

SINGABOUT

SEPTEMBER 2019

GAIL'S LEGACY

Apart from being a regular member of BMC's Concert Party, Gail Copley also composed poems and lyrics for songs and ran charity fundraisers. For one of those fundraisers came her *Concert for Cancer Research Song Book*. The items in this issue of Singabout are a selection of Gail's contributions to that booklet.

M

by Gail Copley

So there we were, you and I
Your dying, almost done
And my dying, just begun

Through your fatigue
You made the effort to teach me
What I need, how I should be

Then we sang, voices blended all but one
Your voice soaring above, so sweet
And with understanding, our eyes meet.

I planted a flower to remind me
Of your calm grace, your dignity
How you were, and how I should be.

Sandy Groper

by Gail Copley

Well I'm from Western Australia, and I've been all over this land
Now I'm in Sydney playing guitar for a bush music band
Bush music's played in Sydney, even tho it's a city
Bush music can't be lost, it can't cos... that would be a pity

Part of the band's uniform is the Akubra hat
And I hear you asking, "Well, what's wrong with that?"
Well, all I can say back at ya is you haven't been outback
Your head would melt under rabbit felt and then you'd faint - splat

I have a pair of clap sticks that were made 'tween you and me
From a tree in the Bungle Ranges, a rare acacia tree
And to hear me lightly tap them, it sounds louder than Big Ben
Makes the bones and the lagerphone sound like toothpicks next to them

Some Sandgroperers are quiet, while others like to chatter
Some Sandgroperers are awful rednecks, but really they don't matter
Some Sandgroperers are awful mean, but most are very kind
And WA's the greatest place to travel and unwind

So that's me, Sandy Groper, nearly finished with this poem
I'm retired now in Sydney, it's the place I now call home
I often wonder though, if the others understand
'Bout being Sandy Groper in a Sydney bush music band



Gail at cancer research fundraiser and the Loaded Dog photos Sandra Nixon

The Room

by Gail Copley

When the room is empty I can never just walk in;
I have to pause at the doorway, looking, looking in
At the pianos flanking the walls, the organ up the back,
The music stands and chairs, and books and brochures stacked

For the accordions, Irish whistles, concertinas all,
And recorders, auto harps, and banjos I recall;
And bodhrans, and harmonicas, maybe a ukulele
Or, for a special treat, even a banjulele.

And a red Axminster carpet first greets all those who call,
The light is soft, a rosy glow, suspended over all
Reverently I flick a switch, and spotlights sprout to life,
Softly lighting various spots against the darkening night.

The shabby walls need painting; but that will never happen;
Lined with fragile posters from, events long past and present.
Of convict songs, of bushrangers, of shearers and the fettlers.
Songs of past and present from Australia's settlers.

The echoes of past performances ring in my ears so long.
Who will come tonight and treat us to a song?
A happy song, a sad song, you cannot stay aloof.
I hope tonight we will play some songs that really raise the roof.

When the room is empty I can never just walk in
I have to pause at the doorway, and start remembering
The past events of music, soft and loud it is playing
I hear the echoes of fiddles, flutes, guitars and mandolins.

And accordions, Irish whistles, concertinas all,
And recorders, auto harps, and banjos I recall;
And bodhrans, and harmonicas, maybe a ukulele
Or, for a special treat,
We all need a special treat,
Oh Ralph please won't you sing, and play the banjulele.

The Bag Lady

To Smokey's tune, "Living Next Door to Alice"

by Gail Copley

Sandra called, she wanted to know,
If I would help before the show - at the Loaded Dog
And that's how it began, how I became
The Loaded Dog's volunteer of fame
How I became - the tea bag lady.

Chorus:

Oh the folk singers come and the folk singers go.
They love to entertain, and enjoy the show.
But for seven long years I've been the Loaded Dog's bag lady.

[Audience response]

Lady? Who the heck's a lady
Seven long years, taking any chance
To sing a song, recite a poem, play fiddle at a dance,
But for seven long years I've been the Loaded Dog's bag lady.

Sandra gave me a hug, and a broad smile.
And she said she hoped I would stay a while - at the Loaded Dog.
Chairperson's Shaz, there's a Ray of light,
Jim and Dallas serve sangers, and dish pig tonight (is Glenys)
There's also me - the Loaded Dog's tea - bag lady.

Sometimes I do a floor spot 'cos I love to perform,
The audience is kind, it's cosy and warm - at the Loaded Dog.
The years have passed, I'm an old gal
I'm still tea bagging Sandra's still my pal.
And I won't quit now - forever I'll be - the bag lady.

