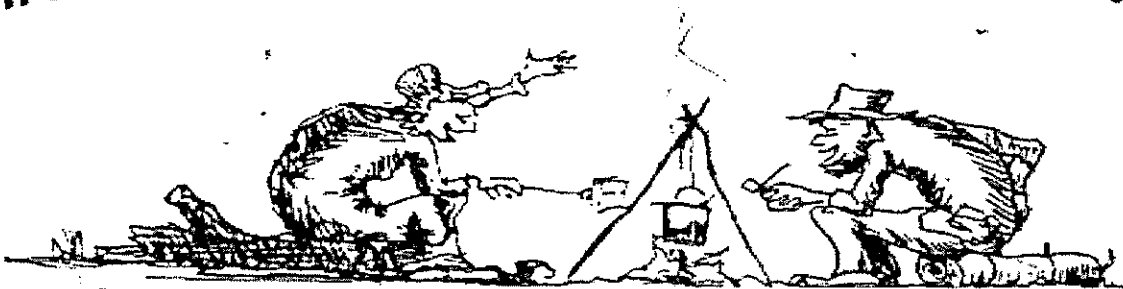


# WA BUSH POETS & YARNSPINNERS



Return Address: The Secretary, Lorelie Tacoma, 16 Gratwick Tce, Murdoch, WA 6150

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Newsletter April, 1999

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## FROM WHENCE WE COME?

Have you given any thought to discovering where your nearest Bush Poetry Enthusiast lives?  
Who knows, your own next door neighbour may be one!

In the beginning ..... Our founder, Rusty Christensen, discovered Jeff Swain over the side fence! Proudly, from a small suburban start, our current membership of 120 devotees stretches along the coast from Wyndham in the north to Albany in the south. We are also represented in the Easter States. Our infiltration into the wheatbelt is steady as the word spreads, and each month brings more far-flung members. Welcome to all of our newest devotees.

Cast a glance down the list to see where members of the WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinnners Assn Inc live.  
Albany, Alfred Cove, Ardross, Armadale,  
Beckenham, Bentley, Bicton, Booragoon, Brentwood, Broome, Bull Creek, Burswood,  
Canning Vale, Canowindra, Carabooda, Carine, City Beach, Claremont, Corrigin, Cottesloe,  
Darlington, Denham, Derby, Dianella, East Fremantle, East Morley, Eden Hill,  
Floreat, Fremantle, Girrawheen, Hamilton Hill, Hilton,  
Joondalup, Kardinya, Kiara, Koondoola, Koorda,  
Lake Grace, Lake Yearlering, Langford, Lesmurdie, Lynwood,  
Margaret River, Maylands, Merredin, Middle Swan, Mosman Park,  
Mt. Claremont, Mt. Lawley, Munster, Murdoch, Myaree,  
Nedlands, North Beach, Northam, Northcliffe, Oakford, O'Connor, Palmyra, Preston, Quairading,  
Ravenswood, Redcliffe, Rockingham, Rossmoyne,  
Shelley, Sorrento, South Perth, St. James, Stirling, Subiaco, Swanbourne,  
Tammin, Thornlie, Trigg, Vasse, Wannaroo, Warnbro, Wembley, Wembley Downs, West Perth,  
Willagee, Wongan Hills, Woodlands, Woodvale, Wooroloo, Wyndham, Yangebup.

Meet the Mob at the monthly "Come All Ye"

Make a note of the changed dates for yourself, and for enthusiasts  
you know who may not be on the mailing list.

**DON'T GET YOUR DATES MIXED UP!**

The Bush Poets and Yarnspinnners will now gather  
Each 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month (May, June & July, 99)  
(7.30pm at the Raffles Pub, upstairs in The Riverview Room)

Entry \$2 at the door

## DROPPINGS FROM THE BOSS COCKY

**STOP PRESS!** Due to circumstances, a decision had to be taken to change the May "Come All Ye" to Friday 14<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 pm, and the **June gathering and the July Annual General Meeting are both also booked for the second Friday of those months – see COMING EVENTS notice this issue.**

There is no doubt that bush poetry (or its equivalent) is spreading as a grass roots form of entertainment. Communication with our Queensland connection, Carmel Randle has been most interesting. Carmel has recently returned from U.S.A., having accompanied her daughter Zita Horton who had won the ladies section of the Waltzing Matilda Bush Poetry competition at Winton in 1998 and was using her prize by performing at Elco, Nevada before some 30,000 fans. Previously, Carmel had been in touch with her counterpart in the U.S. (a Marie W. Smith, the 'Grande Dame' of cowboy poetry in that country) who lives and writes from her home in Montana. The two met in Elco. During the course of conversation it was revealed that Marie had come from Australia and in particular, Fremantle, in 1952, after marrying her cowboy/artist husband Cecil whom she had met on a sea cruise in 1950. Fremantle was the link and "yes" she remembered a certain 'Rusty' Christensen, and so the story has developed to the point that Judy and self are hoping to fit in a visit to Montana on a proposed trip to California in August this year and hopefully attend a cowboy poetry gathering up there. As Carmel explained, Cowboy Poetry is strictly 'cowboy' and only writers and performers who have actually 'ridden the range' albeit in a Ford V8, are considered suitable for performers at the gatherings and to get the opportunity to appear one has to apply and audition at least six months before the event. The gatherings are non-competitive (except to get a start). There is no association as such and each one is independently organized. There are as many female performers as male and the ladies don't have to be outlandish to obtain a measure of creditability.

Here, where there is a country music festival, the bush poetry is tacked on almost as an afterthought, whereas the cowboy poets' happenings include the musos, and my informant tells me there was about equal parts of poetry and singing (vocals) with an acoustic guitar (not one electric twanger in sight) and cowboy songs in the Gene Autrey style are the order. It was only in 1985 that cowboy poetry was rediscovered in the U.S. and I daresay that it was not so long after then we here down under began to realize that our colourful heritage of the spoken word was becoming another endangered species. Of course, the Australian brand of bush poetry is not restricted to the 'bowlegged bards', as an island continent, we accept all comers providing that what they do is relevant to Australia, Australians or the Australian way – and it rhymes.

Cobber Lethbridge finally took up his "finals" prize from 1998 which was a weekend for six at the Ocean Clipper Inn at Rockingham. He, Maricor and the Billy lids thoroughly enjoyed the luxury and to show his appreciation he put on a two hour show in the lounge on the Saturday evening – with a little help from his friends (me).

Great to see so many different faces 'having a go' at our monthly gathering at the Raffles on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April. Don Nicholls celebrated his birthday by stirring our national emotions with his own poem about the first Anzac Day (very good). He then hustled wife Corrine off to hospital we were sure – hope mother and baby are fine Don – please come back soon, and keep writing. The Davey duo, Mike and Maisie are a talented two-some; theirs must be a palatial poetry pad.

Keep on writing and/or practicing.

Rusty (The Boss Cocky) Christensen

### Notice of Committee Meetings

The monthly social gatherings and the Committee Meetings have now been brought into line and fall on the same evening. Both are now scheduled for the **second Friday of the month**, for a trial period up to and including July: **May 14<sup>th</sup>, June 11<sup>th</sup>, and July 9<sup>th</sup> (the A.G.M.)**

With this change in timetable, the **Committee extends a cordial invitation to all interested members to attend the Committee Meetings as visitors.** This is a fine opportunity to meet the current Committee, and to put a toe in the water, so to speak, without commitment.

Committee members are reminded to attend Committee Meetings in the Riverview Room at the Raffles Hotel, Canning Bridge during the hour prior to the monthly Come All Ye gatherings. Meetings will commence at the new time of 6.30pm sharp. Visitors are most welcome.

# SWAGMAIL

*Death is a topic often shunned.  
Both of these poems remind us that the life  
once lived is monumentally greater than  
the loss we grieve.* Ed.

## LETTING LUCY GO

© Brian A. Gale May '98

We had grown up there together, in this one horse country town,  
And Lucy was this little kid, who used to follow us around.  
But life has ways of changing, as we went our separate ways,  
And I'd often think of Lucy, and how we'd spent our days.

I heard she'd hit the city, with it's many coloured lights,  
Heading slowly down a one way street of drugs and booze and fights.  
Then she'd call me every now and then, when things got out of hand,  
To ask about her friends back home, and how she missed the land.

I'd help out at the station, for the Sergeant was my friend,  
And word came down from time to time, that Lucy's in jail again.  
I used to wonder if she loved me, as she never told me so,  
But she'd sometimes come to see me, when they let Lucy go.

I remember the last time he called me,  
He said, "There's something I think you should know,  
Lucy's in here, she's not looking too good,  
And tomorrow they're letting her go."  
So I went down to see her, as I'd done before,  
And it brightened her up, just to see me once more.

But the years of hard living had worn her away,  
For I broke down and cried when I saw her that day.  
But the smile on her face was a joy to behold,  
As she said she'd found something more precious than gold.

They found her next morning, she was down by the lake,  
Her body had taken about all it could take.  
And among her possessions was a note on the ground,  
And nothing much else to show she'd been around.

She wrote of her feelings, both the good and the bad,  
And thanked me for being the best friend that she'd had.  
Well that ends the story, as she lay in the snow,  
But I hope she's found peace, for we'd let Lucy go.

## TO THE KIDS

© Chris Sadler March '99

S'pose now's the time to share the feelings,  
Though it's taken quite a while.  
And I think of life we shared together,  
As I look down to you and smile.

...  
'Cause I reckon life was good to me.  
Though the going sometimes rough.  
But things don't work out as you plan,  
And that makes, time, on kids, real tough.

...  
But through the bonding of a family,  
And the deep love that we shared,  
We worked out life together,  
And in our own way, showed we cared.

...  
To work the land was right for me,  
Such freedom comes to few,  
And with kids to help along the way,  
It's that, that pulls you through.

...  
Along beside me on life's track,  
I had neighbours and good friends.  
With me for a drink, or fun, or work,  
They showed that mateship has no ends.

...  
The dogs they gave me good times,  
Chasing roos around the scrub.  
And you know I always favoured,  
That kangaroo for grub!

...  
And numerous pigs they kept us busy,  
Though I reckon they earned their bread.  
'Cause they always tasted good for dinner  
No matter what they had been fed!

...  
And the footy club down Konno way  
Where we'd laugh and have a bet  
All our keenness and our glory  
There's not a day I would regret.

...  
In later years I finally learned,  
Of 'time' to make the most.  
And enjoying catching fish and crays,  
Was my pleasure out the coast.

...  
So these things tell life's journey,  
And best memories I did save  
Of all the special times I had  
And the enjoyment that they gave.

...  
But now it's time to say goodbye,  
But just before I do,  
Let me say as dad and grandad,  
I couldn't be prouder of you.

...  
For I know you well,  
And all that I see,  
I can understand now, why I say,  
That life was good to me.

You have the opportunity to add to the vigour of our WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinners Association. At the Annual General Meeting in July, the current elected Committee is hoping to add their number by including other members who have a desire to play a more active role than they presently do. Are you one of these folks? By the nature of poets and yarners, the load you accept is unlikely to be heavy, but new input is seriously required. You have several weeks to think it over, and plenty of time to solicit advice from one of the Committee Members at the Raffles gatherings. Alternatively, speak to, or drop a line to your Hon. Secretary Lorelie Tacoma, 16 Gratwick Tce, Murdoch, W.A. 6150.

**WA BUSH POETS & YARNSPINNERS PERFORMERS  
A HIGHLIGHT AT THE COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS**

Now is the time for forward planning. Mark your calendars ahead for the GWN Country Music Awards in Boyup Brook 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> February 2000.

Boyup Brook Country Music Club sent a very encouraging letter of thanks to us for attending the GWN WA Country Music Awards, with special mention of the hugely popular performances from our WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinners Assn members over the weekend. In their letter, they expressed their appreciation of our support, and recognised the problems of sound amplification, and that of overcrowding. Both problems have been addressed, and will be overcome by the use of a small amplifier and a separate marquee at the 2000 Awards. The organizers are keen to fine-tune, and have specifically requested that suggestions for improvement be forwarded to them. If you were there, and wish to forward your ideas, please drop a line to our Bush Poet convener for Boyup Brook Weekends, Brian Gale at 25 Georgette Road, Margaret River, 6285. He will forward your comments on. Don't worry if you don't get a reply, because he is off cycling and reciting through Canada for three months from the end of May.

Brian recalled how the presence of Bush Poets at the Boyup Brook Country Music Weekend has grown since the first Poets Breakfast nine years ago. Back then, just a few poems were heard before the music started. This year, performers recited for an hour and a half on Sunday morning to a packed crowd where some were battling to hear at the back. Saturday morning was also a highlight with seven poets spruiking their wares for nearly four hours at the Pub. Having fun and entertaining the audience were Ron Evans, Arthur Leggett, Peter Capp, Jeff Swain, Maisie and Mike Davey and Brian himself. Brian says he's watched it grow in Tamworth, and it's happening here.

With the help he has had, and hopes to keep getting from performers, he says we can't go wrong.

**ODE TO THE BUSH POETS AT BOYUP BROOK**

© Maisie Davey 22-Feb-99

I have heard a lot of poets  
and verses in my time,  
I've listened to a lot of folk  
reciting things in rhyme,  
but there is not a group as good  
as the Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners  
who were at Boyup Brook last month –  
Oh what a lot of winners!  
There was Peter Capp, with all that crap  
about Wongans and the like.  
He must think we're bloody silly  
if we believe that hype.  
And big Jeff Swain was heard to utter  
dirty stories from the gutter.  
He told us how he has to strain  
to squeeze one out and down the drain.  
Then tall Ron Evans of 'Snowy River'  
spoke so well he made a shiver  
run right up and down our spines  
reciting Banjo Patterson's lines.  
Next Brian Gale on 'Wild Western' topics  
there really was no-one to top it.  
And dear old Arthur, who made us proud,  
was really loved by all the crowd.  
Even Mike, my spouse, he did his share  
although it was his first time there.  
As for me – it was great fun  
relating how the river runs!  
Now I would really like to say  
'Thank you, mates' for a good day.  
Your encouragement and words of cheer  
were really great for me to hear.  
So if any of you are at Raffles tonight  
the drink's on me – is that alright?!

### REPORT ON THE MARCH NIGHT AT THE RAFFLES

The "Come All Ye" gathering of the Bush Poets and Yarnspinners was a busy night at the Raffles on March 5<sup>th</sup>, where an audience of 70 attended. I think it must have been a record of performers – fourteen! As could be expected, a load of talent. Also some excellent music and song from Paddy Connolly who was steered our way by Peter Capp at a gathering at Nannup. Nice to see Connie Herbert there, her smiling face missed for a few meetings. Hector did a good job as Ticket-Seller and Raffle Man. It was a very appreciative audience, which made it a great night for everyone.

The List of Performers: Keith Lethbridge, Syd Hopkinson, Kel Watkins, Maisie Davey, Paddy Connolly, Robert Mayhew, Barry Higgins, Mike Davey, Rusty Christensen, Peter Gralton, Scott McMorrine, Geoff Debb, Reg Myles and Ron Evans.  
Ron Evans

### REPORT ON THE APRIL GATHERING OF POETS AND YARNERS

Despite the change in date due to Easter, an enthusiastic group gathered at the Raffles on 9<sup>th</sup> April. Rusty Christensen was M.C. and interspersed his Geebung Polo Club and Second Class Wait Here (Henry Lawson) with many Irish and other jokes.

A newcomer to the scene, Kerry Lee, presented her own composition, Our Plot, which was extremely well received and we hope to hear a lot more from Kerry. Stalwart Keith Lethbridge rekindled a piece he wrote in 1964 when he was at the Kimberley Research Station, The Old Camp Oven.

Maisie Davey, becoming quite a regular, presented her own word picture of a Walk by the River. Husband Michael has also joined the team and his piece took us to the outback with Spirits, Snakes and Eagle Feathers.

Rum and Water by Douglas Stewart brought Geoff Debb to the stage, and another newcomer Scott McMorrine, a young Uni. student, presented his own writing on Before Cyclone Vance, and The Preamble. Soon-to-be-Dad Don Nicholls made his debut feelingly with his own composition on Anzac Day. It is certainly pleasing to see so many new writers and presenters coming along. These Come All Ye gatherings are just the opportunity for them to "try out".

Veteran Kel Watkins recalled July 1980 at the Geelong Folk Club when he performed All Hail and Whistle, followed by a Trip to Elsewhere (where else?). The varied history of the Canning River was recalled by Joan Macneall in charming style.

A stirring rendition of Banjo Paterson's On Kylie's Run was presented by Ron Evans, followed by the tale of Doreen on the Maiden Voyage by C.J. Dennis. Fine and entertaining performances were given by Syd Hopkinson (Flying Kate), Reg Miles (1944 Cyclone, R.I.P.) and other items by Keith Lethbridge (The Lodger) and Rusty with his perennial favourite Dipso Dan.

Altogether, a wonderful night of entertainment.

We all look forward to the next COME ALL YE on **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May**. **As 1999 is the Year of the Older Person we encourage you to bring along an "older Person". They may even have some work from another era to perform for us!**  
Lorelie Tacoma

### KEEP THAT SWAGMAIL COMING IN

Many thanks to all those members who have confirmed by mail or phone that the newsletter is enjoyed and welcomed as a means to keep in touch. It has been most rewarding to get so much feed-back about the usefulness of our bi-monthly mailout. Do continue to contribute ..... keep the word spreading.

Keep an eye on the dates on the back page of the newsletter, there has been a shift in gears for our Come All Ye gatherings. Novice performers, now is the time to grit your teeth and face an audience. The chance to face a friendly audience each month at the Raffles is an opportunity not to be missed. Each performance should leave you better prepared to face the Australia Day Challenge. Remember, the finals heats commence in October.

Some special news for our writers will be detailed in next issue. For the moment, just let me encourage you to continue putting your thoughts on paper, hone up your old work, and explore new themes. We are on the brink of launching a written competition of our own, right here in the West!  
Kay Stehn Editor

# COMING EVENTS

**Come All Ye (non-competitive gathering)**

**May 14<sup>th</sup>, June 11<sup>th</sup>, July 9<sup>th</sup>**

**For an evening of yarns and ballads**

**Raffles Hotel, Canning Bridge, upstairs in the Riverview Room 7.30pm onwards**

**Entry \$2 at the door. Tell your work mates and bring your friends.**

**Bar open, bring your own plate of supper snacks.**

**Come to perform, come to applaud, come to enjoy.**

**Contact the MC of the night to have your performance slotted into the programme.**

**PLEASE NOTE NEW DATES: SECOND Friday of each month**

**WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinners Assn Inc. Annual General Meeting July 9<sup>th</sup> 1999**

**Raffles Hotel, Canning Bridge, upstairs in the Riverview Room**

**Meeting to commence at 6.30 sharp, followed by the July Come All Ye gathering**

**All members most welcome**

**Midland Folk Festival 1999**

**November 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Written applications to perform close June 24th**

**Enquiries Robert Oats (WA Folk Federation) Tel. 9255 2055 Mobile 041 890 8899**

**A Yuletide Bush Dance June 26<sup>th</sup> (the week after the Winter Solstice)**

**featuring The Pioneer Bush Band**

**Leederville Town Hall Cambridge Street, Leederville**

**Tickets Pre-sale \$10, Door-sale \$12**

**Bookings and info Rob (WA Folk Federation) Tel. 9255 2005 Mobile 041 890 8899**

**Bush Poets' Breakfast at The Annual Boab Festival In Derby**

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July At 7.30 am**

**once again the Man from Myaponga, Bob Magor, will be performing**

**Warm Welcome Billets offered**

**Contact: Cheryle Holmes, Derby Country Music Club (Inc.)**

**P.O. Box 87, Derby, 6728. Telephone 08 9193 1065**



Edna Westall  
2/10 McKimmie Road  
PALMYRA  
WA

6157