

The Bully Tin



January, 2005

& Yarn Spinners

Monthly Muster at the Como Bowling & Recreation Club cnr Hensman & Sandgate Sts, South Perth
Next meeting: Friday 7th January, 2005 at 7.00pm for 7.30pm start.



The 'Bully'



It was known as the 'Bushman's Bible'. *The Bulletin*, launched in Sydney in 1880 as a weekly journal of news, opinion and literature, was read by all classes but especially by country people who enjoyed its irreverent style, mockery of silvertails, satirical cartoons and rollicking bush verses and stories. It was first published by a Scot names Trail who three years later sold it to a syndicate including J.E. Archibald, a journalist who was bitterly Anglophobe, deeply Francophile and passionately nationalistic.

When A.G. Stephens joined him in 1894 and founded the 'Red Page', which featured book reviews and readers' contributions, the 'Bully' became a platform for some of the country's best writers. The journal welcomed verse by gifted amateurs and gave rebirth to the bush ballad tradition that was thought to have died with Adam Lindsay Gordon's suicide in 1870.

It published the poems and stories of Barcroft Boake (who also suicided), Paterson, Henry Lawson, 'Breaker' Morant, Joseph Furphy, Mary Gilmore, Miles Franklin, Shaw Neilson, Hugh McCrae, among others.

Equally outstanding were its illustrators, starting with the American, Livingston Hopkins ('Hop') and the Englishman, Phil May and progressing to George Lambert, Norman Lindsay, the Dysons, David Low and Percy Leason. The best of these tal-

ents were published in book form by a canny Scot, George Robertson of Angus & Robertson, and became the bedrock of Australian literature.

Archibald had a nervous breakdown and spent time in Callan Park lunatic asylum (now, ironically, a writers' centre funded by the New South Wales government). 'A.G.' as Stephens was called, left the *Bulletin* in 1906 to open a bookshop (it failed and his stock was auctioned off), went to New Zealand as a last resort, and then founded a journal in Sydney, the *Bookfellow*.

Slow to adapt to changing times, the *Bulletin* barely changed in format (or attitudes) until 1960 when it was bought and converted by its new owners into a smart weekly newsmagazine similar to *Time*, in which form it survives to this day.

[Extract from 'The Great Treasury of Australian Folklore' compiled by A.K. Macdougall]

Footnote: For the curious Rod chose the name "Bully Tin" for your magazine when we first took over producing it because it tied in with *The Bulletin* and that essential piece of outback equipment, the billy tin.

Droppings from "The Boss Cocky"

Bush Poetry



My!~ How time flies when you are having fun. Well! 2004 flew and members of our association had fun—with bush poetry—which is what its all about, enjoying, meeting and greeting like minded people whenever there is some kind of Poet's muster.

The year 2004 saw the successful National Championships in the Regal Theatre in downtown Subiaco, our first State Championships at the Fremantle Arts Centre, Boyup Brook in February, where over 500 keen supporters turned up for brekky, Derby (300), Halls Creek, Wireless Hill, the Rawlinna Muster, Royal Show, plus shows at Diggers Camp and all the other venues where our performing members are in demand which proves

that people are having fun with Bush Poetry.

From the ground swell that started in the 90's, there is now a wave of enthusiasm for our unique Australian art form which we must catch and enjoy the ride together. The Monthly Musters will fluctuate between good and not so good—depending—but lets not forget that the main ingredient is to ENJOY—as an old quote goes "If you are not enjoying yourself, what are you doing here?" (unquote)

Keep glistening, listening, writin' and recitin' and....
Have a great New Year!

The Boss Cocky

Refer Bill's letter "Letters to the Editor" page 3

Bush Poetry

I've supped billy tea with Johnny cakes,
I've camped out in the scrub,
Worked with sheep and cattle,
Brawled with drovers at the pub.
I have read the works of Banjo
And of Henry and his type
But when I joined this bloody club
Was shocked at all the hype!

According to the 'Bully Tin'
And droppings of 'the Boss'
The Masters' works must be repeated
Or it will be our loss.
We new chums need to recitate
Not read the work we've done
But my glasses cost a fortune
And my memory costs none.

So that is why I'll come no more
And waste my precious time.
I can stay at home and read
And make the Masters mine;
Or I can go back to the bush
And live a life that's free-
Read my poems when I want
Beneath a boab tree.



Many Thanks to Lorraine Johnston

For her generous donation of 2 reams of
paper for the magazine.

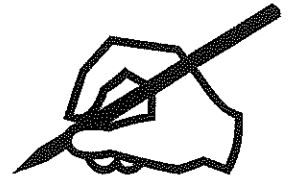


Sorry I forgot to mention it in the last
Bully Tin!

Bill Elkes ©

Please don't
leave us
Bill!

Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor

I attended this meeting (Dec) and brought a friend from Mundijong with me. One cannot let this meeting pass without comment. It was very disappointing.

My feeling is that the group has lost its way. The performance was way below standard. People had not rehearsed, lines were forgotten. Others did not know what they would recite and to add to it all the "Twelve Nights of Christmas" was 'dished up' again. Was this the fourth meeting in a row that it had been performed?

Where has all that lovely poetry from the Pioneers gone? Can one better it? In my opinion the meetings could be planned a little more orderly if one wants to keep one's membership, for as the standard declines so will the membership.

Three very easy steps should be taken -

1. The content for the twelve meetings of the year could be planned in advance. There is enough Bush Poetry in "The Australian Heritage of Verse" & "The Illustrated Treasury of Australian Verse" to plan ahead for several years. Then-
2. Perhaps four meetings each year could be totally set aside for "current writers' readings and recitals. This would give the 'budding' Bush Poets an opportunity to write, prepare, have their work edited, listed by the committee and ready for recital on the nights provided.
3. Read the poems! Instead of endeavouring to remember—especially 'seniors' like myself who have difficulty remembering what happened yesterday—would it be better to have several members read the poems aloud? Leonard Teal, for instance, read the poems aloud and with feeling. He could hold a TV audience. Why not the Perth Bush Poets?

The standard of content has been slowly deteriorating over the last four months, December being the worst!

It is time to take a good look in which direction this group is heading.

- (a) Are we keeping alive our Heritage and creating interest in our early Bush Poets? Or
- (b) Are we interested in only reciting our own poems and projecting our own image?

Whatever the answer, it is time to make an assessment, make a decision and forcefully carry it through.

Sincerely
C Bymes

Dear Editor

Re: Our telephone conversation on Sunday evening 12th December 2004.

Please find enclosed a copy of the verse that I read to you.

An inability to learn my own poetry so that I may perform in front of an audience has been the reason for writing the enclosed verse. I find that I am unable to commit to memory probably due to many varied reasons, one of them being that I am still in the process of creating and am not able to do both things at once.

I hope that you will see the less serious side of this poem and hope that it does not offend anyone. I wrote it with tongue firmly in cheek on the day that I received the 'Bully Tin'.

Yours sincerely
Bill Elkes

Bill's poem can be read on page 2

Dear Editor

In response to Val Read's letter and whether to read or recite poetry. I am an audience participator who comes each month to hear the wonderful poetry of Australia.

As whether to read or not to read that is the question.

Now I am a good reader and a story teller. I think I can read well and with expression, but nothing is as good or well done as looking people in the eye and telling them a tale or yarn or a poem from the heart.

From my observation the poetry learnt off by heart is so much more eloquently presented with expression and animation and feeling that one is in awe of the dedication, drive and discipline of the presenter.

That is what we come to see and hear. Keep up the good work you clever lot.

I bought one of Val's books and am trying to learn a poem. Who knows, by the time I am as old as Rusty or Arthur I may have achieved my goal—to learn it, to remember it, and have said it more than 80 times off by heart as Rusty says, then present it.

Sorry Val. Some are writers and so good at that, some are readers, some are listeners, but only those who memorise should recite the poetry on Bush Poets' Night on 1st Friday of the month. It is their night. We readers, listeners and writers must give credit where credit is due and be thankful for each of the talents that we are given.

Keep up the good work.

Grace Williamson

Retiring Editor Replies

Over the past month we have received some very good letters from members. While these letters are not fully supportive of the club and its current direction, it shows that members are thinking and are passionate enough to put pen to paper. Bravo! All this well thought out comment can only lead to a much better club for all. This is not just the Boss Cocky's Club or the Performance Poets Club or the Old Members Club. It is a club for all who have a passion for Bush Poetry. This includes Heritage, performance, writing (technical or non-technical) and audience support.

The best way to support your club is to participate. Come to the Musters, encourage performers, be open with your compliments or criticisms. If you can't make the Musters drop a line to the Bully Tin. Maybe you have a new poem or some ideas to make the magazine better.

Finally, in response to Jean's letter regarding standards at the Musters. The committee will address this letter in full but I would just like to say something to performers. Once you get behind that microphone you are an entertainer and the most important thing to an entertainer is the audience—without them you have nothing! So treat them with respect and be fully prepared. You are there for them, not for you!

Rod

Letters, articles & other submissions can be sent to:

The Bully Tin
160 Blair Road
Oakford WA 6121

December Monthly Muster

The Muster started a little earlier than usual so we could enjoy a hearty supper at the half time break. The table was loaded with food so thanks to all who contributed. It sure got us all into the Christmas Spirit.

John Hayes was roped into the MC job, as the committee was a bit short on numbers. But John is a trouper and most capable, as expected. He started the evening with "In the Droving Days", always a popular one, and recited one of his own about his Dad. Good stuff.

Rusty was up next, told a few jokes then gave us a great rendition of "Sweeney", a Henry Lawson classic.

Brian Langley, who never misses an opportunity to grab the mike now that he has got the 'hang of it' told us about his "Summer Days" and it was a **short one!** Then he brought the house down dressed in 'girly pig-tails' and told us about the scary perils of 'Going Camping', in a high girlish voice.

It was great to see Beth Scott again after a short absence. Obviously she has now recovered from her marathon walk! She had, however, still managed to write a new poem, which was mostly read, and then followed with the recipe "How To Make An Irish Christmas Pudding", a timely piece which had us in stitches.

Val Read once again gave us a couple of readings from her new book "Love At First Sight", which we all could relate to, and then "Song of the Crows".

A Christmas theme was introduced again when Bob Philpot recited "I Couldn't Wait For Christmas", a sad recollection of his Christmas thoughts, then he followed with another sad but funny poem called "Crumpled Heap" about a moth trap.

Trish Joyce appears to draw on her grandchildren for inspiration, and gave us "Father Christmas" and a grandchildren one I missed the name of, and then "Don't Be Stupid". Short, sharp and funny!

Bill McAtee finished the first half and went back to the 'good stuff' with his recital of J. Sorenson's "How O'Leary Broke The Drought". A fine poem to close the first half.

Cobber (alias Keith Lethbridge)
will be in attendance at the
January Muster.

Don't miss this rare opportunity to
catch up with him.

With our stomachs more than a little full, we continued on and also drew the raffle that Edna had organised, some mysterious Christmas packages—I think, five in all.

The Christmas theme prevailed once more as Wayne Pantall recited his own poem called "Santa's Three Ton Bedford" - a great description of Aussie Christmas at the pub, the kids getting in a little too deep for their own good..

Yes, Rosemary giggled her way through "The Twelve Days of Christmas Turkey" and even though we have heard it before it is always great to hear it again. While she had us all smiling she gave us the Pam Ayres one "No More BBQs". A good belly laugh was had by all.

In a small break away from poetry Bob Chambers treated Us to a couple of yarns. The first about Ducks and Rice Fields and then a farmer who perhaps wasn't much of a farmer, who wanted his 'flock' of sheep shorn, all 29 of them!

The second time around for Beth Scott, and she gave us the classic story of "Old Grandpa" then the sequel to this called 'Old Grandma'. She followed with a couple of her shaggy dog stories. What a wicked mind!

JC did a fill-in poem by Jack Windy, and told us the story of "The Wool Buyer", then Brian Langley recited "McDonald's Creek", the great poem he presented at the Championships. He seems to be improving every time we see him.

Trish Joyce gave us some good advice when she recited "Just Be Careful" and then Bill McAtee once more recited a J. Sorenson titled "Legend of the Strong Men". Bob Philpot gave us another one called "The Big Fella" in reference to large red gum trees and sun-dried milk bottles!!

It was Rusty's honour to wind up the night, and the year and wish every one all the best for the Festive Season, and we got a good smorgasbord. "Salt Bush Bill" by Banjo Paterson, was followed by some singing with Rusty's trusty banjo. "Life Gets Tedious Don't It" then "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone" and one that Rusty has added to his repertoire called "The Martins & the McCoys". His finale was however a Henry Lawson titled "Long by Merry Christmas Time". We ran right over time but a good time was had by all and it was a great finish to a great night.

June Bond

Many, many, many thanks to June for writing up the Muster for me when Rod & I were unable to attend. Would anyone consider taking on the role of Muster Recorder? Or be prepared to do it occasionally? Different approaches would freshen up the column.

Way out back of Perth!

Life has changed dramatically for one member of the Lee family since we traded in the Troopie on a ute. Bennie, our hypoactive, extremely vocal kelpie cross has just discovered the joys of riding in the back of a ute.

Ben has always been a car fanatic, loudly declaring the excitement of being **in** or **beside** a moving vehicle. Now he has discovered the ultimate adrenalin rush of being **on** a moving vehicle!

We've had a lot of different dogs over the years but never one like Benson. He was born without a tail and I swear that his brain must have been in it and when we find that tail we will have the world's most intelligent dog. Until this unlikely event occurs we just have to cope with this frustratingly loveable, annoying, devoted, brainless canine!

He is a dedicated stick-fetcher and has never learnt that a three foot branch won't fit through a one foot gap. He is usually at full speed when this happens which probably explains his permanent grin! He is instantly stirred by movement and attacks the opening and shutting gates, the tow ball on the car and the horses' tails. And thereby hangs a tail, so to speak. His great joy in life is to take a flying leap at the tails when the horses trot past him, swinging off in graceful arc, usually removing a mouthful of tail hair. The horses seem to tolerate this remarkably well but it drives me insane! It takes a year for tail hair to regrow fully! And I am always fearful his head will connect with a hoof. This has never been of concern to Bennie, even after the day he finally made that fateful connection. Ben was in full flight, tail in mouth, when Sonny gave a playful buck. This propelled Ben about 15 feet into the air. Suspended for one gravity defying moment his face took on a look of sheer terror as he realised he was flying and no longer connected to the horse and that the ground was a long way down. Well, dogs have no cat-like agility so when he crashed, he crashed! He shakily picked himself up and stood shakily on three legs, with jaw hanging down, screaming in pain. And guess what, five minutes later he was chasing tails again! I told you he is brainless!

But, back to the ute. The dogs have frequently travelled with us in the car until we got Bennie. You just have to be in the right emotional state to cope with his company as he leaps about emitting high pitched barks which set the ear drums ringing. I've tried endless remedies without success, including spraying him with citronella. The car stunk like a giant mozzie repellent, we were all choking and he was choking and barking. And then, along came the ute. Now he bounces around in the back (on a lead) barking his silly head off while we encapsulate ourselves in the cabin, ear drums in tack.

I swear he thinks he is scaring off all the vehicles which pass by as he flies to the side of the ute, barks at the offending car or truck then stands there, one proud pooch, as the vehicle fearfully disappears. And it seems to me he is chanting (Rap style).....

Please forgive any dreadful poetic error I have made.
Remember—I'm just a brainless, tailless pup!

I'm a dog in a ute.

It's beaut, beaut, beaut.

And I give all the cars

The one paw salute!

I'm the King of the Road

And I set the code

When I'm riding high in my ute.

When you trucks pass me by

Don't give me the eye

For I'm mean and tough

And I can go 'ruff'.

With the wind in my hair

I haven't a care.

All the cars quake and flee

'Cause they're scared of me.

Yes, I'm a dog in a ute

And it's beaut, beaut, beaut.

And I give all the cars

The one paw salute.

I'm the King of the Road

And I set the code

And the girls all think I'm cute!

But I can be mean,

I'm a fighting machine.

When my hackles stand up

I'm one bad pup.

That bloke on a bike

Got a hell of a fright

When I snarled in his ear

"Get your bike out of here!"

Yes, I'm a dog in a ute

And it's beaut, beaut, beaut.

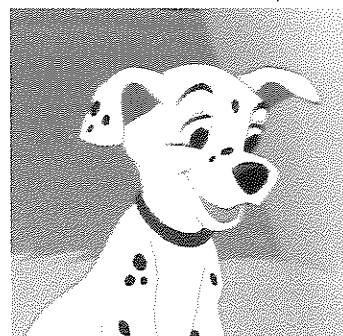
And I give all the cars

The one paw salute.

Don't mess with me

I'm the King, you see!

I'm a dog in a ute and - that's beaut!



A Walk With The Masters

Kath Walker
Oodgeroo Noonuccal
1920-1993

Kath Walker was born in Brisbane in 1920 on North Stradbroke Island. She lived and worked in this area all her life becoming involved with government and community work in 1961.

She was in the Australian Women's Army Service 1941-44 and served on many committees. From 1961-70 she was Queensland State Secretary of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and Secretary for the Queensland State Council, as well as being chairperson and committee member for many other Boards and educational groups.

She delivered adult education lectures in Australia and overseas, being guest lecturer in the South Pacific in 1972. She also lectured at most Australian universities on topics ranging from Australian literature to uranium to Aboriginal culture.

In 1969 she was Australian delegate to the World Council of Churches Consultation on Racism in London, Official Australian Envoy at the International Writers' Conference in Malaysia in 1972 and guest of the Papua New Guinea Government at its Festival of Arts in 1975.

She was driven by a deep desire to gain recognition and respect for her people and their culture. Frustrated with efforts to make her voice heard she returned home to North Stradbroke Island in 1972 where she established Moongalba, an educational and cultural centre. For many Aboriginal and Islander children from the cities this was their first experience of the more natural way of life of their ancestors. For people of other races it was an insight into another culture. Moongalba was named after a wise man of the Noonuccal tribe who had a special place on the island where he would meditate and try to solve problems—his "sitting down place".

Kath produced several books of poetry and prose and was awarded-

Jessie Litchfield Award
MBE 1970

Mary Gilmore Medal
Black Hall of Fame

Fellowship of Australian Writers Award
International Acting Award 1979

United We Win

The glare of a thousand years is shed
On the black man's wistful face,
Fringe-dweller now on the edge of towns,
One of a dying race;
But he has no bitterness in his heart
For the white man just the same;
He knows he has white men friends today,
He knows they are not to blame.
Curse no more the nation's great,
The glorious pioneers,
Murderers honoured with fame and wealth,
Won of our blood and tears;
Brood no more on the bloody past
That is gone without regret,
But look to the light of happier days
That will shine for your children yet.
For in spite of public apathy
And the segregation pack
There is mateship now, and the good white hand
Stretched out to grip the black.
He knows there are white men here today
Who will help us fight the past,
Till a world of workers from shore to shore as equals
live at last.

This poem was written in the 1960's when Kath was travelling Australia campaigning for Aboriginal rights. In 1967 Aboriginal Australians gained the right to vote.

In this period her writings were optimistic and full of hope for the future for her people but, though they gained speaking and lobbying skills along with the vote, the overall white attitude did not change.

This optimism faded as she continued to fight to preserve her culture and to establish a place for her people in this new "white man's world".



Namatjira

Aboriginal man, you walked with pride,
And painted with joy the countryside.
Aboriginal man your fame grew fast,
Men pointed you out as you went past.
But vain the honours and tributes paid,
For you strangled in rules the white men made;
You broke no laws of your own wild clan
Which says, "Share all with your fellow-man".
What did their loud acclaim avail
Who gave you honour, then gave you jail?
Namatjira, they boomed your art,
They called you genius, then broke your heart.

White Australia

Since God's good world began
Not God but godless man made barrier & ban
And reared each frontier wall.
Brothers, when shall we see
Selfless democracy? Life is for liberty
And earth was made for all.
Let little Kiplings rant,
Narrow and arrogant, their chauvinistic cant
That white is nobler birth.
The best of every race
Should here find welcome place; the colour of his
face
Is no man's test of worth!

Any members interested in
a trip of a lifetime!

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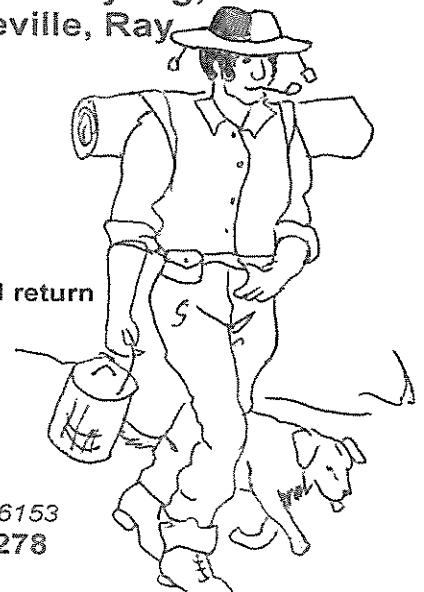
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With a New Year beginning remember-

**What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters
compared to what lies within us.**