

\$2.00

WA Bush Poets & Yarn Spinners

R. SUTCLIFFE 97

Newsletter : March 2001

Committee Contacts Year 2000 – 2001

Name	Position	Postal Address	Phone	Email
Peter Nettleton	President	46 Coolbellup Avenue, COOLBELLUP WA	9314 1313	stinger@inet.net.au
Lorelie Tacoma	Vice-President	16 Gratwick Terrace, MURDOCH WA 6150	9310 1500	
Rusty Christensen	Past-President	51 Coogee Road, ARDROSS WA 6153	9364 4491	
Trevor Cooksley	Past-Treasurer	PO Box 679, SOUTH PERTH WA 6151	9474 2344	
Michelle Sorrell	Secretary	Unit 1, 8 Hill St, SOUTH PERTH 6151	9367 4963	mdsorrell@hotmail.com
Geoff Bebb	Treasurer/Editor	Unit 1, 8 Hill St, SOUTH PERTH 6151	9367 4963	geoff@surpac.com
Phyllis Tobin	Committee	8 Fionn Court, ARDROSS 6153	9364 4323	tobins@inet.net.au
Kay Stehn	Committee	5 Bell Court, BAYONET HEAD WA 6330	9844 1656	swagmail@telstra.easymail.com.au
Joan Macneall	Committee	23 Streatham Street, BECKENHAM WA 6107	9451 6008	macneall1@inet.net.au
Barry Higgins	Committee	140 Bernard Road, CARABOODA WA 6033	9407 5311	

"Come All Ye" at the Raffles Hotel

cnr Canning Highway and Canning Beach Rd Applecross

(Upstairs in The river Room)

Next Meeting Friday 2/03/2001 at 7:30pm



AROUND THE TRAPS with the Top Dog

Lately I have been neglecting my duties as president of the Association and instead attending Meetings of divers other worthy groups. One of these is 'Friends of the Art Gallery', which I think speaks for itself. As some may know, there is currently at the gallery an exhibition of work by "widely respected and influential contemporary Australian artist", Robert MacPherson, entitled '184 Boss Drivers'.



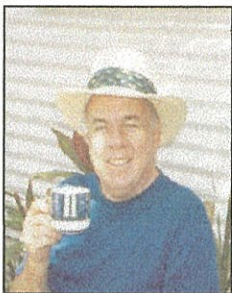
It consists of 184 separate caricatures and "explores Australian subject matter...the history of the drovers and stockmen who lived their life (sic) on the land, disappearing Australian language, flora, fauna, artefacts and roadside signage. At the same time his work engages with the representation of memory, the preservation of vernacular culture, the poetics of naming, the deployment of the ready made and the ongoing legacy of abstraction. The depth to which he has been able to accomplish this double act is rare and special by anybody's standards."(Kristine Smith).

No doubt the familiarity of some of these statements will strike a chord with many members, particularly those who regularly peruse our own aims and objectives as set out in our constitution. When it came out in conversation at the meeting that I was an active member of this association, the person who had planned the opening of the MacPherson exhibition lamented the fact that we had not met sooner, since she had considered getting bush poets involved but had not known where to start.

It strikes me that perhaps it is time we started taking ourselves a little more seriously as an art form, even if we don't understand some of the arty-farty terminology. This does not necessarily mean aiming at a more highbrow audience but just making an effort to improve the quality of what we do and being a bit more selective about when and where we do it.

Let me know what you think.

Stinger



G'Day everyone

You will see elsewhere in the newsletter, that the committee is considering important changes to the organisation of Australia Day. Joan Macneall has proposed that we should have "Champion of Champions" events, so that the normal competition can be opened up and we will not see the same people winning the same competition every year. A "Champion of Champions" event will still give the champions a chance to compete and win in this exalted category.

Kay Stehn has suggested that there needs to be an early appointment of the three judges for all the Australia Day Heats and Finals, and clear direction for judging. She points out that "this is a really crucial area, for criticism and poor image here could destroy the ethos of the movement: that is to FOSTER the public interest in Bush Poetry & Yarn spinning."

These are such crucial areas we would welcome your suggestions. Please contact any member of the committee to express your views. Already the committee has a copy of the judging rules from the APBA. Rusty is reviewing these and the committee will make public the set of rules we decide upon.

So far I have only received one expression of interest in a Workshop on writing Bush Poetry. Keith Lethbridge, John Hayes and myself are planning to run such a workshop in May – but we need interested poets to make it worthwhile.

The Editorial sub-committee is also interested in your ideas about what should be in the newsletter. Are you happy with its content, or are there other things you feel you would like to see in it? Please give me a call on 9367 4963, if you have ideas.

Geoff Bebb

Come All Ye February 2001

We had a very good roll up with new people coming from the interest generated by our Australia Day event. It's a shame that we, therefore, didn't have as many of our "professionals" here on this night. Perhaps they were all exhausted after their mammoth effort on the big day. Hope to see you all here next time "fellas and females" as Keith would say.

Geoff acted as impromptu coordinator and inveigled **Val Read** to be our MC. Thanks Val for acting on such short notice. Val did a great job of tying the evening together with anecdotes and humour.

The evening started with one of our Australia day winners, **Rod Lee**. He set the mood for the evening with his "Gascoyne Junction Pub" where you can't get any food but you can solve all the world's problems in one night. Later Rod solved his own problem of a temporary brain fade by inviting the audience to join in with "We'll All be Rooned" said the CAY members as Rod saved the day in his own inimitable style.

Reminiscence, resourcefulness and humour from our country's people featured throughout the night with such poems as **Keith Lethbridge's** "Wungumbie Hall" full of dancing ghosts from yesteryear and "Surprise" at old Uncle Frank's wicked ways (and energy) with his bride blossom *and* the boarder. Tsk! Tsk! Another witty winner.

Geoff Bebb's family icon "Mt Bebb" was then portrayed with Geoff's customary energy and ability to portray a vivid mental picture. This one is also about a true "monolith" named after Geoffs' family. His rendition of CJ Dennis' "Bush Christening" was equally polished.

PS look forward to having Geoff, Keith and John Haynes, holding a poetry-writing workshop for new writers wishing to improve their style.

Rusty Christensen was asked by **Kel Watkins** to do the next ballad of "The Sprinting Shearer". Rusty's well rehearsed, galloping rendition of this very funny story of a shearer and a swagman who scared each other out of their wits with an imaginary intruder. He left us in stitches as always. So did his rendition of "Caravanning Bliss" from Bob Maygor. Any one in the audience who has ever gone caravanning can really identify with this one, right down to the last grrrrrrraunch of the winding mechanism.

Val Read kept us laughing with "Grandad's Resting Place" which I think was one of Joan Strange's as was "Wife's Horror" of the ironing monster behind the laundry door. Val informs us that Joan had won 28 poetry awards during her writing days. Fantastic! And well deserved. She will be well remembered. Let's hope Val and **Anne Hayes** who read us "Trees" from her collection will carry on the good work for their friend.

Don Wiltshire, back from a 12 month trip around Australia, refreshed, also came up with a new, humorous poem on the last rites with Irish "Mates" Pat McGrath and Mick McGuire and their propensity for drinking at funerals. Am I stereotyping here!

Next we enjoyed the works of **Kerry Lee**, a lady who always brings us a rich tapestry of well observed every day events in gentle and humorous style. Animals feature tonight with "Peppe the Rooster". A gentle bantam who's right out of luck with the bigger ladies in the chook yard. "Good Looker" by G Palmer was more about human foibles and failings, and equally entertaining.

More funny animal observations followed with **Barry Higgins** reciting Sid Hopkinson's "Insects" at the football match and "Animal Cunning". **John Hayes** added to this theme with "The Bargain" and "Stuart's Strays" ending in a riotous cattle stampede.

Sid Hopkinson then took us back to the bush with "The Bush Barber" – Pat from Bungara Flats, and his wonderful idea of "cheek balls" to aid barbers with failing eyesight. . If you haven't heard these hilarious offerings then come to our meetings for the punch lines, I'll let Barry and John and Sid's relaxed styles reveal all.

For more reflective, reminiscences then come with **David Sears**, mustering in God's own country with "Your Church is Bush" by Alan A Symmons and "The Old Man's Muster", or **Joan Macneall** and "The Unknown Heroine" a poem of our early pioneer women's bleak lives and uncertain futures as well as tremendous courage.

To end the evening we had a poem read by **Lorelie Tacoma**, given to her that very night by Rosa Celenza as a "get well" present, a lovely sentiment from the heart.

Continued P7

Winner of Open Written Poetry Award Australia Day 2001

Itchy

He was just five feet four, weighed eight stone, nothing more,
With a head that was balding and matted.
All his clothes were in bits, his pants clung to his hips,
While his shoes were both worn out and battered.

He had dabbled in crime - it was said he'd done time,
Down at Karnet or Canning Vale Prison.
No one knew what he did, but was caught getting rid,
Of possessions that weren't really his'n.

But when out on the straight, it's as certain as fate,
That you'd find him at Saturday's races,
Clutching race book and form, whilst attracting a swarm,
Of dimwitted and battle scarred faces.

To these mates, he's enthuse that his horse couldn't lose,
They'd be mad to ignore his selection,
But they'd better act fast, for the odds wouldn't last
And they'd all have a drink on collection.

Now his drunken mates dim, (mostly dumber than him)
Would believe any words that he'd utter,
Back the horse he'd select, though they'd seldom collect
And would finish the day in the gutter.

When his horse didn't win, he would break the news grim,
That the jockey was paid off by Connell.
And the trainer, Jim Scorse, was seen giving the horse
A concoction from out of a funnel.

Then his mates, feeling bad, unaware they'd been had,
Would surround him in circular fashion,
Just to hear him proclaim, the next favourite was lame,
And they all should be backing his passion.

But what singles him out, from the blokes thereabout,
From the characters dumber and smarter,
Was his scratching his rear and the back of his ear,
Whilst awaiting the race to get started.

In my mind I can see, Itchy standing near me,
Check his tickets and then re-arrange 'em.
Then he'd shuffle a dance, scratch himself through his pants,
Whilst believing his bad-luck was changing.

But his ruin, I'd say, was that Melbourne Cup day,
When the champ Kingston Town had run second.
He ignored what was past, tried to win on the last,
But encountered more strife than he reckoned.

He had backed Cheeky Trot, and he'd put the whole lot
Of the dough he could beg, steal or borrow,
On this four-year-old mare, who could end his despair,
And allow him to square off to-morrow.

Now the twenties he'd got, when he backed Cheeky Trot,
Caused an itch that remained unrelenting,
So he scratched it of course, while he prayed that this horse,
Wouldn't leave him flat broke and lamenting.

You could see him breath fast, as they started the last,
Cheeky Trot made this lightning beginning.
With her postage stamp weight, she led into the straight,
In the *perfect* position for winning.

But a hundred to go, she was joined by Heave Ho
And the two fought with strength undiminished,
But old Itchy was sure, though he'd scratched himself raw,
Cheeky Trot had prevailed at the finish.

But a-lass and a-lack, ere the horses came back,
The *photo* was causing him chagrin.
In a head bobbing go, one horse had its head low,
Heave Ho won by the narrowest margin.

With a roar filled with grief, and with sheer disbelief
Itchy swore as he mangled his ticket,
Threw it down on the steps, as he visibly wept,
While declaring the judge couldn't pick-it.

I stood watching him go, (for I'd backed Heave Ho),
In this tricky and complex environ.
But my smile ear-to-ear, was to soon disappear,
At the wail of the protester's siren.

Protest second 'gainst first, how I inwardly cursed,
Surely this kind of luck couldn't beat us.
And the crowd was inflamed, Cheeky's young rider claimed,
He was hampered, the last hundred metres.

In the middle of it all, I could see Itchy crawl,
Up the steps in pursuit of his wager.
And he cursed and he frowned as he scrambled around -
Even ants on the steps were in danger.

On his hands and his knees, you could hear the bloke wheeze,
Every breath sounding more like a whistle,
When the siren again, put an end to his pain,
By announcing the protest's dismissal.

Down the steps with a spring, I returned to the ring,
To collect my considerable winnings,
While with grief and dismay, Itchy shuffled away,
At the end of long painful innings.

I am oft caused to wince, for I've not seen him since,
He was claimed by the Grim Reaper's aura.
But I'll tell you one thing, Itchy's missed in the ring,
And the racing game's measurably poorer.

© Geoff Bebb 19th October 2000

Profile on Geoff Bebb

He's been writing and publishing poetry since 1966, from his days as a Surveyor on the Woomera Rocket Range, through to his being a computer entrepreneur with his own international software business based in Perth.

He loves writing and also presenting the classical bush poems of the masters.

Coming Events and "Newsy Bits"

Australia Day Fine Tuning Ideas

Australia Day was definitely a huge success as all who were there may testify. Since then the committee has met to see how we can improve the event even more for next year for both the audience and the competitors themselves.

Several suggestions have been made on the how to get "new blood" into the competition so that the association does not fall into the trap of having the same winners each year. A "Champion of Champions" competition was one idea. The ABPA has also given us guidelines for judging which Rusty will follow up. These guidelines will be available for Association members to look at during CAY meetings.

We would welcome suggestions from any of our members competing or not. Please phone any of the committee about this issue or any other issues concerning your association.

Also while on the subject if you are unhappy about anything tell any member of the committee so that we can promptly deal with issues before they loom large and rumours spread. Conversely, if you are happy also tell us and others - a little praise goes a long way in any volunteer organisation, or anywhere else for that matter!.

Marybrook Winery Update 24-25th March 2001

Please note the date change. Six competitors will be chosen to represent the Association. Aub House would like to make this event the alternative Leeuwin Festival and he wants to call it "Six of the Best" (poets that is). You are all again invited to this event as the audience to the poetry evening on the 24th (starting 5.30 pm) and the poets breakfast on the 25th (at 9 am). For more information please call **Rusty Christensen on 9364 4499** closer to the date as some final arrangements are still being made.

PA Systems Expert WANTED Please

We have a brand new PA (sort of portable!) system however we are short on expertise as to its operation. Can any "expert" give us a hand with set up and operation instructions at the next CAY until we are all "experts".

New Master Sheet for Performers at CAY.

In order to assist the coordinator and MC functions at meetings we are devising an improved master sheet for performers at the CAY's. On this sheet we ask you to put how many poems you intend to say and whether you will be reading or reciting them.

All new members will be encouraged and given a fair number of meetings before poems must be recited. We know it's not easy to get up there in the first place and memory seems to disappear out the window with stage fright.

As we mentioned last newsletter, however, we strongly encourage you to learn and recite your poems as this is much more entertaining to the audience. This also makes it fairer for the entertainers who do go to the trouble of learning their works and who at times come a long way to do so. Preference will be given to these committed people.

We can all aspire to their standard with practise and get the same buzz out of attaining a polished performance in front of an appreciative audience.

Authors of Books for Product Table – Request

At the Australia day function \$269 were made for authors thanks to Joan's hard work manning the table. Could authors of books stay near the table at intervals to get books signed as we have frequent requests for this.

Poetry Page

This poem by Brian has been selected for inclusion in the 7th Annual ABPA anthology for the best poems of 2000 sent in to the ABPA magazine throughout Australia. Brian is very happy with this result for he was against some very stiff competition from the Eastern States poets. His 4th trip to Tamworth saw plenty of action in the halls and on the streets where Brian did some busking to sell his books and tapes (3 books in all, the 3rd just hot off the computer for only \$10).

Brian is a member of a Cycle Touring Club and recently spent 10 weeks cycling through Canada. This passion helped him discover poetry 8 years ago. He thinks of his poetry while on the wheel. We agree with you Brian, Canada, its people and wildlife are fascinating. Look out for another book based on the adventures of the "Pedaling Poet" folks.

YOU LEFT BEHIND THE ASHES

You took away our children,
And everything I love,
All we needed was on this earth,
You reached for stars above.
Now the dreams have gone and values changed,
Why I'll never know,
The stars you sought were out of reach,
But still you had to go.
We built a future from the ground,
The world was at our feet,
With children playing in the yard,
And a garden - oh! so neat.

The love we had is dead and gone,
Like the paper and the matches,
The fire that used to bum so bright,
Is just a pile of ashes.
And now the dream's a memory,
Of the life we shared together,
The spring we captured in our youth,
Has turned to stormy weather.
You left behind a broken heart,
And clothes with holes and patches,
And not much else for all those years,
But the embers and the ashes.

The embers of a love so strong,
When the fire burned so bright,
Are only ashes in the wind,
When you're crying in the night.
You even took the curtains,
The curtain rods and sashes,
You took the fire from my heart,
But you left behind the ashes.
I know that life must still go on,
The wounds are only scratches,
But will they heal? - it's hard to say -
For now you want the ashes.



WANDERLUST: Brian Gale's love of poetry and cycling led him on an inspirational solo journey through Canada.

Association Poetry Book Production **Celebrations, Celebrations**

The association's first foray into producing a compilation of our poets' works, surrounding a theme, has been very successful with only a few copies left of "A Welter of Racing and Horse Poems". So far we have raised \$96 for the association and \$192 for the poets. These limited editions ensure that our members can access poetry they have heard and loved for a very small cost. Funds raised, helps the association as well as the poets.

With this in mind we are looking towards producing a similar book with the title "**Celebrations**". **We invite poets to send us their possible contributions.** We have many celebrations in our society, which could evoke interesting poetry and yarns.

If you missed out last time and wish to be considered for this next book please send copies of your poems in **electronic form on a floppy disc (in IBM compatible format) or by email** to Geoff Bebb (geoff@surpac.com) for consideration. Entries must be received by 31st March 2001

Letters from Brian Gale

Brian actually wrote us 2 letters. The first one was a report on Boyup Brook, thanking his fellow poets, **Chris Sadler, Ron Evans, John and Anne Hayes, Joan Macneall** and her grandson (13 yrs old) **Alan Gill** for their support of this event. The event, which is held on the third weekend in February every year in the Town's Hotel beer garden also features a Poet's Breakfast put on by the Lion's Club on the Sunday. Brian reports that everyone had a great weekend, *so please give Brian even more support next year.*

Brian's second letter is as follows :-

Dear Poets,

There is also an opening, if enough interest is shown, for a get together at Boyup Brook in the near future. This is a weekend of paid entertainment. **Can I rely on the support of my fellow poets?**

This has been in the pipeline for some time. The venue is at Harvey Dickson's, 5km from Boyup Brook A lovely, unique setting, free camping and ablutions and these people want to put on a show. All I need is a date to suit most poets and the venue organizers plus the confidence of having the poets to back me.

Let me know how you feel about this idea. A great weekend away doing what we like most and all getting an equal share of whatever is offered.

Those who have been down this way and seen the venue regard it as amongst the best in Australia.

Lets do it ! I need the numbers!

Yours sincerely,
Brian A. Gale (Ph. 9757 2431 evenings 7:30 - 8:00 pm)

Come All Ye continued.....

Tears of hilarity can turn to tears of empathy and thanksgiving within a very short time at our meetings with the wonderful masterly recitation of our dedicated poets as well as our courageous newcomers.

Come one and all to our next meeting for the best value for money entertainment in town.

Cheers

Michelle Sorrell

**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

Geoff Bebb - Editor

Calendar of Events for WA Bush Poets Association

This section is a to help WA Bush Poets plan their activities for the coming months. The table below will show events that the committee knows about, whether or not they have a fixed date.

We will try our best to keep this table updated so that if you are interested, you may enter the events or just attend.

Date	Event	Co-ordinator
24-25 March	Marybrook Winery. "Six of the Best" poetry event. See P5 for further details	Rusty Christensen Ph: 9364 4491
TBA March?	Boyup Brook Poets' Weekend of Paid entertainment at Harvey Dicksons See P7 for further details	Brain Gale Ph: 9757 2431, evenings 7:30pm – 8pm
TBA May??	Greenough River Poets Weekend at Greenough Hamlet	Peter Nettleton Ph: (04) 0777 0053
6 th July 2001	AGM of Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners Association. We need committed available Committee Members!!	Michelle Sorrell Ph: 9367 4963

Return Address

The Hon Secretary
WA Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners Assoc.
Unit 1, 8 Hill St
South Perth WA 6151

Postage Paid

Australia

PP No: 607 742 100 42

Edna Westall

**2/10 McKimmie Road
PALMYRA WA 6157**