brilliant character writer. Note, too, the advantage of being able to use dialogue well. I cannot stress enough the value to be gained from reading and analysing the Award Winning poems available on the ABPA site. They have the added advantage of being contemporary and, in many notable cases, relevant to this Century.

What makes a character memorable?

To be memorable, a character does not have to be one of the "good guys". The key to the success of any character, irrespective of the genre of the written work, is whether or not the character is credible and has integrity with respect to the work as a whole. Without a doubt, Heathcliff from Emily Bronte's "Wuthering heights" is my favourite fictional character; but, all things considered, he was not a true gentleman by any means. His character, however, could be justified in every respect, and he meets the credibility and integrity requirements. Closer to our own literature, Henry Lawson's classic Short Story, "The Drover's Wife", can give insight into characterisation for both Short Story and Bush Poetry genres. In "The Man from Snowy River", Paterson creates a veritable gallery of characters as he makes reference to well-known characters from his other poems and introduces a new one, a stripling on a small and weedy beast... How is that for an instant image that is not easy to forget?

Essential steps in the planning of the characters who will star in your writing:

There is still one little area of our everyday world where we can and should use discrimination. In fact, discrimination can be essential, particularly in Bush Poetry and Short Stories. To avoid confusion in readers – and listeners – you must make your characters as dissimilar as possible. Choose between male and female, young and old, child and adult, fair and dark, short and tall, comical and serious, bald and hairy, clean-shaven and bearded, thin and not thin, intelligent and otherwise... You can use different speech styles, totally different attitudes or philosophies of life. There is really no end to the discriminations that are available to you. Just be careful that you create characters who will not cause your audience to become confused as to who is who in the zoo of your created world. Above all, you must not offend anyone!

Why is there such a need for this discrimination? Why should it be a consideration in the planning stage? Clarity in writing, lack of ambiguity and immediate understanding are priority considerations in any writing genre, but especially in Bush Poetry and the Short Story. There is no room for doubt and unnecessary explanation and description. The writer cannot rely entirely on pronouns to sort out who is who. The writer has the advantage of knowing exactly who is who. The reader does not, and might need guidance. This is where the planning becomes so essential. Anyone who has read one of my critiques might well be familiar with the comment, 'Confusion caused by ambiguous use of pronouns.' Pronouns are the most difficult parts of speech to use correctly. These are my suggestions:

- Have a strong, clear image of your characters in mind before you begin to write.
- The number of characters should be limited to as few as absolutely necessary, depending on the length of poem or Short Story.
- Chose different genders so that any particular pronoun refers to one character only.
- Use well-chosen alternative descriptors if genders are the same. Make use of the discriminators given above – and the many, many others that are available.
- Use well-punctuated dialogue that readily reveals the identity of the speaker.
- To avoid ambiguity, cleverly work key differentiating words into dialogue, commentary and descriptions.
- Choose names that are suggestive of gender. Avoid choosing names that end in 's' as this often causes problems when apostrophes are used to denote possessive case.

Can you improve on these sentences from a Number One Best Selling Author?

This and Alex went out to the art studio where she had mentioned work was needed on a painting for a client that was due to be shipped out the next day. (Three problems.)

The two were so focused on one another that they never saw the person who had been watching them move slowly away from the window. (Three problems.)

On his way back to the inn Fred phoned him. (Three problems.)

Good luck with the competitions still available to us in 2024. Entries for the 2025 Blackened Billy close towards the end of 2024. Don't miss that one. Cheers, Irene.

'Women In Sport'

© Harry Donnelly 25-7-24

Unlimited numbers of sporting fields,
weekend mornings across the land.
Thousands of girls in hundreds of towns,
having fun with foot and hand.

A scene re-enacted in dozens of codes,
resurgence in women's sport.
Fitness and fun uniting once more,
an elixir that can't be bought.

Parents, Grand and Great Grand,
gathering in support.
Millions of girls across the globe,
in every kind of sport.

This amassing of the people,
winter, summer, autumn, spring.
Is a catalyst against obesity,
and sport is just the thing.

This world-wide weekend workout,
brings a buzz about the place.
Boys and girls once more in sport,
and smiles across the face.

The advent of fast-food enterprise,
Eighties, Nineties...Noughties style.
Took kids away from exercise,
gaining kilos all the while.

I love seeing this resurgence,
boosting Gender Equality.
As women excel in every sport,
whilst smashing obesity!

When fitness is set from childhood,
good chance 'twill carry on.
To be passed through generations,
learned from generations gone.

Horse racing, Cricket, Martial Arts,
even State of Origin stuff.
Things that mainly a bloke once did,
our girls prove just as tough.

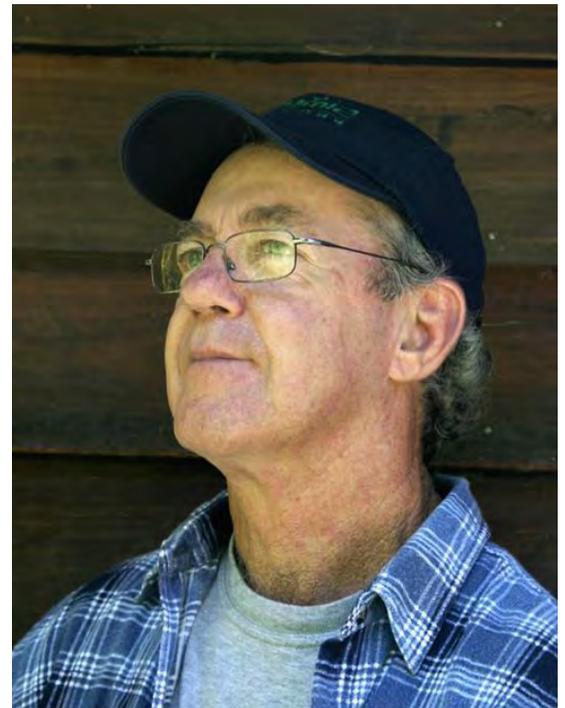
And it leads to extra coverage,
on the global viewing stage.
Our Matilda's...all so swiftly,
re-writing every page.

As an oldie I couldn't be prouder
to see kids back in the parks.
Running, practicing, honing skills,
excelling dawn till dark.

A growing new phenomenon
on indeed a global scale.
Of women in every kind of sport,
most thought of just for male.

I've often written of times gone by,
how fortunate we kids were.
To run and play unhindered,
and today I still concur.

So, full steam ahead I scream aloud,
for boys and girls as one.
A better world for all I say,
for what 'Women in sport' — has done.



(artwork by Keith Blake)

Entertainment, Book Launch and BBQ at the Yeoval Banjo Paterson Museum 2024.

Yeoval hosted another full, non-stop, day of poetry and music as part of the Orange Region's 2024 Banjo Paterson Australian Poetry Festival in mid February.

With the smell of bacon on the BBQ wafting through the air we kicked off at 10am and didn't pull up until 4pm. The crowd enjoyed some great poetry and the brackets of music by Chris McGinty and the Sydney based Bush Band took us back in time with some lovely old ballads.

Robyn Sykes and Greg North introduced one of the day's highlights with the release of Heather Knight's book about the remarkable family of Banjo Paterson called 'Poets, Painters and Pioneers'. I can only quote and totally agree with Dr Judith Godden, professional historian, when she says "For Heather, Banjo's extended family was the family that kept on giving. Thanks to her thorough research and easy writing style, we to can get to know them and, in doing so, peer through a window into Australian life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries".

W. Benjamin Lindner also gave us a rundown on his book "Waltzing Matilda". Benjamin is considered one of the country's leading experts on the topic and the book is well worth the read.

I was also fortunate to obtain a copy of the long awaited book of poetry by Harry Bestwick called "The Grey Nomad's Happy Hour Handbook of Laughter". Get in touch with 'Old Grumpy' for a copy.

Other poets to appear on the day were David Melville, Don Swonnell, David Stanley, Jim Lamb, John Watkins, Len Banks, Norma from Parkes, Brian, Terry Dingwell, Robert Osborne and Chris Hardy. Hope I haven't missed anyone.

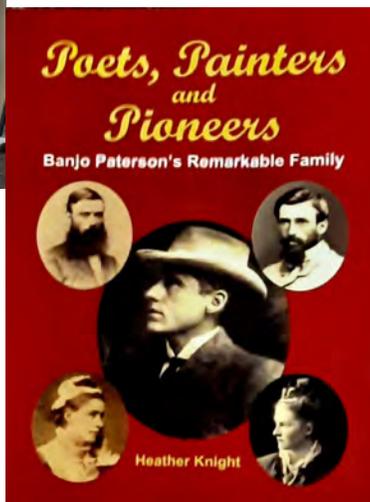
As usual the Banjo Paterson-More than a poet Museum were great hosts with the BBQ running all day. Sharon had Clancy's Café pumping with some top shelf coffee, scones, muffins, trays of slices and drink and many guests took the opportunity to look through the Museum. If anyone is in the region make sure you take the opportunity to have a look through this well-appointed attraction to learn, and view, some of Banjo's family history. There are many unique exhibits on display.

The Festival continued through the week with the Molong poetry brawl, competitions, poetry in parks, pubs, markets and wineries. The Cargo Cup held at the Cargo Inn allowed the poets to relax and a great night was had by all. The night ended in a "poet-off" between Gerry Manion and David Melville. They really bunged on a show and nearly lifted the roof off the pub. Gerry ended up taking the honours and last year's winner, John Watkins, handed the Cup over for Gerry to cherish for the next 12 months.

Jim Lamb



Heather Knight
Launching Her
New Book, Poets,
Painters and
Pioneers.



David Stanley
Performing



Poets In The Park

Galahs

© Ted Logan

My daily walk – my sometimes route –
Past the tiny park in Suffolk Street,
Commute with nature, rest my soul,
Take a water break on a park seat.
I catch my breath and survey the scene
All was as it should be fresh and green.

“But hello! What’s with the other side!”
Towards the gate a patch of grey
Catching the light with flecks of pink.
I was moving on but decided to stay
A flock of galahs was pecking the earth,
In a fit of frenzy for all their worth.

Each of them had their allotted place
To peck in, but if more was needed,
Their neighbours moved on an equal space
Some “galahic” law was being heeded.
So the surface scene seemed in constant motion
Like the ripples in a quiescent ocean.



If a galah was being crowded out
And there was no space in view,
And a move was just not possible –
A stressful hullabaloo.
It took to the wing, as quick as a wink,
In a feathered fury of grey and pink.

This was such a large flock of birds,
I counted roughly thirty five;
The constant changing of the guard,
A struggle to find food and survive.
Intrigued I stayed to watch a while
To lodge in my memory the file.

I could indeed have been there still
But a visitor came in through the gate
And walked the path towards the birds
And hurrying as if she was late.
The galahs rose up together as one
Circled the park, and then they were gone.

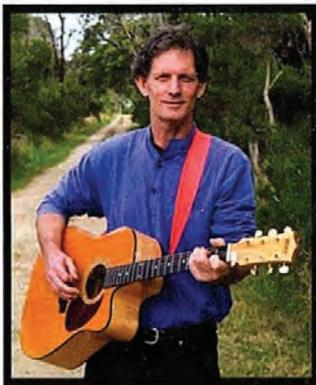
Note: A true recent story. I had never seen such a large flock of galahs since I taught school in the Wodonga area in the 1960s. They seemed to have an exclusion personal (galahanol) zone around them on which no other bird could encroach.



2024 TOLMIE Bush Entertainment Muster 22nd to 24th November



At Tolmie Recreation Reserve 15 Kms from Mansfield
A Grey Nomads & Campers Paradise. www.tolmie.com.au
Enjoy a relaxed weekend of Bush Poetry & Song/Music
Day visitors welcome. Muso's bring your instruments!!!
6pm Friday 'Meet & Greet' old friends & make new ones



FREE entry. Donation for Greg Champion Concert

SATURDAY 9am - 10.30am Bush Poets & Muso's Breakfast Open Mic to lunch 12n.

2pm – 3.30pm ANZAC Tribute. Break. Open Mic to 5pm.

**8pm Concert: Greg Champion of 'Coodabeen Champions'
& selected entertainers to approx 10.30pm.**

SUNDAY 9am to 10.30am Bush Poets & Muso's Breakfast

Novice Poetry & 1 minute poem Comps. Finish 12n.

\$7.50 per person per night site fee.

**Family entertainment All welcome. Conducted by the Victorian Bush Poetry and Music Assoc.
www.vbpma.com.au See Muster page. Facebook: Tolmie Bush Entertainment Muster
E: info@vbpma.com.au BYO Chairs!! Enq: Tim Sheed 0438861271 Jan Lewis 0422848707**

"Snow, Fire and Gold - the story of Bill and Evelyn Piper's life in the Australian mountains."

Self-Published Book by Stephen Whiteside.

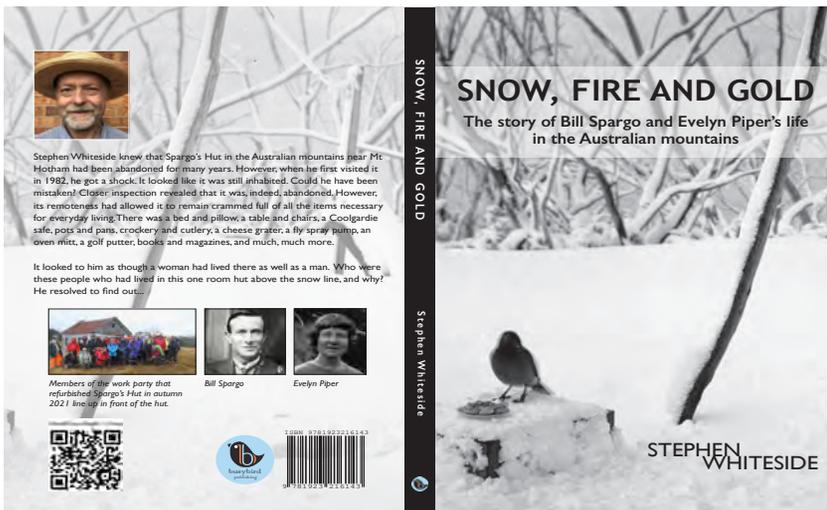
The book was inspired by a visit to Spargo's Hut, near Mt Hotham, in 1982. The hut is a two hour walk from the Hotham resort, and in those days there was no track to follow. Stephen had been told the hut was abandoned, but his first glimpse inside suggested otherwise. Closer inspection revealed, however, that while it was indeed abandoned, it remained crammed full with all the items necessary for everyday living. It looked as though a woman, as well as a man, had lived there. Stephen resolved to learn as much as he could about who had lived there, and why.

Upon returning in 1987, to take a full photographic inventory of all the items in the hut, he also began criss-crossing country Victoria, interviewing and recording people who had known one or both of the hut's occupants - Bill Spargo and Evelyn Piper. He spoke to skiing pioneers, former chalet managers, prospectors and miners, road makers, cattlemen, and many others. After speaking to Bill's descendants, and managing to track down Evelyn's descendants in England. Stephen was given photographs, personal letters, and other documents. Gradually, the story came together. The arrival of Trove in recent years also gave him access to many newspaper articles which contained relevant information.

In 1988, he successfully nominated Spargo's Hut for registration with the Historic Buildings Council (now Heritage Victoria). In 2011, the Hotham Resort Management Board built a walking track to the hut, and in 2021 the hut was extensively refurbished by the Victorian High Country Huts Association, with support from the Hotham Resort Management Board. The project was driven by Bill's great nephew, Neville Spargo.

The book contains a large number of photos, both historic black and white (Bill Spargo was a very keen photographer) and more contemporary colour. The black and white photos are remarkably clear, and many of them have not been published before.

A number of successful launches have already been held around northeast Victoria, and many more are scheduled for later in the year. Stephen is also launching his book at Readings Carlton in Melbourne at 6.30 pm on Wednesday, 17th July.



About the Author

Stephen Whiteside has been walking and skiing through the Australian mountains for most of his life. He has also been writing for many years - mostly rhyming verse, but also short stories, and articles about Australia's history and natural environment. Many of his poems have been published in magazines or anthologies, both in Australia and overseas, or won awards. In 2014, Walker Books published a collection of his poetry for children, "The Billy that Died with its Boots On and other Australian Verse." In 2015, the book won a Golden Gumleaf for "Book of the Year" at the Australian Bush Laureate Awards during the Tamworth Country Music Festival. In 2016 he judged the Secondary School Section of the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards. Whiteside works as a GP in Melbourne. This is his first novella.

Previous books by Stephen Whiteside

The Billy That Died With its Boots On and Other Australian Verse (Walker Books, 2014)

The "Ant Explorer" Parodies (self-published, 2010)

"The Brigadier's Horse" and other poems from the Western Front by Arthur Dean, compiled by Stephen Whiteside (self-published 2010)

The Paterson Parodies (self-published 2009)

Poems of 2008 (self-published 2009)

Early Poems and Songs (including "Omeo") (self-published 2008)

Poems of 2007 (self-published 2008)

Across the Nullarbor

© Colin Elliott

No longer do we face an unsealed road and corrugations.
Those who travelled years ago faced many aggravations
That we will never know. Hats off to those who went before!
It's relatively easy now to cross the Nullarbor.

Back then, to make that journey was a major undertaking
That pushed those cars of yesteryear right to the point of breaking,
With tyres torn or radiator leaking from its core.
It took a bit of courage then to cross the Nullarbor.

Grey nomads, caravans in tow, now take the challenge lightly,
Stopping at a roadhouse or a quiet free camp nightly.
But there is still adventure. We are eager to explore.
It's a senior's rite of passage to cross the Nullarbor.

Some say that it is boring, hours and hours of endless plain.
Having done it once they never want to go again.
But in its sheer immensity, it cannot be a bore.
There's much to see and wonder at, out on the Nullarbor.

With so much space how can so many trucks hit 'roos unchecked?
It's 'roos that hit the trucks, perhaps you'll want to interject.
It seemed there were more roadkills there than we had seen before.
We didn't quite expect that, out on the Nullarbor.

The problem only worsens when an eagle swoops to feed.
He drops down on a roadkill with gastronomic greed.
A truck approaches. His take-off performance now is poor.
That extra weight ensures he dies there on the Nullarbor.

A tangle of brown feathers marks just where he lost the race.
He didn't climb up fast enough, and died there in that place.
It seemed an easy meal, he couldn't know what was in store.
Another 'wedgie' sacrificed, upon the Nullarbor.

A road that doesn't deviate for ninety miles or so.
The longest straight stretch in the country; there's no need to slow
Down for a bend, your foot can stay immobile on the floor.
There's nothing much to skirt around, upon the Nullarbor.

The name implies there are no trees, which isn't strictly true.
The treeless plain expected only briefly came in view.
We will admit the trees are small, the soil must be poor.
There's not much rain, but there are trees upon the Nullarbor.

Those cliffs that offer ocean views that cause your pulse to race.
The surging Southern Ocean, a remote and lonely place.
A stirring backdrop to the landscape, leaves you wanting more.
It is a very special place, the sprawling Nullarbor.

So maybe, now the road is smooth, the challenges are gone.
The romance may have died a bit, as progress forges on.
It's still a great experience, and one we'll share once more.
We'll sense the moods and hear the silence of the Nullarbor.



"I'M A MILITARY NURSE"

©Tony Caswell (TC The Goodna Gunna) 24/04/2019

*What a nurse could be saying to a wounded and frightened soldier
For Goodna ANZAC Day Service 2019*

"You've served your country, and paid a very high price
Like many of your comrades, a non-recognised sacrifice
But you have earned the comfort and care that is waiting for you
With our medical skills you, are going to make it through

To survive you have to give us all you've got
Badly wounded after being shelled and shot
Now you are here, suffering in a hospital bed
Very lucky to be alive, instead of being dead

I'll clean up the blood and wipe the gore away
And patiently listen to what you have to say
I'll hold your hand when you have doubts and begin to cry
And I'll give you belief and hope that you won't die

You have been damaged and hurt, but I have seen worse
You will feel anger and rage and, at times will let out with a curse
But I'll be right here to stop your life from slipping away
I'll be here to make you strong, so you can fight another day

I've heard the guns rattling, bombs falling and shells flying overhead
I've assisted with operations in theatres full of mayhem and dread
We've worked hours until our bodies and minds had no more to give
It's our duty, it's what we do, so you and your mates continue to live

I know you must be tormented by thoughts that invade your mind
We share the torture when horrific flashbacks make us two of a kind
Our carefree personalities have forever been cruelly changed
Into a shell that can be negative, violent, withdrawn and deranged

Because just like you I am part of this soul-sapping fight
I am also a warrior, wearing a Red Cross and a uniform of white
With pride, I am a Military Nurse, who is trained to care
With determination, I am a Protector, who is game to dare

Alongside doctors and stretcher bearers we're part of a team
We see your panic, we feel your fear, we hear your scream
We plan to restore your body, we plan to ease your pain
Then another casualty arrives, and, our battle will start all over again"



MY LIFE



Peg Vickers at Nambung

I was brought up on a farm
Though it did me little harm
I don't believe it did me any good.
For t'was not till I was forty
And my hands were rough and warty
I discovered ladies didn't chop the wood.

I could have played the concertina
Or become a ballerina
Or a surgeon I venture to suggest.
I milked the cows and fed the chooks
Didn't read too many books
So all my hidden talents lay suppressed.

I was barely educated
And I wasn't liberated
One might say this upbringing was austere.
At an early age I married
And was consequently harried
By a stork that came to visit every year.

But one has to understand
That's the life upon the land
So do not feel bad on my behalf.
For there's one thing that I knew
I actually could do
And that was I could make the people laugh.

Though I'd never win a prize
In the art of being wise
Or doing things to make a lot of money.
Being ignorant and broke
One can still afford a joke
For it doesn't cost a penny to be funny.

So when I've done my best
And am finally laid to rest
There are words that could be said upon that day.
"She may have been quite daft
But at least the buggers laughed
And that's about as much as we can say".



Peg Vickers at Nambung

We need to give The Earth a rest
to fix the climate mess.
The use of fossil fuel's a pest—
we need to use it less.

The science tells us what to do
to get the planet well
and now we have to see it through
before the final bell.

We have no time to muck around,
the time to act is now.
To use these fuels is now unsound,
so this we can't allow.

The time for painless change has gone
as temperatures are high.
The danger warning light is on
so now we have to try.

The only use for energy
will be necessity.
Of oil and gas and coal, be free
to keep integrity.

When power stations using coal
no longer operate,
for wind and sun as fuels of goal
we'll have to, then, mandate.

Until they use a fuel that's clean
all flights we have to stop
and road transport must not be seen
if petrol is its drop.

Some people say it can't be done—
"Economy's the king,
its fall would stifle all our fun"—
to habits foul they cling.

Recession's needed for the plan—
a lot of jobs on hold.
The government declares the ban
supporting with its gold.

The rapid change will cause some grief—
the rich will have the pain,
but CO2's the real thief—
that monster must be slain.

We need to see that short-term pain,
of giving up some things,
will lead to solid long-term gain
a healthy planet brings.

She won't be right and that's for sure
unless we do what's right.
"No fossil fuels!", let's make it law
and win this deadly fight.

In Eden's Bay, the first whaling station to grace
Australia's mainland with toil and place.
For over a century, whaling tales did unfold,
In Twofold Bay, where stories are told.

In the Bay where waters swirled and churned,
Old Tom did swim; he twisted and turned.
A joker he was in whaling times,
An orca legend in sailors' rhymes.

With a thrash of his tail, and an old mighty splash,
He'd signal whalers to make a dash.
The hunt was on, the chase in depth,
An ocean game of life and death.

He guided whalers with unerring skill,
Through cold, briny depths with predatory thrill.
Harpoon ropes gripped in his jaw,
Towing boats with a mighty draw.

In the fray, he'd leap high and grand,
Landing on harpoon ropes, like a sea anchor's hand.
Old Tom, the head orca, led the dance,
In the watery chaos, he'd advance.

Season after season, Old Tom would return,
For the thrill of the hunt, the sea's wild churn.
He loved the chase, the splash, the roar,
It was his game, from sea to shore.

But time is a tide that none can outrun,
And in 1930, Tom's final hunt was done.
His body, a relic, drifted slowly to the Bay,
Eden mourned on that very sad day.

To honour him, the folks did solemnly choose,
To mount his frame, for all to muse.
In Eden's Museum, Tom rests in peace,
His legend continues, it does not cease.

If you wander to Eden's shore,
Visit Old Tom, of lore and yore.
In silent halls, his tale's on display,
The Orca King of Twofold Bay.



"Boganbungan's Transformation."

© Peter White

It's said that Bungeworaga is a rather pretty place where the people of the town are filled with civic pride. It's neighbour, Boganbungan, is an absolute disgrace where ignorance and apathy are both exemplified.

Buhgeworaga's Chairman who was asked about his town sang the praises of the people who were living there Boganbungan's header asked why its morale was down, replied with a shrug, "I don't know and I don't care."

Having won "Tidy Town" five years in a row, people of Bungeworaga were keen to win this year. The Boganbungan folk had never had a go and it seemed quite likely it would never happen here.

The start of every year is when all work transfers occurred The Bank at Boganbungan got a newly married Teller. Within a week the party line had quickly spread the word for a city boy, Jack Morris, seemed a decent 'feller'.

The Bank house that they occupied had sure seen better days and one might even say it was a state of disrepair.. But Jack and Judith Morris hadn't caught the town's malaise and both keen DIYers they would give the house some care.

To signal their intention they began in their front yard. They pulled the weeds and mowed the lawns then planted shrubs and flowers. They both admired their efforts and, although the work was hard, decided, next weekend, they'd plan to spend a few more hours.

The next weekend Jack fixed the fence and mowed the nature strip While Judith potted plants and gave the fence a lick of paint. After lunch, Jack drove his ute, with rubbish, to the tip. Though Judith's hands were blistered she'd not utter a complaint.

Jim Barnes, their northern neighbour and Frank Watson to the south decided they would give a general tidy-up to theirs. Across the road, Maud Jackson who was well-known for her mouth, called to Ted, "Look at this mob with all their fancy airs."

Tef Jackson said, "What they can do I'll do a better job", and from his shed he wheeled his barrow and his rusty tools. And so began the gardening craze, the street became a mob of mowing, weeding, planting, painting, fixing, gardening fools.

Throughout the town this gardening mania took a hold and spread. Each neighbour vied with neighbour to complete this transformation. The Shire Chairman at a local Council Meeting said, "The folk of Boganbungan have all earned our acclamation."

"We should enter "Try Town" as now the town's so pretty and take advantage of the way our transformed township looks." Filling in an Entry Form they sent it to the city. Said Bungeworaga people, "That's a turn-up for the books!"



The Judging Day arrived and final touches were applied. The hope of Boganbungan to acquire a prize soon ended. To Bungeworaga "First" again, the judges would decide, awarding Boganbungan's first time entry "Highly Commended".

The folk in Boganbungan weren't upset by this decision. Simply, they were flabbergasted by how well they'd done. The job they did - remarkable - more than they could envision. The way they celebrated you would think that they had won.

High morale gave Boganbungan a new-found sense of pride as well as resolution not to follow ways of old. There's no place now for ignorance and apathy to hide. Forever, Boganbungan's changed, it's future bright and bold.

In recognition, Jack and Judith Morris were rewarded by Councillors establishing a trophy for the town. Each year the "Tidy Home" is by the Shire awarded "The Jack and Judith Morris Cup" - a prize of great renown

Man from Snowy River Festival 2024

Corryong, Victoria

Thurs 11th – Sun 14th April

The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival this year also played host to the Victorian Bush Poetry Championships (that were last held there in 2022). The 'jewel in the crown' of State Championships, competitors this year were vying for a slice of the \$3500 worth of cash prizes & trophies that were on offer for the various 21 competition sections. 'Up for grabs' were the main titles for the "Overall Written Champion" and the "Matilda" & "Clancy's Choice" (Overall Female & Male Performance Champions). The festival's Poetry and Bush Music competitions started 29 years ago now (way back in 1995) and are now revered as one of the most prestigious spoken word events in the country.

Kristy Streat took over as the "Overall Events Manager" for the festival in 2024 and "The Rhymer from Ryde" was hired to be her 'right hand man' & "Assistant Poetry Event Manager". The "Rhymer" had a wealth of experience 'under his belt' in this regard as he had been Jan Lewis's assistant for the last decade. The "Rhymer" also doubled up on his responsibilities for the weekend as "Senior Judge" for the Victorian Bush Poetry Championships competition sections. A big job indeed, but he was far from alone.

The "Rhymer" was joined at the judging table by John Peel, Tim Sheed, Christine Middleton, Jenny Markwell, Maurie Foun & Geoffrey.W.Graham. Matthew Hollis also lent a 'helping hand' around the Lions Youth Hall and Banjo's Block where needed (mainly when the "Rhymer" was having 'stress-meltdowns' when things didn't go to plan).

Mick Coventry once again 'stepped up to the plate' to take up his position as 'Head Collator' for the competition sections and was ably assisted by David Taggart & Tim Sheed in the completion of his duties. Howard James also manned the stopwatch for the competition sections to make sure our excited competitors didn't 'overstep the mark' by going over the 8 min allotted time limits. Howard also helped out at the Thursday night "Meet & Greet-Walk up Session" at the bottom pub by volunteering the use of his P.A. system (which was also used at Friday's 'Anzac Remembrance Concert' in the RSL Club Hall). Good on ya mate!

Kevin McCarthy and Simon Dillon 'ruled the roost' around the campfire at Banjo's Block with their well-attended "Aussie Sing-a Long" sessions (providing traditional music during the dinner breaks) as well as the customary 'Jam Sessions' around the fire late at night (till the early hours of the morning too I believe). Christine Middleton lovingly stroked & plucked her magnificent harps (around the traps) adding 'a touch of class' to proceedings as well. Of course, there's no better Banjo Paterson 'tribute' artist than our own "Geoffrey. W. Graham" from Eaglehawk who also delivered his slice of Banjo down at the Recreation Reserve.

As per usual 'all & sundry' gathered down at "Banjo's Block" at 8.30 every morning for this year's run of "Poets Breakfast" sessions.

Over the 3 mornings that were entertained by a colourful range of characters including Geoffrey.W.Graham, Phil McManus, Howard James, Jenny Markwell, Martin Mulholland, Bruce Chandler, Don & Christa Dwyer, Colin Carrington, David Stanley, Liz Dorsett, Mick Coventry, Maurie Foun, Kevin McCarthy, Simon Dillon, John Peel, The Rhymer from Ryde, Colin O'Keefe & Jacqui, Judy Boyd, Jim Lamb, Chris Smith, Campbell the Swaggie, Lorraine McCrimmon, John Watkins, Seamus Foley, Peter Hartigan, Emma Coburn, Andrew Hull, Snowy Clarke, Kristy Kemp, Johnny Clancy & Matt Gardener. These "Poets Breakfast" sessions were presided over once again by "The Rhymer from Ryde" and his willing 'sidekick' Matthew Hollis.

Special thanks to go to Bruce "Bushranger" Hill and his team of hardy volunteers who came on board at the last moment to supply meals to the crowds at 'Banjo's Block' after the 'Food Van' that had been booked was cancelled at the last minute. Bruce (who had helped with food preparation at previous festivals) took on the job with very little notice (even buying the food required out of his own pocket before he even knew whether he's be recompensed or not). Top Marks mate! A very big thank you from all the contented and satisfied stomachs @ 'Banjo's Block'. Hope to see you 'on-board' as the preferred caterer for 2025.

Of course a huge volume of thanks must also go to our dedicated team of poetry volunteers who kept the wheels greased and rolling over the course of the weekend. Lead by Lisa Walsh (from the MFSR committee) and ably assisted by Jan Lewis & Linton Vogel our wonderful volunteers this year included the following dedicated souls, Bruce Clark, Chris Wilson, Bruce Chandler, Colin Carrington, David Stanley, Howard James, Jeff Kearney, Jenelle Jurcic, Jenny Stephens, Jo Edwards, Kathrin Wales, Kaylene Kearney, Kerri Robinson, Laurie Webb, Linda Hughes, Mick Coventry, Mon Galvin, Phil McManus, Renee Kostiuk, Stacey Leigh Kidston, Sue Spence & Vlado Jurcic. (Apologies to anyone that I may have missed!) Thanks folks! Oh, by the way, special thanks go to Malcolm Batty who was the "Rhymer's" 'go-to man' in the Lions Youth Hall (manning the front desk at the Lions Youth Hall and answering all the multitude of questions from the public and contestants alike). What a top bloke!

(Oops, I nearly forgot. A big "Thank you" goes out to David Stanley, Matthew Hollis & Malcolm Davies as well for their various photos contained within this report. "The Rhymer from Ryde" also contributed in this regard. Good on ya fellas!!! We couldn't tell the weekend's story as well without the visual images).



Photos by David Stanley, Matthew Hollis & Malcolm Davies



Regular Monthly Events

NSW

"Laggan Bush Poets." The Laggan Pub, Laggan NSW. The 1st Wednesday of every month (except January), starting at 7pm. For further details contact Mike or Elaine on (02) 4837 3397

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 (Free RV camping at the Lagoon)

QUEENSLAND

Toowoomba Bush Poets meet on the second Saturday of each month at the COBB & cO MUSEUM , 27 Lindsay Street, Toowoomba, Queensland 4350, between 10 am and 12 midday. Read..Write..Recite ..or just Listen. All 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 Manfred 0411160510 or Howard on 0431689054.

Kuripia Poets - last Sunday of the month 2pm to 4.30pm, Croquet Hall, 91 Codelia St. Sth Brisbane. Contact Marilyn 0458 598 683

Geebung Writers - 9.30 am every 2nd Wednesday of the month at Geebung RSL. Contact Jean (07)32654349

Bundaberg Poets Society Inc.2nd Saturday of the month. 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" meet at St Margaret's Church Hall in Sandgate, beside the primary.every 3rd Tuesday from 5-45 pm contact 042 15 14 555

Townsville Bush Poetry Mates Inc. meet 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. – St Augustine's Church Library, 631 Bourke St Melbourne. It is a short walk from Southern Cross railway station. All Welcome. From 1-30pm till 4-00 pm. Contact: Maree Stapledon: 0408 100 896

Mansfield Bush Poets Group - second Friday of the month 1.30pm-4.00pm, 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