

The Bully Tin

December, 2005



& Yarn Spinners

Monthly Muster at the Como Bowling & Recreation Club cnr Hensman & Sandgate Sts, South Perth
 Next meeting: Friday 2nd December 2005 at 7.00pm for 7.30pm start.
www.wabushpoets.com

Poets & Port Night Christmas Muster ★ Raffles ★ Port Christmas Goodies

The Fire at Ross's Farm

The True Meaning of Christmas by Henry Lawson

The squatter saw his pastures wide
 Decrease, as one by one
 The farmers moving to the west
 Selected on his run;
 Selectors took the water up
 And all the black-soil round;
 The best grass-land the squatter had
 Was spoilt by Ross's ground.

Now many schemes to shift old Ross
 Had racked the squatter's brains,
 But Sandy had the stubborn blood
 Of Scotland in his veins;
 He held the land and fenced it in,
 He cleared and ploughed the soil,
 And year by year a richer crop
 Repaid him for his toil.

Between the homes for many years
 The devil left his tracks:
 The squatter 'pounded Ross's stock,
 And Sandy 'pounded Black's.
 A well upon the lower run
 Was filled with earth and logs,
 And Black laid baits about the farm
 To poison Ross's dogs.

It was, indeed, a deadly feud
 Of class and creed and race,
 So Fate supplied a Romeo
 And a Juliet in the case;
 And more than once across the flats,
 Beneath the Southern Cross,
 Young Robert Black was seen to ride
 With pretty Jenny Ross.

One Christmas time, when months of drought
 Had parched the western creeks,
 The bush-fires started in the north
 And travelled south for weeks.
 At night along the river-side
 The scene was grand and strange—
 The hill-fires looked like lighted streets
 Of cities in the range.

The cattle-tracks between the trees
 Were like long dusky aisles,
 And on a sudden breeze the fire
 Would sweep along for miles;
 Like sounds of distant musketry
 It crackled through the brakes,
 And o'er the flat of silver grass
 It hissed like angry snakes.

It leapt across the flowing streams
 And raced the pastures through;
 It climbed the trees, and lit the boughs,
 And fierce and fiercer grew.
 The bees fell stifled in the smoke
 Or perished in their hives,
 And with the stock the kangaroos
 Went flying for their lives.

The sun had set on Christmas Eve,
 When through the scrub-lands wide
 Young Robert Black came riding home
 As only natives ride.
 He galloped to the homestead door
 And gave the first alarm:
 'The fire is past the granite spur,
 And close to Ross's farm.

'Now, father, send the men at once,
 They won't be wanted here;
 Poor Ross's wheat is all he has
 To pull him through the year.'
 'Then let it burn,' the squatter said;
 'I'd like to see it done—
 I'd bless the fire if it would clear
 Selectors from the run.

'Go if you will,' the squatter said,
 'You shall not take the men—
 Go out and join your precious friends,
 But don't come here again.'
 'I won't come back,' young Robert cried
 And, reckless in his ire,
 He sharply turned his horse's head
 And galloped towards the fire.

And there for three long weary hours,
 Half-blind with smoke and heat,
 Old Ross and Robert fought the flames
 That neared the ripened wheat.
 The farmer's hand was nerved by fear
 Of danger and of loss;
 And Robert fought the stubborn foe
 For love of Jenny Ross.

But serpent-like the curves and lines
 Slipped past them and between
 Until they reached the boundary where
 The old coach-road had been.
 'The track is now our only hope,
 There we must stand,' cried Ross,
 'For nought on earth can stop the fire
 If once it gets across.'

Then came a cruel gust of wind,
 And, with a fiendish rush,
 The flames leapt o'er the narrow path
 And lit the fence of brush.
 'The crop must burn!' the farmer cried,
 'We cannot save it now',
 And down upon the blackened ground
 He dashed his ragged bough.

But wildly, in a rush of hope,
 His heart began to beat,
 For o'er the crackling fire he heard
 The sound of horses' feet.
 'Here's help at last,' young Robert cried,
 And even as he spoke
 The squatter with a dozen men
 Came racing through the smoke.

Down on the ground the stockmen jumped
 And bared each brawny arm;
 They tore green branches from the trees
 And fought for Ross's farm:
 And when before the gallant band
 The beaten flames gave way,
 Two grimy hands in friendship joined—
 And it was Christmas Day.

While this poem reflects
 the true meaning of Christ-
 mas it is also a tribute to
 the memory of a special
 WABP&YS member -
Connie Herbert

Droppings from "The Boss Cocky"



Hello! to all my Bush Poetry friends.

Our Association at the moment, is like a duck on a pond, gliding smoothly across the water, but paddling like crazy underneath.

We have made an official application to the US consul, which has been sent on to head office in Canberra, for approval, which they say is a given, there's many a slip, but I feel certain that we will have cowboy poet, Dick Warwick, with us for a week and a half in early March '06.

Of course, life goes on in between. Australia Day looms large in January, keep spreading the word to all and sundry about the fun and great entertainment, under the trees on Wireless Hill, for three hours, for only a donation to a good cause. The December muster will take the form of a Port and Poetry night. With Christmas well and truly on the radar screen, the committee feels it should show appreciation to our supporters - you mob - for supplying the audience for the performers to try out any new [and old] material on. If you have a friend whom you wish to bring along, please do so, what better introduction to our art than a glass of port and some Chrissy cake ?

It is possible that 2006 will be a busy year for Bush Poetry. I have stated many times, with conviction, what a grand band our committee is. Having said that, I am loath to load them up with too much work, even though they are willing workers. I have made this appeal before, and it has fallen on deaf ears, but, if any of our friends out in Bush Poetry land, feel they could spare a little of their time and talent, we would love to have them come join us - things don't just happen.- Give it some thought.

In the post today was the order form for the 2005 Bronze Swagman Book of Verse, out of Winton Qld. It is an excellent anthology of the work sent in nationwide, for judging of the written competition. A must for budding writers, and good reading for others. Very reasonably priced at \$ 13. 00 [including postage in Aust.]. Would make a great Xmas pressie. June or Jean [the two Jays] will take your orders at the muster or give them a bell.

Hope to see you at the P&P night, if not, will take this opportunity to wish you and your family the very best for Christmas, and may the New Year be kind to you as you join with rest of the lucky folk as they enjoy fun and friendship with Bush Poetry.

The Bush Cocky Rusty C

Bush Poet's Breakfast at Albany Show

At last another Bush Poet's Breakfast has taken off in WA! After years of frustration trying to develop another breakfast of the calibre of Boyup Brook it would appear the huge success of the Breakfast at Albany Show will ensure it a place on the calendar.

How did happen? Through the hard work and dedication of Peter Blyth. The Show Committee had budget concerns and told Peter the idea wouldn't work. One sure way of making something work is to tell Peter it won't! With bull headed determination he made sure it did! And it was wonderful to be a part of this success and to see the results of the efforts of the Blyth family, their network of friends and the Albany bush poetry enthusiasts come together to put on an excellent event. With virtually no support from the Show Committee and after being totally ignored by all the Albany services clubs, following requests to cook breakfasts, this team leapt into action. Pete organised the venue and the promotion of the event. And friends took control of the breakfasts... and what a job that turned out to be with 210 breakfasts sold! Over 275 people attended and the Show Committee are now convinced it will work and have signed Peter on for next year with a bigger venue and full support.

The diverse balance of poets were what, I feel, made the event one of the best I have been a part of. Bill Gordon of Boyup Brook provided the mandatory well loved classics. Wayne Pantell was the commentator on local and general issues. Kerry and I provided some of the humorous poetry, along with a light hearted sharing of our domestic disputes. Barry Higgins gave cameo performance with a couple of his comedy classics and Peter Blyth shared his poems which the country people could readily identify with.

The highlight for me was the emergence of Peg Vickers, recipient of many 'placing's and 'highly commended's in written competition Australia wide. Peg took the stage as nervous as hell but came through like a true pro with her own very humorous, under stated style. The audience loved her and we all hope to see more of her in the future.

Congratulations to Peter, Jill and Donna Blyth and thanks to Grant and John.

Rod Lee

Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor

What a decision I've had to make, which is: 'should I send this letter or not'? It would be very easy just to sit back and do nothing, but my zeal for bush poetry to be presented at its best has spurred me on.

The Eastern States' competitions are getting very strict now and Western Australia must be on a par with them.

I realise you must now be thinking: "Well, if she's so smart, why doesn't she be a judge?" The truth is that I'm not so smart that I don't get penalised for careless mistakes. So much so that I do not feel I could competently 'judge' anyone else's work. But - I can give what advice I can in the hope that it will help a fellow poet. If we all share our knowledge with each other, maybe one day we'll produce another Banjo Paterson or Henry Lawson, especially with the interest that our juniors are showing in bush poetry today.

The poems published in November's newsletter had lovely themes, but they had not been given that final 'polish'. It isn't that hard to write poetry, but it's quite a challenge to edit and re-edit our work until it borders upon perfection, without allowing our poems to sound like the monotonous drone of a bee when being recited. We can easily recognise the works of Paterson and Lawson, because of their well-crafted rhythm and metre, yet occasionally we'll find that even these masters have not been too pedantic at times.

I once read: 'Satisfying poetry is rarely entirely regular. Mechanical regularity is soon wearisome to the ear and is a characteristic doggerel. The poets satisfies out love of rhythm in a more interesting and subtle way by introducing all kinds of variations and inversions, while at the same time maintaining the throb of the basic metre.'

But beware! A poet has to be very aware of the boundaries when using these variations and inversions, which should never be confused with glaring mistakes or carelessness.

While I appreciate and welcome criticism of my work, there are many among us who do not, and I hope my comments do not sever their cordial attitude towards me. If I have helped one aspiring writer by having the temerity to state my opinions, then I feel I am doing my bit for fellow poets in Western Australia.

Val Read

Dear Val

I make no apologies for my selection of winning poem. No way would I consider myself an expert judge but, in the absence of such a person, I took the job on. The other alternative was not to run a Written Competition, which is unfair to those who write but don't perform. It was an extremely difficult job and choosing a winner from the final five was a task I agonised over for a week. I was aware of technical errors in the poems but I feel a good poem needs to be more than technically correct and that to focus completely in this area is to risk creating a perfect, but soulless, poem.

At the time of judging I did not know who had written the poems so there was no bias. I finally chose "Old Hector" for the imagery it created and the warmth of the poem. It was not a perfect poem. As you pointed out even the Masters made errors. (As they set the standard for today's bush poetry perhaps too much emphasis is being put here today?) To me it is important not only how well the poem reads but how well it entertains the reader. I have included the letter and poem in the next column to highlight this.

I was actually taught by a prominent Eastern States poet, and winner of many written prizes, that there are no set rules, only guide lines, and that you can add an unstressed syllable to either end of a line. Judging by your corrections to the two poems you sent me it would appear we differ here. I would welcome further comments from other writers on this.

It is always good to discuss differences and I appreciate your letter.
Kerry.

Dear Rod & Kerry

Recently our bus trip with Freedom Travel on the 18th October, took us to your property to enjoy Bush Verses, Yarns & BBQ. That particular day keeps coming back into my memory - it was just so entertaining, interesting and I thoroughly enjoyed the day.

On that particular day I brought out some of my own poetry for you to read at some time - when you had the time, but I chickened out and that roll of paper, secured with an elastic band went back home with me.

When I notice that roll of paper still sitting on my bench, I am reminded once again, that maybe you might have enjoyed a little personal stuff written by someone else, so I have decided to send you a few copies. Cheeky? No, just feel it is nice to share sometimes.

I loved your verse on the 'old battered hat', that one really got to me as it reminded me of a story I wrote some time ago regarding 'the letterbox'. Mine is a little out of focus, but you may want to re-write it sometime in your own professional way. It could be quite comical, particularly knowing how entertaining and expressive you both are.

Thanks for a lovely day and also to your son, he has a wonderful voice, it was so pleasant to hear him play and sing his songs. Such a pleasant day.

IT'S NOT OVER YET

When you reach the fifties your fun can be destroyed,
If it isn't the grandies, its the old timers from abroad.
Your life is restricted, you wear a permanent grin,
Which falls onto the mattress the moment you fall in,

The house comes to a stand still, the dishes in the sink,
The repetitive stories, you find it hard to think,
You love them you know, but you just can't move,
Without someone following with bubble pipe or booze.

I've applied for a holiday, a day off from work,
Bit against my grain as work I don't shirk,
But maybe just drive to some faraway town,
To watch butterflies, trees - a grub on the ground.

Life is so short, and there's so much to do,
Let's start the day with something quite new,
There's walking and running and wind in the face,
A beer or too at my favourite place.

I love life so much and need to keep moving,
To jump in the ocean, I find that real soothing,
So don't hold me back or think I'm passed it,
There's still plenty of action in this old basket.

Margaret (Min) Seats

November Monthly Muster



What a great night the November Muster turned out to be - good bush poetry well presented, variety and a very capable MC in Tom Conway.....so capable we actually started at 7.35pm.

Rusty kicked off the evening with a few jokes and a delightful poem by one of the forgotten masters, W T Goodge *The Oozlum Bird*.

Then it was over to Grace Williamson who elected to tell us a very interesting yarn about her husband's grandfather which led into Banjo Paterson's *Pioneers*. Grace delivered this poem in the excellent style we are becoming accustomed to.

Barry Higgins decided to have another go at his One Minute Poem entered in the City/ Country Challenge as he felt he didn't do it justice then. His subject was "battler makes good in the outback". He coerced with Syd on this so, naturally, a great little poem was created.

From the topics Kerrie bases her poems she definitely is able to think out side the square. Her poem *This Mouth* took us on a hilarious journey from the little baby mouth to school mouth and through to the disillusioned adult mouth.

Then *A Cup of Coffee* by P Rush was delivered in bright confident style by Isabel (sorry, no last name). This was a reflection on all the choices we have now and sometimes, I must agree, it is easier to just go home!

And then.....wait for it....Brian Langley READ his poem—*The Day They Moved The Rake*. This was understandable as it is an extremely long yarn based on the true story of an accident his father had many years ago.

This was followed by another reading but, if they are done well, what the heck!?! This time Leslie McAlpine shared a parody of "Clancy of the Overflow" which appeared in a 1985 edition of *Farmers Magazine*. This hilarious piece was titled *Nancy of the Overtime* and was very much enjoyed by all.

There is a lot of talent emerging from the club, not the least being Hector Scott who, for medical reasons is unable to memorise his poems, read his own poem *An Australian Mountain Storm*. A beautiful descriptive poem.

From Bob Chambers we got the story of how Uncle Bert went to Meekatharra to see his mother-in-law's wedding which was actually held in Bunbury—looked better from there! Oh dear! A thoughtful man who is obviously passionate about the environment and whose name I only know as John shared two of his works with us. They were short poems but well worth the hearing—*Clarrie, Rest in Peace* (an obituary to an aboriginal

Then Rod, myself and a visitor from Port Macquarie, Rod Worthing, did a tribute to Will Olgilvie. Rod gave a short talk on some of the interesting facts of his life, one being that he was a great mate of Breaker Morant's. Then Rod Worthing recited the story of a hair brained horse race between the two mates titled *The Steeple Chase*. Olgilvie was a romantic and a horse lover which makes him a favourite of mine. *The Riding of the Rebel* highlights these traits and was my choice for the tribute to this great balladeer.

After such a full and interesting first half the Break was appreciated. With Edna back in control all was back to normal in the kitchen.

Certificates not presented at the State Championships were awarded to those who were present to receive them. The unclaimed ones will, I expect, be posted out to the appropriate place getters.

A new section has been introduced to the Muster to encourage non participants to take to the mike - "Reading From The Classics". Lorelie was the first member selected here and she read what I feel should be Australia's national poem *My Country* by Dorathea Mackellar. Surely her best work.

It was comedy then from Brian Langley with his mind going in *The Reason That I'm Here*.

Then I performed *Dressing Down*, a warning of what can happen if we take short cuts and don't give our undergarments the respect they deserve. It is Murphy's Law you will be caught out!

Rod Worthing shared Neil MacCarther's *The Colt From Old Regret*, telling the story of what happened with that colt several years later!

Rod then had us all laughing with *The Blower Vac* (He reckons he can't write poetry) before Rusty finished the evening off with *The Day the Favourite Beat Us* by Banjo Patterson.

I felt this was one of the best Musters we have had for a long time and am sure we all went home well satisfied with the evening.

Kerry

And a word from Phil Strutt on why the unbelievable happened at the City/ Country Challenge when the well credentialed Country team lost!

The Inquest (how did we lose?)

Aby captained by Ron Evans
Who's everyone's best mate,
Though he was punctual for each session,
They always said he was 'late'.

How could The Country lose the match?
We should have been a shoe-in'
Bush folk doing bush poetry.
We knew what we were doin'.

Though Peter has a spirit Blyth
He surely is no Coward;
He ran Australia, not a farm,
He could replace John Howard!

Cobber came and saw and conquered,
Veni Vidi Vici—gone!
We knew his history and his form.
He was always long odds-on!

Chris Sadler strode upon the stage,
To the audience she appealed.
A country Sadler with Country charm,
From Wongan, not Tenterfield!

We had a Gordon who wasn't gay,
A Heffernon - not a lump!
A phrasing Fraser and a Gale,
And Hayesey is no chump!

How did we lose? It's Gerry's fault!
Goosey, goosey gander;
With three from Oakford and beyond
The 'City' had Gerrymander!

Way out back of Perth!

Something very strange happened this winter. It was the wettest winter we have had since we first moved out to Diggers Camp. That winter the horses were spending their days in knee deep water. This winter the block didn't sink as much. We had, instead, a collection of unplanned water features where paddocks should be. That wasn't strange, just inconvenient. What was strange was that we had water, water everywhere...everywhere, that is, except in our water tank. It appeared to be filling. Constant checks in the pouring rain proved it was filling. But it wasn't filling to the top. Even in a dry winter it generally overflows half way through the season. This event is cause for great rejoicing when I pay homage to the generosity of the water god by enjoying long *deep* soaks in the bathtub. Alas, this year, no long deep soaks. We checked and rechecked the gutters and down pipes and thought up all sorts of obvious and bizarre reasons why the level was dropping instead of rising, ignore of course, the most obvious but most undesirable - a hole in the bottom of the tank! But, as the last of the rain clouds bid us farewell, we finally conceded this was the cause—a plug hole without a plug! No point in panicking or mourning the loss of this precious resource. An action recovery plan had to be implemented immediately. A small tank was purchased, denting the budget some what, and water from the ailing tank was pumped into it. Once the main tank empties it will be repaired and cleaned and ready to go again. Water is not a problem at the moment but if, round March or April, we arrive on your door step for a cuppa with towels and a bag of washing you'll understand why.

Living with tank water has made us appreciate how precious this commodity is. When we first moved to Oakford there was just a little rusty tank covered with patches.

While we waited for the house to be built we continually added to the patches, the theory being that once it was completely covered in patches it would be stronger than ever. In theory only. Instead it started to crumble. One evening Dale and I came home hot and sweaty and covered in dust to find we could only coax a bucket of water from the tank to wash the filth off with and enjoy a reviving cuppa.

Then the big 96,000lt tank arrived with a seemingly endless pile of panels, 500 bolts and nuts and 1000 washers. I know this figure for a fact as my poor Dad inserted and tightened every single one....and he was counting. Boy, was he counting! Then the rains came and the tank started to fill. Oh, happy day! Then the tank started to empty. The liner had a mass of pin prick sized holes in it. This was a complete disaster as the house had gobbled up all available finances. What to do! God took control sending a willy willy which tore the roof off and dumped it into the tank destroying the liner in the process. Insurance saved us that time. But this time, I fear, we are on our own.

Well, this is my last article for the year so Merry Christmas to all and all the best for the New Year!

Kerry



Happy Christmas from Baa-Lee, Caddie
and the menagerie at Diggers Camp



Muster at the Como Bowling Club

Friday December the 2nd

7.30 pm

Poets & Port Night

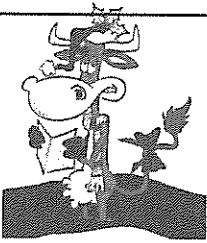
At interval

Port , Tea & Coffee

Savouries & Xmas Goodies

Raffles

PLEASE COME ALONG



Member's Contributions

I was so inspired by Kerry Lee's beautiful prose in her article Way Out Back of Perth, (The Bully Tin, September, 2005, that I've put her words into poetry).

WAY OUT BACK OF PERTH.

The morning air is misty,
and it promises more rain.
The warble of the magpies
is a beautiful refrain.

Gold fingers of the sunlight
breaking through the shim'ring clouds
are gilding rippling waters
where the brown ducks swim in crowds.

Grey shadows of the gum trees
cast great shadows on the lake
where haughty swans serenely swim
to where the wavelets break.

And, followed by their cygnets,
parents paddle to the edge,
to waddle in formation
all along the waving sedge.

I stare in fascination,
for I can't believe my eyes
to see this drought-scarred paddock
turning into paradise.

Last month there were no grasses
growing on its dying face,
now flower buds are sprouting
on ev'ry inch of space.

The bullfrogs sing at ev'ning tide
bass symphonies to night, ...
And grey galahs are shrieking
as they wheel in homeward flight.

My spirits are uplifted,
and my heart is full of song,
to see this transformation –
dusty field to billabong.

V.P. READ. & KERRY LEE. 15/10/2005.

WINE

With the many thousand acres
That are planted with the vine,
They'll be pleading with the masses,
To – "Take a little wine".

And the experts will be busy
When they tell you what to sip,
As you raise the little finger
When you have a little nip.

They'll have a wine for porridge
And another one for stew,
If you're not sure which one to use,
Well-- anyone will do!

And, even if you're camping
In a tent beneath a tree,
There will be a wine for damper,
And the fish you've caught for tea.

But for those who "Pass the flagon",
As they sit around in shade,
They'll need to raise the standard,
And consume a better grade.

They'll serve Chardonnay with lizard,
And Pinot Noir with Kangaroo,
As they raise the little finger,
And give the flies a "shoo".

John W. Putland

A Christmas Story

T'was the morning of Christmas, when all through the house
All the family was frantic, including my spouse;
For each one of them had one thing in mind -
To examine the presents St Nic left behind.

The boxes and wrapping and ribbons and toys
Were strewn on the floor, and the volume of noise
Increased as our children began a big fight
Over who got the games and who got the bike!

I looked at my watch and I said, slightly nervous,
"Let's get ready for Church so we don't miss the service."
The children protested "We don't want to pray.
We've just got our presents and we want to play!"

It dawned on me then that we'd gone astray
In confusing the purpose of this special day.
Our presents were many and highly priced,
But something was missing—that something was Christ!

I said "Put the gifts down and let's gather together
And I'll tell you a tale of the greatest gift ever.
A saviour was promised when Adam first sinned
And the hopes of the world upon Jesus were pinned.

He is the Messiah whom prophets foretold,
The Good Shepherd to bring his sheep back to the fold.
He was God become man. He would die on the cross.
He would rise from the dead to restore Adam's loss.

Santa Clause, Christmas presents, a brightly lit pine,
Candy canes and spiked eggnog are all very fine.
Have fun celebrating but leave not a doubt
That Christ is what Christmas is really about!"

Author unknown



A Walk With The Masters

"Dryblower" Murphy (Edwin Greenslade Murphy) 1867-1939

Born in Castlemaine, Victoria, he was educated at a state school. Developing a good tenor voice he joined the J C Williamson Opera Company and toured for three years. In the early 1890's he followed the gold rush to Western Australia. While on the goldfields he began writing verse for the press and in 1900 joined the staff of the Perth Sunday Times contributing to a column "Verse and Worse" for 40 years. He wrote humorous and entertaining yarns about life in Western Australia from the gold rush to his death in 1939. He often wrote on brown paper bags and was known to arrive at the Sunday Times office in blue striped pyjamas. He was a born joker and lover of his fellow man. In his newspaper column he fought for many popular causes, and his humour and kindly satire made him the best known and loved journalist of his time in Western Australia. The verses he wrote when his son enlisted in the 1914 war succeeded in expressing his mingled pride and anguish in an unpolished fashion where a finer poet may have failed. He published a novel *Sweet Boronia: A Story of Coolgardie* in 1904, *Jarrahlend Jingles* and *Dryblower's Verses*. He died in Perth 9th March, 1939 leaving a wife and three sons.

NB> A "dryblower" is a crude hessian and wood devise used to separate gold.



Sketched by
Low 1912

Unfortunately
this is the
only picture
of Dryblower
I could find!

The Smiths

We had many problems set us when Coolgardie was a camp,
When a journey to the goldfields meant a coach-trip or a tramp;
We had water questions, tucker ditto, also that of gold,
How to clothe ourselves in summer, how to dress to dodge the cold.
We marvelled how the reefs occurred in most unlikely spots,
For the topsy-turvy strata tied geologists in knots;
But though we plumbed the depths of many mysteries and myths,
The worst we had to fathom was the prevalence of Smiths.

To say they swarmed Coolgardie was to say the very least,
For they over ran the district like the rabbits in the East;
The name predominated in the underlay and drive,
The open-cut and costeen seemed to be with Smiths alive;
Where the dishes tossed the gravel they gathered from afar,
They clustered in the two up school and in the shanty bar;
And while Jones and Brown were just as thick as herrings in a frith,
If you threw a stone at random you were sure to hit a Smith.

There were Smiths from every region where the Smiths were known
to grow,
There were cornstalk Smiths, Victorian Smiths and Smiths who eat
the crow.
There were Maori Smiths, Tasmanian Smiths and parched-up Smiths
from Cains;
Bachelor Smiths and widower Smiths and Smiths with wives and
bairns,
Some assumed the name for reasons that to them were known the
best
When silently they packed their ports and flitted to the West,
Till every second man you met to yarn or argue with
Was either a legitimate or else a bogus Smith.

It really mattered little till the days the big mails came,
And then began the trouble with that far too frequent name;
For the Smiths rolled up in regiments when the letter "S" was called,
To drive the post-officials mad and prematurely bald.
Shoals of Smiths demanded letters that were never to them sent,
Wrong Smiths got correspondence which for them was never meant;
And many a Smith, whose facial calm shamed Egypt's monolith,
Bought jim-jams with the boodle sent to quite a different Smith.

The climax came one Christmas Eve, the mail was on its way,
And the post-officials yearned to block the Smiths on ChristmaDay.
So they faked an Eastern telegram by methods justified,
Upon it put no Christian name and tacked it up outside;

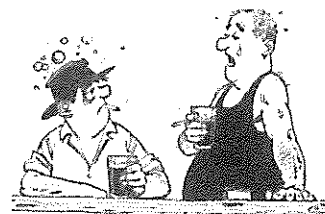
It was from a Melbourne lawyer, and addressed to 'Smith Esquire',
It was stamped 'prepaid and urgent', so 'twould confidence inspire.
And when Coolgardie sighted it and marked its pungent pith,
There was pallid consternation in the habitat of Smith.

'Our client has informed us you are over in the West',
And the message, 'and she threatens your immediate arrest;
She hears your known as Smith but says you needn't be afraid
If you come and face the music and redeem the promise made.'
The population read it, and before the day light came
A swarm of Smiths rolled up their swags and took a different name.
They declined to face the music and return to kin and kith,
And the maiden who was promised still awaits the absent Smith!

A Drinking Poem

At dusk I do not weep or curse as on my swag I sit
And vote this world a trifle worse than deep Gehenna's pit.
I do not sigh for rippling rills that babble through the ferns.
Ah, no, for flowing frothy swills my thirsty thorax yearns.
I recollect the sprees that irked when shanties ran with shick;
And as I think of drinks I've shirked my mental self I kick.
Yea, here amid a beerless drought my heart with grief is bruised
When I fancy figure out the pints that I've refused.

Hot Sheol must consist, I think, of long and pintless years,
Where no poor sinful soul may drink his fill of cooling beers.
The burning brimstone and the torch may be for mulga men,
But grant, Oh Satan, as I scorch, a tiddley now and then.
Still, if Gehenna will not give what I'm on earth denied,
I may at last decide to live where in no souls are fried;
And when Saint Peter at the door my passport has perused,
He'll put me, p'raps, where I may score, the pints that I've refused.



Committee Members – WA Bush Poets & Yarn Spinners 2004-2005

Rusty Christensen	President	9364 4491
Tom Conway	Vice-President	9339 2802
Jean Ritchie	Secretary	9450 3111
Kerry Lee	Editor	9397 0409
June Bond	Treasurer /Schools Co-ord.	9354 5804
Edna Westall	Committee	9339 3028
Brian Langley	Committee	9361 3770

Members please note Please contact any of the above committee members if you have any queries or issues which you feel require attention.

Events Calendar

- Nov 4 WABP&YS Assoc Monthly Muster Como Bowling Club 7.30pm Rusty 9364 4491
- Nov 12 Glenn Innes "Land of the Beardies Festival" N Campbell 02 6732 2663
- Dec 2 WABP&YS Assoc Monthly Muster Como Bowling Club 7.30pm Rusty 9364 4491
- January Tamworth Bush Poetry Competition & Blackened Billy Written Competition
SSAE Jan Morris PO Box W1 West Tamworth 2340
- Jan 6 WABP&YS Assoc Monthly Muster Como Bowling Club 7.30pm Rusty 9364 4491
- Jan 26 Australia Day Concert Wireless Hill (time & details to be confirmed)
- Feb 3 WABP&YS Assoc Monthly Muster Como Bowling Club 7.30pm Rusty 9364 4491
- Feb 24 Closing date Dunedoo NSW Written Competition Sue Stoddart 02 6375 1975
- Feb 28 Closing date Midlands Literary Competition SSAE PO Box 1563 Ballarat Vic 3354
- Mar 3 WABP&YS Assoc Monthly Muster Como Bowling Club 7.30pm Rusty 9364 4491
- Mar 5 Closing date Ipswich Poetry Feast—\$2,600 Written Competition 07 3810 6761
- Mar 10 Closing date Grenfell NSW Short Story & Verse Written competitions SSAE PO Box 77 Grenfell 2810
- Mar 10 Closing date Henry Kendall Poetry Award SSAE Central Coast Poets PO Box 276 Gosford 2250
- Mar 15-19 Narrandera NSW John O'Brien Bush Festival & Competition 1800 672 392
- May 6/7 Moondyne Festival Toodyay Bush Dance Sat Night Kim Watts 9574 5009 moondyne_joe2005@yahoo.com.au

If you are aware of any events which may be of interest to poets or poetry lovers which are not listed above please advise me by phoning 08 9397 0409 or posting to 160 Blair Road, Oakford WA 6121