

# A.B.P.A.

*Australian Bush Poets Association*  
*Volume 30 No. 5 October/November 2024*



## Vale Shirley Friend



## 2024 Brisbane EKKA

You may hear people running bush poetry down with words like, "They're dead men, and women, walking", "bush poetry is dying", "nobody wants to hear bush poetry these days", well guess what, that is absolutely not the case! This week the Brisbane RNA EKKA bush poetry competitions had almost doubled as the competition started. The virtual competition was amazing with almost double the number of entries. The daily shows have proven that people, young and old, love what we do! This picture shows only a third of a group of young rappers who were enthralled by the show. They laughed and sat amazed by what they saw and heard.



Delighted audience member Jay Randall with Manfred Vijars and Mick Martin who performed for the crowds on the shearers' stand, bush poetry's home at the EKKA.



Trisha Anderson everyone's darling of the Ekka is pictured here with Amy Litzow. Amy presented a heart warming poem written by Milton Taylor about dementia. The poem "Claire" is a touching piece that had the audience emotionally connected and identifying with the nurse in the poem.

Trisha Anderson is still involved with the RNA bush poetry as she judges the virtual competition, assists poets during the live Comp and even presents on the shearers' stand at the daily shows. Trisha kept the Ekka bush poetry going and going for the last 24 years. We owe her so much that we can never repay such a wonderful gift.

# President's Report

There has been a lot of activity in the Bush Poetry scene over the last few months, the recent Nanango festival being a very successful example.

Christine and myself travelled up to Camooweal to run the Bush Poets Breakfasts for the three days of the Camooweal Bush Drivers Camp Festival and that was a lot of fun.

The Victorian Bush Poets and Musicians Association are holding the Tolmie Bush Entertainment Muster from the 22nd to 24th of November with special guest and patron Greg Champion headlining the entertainment.

The New South Bush Poets are planning a festival in Gloucester for the 7th and 8th of March 2025 and hoping to make it the State Championship (more info in subsequent magazines).

On the weekend of the 8th, 9th and 10th of November the WA Bush Poets Championships are being held in Toodyay and we are looking forward to being involved in that.

Finally for my report The Man From Snowy River Festival and Victorian Bush Poetry Championship is being held in Corryong from the 10th to 13th of April 2025 and we anticipate a big rollout for that. ABPA sponsors State Championships to the tune of \$1000 per time and that helps to get these festivals over the line.



Onwards and Upwards for  
Bush Poetry  
Tim Sheed

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## **Next Magazine Deadline is November 27th 2024**

# Vale Shirley Friend



In remembering Shirls, I can't help remembering Cedric. Sitting with Shirl at home, in the audience, at the product table, in the driver's seat of their Toyota Campervan and around the campfire at Gympie, but never in the shadows. Ced had an infectious laugh, strong opinions that would be heard, and he made the finest bread and butter pudding I have ever tasted. Shirley and Cedric were a complete unit and the image of them together again is worth cheering about.

I first met Shirley at Woodford Folk Festival in the late 1980's performing on stage with myself and author Sandy Thorn. Shirl slayed 'em. She read from a book back then, but it didn't matter. She had the audience in the palm of her hand, irreverent, unapologetic, cheeky, motherly, an old hand at stage craft and comedic timing. I was immediately in awe of her, and like many poets, for the next two decades I envied her, learned from her, followed her on stage, forever in her wake, and loved her like a true mate.

She was a Folk Poet, of the old school, sharing and wise, always available, humble, keen to participate and the winner of not one individual poetry award. She didn't need them, she didn't bother accumulating trophies, her audience gave her everything she needed and in spades.

Shirley came up with the name The Naked Poets, inspired by one of her favourite British shows, The Naked Vicar Show, and organized the first ever show at a small hall in Wamuran, where the host a local DJ compered naked with a fig leaf over his private parts. Shirley's ideas were endless.

In the Naked Poets she inspired Muz Hartin, myself, the late Bobby Miller, Ray Essery and Pat Drummond and the many other guest artists we invited onto the Naked Poets show, to let go, to experiment, to imagine ourselves as aliens, gay cowboys, dancing deckhands, frolicking bumble bees, Indian country music singers, synchronized swimmers and of course, giant human condoms bobbing and thrusting up and down, up and down, on stage, as Shirley led the chorus and the audience watched open-mouthed while Cedric rolled his eyes and shook his head from the side of stage. There was not a theatre piece The Naked Poets attempted that was not influenced by her amazing ability to warp your mind or to force you to giggle uncontrollably.

In the bigger picture, Shirley Friend inspired other Performance Poets to examine and challenge what we perceived our role as Aussie Poets and Storytellers to be.

On certain conservative stages some Bush Poets and their staunch entourage turned their backs on her performances, protested her subject matter of mammograms, specimen bottles, promiscuity and wayward boobs. But not for long. Shirley would be proven a woman ahead of her time, eternally youthful, as she became a festival favourite, drawing new audiences, testing boundaries and soon even the most conservative fans acknowledged her talents while being swallowed up by her unique character.

Apart from her amazing standup routines, she created mayhem with Ray on the back of his motorbike, pretended to pedal a bicycle with her underarms stuck to her sides, and every now and then sang in tune, to deliver those lines that had grown men buckling in two, old ladies holding their sides hoping they wouldn't wet themselves, and teenagers asking their parents to buy them tickets for the next show featuring Shirley Friend.

Shirley was a woman who loved and honoured her friendships, and of course, hot salty chips. She became the most loving mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother to so many, bragging to all and sundry about their next adventure, their travels and achievements.

Shirl was the grateful immigrant who together with Cedric embraced opportunities, forged an amazing life in Australia, created successful businesses, worked bloody hard, and in retirement found time to share with audiences her amazing sense of humour, her world-class untapped talent, her generosity and her mateship.

In her time here on Earth, Shirley Friend opened her heart and let us in, encouraged us to see the lighter side, to celebrate and laugh together. In baring her soul, she became the original, the quintessential Naked Poet.

To you Shirl we express our gratitude in your own words - "Oh... Bless you Darling! You're so kind." You too were kind Shirley, one of a kind, and for that we shall love and remember you always.

Marco Gliori





# MET AT A COUNTRY PUB

© Jim Kent

Winner 2024 Boree Log Award



I met him in a country pub, way out the back of Bourke,  
while trucking plant to Opal miners - hot and dusty work.  
My throat was parched and tonguing for a cold and frothy brew,  
and there I'd stopped to whet the whistle with a beer or two.

He was the only customer, his chair beside the bar.  
"You're looking thirsty, mate," he said, "so join me for a jar."  
I guess he sensed my hesitation and shook his greying head,  
"I ain't no bar fly bludgin' drinks, I buys me own," he said.

"Besides I ain't a drinkin' man, me daily quota's few,  
and sittin' here and thinkin', mate, is what I mostly do,  
exceptin' when there's others here and then I likes to yak,  
a lonely place for man and beast, out here along the track."

"It's mostly quiet hereabouts except on Sat'dee night,  
that's when the ringers from the stations come to drink and fight.  
At times there's shearers passing through, or drifters chasing dreams,  
a hopeless track they're following, for life ain't what it seems."

I joined him at the bar beneath a rattling ceiling fan,  
a rustic friendly bushie who I guessed a lonely man,  
with ancient pipe and baccy tin, on the bar a battered hat,  
it wouldn't hurt, I told myself, to stop awhile and chat.

"I'm ninety come September, wonderin' if I'll make the ton,  
the only time I've left this place is when we fought the Hun,  
in Alamein a German mine removed me bloody peg."  
He tapped his knee to show me that he had a wooden leg.

"It's been no handicap," he said, "when workin' on the land,  
it didn't stop me rousin' - always was a station hand.  
Retired now, I spend me time just sitting in the shade,  
while thinking of the blokes I've met and all the friends I've made.

"Rememberin' too those passin' through and mostly travellin' light,  
with tucker bags near empty, out of work and on the bite.  
I'd often lend a bob or so to battlers on the track,  
despite the promises they made they rarely paid me back!"

He sparked a distant memory from many years go,  
when Stretch and I were on the track, and always short of dough  
while chasing rainbows never found. The foolish dreams of youth,  
the visions splendid shattered by an awful bitter truth.

We never found our pot of gold, just empty tucker bags,  
deciding that we'd had enough we chucked away our swags,  
returning home no longer boys, instead much wiser blokes,  
and where we'd never have to bludge for tucker, beer and smokes.

My bushie friend was yarning still, he liked to hold the floor,  
"Yer know," he said, "I reckon that I've seen you here before.  
Me mind is shonk rememberin' names but don't forget a face,  
of fellas met along the track, or stoppin' by this place."

I said "I've been a truckie now for thirty years of more,  
and travelled many country roads but not this way before.  
Perhaps I passed this place one time, a shearing wannabee,  
when skint we were, my mate and I, and on the wallaby."

He snapped his fingers, interrupting, "You've been here before,  
the fella trampin' with you tallest bloke I ever saw,  
like rabbits on the run you were, and beggin' for a ride  
to dodge the shearers chasing you and after head and hide."

"You'd been to Barlow's River Station looking for a job,  
the shearers there were striking though, a tough, unruly mob.  
A pair of scabs was said of you and told to "bugger off!"  
you dumped that punchy shearing boss into a water trough."

The memories came flooding back, I hung my head on shame,  
I'd thrown the shearer in the trough and Stretch had copped the blame,  
and beaten with a wooden post, his face was quite a sight,  
I hit one shearer with a brick before we fled in flight.

"And baying for yer blood they were, those shearers giving chase,  
and close behind, I reckon, when you buggers reached this place."  
The bushie grinned, or was it leered, "they'd skin yer both alive  
and hang you high with barbed wire, their wrath you'd not survive."

"The mailman passing by refused to let you in his van,  
for he was once a shearer too, also a union man.  
I was a simple working bloke, with just a coupla crown,  
but reckoned it'd change his mind, he'd take yer into town.

He grinned again and sipped his beer, "the bugger let you ride,  
escapin' from that angry mob., the luck was on yer side,  
the angry shearers found you gone, a long way down the track  
and headin' fer the town and rail and never looking back."

We rode the rattler out of there and swore we'd not return,  
for tramping tracks and shearing sheep no longer our concern.  
Now Stretch and I are mates no more, we went our different ways,  
forgetting then or so I hoped, those painful distant days.

I left that pub a humble man and feeling rather rotten,  
beguiled by distant memories I'd thought so long forgotten,  
and angry that I'd stopped to chat, the yesterdays revive  
when scabs we were and on the run and lucky to survive.

I was about to drive away- he called me from the door.  
"Before you go," he said to me, "there's just a matter more",  
Oh Gawd, I thought and feeling sick, what other evil did?  
"Your mate and you," he called aloud, "still owe me half a quid!"



# Queensland Bush Poetry News

*with Peter Frazer*

Bush poets across Qld have been really busy During July , August and September..

Special congratulations to the members of the Townsville Bush Poetry mates group who celebrated their 20th Anniversary at the start of September. Over the years this group has produced and fostered many great bush poets and bush poems. If your ever up that way , look them up . They will make you welcome.

The Historic Stone house venue at Moore hosted its annual event on 27th and 28th July with Bush poets from near and far in attendance, on stage and around the campfire .Gary Fogarty conducted a great poets workshop for a dozen poets on Sunday.. Tara camel festival Bush poetry events on the 2,3,4th August were jam packed with standing room only at Gary Fogarty's presentation.

In early August the big city was treated to a touch of Bush poetry , with strong performances at this year's EKKA ( RNA show) both on stage and off.. This year record numbers nominated to compete in the virtual and live sections. .Prize money this year was quite significant , thanks to key sponsors, RNA, Queensland Caravanners and Akubra,who generously donated some iconic Akubra hats as prizes.

In the evening , members of the iconic Brisbane Tattersalls club were introduced to a night of traditional Bush poetry by Mick Martin, Gary Fogarty , Paddy O'Brien and Peter Frazer. The response from those in attendance clearly demonstrated that Bush Poetry truly has a place in the hearts of big city dwellers as well.

The 14th August saw the celebration of the 10th year anniversary of the last Cobb and CO coach run in Qld. ( From Surat to Yuleba.). Peter Frazer and Marion Fitzgerald performed a 4 day tribute to Cobb and Co at the Toowoomba Cobb and Co museum

. Then the celebrations continued at Yuleba . Ray Essary and Gary Fogarty were on hand with some bush poetry as the coach ran once again from Surat .

Once again the Amamroo state forest came alive from the 22 to 25th August with the famous Gympie muster.. with Bush poets and yarn tellers from across the nation, treading the stage.

The Nanango Country music muster was on again and Bill Kearns, Ray Essary and Gary Fogarty, flew the bush poetry flag at the breakfasts and walk ups.

The Isaac shire at Nebo ran their 23rd "Bush poets Smoko" event again this year on Sunday 15th September. Dan Lockyer ( MC) and his daughter Katie , Singer and guitarist, were joined by Mick Martin to entertain a standing room only crowd. There were 7-8 local walk ups and the Smoko lasted for 2-3 hours.

Winton once again held its Bush Poets Breakfast and show In September , with legends like Marco Giori , Ray Essary, and Errol Gray reminding us why it's great to be Australian.

Logan Performance Bush Poets held their annual event "The Muddy River Bush Poetry Championships" on Saturday 21 September, with a strong field of contestants , competing in a number of categories , including the Jim Tonkin Memorial Comedy Bush Poetry award.

To close the month out Bony Mountain Folk festival just outside of Warwick was on again on 20,21 and 22 September, with yet another round of great bush poetry.

Queensland is calling  
And the poets are on their way.  
From the Curry to Coolangatta  
Bush Poetys on display

Yes. Bush Poetry is alive and kicking  
At the festival and country pub.  
On stage at some swanky city do  
or round a campfire in the scrub.

The venue doesn't matter  
it's the people you see.  
We keep alive the spirit  
with our Aussie Bush poetry.

I've travelled cross the mountains  
and I've travelled from the sky  
to see the glow of neons from on high.  
The sun goes sliding somewhere  
behind the city towers,  
the night sky then begins its neon hours.

Kaleidoscopes of colour  
through the veins of city streets  
awaken neon nights for all their treats.  
Pubs and clubs and restaurants  
advertise in colours bright  
for pleasures and the treasures of the night.

The suburbs turn to sleeping  
and the blinds are drawn to light,  
the city heart is beating teasing sight.  
The neon night is calling,  
come and be a city guest,  
from beaches to the foothills in the west.

I too have been to wander  
with the crowd to see the sights  
of racy, pacey city's neon nights.  
The crowds spill from the platforms  
and the taxis rush reserved  
in traffic like a beehive so unnerved.

They scurry and they hurry  
in a heaving, homeward rush,  
they bustle and hustle, beating the crush.  
They pour late into the night  
from suburban stations' glow,  
fed by the flicker of the neons' show.

From King's Cross to China Town  
and from Penrith to Bondi,  
ceiling lights are shrouding jewelled sky.  
Once more I cross the mountains  
for my home out farther west  
where ideas of my life can be addressed.

It's there I'm sleeping easy  
where the air is crisp and clean  
and stars will shine like crystal chandeliers.  
The Milky Way gives comfort  
on the stage of evening light,  
no harshness of a neon near in sight.



## WHEN THE BRUMBIES COME TO WATER.

© Kevin Pye

There's a river bathed in beauty at the setting of the sun,  
where the brumbies come to water when the summer day is done.  
From the lofty Snowy Ranges, where the Mountain Ash grows high,  
Black stallion moves in shadows of the purple evening sky.

His Lordship leads his mares and foals,  
his playful colts and fillies,  
to where the sweetest water hole  
is fringed by water lilies.

Free days of Mitchell grazing,  
valley havens, terraced lanes,  
are now challenged by the culling  
of the men with smarter brains.

They have come to steal the freedom  
of the brumbies on the run  
when they reach the lowland water  
when the summer day is done.

A stock whip cracks the silent dusk  
and the stillness tears apart  
as the rail yard causes terror  
that rules each brumby heart.

The proud wild beauties scatter  
but some fall to trap and gun  
while the stallion snorts in anger,  
free to rule his mountain run.

There's a river bathed in beauty at the setting of the sun,  
where the brumbies come to water when the summer day is done.  
From the lofty Snowy Ranges, where the Mountain Ash grows high,  
Black stallion moves in shadows of the purple evening sky.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WA

# W.A. Bush Poets & Yarnspinners Assn.



Well known Derby icon, **Sam Lovell** has been given two prestigious awards recently. A **Lifetime Achiever's Award** and induction in 6DBY Musicians Hall of Fame as well as Australian Bush Balladeers Association **Life Membership Award**.

Sam is a regular contributor at the **Derby Bush Poet's Festival** held in July each year. His stories of life in the Kimberley are legendary.

Pictured above with his wife Rossita (far right) and visitors to Derby Warwick Trant (WA musician) and Freda Chandler

WA Bush Poets have a busy time ahead with the spring warmth back in our bones.

At our recent AGM, the membership once again voted **Bill Gordon** as President (12 years!) Bill is still waiting for someone to take his place but continues to enjoys travelling about our state and country promoting Bush Poetry and providing opportunities for new poets to perform and swell our number of performing poets.



There will be a good representation of poets at the second **Chapman Valley Country Muster** in October.

Then on to the southern areas of WA at **Mt Trio** in The Stirling Ranges near Albany, another Country Music Muster in November will include more poets amongst a

lineup of well known musicians and featuring **Amber Joy Poulton**.



Our **State Championships** will be held in November with **ABPA President Tim Sheed** and **Christine Middleton** travelling from Victoria to judge the event.

Two new publications have been launched in WA recently.

Our well known and revered poet **Keith "Cobber" Lethbridge** has compiled a collection of his favourite poems and yarns from past years and some new ones into a book titled **"No Regrets"**. President Bill Gordon had the honour of writing the foreword and also the privilege of speaking at the launch which was held at the State Library in Perth.

Cobber's granddaughter, 13 year old Willow, started the illustrations when she was in year 7 and she has aspirations of becoming a vet.



Cobber is pictured (right) signing books with his wife Maricor and Bill Gordon



WA Bully Tin Editor, **Deb McQuire**, has been very instrumental in putting together a **Teachers Handbook**. She worked diligently with school teachers and contacts as well as local poets in compiling a great resource to encourage teachers and pupils into writing and reciting poetry. 80 copies were quickly snapped up by the schools and another 40 were printed as the demand grew. It gave some of our poets the opportunity to follow up with workshops in some schools.

Our Committee is very appreciative of her initiative and success.

# *Politicians Should Not Wear Akubras*

© Jack Drake 1.7.24

Akubras are an icon of Australia 'round the world.  
A badge of office proudly worn by Aussie boys and girls.  
They've been made here since the rabbits almost overran this land  
but traditions being compromised – it's time to make a stand!

They made their reputation as the headgear of the bush  
to deflect an angry bullock with a slap around the moosh,  
lift the billy off a campfire or fan one into flame.  
But now unworthy influence has entered in the game.

We see them on the telly perched on politicians' scones  
to try and make them look as if they know what's going on  
way out here in the heartland when they haven't got a clue  
exactly what the people in the bush are going through.

Do they really think us bushies believe that they belong  
wearing Akubras backwards, and they're unaware its wrong.  
With the whole brim curling upward from sitting bottom down,  
they only put it on their heads when they go out of town.

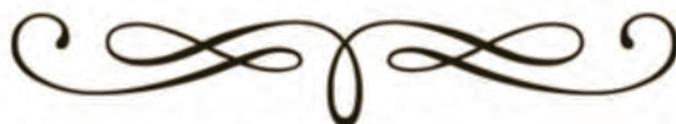
Whenever they vacate the city, out the bush hat comes  
looking like its shape was styled by a bloke with thirteen thumbs.  
Not a sign of any character from months of honest wear.  
As phoney as a plastic plough without one ounce of flair.

So just go out in the inland where the real hats are worn  
by real bush bred Australians, all country bred and born.  
A hat is made distinctive by a special kind of bash.  
A nicely styled brim, a band that's quality, not flash.

Croc skin and plastic croc teeth might be fine for Mick Dundee  
but out there in the Mulga, it is fairly plain to see  
a perfect piece of plaiting be it braided 'round or flat,  
with a crease its owner fashioned, is how to dress a hat.

Regarding bush Akubras, there's just one more thing to say.  
The trick to keeping it in shape is how it's put away.  
It's fine to hang it on a peg but when you sit it down.  
To keep the brim in perfect shape, just sit it on its crown.

So listen all you pollied. Stick to suits and lace up shoes.  
Forget felt hats and riding boots when your wardrobe you choose.  
So if you're heading bush and think your outfit might be wrong,  
get a five buck hat from Bunnings and a pair of Aussie thongs.



# 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.

This time from Cloncurry, Queensland we have winning rhymed and metered poems from the Cloncurry Poetry Prize – Junior, a prestigious, annual open poetry style competition for adults and young poets.

Thank you to the Cloncurry Shire Council, Mayor and supporters for the special cultural opportunity your town offers.

The 2024 Theme for this competition was –  
'Standing on the Shoulders of Giants' –  
Through the lens of Outback Australia.

# Our Poetry Kids

with Brenda Joy



## Outback Land by Gemma Bull <sup>2<sup>nd</sup></sup>

In the vast outback, where legends roam,  
we stand on the shoulders of giants unknown.  
Their spirits guide us through the desert's place,  
their wisdom and strength we forever embrace.

Through red sands and spinifex plains,  
we honour the ancestors' enduring strains,  
their footsteps echo in the ancient land,  
their stories whispered by the Dreamtime's hand.

From Uluru's majesty to Kakadu's grace,  
we find solace in this timeless space,  
the giants before us, their legacy clear,  
their resilience and courage forever held dear.

In the shimmering heat of the midday sun,  
we remember those whose journey's begun.  
Their resilience like the mighty boab tree,  
teaching us to stand tall, forever free.

As the stars blanket the Outback's night sky, we  
feel the presence of those who once passed by.  
Their knowledge, like constellations above,  
guiding us with wisdom, hope and love.

From the song lines that traverse this ancient land  
we learn to listen and truly understand.  
The giants' voices carried on the wind,  
their stories and truths, forever chagrined.

In the ochre hues of a desert dawn,  
we pay homage to those who have gone.  
Their spirits dance in the fiery glow,  
their legacy burning bright, forever aglow.

On the banks of billabongs, where life thrives,  
we witness the giants' eternal lives.  
Their resilience, like the river's ebb and flow  
teaching us to adapt, to learn and to grow.

Through drought and flood, the Outback's test,  
we find strength in the giants' bequest.  
Their connection to country,  
unwavering and strong,  
inspiring us to belong, to sing the land's song.

So please, let us stand  
on the giants' shoulders high,  
with gratitude and reverence, reaching for the sky.  
In the Australian Outback, their legacy remains,  
guiding us forward, forever in our veins.

© 2024 Gemma Bull (at age 16)

### Results of *The Cloncurry Prize – Junior* for 2024 –

Placegetters –

1<sup>st</sup> *Echoes of Giants* by Jayden Sherwood

Cloncurry State High School

2<sup>nd</sup> *Outback Land* by Gemma Bull

Brackenridge State High School

3<sup>rd</sup> *The Giant's Light: A Journey to the Sky*

by Bailey Fillery Peachester State School

These poems have been pre-published on the Cloncurry Shire Council website and social media pages.

Link to [www.cloncurry.qld.gov.au](http://www.cloncurry.qld.gov.au)



1<sup>st</sup>

## Echoes Of Giants by Jayden Sherwood

In the outback's vast expanse,  
where the earth meets the sky,  
and the mountains rise high,  
reaching for the heavens nigh,  
there we stand on the shoulders of giants of old  
their wisdom and strength like the mountains bold.

In the rugged terrain, where the sun beats down,  
we learn from those who came before,  
from town to town,  
their stories carved in the rocks,  
their spirits ever near,  
guiding us forward, dispelling every fear.

For they conquered the challenges,  
the trials they faced  
leaving behind a legacy, a lasting embrace,  
their resilience like the land, enduring and strong,  
teaching us to persevere to right every wrong.

So we journey through this vast outback land,  
we remember those who paved the way,  
hand in hand.

Standing on the shoulders of giants we rise  
with reverence and gratitude,  
under the outback skies.

© 2024 Jayden Sherwood (at age 15)



3rd

## The Giant's Light: A Journey to the Sky by Bailey Fillery

In a land where dreams take flight,  
and stars shine bright in the night,  
there's a story that's often told,  
about giants, brave and bold.

They're not tall like trees so high,  
but they're special, I'll tell you why.  
They're giants in a different way,  
with wisdom to brighten our day.

Long ago, they walked this land,  
leaving stories like grains of sand.  
Each one a star in the sky,  
helping us learn, helping us fly.

Like little ants, we stand on their backs,  
their wisdom guides us on our tracks.  
With each step, we can reach the sky,  
their light helps us soar, oh so high.

Their knowledge flows like a big, big sea,  
reaching out to you and me.  
Even though they're no longer here  
their spirits stay, forever near.

Let's learn from those who went before,  
their wisdom opens up new doors.  
With giants' help we'll reach new heights  
and chase our dreams among the lights.

© 2024 Bailey Fillery (at age 9)

## Giant

by Roye Zhiyu Yan

I'm standing on a giant's shoulders.  
They're who I am.  
A person who is a daughter.  
A person who is loved.

I'm standing on a giant's shoulders.  
They're who I will be.  
A person who is a friend.  
A person who is dependable.

I'm standing on a giant's shoulders.  
They're who I am becoming.  
A person who is a student.  
A person who is intelligent.

Someone will be standing on my shoulders.  
They'll become better.  
A person who'll create greater change.  
A person who'll be exemplary.

© 2024, Roye Zhiyu Yan (at age 11)

## Promise in the Sky by Gabriel Harris

There is a destiny foretold,  
to all of those in need.  
The Outback Fate, frankly;  
no matter what circumstance it be.

It is a beacon of relief,  
a lone bird, soaring in the air;  
shining bright its mighty light,  
bestowing good healthcare.

For is it not the Flying Doctors,  
boasting their red and white,  
a flying medic in the day,  
a hospital by night?

Across this sunburnt country,  
with every day gone,  
The Flying Doctors are hard at yakka,  
night to night, dawn to dawn.

This is our forever legacy,  
generations young and old,  
standing on giants' shoulders,  
The Flying Doctors behold.

© 2024 Gabriel Harris (at age 9)

## On the Shoulders of the Australian Outback by Olivia D. Lee

The Australian Outback,  
where plants and animals pack.  
From sleepy koalas to jumping kangaroos,  
it is full of wonder so get your shoes.

Its trees sway side to side,  
they are impossible to hide.  
It is home to many rocks,  
that sometimes creep in your socks.

Now, I understand the importance  
of my teachers and the *giants*.  
The lessons they impart,  
that now lay in my heart.

The Australian Outback  
has got our backs,  
we know who we should trust,  
so keeping it safe is a must.

Now, our knowledge is strong,  
our beliefs will last long.  
The messages will not grow apart,  
for it will always lay in my heart.

© 2024 Olivia Lee (at age 9)

# The Wizz Bang Campervan

©Gerry Mannion 2024

(Winner - Ekka 2024 Original -caravanning theme)

My wife and I used to get away camping in our tent  
But sometimes it would rain a bit and cause some discontent  
We'd see all the big flash caravans their occupants clean and dry  
As we huddled under a leaky tarp and the rain fell from the Sky

Admiring all the van's setup in the parks or beach or Bush  
The talk would be of caravans as we'd head home in a rush  
As we'd spend our time unpacking, drying out our clothes and tent  
We'd swear we'd have a caravan the next time that we went

So to get ourselves a caravan well that was our intention  
And we researched all the options too numerous to mention  
Do we need one with a tandem axle? to go off the beaten track  
Or with ensuite, shower and air con to explore the Great Outback?

But the thing we came to realise, these rigs were big and heavy  
And to tow them we would probably need a Dodge Ram or a Chevy  
So we looked around at pop tops and little folding A -VANS  
And quirky little beds on wheels, those teardrop Caravans

And because we both are working still and have yet to retire  
We thought maybe a campervan, was what we should acquire  
So we settled on a Wizz bang van a brand new Transit Custom Sport  
But not just for our weekend fun, also my day to day transport

When I picked it up and took it home my heart was filled with Pride  
I drove it straight into our Garage to show the wife inside,  
I opened up the drivers door and the sliding ones as well  
So we both could revel in its beauty and absorb that new car smell,

Leather seats, reversing camera and with lane guidance too  
(Yeah just what I needed someone else to tell me what to do)  
I jumped into the drivers seat to reverse out my brand new ride  
Checked the camera and the mirrors as I moved it back outside

But then as I reversed it back there was a mighty splat  
I hit the brakes and thought to myself what the hell was that  
I wondered what the crash was that made my blood run cold  
As I thought that I had wrecked my van and it just a few hours old

I checked the rearview Camera and the mirrors left and right  
To see if I could ascertain what had given me such a fright  
And then I saw the reason that had filled my soul with dread  
The garage door release rope was around the same height as my head

And when I closed the offside door there was something I had not seen  
It had caught that garage door release and jammed the rope between  
So as soon as I started moving back it was then disaster struck  
As the garage door came crashing down and landed on my truck

Well I lifted up the garage door so I could assess the carnage  
But despite the clatter and the noise there was no major damage  
Then I set about the task of fitting out my brand new car  
And I thought the damage that was done was just a battle scar

It was just a basic panel van, not a camper to be precise  
But I had a plan to fit it out so it would look real nice  
So to all you caravanners out there I hope its not a damper  
As coming soon to a site near you is yet another Wizz bang camper



# Spirit of Australia

© Catherine Lee

The tussock's gusting down the hill, the red sand mocks our crying,  
for soil is cracking, dehydrated livestock sadly dying.  
The wells are dry, the land is desiccated, nothing's blooming;  
we wake to heartbreak every day—no sign of rain is looming.  
The dust whips over arid fields, we fight a losing battle  
of pulling thirsting sheep from mud holes, shooting starving cattle.  
The birds are falling from the trees, no strength in them for soaring,  
whilst every eye turns heavenward, for sweet respite imploring.  
We have to wait it out—there isn't any other option—  
we chose this life, this place in our great country of adoption.  
Yet though the drought is merciless and all supplies depleted,  
we'll come through this just like before, brought low but not defeated...

Vast forests savaged by the flames with heat that's all consuming;  
all living things their imminent demise are now assuming.  
The crackling gums are buffeted by untamed winds of fury  
as Mother Nature rages—stands unyielding judge and jury.  
Black ash is flying through the air and roos take flight in terror;  
dense smoke conceals escape routes and too late they see their error.  
The stench of burning bush and carcass screams abomination—  
the die is cast, we have to beat this dreadful conflagration.  
From conquered furnace, houses razed, defiant smouldering embers,  
fresh hope will spring with life anew whilst everyone remembers.  
Though bush fires bring such tragedies no victory can sweeten,  
this toughened harsh rough country's sometimes licked, but never beaten...

The coastline's whipped with high speed winds, the palm trees wildly thrashing—  
huge waves spew forth their anger on primeval rocks they're smashing.  
There's not much hope for any boat still coupled to its mooring;  
as sea churns fiercely, ruthless, heavy stinging rains are pouring.  
Though preparations have been made we still remain astounded  
at power of the elements and unleashed hell unbounded.  
From shelter we're inert with shock at force of winds prevailing,  
uprooting objects in its path, producing eerie wailing.  
Although we're safe inside with sturdy hatches firmly battened,  
we cannot help but fear our homes will be completely flattened.  
But we will salvage all we can when wrathful storm's abated  
and start again—we're often crushed, but never subjugated...

The plains are swamped, swift rivers run throughout the drowning city,  
and in the country bloated livestock floats—the sight's not pretty!  
The people flee as homes are wrenched and carried in the torrent;  
they try to save their pets and come to terms with sights abhorrent.  
Survivors cling to battered trees to wait for their salvation,  
whilst on the news we're watched by every person in the nation.  
The animals are moved to higher ground in scenes chaotic,  
confused and panicked, terrified at nature's rage aquatic.  
Belongings float away; some lose their every prized possession—  
must start from scratch—a necessary slow and sad progression.  
But weapons that the elements seem always to be wielding  
may see our spirits dampened, tried or sunk, but never yielding...

Adversity may belt this massive continent of splendour—  
this timeless land of ancient race and all who would defend her;  
yet through the droughts and tempests, fires, each conflict and confusion  
her people rise to challenges with guts in great profusion.  
And be it man or be it nature who aspires in taming  
this rugged, wild enormous place, her pride she'll be reclaiming.  
For country-wide, although she's knocked she'll rise and come up fighting—  
descendants of her pioneers still sense their zeal igniting.  
Though life is sometimes rocky, cruel, and she may seem reflective—  
her passion often tested—she will not be found defective.  
Enduring, free and bountiful with loyalty deep seated,  
the Aussie spirit triumphs, and will never be defeated.



She's usually verbal and said with a twang,  
Good old Aussie colloquialisms, lingo best described as slang.  
If spitting chips, it doesn't mean your regurgitating a sanger,  
Something's given the shits, and dander's up in anger.  
Nor is getting the shits a cure for constipation,  
Just means there's a ruddy cause for aggravation.  
Where cockies squawk complaining about the weather,  
Blokes gather, giving the Aussie salute, have a stubby together.  
Some light up a durry, bludgers may head off to the dunny,  
Maybe time for their shout, light the barbie, no wuckas, no hurry.  
Rooting for the local footy team, but things look cactus,  
Probably as they skip training, lacking bloody practice.  
Crikey, things turning around teams going flat out,  
Stirring up the locals, all stoked, giving out a shout.  
All getting into pies smothered in dead horse,  
Gagging on sangers going down as the second course.  
Time now to pull stumps, head off to the missus,  
Collect up the ankle biters, back to the wife and kisses.  
Leave behind all the drongos and odd galah,  
But skull one more for the road, down another jar.  
Feeling a bit like an old car, pissed and broke,  
Lost the thongs, into the wobbly boots, can happen to any bloke.

## **Breaker Morant**

© Robert Davis

In Australia's Outback, a land wild and free,  
Roamed Harry Morant, a horseman as tough as the mallee.  
Penning ballads and bush poems, called 'The Breaker',  
Taming steeds, telling tales, a rugged heartbreaker.

Out from England's shores to Australia's plains,  
He rode the outback, chasing distant gains.  
His skill with hooves, unmatched and bold,  
Earned him fame, as tales of courage were told.

But war's cruel shadow cast its dark embrace,  
As the Boer conflict raged, in a faraway place.  
Morant sought adventure, signed up on a whim,  
But caught in a web of vengeance, bloody and grim.

In African lands, where war's tempest raged,  
British and Boer fiercely engaged.  
In an irregular Bushveldt unit, the Breaker was placed,  
Carbineers with obscure orders, guerilla warfare faced.

Accused of deeds both cruel and unjust,  
A scapegoat for a nation's fear and distrust.  
Charged with murder, a soldier's darkest night,  
His name and reputation cast in blight.

He spoke of battles raging, out of control,  
Fierce combat took an unforgiving toll.  
No prisoners to be taken, the orders; laws of war?  
But in the chaos, justice did not seem to score.



Twelve lives he took in the heat of action,  
A British court-martial's verdict, a sombre faction.  
A Colonial to be executed, fate unkind,  
Yet controversy swirled, dividing hearts and minds.

On a sombre morn, the sentence was read,  
Breaker Morant by firing squad – to be shot stone dead.  
Comrades wept; their hearts torn apart,  
As he faced his destiny with an unwavering heart.

Shadows linger, truths remain untold,  
Of courage wrought and hearts grown cold.  
For Breaker Morant, in glory's frame,  
Bears both the honour and the shame.

A folk hero, perhaps, or tragic soul,  
His legacy etched in war's relentless toll.  
Breaker Morant, horseman, poet, and more,  
A complex figure, forever lost to war.

# BRIDGET THE BARMAID

© Peter White

Bridget, the barmaid, called Bridie, with ever a smile on her face,  
managed the bar, kept it tidy, with never a glass out of place.  
She came from the village of Golleen from Erin's green County of Cork.  
A beautiful red-headed 'colleen' who spoke with a brogue when she'd talk.

From Ireland to Queensland's brown 'outback' she made her way from the coast,  
with nought but a battered old backpack and an urgent desire for a post.  
She was starting to run out of money and had little cash in her purse.  
To be broke here wouldn't be funny. She hoped things wouldn't get worse.

She came to the west town of Quilpie and then made her way to the pub.  
On the verandah, a red Aussie kelpie - she bent over and gave it a rub.  
The kelpie then nuzzled her finger. She had made a new life-long mate.  
She fought down the impulse to linger. Her need to find work couldn't wait.

In the bar she asked for the owner to inquire if he had a job.  
Joe Boyle, a bit off a moaner, asked, "Why would you work for this mob?"  
"I need a job to support me. I've served in a bar once before.  
Soon of adequate funds I will short be, so please don't show me the door."

"I'll give you a trial in the morning and you'll have a room for the night.  
Hard to please, I am. That's my warning. The job's yours if you are all right."  
Well she took to the job like a trouper, tending bar and then cleaning floors.  
Said Joe, "Bridie that's super. The barmaid position is yours."

She was popular with all the locals and treated them all just the same.  
She didn't make fun of the yokels when into her bar-room they came.  
Joe noticed the bar trade increasing. 'Twas Bridie they all flocked to meet.  
Her cheerfulness always unceasing. All clients she'd happily greet.

Not known to suffer fools gladly, she was quick to show them their place.  
None of her marks took it badly. There was always a smile on her face.  
A stranger in town called her "Birdie". She cynically gave her reply.  
"Do yer t'ink t'at someone so sturdy could ever possibly fly?"

Joe notably changed since her coming. There was even a smile on his face.  
In the bar he walked around humming. Of his temper there wasn't a trace.  
And Bridie, too, was seen flirting, coyly smiling as Joe wandered by.  
To those watching it was disconcerting to see Bridie give Joe the eye.

It was obvious to every drinker, as each of them sipped at his beer,  
you'd not have to be a great thinker to see what was going on here.  
Bridie and Joe were a-courting. To all that was easily seen.  
But a problem for them needed sorting. One was 'Orange, the other was 'Green'.

In Ulster lived all Joe Boyle's people. But Armagh is Joe's home no more.  
Shadows cast by the Protestant steeple pointed straight to his old father's door.  
Her family, all Papist, were baptised in Our Lady, Star of the Sea.  
By her parents she knew she'd be chastised if a 'Proddie' she chose to be.

Being both of a different persuasion they couldn't agree on a church.  
Each withstood the other's dissuasion. It seemed they'd be left in the lurch.  
So they chose a Celebrant, Civil, for Joe to make Bridie his bride.  
He said, "We'll have none of yer drivel. Just make sure the marriage knot's tied.

Celebrations then followed their wedding, guests arriving from miles around.  
The joy of the couple was spreading encompassing all those it found.  
They partied all night until morning. Most suffered a sore, splitting head  
Then all the guests left, mostly yawning, and made their way home to their bed.

Thirty-six years since proceeded. Their issue a daughter and son.  
None doubt that this marriage succeeded. For each there's no other one.  
Bridget is now known as Bidy and Joseph is her loving spouse.  
She still pulls a well-drawn, cold middy and both keep a popular house.

So if you've the urge for vacation why not travel in Queensland out west.  
For your holiday spend the duration where friendliness has stood the test.  
For a welcome that is quite explicit you'll do well to take it your choice  
to give Bidy and Joseph a visit and be charmed by their soft, Irish voice.



# Sam: The Sequel

© Edwina Smith 2023

They wish him luck  
Sam's on the truck  
He'll take him for a trial  
Tears flow, it's time to go  
The Sergeant gives a smile  
"We'll see how he goes  
And who knows  
But I think he's a star!  
I'll keep in touch, thanks so much  
The best I've seen by far"

One may think it's natural  
To run away from danger  
And to a horse's mind  
Nothing could be stranger  
Than standing still or moving in  
To riots or a crowd  
Something tells the farmer  
He'll do them all so proud

And now the work begins  
With methods tried and tested  
But not before the new recruit  
Is fed, groomed and rested

No need or want for haste  
The process slow and steady  
They must prepare Sam  
And make sure he's ready  
To face those things  
Known to spook a horse  
How will he do  
During his training course?

Flying bits of paper  
Flags and waving hands  
The sound of heavy traffic  
And loud brass bands  
Patrolling busy streets  
The city and it's noise  
Sam must learn to walk along  
Quiet, calm with poise

No day will be the same  
There may be need for pace  
Sam must regain his calm  
And not think he's in a race  
Between horse and rider  
A bond of trust is set  
Together they'll make it through  
The standard will be met

Times have been hard  
Decisions must be made  
Knowing when to give up  
If only he could have stayed  
Farming broke his heart  
The only life he's known  
Now it's just too much  
Stress and strain have shown

The thought of town makes him frown  
But he's done with endless trying  
His family know they'll be better off  
That won't stop them crying  
He thinks of his lovely mare  
Remembers when she foaled  
A little bay colt, now grown up  
Now sadly must be sold

They came from all around  
And offered him good prices  
Sam's the horse they want  
Not having any vices  
Quiet and calm, strong and sound  
They'll buy, lease or hire  
But the farmer hesitates  
He'll wait for another buyer

From the city he has come  
To inspect the farmer's horse  
Could there be a chance  
He'd suit the Mounted Force?  
Good feet, strong build  
Easy to float and shoe  
"Well, he's surely big enough  
He stands at 17.2!"

He looks the horse up and down  
He saddles up with ease  
Then takes him for a test ride  
Sam willing and eager to please  
He wonders how he'll cope  
It will be quite a change  
Working in the city streets  
Instead of the open range

In the Force, they need a horse  
Who learns the clever moves  
And nothing gives him greater joy  
Than the sound of horses hooves  
A soothing voice, firm but kind  
As if Sam understands  
He nuzzles Sergeant with his nose  
Who's already making plans



To everyone's delight  
Sam progresses well  
He'll make a good police horse  
Sergeant is pleased to tell  
Many stop to admire  
His temperament and size  
And he charms the public  
With those big brown eyes!

Better days have come at last  
Worry's left the farmer's face  
They've settled down, not far from town  
And have a smaller place

As a treat, they've got a seat  
To watch the big parade  
Spirits are much brighter now  
The best move they've made!

The atmosphere is festive  
And the family enjoy the show  
But much to their surprise  
There's someone there they know  
It's Sergeant with his mounted team  
Astride a beautiful bay  
Joy fills each heart  
More than they can say

Oh what a sight he makes  
Coat shining in the sun  
Walking with his equine friends  
Sam makes it look like fun  
His stride calm and steady  
He was made for the Force  
The family are so proud to say  
"That's Sam, our favourite horse!"



# TOWNSVILLE BUSH POETRY MATES Inc

## 2004 – 2024

Back in Sept/Oct 2004 an invitation was put out that there was to be a poetry group formed in Townsville. At the first few meetings there was a lot of free verse/prose performed but in the group was a lady by the name of Melanie Hall. Within a few weeks there was a breakaway group with Melanie, Kathie Priestley, and Eileen & Bill Flynn who started meeting at the Banjo Paterson Motel (why not?). Soon after, along came a lovely lady by the name of Val Dart. Discussion of what were they going to call themselves and Val suggested "The Mates" and that is how The Townsville Bush Poetry Mates became what it is today. Melanie encouraged the group to write, perform and it wasn't long before she had them competing in competitions in Charters Towers along with doing their own concert in Townsville. Their performances were in great demand. Then in 2011 a spectator at a competition in Ravenswood NQ, saw the talent within the group. Lyn Tarring became a member, got us incorporated and in 2012 and 2013 the TBPM Inc held the Qld Championships which was well attended. A lot of hard work was put in to make both these events successful. Judges like Johnny Lloyd, Bill Kearns, Neil McArthur, Long John Best, Mel & Susie showed Townsville audiences what Bush Poetry was all about. Over the years, members have come and gone and as age catches up, the organising of events becomes a little harder. In 2016 and 2019 the Mates held concerts to a booked out audience (275) at the beautiful Carlyle Gardens theatre. Proceeds going to 3 different charities in 2016, and \$5000 going to the QCWA Drought/Flood Relief in 2019. Annually we perform at the Dam Fine Rally here in Townsville but unfortunately the Rally hasn't been held in the last 2 years because of ongoing works at the venue.

Today, the Mates still entertain at the Aged Care Homes and have quite a few requests for a couple of poets to do light entertainment at dinners etc. We meet monthly on the 1st Saturday of the month, 10 am till 12.30pm at the Aitkenvale Library. We currently have 19 members and our ex teacher Eileen gives us homework each month. There are some really good poems coming from our poets and we get lots of laughs. If you are in the area any time and would love to join us, you are very welcome. Contact our President, Barry Graham on 0487 195 156.



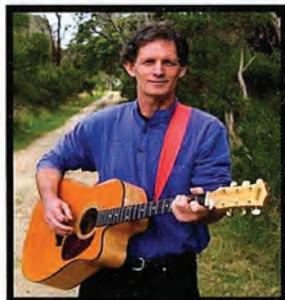
20th Anniversary Celebrations 07/09/2024  
Front – Eileen Flynn    Back – Rusty Dart, Kathie Priestley, and Bill Flynn



## 2024 TOLMIE Bush Entertainment Muster 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> November



At Tolmie Recreation Reserve 15 Kms from Mansfield  
A Grey Nomads & Campers Paradise. [www.tolmie.com.au](http://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](http://www.vbpma.com.au) See Muster page. Facebook: Tolmie Bush Entertainment Muster  
E: [info@vbpma.com.au](mailto:info@vbpma.com.au) BYO Chairs!! Enq: Tim Sheed 0438861271 Jan Lewis 0422848707

# The Cat On The Window Sill

© Ted Logan

Cats have remarkable sets of skills,  
Lithe bodies, great balance – to climb and spring;  
Know when to relax and purr content,  
Or when to scratch and come out fighting!  
The cat that sat on that window sill,  
Had many a feline trait and skill.

I spotted the cat on my daily walk,  
That took me sometime to Soudan Road.  
The black cat perched on a window sill  
Forlornly outside its cherished abode.  
It wasn't fussing or caterwauling,  
But intent on its safety, free from falling.

The ledge was too narrow for its bum –  
It overhung the sides and the back;  
Sudden movements could spell disaster,  
Give equilibrium a whack.  
It played it safe but didn't move a muscle,  
No washing its face, flinch or fussel.

Intently peers into the dimly lit room.  
For clues to the slightest sight or sound,  
That someone in there, had become aware,  
Of the cat on the ledge which was looking around.  
Cats are patient and prepared to wait,  
To sit it out in a solitary state.

I felt compelled to reach out to the cat,  
To lift it from its reverie, so said –  
"Teh! Teh! Teh!" in a cat attracting voice.  
The cat then slowly raised and turned its head,  
Gave me a stare of indifference and disdain  
Then put its watching program back in train.

To reach the sill itself was quite a feat –  
Over a meter of vertical height,  
Straight up from a soft standing start,  
The cramped landing above, which would give no delight.  
The cat was in for a discomforting wait,  
Whether the house-holder would be early or late.

At this stage my attention ended –  
I continued on with my walk.  
Spent quite a few days in hospital,  
Unable to work or to talk.  
My intentions and my interests still  
Was the saga of the cat on the window sill.



Note: as is implied in the poem, after I came out of hospital, I did follow up this story.

On a Sunday afternoon I spoke to several house-holders in Soudan Road. No-one seemed to have any knowledge of the cat on the window sill. One house-holder said she sometimes fed a large black cat which seemed to be a stray. Someone else had seen a large black cat in the neighbourhood, but no-one seemed to know anything about its owner or its locality.

Any solution to this story is at present a mystery.

# Gympie Muster Poets 2024

Under the guidance of our chief Muster Poet and Camp Organiser, Marco Gliori, the Muster Poets once again gathered in the Amamoor Forrest to entertain Festival goers for the 2024 Gympie National Music Muster. There were wild scenes of mayhem, havoc, chaos and several other synonyms thrown around the campsite and the scrabbleboard as well as the stage.

Joined this year by Murray Hartin, Peter Capp, Neil McArthur, Pixie Jenkins, Errol Gray and guest appearances by Brad McLean, Bob Condon and same naked, random dude from the audience who had been sleeping under the drum kit all night, Marco took the audience on a wild ride through the spoken word and the art of storytelling.

With well over 50,000 campers in attendance, Bush Poetry continues to draw a massive following at the Gympie Muster and all thanks to Marco who has been organising troupes for over thirty years. The Muster still goes from strength to strength, unlike the physical condition of the Poets.

Already looking forward to the 2025 Muster, which, Pandemics excluded, should be another fine and dandy experience.



*Campers' Poets Brawl - They wrote 'em in camp, original poems and stood on stage (some for the first time) to recite their poems about The Muster, Flying Pigs, Camping Olympics, only to be gonged off if they went over asecond. Our time-keepers Grace and Cody from Texas showed no mercy! Audience applause saw the winner as Kev with his humorous poem about Parkinsons Disease, which he has - and endured during his performance. L-R - Neil, Eve, Elizabeth, Tim, Celia, Marco, Chook, Kev the winner, and Muz.*



(L-R) Brad McLean, Errol Gray, Peter Cap, Pixie Jenkins, Marco Gliori, Muz Hartin, Neil McArthur. (Not in photo - Bob Condon Comedian). Thanks to our audience, Muster volunteers, sound and lighting engineers, stage managers and those faithful campers who mustered up each morning.



*Special thanks to Colleen, Diedre, Julie, and Jenny for organizing us all. Another great Muster in 2024!*

## 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](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 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