

\$2.50

WA Bush Poets & Yarn Spinners

Newsletter : November 2002

Heat 1 Wireless Hill Challenge 2003

Friday, 1st November 2001

Novice Others' Poetry

Novice Own Poetry

Open Own Poetry

Open Yarnspinners



"Come All Ye" at the Raffles Hotel

cnr Canning Highway and Canning Beach Rd Applecross

(Upstairs in The River Room)

Next Meeting Friday 1/11/2002 at 7:30pm

Lorelie's Letters

November is going to be a most interesting month. We start off on the 1st with our first Heat towards the Championship on Australia Day 26th January. Competitors so far are Val Read, Kerry Lee, Rod Lee, Rusty Christensen, Peter Williamson and Peter Nettleton. Please give me a call on 9310.1500 if you would like to add your name to the list. It would be nice to have a few more women too.

Last months' Ladies Only first half of the show was well received and perhaps next year the ladies will fill a whole programme!

Although not an Association event, we are happy to support Rod and Kerry Lee in their efforts to promote our aims. They are bringing from Queensland one of Australia's most awarded female bush poets, Glennie Palmer. There will be an opportunity for our members and friends to hear Glennie at the Raffles Hotel on Friday, 15th November at 7.30pm. She will be supported by Rod, Kerry and Rusty, but mostly the programme will be Glennie. Admission on this occasion will be \$5 for everyone.

For those who want to make a whole night (and/or morning) of it, there will be a Bush Concert Weekend at the Lee property, 160 Blair road, Oakford on the Saturday 16th, starting with a natural horsemanship display at 4.30, barbecue or picnic tea from 5 to 7 (BYO Everything including some rugs), then the main concert 7 to 10 p.m. Bring your campervan or tent and sleep-over for the Poet's breakfast and performance from 7.30 next morning. Ring Kerry or Rod for more information and a booking on 9397.0409 (home) or 9493.4333 (work).

Please be sure to read Peter Nettleton's report on his enjoyable weekend at Yealering on 12th October. Congratulations to Lindy-Jane Porter and her team for organising such a superb event.

One of our judges, Val Mazalevskis, who performed last month, was busy having a heart attack at the same time unknown to most of us. Val has since had a quadruple by-pass operation and we wish her a speedy recovery and return to the scene.. We thank Chris and Don Sadler and Lyn McPharlane for their assistance to Val at the time.

Do come along on 1st November and 6th December to encourage all the candidates at the Heats.

Good luck to all,

Lorelie.



Michelle's Musings

Hello from the UK. We thought that we may be able to communicate better here, being an English speaking country and all. Wrong. Geoff has had more trouble making himself understood and vice-versa than any where else in Europe! (Must be the Aussie Poet accent.) We have many funny poems and stories on the tip of our computer to write about our travels. We have spread bush poetry around in several countries, without need of translation.

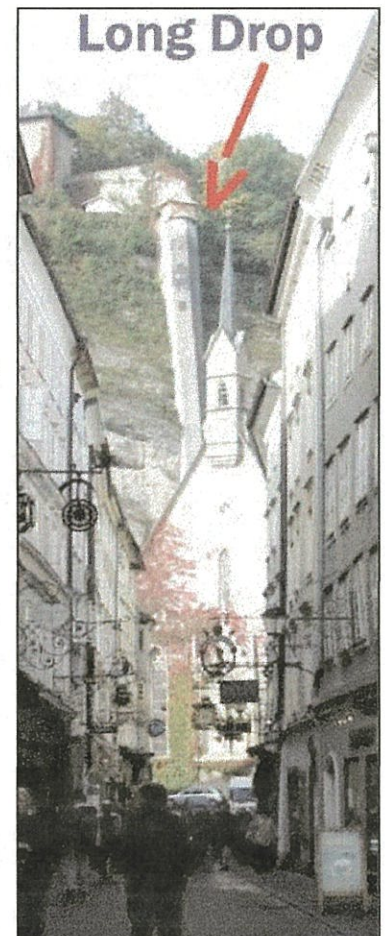
We have felt welcome and safe in all countries until last weeks' madness. Our condolences to any one who has suffered directly from the Bali tragedy.

I must say we even had a reactive twang of 'wariness' when a group of Islamic men entered the train going to Sheffield. Keep up the good work Kel.

Keep spreading joy through poetry and enjoy the first round of the Wireless Hill Challenge till we get back. Thinking of you in the delightful Aussie sunshine.

Cheers

Michelle



" They have it here too. The 11th century Salzburg Long Drop."

Come All Ye November 2002 – Rod Lee

When I volunteered to report on the CAY for September 2002 I had no idea of what I was getting into.

Firstly, my congratulations must go to our MC, Lorelie. On a night when it appeared that some performers were making up for infrequent appearances, Lorelie was tolerant but firm when required, keeping the night moving.

The idea of a Ladies Half was a very good one showing the depth of talent amongst the women. Developing new faces, Rosa and Verla, presented their own poems, through to Val Reid who can set the benchmark anywhere in Australia. Our very professional presenters Kerry, Chris Sattler and Beth Scott gave us the full gamut of high standard Bush Poetry Performance from Classic, Own Material both humorous and serious, through to Contemporary Works of other poets. Connie, Val and Joan showed us what they derive from their love of Bush Poetry. Joan uses it to express her love for her family, Connie loves to entertain and Val likes to present the reflective thoughtful works.

The second half was for the men. Arthur gave us a couple of great works of his own then broke into a song from "My Fair Lady" - Bush Poetry Arthur? Barry Higgins was back and kept it bright and light, as did Rusty. Bob Phelps did his own work "Mick the Gun". I think it is safe to assume, Bob, that people who have been listening to and reciting Bush Poetry for many years will know most of the fundamentals of a shearing shed.

Unfortunately, the evening went a little overtime and we were only able to hear two short poems from Keith Lethbridge's new book, soon to be released, plus a very entertaining tune with the spoons and mouth organ. It is always a privilege to have Keith perform for us.

YEALERING - 12 October 2002

History was made recently when we had the first official heat for the Wireless Hill Challenge held outside the metro area – in fact, outside the Raffles Hotel, at the Yealering Community Hall on 12 October 2002, a date that has become infamous for entirely different reasons.

An approach had been made to our association earlier in the year by Lindy-Jane Porter of the Yealering Progress Association. Lindy-Jane had been to Wireless Hill on at least one occasion in the early days of the Challenge and was keen to get some top-level competition going in her adopted hometown. She asked the association if we could assist with instructions and perhaps personnel for their planned comp, to be held in conjunction with the 'Banksia Ball-derdash Ball'. Having had some past connection with Yealering, I volunteered to be 'our man on the ground', to give an explanation of the rules, a demo performance and co-ordinate the judging.

Being well aware that things never quite work out as you plan, I was given some leeway by the committee as to how to conduct the heat on the night. The bottom line was that the successful competitor should be of appropriate standard to go directly to the grand final on Australia day. It was therefore with some trepidation that I motored on out the 200Km into the Central Great Southern Wheatbelt (or 'Wheat-heartland' to some) and checked myself and my two young daughters in at the old Commercial Hotel, now renamed the 'Lake Yealering'. The girls took a while to get used to the surroundings, but warmed very quickly as soon as we got to the hall and they saw the mobs of other kids and vast quantities of food arrayed before them.

It was very much a family night of the old-fashioned variety. Everyone, his grandma and his dog was there. The hall had been thoughtfully and interestingly decorated in banksias and gum fronds, in amongst an array of antique wagonery and hay bales. The 3-piece band ('Fiddler's Green' from Perth) fitted well into the mood and the scene was set for fun at all costs.

Barry Clapp, long-standing member of our association and these days Postmaster at Corrigin was my co-judge. Barry took his job very seriously and I am indebted to him for that. I did my bit, then we kicked off with the first contestant, Phil Cawley, who gave us an original yarn about a very canny sheepdog. Next up was Tim Heffernan with an original poem, set to music, about dunnies he had known. After that, the band launched into some dance tunes and in no time flat the floor was filled with all ages. It was as if these people had never heard about hanging-back for the first 2/3rds of the night.

Lindy-Jane was next up with one of her famous original poems, followed by Reid Hodgson with his composition about trying your luck at the B&S Ball. Then followed more dancing, supper, and an absolutely sidesplitting yarn by Tania Parker using vocal impressions of a wide variety of fauna, both native and domestic. This was followed by Tim's hilarious political satire about the 'Yobbos' Federation' and another performance piece by Tania, this time using physical props including a telephone, a toilet pedestal and a live sheepdog.

The judging was very tight and fierce. The organisers had beautiful trophies to present to each of best poet and best yarnspinner on the night and they went to Tania (yarn) and Tim (poem). Both winners were, in my humble opinion, well up to the standard required to make it to Wireless Hill and beyond.

We finished off the night with Barry and I strutting our stuff, followed by more music and dancing until the small hours. My girls only just made it back to the hotel and bed before falling asleep, as did I. All in all, a great night's frolics.

On the way home next day, we stopped in at Wickopin for their 'Back to the Bush' festival, but that's another story. Congratulations and thanks to Lindy-Jane, Narelle and all who helped make the 'Banksia Ball-derdash Ball' a memorable as well as an historic occasion.

Peter (Stinger) Nettleton

BACK TO PERTH

Through the Greyhound windows I see the scrubby plain
 On the road from Meekathara, back to Perth again
 The sky a lazy crazy jumble of cloud and streak and hue
 The roadside every mile or so , the body of a roo
 A big homestead, a shearing shed, the trees a bit more green
 I think it's Kirkalocka station, as far as I can glean
 Somewhere past the ridge afar, and triple that again
 Near half a million acres of dusty scrubby plain
 It's four o'clock the road rolls on, relentlessly and straight
 The motor drones, a change of noise, as we cross a cattle grate
 Winter here is never cold and summer never kind
 We're only twenty miles or so from the town of old Payne's Find
 The bus pulls in the sleepy town, no traffic lights or such
 No neurotic hectic pace, no one worries much
 A Kingswood wagon, half a dozen blokes, in terrible condition
 Alcohol a plenty, drunkenness their mission
 Past the wheat fields of Wubin, as far as the eye can see
 The sun has rolled away to sleep, the wind is warm and free
 A silo loomed as darkness loomed, and twilight quietly fade
 The greyhound purred, none spoke a word, perhaps a little jaded
 I dozed a while and when I woke, Perth was in my eyes
 That city with the same old feel – We're here! The Driver Cries.



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THE MELBOURNE CUP

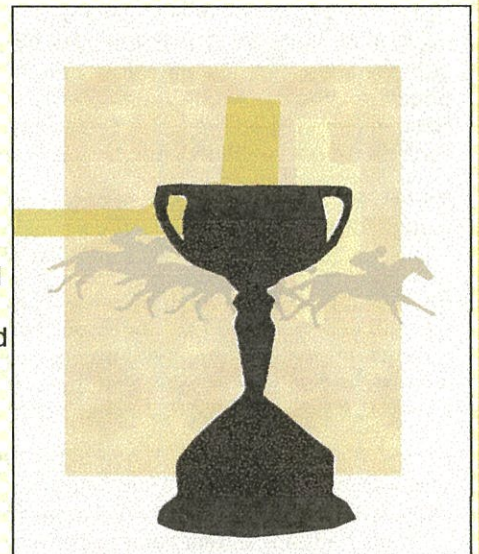
The Melbourne Cup again has come, Twenty three horses to face the gun
 The favourite horse was born to run, Vo Rogue was safe at 8 to one
 The Kiwi-landers had five to race, and none of the were short of pace
 The hopeful faceless punters waited, while the horses all were gated
 The flashing light was on the stall, a pall of silence over all
 Away they go the caller shouts, the sound of thunder all about
 The thump of hooves the slap of leather, the galloping field moves together

They settle down Vo Rogue's on Fire, if he keeps this up he'll have to tire
 He's eight in front and what a pace, he'll make these horses really race
 The field spread out to thirty lengths, Rosedale's running ninth or tenth
 The favourite horse is 21st, but renowned is he for a finishing burst.
 As they come along to the last three hundred, around the big field thundered
 Vo's still there but just by one, the rider of Rosedale commencing a run
 The favourite coming round the field, Vo's giving ground he's starting to yield

The favourite horse has come from last, he moves to Vo to go right past
 But the Mighty Rogue he still clings on, the caller said he thought he'd gone
 Rosedale flashing down the track, Vo Rogue in front and fighting back
 The crowd stood up and cheered and clapped, the jockeys' whips just cracked and cracked
 A hundred out and what a run, the fave and Rosedale racing as one
 But the gallant Queensland horse still led, just holding on by half a head
 The other horses all were trying to pass this horse that should be tiring

But NO! Vo Rogue he just found more - and past the post to narrowly score
 And Cyril Small his eyes welled up - when he held aloft the Melbourne Cup

(Vo Rogue never won a Melbourne Cup but certainly was a great horse)



© Peter. Capp

Close Encounters of a Third Kind

As recalled by Mrs John H. McKay nee 'Ryall' on the 23rd September 2002

Mrs McKay who now lives in Swan View wrote me a short letter saying that she had an early association with not one, not two but three of our Australian Poets: **Dorothea MacKellar, John O'Brien and Roderic Quinn**. My curiosity, thus aroused, prompted me to call her for more information. As she now finds it hard to write she just reminisced and dictated those encounters over the phone. This made my afternoon. I felt I should share these with you as part of a heritage that must not be lost. Mrs McKay met these people during the time she was only a schoolgirl then later as a nurse at St. Vincent's hospital in Sydney.

Dorothea MacKellar

Dorothea MacKellar was in a private room, in residence at St Vincent's hospital and had her own trained nurse. Strict rules of the day, forbade probationers to attend this special patient unless her own trained nurse was off duty. Mrs McKay (then a young probationary nurse, Miss Philomene Ryall) was asked to take a dinner tray up to Dorothea's room one evening. She had no idea who Miss MacKellar was at the time, for she was not given her Christian name. In those days the large wooden trays were very heavy, laden with a full silver service, and they had to be taken down a long, corridor to the private rooms. This was on a Sunday, when Dorothea was to have come back after a regular sojourn out. Dorothea was not back so the tray had to be taken back along the highly polished, slippery wooden corridor, back to the pantry. This happened four times in succession. By this time young Philomene was exhausted and looked like dropping the tray. She had been well trained by her mother, that when you look like dropping an expensive item, go with it, presumably to try to save the items. Philomene did just this and ended up covered with the meal. She must have prayed that Miss MacKellar would not return that instant.

Later she found out who Miss MacKellar really was. Philomene was given a gift of a specially signed Christmas calendar, which is still in her daughter's possession today.

John O'Brien

Mrs McKay lived in Randwick and attended Brigidine Convent School as a young girl. At that time, her father; the partner of a Sydney firm, became ill and had to semi-retire and supervise operations only. He had to assess the possible opening of a new store in Narrandera at that time. Naturally the family had to go with him, as he was still not well. It's there that young Philomene's very devout family made the acquaintance of Father Hartigan: the Parish Priest. - (John. O'Brien). The family became firm friends with this very special parish priest. One day, Philomene was attending a music exam at he parish school. Her mother prayed for the success of all the girls, attending the exams. The exams seemed to take forever and each time her mother thought they were finished, she was sent back to pray some more by Father Hartigan, as they had not finished . The prayers must have worked for Philomene passed the exams. She also remembers learning "Ten Little Steps and Stairs" off by heart. And also remembers that Around The Boree Log was the theatre in Narrandera where she actually performed.

Ten Little Steps and Stairs

There were ten little Steps and Stairs
Round through the old bush home all day
Romping about in the old bush way
There were ten little wild March hares
Storming the kitchen in hungry lines
With their naked feet doing mud designs
"All over the place like pumpkin vines."
There were ten little Steps and Stairs.

There were ten little Steps and Stairs.
In their home –made frocks and their Sunday suits
Up through the church with their squeaky boots
While the folk went astray in their prayers,
They hustled along all dressed and neat -
Oh, They bustled a bit as they filled the seat;
From the first to the last, the lot complete
There were ten little Steps and Stairs.

There were ten little Steps and Stairs.
But the years have shuffled them all about
Have worn them thin, and straightened them out
With the tramp of a hundred cares;
Ay, and each grim scar had a tale to tell
Of a knock and a blow and a hand that fell
And a break in the line, and a gap. Ah, Well -
There were ten little Steps and Stairs.

By John O'Brien (Father Hartigan)

(This poem was written about his family)

John O'Brien was a real character, he was also very kind and unassuming. In later years he was sent as Chaplain of Sacre Coeur Convent in Rose Bay.

Roderic Quinn

This third poet is not known to me, but I'm told he wrote lilting poetry, well known in the bush. Perhaps other readers could enlighten me. Roderic was very severely injured on the back of the head whilst getting on a tram in Sydney. Nurse Ryall made his acquaintance whilst on duty as a night nurse at St Vincent's Hospital, where he was taken. Those trams must have been dangerous for I also recall my mother-in-law relating an incident when she was almost electrocuted at 5 years old and flung a great distance from a tram. The simple things in life were difficult in those days. Anyway, back to our poet. He was very impressed by the diligence and care given by the night nurses for he wrote a poem called "Night Nurses of St. Vincents" in their honour. It was subsequently published in The Bulletin. Mrs McKay remembers it word for word and recited it over the phone to me.

Thanks Mrs McKay

Journey to My Ancestral Home

A billion snowflakes
Swirl to earth like frozen glittering stars,

Billowing silently round mountain tops,
on the giant sentinels of my home.

So soft - away - so far.

Seeping slowly through cracks in time
To giant caverns underground.

Drip, drip, dripping, lime.

Desperately seeking escape.

Suddenly springing forth from hidden place
Joining gurgling rivulets to shape

Mighty rivers cascading free.

Raging and surging down deafening chasms
To be captured - for electricity.

Once released,
With their energy spent,

Those billion stars twinkle on placid lake,
The thirst of man and beast to slake.

On their way to silent oceans deep,
Then back to the skies their cycle to keep.

The First Snow

The snow fell softly in the night, light as a fairy's wing,
Six inches changed the landscape and how the Robins sing.
A giant mantle stark and white, covered all the land,
A postcard picture that could only be, created by his hand.

The dark green ferns, the giant spruce, changed colour overnight,
A wonderland of diamonds, sparkling in the morning light.
The clouds hang thick among the hills, the sunshines bright above,
A Christmas treat come early, bringing peace and joy and love.

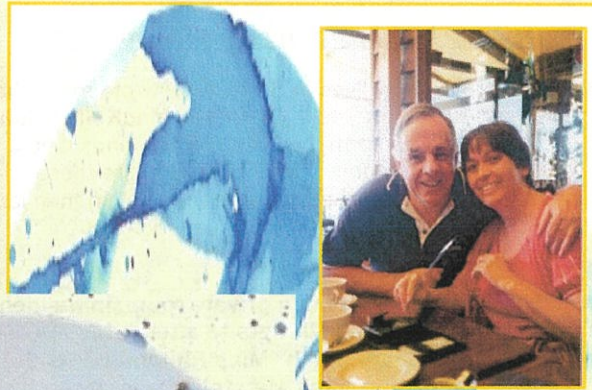
The ducks have gathered on the lake, it's maybe time to leave,
With geese already out of sight, winged South on the Autumn breeze.
The moose and elk are restless; it is rutting time for them,
The black bears and grizzlies, are heading for their den.

Snow rabbit plays among the drifts, as he hides from wolf and fox,
Another season hits the land, as its icy fingers locks.
Summer seems a distant memory, as the snowplough races by,
A cloud of flurry in the air and white swans in the sky.

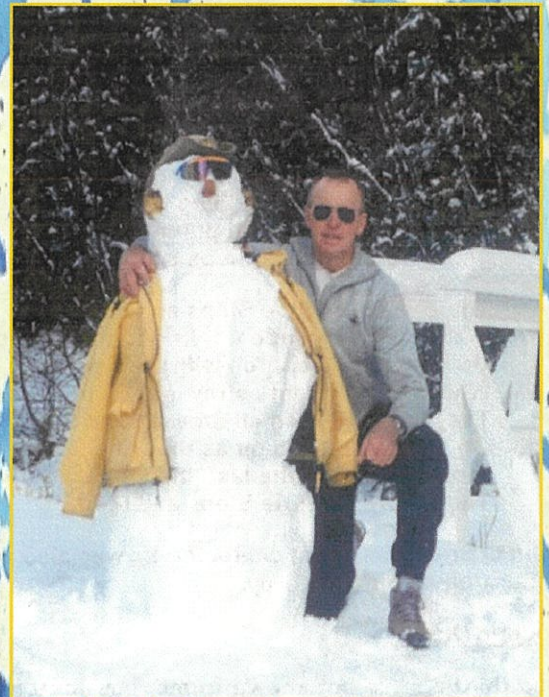
Children have their snowball fights, toboggan down the hills,
Cross-country skiers check their skis and never mind the spills.
So fast the season changes, it is winter overnight,
The sun shines weakly in the sky, gives up without a fight.

But still the winter wonderland has a beauty of its own,
A sight that some can't comprehend; they've never seen or known.
To think that only yesterday, the green and golds turn white,
The Creator waves his magic wand, oh! What a lovely sight.

© Brian Gale
Margaret River (late 2001)



© Michelle Sorrell 1995



**G'day everyone. We're almost in the snow.
Here's Brian's experience of the white stuff.
See you all soon. Geoff and Michelle**

Let's Help our Talented Aussie Kids

Joan MacNeall, our long-standing committee member who has worked tirelessly to get young people involved in Bush Poetry has undoubtedly got two talented grandchildren herself. Alan, you have already met at the Wireless Hill Competitions. He has gained such confidence in public speaking that now he has even gone on channel 31 in a youth forum and was asked back by the station to do two more shows.

However, its not about him I wish to write to you today; it's about his sister Vicki. She has just won a place in a National Science championship to be held in Canberra in February. This is a call for help to get Vicki over there. She has some help from Rotary but is \$800 short for the overall trip. Our committee thought it would be a nice idea to assist Vicki in this cause as we need young, bright and enthusiastic people to further our countries' progress. Vicki is going to address the Bush poets this month about the quest (perhaps we can persuade her to recite a

Tragedy in Bali

They sought return, to their homeland again, *(as in RAIN)*
 Then the cruelest act, in the darkest night,
 Snatched them from, our caring sight.
 Took evil to a different height,
 Dimmed the world of all its light.
 And tears fell down like rain.

Their homeland trip, they planned to make,
 But no, the last of tender ties,
 Is now so etched in aching eyes,
 So many sad and anguished cries
 Our hearts do break, our souls do ache.
 And tears fall down like rain.

Their strong unbroken spirits, are truly now a part,
 Of this our homeland country,
 And sadly though I search to see,
 Unanswered questions mock at me,
 And the greatest grief of all, has ripped in to my heart.
 Our tears fall down like rain

Chris Sadler

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**The Members of the Editorial Sub-Committee
Would like to thank all those,
who contributed to this Edition of The Newsletter.**

**Without their support and enthusiasm,
a Newsletter like this would not be possible.**

Many Thanks

The Editor

WA Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners Association Inc

Coming Events

Date	Event	Co-ordinator
Fri. 1 st Nov. 2002	Heat 1 of Wireless Hill Challenge	Lorelie Tacoma – 9310 1500
Fri. 15 th Nov. 2002	Comedy Night Special starring Glenny Palmer at Raffles \$5.00.	Rod Lee - 9897 0409
Sat. 16 th & Sun. 17 th Nov. 2002	Bush Concert Weekend	Rod Lee – 9397 0409
Fri. 6 th Dec. 2002	Heat 2 of Wireless Hill Challenge	As for heat 1 above

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