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# WA Bush Poets & Yarn Spinners

R. Sutcliffe 97

Newsletter : September 2001

## Committee Contacts Year 2001 – 2002

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**"Come All Ye" at the Raffles Hotel**

cnr Canning Highway and Canning Beach Rd Applecross

**(Upstairs in The River Room)**

**Next Meeting Friday 7/9/2001 at 7:30pm**

## Lorelie's Letters



We have interesting and exciting times ahead. At our next COME ALL YE on 7<sup>th</sup> September we hope to welcome and encourage some new performers who will be preparing for the Championship Heats in November and December.

Veteran writer and performer Connie Herbert was elected Vice-President at our last committee meeting. We will keep you busy, Connie.

The highlight of September will be the visit to Perth of Bob Maygor from Myponga, South Australia. Bob was the winner of the Bronze Swagman Award last year and really is a great writer and performer. A special night at the Raffles has been arranged for **FRIDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER at 7.30 p.m.** so be sure to mark that event in your diary, and bring only your very best friends.

We must be doing something well because the Royal Agricultural Society has invited us once again to present a Poet's Breakfast on 3<sup>rd</sup> October to entertain the stockmen and all the other early risers at the Show. Also, Treasurer Geoff Bebb and Rusty Christensen were invited to be the judges for the annual Country Women's Association poetry competition, an experience they enjoyed immensely.

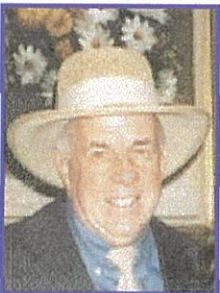
The afternoon performance at Chapel Farm at Jane Brook was most enjoyable and thoroughly relaxing. Several members joined the other patrons who sat back in the sunshine, glass of red in hand, and absorbed the fine poetry presented. Rusty even went indoors to a 60th birthday group and gave them a special presentation which was really appreciated. A great way to spend a Sunday afternoon!

The upcoming South West event at Marybrook Winery on 20<sup>th</sup> October is drawing near and we need to make arrangements. Please let me or Michelle know if you plan to perform or just come and enjoy yourself. Also if you will be bringing your campervan, tent, caravan, swag, sleeping bag, bed socks, hot water bottle or whatever.

Altogether, you will gather that we are busy spreading the word of Australian poetry far and wide and it is becoming more and more popular. And there is plenty more in the pipeline!

See you soon.

Lorelie.



G'day everyone,

What a busy time this is turning out to be for the Association, with Poets performing at a wide variety of venues across the state and new events popping out of the woodwork to augment some of the traditional events that have appeared over the past few years. Bush Poetry can be deemed to *Alive and Well* in WA.

Many thanks to those who took the trouble to speak to me about the proposed changes to the Wireless Hill Challenge for 2002. The vast majority of people were very supportive of having two separate competitions – one for truly Open Class performers and one restricted to Members of our Association, who have not won a Wireless Hill Challenge, or any other equivalent competition. Please read the details on Page 5 of this issue.

The Committee has embraced this new idea and we hope that it will lead to a consistent and improving standard of performers who can aim to reach the highest level and then perhaps to be able to compete country-wide. The new rules will mean that ordinary Members can aspire to compete in restricted competition, with some hope of winning and then *graduate* from there to the open competition with the confidence born from having tasted victory.

To make the new competition a truly worthwhile one, we need a lot of contestants – so get out your pens and paper and start writing, in an effort to enter the "Written Competition" or the "Restricted Perform Your Own Competition". Alternatively, trot out your old poetry books and start learning those old classics with a view to entering the "Restricted Perform Others' Works" Competition. Make the effort, join in the fun. You'll find it to be a real challenge.

Geoff Bebb

## Come All Ye – August 2001

It was a wet and stormy night and 55 people braved the conditions to attend our meeting. Most of our regulars were absent (perhaps the big Paterson/Lawson night wore them all out), however we had a lot of new faces and many visitors. **Rod Lee** presided as MC, so, as you can imagine, the humorous yarns flew thick and fast.

The most novel yarn / poem for the night (a really true one) came from **Trish Matthews**.

Trish allowed us to include the photo as proof of "Duck Man" from Broome, who uses his metal detector on the beach to rake in treasure that drops from people's pockets or off swimmer's fingers. Really unique. Trish ponders their loss and his gain.



Here are some treasures from that night.

Alas, no theme was found,  
So I'll just list the poets on sight,  
As their turn did come round.



First I'll mention **Bill Matthers Brown** as our new faces winner for the night, with his tale of the elusive "Possum", a NZ shearer in outback South Australia. Followed by his own poem, from the heart, about his children, called "Two Keys".

**Barry Higgins** – with his favourite Blue the Shearer and Syd Hopkinson poems- "Local Government", reinventing the wheel. Also Syd's famous animals in "Taronga Park Zoo" The chook yard in "Gale Force Winds" ouch! The Pigs Paradise in Canberra, and "Laughter and Tears" from the donkey in the country pub.

**Rusty Christensen**- You can see where Rusty spent his holidays. He's come back as an American (complete with accent) with an old Phil Harris poem/song "The Dark Town Poker Club". It soon wore off, when he came back to form with Lawson's "2<sup>nd</sup> Class Wait Here" and Cobber's "Mother McCue". Thank heavens! Thought we'd lost you.

**Kerry Lee** – on her equinitis medication, in fine fettle or is it fetlock? With a horsy poem from Veronica Weal – "Green and Gold" very moving as always, as was the very appropriate "Melody of Rain" from Frederick Mc Goffen. Next came "Riley's Ruse" by Alf Wood. With a novel way to cure a boastful man.

**Rod Lee** – dotted the evening with his own great yarns from "The Outback of Perth" in Oakford. Kerry copped it as usual, although she's definitely his favourite filly (23 seconds over the quarter mile). He thinks he's on a winner here at the bush races. Watch it Kerry! Thanks Rod

**Ron Evans** – recited his farewell trademark poem "The Intro" from CJ Denis and "On Kylie's Run" He didn't miss a beat this time. See you in Boyup Brook Ron.

**David Sears** - A second flock of "Blasted Crows", the kamikaze pilots over the dunny roof. Blue The Shearer's other "Outdoor Dunny" followed, with the man eating mop bucket. Ouch! Even makes *me* wince David.

**Syd Hopkinson**- Another very apt poem for the weather at the time, about "The Primary Producer" suffering through rain and drought and seasonal flops. Syd's humorous streak came out with the yarn about the "Two Smiths" hospitalized for different accidents being pained further by a mix up in their treatment. Another 'ouchy, poem.

**Geoff Bebb** - C.J Dennis' "The Post Cup Tale" about the winner of 1927 Melbourne Cup - Trivalve, who apparently died in the Northern Territory of snake bite - well after the race. Geoff's own, "The Showdown of Dennis O'Neill", with nail biting finish, was conceived after another mad conversation and a real situation.

**Connie Herbert** – Took us "North of 28" where every thing's a 'bloody', something gripe yet those that survive would not live anywhere else. Plus a great yarn "The Perfect Solution" for old Gemma (85) who wants to rob a bank to secure her old age. Might as well, it's probably safer than the stock market. Connie made up with this one while acting as a roving reporter on the edge of nowhere

That's all the pearls of wisdom we've gathered here tonight,  
Come back next month and share the fun,  
And ever-wondrous sights.

Cheers, Michelle



## DUCKMAN

In his wet suit, wet, and his earphones red  
I saw Duckman emerging from the sea bed  
In his Yellow Arab hat, he is digging in the sand,  
Looking for the wedding rings that slip off from your hand.

Now, don't go near the seaside, when Duckman is about  
He'll detect the treasures that you lose and he will fish them out,  
For he says he is recycling, the things you leave behind  
Your cash and rings and jewellery, whatever you lose, he'll find.

And he detects for gold and silver, any trinket, jewel or locket  
And if you leave your trousers while you swim, he'll detect them in your pocket  
So it would probably be better, if your valuables you lock  
For if Duckman is detecting, he'll put them in his sock.

He's there in early evening, and at any time of day  
He detects out upon the beaches and underwater in the bay  
And it won't matter one small bit, what slips off while you swim  
If it's of great sentimental value, it'll be all the same to him.

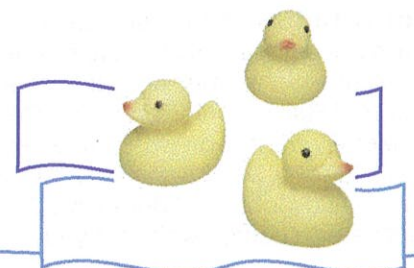
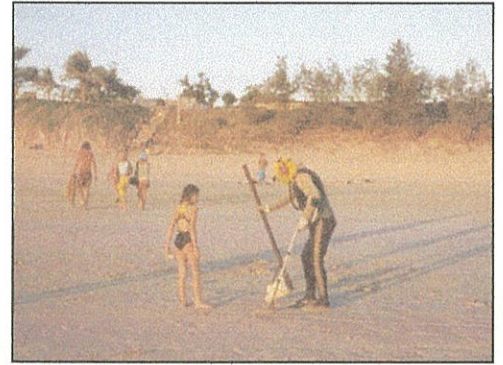
He's got a bit of your stuff, in his black sockful full of tricks  
He'll pick up all lost coinage, thirty bob or two and six  
And it doesn't matter if you're a nudist, and you're naked on the beach  
Don't think for a moment gold fillings, are out of Duckman's reach.

He has big collection, of detectors large and small  
Whether it be gold or cash or treasures, he has a detector for them all  
And if you can't see him, you can hear him, his detector's click click click  
As he wades knee deep in water, home made sand scoop on a stick

But there is no need to fear him, Duckman lives a normal life  
He has two normal children, and a normal suburban wife  
He works hard for a living, bit it is at weekends he unfurls  
And emerges forth as DUCKMAN, into his private detecting world.

A world of seas and inlets, of oceans ponds and streams  
Where each time he gets a signal, it could be Duckman's Lotto dream  
A sunken city full of treasure, with streets with gold are paved  
But probably just a shilling, which for weeks some kid had saved.

So don't you fear our Duckman, just keep your gold tight in your grasp  
And make sure your watch is on your wrist, and fix that faulty clasp  
And keep your cash right with you, for it will surely make you sick  
If it becomes our hero's treasure, DUCKMAN, with his sand scoop on a stick.



© Trish Mathews 2001

### Bob Maygor's Visit - 7:30 pm Friday, 21st of September



Our association has the rare privilege of hosting one of Australia's best poets from the East. We will hold an extraordinary meeting to hear Bob recite his poetry, at the Raffles on Friday the 21st of September. This is indeed a rare opportunity for us to hear such a talent.

Rod Lee and Geoff Bebb are coordinating the evening, so please direct queries and requests to recite on the night, to them. **Geoff on 9367 4963 and Rod on 9397 0409.**

If we get really good support on that night we will consider holding other celebrity nights.

### Rusty's letter to the Editor of Fremantle Herald

In a recent leading press article - The West's Big Weekend August 4<sup>th</sup> - the director of the WA Maritime Museum, Graeme Henderson made some strange statements. From the viewpoint of a few fair dinkum Aussies, particularly from the generation preceding his, they could even be termed *irresponsible*.

Mr. (or is it Dr.) Henderson claimed that the Australian outback heritage is a myth conjured up by the writers and poets of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that more of our heritage belongs to the sea. As an island continent this is in fact so, but his pronouncements smack of tunnel vision.

To say that " *This romantic concept of Australia as a land of women tending the farm while the husband's out herding the sheep, this country and bush mentality, this mythology about what Australia is all about, well, it's totally wrong and it's totally misleading*". To me this shows a lack of knowledge, experience and respect for the pioneers of our country.

Most 'latter day' Australians can identify with either the bush or the coast. My Danish sail-maker grandfather jumped ship in Melbourne after surviving a typhoon in the China Sea. My mother's people were Irish farmers who came and pioneered virgin country first in South Australia and then again in WA round Dowerin, so I can see both sides of the coin.

Quote 2 " *The whole concept of having this bush thing going is just nonsense - this mythology has basically come from the writers and poets who travelled throughout the Australian outback and bush in the 19<sup>th</sup> century - the bush legend is just that, a 'myth'*"

I would like to tell my mother that sage piece of wisdom. Her stories, of the lifestyle way back then, make life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century seem like some modern Utopia. Try telling my mother's brothers or her sisters, who married farmers. Try telling those, who depended on the land and the elements for their livelihood, that it's a myth. Try telling the drovers, shearers, the itinerant workers, bullockies, teamsters, truckies, orchardists, graziers, pub keepers, country business people. What about the miners, some of whom pushed barrows to the diggings or the swaggies, who tramped the length and breadth of this brown, unforgiving land. These thousands of battlers, did they make it all up?

Some of us have witnessed the conditions that the aforementioned folk lived under as they contended with drought, flood, frost, isolation, lack of amenities, low prices and rapacious banks. We know it is not a myth.

Mr Henderson's flippant remarks show how history can be dismissed and replaced with a jaundiced version to suit an argument. In this case the argument was to justify spending \$35 million of public monies on a mausoleum - the central piece, of which is to be a monument to a discredited entrepreneur who financed the craft (Australia II) with other people's money.

It is a fact that Australia is one of the most urbanized countries in the world and that most of our country towns and centres have become victims of globalisation and those economic rationalists. However, we must not lose sight of where we came from nor the people who went before us to lay the foundation for our enlightened and affluent society.

I must make it clear that I am not against 'Graeme's Garage' but I would suggest he sticks to what he knows best and to poetry such as "I must go down to the sea again, to the lonely sea and the sky" and leave "The Man From Snowy River" to those who respect and appreciate it.

**This is a précis of my response to Mr Henderson's article. Hopefully this response will appear in the Fremantle Herald soon (watch this space). I would appreciate any of our member's views on the subject.**

**Rusty Christensen.**

### Changes to Wireless Hill Challenge Competition for 2002

The Committee has decided to change the format of the Wireless Hill Challenge competition to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2002.

The existing categories of "Own Poetry" and "Others' Poetry" have been renamed to "Restricted - Own Poetry" and "Restricted - Others' Poetry", while we will introduce two new categories "Open Own Poetry" and "Open Others' Poetry". The winners in all categories will receive a cash prize as well as the perpetual trophy. Second and third will also receive cash prizes.

The "Restricted" categories will be only open to those Financial Members, who have not WON a previous Wireless Hill Challenge or equivalent competition in that category. The Open Competition is open to anyone.

There will only be two Heats this year - in November and December. Nominations for the Heats will be made in writing by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2001, to Geoff Bebb, who will be the principal co-ordinator for the Heats. Members will have to nominate the works they wish to present and the night of their preference. The finalists for the Wireless Hill Challenge 2002 will not be announced until after the second heat - so as to ensure a professional make-up to the Finals.

Poets wishing to enter the "Open Written Competition" please be aware that the winner will be called upon to *recite* their winning entry at Wireless Hill.

## Halls Creek

Cobber returned to the Kimberley in the year two thousand and one;  
 Back to the land where, years before, his work days had begun;  
 Where rugged, rocky ridges rise to many a mighty peak;  
 Where scattered pools in gullies lie'  
 Under a cloudless azure sky,  
 In the shire of Halls Creek.

He left the comfort of his home, the friends he held so dear,  
 The tragic grind of daily toil disguised as his "career",  
 To heed, at last, a higher call that echoed wide and free.  
 He said: "I'm only fifty five,  
 And mighty glad to be alive,  
 Back in the Kimberley!"

Then Cobber sought to make his mark, where dingoes howl at night,  
 Where broilgas play at close of day, amid the fading light,  
 Where turkeys hunt for grass-hoppers through spinifex and sand,  
 And when the summer cyclones blow,  
 A host of mighty rivers flow,  
 Across the broken land.

Now, every night dark shadows fall and Cobber says a prayer;  
 A message to his wife back home, his children waiting there;  
 To keep them safely fit and well, to set their spirits free,  
 To follow quickly when they can,  
 That foolish, solitary man,  
 Away in the Kimberley.

\* \* \*

Grey Brahmin chew their cud, and slowly swish their tails,  
 Tall, wiry stockmen sip their tea, then lean against the rails;  
 Brush wallabies find rest and shade, beside a dusty creek,  
 While Cobber strolls along a track,  
 The Golden sun upon his back,  
 In the shire of Hall's Creek.

© **Cobber** - Keith Lethbridge Halls Creek June 27 2001

## Little White Lies

"Now don't try that one on me my boy", my mother said one day,  
 "Cos I'll know for sure you're telling lies to me.  
 For when you put your tongue out – I can see a little spot."  
 So I did – and then she touched it – saying, "See!"

I raced into the bathroom to view my trait'rous tongue,  
 And I saw it there – where anyone could see,  
 That tell-tale mark upon it – 'bout a centimetre long,  
 So I tried to rub it off – before I went to tea.

Well, after I had eaten – and after washing up,  
 I went back to the bathroom for a look,  
 And although the mark had faded – it's outline was still there,  
 "Gosh!" I thought, "No wonder she went crook!"

Years later when I married – my mother says one day,  
 "Let me show a certain cure for a child that's lied,  
 You just take an eyebrow pencil and you hide it in your hand,  
 And when it pokes it's tongue out...." Well I laughed until I cried.

© **John Hamilton**



## Dear readers,

We have received so many wonderful poems from members that we have decided to change the format this month to include more of these, without the special poetry page heading (to gain more space).

We would love to print every poem that comes our way, however, because of this space shortage we would prefer short, pithy ones (this includes more people.)

We've included one of our best known poets' new work and one of our newest members' new work today.

We hope you enjoy them.

## PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE

I really would appreciate your poems or articles on disc or by Email if you can so that I don't need to re-type them. I'm a two-finger typist and it takes me a long time to achieve a reasonable accuracy.

Thank you to all contributors,

**Michelle Sorrell**



## Want to earn money from performing bush poetry?

The WABPYA is essentially a non-profit organisation and does not operate as a booking agency, however from time to time it does get enquiries from outside bodies looking for poets and yarn spinners to perform at their functions and venues for financial reward.

Immediate past-president and seasoned performer Peter "Stinger" Nettleton is now in the process of establishing an agency (under the banner "Stinger Enterprises") to act as an intermediary in this area.

It is envisaged that from time to time enquirers will be referred to this agency by the WABPYA and Stinger will then do his best to 'fill the bill' from the 'talent' on his books. A small percentage of the fee will go to the WABPYA and the agency, the balance being paid to the performer.

If you would like to be 'on the books', simply send your particulars to Stinger, along with a photograph and a sample of your work (if possible) at the address on the advertisement. He will then confirm that you have been listed and will contact you when a suitable 'gig' comes up. Too easy!



### Stinger Enterprises Booking Agency

**Peter Nettleton**

**9417 8663**

**Stinger Enterprises  
3 Ashwood Place  
South Lake 6164**

**stinger@iinet.net.au**

### **Bowman Furniture Industries P/L**

**158 Maddington Rd  
Maddington 6109**

**Ph: 9493 4333**

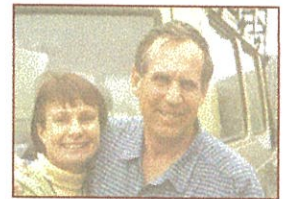
**Fax: 9493 4933**

**Email:**

**daverodkerry@bigpond.com**

Place your ad.  
Here next  
month

### **Rod and Kerry Lee of Bowman Furniture Industries**



Rod and Kerry are not only poets extraordinaire, they are also the proprietors of a fine furniture business that specializes in home entertainment systems and home offices. They have decided to sponsor our association by placing an advertisement for their business in the newsletter each month. This is an example of how our association can have two way benefits for our members. Please support them!

## Welcome to the World – Harry Dixon Grey Watkins



*Congratulations!*

Kel and Sarah on the safe arrival of your son.

Harry arrived into the world, already at home, on Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> August.

Harry is the new brother of Joshua Dixon John Watkins



### John Hayes on "Ecowatch" – Channel 31

Apart from gallivanting around the countryside and selling lots of poetry books, John is to appear on the Eco Watch programme – Channel 31. **Thursday night at 6.30pm. September the 6<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup>** are mooted as 3 possible dates.

Anne (John's right hand lady who does all the bookings) and John will be off again till November. There is no rest for the wicked, as they go around the State spreading poetic news and giving workshops. John even gave a very memorable workshop to some young fellow travellers, around a campfire in Carnarvon.

John may not even be able to see himself on TV so members will have to keep an eye out for him.

He has found time to write new poetry on the road as well, so we look forward to his return when he may recite for us "Ernie's Pipe Dream" and "Somewhere River". **What a life!** I suppose, "Someone has to do it".

### Recycled . Poetry Book Corner

The committee came up with a fund raising idea which requires very little work, but which may be useful to our members who come to CAY's. Many of our members have a heap of old poetry books gathering dust under the bed. If you could bring these in to CAY's we could price them cheaply and hold a special raffle (say \$2) for people to go and pick a book of their choice till all books were gone from the book corner. Alternatively, books could be put on the product table and sold outright. (I suggest the latter for all books over a certain price so that the raffle could remain fair.)

**Please ring in your thoughts on this one - Michelle and Geoff on 9367 4963 or tell us at the CAY.**



**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**

## **WA Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners Association Inc**

### **Coming Events**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Co-ordinator</b>
Frid 21 <sup>st</sup> Sep 2001	Special "Bob Magor" nite – Featuring the man himself See P4 for Details	<b>Red Lee 9397 0409</b>
3rd Oct 2001	Royal Show – Poets Breakfast	<b>Rusty Christensen:</b> Ph 9364 4491 (Performers have now been selected)
15 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2001	Final entries for Children's Competition (member's children welcome)	<b>Joan Macneall</b> 9451 6008 H 9451 3330 W.
20 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>st</sup> Oct 2001	Marybrook Winery Bush Poets Breakfast	<b>Lorelie Tacoma:</b> Ph 9310 1500
Frid 26 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2001	Final Nominations Heat 1 Wireless Hill Challenge 2002	<b>Geoff Bebb</b> 9367 4963
Frid 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2001	Final Nominations Heat 2 Wireless Hill Challenge 2002	<b>Geoff Bebb</b> 9367 4963
Frid 21st Dec 2001	Final entries for adult Written Competition 2002 Wireless Hill Challenge	<b>Geoff Bebb</b> – Competition Judge 9367 4963

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