

# The

September 2013

W.A. Bush Poets

# BULLY TIN



**Next Muster 6th September 7pm - Bentley Park Auditorium, Bentley Park**

MC Christine Boulton Phone: 9364 8784

PO BOX 3001 WEST TAMWORTH 2340

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1620 English emigrants on the pilgrim ship, the Mayflower, depart from Plymouth, England, on their way to the New World in America.
- 1941 Nazi Germany dictates that all Jews over the age of 6 must wear the Star of David in public.
- 1972 Nine Israeli athletes being held hostage are killed in a bungled rescue attempt during the Munich Olympic Games.



## In Possum Land

### Henry Lawson

In Possum Land the nights are fair,  
The streams are fresh and clear;  
No dust is in the moonlight air;  
No traffic jars the ear.

The possums gambolling overhead,  
'Neath western stars so grand,  
Oh! Would that we could make our bed  
tonight in Possum Land

## THE 2014 BLACKENED BILLY VERSE COMPETITION

*Sponsored by the Australian Bush Poets Association*

Put your bush hats on and get writing for the 2014 Blackened Billy Verse Competition, which opens September 1.

The traditional bush verse of poets such as Paterson and Lawson has moved into the modern era and bush poetry now reflects life in all parts of Australia, not just the out-back. Suburban trials and tribulations are just as relevant as the daily problems of living in the bush. What makes it bush poetry is the style in which it is written. Bush poetry must have the rhyme and rhythm of traditional bush verse.

The organisers of the competition, the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group, invite poets to enter the Blackened Billy. Entry forms will be available on September 1. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Jan Morris, PO Box 3001, West Tamworth NSW 2340, or email [janmorris33@bigpond.com](mailto:janmorris33@bigpond.com)

Entries close on November 30 and the winners will be announced at the Tamworth Country Music Festival in January 2014.

### Notes from the Editor:

First: a huge thank you to Irene who has been doing a fantastic job.

Second: another huge thank you to Brian who has set up the template and who came around and gave me a crash course. Also to Maxine who organises the snail mail out.

Third: thank you to people who have sent in poems and articles: Terry, Irene, Bill, Brian, Meg and Nancy.

I would also like to apologise for the extra emails to people while I was setting up the mail group. Hopefully that will have been sorted out by the time this is mailed to you by Maxine or emailed by myself.

This is your newsletter so please let me know what's missing. We are going back to an eight page format and would welcome your feedback and opinions.

Happy reading,

This Bully Tin has been printed with the generous assistance of the office of  
**KATE DOUST MLC**  
and posted with the generous assistance of Ben Wyatt, MLA - Member for Victoria Park.

## President's Preamble -



It was pleasing to see a good number of members attend the Annual General Meeting, and several visitors for the muster as well. Alan Aitken has taken the treasurer's position, and we welcome him to the committee. Alan is doing a great job organizing the Bunbury chapter of bush poets. It was great to see Dave Smith up from Collie and able to recite for us at the muster. Springtime brings on the shearing so the old story goes. Well it is certainly bringing out the bush poets. I know of six events in seven weeks (see back page) plus our regular musters at Bentley Park and in Bunbury. We have had a good response from poets for the "Blues for the Bush" open day at Charles Darwin Reserve, Perenjori on 5<sup>th</sup> October. This is a day of free entertainment and attractions plus free camping. There is a Blues Concert at night (a charge applies to the concert). The reserve is about 4 – 5 hours north of Perth, so we might have an early start after the October muster. Christine Boulton has volunteered to be the editor of the Bullytin for few months. Thank you Christine, and I know Irene welcomes the time off from this task.

Bill Gordon  
President.

### **WANTED - Muster MC's & Classics Readers**

With Dave being on the sick list and Terry probably being away for some time, the Event Coordination role has been taken over (Temporarily???) by Vice President Brian Langley. He is looking for members who would be willing to take on the role of MC or Classics Reader for 1 Muster each for the year ahead. There are guidelines to work within, for those who are unsure as to what is required, Please see see Brian or contact him (details on the back page). Thank you.

From Poem Hunter

John Shaw Neilson, was an Australian poet. Slightly built, for most of his life, John Shaw Neilson worked as a labourer, fruit-picking, clearing scrub, navvying and working in quarries, and, after 1928, working as a messenger with the Country Roads Board in Melbourne. Largely untrained and only basically educated, Neilson became known as one of Australia's finest lyric poets, who wrote a great deal about the natural world, and the beauty in it.

### **Early life**

Neilson was born in Penola, South Australia of purely Scottish ancestry. His grandparents were John Neilson and Jessie MacFarlane of Cupar, Neil Mackinnon of Skye, and Margaret Stuart of Greenock.



### **In the Dim Counties**

In the dim counties  
we take the long calm  
Lilting no haziness,  
sequel or psalm.

The little street wenches,  
The holy and clean,  
Live as good neighbours  
live  
under the green.

Malice of sunbeam or

menace of moon  
Piping shall leave us  
no taste of a tune.

In the dim counties  
the eyelids are dumb,  
To the lean citizens  
Love cannot come.

Love in the yellowing,  
Love at the turn,  
Love o' the cooing lip—  
how should he burn?

The little street wenches,  
the callous, unclean  
—Could they but tell us  
what  
all the gods mean.

Love cannot sabre us,  
blood cannot flow,  
In the dim counties  
that wait us below.

**John Shaw Neilson**

### Different Tracks

Nanga Music Festival (with a Sunday Poet's Breakfast).

October 11th –13th, Nanga Bush Camp ,Dwellingup. For more information [www.nangamusic.org.au](http://www.nangamusic.org.au)

Also Folk in the Forest, mid November, more information to follow. This is a charity event to raise money for children's cancer research. Venue: Banksia Springs, Dwellingup.



# A Ballade of Wattle Blossom

By Robert Richardson

1/7/1850-10/4/1901

There's a land that is happy and fair,  
Set gem-like in halcyon seas;  
The white winters visit not there,  
To sadden its blossoming leas,  
More bland than the Hesperides,  
Or any warm isle of the West,  
Where the wattle-bloom perfumes the breeze,  
And the bell-bird builds her nest.

When the oak and the elm are bare,  
And wild winds vex the shuddering trees;  
There the clematis whitens the air,  
And the husbandman laughs as he sees  
The grass rippling green to his knees,  
And his vineyards in emerald drest --  
Where the wattle-bloom bends in the breeze,  
And the bell-bird builds her nest.

What land is with this to compare?  
Not the green hills of Hybla, with bees  
Honey-sweet, are more radiant and rare  
In colour and fragrance than these  
Boon shores, where the storm-clouds cease,  
And the wind and the wave are at rest --  
Where the wattle-bloom waves in the breeze,  
And the bell-bird builds her nest.

*Envoy.*

Sweetheart, let them praise as they please  
Other lands, but we know which is best --  
Where the wattle-bloom perfumes the breeze,  
And the bell-bird builds her nest.

## A Protest and a Protest

A certain old maid at Port Victor  
had many strange pets to afflict her,  
her Kangaroos fought  
with the emus she caught  
and when she protested, they kicked her .

John Shaw Neilson

## Insurance Protection

Some country Members have joined the WA Bush Poets with the aim of any public events they organise being covered by the WA Bush Poets Insurance - This does however have a couple of responsibilities - ones that a recent country event did not carry out and consequently, had there have been an injury, they would NOT have been able to have claimed through our insurance. The responsibilities are - That the event MUST be authorised by the WA Bush Poets Committee AND there must be indication that the WA Bush Poets are involved, (ie our banner displayed and/or any advertising to include the WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinners Assoc. name and logo In future, in order to be covered by our insurance, ANY MEMBER organising a public event must inform the Management Committee of the details, They must also display prominently the fact that the event is in association with the WA Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners. Our President currently holds our Banner - this can be sent around the state, however the local event will need to pay for its transport in both directions. Alternatively, our name and logo on advertising and at the event acknowledging our involvement would likely suffice . Brian

A bit of tongue in cheek nonsense

## BERTIE ON THE PHONE

Why hello Jenny darling this is Bertie  
don't you know,  
extending invitations to our pukka poets  
show.  
It's for the literati and a real poetic treat  
and anyone who's anyone is sure to book  
a seat.

They say we're nearly booked out -  
there'll be twenty there at least,  
and after entertainment, we're to have a  
smashing feast.  
There's cucumber sandwiches, with the  
crusts removed of course  
and lots of lovely champers; Pater has a  
useful source.

No Mater won't be coming - poor old dear  
has lost the plot.  
this morning as I practiced, she insisted it  
was rot.  
Some cretin bushy poet --- yes the ones  
that always rhyme,  
has turned her to the dark side - which  
I'm sure must be a crime.

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## Old Granny Sullivan

A pleasant shady place it is, a pleasant place and cool -  
The township folk go up and down, the children pass to school.  
Along the river lies my world, a dear sweet world to me:  
I sit and learn - I cannot go; there is so much to see.

But Granny she has seen the world, and often by her side  
I sit and listen while she speaks of youthful days of pride;  
Old Granny's hands are clasped; she wears her favourite faded shawl -  
I ask her this, I ask her that: she says, 'I mind it all.'

The boys and girls that Granny knew, far o'er the seas are they,  
But there's no love like the old love, and the old world far away;  
Her talk is all of wakes and fairs - or how, when night would fall,  
"Twas many a quare thing crept and came,' and Granny 'minds them all.'

The day she first met Sullivan - she tells it all to me -  
How she was hardly twenty-one and he was twenty-three.  
The courting days! the kissing days! - but bitter things befall  
The bravest hearts that plan and dream. Old Granny 'minds it all.'

Her wedding-dress I know by heart; yes! every flounce and frill;  
And the little home they lived in first, with the garden on the hill.  
'Twas there her baby boy was born; and neighbours came to call,  
But none had seen a boy like Jim - and Granny 'minds it all.'

They had their fights in those old days; but Sullivan was strong,  
A smart quick man at anything; 'twas hard to put him wrong...  
One day they brought him from the mine... (The big salt tears will fall)...  
'Twas long ago, God rest his soul!' Poor Granny 'minds it all.'

The first dark days of widowhood, the weary days and slow,  
The grim, disheartening, uphill fight, then Granny lived to know.  
'The childer,' ah! they grew and grew - sound, rosy-cheeked and tall:  
'The childer' still they are to her. Old Granny 'minds them all.'

How well she loved her little brood! Oh, Granny's heart was brave!  
She gave to them her love and faith - all that the good God have.  
They change not with the changing years; as babies just the same  
She feels for them, though some, alas! have brought her grief and shame:

The big world called them here and there, and many a mile away:  
They cannot come - she cannot go - the darkness haunts the day;  
And I, no flesh and blood of hers, sit here while shadows fall -  
I sit and listen - Granny talks; for Granny 'minds them all.'

Just fancy Granny Sullivan at seventeen or so,  
In all the floating fin

John Shaw Neilson

### **Toodyay Bush Poetry Festival, Abbreviated Program—full program—see last month's Bully Tin or our website [www.wabushpoets.asn.au](http://www.wabushpoets.asn.au)**

**Friday 1st** from 11am - 3 workshops, at the CWA Hall  
Evening - Bush Poetry with Dinner at the Toodyay Bowling Club

**Saturday 2nd** Morning— State Championship events—Junior & Novice  
Saturday Lunchtime Fun Written short Verse—Theme Road Safety, Opening Ceremony  
Saturday Afternoon State Championship events, Novice Classics Reader, Yarn Spinning, Contemporary#  
Saturday Evening Family Bush Dance with Greg Hastings and Co.

**Sunday 3rd** — Bush Poets brekky followed by  
Sunday Morning - State Championship Events— Traditional #, Original Humorous#  
Sunday Lunch Time Poets Brawl - time ,  
Sunday Afternoon Final Championship event, Original Serious # then Winners of Written Comp,  
Announcement of State Champion , Presentation of Awards, Close -

## Website “Hits”

At our AGM I was asked the question “How many hits has our website had?” and “Why isn’t it published in the Bully Tin?” My answer to the first question was “I don’t know” and thus the answer to the second was obvious.

These questions do however raise other questions, ie What is a “hit”? How do we count them? and “What is their significance?” , Let’s tackle these instead

A “hit” is simply a measure of how many people go to a particular page on a website. It does NOT indicate what happens then, why they came, where they came from or where they are going next. Do they wander around the website, and if so, which pages do they go to? Or, having got there, do they immediately leave? Do they take any notice of the content of any page they end up on? Only they know.

As to counting hits, you then run into the problem, do you count the number of times that anyone “comes through the door” or do you count the number of different individuals, ignoring the fact that some may come and go several times?

There are further complications when we consider what a website is. An analogy to the physical world is a multi room apartment, where each room represents a page of the website. In each of these rooms, (and I’ll use our website as an exam-

may find a whole lot of information about a particular aspect of our Assn., eg. Its ideals or maybe its history. Alternatively, it may be a list of upcoming events, or competitions, or maybe a list of members with services or products for sale. But then again, it could just be a single poem, a notice of an event or a map.

Unfortunately for the person wishing to count visitors, there are other complications. Every room has a doorway to the outside world, Visitors don’t have to enter through the “front door” . Even more complicating is the fact that visitors can move between many of the rooms without having to pass through any common room or passage or hallway. So, in our case, a visitor could enter directly into a room containing a poem, from there, “jump” to a list of poems, then jump to another list of poems, back to the first list, then to see when the next muster is, then leave - What do you count?

In 2006, when I took over the management or “Webmaster” role of our website, access to our website was almost exclusively via the “front door” (Our “Home Page”) and we only had about 6 rooms in our “apartment”. Now, some 7 years later our apartment has grown to more than 500 rooms, (a significant number of which contain just a single poem from a WA poet of a past era) So! What do we measure? Do we put a counter in every room or if not, in which rooms? Perhaps just on our “front door” Should we count multiple visits by the same person? It all becomes rather complicated and meaningless.

Our website was once “housed” in a large multinational website, initially, we got free rent (for a small amount of space), but had to put up with advertising on our walls. Later, we needed some more space for which we paid a small “rental” fee (\$4 per month – no adverts). – at that time there was a counter on our “front door”. In February 2012, we were offered “free accommodation” in a local webhosting service (WANet). The then committee took up this offer. The current “landlord” does not provide counters as he, like me knows that they don’t tell you what you really want to know - What did your visitors come for? Did they get what they wanted? Do they recommend us to others? These questions are virtually unanswerable.

So, back to the questions at the AGM – Bearing all I’ve had to say here, (An AGM was not the place for such an explanation) I feel I was justified in my response.

Brian Langley, Vice President and Webmaster



### UPCOMING MUSTERS

**September**—“Traditional Night”

**MC Christine Boulton** 9364 8784  
christineboulton7@bigpond.com

There will be no Classics Reader as the whole programme will be Traditional / Classics

**October**— **MC. Dot Langley** 9361 3770

brumbrum@tpg.com.au  
Classics Reader — Jack Matthews

**November** - **MC Jack Matthews** 9361 9793

galloping.jack@westnet.com.au  
Classics reader - Teresa Rose

**December** - Christmas Muster,  
“Pies, Port and Poetry “ with Giant raffle

**MC Grace Williamson**  
Classics reader Heather Denholm

**Do you want to be part of the National Scene —  
Then you might consider joining the Australian  
Bush Poets Assn  
www.abpa.org.au . Annual membership \$30  
Stay up to date with events and competitions right  
across Australia**

## **August Muster Wrap Up – Nancy Coe and Meg Gordon**

MC for the evening was **Peter Nettleton** and he opened with "The Nudist" - Phil Strutt, a poem he performed at the Kununurra show this year.

**Rodger Kohn** – Rodger has put another of John Hayes poems to music - "The Wind". He also put one of his own poems "Does Your Mother Know" to music. This was all about the turbulent teenage years.

**Dot Langley** - "Gran's Quilt" - Carol Reffold who is a writer, reciter, patchwork quilter and known as the "Patchwork Poette". She was born in Chellworth, Surrey, England and emigrated to Australia in 1960 and started writing poetry in 1994. Poem tells the story of how a gift of love can be received but so unappreciated.

**Barry Higgins and Kerry Bowe** - "Animal Anecdotes" - Syd Hopkinson. An amusing medley of short ditties to add some light humour to the evening. Then we heard "Memory Morsels" and "Family Favourites".

**Dave Smith** (great to see Dave back in action amongst us) – "Mulga Bill's Bicycle" Banjo Patterson. Always good to hear a favourite classic.

**Robert Gunn** - "Mulligan's Shack" - author unknown. An amusing tale of the birth of quads by the light of a lantern.

**Bill Gordon** - "The Cattledog's Revenge" - Jack Drake. The city visitors took it too far when they brought their rottweiler pup to the farm. The pup left a trail of destruction around the farm until the old cattle dog took control. He flew into the rottweiler and bit it where it hurts, then hung on as the pup took off down the paddock. The result was that the rottweiler lost his masculinity and the city folk were no longer welcome at the farm.

**Grace Williamson** - "The Pepper Tree" - Evelyn Cull. Revisiting a goldfields ghost town brings back memories to an elderly lady who planted a pepper tree as a young bride. Despite droughts and abandonment when the gold was gone, the pepper tree survived and now stands alone in the barren landscape.

**Jack Matthews** - "Drummer Rigby" - Written by local poet, Dee Sanders. The two men who murdered a soldier, Drummer Rigby, in Britain recently were born in the UK to Nigerian Christian parents and converted to the Moslem religion. A costly price of multiculturalism. (The mood of the audience became quite sombre after this one).

**Brian Langley** - "The Forest" - Brian Langley. A Forest is a magical place where the sounds and sight of nature surround us. Unfortunately far too often these sounds are replaced with that of the axe and saw as they clear the land for agriculture. But at what cost! Fewer trees mean less rain, less wildlife and perhaps in a few years the land will be desert. And how many of us really care?

"The Prize Axe" - Brian Langley. This is the story of an ancient axeman who, when he was 21 was given a special axe. Now, some 65 years later, he still has that very same axe, all shiny like new, despite having been used extensively in competition for many years. And to think in all those 65 years, it has only had four replacement handles and just one replacement head!

**Lesley McAlpine** - "How's That!" - Martin James Pattie. When a town gets drowned in the name of progress.

**Keith Lethbridge** - "Never Forget". Cobber told this story accompanied by his guitar. Nobody wants a war. When it happens, lives are lost. This poem asks that we never forget the sacrifices made by those who fought to give us the freedoms we enjoy today.

"Cobber States His Case". This is a combination of two rhymes. The first section was originally an introduction to Mildew, the cook, but now is used by Digger to introduce Cobber as a political candidate. The second part is "schizophrenic" verse: it only rhymes if you have a weird sense of humour.

After the supper break, **Peter Nettleton** opened with a sequel to "The Nudist" - Phil Strutt.

**Nancy Coe** - In response to a request gave the definition of a ditty - A long story told in short verse and often set to music.

In reading from the classics, Nancy featured Henry Lawson and read his poems "New Love, New Life". And for those who read to children "In Possum Land".

**Kerry Bowe** - "The Other Woman" Kerry wrote this poem after the idea came when emerging from her sick bed after a dose of the flu. She hardly recognised herself in the mirror so she and her husband then blamed *the other woman* for everything that wasn't done or done incorrectly.

**Bill Gordon** - "Turbulence" - Murray Hartin. This well know poem tells of a ringer from Alice Springs who has a fear of flying. When he has to take a plane trip and they run into severe turbulence, he sits astride his swag and rides it as if he is on a wild bull in a rodeo, much to the amazement of the terrified passengers.

**Rob Gunn** - "Chinese Whispers" - Another Murray Hartin winner given excellent treatment by Rob.

**Grace Williamson** - "Believe it or Not" Alec MacCormack. This poem tells of a shearer who befriends a swagman for a night and tells him that he has made 500 pounds wages. The swagman said to him that that was a lot of money and he should be careful as *many a man has been murdered for less*. The shearer feels that he was foolish to have said anything and takes off into the night only to feel he was being followed.

**Jack Matthews** - "The Senior Citizen's Meat Raffle" - Bill Kearns. When two raffle books of identical colour are accidentally sold at the local Bowling Club, the consequences when the winners are called can be catastrophic.

**Barry Higgins** - "Laughter and Tears" Syd Hopkinson. A country pub yarn about Whopper, the donkey.

**Brian Langley** - "Boat People" Brian Langley. While the politicians fight about finding a solution to "Boat People" and border security, all the things we are saying about *them* changing our way of life, about their beliefs, about them ogling our women while closeting their own - They've all been said before. Around 200 years ago when our ancestors came to change the future of Australian Aboriginals.

**Rusty Christensen** - "Blue and The Sheep" Bob Magor. Rusty delighted us with his great rendition of the exploits of a sheep dog and his prize find. Rusty still has an amazing memory, this poem contains 47 stanzas. It is the story about a retired sheep dog, Blue, who has been sent into town to live with the family's grandmother who is also retired. Blue still loves the outdoors and fossicking around the paddocks, which he was doing one Sunday morning, he happened upon a sheep which had been dead for over a week with the appropriate odour. He is delighted with his find and the story unfolds as he drags/carries the smelly corpse from place to place around town. He finishes up at Grandma's who warns him of the dangers around town.

To wind up the evening **Cobber Lethbridge** yodelled his way through a Tex Morten number called "The Swiss Mountaineer". Is there anything this man cannot do?? He followed this by his poem "Show Day". It's a fact that Mother McQ is no oil painting, but she enters the beauty contest at the show. She reckons the money would come in handy. One of the other contestants thinks it's a joke, but Mother McQ is deadly serious. A fight breaks out and the winner is.....Mother McQ!

