

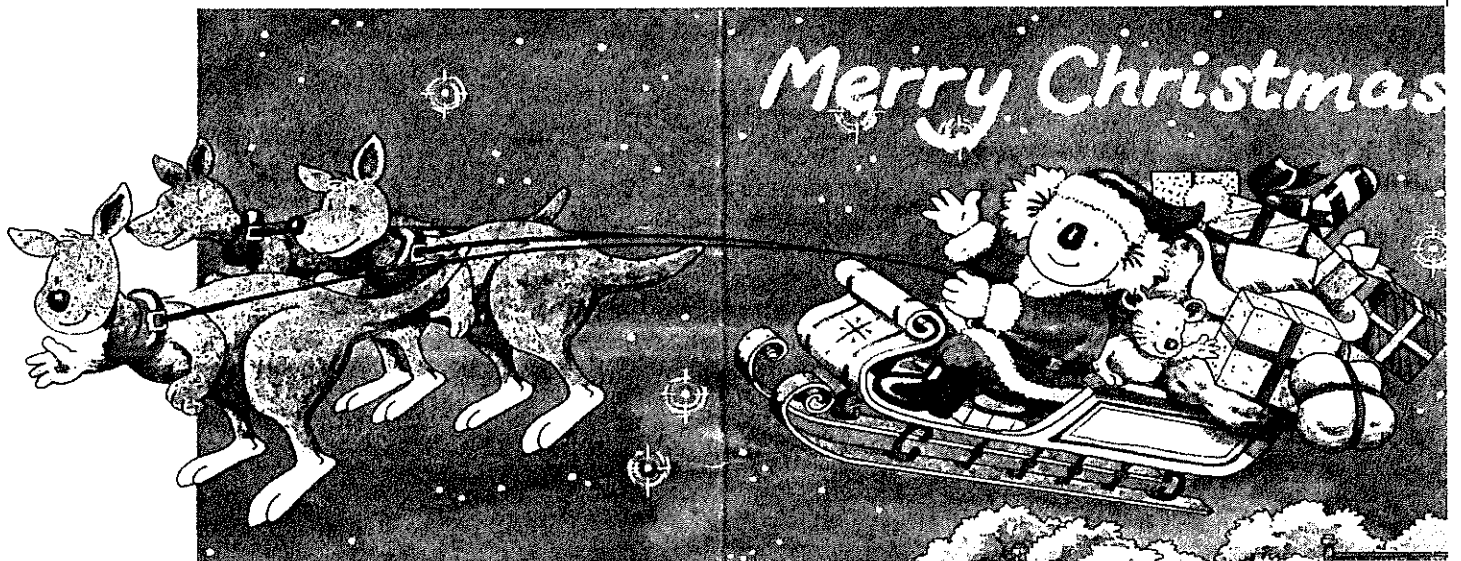
The Bully Tin



December, 2004

& Yarn Spinners

Monthly Muster at the Como Bowling & Recreation Club cnr Hensman & Sandgate Sts, South Perth
Next meeting: Friday 3rd December, 2004 at 7.00pm –Christmas Party—Bring a plate.



& a Happy New Year

Australian Bush Poetry Champions
2004



Milton Taylor

Melanie Hall

Keith Lethbridge



Australian Bush Poetry
Championships



See inside for competition results

Droppings from "The Boss Cocky"



Now that the dust has settled and the last visitor has moved on, we can reflect on a week that was, the 2004 Bush Poetry Championships or Festival of Australian Rhyming Verse, whichever takes your fancy.

No matter how you view it, or what perspective you have, in my opinion, there is one word to sum it up—SUCCESSFUL. From the time some four years back when the idea was first floated, when our first excellent application was refused, then later accepted after resubmission, everybody involved has been enthusiastic and co-operative.

I have expressed it before, but at the risk of repetition, the committee is a pleasure to work with, I find it difficult to single out individuals as they are a grand team. Of course it was not only committee members but Neil & Lyn McLennan, John & Ann Hayes, 'big bold bustling' Barry Higgins, Maxine Richer, et al, who helped make the event the success that it surely was.

It would be remiss of me, not to make special mention of the "Wattle Grove Wonder Woman" - Edna Westall— aka 'Edna the Hun' who ran the camp with such dedication and efficiency that she not only earned the non de plumes, but the respect and affection of everybody except the caretaker at Camp Wattle Grove—'Thank you' Edna!

Kerry & Rod Lee of Diggers Camp fame took on a Herculean task and fortunately the Rotary Club of Kenwick got into the act to help organise the ticket sales—the proceeds to go to worthy Rotary project in 2005—the Cord

Blood Bank Appeal (target \$5m). Not all tickets were sold but the Rotary Club is happy, the Diggers Camp mob are happy (and wiser), the committee is happy, I trust our members are happy, which will make the 2004 National Championships a happy occasion. A huge bonus being that many more West Australians have experienced the fun and fellowship of Bush Poetry.

No matter what endeavour is attempted, nothing is ever 100% correct, there may be some out there who are not as happy as others, which is human. We have all learnt something from the experience—hindsight is a good teacher.

One thing that does come to me is that we in the 'real west' must keep to our original charter, to conserve the works of the masters of Australian Rhyming Verse. We must not go too far down the track of smut and laughs for laughs sake (even though we enjoy a laugh) but keep on stimulating the respect, talents and the legacy left by the pioneers of our unique art form.

There is a model for the above in our mate 'Cobber', who has won the ABPA National Written Competition by sticking assiduously to the basics of rhyme and rhythm—he seldom compromises—from all the mob 'CONGRATULATIONS!' Well done, mate.

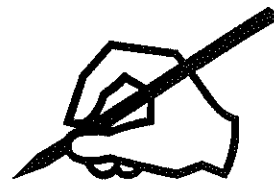
Another of our stalwarts, Beth Scott, has been in the news, receiving recognition for her efforts in raising \$150,000 from her marathon walks—30 for Telethon and 28 for Appealathon—a total of 58 big efforts. Well done, Beth! You and Cobber could start a Walkathon.

In conclusion to all involved, may I simply say 'THANK YOU'.

The Boss Cocky

**Fine eloquence consists in saying all that should be said -
not all that could be.**

Letters to the Editor



The editor

I have received another letter from Val Read (refer page 13) again stressing the importance of correct technical facets of our art form and also the perceived prominence of performance poetry over written poetry.

I think the different points of view have been well covered and I don't think either side have come any closer to agreement.

Maybe it is a challenge to the committee to try to vary our Musters to cater for all styles of Bush Poetry. I know I would prefer to perform at professionally presented evenings, perhaps four nights a year with like minded poets and audience.

Perhaps some members' suggestions here could help the committee, who wish to make this an Association for all members. We also wish to advance all forms of Bush Poetry into the future.

Dear Editor

The Earnest Importance of Rhyme & Rhythm

A response to Val Read's poem in the October Bully Tin.

So Val Read and her gang
would like to have a bang,
And bash at those who stray
and use some slang?
Or if they waver rhyme and meter,
like Phil Strutt and Capp, Peter,
Why? So should this rule be applied to all and one?
Should we regard the use vernacular
as less than, well, spectacular,
Can't they use some simple gimmicks just for fun?
If we say that this fault then is,
like a double fault in tennis-
We should write off C. J. Dennis—he was one!

NB> Replies with a stamped self addressed envelope for a comprehensive list of C. J.'s 'abominations'.

Phil Strutt

Dear Editor

I had the pleasure of becoming a member of WA Bush Poets after attending a bush poets breakfast in Dandaragan earlier this year.

I have since moved to Cooktown in North Queensland and look forward to receiving "The Bully Tin" each month. It is certainly an inspiration and has opened up a whole new world for me.

It just goes to show you are never too old to learn a new skill. Whilst I am unable to attend your functions I just thought I would let you know the enjoyment I get every time I open your newsletter

Dot Smith

(Thanks Dot for the feedback)

Dear Editor

Congratulations on a wonderful competition, the best I have attended. I'll not forget it ever, with it's atmosphere and bonhomie, superb organisation and a magic venue called the "Regal" in the heart of Subiaco—200 Miles from Wattle Grove. Absolutely fabulous!

Yesterday (Mon) I slept on and off (as geriatrics are allowed to do) but memories of Wednesday to Sunday have been flowing freely today so my wife has been enjoying them with me. The judges must have had a difficult task—with seconds and thirds anyway—but were brilliant in their decisions. I had a chat with Dave Proust (who won the Original Humorous) & he told me he was dyslexic & I can't help but feel that our school system needs a good shake-up. The Bush Poetry movement helped to discover this huge talent lying dormant and WA deserves a special round of applause for identifying Dave's wonderful gift & rewarding it appropriately.

As for me, I arrived in Perth measuring 5'2". Today in the mirror I'm 6'2". Many thanks! Attached is a tribute to WA from a grateful participant. In it I've mentioned Leanne Jacobs. Chris Sadler performed the same poem brilliantly.

Warmest best wishes

Dan O'Donnell

Dan came over from Stafford Heights to compete in the National Competition.

The time and effort required to organise this competition was enormous. It is letters like this which make it all worthwhile.

Dan's poem can be read in the Member's Contribution section on page 6.

Australian Bush Poetry Championships

Competition Results

Australian Champion-Male

1st Milton Taylor
 2nd David Proust
 3rd Jim Brown

Original Serious-Male

1st Milton Taylor
 2nd Noel Stallard
 3rd Ron Leikefelt

Original Humorous-Male

1st David Proust
 2nd Noel Stallard
 3rd Peter Capp

Australian Classic-Male

1st Jim Brown
 2nd Noel Stallard
 3rd Milton Taylor

Open Contemporary

1st Milton Taylor
 2nd Rusty Christensen
 3rd Jean Lindley

Open Novice-Original

1st Colin Carrington
 2nd Arthur Leggett

Australian Champion-Female

1st Melanie Hall
 2nd Kerry Lee
 3rd Carol Heuchan

Original Serious-Female

1st Melanie Hall
 2nd Carol Heuchan
 3rd Cathy Edwards

Original Humorous-Female

1st Carol Heuchan
 2nd Melanie Hall
 3rd Kerry Lee

Australian Classic-Female

1st Kerry Lee
 2nd Cathy Edwards
 3rd Melanie Hall

Yarn Spinning

1st Peter Capp
 2nd Melanie Hall
 3rd Milton Taylor

Open Novice-Other's

1st Theresa Proust
 2nd Alex Allitt

Written Competition

1st Keith Lethbridge

"Old Mates"

Highly Commended

Keith Lethbridge "Still Alive"

Donald Crane "The Old Timer"

Dan O'Donnell "Please Don't Waste Your Body Parts"

Brian Langley "Moore River Blues"

Ellis Campbell "Farewell Packhorse Drover"

Keith Lethbridge

A West Aussie Bush Poetry Icon, Keith has few equals as a performer and writer of poems, musician & square dance caller. His poems reflect his experiences in the outback with a deceptively easy flowing style which is the trademark of someone who has mastered this art form. He is a quietly spoken unassuming man with a subtle sense of humour.

Keith is one of the founding members of the WABP&YS Association, formerly of Armadale, and now residing with his family in Halls Creek.

This is Keith's winning poem.....

Old Mate

I've travelled this land from the east to the west,
From the plains to the mountains high,
Down in the gullies where wallabies rest
And out where the brolgas fly.
I've dined in style at the finest pub
That ever unfurled a flag,
But I'm not well suited to fancy grub
And sleep just as well in a swag.

*There's a little bush river that runs to the sea,
And they tell me the yabbies taste great,
By a blazing log fire with a billy of tea,
But not without you, old mate.*

Remember those times when we worked on the road
And the gravel was hotter than Hell?
When I caught the lurgy, you shovelled my load.
Oh yes, I remember it well.
From station to station, from wool-shed to town,
With many a yam and a song,
But when there was only one job to be found,
Then we just kept moving along.

When the money flowed easy, we squandered the lot,
And forgot about taxes and rates.
We didn't keep records of who paid for what;
That's never a problem, with mates.
Remember the time we fell foul of the law,
When sour-belly syrup was sold?
It cost us six days and it could have been more,
But at least we kept out of the cold.

The wages were low and the yakka was hard,
And youth has a reckless pride.
Remember that brawl in the mustering yard?
It was good to have you by my side.
And now that we're older I'm timing my run
To that beautiful pearly gate.
I'll call to Saint Peter: "Don't hurry me son,
I'm waiting for my old mate!"

*There's a little bush river that runs to the sea,
And they tell me the yabbies taste great,
By a blazing log fire with a billy of tea,
But not without you, old mate.
No, not without you, old mate.*



"COBBER"
aka Keith Lethbridge

Member's Contributions

Does

Poetry Make the Heart Grow Stronger?

Yes, reciting epic Greek poetry such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* actually seems to be good for the heart—at least according to a new study by a team of European researchers.

It all has to do with breathing patterns and their relationship to cardiac rhythms. It turns out that reciting poetry—especially verse like Homer's that follows a specific rhythm called hexameter—makes an excellent breathing exercise. The authors of the study taught healthy volunteers to recite passages from Homer while walking and lifting their arms with each breath. The result was an increase in the synchronization of certain cardiorespiratory patterns that are believed to be favourable to the long-term prognosis of cardiac patients. There was less of this synchronization with controlled-breathing exercises alone and almost none during normal, spontaneous breathing.

Whether or not you like the poetry probably doesn't matter.

By David Bjerklie

Submitted by Wendy Evans.

into his servant's bedroom.



I'm Gunna Do Whatever It Takes

Bush Verse is not easy. It's no lark at all I find.
And competing in the contests is a testing, bloody grind.
For some it looks so easy. They do it with great flair
But for me it is quite different and I'm tearin' out me hair.
Me mouth goes dry, I'm in a spin for every bloody bit,
An' the Judges then downgrade me as a useless bit of ..garbage!
But I have just discovered a hitherto unknown factor:
I have a hidden talent as an undiscovered actor.
Recently in Double-You-Ay, in October Oh-Oh-Four,
A lot of people coming out of the stately Regal door
Saw me with Milton's trophy. I was watching it for him
And if anyone had threatened it I'd have torn 'em limb from limb!
I held the trophy proudly like a soldier, airman, sailor
When the crowd all grew excited: "Look! There's Milton Taylor!"
They thought I was the champion with my looks and fine physique,
So I'm giv'in up all worries about my second-rate technique.
From now on I am Milton in every poet-town'
Or Johnny Best, or Stallard, Noel—any poet of renown!
No more for me the agony, the worry and the fret,
I'm gunna be Frank Daniels or Ronnie Liekefett.
Oh, I'll learn me lines and all that stuff but from woes I will be free
As I let the world just think that I am Rod or Kerry Lee.

I'll learn to ride a bicycle—that's not a difficult feat—
And pretend that I am Melanie and do her "Peddlin' Pete!"
I love the work of Carol—Carol Heuchan is her name—
So I'm reading up on horses and all the Racin' Game
An' no one'll ever notice—provided I do not quiver—
That it's me and not Ms Heuchan with "The Man From Snowy River."
An' no one'll give a bloody stuff whether I'm a Bolshevik,
A Marxist, taxidemist or plain ventriloquist,
If I dress up just like that John O'Brien, and that is now my goal
To fool the people into thinking' I'm Mr. Stallard, Noel.
I'm also doing stretchin' ' cos I'm just five-foot two
An' to make me slightly taller, there's a lot of work to do
'cos I wanna be like Big John Best, an' fell the way he feels
So I'm doin' lots of stretchin' and I'm wearing big high heels.
I'm studyin' up on Elder's, an' wearin' a pretty frock
And tryin' hard to walk and talk just like Leanne Jeacocke.
I know I'll win some trophies and get me share of fame,
But I'm gunna have to do it under someone els's name!

**Dan (aka Milton, Frank, Noel, John, Rod & Kerry, etc.)
O'Donnell**

October Monthly Muster

Congratulations to Val Read with the launching of her new book. She has a right to be proud of it—both for presentation & content. The poem she shared with us from the latest book, reflects the quality of her penmanship.

We were treated to a great variety of poets and poetry. Tony Frew made his first appearance with an original work. Hope to see you back, Tony. It was also Mary's first time and she gave a very creditable performance, even though the mike went limp on her.

Rosemary is now becoming a regular at the mike and always has us laughing along with her. As did Trish with her naughty poems and Hadley with his romantic one. I always enjoy listening to Rosa, and Margaret certainly livened the night up with her props and poetry.

Brian Langley and Bob Philpot shared a variety of their poems with us. My toes are still curled at the thoughts of going barefoot in the chook pen, Bob!

John Hayes gave us an interesting history lesson with his poem "Digger's Rest" and the "widow maker" drill.

And Rusty, Rod and Kerry filled in the rest of the evening.

Many thanks to Barry for being our MC for the evening. And a HUGE thanks to Judith, from Darwin, for drawing my ticket out in the raffle for the patchwork quilt! I fell in love with it when I brought it back from Tamworth after Carol Reaffold donated it to us as a fundraiser for the National Championships. Finally, after eight months it now adores our bed.

The name badges are a great inclusion and our thanks go to Brian for producing them. It is a terrific way to identify members and to get to know each other. They also save sieve heads like me who can't remember names from acute embarrassment

Rusty presented the "Three D's" for performing poetry—determination, dedication and discipline to learn poems and recite well. While it is wonderful to see the enthusiasm with which people are presenting their poems it is a courtesy to other performers not to take more than five or six minutes at the mike to ensure everyone has a turn. The rotation will continue until the evening runs out of poets, poems and time so you generally have several turns at the mike..

Thanks to everyone for a wonderful night.

November Monthly Muster

With the dust still settling after the National Championships it was business as usual for WABP & YS. We were privileged to have some of the Eastern Staters join us, Col Carrington from Victoria and the Jacksons from Charters Towers, Queensland. Harold & Dawn are hosting the Nationals next year in April. We wish them well in this venture.

Rod started the evening by presenting medals to those who put in extra effort before and during the week of the Nationals. I hope they treasure these mementos as a token of a job well done.

Rod kicked off the night with one of Keith Lethbridge's poems which was appropriate with Keith winning the National Written Competition. Congratulations, Keith!

Col was entertaining with his rendition of "The Smiths" by "Dry Blower" Murphy. I hadn't heard of this poet until recently when I was given some old poetry books at a Seniors presentation. One book had a collection of his poems. Later Col recited Ellis Campbell's "As Luck Would Have It". As we could hear from his presentations Col was a worthy winner of the Novice Original. Then Harold also gave us some poems not previously performed at our Musters—"The Little Boy's Dilemma" and George Crawley's "Hello Baby Joe".

To add further interest to the night Beryl read her t-towel from the Daley Waters Pub and Trish broke into song, with a very sweet voice, as well as reciting one of her trade-mark naughty poems. The poets never fail to surprise us!

Rosemary was back with her giggles and smiles reciting more Pam Ayres, Ron did an admirable job of "Salt Bush Bill's First Fight" and David Seares recited the clever poem "The Cremation of Sam McGee".

Bob Philpot gave us some humorous original works, Rod some of his own works plus Don Lloyd's "Teddy Bear" - a beautiful moving poem, I spruiked a few and John Hayes shared a few of his poems and finished the evening with Henry Lawsons' "103".

It was decided to have a small Christmas party before the December Muster, starting at 7pm—everyone to bring a plate. Should be fun.

Kerry

READ THIS!!!

IT'S ALL SO OVIBUOS

Aoccdrnig to rscheearch at an Elingsh uinervtisy, it doesn't mttar in what order the ltteers in a word are, the only iprmoetnt thing is that frist and lsat ltteer is at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a total mses and you can still raed it wouthit porbelm. This is bcuseae we do not raed ervey lteter by istlef but the wrod as a wlohe.

Johnathan Powell

No wonder editors have so many problems with proofreading!

Way outback of Perth

My first instincts have just been confirmed –people who own donkeys are different, and slightly mad. I can safely express this opinion as I have just now officially joined their ranks, thanks to Elmo, our little donkey.



"Bridle Trails perfect venue for next ride/drive/walk" read the article in the latest "Donkey News & Do's" - new members welcome. As Elmo hadn't seen another donkey in over a year I committed (???) us both.

Sunday morning saw Rod and I, along with two lovely obliging ladies from the Donkey Society hauling and pulling one very reluctant donkey into the

float. Eventually brute force and peppermint treats won over donkey stubbornness (he's not a very large boy), the ramp was quickly bolted shut and away we went with just a pair of pale ears visible above the sides of the float.

Elmo wasn't frightened, just not sure if this was how he wanted to spend his Sunday morning. His mood changed dramatically once he met his new friends and he trotted happily along with the group. My mood changed dramatically too, about 5 kilometres into the WALK as my gait gradually lost its' bounce and became more of a drag! And this is when I seriously started to question my sanity. Why was I voluntarily out walking in 35 degree heat when I could have been relaxing at home? Then I looked around at the happy chatty group and the little herd of donkeys in all shapes, colours and sizes and I knew why—it was fun! There is something very special and endearing about a donkey and the people who love them.

Mind you, I now have a strong desire now to finish Elmo's harness training. I intend enjoying next outing perched up in his little cart with Elmo doing all the walking!

Kerry

A Walk With The Masters

Eureka Stockade

"Eureka lives in our democracy, our union & civil rights
Our National Independence"

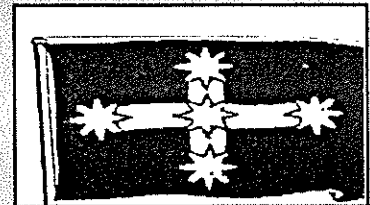
Peter Lalor

Eureka lives as a red thread through the story of our democracy, our civil & union rights, our national independence.

It represented the struggle by the gold miners in Victoria in the 1850's against paying a licence fee of 2 to 3 pounds per month, against taxation without representation then grew into a demand for votes for all.

The long struggle culminated in the Eureka Stockade at Ballarat on 3rd December, 1854 & the government was forced to give the vote to all men. Coincidentally, this is also the date of our December Muster.

It is now accepted as a symbol of republicanism and national Independence.



A Ballad of Eureka

Stand up, my young Australian,
In the brave light of the sun,
And hear how freedoms' battle
Was in old days lost and won.
The blood burns in my veins, boy,
As it did in years of yore,
Remembering Eureka,
And the men of 'Fifty-four.

The Tyrants of the Goldfields
Would not let us live in peace;
They harried us and chased us
With their horse and foot police.
Each man must show his licence
When they chose, by fits and starts..
They tried to break our spirits,
And they almost broke our hearts.

There comes a time to all men
When submission is a sin;
We made a bon fire brave, and
Flung our licences there in.
Our hearts with scorn and anger
Burnt more fiercely than the flame,
Full well we knew our peril
But we dared it all the same

On Bakery Hill the Banner
Of the Southern Cross flew free.
Then up rose Peter Lalor,
And with lifted hand spake he:-
"We swear by God above us,
While we live, to work and fight
For freedom and for justice,
And our Manhood and our Right."

Then on the bare earth kneeling,
As on a chapel-floor,
Beneath the sacred Banner,
One and all, that oath we swore:
And some of those who swore it
Were like straws upon a flood,
But there were men who swore it
And who sealed it with their blood.

I said, my young Australian,
That the fight was lost—and won
But, oh, our hearts were heavy
At the setting of the sun.
Yet, ere the year was over,
Freedom rolled in like a flood:
They gave us all we asked for—
When we asked for it in blood.

The bitter fight was ended,
And, with cruel coward-lust,
They dragged our sacred Banner
Through the Stockades bloody dust.
But, patient as the gods are,
Justice counts the years and waits—
That Banner now waves proudly
Over Six Australian States.

God rest you, Peter Lalor,
For you were a white man whole;
A sword blade in the sunlight
Was your bright and gallant soul.
And God reward you kindly,
Father Smith, alive or dead:
Twas you that gave him shelter
When a price was on his head.

Within the Golden City
In the place of peace profound
The Heroes sleep. Tread softly:
T'is Australia's Holy Ground.
And ever more Australia
Will keep green in her heart's core
The memory of Lalor
And the men of "Fifty-four".

Victor J Daley (1858—1905)

He came to Australia at the age of 20 doing clerical and journalistic work in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Queanbeyan and Grafton where he lived with other noted poet, E J Brady. He died at a young age of tuberculosis.

The above is the condensed version of his "Ballad of Eureka".

Charles Thatcher (1831-78)

A witty and well educated Englishman, he arrived in Melbourne in November 1852. He soon discovered he could make more money singing, writing and entertaining in the Goldfields at Ballarat and Bendigo than digging for gold. He is best known for his convict ballad "Botany Bay" (*Farewell to old England for ever...*)

His work, *Captain Bumble's Letter*, jeers satirically at the victorious but unpopular soldiers who put down the Eureka uprising.

Captain Bumble's Letter

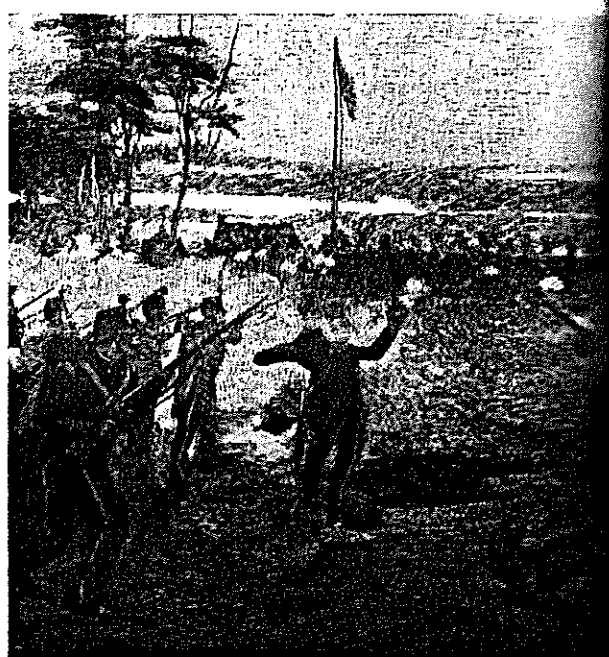
Don't talk about Sebastopal,
The Russian War is flat now,
Just listen to despatches
Just come from Ballarat now.
Our noble Governor, Sir Charles,
And where is there a better,
Has permitted us to publish
Captain Bumble's private letter.

He writes thus to His Excellency,
"Myself and Major Stiggins
Got our brave fellows all equipped
And started for the diggings.
Our band struck up God Save the Queen,
Into cheers our men were bursting,
And every gallant soldier was
For glorious action bursting.

"Our first attack was on two drays
Which we saw in the distance,
But the enemy surrendered
After just a slight resistance.
We were disappointed in our search
Of these two wretched traitors,
For instead of seizing powder
It was loaded with potatoes.

"We marched but were obliged to halt
On behalf of Sergeant Trunnions,
Who was unable to proceed
On account of having bunions.
We stationed pickets all around
To give us timely warning
And there we bivouacked and slept
Till nine the following morning.

"At length into the diggings,
Foot sore our men did tramp there,
And we took up our position
Within the Gov'ment camp there:
Provisions were served out to all
And my very soul it tickles
To contemplate their ravages
On the cold boiled beef and pickles.



"We watched at night, but all was still:
For glory we were yearning,
And we fired upon a tent in which
A candle was seen burning.
We killed a woman and a child
Though twas not our intention;
But that slight mistake occurred
Of course I needn't mention.

"At length in earnest was the strife:
While buried in their slumbers
We made a bold and desperate charge
And cut them down in numbers.
Our gallant fellow fought like bricks,
The rebels were defeated,
And then by hundreds off they ran
And to the bush retreated.

"Thus all is quiet and I now
Subscribe myself your humble
Devoted servant of the Crown
Frederick Augustus Bumble.

Postscript

Pray send us up some good cheroots
And anything that's handy
And by all means, pray don't forget
We're nearly out of brandy."

Charles Thatcher

Junior Poetry Section

Applecross High School

Congratulations to the students from Applecross High School & their teacher, V Lake. They were the only entrants in the Junior Written Competition & Katie Rifici & Cameron Barnes performed brilliantly at the Regal Theatre

A Stricken Plain

Searing heat and dry parched earth, baked hard from a relentless sun.
Leaves crunching, curling, crackling as heavy footsteps come.
Feet stop still as the farmer stands and squints at the horizon
A barren, red, dusty sea, dirt caving in then rising.

By the dried up dam, the shrivelled sand, the desperate cattle stand,
Flicking flies and nibbling grass, stray wisps about the sand.
He grimly readjusts his hat, a futile barrier from the heat,
Fingering his rifle ruefully, he starts ahead, dragging his feet.

Glazed eyes search the split clay, a child's unfinished jigsaw puzzle,
Ridged like bark and dry as bone, the helpless land was sure in trouble.
After months of endurance, hunger, thirst and strain, a sudden shot rips the air.
Painful life brought to a painless end: it really was too much to bear.

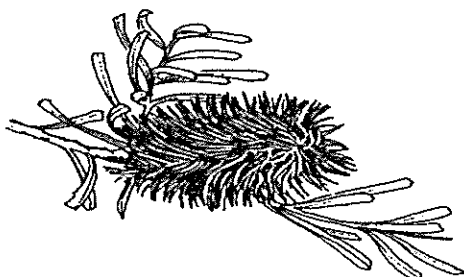
Fighting back tears and oozing with sweat, withering beneath a scorching sun,
It was all part of a farmer's job, there was no other choice: it had to be done.
Up in the shed, past a rickety fence, deteriorated, dejected, splintered wood,
Leaning outwards listlessly, rusted bolts supporting as best they could.

Stained tin laps up the heat, thick heavy air, a struggle to breathe,
Far in the corner, six empty barrels that'd always overflowed with feed.
A plough, tractor, seed dispenser, abandoned over a long, useless, draining season.
Ditching the gun and collapsing down, the farmer prays for rain and tries to reason.

Through the door, a colourless painting, boxed in by a wooden picture frame.
Red, the last, lonely tube of paint, splashed over canvas, brushstrokes untamed.
A fuzzy line blends ground and sky, the earth steaming, sizzling in the heat.
The vast, glaring, tremulous plain, a dreadful image of defeat.

Could this struggle go on much longer? Until there was nothing left worth fighting for?
How many weeks? How many months? Would it be a year? Maybe more?
When would sweet smelling droplets fall again, the rooftop sag beneath the rain?
When would the gods next have a brawl, relieving this dire, pitied, stricken plain?

Kate Rifici ©



Pretty in Pink

All these tears that I have cried
This fear I bear it like false pride
Now my joy's been crucified
there's nowhere left for me to hide.

I hear now what the shadows say
I'm filling my warm bath today.
They speak of hunting me as prey.
I'm sick of the games that they play.

I cannot count the times I've tried
To take my life to end the lies
To shut my ears when they deride
I swallow glass to bleed inside.

They whispered that I'd die today
My mind is a dishwater grey
In destiny I have no say
In my left hand is gleaming blade.

Lying here, looking at the roof
I searched my life, searched for proof
Searched for a sign that this was truth
Instead I'll end my life in youth.

Popping white pills to ease the pain
Here lies I, quietly insane
Two quick slashes end they reign
And my soul swirls down unplugged drain.

I wonder who'll find my little cesspool
Maybe one of those girls that's "cool"
Pretty in pink, like Sunday School
I show them now, who is the fool.

Before I had a chance to bloom
I had decided I was doomed
Warm and bloody in this fake womb
When will it end, end the gloom?

My autopsy behind the screen
Reveals a life 'twas never seen
From crack to coke and in between
I can't remember where I've been.

This is the life that I've abhorred
Within myself I've sown discord
My subconscious, unexplored
Blood that should have never poured.

On the 'net I found my friends
Vampire Freaks brought me the end
To them, the blame I'll surely send
They took me to my wit's frayed end.

Griffin Jagoe

Red Dog

Across the West Australian Plains he travelled far and wide,
From town to town, upward and down and still he never tired.
His spirit took him places never seen before by man.
He gather friends from all around while on and on he ran.
Never still, he always raced to where—nobody knew.
Those secrets were kept to himself, Red Dog from Paraburadoo.

It all began one summers day, beneath the Pilbara sky,
A puppy born descendant of the dogs in Scotland high.
Too soon he bored of family life and broke loose seeking yonder.
His yearning for excitement left no place to far to wander.
The dark red earth became his home, enough to see him through
A companion of the desert was Red Dog from Paraburadoo.

Red built up a reputation in the years after he left.
His appetite the cause of many counts of petty theft.
Jumping out in front of cars he knew to hitch a ride
And his habits after meals which proved rather undignified.
But despite his less appealing traits, he was brave and true,
A capturer of many hearts; Red Dog from Paraburadoo.

Prepared for an adventure, Red Dog went walkabout
To a place down south he'd heard the locals talk about.
Perth was quite nice, he first thought, with its pines and sandy beaches
But it lacked the life that gave his home its rough and friendly features.
So away from busy street lights and the ambient human zoo,
Red turned away to head back to his place in Paraburadoo.

In Dampier he found good friends amid the mining bunch,
Who always had a bite to eat left over from their lunch.
To them he was a mate who never roughed 'em up or swore
And they, to him, great playmates who were loyal to the core.
Such was his place amongst the men, his Hamersley Iron crew
They arranged a bank account for Red Dog from Paraburadoo.

Red belonged to no one but himself for all that time,
So as soon as he met John his canine hopes began to climb.
The Hamersley bus driver got to know the dog by heart,
And adopted Red to be his own, best buddies from the start.
"Dog is man best friend" they say; and how its oh so true,
For John and Red Dog were as one, the pair from Paraburadoo.

John had bought a motor bike and rode it on that night
When the velvet light did cloak the desert moon's shadowy light.
Hurling down the road he never made it past the bend
And here beneath the silver gums John's story does now end.
Red never knew where John had gone or why he'd left so soon
But it left a hole within the heart of Red from Paraburadoo.

Now John was gone Red chose again to travel the outback
Though he would have given anything to have his master back.
More than one adventure saw him in a dire straight
But the worst came when he was taken by deadly dingo bait.
His essence slowly drained away and out the window flew
The last journey was a bad one for Red Dog from Paraburadoo.

Cloaked with rusted desert earth a ghost of outback land
His trusty paws did carry him through scrub and o'er sand.
'Neath scorching sun and clear blue sky he roamed the land so far
Searching for a man whose absence left him with a scar.
So now he lies in peace although his spirit is renewed.
Your legend lives on by and by, Red Dog from Paraburadoo.

Holly Watson-Reeves

Nan

The daybreak brought along the call of the bird.
It seemed that the sun would shine.
But the breathing of a killer couldn't be heard
Nor would the day remain so fine.

His crafty eyes seemed strangely hazy
As he cut his hair, layer upon layer
His movements ever so lazy
While many others sang their prayer.

His dirty hands picked up a virgin gun.
The black rubber of its handle his hands gripped.
The smirk on his face thought it was fun
That the hearts of many others be ripped.

Striding he became increasingly inflamed.
A look of certain malice on his face.
He was very eager to complete his mission.
Eager to complete his one man race.

Walking up to Nan he pointed the gun at her head.
"BANG!" The sound drowned my heart beat.
Cries echoed a tone of dread.
Sweaty palms of mine blamed the heat.

Ten minutes later I just sat
For the killer had butchered so many.
All left of Nan was her pink hat.
The killer had lost his sanity.

I could catch the stench
Of his dirt, and of others, their blood.
His laughter circled my mind
While emotions came out in a flood.

My cheeks felt so very cold
Cold, as cold as "his"-killers fury.
My body began to feel weary and old.
He had become his own judge and jury.

The pink hat was the only relief for my frustration
He had done what I never knew one can.
The colour of the hat was the colour of her cheeks
The colour of the cheeks of Nan.

Deeksha Keul

The Heat wave from Hell

An Australian Story by Cameron Barnes based on the 1939 Heat wave on Black Friday and bushfires that followed.

'Twas early on Black Friday when I went for my morning walk,
And when the sun had risen, the birds began to squawk!
I wondered why they made such noise, until I felt the heat,
It was the hottest morning and I thought it was a treat.
I walked and walked till half past eight, until inside my head,
I thought if day got hotter, than I could be nearly dead!

The return was like a sauna, as I really began to fret,
My legs were really tired and my eyes were full of sweat.
Lethargically I carried on to try and find some shade,
And as I sat beneath a tree, the heat began to fade.
I was so very tired that I crumbled in a heap,
Before I even knew it I had drifted off to sleep.

A siren blared from up above, as I was then awoken,
I reached to get a drink and found, my water flask had broken!
I walked out in the dazzling heat to find the blaring sound,
When suddenly a fire engine pulled up on the ground!
A passenger instructed me to enter in the rear,
I had been saved from certain death with nothing but all to fear!

As I was driven back to my house, I was warned to stay in the cool,
But when I got back inside I found, I was a stupid fool!
The power was down, the fridge was off, the fans just wouldn't work,
My house was like an oven and my head had gone berserk.
Despondently I realised, I was not saved at all,
For everyone else was safe inside the local bathing hall!

As I waited in the heat I wondered what to do,
When instantly, inside my head I knew just what to do.
I went into my bathroom, and had a nice cold bath,
But surprisingly, outside I heard a BANG from down the path.
I leaped up from the bathtub, and went outside to see,
A seething mass of red-hot flames devouring my tree!

(Continued page 13)

Heat Wave From Hell (continued from page 12)

The fire was gargantuan, and I was now its prey,
The flames shot out at everything in a terrifying display
I watched in utter horror, as cats and dogs were killed,
This fire was a monster and its hunger was not filled!
Thankfully I remembered myself in a wet, sodden towel,
I knew I must find help at once so I began to howl.

I yelled and yelled with all my might, but I had not a chance,
The fire reared up hurriedly and on me, it began to advance.
All hell broke loose as the deadly beast rained down its might on me.
The count of beasts was suddenly, not one, not two, but three!
Hot, burnt and deep in hell, I tried to get away,
But the beast was just too powerful, and I was roasted prey.

My vision swam with turbulence; my wretched throat was baked,
My life was almost over and inside, my heart truly ached.
Nothing had prepared me for such a hellish day,
And now my happy brilliant life had ended in dismay.
Oh beast, oh beast, oh wicked beast, my efforts were in vain,
For now you have destroyed me and my head is full of pain.

Seventy-one souls perished, in those hot two weeks of fire,
Yet the death toll for the heat wave, was somehow even higher.
The heat was just a murderer, with more than four hundred
killed,
And yet in all their suffering, no blood at all was spilled.
Imagine being in the depths of hell, before you were deceased,
So spare a thought for the people that were killed by nature's
beast.

Cameron Barnes

Letters to the Editor (continued from page 3)

Dear Editor

Every time I receive our newsletter, I resolve not to write again about the debate we've been having over the past months regarding writing and recitation poets, then The Boss Cocky writes that fourth paragraph in his "Droppings from the Boss Cocky" in the October issue, that started the steam hissing out of my ears.

"There are three types of poets. The many anonymous ones whose work never sees the light of day, performance poets, who select good writers' work, commits it to memory and performs it for the audience, and there are the real talents who write and present—NOT READ—their work. Good poetry and performance go together."

Western Australia is missing out on a lot of wonderful Australian Bush Poetry because there are many writers whose talent does not extend to memorising and reciting their work, therefore it never sees the light of day because they are not encouraged to read at our monthly gatherings which, being of a social nature, should not be so restrictive. How many times do we have performance poets stopping in the middle of a recitation to delve into their pockets for their hard copy because they have forgotten their lines? This happens at every meeting. So I ask, what is the difference between a reciter muffing their lines, and a writer reading their work clearly and distinctly though not as actively? If the podium was put beside the microphone, reciters and readers may be able to perform more professionally without having to juggle or search for sheets of paper.

We have very few reciters who can recite without hesitation and who have quite a repertoire. Most have a limited number of poems that they recite at every venue. A writer, on the other hand, can present something new every week. Both should be respected, allowed and encouraged to present their work to the audience in the way they are most comfortable with. Writers fully understand that reading is not on in oral competition.

It is very disappointing to see that the written competition was given even less promotion than in 2003, whereas the reciters were given the red

carpet treatment, and that's not fair. Over the past months the written competition has not been mentioned in The Bully Tin, whereas reciters have had extensive coverage. An entry form should have been provided in earlier newsletters. Although writers receive a monetary prize, they miss out when the trophies are presented. Written competitions must be judged by people who are fully conversant with the construction of poetry.

The content of the poetry and yarns should be verbally checked before they are recited, and the reciter told to observe propriety. There are some presenters who still persist in performing poetry that has smutty content, and who denigrate efforts to keep it out of our poetry. It is obvious by the audience reaction to some work that it is not appreciated.

We have to make up our mind if we want to be a creditable organisation promoting dinky-di Aussie poetry, or promote a "Kevin 'Bloody' Wilson mentality which is insidiously creeping into a lot of the work of Eastern States reciters and writers. Most of us accept 'naughty' quite happily but vulgarity does no credit to the presenter or the listener. It does not belong in Western Australian Bush Poetry.

And last but not least, I urge poets to make sure their work has been perfected before sending their work to be published. I had a small book of Australian poetry published some years ago that still haunts me to-day because I had never learnt the art of rhyme, Rhythm and meter. The Poet's Manual and Rhyming Dictionary by Thames & Hudson is a great help to aspiring poets. It is very educational and easy to read.

There are some who do not agree with my persistence that our Australian poetry be protected from insurgents who are sabotaging poetry that should not only entertain us, but teach our unique traditions and humour. One should be able to recite it to all sex and ages, and in all venues from schoolrooms to nursing homes without causing discomfort.

V.P.Read

I would not normally reply to 'Letters to the Editor' but just wanted to comment on a few issues raised by Val.

Firstly, the club has been a "performance based club" since its inception. I found this hugely daunting at first, as many do, but pushing myself to learn poems and confront the mike has given me great personal development. Referring to hard copy and fumbling lines is all part of this learning process and, therefore, should not be criticised. There was a period when "reading" dominated the nights and membership dropped off. That was when it was discouraged. It would be hard to deny the club is successful in its present format but maybe other formats could be introduced?

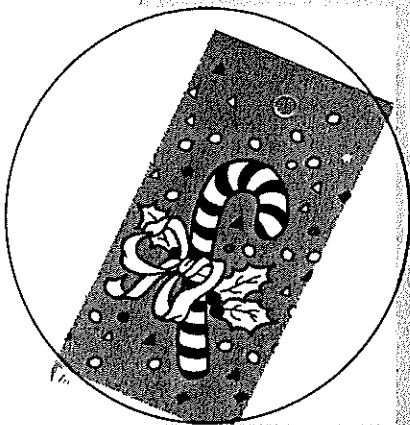
Val does raise some good points. Ideally we too would have liked the entry forms available sooner. Perhaps as a club member and interested party you could have brought this to our attention at the time? I welcome help and advice. We try to cater for all poets with the Musters and the Bully Tin and to make both as entertaining and interesting as possible. Feedback from members is needed to do this—so more thoughts, ideas and comments in the

Letters to the Editor please!

Kery

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Christmas Party

December Monthly Muster -
don't forget to come early
for a Christmas Gathering.
Bring a plate & your Christmas Spirit.
Evening starts at 7.00pm

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