

ANOTHER WILLY - WILLY OF BULLDUST AT WIRELESS HILL

Once upon a time, not so very long ago my fellow Australians, a wonderful phenomenon walked our wide brown land in the shape of home-spun balladists, story - tellers, bush and urban poets and incredible yarn-spinners. These folk all travelled extensively and wrote furiously of this vast, harsh country and their experiences therein, and, as in all good story telling the truth was not allowed to browbeat a good old fashioned dose of bulldust into boring submission. Oh our word no! Your average currency lad and lass, your cornstalks were not the ones to let true facts stand in the way of a bloody good story and so in the 'good old days', whenever a camp fire sputtered into life so did one of these downy birds appear, to literally blow us away with words. The same could be said of the city barfly, forever searching dryly for expression through the bottom of a glass, usually presented in the fabulous key of Oz Sardonic.

These worthies, either hunkering down in the classic bushman's crouch or leaning gracelessly upon the bar would transport us with their tall tales, taking us to the Bush or to the City, introducing us to the many kinds of flora, fauna and folk, yea, all the beasts and beauties that inhabit this fair land and at the same time often dispensing valuable advice to the new-chums, albeit whilst having a 'bit of a lend' of the aforementioned immigrant... just for fun of course.

These valuable community writers did also dot their I's and ply their pens for the majority of newspapers and magazines of the day, yet, sadly by the time Australia had extricated itself from the Great War these mobile news platforms had been soundly shouted down by waves of radio and then later trounced into limbo by the TV transmission. The People's Voice had been quite effectively silenced.

But for Western Australia (and some of those other states) this is rapidly changing, following a remarkable year that saw one man's dream not only flower into the Western Australian Bush Poets and Yarnspinner's Association with a rapidly burgeoning membership, now in the several hundreds, it also saw the first year of full-on work-spinning elimination bouts held at the Raffles Hotel, the Hill's Forest Amphitheatre in Mundaring, courtesy of CALM, plus five towns down the Bibbulmun Track (also courtesy of CALM) hunting up poets and yarnspinners and find them we did.

All this frenetic activity and energy expended to find two challengers whom we anticipate sending to represent West Australia in the two Eastern states festivals, at Winton (for poets and ballads) and at the Adelaide Comedy Festival (for yarn-spinners) with air fares and expenses paid.

So pack the eskys, and not forgetting your sun umbrellas, please do join us at this powerful West Australian revival of the Australian Spoken Word Feast.

This fun event is to be held on January the 26th, Australia Day, at Wireless Hill from 1 pm to 2 pm you will be vastly entertained by 'Poets from the Grass' and the 'Dingo's Breakfast Oz Music and Poetry Band' and then finally, twixt the hours of 2 pm and 5 pm, this year's finalists will battle it out for the trophies and trips. Your MC is Roger Montgomery of Peter Holland's ABC 6WF Friday Afternoon Show..... and just remember, it's fun and all free folks!

This project is a joint venture shared by the City of Melville and the Melville Rotary Club and is supported by CALM, ABC WF and the Australia Day Council.

Further information can be obtained from Jamie Mills, the Community Arts Officer for the City of Melville on 364 0695, Rusty Christensen on 364 4491 or Roger Montgomery 339 7670.