

WA Bush Poets

# The Bully Tin

August, 2005



& Yarn Spinners

Monthly Muster at the Como Bowling & Recreation Club cnr Hensman & Sandgate Sts, South Perth  
Next meeting: Friday 5th August, 2005 at 7.00pm for 7.30pm start.  
[www.wabushpoets.com](http://www.wabushpoets.com)

## Friday 5th August 2005 6.30pm sharp!

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# A G M

## WA Bush Poetry Championships!

22-23 October 2005

# Droppings from "The Boss Cocky"



It is with much pleasure and satisfaction that I present my report for our year of 2004 / 5 . It has been a busy and rewarding year of Bush Poetry for many reasons, not the least being the enjoyment of working with our excellent ----  
---COMMITTEE I have expressed several times before what a grand team they are to work with . I can assure members that the affairs of the Association are in good and safe hands . A friend of many years, Tom Conway, has gone from a regular muster man to a sound competent Vice President and has added another dimension with his experience, expertise and in depth understanding of the issues to be tackled .

I consider that the Association is extremely fortunate to have the time and energy of Jean Ritchie as Secretary, Jean is proving to be a most efficient secretary and hostess . Kerry Lee has done a Herculean job of Treasurer and Editor, the former job will be taken on by June Bond which has given Kerry renewed enthusiasm to continue with the important job of Editor - so please keep those snippets of news views and interviews rolling in for the Bully Tin .

Lorelie Tacoma, Rae Dockery, Brian Langley and the indomitable Edna Westall have made up the balance of the team, the downside is that the most reliable and busy lady, Lorelie T, after a long innings [ from day one ] is stepping aside, as is Rae D due to a change in geography, neither of these true blue girls will be riding off into the sunset . With the departure of these two stalwarts, there are a couple of gaps to fill . I am sure there are capable keen characters prepared to take their place at the table, it is not too demanding - and, it is FUN - we promise .

SCHOOLS - From a grant from the City of Melville and the persistent efforts of June Bond we were able to get a foot in the door of some schools in the Melville area, I only hope we made an impression on the teachers to get the pupils writin' and recitin' so that we can have them involved in a written comp. in the near future with a cash incentive .

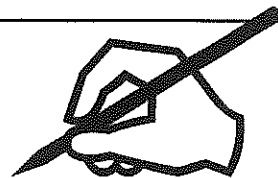
EVENTS -The year has seen numbers increasing at the various Bush Poetry events . Boyup Brook breakfast in February was estimated at over 700, Derby in the Kimberley maintains a regular give or take a bit, 300, Wireless Hill on Aust .Day holds its numbers, our monthly musters at the Como Camp are consistent, plus anywhere else - and there are various events starting - where quality Bush Poetry is performed, sceptics are converted to supporters .

NATIONALS - The very fact of bringing the National Championships to Perth proved that our young Association had come of age, it was the result of some long term planning and some short term action . Kerry and Rod Lee AKA Diggers Camp bore the brunt of most of the short time action, from making their home available to hordes of various bards, organising events, to making the trophies [ borers were extra ]. This hard working couple, who have done so much to fly the flag, kept their collective shoulder to the wheel, nose to the grindstone [ not very comfortable ] saw the job through to a successful conclusion .

Year 2004/5 has been one of steady growth and consolidation for our movement . As we approach the tenth anniversary of establishing Bush Poetry here in W.A. we can look back with pride, reflect on the characters who have come and gone, keeping in mind that basically what we are doing, while still enjoying what we do, we are also - in a time of international confusion - keeping the Aussie tradition alive . I look forward to your company in 2005/6 .

The Boss Cocky      Rusty C

# Letters to the Editor



## Calling all Performance Poets!

Expressions of interest are required from those poets interested in performing at the **Royal Show** this year.

Poets will need to be able to spruik professionally for at least half an hour to one hour, depending on the number of interested poets.

The down side is coping with excessive noise and a fickle fluctuating audience.

The up side is you will be paid (not well enough to fund that dream holiday) and you will receive free entry to the Show.

It is an interesting and challenging experience and can be a lot of fun.

To register your interest please phone me on  
9397 0409.

Profiles and photos, if possible, are required asap.



## State Championships

Closing date for entries in the competition is  
7th October, 2005



## Traditional Night 2 September 2005

This is our special night devoted exclusively to  
the Old Masters.

Why not join in the spirit of the night and come  
in period costume!

## Darren Jaycock Appeal

### Call for donations

Leanne Jaycock is an active member of the APBA and is the current editor of the APBA Newsletter.

Her son was recently hit by a car while riding his push bike and has sustained serious injuries.

The WABP&YS Assoc Committee thought some of the members might wish to donate to the appeal currently being held to raise funds for Darren's hospitalisation and treatment.

A call for donations will be made at the August Muster.

## Dear Editor

I think the city v country competition at Tumblegum Farm is a good idea. Perhaps an audience vote for the best poet would be of interest.

You all did a splendid job of organising the Nationals and I liked the name tags, but they don't need to be so expensive.

I have written a few more poems and have enclosed one for the Bully Tin.

John Putland

## THE PENSIONED OFF MECHANIC.

Old and weary, grey and bent,  
Remembering the times he spent –  
Fixing trucks and motor cars.  
Checking out his many scars.

Busted knuckles, worn thin nails,  
Wonky legs and other ails.  
The early days when he was young,  
The cobbers that he worked among.

When servicing was done with pride,  
And they never sought to hide  
Stripped thread nuts or a broken stud,  
Or failed to clean off grease and mud.

You see him still in overalls –  
They keep him warm and clean,  
And if you look more closely –  
He's more clean than he has been

For when he worked on diesels  
He was grime from head to foot.  
And when it came to wash-up time,  
His hands were black as soot.

Before he had hand cleaners,  
Washing them was quite a pain.  
He had Solvol soap and Trusol,  
Which often blocked the drain.

He knows his carburettors  
And those generators too –  
But when you say computers,  
Then he hasn't got a clue.

He dreams of some clean workshop  
With equipment, up to date –  
Of silent brakes that never fail,  
And pull up nice and straight.

Of front tyres wearing even –  
Of engines running sweet,  
That climb the steepest hill in top,  
And never miss a beat.

John W Putland ©  
Darkan WA 6392

## July Monthly Muster



Lorelie undertook the MC position and led us into the night reading some humorous emails she had received before introducing **Rod Lee** as the first spruiker for the evening. Poor Lorelie was a bit lost to know what he was going to recite as she couldn't read his writing. Maybe he should have been a doctor? His bedside manner just might let him down! He regaled us with the first poem he wrote—*Mongrel Bees*—words of caution... beware of the bite of the mongrel bees, alias beer, wine and port.

**Trish Joyce** took the mike and started to recite (amid giggles) *The Bare Facts*. We had to wait until the second half of the evening to hear all of that story but we got a good laugh from *Embarrassing Moments* when she was stark naked looking for the soap and heard a woof whistle. The admirer, she finally discovered, was a budgie!

**Brian Langley** had a collection of short children's poem. He was fresh out of bush poems with all these relating to the sea. They were entertaining and well written accompanied by a warning on the dangers of the sea. Safer to swim in the pool! One member who is coming on in leaps and bounds and needs to be highly commended for her research and presentation is **Grace Williamson**. *The Death of Ben Hall* is a poem of epic proportions about the Pommy bush ranger. Her preamble was informative and interesting and the poem delivered without fault. Well done Grace!

**Barry Higgins** always has a few jokes and yarns to tell which tickle the ribs and he didn't disappoint us this time. He then delivered *Bush Justice* (**Bob Magor**) with an interesting slant on *working gear*.

Congratulations were due to **Jean Ritchie** when Barry revealed she had just won a Penguin Award.

As an aside, Jean and June Bond (always busy at the door) have just celebrated birthdays over the past few weeks. Best wishes to you both!

Lorelie was back with her storytelling before calling me to the mike. My selection for the evening was *The Pack Horse* (**Will Olgilvie**). I love the imagery and sensitivity of his poems and this one, I feel, is one of his best.

Apologies are extended here as I only know the next performer as **Frank**. He recited *The Sydney Harbour Bridge* (**C J Denis**), a humorous account of when the bridge was opened in 1932 and it was "tested" by Bill Smith's cows before the Premier, Jack Lang, could have the honour.

This was followed by *Progress* with its devastating effect on the bush.

Lorelie then paused the evening for the Supper Break—right on time!

**Margaret Taylor** kicked off the second half of the evening with more of her delightful stories. The first, *Thoughts of One Waiting for the Geriatric Express*, was of her 84 year old mother who thought she had missed hers. The second, *Noise*, we could all relate to—noisy neighbours, barking dogs, loud commercials...and a husband unfazed by all this because he is deaf! No sympathy there for poor Margaret.

I'm not sure (reading my pathetic notes) how **Frank Williams** and *Honky Tonk Blues* (circa 1953) fitted into the program but Lorelie's statement "That's too modern for me!" cracked me up. You're a treasure, Lorelie!

**Syd Hopkinson** focused on the weather, which is generally of interest to us all. This wise old sage advised us to fix our rain gauges at least three feet off the ground—just to be sure it is rain in the gauge and not doggy wee! Thanks for that Syd! He then shared a clever poem, *Under the Weather*, recounting the woes of a radio announcer trying to twist his tongue around all the weird and wonderful names of outback towns when reading out the weather. I was greatly impressed at the way Syd remembered them all, especially without suffering RSI of the tongue!

**Rod** was back again recounting the fishing yarn of *Barra-mundi Bob* after being admonished by Lorelie not to use up too much time. A tough MC is our Lorelie! Boldly though he risked her wrath by then reciting **Murray Hartin's** "The Dentist". It is such a funny poem he was soon forgiven.

Then something new—a medley of short funny poems performing by rote by **Syd & Barry**. Their supply of funny ditties seem to be endless! I love the way Syd's mind works. Back with her wonderful smile and giggles, **Rosemary Sharland** explained why Rod would not die from "Pulpy Kidney" (**Phillip Rush**) after he copped the injection meant for the sheep. She then paid tribute to a dear friend, **Moona**, who died of cancer.

**Trish** was back again with Take 2 of *The Bare Facts* and finally shared this funny story with us.

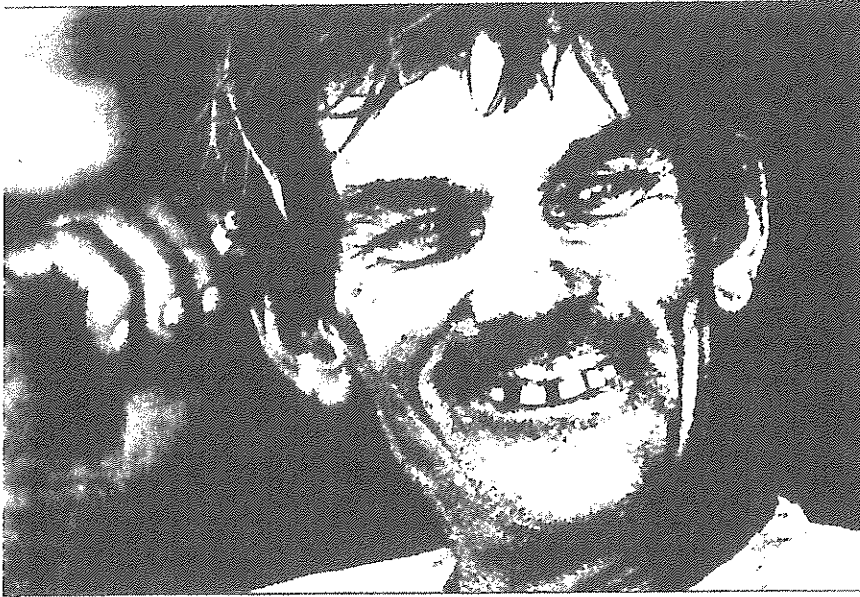
**Brian** gave the night a touch of class with his poem about jogging and dog poo with a plea for pet owners to clean up after their dogs. A fair request I would think.

That reminded me of a letter in the West yonks ago. The writer's beach holiday was ruined on the first day when he sliced his foot open on a broken bottle. He stated he would have preferred to have trodden in dog poo, which he could just wash off. I prefer neither, thanks but he made a good point. Just to keep the deteriorating level going I recounted the story of when I turned Rod into a fence post for calling me *Bloody Woman* one too many bloody times.

And that brought the evening to a close right on the dot of 10pm!

**Kerry**

**Membership Fees  
Due NOW!**



## Keith Lethbridge (Cobber)

wins  
Derby Written  
Competition

with his poem honouring  
the life of a  
Kimberley character.

Quite a character: Johnny James was famous in the Kimberley as a barefoot cattleman and bush poet. He died in 1998.

### Copter crash claims famed poet and cattleman

By Leith Paganoni

#### The West Australian September 2003

A feisty barefoot cattleman who was the epitome of the Australian bush battler was killed in a helicopter crash near Derby on Sunday.

North-West bush poet Johnny James, 56, had lived alone on Yakka Munga Station, 200km east of Broome, and spent 35 years in the Kimberley catching bulls and working cattle.

Pastoralists and Graziers Association Kimberley chairwoman Beth Webb-Smith said the community was shocked at the loss of such a strong character. "If he spoke or rode a bull it was with gusto", she said. "He had a very dramatic way of producing his character. A lot of stories will go with him. Not only the stories but the way they were told."

She said James ran Yakka Munga single-handedly and did not let anything daunt him, living beyond the bounds of most people.

He wrote poems about living in the bush and recited on many occasions, including at the funeral of former PGA leader Tony Boulton at Karrakatta cemetery in 1998.

It would have meant a rare trip to the capital for James, who said after a holiday in the city 15 years ago, that Perth was like a different planet. He claimed city dwellers did not recognise the hardships of life in the wilderness where the nation's wealth was created.

#### Yakka Munga Man

They miss him in the Kimberley at Yakka Munga Station,  
And every now and then they hold a special celebration.  
They miss him at the muster when the going's getting tough,  
And yarning in the dinner camps, they miss him sure enough,  
And then of course at Derby there's the poets' breakfast show,  
Where spruikers from the outback and the city have a go.  
They've got some great bush poets and a lot of famous names,  
But there'll never be another Johnny James.

His voice was rough as gravel and he lacked a tooth or three,  
And the fashion of his haircut was a total mystery.  
He strode across the Kimberley, no boots upon his feet,  
The wildest looking character you'd ever care to meet.  
His eyes were fired with passion and his jaw was firmly set,  
Just itching for some idiot to pick a fight, and yet,  
They've got some great bush poets and a lot of famous names,  
But there'll never be another Johnny James.

He couldn't match the masters with his rhythm or his rhyme,  
And his onomatopoeia didn't matter half the time,  
He held some strong opinions and he wrote the way he spoke,  
So you couldn't help admiring the courage of the bloke.  
He wrote of situations every bushman understood,  
And even Rusty Christensen conceded he was good,  
And of all the great bush poets and of all the famous names,  
There'll never be another Johnny James.

So now he's with his maker, "shuffled off his mortal coil",  
No more he'll roll a scrubber, nor watch the billy boil,  
No more he'll work from dawn to dusk then halfway through the night,  
To muster one more gully run or set a windmill right,  
No more he'll stir an audience with passion in his eyes.  
His spruiking days are over, but a legend never dies,  
And for all your great bush poets and those fancy, famous names,  
There'll never be another Johnny James.

Keith (Cobber) Lethbridge (c)

# A Walk With The Masters

## W T Goodge 1862-1909

*Hits! Skits! And Jingles!* is the best known work of W T Goodge, who was born in London in 1862 and died in Sydney in 1909. It contains many famous verses, including *Ode to the Frying Pan*, *A Genuine Bush Song*, *Dan the Bullocky*, *The Oozlum Bird*, *Praying for Rain* & *The Great Australian Adjective*. The book was first published in 1904 and has attracted the students of Australian verse ever since. Goodge, the son of a London law courts clerk, worked his passage to Australia on *The Cathay* at the age of 18. He left the ship in Sydney and took a job on one of Cobb & Co's properties, Winagee Station in western NSW. He contributed verses to the *Dubbo Express* and later took a job as a reporter and writer of verse for the *Lithgow Mercury*. After working for a spell in Sydney and then as editor of the *Orange Leader*, Goodge began freelancing for various papers. He was a prolific writer. Many of his columns included 'skits' on sport or politics. He died suddenly at 47.

Norman Lindsay considered him one of Australia's best writers of bush verse. His social commentary from this era is an excellent example of the language of the time. From his involvement with the newspapers he used satire and rhyme to highlight the issues of the day.

### THE SMITHVILLE TANDEM BIKE.

Now Henry Jones and William Brown

Were built, as nature planned 'em,  
Although the swells in Smithville town  
Perpetually banned 'em.

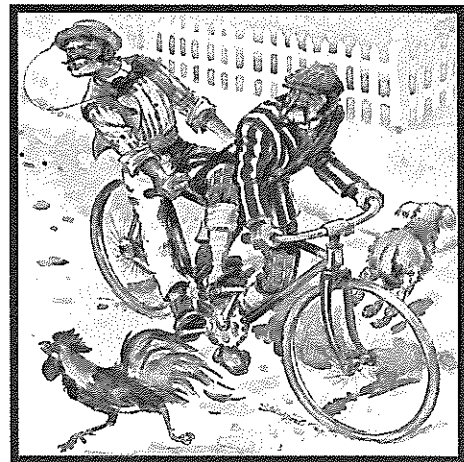
They'd long been chums in fights and frays,  
Together "on the burst" for days,  
And when they got the cycling craze,  
Of course they bought a tandem!

But tandem bikes, though right enough  
For those who understand 'em,  
Are very apt to cut up rough  
On folks who ride at random;

When Brown desired to take the right,  
Jones screwed to left with all his might,  
And then they'd start to swear and fight  
While riding on the tandem!

And Jones would swear that Brown was bound  
Upon the road to land 'em,  
And all the people standing round  
A pair of fools would brand 'em.  
Some twenty miles they went in rain  
When Brown got off and took the train,  
And Jones was left and tried in vain  
Himself to ride the tandem!

He tried the front and hinder seat,  
But Jones could not command 'em,  
With observations choice and sweet  
He swore he could n't stand 'em.  
Next day the folks who saw the start  
Saw Mr. Henry Jones the smart  
Returning in a horse and cart—  
A-bringing back the tandem!



### OUR DOG JIM.

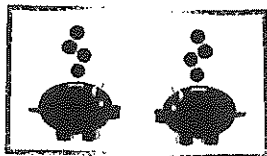
We own a dog, his name is Jim,  
And nobody gets the best of him.  
One day when walking down the town,  
The dog was kicked by Jenkins Brown.  
Jim made no fuss, but he was riled,  
Although he merely looked and smiled.  
Now when the policeman came around  
Our Jim was nowhere to be found.  
"Had we a dog, and pay the cost?"  
We said our dog was lately lost.

And so the policeman went away  
And called on Jenkins Brown next day.  
"Had he a dog?" He swore he'd not  
When Jim appeared upon the spot  
And jumped around and licked his hand  
To let the policeman understand.  
When Jim saw Brown had paid the fine  
He came back home with us to dine.  
That's how we saved our half-a-crown  
And Jim got level with Jenkins Brown!

# more W.T. Goodge!

“98”

Who fears to speak of '98  
Whose natal day we celebr8  
This is the day from which we d8  
New resolutions, good and gr8!  
Henceforth our smoking shall ab8,  
The weed nicotian we shall h8.  
We'll swear off gin and whiskey str8,  
And put no nobblers on the sl8.  
Our words we now will regul8  
In phases mild and delic8,  
Such games as pool we'll design8  
As absolutely reprob8!  
Who speaks of Yankee Grab must w8  
On other folks in '98!  
No dominoes to enerv8  
And cloud the mind inebri8!  
Oh, we shall not particip8  
In sinful games in '98,  
But daily seek to elev8  
Our minds on things regener8!  
We'll go to church in solemn st8  
Six times a week in '98,  
And place our sixpence on the pl8  
If coppers are inadequ8.  
This is our present estim8  
Of virtues in the agre8,  
We happily might effectu8  
If man were but immacul8!  
Alas, in dread we contempl8  
Lest '99 event8  
And find us in the parlous st8  
In which we started '98!



## Two Fools

There is the fool that spends his money fast,  
Grows old and dies a pauper at the last.  
There is the fool that hoards it to the end  
And leaves it for some other fool to spend!

## THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN SLANGUAGE.

'T is the everyday Australian  
Has a language of his own,  
Has a language, or a slanguage,  
Which can simply stand alone.  
And “a dickon pitch to kid us,”  
Is a synonym for “lie,”  
And to “nark it” means to stop it  
And to “nit it” means to fly!

And a bosom friend's a “cobber”  
And a horse a “prad” or “moke,”  
While a casual acquaintance  
Is a “joker” or a “bloke,”  
And his lady-love's his “donah”  
Or his “clinah” or his “tart”  
Or his “litle bit o' muslin,”  
As it used to be his “bart.”

And his naming of the coinage  
Is a mystery to some,  
With his “quid” and “half-a-caser”  
And his “deener” and his “scrum!”  
And a “tin-back” is a party  
Who's remarkable for luck  
And his food is called his “tucker”  
Or his “panem” or his “chuck.”

A policeman is a “johnny”  
Or a “copman” or a “trap,”  
And a thing obtained on credit  
Is invariably “strap.”  
A conviction's known as “trouble”  
And a gaol is called a “jug,”  
And a sharper is a “spieler”  
And a simpleton's a “tug.”

If he hits a man in fighting,  
That is what he calls a “plug,”  
If he borrows money from you,  
He will say he “bit your lug.”  
And to “shake it” is to steal it,  
And to “strike it” is to beg.  
And a jest is “poking borac,”  
And the jester “pulls your leg.”

Things are “cronk” when they go wrongly  
In the language of the “push,”  
But when things go as he wants 'em  
He declares it is “all cush.”  
When he's bright he's got a “napper,”  
But he's “ratty” when he's daft,  
And when looking for employment  
He is “out o' blooming graft.”

And his clothes he calls his “clobber”  
Or his “togs,” but what of that  
When a “castor” or a “kady”  
Is the name he gives his hat!  
And our undiluted English  
Is a fad to which we cling,  
But the great Australian slanguage  
Is a truly awful thing!

### Committee Members—WA Bush Poets & Yarn Spinners 2004-2005

Rusty Christensen	President	9364 4491
Tom Conway	Vice-President	9339 2802
Jean Ritchie	Secretary	9450 3111
Kerry Lee	Treasurer / Editor	9397 0409
Rae Dockery	Committee	9356 7426
June Bond	Schools Coordinator	9354 5804
Edna Westall	Committee	9339 3028
Lorelie Tacoma	Immediate Past President	9310 1500
Brian Langley	Committee	9361 3770

**Members please note** Please contact any of the above committee members if you have any queries or issues which you feel require attention.

### Events Calendar

- Aug 4-7 Byron Bay Writers Festival 02 6685 6262 [www.byronbaywritersfestival.com.au](http://www.byronbaywritersfestival.com.au)
- Aug 5 WABP&YS Assoc AGM & Monthly Muster Como Bowling Club 7.30pm Rusty 9364 4491**
- Aug 15 NSW Bush Poetry Championships—closing date Written Competition—02 6657 2139
- Aug 19-21 Queensland State Championships North Pine Camp Oven Festival 07 3343 7392
- Sept 2 WABP&YS Assoc Monthly Muster Como Bowling Club 7.30pm  
Traditional Night Rusty 9364 4491**
- Sept 9-11 Inverell "Celebration of the Outback" 02 67 2111 127
- Sept 10-18 Winton Bush Poetry Muster 07 4657 1296
- Sept 30 FAW Soapbox Written Comp M McGoldrick 32 Mackie St, W't Moorooka Q 4105
- Oct 7 WABP&YS Assoc Monthly Muster Como Bowling Club 7.30pm Rusty 9364 4491**
- Oct 7-9 NSW State Championships 02 6657 2139
- Oct 20 Closing date Walla Walla Heritage Festival Written Comp PO Box 22 Walla Walla NSW 2659
- Oct 22-23 WA Bush Poetry Championships and Country City Bush Poetry Challenge  
Tumblegum Farm - for details refer Page 3**
- Nov 4 WABP&YS Assoc Monthly Muster Como Bowling Club 7.30pm Rusty 9364 4491**
- Dec 2 WABP&YS Assoc Monthly Muster Como Bowling Club 7.30pm Rusty 9364 4491**

If you are aware of any events which may be of interest to poets or poetry lovers which are not listed above please advise me by phoning 08 9397 0409 or posting to 160 Blair Road, Oakford WA 6121