

BULLY TIN



& Yarn Spinners

★ Next Muster - June 4th, 2010 7.30pm MC Lorelie Tacoma
Auditorium, Bentley Park, 26 Plantation Dve Bentley 6102.

June is
Start of Winter,
Foundation Day, D-Day,
Red Nose Day,
World Blood Donor Day,
Potty Training awareness
month



A Younger Henry

As this month is the month of Henry Lawson's birthday, I have devoted this first page to 3 of his lesser known shorter poems. The first fits with this month being the start of winter, the second is

indicative of Henry's insight into the minds of those who would comment on the endeavours of others while the third relates to a shipwreck, a reminder that June was the month in 1629 when the Batavia was wrecked.

Rain in the Mountains

The valley's full of misty clouds,
Its tinted beauty drowning,
Tree-tops are veiled in fleecy shrouds,
And mountain fronts are frowning.

The mist is hanging like a pall
Above the granite ledges,
And many a silvery waterfall
Leap's o'er the valley's edges.

The sky is of a leaden grey,
Save where the north looks surly,
The driven daylight speeds away,
And night comes o'er us early.

Dear love, the rain will pass full soon,
Far sooner than my sorrow,
But in a golden afternoon
The sun may set tomorrow.

Australian Bards and Bush Reviewers

While you use your best endeavour to immortalise in verse
The gambling and the drink which are your country's greatest
curse,

While you glorify the bully and take the spieler's part --
You're a clever southern writer, scarce inferior to Bret Harte.

If you sing of waving grasses when the plains are dry as bricks,
And discover shining rivers where there's only mud and sticks;
If you picture 'mighty forests' where the mulga spoils the view --
You're superior to Kendall, and ahead of Gordon too.

If you swear there's not a country like the land that gave you birth,
And its sons are just the noblest and most glorious chaps on earth;
If in every girl a Venus your poetic eye discerns,
You are gracefully referred to as the 'young Australian Burns'.

But if you should find that bushmen -- spite of all the poets say --
Are just common brother-sinners, and you're quite as good as they
You're a drunkard, and a liar, and a cynic, and a sneak,
Your grammar's simply awful and your intellect is weak

THE LIGHT ON THE WRECK

OUT there by the rocks, at the end of the bank,
In the mouth of the river, the Wanderer sank.
She is resting where meet the blue water and green,
And only her masts and her funnel are seen;
And you see, when is fading the sunset's last fleck,
On her foremast a lantern--a light on a wreck.

'Tis a light on a wreck, warning ships to beware
Of the drowned iron hull of the Wanderer there;
And the ships that come in and go out in the night
Keep a careful lookout for the Wanderer's light.
There are rules for the harbour and rules for the wave;
But all captains steer clear of the Wanderer's grave.

And the stories of strong lives that ended in wrecks
Might be likened to lights over derelict decks;
Like the light where, in sight of the streets of the town,
In the mouth of the channel the Wanderer went down.
Keep a watch from the desk, as they watch from the deck;
Keep a watch from your home for the light on the wreck.

But the lights on the wrecks since creation began
Have been shining in vain for the vagabond clan.
They will never take warning, they will not beware,
For they hold for their mottoes 'What matter?' 'What care?'
And they sail without compass, they sail without check,
Till they steer to their grave 'neath a light on a wreck.



Walking Different Tracks

Book Launch I recently had the opportunity to attend a book launch at the Katherine Suzanna Pritchard writing centre (Katherine's Place) up in the hills. What a delightful building and setting, unfortunately marred by being on a busy road. The launch was for a new book of miscellanea by the Karibu women's writing group called "Brussel Sprouts Wont Kill You" Our own **Caroline Sandbridge** is one of the 7 co-authors of the book.

Congratulations, Caroline, we look forward to seeing your and the others work.

2010 Blake Poetry Prize

This national award offers a \$5,000 prize for a poem up to 100 lines that explores the religious or spiritual. Poems sympathetic to those concepts are also equally welcome. Closes 11 June. For entry forms and details go to <http://listmail.bam.com.au/t/r//bhduhu/cfjrkr/x>

IN BRIEF

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership Fees are Due from July 1 - a renewal form is included in this Bully Tin - please pay on time as we don't want to have to send out further reminder notices. Fees are unchanged since last year (and for the last several years)

BADGES

Remember—we now have badges for sale— Selling well, but we still have quite a few. See the treasurer at Muster or send her the \$5 plus \$1 P&P (or include a SSAE)

WRITE UP PERSON NEEDED

Still looking for someone to do the October write up— Dot will be unable to do it as she will have her writing arm strapped tight to her body - any takers??

Report of the Bush Poets Brekky and Poets Brawl at Geraldton 16 May 2010 from Catherine McLernon

This inaugural event was held in conjunction with the National Motoring Heritage Day in Geraldton. After receiving an encouraging response to a call for poets, we held an info session for interested people which revealed some budding and already blooming poets amongst the Midwest scenery.

A chilly morning greeted the bush poets who gathered at Spalding Park ready to commence at 8.30 am. MHR poet and former ABC reporter, **Grant Woodhams** volunteered to be the MC for the event and thoroughly enjoyed himself introducing our poets and doing a little interview with them all. [Once a reporter always a reporter!]

I started the show with Banjo's *Mulga Bill's Bicycle*. **Vic Haesler** from Three Springs (who happens to own a penny farthing bike then stepped up and recited a revision of this poem which was written for him and about him called *Handle's Bicycle*.

Tony Turner, "The Man Under The Hat" from Geraldton and **Heather Wallace**, a farmer's wife from just north of Geraldton then treated us to "double act" Tony started with 'A Visit To The Dentist' which of course describes the silliness of dentists asking you questions when they have filled up your mouth with instruments. Heather responded with 'Spit' which was a delightful reminder of just how useful and necessary spit is. Tony then next took a lower look at the world and recited 'Cockroach' – Heather continued this theme with 'Visitors To My House'. Tony finished their presentation with 'Ants' and how embarrassing it can be when you are waging a losing war against them and visitors come.

Vic Haesler came back to the microphone with two

Bob Magor gems . 'Who Will Give The Bride Away?' has got to be what many fathers-of-the Bride might be thinking when the preacher asks that question. His performance of 'Blue and the Sheep', the tale of a retired sheep dog sent to live in town with Grandma and the havoc he wrecks with a dead sheep, had everyone holding their sides together to stop them splitting.

Stan Maley from Geraldton stepped up to the plate as a novice bush poet and entertained us with two Banjo Paterson classics, 'The Geebung Polo Club' and 'The Man From Ironbark'. Stan has a steady laid back delivery which goes well with bush characters.

Roger Cracknell, who surprised all the Geraldtonians at the Boyup Brook Country Music Festival bush poetry events commenced with 'Our Country' which is an honest look at how important our country is to him. He then told us 'The Saga of Boozer Brown' when the poor old boozer is blown sky high by some of the local yokels when he sits on the dunny in his drunken stupor

George Giudice, one of our local legal eagles in Geraldton, favoured us with two of The Banjo's well known poems. 'The Man From Snowy River' was recited without a slip. He then said that being a lawyer, as was Banjo Paterson, he could well relate to the desire expressed in 'Clancy of the Overflow' for the change from the dingy office to the healthy, carefree life of Clancy.

Yours truly then returned to the stage with my own poem, 'The Emu and The Kangaroo' a [kangaroo's] tail of true friendship when the kangaroo saves his friend the emu from becoming dingo dinner. I followed this with. 'My Other Education' which is the story of my dad showing off and the education that started with language my mother would never have taught me!

Roger Cracknell returned, first with his 'A Fateful Day's Fishing' which tells of his sorry plight when he consumes too much chilli the night before and seriously disrupts the natural order of the billabong resulting in a great catch of stunned Barramundi and a confused croc. . He finished with 'The Operation' which had everyone laughing at his plight in his tale of surgical intervention for piles!

After Roger finished, I returned to the stage, intending to finish the brekky with my party piece, 'Said Hanrahan' by John O'Brien which is always a favourite at this time of the year when farmers are waiting for the rains.

We then introduced the idea of a Poets Brawl, and rang President Brian for a phrase, which had to be included in a poem to be presented in a couple of hours.

(continued next page)

Grant then announced the phrase for the poet's Brawl. We charged a \$5 entry fee with the winner taking the pot.

With a bit of time up our sleeves, we were able to slip a late addition into the brekky **Jim Robinson** from Geraldton arrived with Bonnie his wee dog and performed two of his own.

Fortunately his wife wasn't with him as they are both about her misfortunes. 'House Painting' describes her resulting change of colours on different parts of her body by her inadvertent contact with wet paint. Jim has been a lighthouse keeper on Rottnest Island in his time so of course his wife needed a bike to get around. Unfortunately, he fixed everything except the brakes and poor Doreen ended up looking like a tree in 'Doreen's Bicycle Ride'.

With the audience demanding more, **Tony and Heather** teamed up again with Heather relating some of her tales of woe from helping her husband with farm work in 'Shearing The Lambs' and 'Fencing'. Tony described the beauty of the 'Murray River Cliffs' they experienced on a houseboat holiday. His last offering 'Dictionary-itis' was inspired by a friend who has a tendency to use big words.

The morning was finished with **Grant Woodhams** reciting Dorothea Mackellar's 'My Country' which she wrote as a homesick 19 year old when she was in England. I then invited the audience to sing it with me as when we were at school it was, as Grant reminded us, 'part of the school curriculum'. Everyone joined in even those who didn't know the words well.

Entries were then taken for the Bush Poet's Brawl. There were five entrants; **myself, Tony Turner, Heather Wallace, Stan Maley and Jim Robinson**. We met back at the stage at 1pm to present our poems. I asked Vic Haesler if he would be our judge. He did a great job of judging giving all the poets marks for rhythm and rhyme. The marks were very close ranging between 13 and 17. Every poem was entirely different and very entertaining. The phrase that Brian had given us that had to be included in the poem was 'was up there in the gum tree'.

I wrote 'Matilda's Blue' which tells of me, up a gum tree watching Matilda taking fright at Mum's legs and butting her over in the chook house.

Tony Turner retold the story of Roger Cracknell's Fateful Day's Fishing from his vantage point in the gum tree and how it was his bottle of chilli that Roger used to foul his insides up with.

Heather Wallace wrote an excellent description of all the sights she saw at National Motoring Heritage Day and being pooped on by the bird up there in the gum tree.

Stan Maley was in a reminiscing mood describing the memories that a man remembers of himself as a boy playing in the gum tree.

Jim Robinson related the tale of the small town cricket match between the Aussies and the ex-pat Poms. The game was won when the blacksmith hit the ball so hard it wasn't found until three weeks later stuck in the gum tree branches.

All the poets thought it was a wonderful opportunity to challenge themselves and are ready for the next Poet's Brawl. Yours truly was a photo finish winner.

All in all the day was a tremendous success and our poets are looking forward to another get together soon.

Yours in Bush Poetry
Catherine McLernon

Thank you Catherine for both organising what would appear to have been a great inaugural event (sorry I couldn't be there) and for your excellent wrap—up. Not only that,

but for your dedication and effort in running around looking for new poets. I do hope that some of them at least will consider joining us, and that from time to time we will see them should they find themselves in the big smoke. It is gratifying to know that Bush Poetry, both traditional and contemporary is still "the style of choice" of a considerable portion of our community. "Arty Farty" poetry is all very well, but I have yet to see a public audience of other than the poets mates demanding that the presentations continue long after the advertised finish time as often happens with our style of presentation. Once again WELL DONE!!! - Ed

Four of the poems from the Brawl are presented here— bear in mind that some of these poets are quite new to both the strict structure of our style and also to the "Poets" brawl concept - Well done to all

The winning entry in the Geraldton Poetry Brawl— poems must include the phrase "was up there in the gum tree"

Matilda's Blue © Catherine McLernon May 20120

*I was up there in the gum tree, a flowering sugar gum
Among the shady branches, high above my mum.
She was in the chook shed searching for the eggs
Head down in the nest box, exposing bum and legs*

*As she bent over in her search to get a closer look
Matilda came into the shed to claim her favourite nook.
I think that I should tell you, that Matilda was my goat
With horns that spread out neatly and a soft Angora coat.*

*She saw, from her perspective a creature strange and new
As Mum searched for the eggs with her legs and bum in view.
So Matilda did what goats do when threatened by a foe...
Put her head down, pawed the ground. Then a chook squawked,
"Go!"*

*Matilda's aim was brilliant. She didn't miss a beat.
She hit mum with her horns then followed with her feet.
Mum's legs were in the air, her face was in the dust
She wore a nest box on her head garnished with some rust.*

*Matilda nicked off quickly when she realised she had blue'd
As Mum regained her posture and told her she'd be stewed.
There were no eggs to eat that day. The goat escaped slow death
And lived a long and spoiled life until her dying breath.*



Under Gum Trees
16th May 2010

A Poem by Stan Maley

Was up there in the gum tree,
The little boy swung wild and free.
Smooth trunk stood with grace
Enchanted the lad as he lifted his face
To branches spreading wide
Leaves pointed, hung down by his side.
His place, this tree, long ago.
As he grew to a man and moved away,
Time wrought its fate, cruel and sad.
Blinded him from the memories of a lad,
Of his swing, the twenty eights above.
Pink and greys, ants on the trunk, his love.
The man came by one day, to suddenly see.
Happiness, long ago, up there in the gum tree.

“Was up there in the gum tree”
By Heather Wallace

Helen and Ian Harrison are such a great pair,
creating and organizing, this Motoring Heritage Fair.



They collect all sorts of ‘junk’, and wonderful ‘treasures’
I saw some odd grinding things, and weird things that measure.

The ladies from Northampton, have old sewing machines,
Ones for delicate lacy things, and also mending jeans.



A blacksmith beating things from many past years,
Brian Hipper shearing sheep and flashing, sharp shears.

Cars of all descriptions, not so new and old.
A 58 Black Cadillac and a Benz of silver/gold.



I ate some fairy floss, after a burger in a bun.
Felt contented with the food now settled in my tum.

I watched the little train trundling it’s narrow little track.
And rested in the shade and lay there on my back.

Then something wet and gooey did plop upon my head
I touched it and smelt it I must admit with dread!

A bird had relieve itself dropping it all upon me.
The nasty little culprit was up there in the gum tree!!!



The Cricket Match © **Jim Robinson**

The small town was divided
With feelings fit to break
It was the cricket season
And honour was at stake

They were playing for the ashes
So what else could they do
The Aussies and the ex-pat Poms
But have their own game too

They didn’t have a proper pitch
Where they could play the game
It was just a clearing in the bush
But it did them just the same

The stakes were high, the losing team
It was made very clear,
The winning team, for one whole night
Would pay for all their beer.

The ex-pat Poms all batted first
And though the pitch was rough
Made a hundred and fifty runs
And thought that was enough

The Aussie side went in to bat
And amidst the cheers and jeers
Were nine down for a hundred
And the poms could taste those beers

The last man in was the blacksmith
Who had an awkward style
But with muscles hard as steel
Could hit the ball a mile

He hit the ball, away it soared
Way up towards the sun
And before it even left the bat
The Aussies shouted “Run!”

Lost ball, the ex-Poms chorused
Those runs don’t count at all
“Piss Bum!”, the blacksmith told them
“We run till you find the ball.”

The runs were got. The game was won.
That night the beer flowed free
And everybody wondered
Just where the ball could be

And it was three weeks later
Before the ball was found
It was up there in the gum tree
Twenty feet above the ground

*Written for the Poets Brawl,
National Motoring heritage Day,
16 May 2010, Spalding Park, Geraldton*

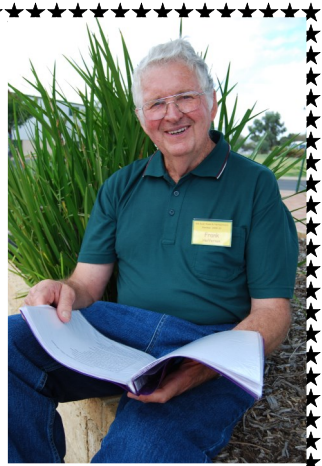


Poets Profile It's a few months since we last featured one of our local poets, but they've not been forgotten. Over the past few years, most of our regular performers have been featured, however a few got missed along the way. This is one of those. This month we feature a poet who hails from the wheatbelt town of Narrogin, but comes to Perth quite regularly. Last month, the local paper ran a full page article on him and this is an extract from that piece. I refer to **Frank Heffernan**.

Frank has been writing bush poetry on and off for 60 years. He explains where his passion and inspiration comes from and how it relates to farmers. The rise and fall of Merino wool, keeping trains on country railroads, climate change and even finding his son a wife are some of the bush poems Frank has written about. The topics, close to the semi-retired farmer's heart echo the thoughts of his peers living on the land. His inspiration is from the farm, his family and issues that affect everyday people. Last year Frank penned 'Bring back the train' highlighting the plight of wheatbelt farmers wanting to railway upgrades to take grain off road. - Three months later, the Strategic Grain Network Committee recommended the closure of more lines, a move vehemently opposed by farmers and communities.

By choosing subjects his audience can relate to, Frank has been able to capture their attention and highlight social issues including domestic violence and road trauma. Bush poetry can be any subject and there is only one rule - it must have rhyme and meter," Frank explained. "Often it's a humorous event that triggers a story and it all goes from there. "The hardest bit is to get the first two lines to rhyme. Once you get that, the rest comes together pretty easily."

While not as famous as old masters such as Henry Lawson, Banjo Patterson and CJ Dennis, Frank has recited his own material to Australia Day crowds in Perth as well as in many towns throughout his district. "I love hearing the other poets. They come up with so many ideas I hadn't thought of and I have ideas they haven't thought of. Its just amazing how much variety and material there is." Frank said. "I love playing with words, meter and rhyme. I just find it a diversion from the harsh realities of life." - Frank's poem "Bring back the train" is on the next page



(Mainly) Aussie — History This Month June

| | | |
|------|------|--|
| 1st | 1829 | WA coastline first sighted by WA's "first fleet" |
| | 1850 | First Convicts arrive in WA |
| 4th | 1629 | "Batavia" wrecked at the Abrolhos Is. |
| 5th | 1988 | Kay Cottee (1st female) ends solo sailing circumnavigation of the earth |
| 6th | 1835 | John Batman signs treaty with aboriginal elders for land which will become Melbourne |
| | 1859 | Qld separates from the colony of NSW |
| | 1944 | D-Day Allies land in Normandy |
| 7th | 1825 | Van Diemen's Land separates from the colony of NSW |
| 8th | 1951 | School of the Air opens (Alice Springs) |
| 9th | 1928 | First flight across the Pacific (C K Smith) |
| 11th | 1851 | First significant gold find in Australia (Vic) |
| 13th | 1928 | Vegemite first appears on shop shelves. |
| 15th | 1215 | Magna Carta signed in England by King John |
| 17th | 1867 | Henry Lawson born |
| | 1893 | Gold discovered at Kalgoorlie (P. Hannan) |
| 18th | 1829 | Swan River Colony proclaimed by Gov Stirling |
| 20th | 1988 | \$2 coin replaces bank note |
| 23rd | 1810 | Australia first Post Office opens (Sydney) |
| 24th | 1870 | Adam Lindsay Gordon dies by his own hand |
| 25th | 1950 | Korean War starts |
| 28th | 1919 | treaty of Versailles - WWI officially end |
| | 1880 | Ned Kelly's "Last Stand" at Glenrowan |

May Short Poetry Comp -

Results of the May "Winter" short poetry Competition were
 1st Grace Williamson 2nd Brian Langlely
 3rd Chris Preece 4th Frank Heffernan
 Grace achieved 23½ marks while the other 3 all got 23 and needed to be separated on countback— The 4 winning poems are presented in this edition. Congratulations to the winners and a BIG THANK YOU to the 5 judges who were co-opted on the night.

1st "GIVE ME WINTER ANY DAY." © Grace Williamson

Thirsty, dry and barren ground welcomes the soaking rain
 The plants will shine bright and green and flowers come again
 "Give me winter any day" I heard when I was young
 I thought that they were crazy, I loved the summer sun
 But now that I am older, those words ring true for me
 Those winter days are cosy, with a rug upon my knee
 The fires burning brightly, warming the cold night air
 Lounging round with my family in a comfy chair
 Drinking milk or hot chocolate in the micro zapped
 The softness of a jumper around my body wrapped
 A doona cosy on my bed and 'jarmies" oh so snug
 I lie there in my cocoon, just like a little bug
 It's raining on the outside, the garden is all fine
 I cuddle up with a book my world's lost in each line
 Now the years have moved along I cry the cry of old
 "Give me winter any day" those days when it's so cold.

2nd Fixing Winter
© Brian Langley

Winter time, I do not like; the days are much too short;
too dark for early rising, for surfing or for sport
and after work, the eve'nings, they're really much too dark
for catching fish or swimming, or jogging in the park.

The answer to this problem? It's very plain to see;
I'd have it fixed in no time, if it was up to me.
For as the UV index, in winter time is low,
that's the time to be outdoors, the time for us to go

down to the beach for fishing, or up on mountain peaks
skiing on the winter slopes, you could, for many weeks.
There's many days in winter, when these things could be done;
rain comes down just now and then, there's really lots of sun.

So how to fix up winter and make it fit to live
From May right through to August? My thoughts on it I'll give
The answer to this question, I'll tell you loud and clear:
All work should be forbidden, those four months of the year

3rd Winter © Chris Preece

Storm clouds gather over sea grey and green
Wonder and beauty in an ever changing scene
Raindrops patter loudly on the window panes
Glisten and sparkle on green trees as it wanes

Umbrellas and raincoats, grey clouds at dawning
Wet clothes and puddles and white misty mornings
Slippers and fireplaces, hot cups of sweet tea
Glow of soft lamplight at home wait for me

The tiresome hot days and nights had their run
Enjoy sitting reading in warm winter sun
The soft glow of evening after a crisp cold day
Warm wool around me now winter's here to stay

These pleasures of the season given free to us all
So accept and enjoy natures gift as rain falls

4th 3 Faces of Winter
© Frank Heffernan

I awoke at dawn from a freezing night
And walked outside to a glorious sight
White frost lay thick on the frozen ground;
It was perishing cold, yet not a sound
It's winter!

The pouring rain turns dry land to mud,
From a tiny trickle to a massive flood.
We drained some down to an earthen tank;
For it's liquid gold in a farmer's bank.
It' winter!

The west wind springs from the gentle breeze
To a howling gale that whips the trees.
The dark clouds roll with a light that's eerie;
The days are dull and damp and dreary.
It's winter!

Bring back the train by Frank Heffernan Oct. 2009

There are hundreds of rigs with their great heavy loads;
They're clogging our highways and buggerin' the roads.
What are they doing there, could someone explain?
Why don't we put all our freight on a train.
When I went to school our teachers all taught
That rail was the way to get produce to port.

Dozens of towns covering much of the nation
Were built round the site of a new railway station.
Then most of our goods and service and mail
Was sent us to all, though a network of rail;
Progress and growth the country enjoyed;
Jobs were a plenty, 'coz the railways employed.

So bring back the train, please bring back the train;
To cart all the super, our fuel, wool and grain!
It's disgrace to our gov'ments, and pollies elected;
For decades our rail has been sadly neglected.
Putting so many trucks on road is insane,
When it's smarter and better and safer by train.

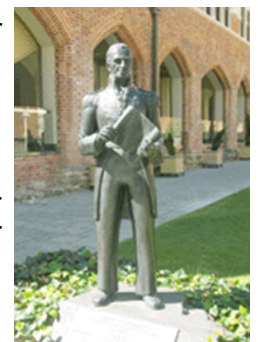
But we must have vision and courage to invest,
In fast modern loco's that equal the best.
And widen the tracks to the new standard gauge;
And plan for the future of a bright golden age.
Get the trucks off our highways, both gravel and tar;
For the sake of commuters in buses and car.
The answer for transport is really quite plain---;
Just fix up the railways, and bring back the train!

Being the month that the Swan River Colony was founded, I went looking for a suitable poem but was unable to find anything, so instead, I have put in a bit history about a statue that resides in Central Perth. The statue is of our first Governor, Capt James Stirling.

History Of the Captain Stirling Statue: The Captain James Stirling statue was funded in 1979 by Channel Nine and Radio 6KY, to commemorate the State's 150th Anniversary.

The statue was originally unveiled outside the front entrance of the R&I Bank building in Barrack Street but was later placed in storage following the demolishing of the building in 1996. It was only in 2002 that any thought was given to dusting the old captain off and restoring him.

In 2002 Housing and Works Minister, Tom Stephens, called for expressions of interest from local government and community groups for a new home for Perth's founder, Captain Stirling. Finally in 2003, Stirling saw light of day. Fully restored he was placed in Foundation Park near the spot where the new colony was declared Perth and where marking the day Mrs Helen Dance, the wife of H.M.S. Sulphur's captain, ceremoniously cut down a tree



May Muster Wrap up , by Dot Langley

Tonight was our Short poetry Competition and we had 17 entries (some of our poets were inspired to write not one but two poems) and we thank them for their efforts.. There were entries from well known writers and some who have only just started to write bush poetry. To each and everyone a really BIG THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION. To our readers who once again stepped up to present the poems, a BIG THANK YOU for your participation and the time that you spent preparing for this night's entertainment. To the winner's and place getters, congratulations. This was a close competition with not many marks separating the poems and we needed to do a count back to decide the top four. To everyone a FANTASTIC JOB WELL DONE as it's great to see the commitment with your poetry to our association. We must not forget our JUDGES these people are chosen at random and they did a fantastic job. If you are ever called upon to be a judge don't be nervous and worry that you won't do the right thing. If you as a judge or even as a listener, start with the idea that every poem is going to be a good one and begin your scoring with a base score of 7 out of 10. Then you can go up or down depending on what about the poem that you like. For these types of competitions it really does get down to what the particular judge liked. There isn't time to be counting syllables and checking for the metre, although sometimes you will hear the rhyming structure within a particular poem. Without our judges we couldn't have these types of competitions. We would then have to make them into a much more formal structure with the poets then spending long hours refining and correcting their poems and I think that would spoil the spontaneity that our contributing poets give us for these 16 short line poems all of which had to have the theme "Winter" - a bit more about them later.

Our numbers were down and to those who missed coming you missed a great night's entertainment from everyone. The first half, capably MC by **Chris Preece**, had some of our performers and presenters tackling new subjects and areas of concern. For our first presentation had **Brian Langley** looking at what he considered an eyesore, the Ferris wheel on the foreshore. He had penned a short verse "To a Ferris Wheel" about this structure that he disliked shortly after its erection and he was thrilled to see that it was being torn down and packed away. Now perhaps we could see the river and the lovely sky line once more.

Teresa Rose presented Pat Sundstrom's poem "For Everything a Season" where, with the coming of winter there is a change in the air as the colours of the trees change. There is a crispness about with the wind hinting at the cold to come. Whilst inside snuggled up in woolens with the stove glowing the buffeting of the storms make us wonder if the bridge will be covered with water. But the seasons must run as they always will for the sleeping earth will nurture the new growing things while we ride out the storm or two.

Jack Matthews is new amongst us but he had a tale to tell. Initially he didn't know the author but Brian put him right at supper time. See Note. "The Tale of Sonia Snell" is the story of a young lady needing to spend a penny at the railway station 'loo'. — The problem was that the seats had just been freshly painted and she was stuck fast. They managed to undo the seat and cart her off to hospital, with the seat well and truly stuck on her, well never mind!!! The Doctors were astounded but one young chap was quick to let everyone know that he had indeed seen such a sight before but never framed!!

NOTE The author is Cyril Fletcher (1920 – 2005) who was a well know poet in the old BBC vaudeville style era and was responsible for a number of naughty but nice poems. Even though it is a British poem, it is of a style and subject that fits nicely in our genre and could have occurred here.

In a new direction for her **Shan Rose Brown** presented Banjo's "A Bush Christening". The story of a young lad who wasn't christened and his mother worried about his future if he should die. The priest on his travels said he would name him. The lad thinking that this sounded very like branding hid in a log. The priest said if someone would poke a stick up the log and as the lad came out he would name him. But the he forgot what name had been chosen. So he threw the flask of whiskey at him that was McGinnis whiskey and that is why he is known as McGinnis McGhee.

When you think back to Banjo's time there would have been people from all over the British Isles. Therefore he would have heard different people with different accents on the street saying his poetry. So it was lovely to hear this poem with a Scottish burr to the words. Gives a whole new meaning to 'poetry for the people', not just for the upper crust!!!

With their double act **Kerry Bowe** and **Barry Higgins** had some of Syd Hopinsons short ones. The first had Eve trying on her fig leaves, while Adam was hoping for autumn to come early so he could see the leaves fall. The second had a blonde very confused about her husbands driver (one of his golf sticks). She thought that the car designers were very clever to also design the "driver".

Grace Williamson does enjoy Joan Strange's poetry and with one of hers, "Mother Day" was appropriate as that special day was coming up. For all Mothers who has had this happen. The breakfast in bed when the tea is carried in on the tray with the toast burned and the tea cold and very weak, the cornflakes have overflowed the bowl and there is butter on the floor. The preparation has taken days with cries of "don't come in here" while there is the sound of rustling paper and as these gifts are offered she opens up each parcel. A tear is shed as these packages hold prizes that no money can buy – the priceless gift of love.

Colin Thomas had an apology to Banjo with his poem, "There's Movement". Although with this version it wasn't

the horse that had got away it was the Boss who was having trouble with his bowels!! Mrs Boss was quite concerned so she had baked him a pie with a list of quite frightening ingredients guaranteed to get things moving. As he made a final dash for the outside toilet he sat down with a sigh of relief. Now young Billy was always in trouble with his pranks and he thought it would be funny if he lit the fuse on some crackers and stuffed them in the bin by the toilet wall. No one appreciated his humor and they chased him all over the place and threatened him with torture or even hanging!

We didn't expect **John and Ann Hayes** to be with us as they were meant to be heading for England but with the planes all being grounded they had had their holiday plans interrupted. John always likes Lawson, and with "When Your Pants Begin To Go", tells of the despair of a person who has had misfortune and strife with his collar all clouded and a shirt that isn't white. If when you were flush you took your pleasure and didn't allow for what was to come you had better tell your friends that you are getting on all right. But it is hard to wear a grin when your most important garment is getting rather thin.

Next was **Ron Ingham** who told us that In the Women's Weekly in February 1943 there appeared a poem by Bobbie Tobruk titled "Sapper T Reg". This told of the little dog befriended by the troops, who had no pedigree. All the troops loved him and shared their beer and biscuits with him. He shared the line duties and saw his share of fighting and they had taught him how to run for cover. He dodged dive bombers but he had to die under an Arab Truck. He was buried with full honors.

Being the month of Mothers Day, Ron then sang in Italian "Mumma" The lovely song by Connie Francis tells of days that she was guided by her mumma and that safe in the glow of her love nothing can ever replace the warmth of her embrace.

Because John wasn't expected to be here **Grace Williamson** had offered to present his poem "Ode To Winter". With the days growing shorter and the autumn leaves sweeping all around this heralds the coming storms with lightning and thunder. With the coming of the rain the rivers spread out over the plains and the drought of the inland is broken by the heavenly rain. As winter passes there is the carpet of green spread out across the landscape and with the birds song heralding the birth to the spring.

Frank Heffernan up from the country had a poem about their "Beach House". They share this quaint house with other rellies but it is in need of some TLC very quickly as the rain poured in and the gutters were leaking. A mate called Fred was called in to give his expert opinion. Well the roof has just got to go, so off it came. The weather turned nasty and the winds blew over a big tree which split the joint in two. This caused a blackout and the switchboard was bad enough to start a fire. The only way to fix it? To do a complete re-wire. The plumbing atrocious, the carpets full of dust and mites and the awful battered wood doors rattle day and night. Fred also tells them they will need some insulation and a solid cast iron log fire to warm everyone. The list just kept getting bigger. So if you own a old beach house take a tip from Frank give it to the Salvo's, donate it to some other charity, but never, never get Fred to renovate it.

Graham Hedley used Lawsons "Faces in the Street" for his satirical look at The Voters In the Street. With the English election and our own coming soon its was an appropriate presentation. They lie the men who tell us that they will form the government and with their policies presented the voters in the street look for guidance from anyone they meet. The polling station officers arrive and the voters drift in to cast their votes but will the apathy of the drifters change the status quo or will the bored to tears electors really care who is in power. The candidates will be worried but do they really care about the voters in the street? Surely they are only keen of being elected!

Chris Preece read another one of John Hayes poems simply titled "Winter". For when its raining it is a joyful sound as it rattles on the rooftops and patters on the ground, as it bubbles in the gutters then gurgles down the drain. Then the storm hits with its thunder and lightning and the wind thumping on the window. Soon you will see the changing scene as hills and valleys are covered with many shades of green. The frosts that come and the freshness or the early morning dew while the trees wait for springtime to dress their limbs with leaves.

After a lovely supper with as always our thanks to Edna and her band of willing helpers. I know that this is the time to catch up with people BUT we are here to listen and enjoy poetry. If a few of you want an extended period to socialise perhaps we should have a different get together time on another day.

After supper it was time for the Short poetry Competition. With 17 poems written by **Pat Sundstrom, Chris Preece, Frank Heffernan, Dave Smith, Teresa Rose, Grace Williamson, Owen Keane, Syd Hopkinson, Brian Langley, Graham Hedley, Colin Thomas and Kerry Bowe** we were presented with some vastly different ideas of what Winter, the theme of the competition meant to the various poets. While some were presented by their author, others were presented by a nominated "reader", the judging, hopefully was on the poem, not the presentation, however it is often difficult to split the two.

Presenters who did not write entries were **Dot Langley, Shan Rose Brown and Jill Miller**. Some of the writers also present poems from others.

After the competition entries had been presented, the judges scores were tallied up and checked - The list of winners and the winning poems are elsewhere in this Bully Tin. A small prize was awarded to the winner. Certificates for the top 4 will be presented at the June Muster.

With the short poetry competition taking less time than anticipated Chris asked if there were other presenters available to take us up to closing time.

At this point I was very busy helping Brian count and decide the winners of the short poetry competition and I may have missed some vital bits of people's presentations, so I apologise as I don't have more than two hands.

Lesley McAlpine had a little poem used at her grandson's naming. By that well known author, Anon "A Mother's Wish" is a charming verse that I have seen different version of. It is a wish that her child will look back and remember that she spent time with him now because children grow up when you are not looking. So the mother won't spend time cleaning and cooking and the dust and the cobwebs can wait because her baby needs cuddling and babies don't keep.

Ron Ingham gave us another with a Mothers Day theme. "Dear Mum I'm Safe and Well". I believe that this piece came from Terry and Jenny Bennetts with their song of the same title. From their web site news letter, their explanation of how it came about is "The niece of a soldier who served during WW2 showed us a letter he sent home to his mother from Tobruk and asked us if we could write a song about it. The letter was written as a poem with every verse ending with the words 'Dear Mum I'm Safe And Well' Although it was censored we took what he had written all those years ago, filled in the gaps, added a tune and it ended up as this Albums opening song".

With some of Syd Hopkinson's wry sense of the ridiculous **Barry Higgins** gave us "The Illiterate Shearer" (or as he puts it for the tautologists among us "The Illiterate Stockman who Couldn't Read or Write"). The story of this bloke who had made is fortune mustering and offered to help out at Cue with driving the dunny cart. But when he was asked to sign a contract he couldn't because he couldn't write his name. So he caught the train to the city and went shopping. A shop girl seeing his large roll of bank notes called a Policeman and he took him to the local bank to put the money into a bank account. When asked where he would be if he could read and write he replied that he would be back up in the Murchison driving the dunny cart at Cue!

With his second one "Tender Loving Care", the Matron was astounded to see a patient running down the hall with a nurse in hot pursuit carrying a bed pan.. She had told the new nurse to prick his boil - certainly not the other way about. !!!

With apologies to Ten Green Bottles **Frank Heffernan** had "Ten Fair Maidens" who slowly reduced after some of them had had too much wine, went missing, felt ill and died, were not good mixers, went home, married the bloke next door, got sick, had an argument and shot through but now he is quite happy but feeling glum and with eight grandchildren he is content with the last of the fair maidens.

Brian Langley then recited his Mother's Day poem. Perhaps a different slant on love of your mother. She is sitting there in her chair, unaware of her situation. She tells him of the her childhood and later the husband that she loved. Her children have died, a son at Long Tan and a daughter who didn't survive infancy. Another son she hasn't seen for many years but wonders where he is. She is getting very frail and wonders why this visitor, as he puts his arms around her, weeps as he calls her mum. The winning poems from the competition were then read out to complete the night.

June 25th is Red Nose Day, the day where money is raised for research into Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

For all those who have been affected by this terrible calamity, here is a little Hug for you from the SIDS website.

The Universal Rx
by Henry Matthew Ward

No moving parts, no batteries,
No monthly payments and no fees;
Inflation proof, non-taxable,
In fact, it's quite relaxable.

It can't be stolen, won't pollute,
One size fits all, do not dilute.
It uses little energy,
But yields results enormously.

Relieves your tension and your stress,
Invigorate your happiness;
Combats depression, makes you beam,
And elevates your self esteem.

Your circulation it corrects,
Without unpleasant side affects.
It is , I think, the perfect drug:
May I prescribe, my friend,.....the hug!

(and, of course, fully returnable!)

Letter to the Editor— (This was apparently e-mailed to me some couple of months back, but I did not receive it then . I have now been given a paper copy.) —

With reference to “Australian Heritage” on page 5 of the March 2010 Bully Tin—I feel very strongly singing with feeling and standing still when “Advance Australia Fair” is being played.

I am proudly an Australian Citizen and am very saddened and annoyed when those around me talk and fool around instead of showing respect for our flag and country. Whilst I have the floor—I know that many of our members, poets or not appreciate and admire the wonderful memory of those who are able to recite good poetry. We don't mind listening for more than 6 minutes after all, what are we attending the evening for?

Preambles are necessary information and should be short and to the point. All other talk unnecessary and should only be used if there is time to be filled in.

So performers who have poetry to share, whether reading or performing should not have to worry about rushing through it because it spoils the enjoyment of the listener.

Chris Preece 16—3—2010

Chris— Thank you for your comments—It's nice when members do feel strong enough about anything for them to write in to the Bully Tin and make their views public. Hopefully this will invoke other comment.

I'm not quite sure how your comments above relate to the particular article which was an extract from an address by Edmund Barton in 1907 about being Australian (no matter what your origin) - perhaps it was triggered by the action of some people on Australia Day? I also deplore the fact that some people don't seem to respect our traditions, however, this is one of the penalties we pay for being a “Free Country”. Another possible reason for this “disrespect” is the inherent psyche of Australians that we do not stand on ceremony and certainly don't show “respect” to our National leaders.

As to your second comment—I too admire the ability of some people to remember poems that go on and on and on. However that does not make the long poems any easier for me and many others to concentrate on for an extended period. It would seem, from comments at performance workshops by several National Champion Bush Poets and lecturers in public performance that the average audience member has only about a 4 minute concentration. Perhaps you might be one of those who has a longer one. (also being a devotee, you likely expect longer poems) As to preambles, there is a problem with your comment in that in SOME cases, the presentation is actually a story which becomes the preamble to a short poem. We after all are also “Yarn Spinners”, as well as poets and it is hoped that performing members develop skills to tell a story, be it factual or fictional, in isolation or as a preamble to a poem. A good story can be just as enjoyable as a good poem. On the other hand a long boring preamble can destroy a presentation

As to your last paragraph—I have never suggested that any story or poem be “rushed” - in fact the opposite is true. I suggest that presenters slow down when they are in front of an audience. I have however commented many times about choosing suitable material to present. - Ed

.And a bit of philosophy from CJ Dennis's 2nd book, “Digger Smith”

Out West

I've seen so much uv dirt an' grime
I'm mad to 'ave things clean.
I've seen so much uv death," 'e said-
"So many cobbbers lyin' dead-
You won't know wot I mean;
But, lad, I've 'ad so much uv strife
I want things straightened in my life.
"I've seen so much uv 'ate," 'e said-
"Mad 'ate an' silly rage-
I'm yearnin' for clear thoughts," said 'e.
"Kindness an' love seem good to me.
I want a new, white page
To start all over, clean an' good,
An' live me life as reel men should."
We're sittin' talkin' by the fence,
The sun's jist goin' down,
Paintin' the sky all gold an' pink.
Said e. "When it's like that, I think-"
An' then 'e stops to frown. Said e,
"I think, when its jist so,
Uv God or somethin': I dunno.
"I ain't seen much uv God," said 'e;
"Not 'ere nor Over There;

But, partly wot the padre said,
It gits me when I stare
Out West when it's like that is now.
There must be somethin' else-some'ow.
"I've thought a lot," said Digger Smith-
"Out There I thought a lot.
I thought uv death, an' all the rest,
An' uv me mates, good mates gone West;
An' it ain't much I've got;
But things get movin' in me 'ead
When I look over there," 'e said.
"I've seen so much uv death," said 'e,
"Me mind is in a whirl.
I've 'ad so many thoughts uv late." . . .
Said I, "Now, tell me, tell me straight,
Own up; ain't there a girl?"
Said 'e, "I've done the best I can.
Wot does she want with 'arf a man?"
It weren't no use. 'E wouldn't talk

Uv nothin' but the sky.
Said 'e. "Now, dinkum, talkin' square,
When you git gazin' over there
Don't you 'arf want to cry?
I wouldn't be su'prised to see
An angel comin' out," said 'e.
The gold was creepin' up, the sun
Was 'arf be'ind the range:
It don't seem strange a man should cry
To see that glory in the sky-
To me it don't seem strange.
"Digger!" said 'e. "Look at it now!
There must be somethin' else-some'ow."

