

REGULAR MONTHLY AND WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

BEECROFT BUSH DANCE - Feb, May, Aug, Dec (page 16)

With music from Sydney's best bush bands

1st Saturday of the month from 2pm - 4.30pm

Beecroft Community Centre, Beecroft Rd Beecroft

DANCE WORKSHOP - Feb to Dec (except public holidays) (Page 16)

Monday nights 7.30 - 9.30pm

Pennant Hills Community Centre, Yarrara Road Pennant Hills

Slow Music Workshop - Feb to Dec (except public holidays)

Monday afternoons 5.00 - 7.00pm at the hut *

Song and Music Workshop - Feb to Dec (except public holidays)

Monday afternoons 7.15 - 9.30pm at the hut *

BEECROFT FAMILY DANCE (see details p6)

SINGABOUT SESSIONS - Feb to Dec **NEW**

11am - 2pm 3rd Wednesday of the month at the hut *

Zoom Session (on line session)

2nd Wednesday of month commencing 11am for 80 minutes

email for more info bmcmail1954@gmail.com

MARRICKVILLE MUSIC GROUP - Feb to Dec

1st Wednesday of the Month 11am - 2pm at the hut *

Music from all genres including bush. \$10 - tea and coffee provided.

PLAYFORD DANCING AT THE HUT - Feb to Dec

1st Tuesday of the Month 7.30 - 9.30pm at the hut *

English Country Dancing, with *live music*. \$10

SYDNEY SLOW IRISH SESSION - Feb to Dec

Sunday nights 6.30pm at the hut *

Irish traditional music at a pace that suits beginners and intermediate players. \$10 (concession \$5) includes tea and bikkies.

* Hut 44, "Tritton Hall" 142 Addison Road, Marrickville

For more information please contact the club on
bmcmail1954@gmail.com or 0466 877 423

MULGA WIRE

INCLUDING
SINGABOUT



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A BUSH MUSIC CLUB PUBLICATION

EDITORIAL

Isn't it great to have our *Mulga Wire* up and running again? Emails and web pages are great to let you know what's going on but they tend to evaporate too quickly into the ether. I feel mags like ours are a bit more tangible & there for the long run.

AND...what a great issue we have for you. It's bursting at the seams. I had trouble fitting it all in and there's lots left over for next issue. Thanks everyone, for all the good wishes, the letters, articles, songs etc. keep 'em coming.

I could almost smell the Perkins Paste while reading Dale's account of home publishing in the 80's. Thanks too Dale for getting John's publishing timeline sorted.

John Short's rivetting revue of "*Time Means Tucker*" is so interesting—makes me want to read it again. Members might be interested to hear that we have copies of the book available to read in the club's library and I seem to remember there are copies to be found on line too. Google it!

Karen's description of our trip to Yeoval is definitely firing me up for the next trip in February. It'll be great to catch up with our wonderful hosts, Sharon and Alf Cantrell yet again. Cheers Alf, we all hope you're recovering well from that recent surgery.

Note also the charity concert advertised on page 15, in memory of our dear old friend *Reg Murray* who sadly passed away this year. Get there if you can.

Ideas for next issue: **Concertina Corner** (for our free reed readers) how about **Classified Ads** (instruments, books, collectables—whatever?) Interested?

Season's Greetings to all and..... keep that copy rolling in in the new year.

Cheers for now,



Ralph Pride
pridehome@msn.com.au

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DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUES.....

Autumn	15th February
Winter	15th May
Spring	15th August
Summer	15th November

COVER PICTURE:

This imposing statue of a poet in uniform guards the entrance to the '*Banjo Paterson—More Than A Poet Museum*', Yeoval. Our very own **Concert Party** were made very welcome on an excursion there last February. (story page 8) *Photo: Karen Fong*

BUSH MUSIC CLUB INC.

MEMBERSHIP

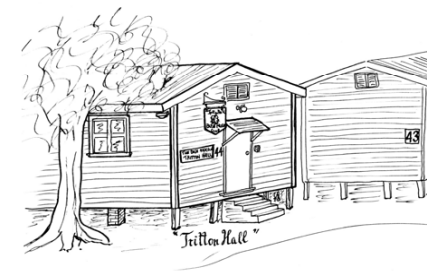
New members are always welcome and encouraged to participate in the activities of the Club. Membership forms are available from Club functions or can be downloaded from our website or fill in our online application form.

Members receive a copy of the Club's quarterly newsletter *Mulga Wire*, concession rates at Club functions, as well as the satisfaction of supporting an organisation dedicated to the continuation of Australian tradition, its preservation and the wider recognition of our treasured heritage.

TRITTON HALL

Our *air conditioned* headquarters at Hut 44, Addison Road Community Centre, Addison Road Marrickville are available for functions meetings, rehearsals, etc at very reasonable rates.

For more information contact 0466 877 423



Bush Music Club Committee

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Vice President	Don Richmond	0409128754
Secretary	Karen Fong	0466 877 423
Treasurer	Allen Davis	9639 7494 (H)
Committee Members	Brian Freeman Elaine Elmers George Bolliger	

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blog -	https://blog.bushmusic.org.au/
Youtube -	https://www.youtube.com/user/BushMusicClubInc
Email -	bmcmail1954@gmail.com
Facebook -	https://www.facebook.com/BushMusicClub/
Meetup -	http://www.meetup.com/Sydney-Bush-Music-Club-Meetup/
Instagram -	https://www.instagram.com/bushmusicclub

BREAKING NEWS

The Bush Music Club turns 70 in 2024!

To celebrate this wonderful milestone, the Bush Music Club Committee has organised various events throughout the year.

- On **Saturday 3 February**, there will be an **afternoon dance** at Beecroft with the wonderful *Ryebuck Bush Band* playing and a special cake to share.
- On **Sunday 26 May**, there will be a **reunion for members and friends outside Sydney** at the **Goulburn Club**. The day will involve:-
Registration between 9:15 and 9:45 Talk about aspects of the Bush Music Club's history between 10 and 11
Music and Song session selections from *Singabouts* throughout the years
Hearty stew and catch-up between 12:30 and 1:30
Then over to our members and friends: an opportunity to share a favourite tune, yarn, song, poem etc. with participation encouraged
Why not make a weekend of it? The Goulburn Club at 19 Market St, overlooking Belmore Park, often has a music session on Friday nights. Goulburn offers lots of activities for the Saturday, including taking their self-guided Heritage Tour throughout the city, walking on the new trail along the banks of the Wollondilly River or meeting friends and relaxing at the many cafes and eateries. The Visitor Information Centre in Goulburn is situated at 202 Sloane St, near the Railway Station.
- On **Sunday 27 October**, there will be a **lunch and special afternoon dance** for members and friends at **Petersham Town Hall** in Sydney. The day will involve:-

Welcome at 11 with opportunities to enjoy a slide show through the years or play music with others.

Delicious buffet-style lunch between 12:30 and 1:30

Afternoon dance with a variety of callers and musicians

Festival Dates:

Illawarra Folk Festival 19-21st January 2024

Banjo Paterson Festival 17-26th February 2024

Bush Traditions Gathering Gunning 23-25th February 2024

National Folk Festival 28nd March—1st April 2024

Trad&Now Live! is a free international streaming service for Australian folk music in its broadest sense. It has been live on air since July and has gone ahead in leaps and bounds since then. Go to www.tradandnow.com If you click on the TradLive logo, that will take you straight to the music.

The BMC Blog: – <https://blog.bushmusic.org.au/> Sandra Nixon has been very busy updating the Bush Music Club Blog, so visit the BMC website and check out the latest additions..

International Concertina Day - 6th February 2024 - celebrate it, watch for events.

Banjo Paterson's Birthday - 17th February 1864



How time flies....it's nearly Christmas and that means just one thing.....

it's nearly party time!!

The Bush Music Club will be turning 70 next year !

[See page 18 for the exciting events we have in store].

Next year we have a busy schedule with appearances at the **Illawarra Folk Festival and Folk School** in January, **Banjo Patterson Festival**, Yeoval in February, **National Folk Festival** in March, as well as the Beecroft Afternoon Bush Dances in February, May, August and December AND the **70th anniversary celebrations**. And much, much more.

A special thank you to all the volunteers, helpers, members, friends and committee who helped make this year's activities so enjoyable.

All the very best for the Season and keep the music and dancing going !!



Ciao Sharyn

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LETTERS



Visiting Bob Foggin

Our long time member and wonderful violinist, Bob Foggin and his wife Monica, are now residents at Summit Care Retirement Village, 5 Bass Dr Baulkham Hills.

Members are encouraged and more than welcome to visit Bob and Monica, preferably in daylight hours.

Several old mates of our Bob, viz, Eric Eisler and Allen Davis, have called in from time to time and have been most welcomed by Bob.

Club members are encouraged to *bring along an instrument* to play and sing some songs with Bob ...he loves it and is more than willing to sing along.

Allen Davis

Dear Editor,

Congratulations for getting Mulga Wire out for Spring 2023.

And thanks to Mike Young, who edited it over the previous ten years with his encouragement to me as well as others to write a number of folklore articles for inclusion in Singabout.

Ralph's article 'Vale BOB BOLTON 1945-2023' acknowledged the incredible contribution and dedication that Bob gave to the BMC. However, Bob was not as involved in the original publication of the song books of John Dengate as indicated by Ralph, although he was involved in the reprints. The historical process was so much more involved and more people were involved than needed now.

Before I share with you some information from the past I would like to acknowledge Bob's invaluable technical assistance in helping me resurrect the faded old pages of foolscap that Gay Scott had put together for a book of Sally Sloane's songs. We brought it out in 2004 to celebrate the Jubilee year of the inaugural meeting of the Bush Music Club.

"My Shout -1982", was largely a work of Alan Scott, who came to our house for weeks to produce the book. Initially Julie Castle and Gay Scott typed lyrics, which John would check and recheck. Once I had ensured the whole lounge room floor was clear for the large sheets of cardboard, Perkins paste, razor sharp trimming knives, metal rules and set squares, the sheets of lyrics were cut and pasted onto the boards.

Ashley Scott wrote the lines of music 'calligraphy' and friend Peteris Grislis wrote the titles. These also had to be pasted with perfect straight measurements, but Alan

MONDAY WORKSHOP NEWS

Slow session

It was pleasing to have Richard return after being out of action with a broken finger for a number of months. Cathy has also reacquainted herself after extensive holidays. We are now spending more time focusing on particular tunes, with a view to being able to play them by *memory/ear*. Breaking down tunes in "hard" keys such as "A", has helped to overcome the reluctance to play them with confidence. Nora has again gone off on holidays. I'm thinking we should have a series of terms throughout the year, during which no-one can be absent without special dispensation. With the end of the year looming, exam time is beginning to come to mind...

Concert Party

The theme for October had been "*Women in the bush*". A number of members have gone out of their way to research interesting items to present on this topic. The piano has been repaired, but still isn't quite as good as it once was - perhaps because Ralph and George interfered with it. We spent time preparing for Kangaroo Valley FF, playing tunes from Session Book 1 and the Pink Song Book 3. It was sad that Mr Burch could not add his voice to these practices, as he was absent on medical leave.

A growing plan/idea for next year, or maybe a festival session is to train (young??) dance callers. Given our ageing folkies, (*it's a lie. ed*) we need to start planning for the next generation. The aim would be to have a small band, and say, 8-12 people interested in becoming callers. Each person gets taught how to call a particular dance, whilst the others are the dancing "Guinea pigs". They then get to show off what they've learnt at a concert party dance. Something to consider...

George Bolliger

For your diaries: Brian Freeman informs us that BMC CP now have an upcoming studio gig *live to air* with Ross M Fear. Especially requested by himself & for the occasion of Sharyn's + BMC's 70 birthday-year. 9/1/24,



MARRICKVILLE MUSIC GROUP

Last week we all had a very enjoyable day at the hut, numbers were down a little for the last session of the year but the hardy souls who turned up saw the year out with some terrific music, chocolates, tea/coffee and biscuits.

We all agreed to start 2024 on the right foot or on the right A chord with our next MMG meeting to be Wednesday, 3rd January 2024, from 11am to 2pm.

Sharyn Mattern

DANCING NEWS

PENNANT HILLS DANCE WORKSHOP

Pennant Hills Community Centre
Lower Hall, downstairs from the library
7.30pm to 9.30pm most Mondays.



As we get to the end of 2023, there's been plenty happening at the BMC dance workshop.

Our Christmas Party was held on Monday 11th December where we danced to live music provided by the BMC's own Concert Party. This was a great night and very well attended. We finished up with a very nice supper.

The Christmas Party wasn't to be our last workshop for the year. Monday 18th was our annual "Request Night". There was no fixed program. Dancers could request and enjoy their favourite dances from our 2023 repertoire.

We now take a break until Monday 15th January 2024 when we'll resume our regular Monday night get-togethers in the new year.

So there is plenty of dancing at Pennant Hills. See you there !



John Short

BEECROFT FAMILY BUSH DANCE IN THE AFTERNOON

Beecroft Community Centre
Beecroft Road, Beecroft (opposite Fire Station)
Saturday Afternoon 2.00pm to 4.30pm
Admission \$ 20 Concession \$15 Members \$15 Family \$40



2024 Diary Dates

3rd February	Ryebuck Bush Band
4th May	BMC Concert Party
3rd August	BMC Concert Party
7th December	BMC Concert Party

[Please note the slight unavoidable increase in admission, of \$1, from

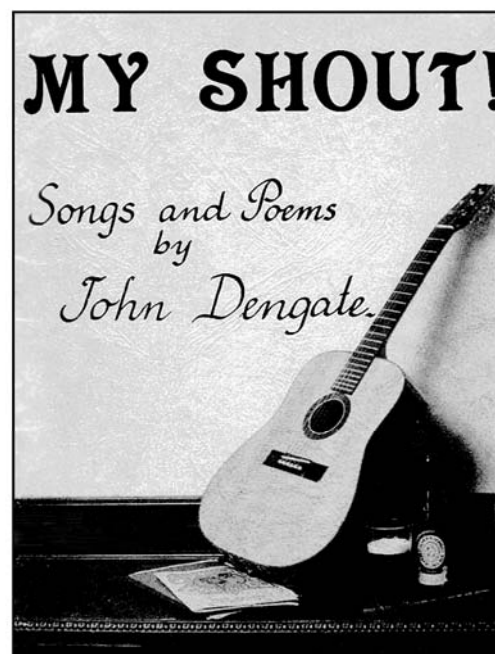
LETTERS

forgot to include his own name on the titles page. John acknowledged the contribution of Alan Scott in his second book.

There is quite a story about the illustrations, which were all drawn by John, and the photographs. Although Bob Bolton was named as photographer, initially a friend of John's had gone out to photograph some of the sites such as Erskineville. Sadly he was killed in a terrible road accident the next day and the film and camera which were in the car, were impounded by the police. Most of the photographs were actually from the Dengate collection such as the one of John's mother as a young woman.

The second book "*My Shout Again!*" was produced by Queensland Folk Federation when Bill Hauritz said there should be a songbook of John's contemporary songs in 1989. As usual a number of people were involved in printing the music and illustrations.

By 2012, Sandra Nixon suggested reprinting the books for the BMC 60th Anniversary. However, I suggested that it would be an opportunity to print a number of the songs that John had written about the current political scene as well as his own experiences of life as well as selection from the previous 50 years. I had typed all these as there were constant requests for copies of words of John's latest songs. Tony Suttor from NT used to enjoy getting the latest song to sing at the Darwin Top End folk Club, held in the WW2 gun turret building. John would scrupulously check each line for corrections before songs could be emailed or printed.



The selection of songs, from hundreds, proved a challenge, so many old friends were asked for an opinion. When I asked John, his comment was that he wrote the songs and sang them but that was the end of his job. I also decided to include some of John's Christmas card designs as the illustration as his sense of satire ran to graphic design. Unfortunately, I only had two weeks free to pull all the content together, so the pressure was on. More time would have given opportunities for polishing the book, but the words were out there. The Bush Music Club had it ready for sale for their Anniversary. All original copies sold, so they are collector's copies, but there have been reprints and Bob produced those.

Here's to ongoing copies of 'Mulga Wire'.

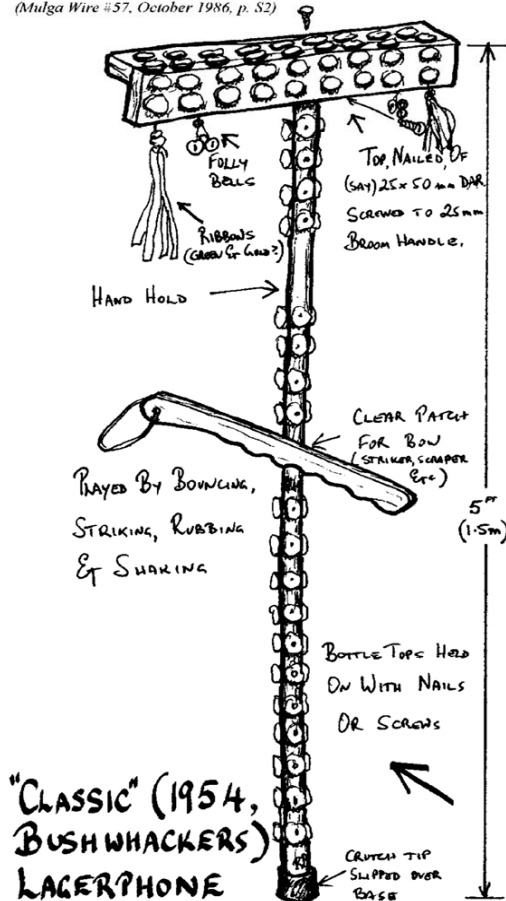
Dale Dengate.

LETTERS

"IT'S ALL ABOUT THE COUNTING" - Remembering Bob Bolton

In the 90's I used to enjoy Monday nights at the *Bush Music Club (BMC)*, Hut 44 at Marrickville. There was dancing and the music was often led by Bob Bolton. I enjoyed learning bush dances as it was good preparation for the regular dances at Glebe but I was no 'Fred Astaire'. It was Bob who advised me to count while learning a dance. "It's all about the counting", he said. So that's what I started to do...I'd like to think I became a better dancer.

(Mulga Wire #57, October 1986, p. 52)



(Drawn by Bob Bolton)

It was also on Monday nights that I picked up how to play a lagerphone. Margaret Bolliger taught me the basics about counting, the bassline and bringing in the striker or 'rattle stick'. Bob helped reinforce Margaret's instructions and encouraged me on other occasions. I became quite good on the instrument. I remember one Monday night George Bolliger was playing a tune on the piano and I was having a go on the lagerphone. Pete McMahon made the comment that the piano and lagerphone complemented each other really well. I thank Bob for all his encouragement.

I can recall special *Beer and Cheese* nights at the BMC. I still clearly remember one Friday night when Bob Bolton took the time to explain the tuning of a guitar. It gave me the confidence to start learning to play the instrument. I think of Bob when I strum a few tunes today.

I also used to see Bob Bolton at various festivals. At the *Illawarra Folk Festival* a few years back, Bob and I were catching up over a beer. The conversation got around to 'Murray Mud' or *Coopers Black* and, you can guess, we got stuck into a few. I remember a great feeling of camaraderie but later that night the tent seemed to float...

Thanks, Bob, for the advice and chats over the years. You are sorely missed.

Graeme Evans



Charity Concert, Afternoon Tea and Bush Dance

In memory of
Reg Murray

Entry: \$10 tax deductible donation to
Melanoma Institute Australia

1:30pm - 4:30pm
Sunday 28th January 2024
Heininger Hall, Heininger St, Dapto

Concert performers...

As I Am
The Romeos and Sam
Chordeaux

Phone: Cris 0404 667 614
Wongawilli Colonial Dance Club

Central Coast's Second Saturday Bush Dances

East Gosford Progress Hall,
Cnr. Wells St and Henry Parry Drive.
7.30 - 11.00pm

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Feb 9: | Bushdance (Waterbombers) |
| March 9: | Social: Dances from the British Isles (John Short) |
| April 13: | Bushdance (Ryebuck) |
| May 11: | Colonial Bushdance (Southern Cross) |
| July 13: | Jane Austen Night (Short Dented Potts) |
| Aug 10: | Social TBA (John Short) |
| Sept. 14: | Bushdance (Rosella) |
| Oct 12: | Flannel Flower Spring Ball (Barangaroo) |
| Nov. 9: | Bushdance (Frohlich Bros.) |
| Dec. 14: | Christmas Contra (Ryebuck) |

For more information visit our website www.ccbdma.org

SAPLINGS & THE BMC YOUTH BUSH BAND



About 7 years ago a small group of BMC members (myself, Kerry Doherty and Tony Romeo) presented a concept to the BMC committee, we called it *Saplings*. The original aims included "...have fun, entertain and give young musicians an awareness of Australian collected music with a desire to play the tunes." With our long term goal, "... for the Bush Music Club to be known as a centre of excellence in presenting collected music to children."

We have grown since those early days and so have the original young people who have joined in with the *Festival Sessions, Master Classes, Regional Sessions and Family Camps*. Some of those original members are now tutors for the younger Saplings joining us.

Saplings have had a wonderful 2023. We attended four festivals and have another coming up as we go to print. All these festivals were very different in design and in the number of young musicians turning up to play and sing. Our numbers have ranged from half a dozen a day at *Kangaroo Valley Folk Festival* to about 30 a day at the *National*. At the *National* and *SessionFest* the kids were able to perform what they learnt in the sessions towards the end of the festival. At the *National* this year they were in a major venue for the concert and sang and played beautifully!

Many thanks to the festival organisers for putting Saplings on the programme: at *Illawarra Folk School and Festival* (Illawarra Folk Club), *The National, SessionFest at Morisset* (Newcastle and Hunter Valley Folk Club), *Kangaroo Valley Folk Festival* and the inaugural *Bundanoon Folk Festival*.

Some of our young tutors and musicians have "graduated" to play for the BMC Youth Bush Band at the National the past two years. They sounded as good as any bush band I have heardreally! They also helped out presenting a couple of half hour, high energy, fun participation performances at the *Kids Festival at the National* this year and hope to repeat it next year.

Saplings have been given some instruments which have been incorporated into an Instrument Loan Programme (we don't need anymore instruments at present please). If any member knows of a child who would benefit from the loan of an instrument, please let me know... helenromeo.romeo@gmail.com.

Thank you to the BMC members who have tutored our Saplings this year, thank you to the collectors who have gathered the music and thank you to the parents for bringing their young musicians to us... and a special thank you to the Saplings Sub-committee: *Beck McCullum, Chris, Poleson, Tony Romeo, Dave Johnson, Emma Sputnik and George Bolliger*.

Helen Romeo



LETTERS

Ralph,

A short note to say hello, thank you and to tell you how much I enjoyed reading the Mulga Wire.

The article on Bob was an eye opener and please pass on my regards to Pat.

I was interested to see Alexander Prince received a mention. He toured out here at the invitation of Harry Rickards the proprietor of the Tivoli Circuit. Prince arrived in Adelaide on Saturday October 29th, 1910. He was on the bill that day for afternoon and evening performances at the Tivoli Theatre. From Adelaide he went to Melbourne, Sydney, New Zealand, Sydney, Brisbane, Rockhampton and back again.

In Sydney he appeared at a charity Town Hall performance fund raiser for the aid of families who had lost members in surf boat accident, I think near Coogee?

Prince was certainly of his time as he had monthly gramophone releases to coincide with the tour which wound up around September 1911. These recordings were imports and advertised in the local newspapers. He returned again in 1913 with the Victoria Theatre, Newcastle added to the tour.

Thank you once again for a good read.

Regards,

Jim Dangarfield

PS

Below are the details of the concert Prince performed at whilst on the Tivoli circuit in Sydney. The reviews for Prince in the newspapers mention his concertina playing where he *imitates a set of bagpipes*. Astonishing!

Evening News, Sydney, Fri 17 Feb 1911 Page 5

COOGEE SURF TRAGEDY.

TOMORROW'S BENEFIT FOR THE WIDOWS.

A colossal programme has been arranged by Mr. Hugh Ward and the presentation almost dwarfed by the popular desire to do something big for the relatives of the victims to the disaster. The whole of the theatrical profession have placed themselves at Mr Ward's disposal for the good cause, and the result is a programme colossal in its excellence.

The benefit concert will take place at the Sydney Town Hall tomorrow afternoon.

CONCERT PARTY EXCURSION

HANGING OUT AT YEOVAL

In February this year, a number of us from the Bush Music Club spent a few relaxing days at the Yeoval showground to take part in the *Banjo Paterson Australian Poetry Festival* (17 -26 Feb 2023). It was near Yeoval (not far from Orange) on a property called '*Buckinbah Station*' where Banjo spent his early childhood.

The festival had events at various locations, including: the *More than a Poet Museum* in Yeoval, the Freemasons Hotel at Molong, *Boree Nyranng* at Borenore (the property where Banjo's grandparents lived) and the Civic Centre at Orange. We performed a number of brackets on the Sunday under the shade of a large tree beside the museum in Yeoval as part of the *Poet's Brunch and Entertainment*.

Ralph Pride had put together a collection called "Songs of Banjo Paterson" which included *Waltzing Matilda* (of course), *The Billygoat Overland* (from Banjo's book "The Animals Noah Forgot"), *A Bushman's Song* (words by Banjo, set to Joe Cashman's tune) and a little gem called *The Dry Canteen*, a soldier's song that Ralph transcribed and arranged from a faded hand-written manuscript found in the National Library of Australia among Paterson's papers.

When we weren't playing, we sat and enjoyed listening to some bush poets, including Greg North, Robyn Sykes and the duo Melanie Hall and Susie Carcary. Mel and Sue encouraged three local children to get up and help with a performance of *The Spider from the Gwydir* by W.T. Goodge – just great. About seven poets also got up to recite Banjo's *The Man from Snowy River*, each saying a few lines – very enjoyable.

We visited the *More than a Poet Museum/Exhibition* a few times. It may have been because it was nicely air conditioned and they serve yummy scones and jam and a hot strong coffee but it was also because Sharon and Alf Cantrell, the curators, are such friendly, welcoming and knowledgeable hosts. Wandering around the museum, you can certainly appreciate that Banjo was more than a story teller and poet. There is information, for example, about his work as a solicitor, WWI correspondent, newspaper editor, ambulance driver, jockey, sports commentator and a great adventurer.

There's something to be said about leaving the big smoke for a few days to relax, play music with mates, share the occasional meal together and gaze up at the night sky full of stars. The showground has a new shower / toilet block and there are powered sites.

If you couldn't make it due to other commitments, do come along to Yeoval next time. We are thinking of making this a regular gig.

Karen Fong



Yeoval Showground @ Sunset

SINGABOUT

These hyperbolic verses, a fantasy of relief work during the Great Depression, were discovered by John Meredith among the papers of the late Duke Tritton. It was sung in the 1970's by the Bush Music Club's Concert Party, to the Irish tune '*Mick Maguire*'. "Stevens mob" refers to the NSW State Government of the day.

Hayes' Gap 1932



Chorus: *Old convict ways, old convict days,
Are here again mayhap;
In ball and chain, we'll toil again
On the road at Hayes's Gap.*

The single men said nothing when
To Mogo Road they went,
So all of us, no noise or fuss,
To Hayes's Gap are sent.

It seems that we're no longer free
To live our normal life,
And you and me, just slaves shall be
Till we leave this world of strife.

We wonder if that little stiff,
That pompous shire-hall chap,
Or boss, Matich, will swing a pick
With us at Hayes's Gap.

The Stevens mob will end the job,
Our manhood they will sap,
They'll use the lash, our spirits smash,
Out here at Hayes's Gap.

We have no hope, they'll use the rope,
Our hungry necks to snap;
High in the breeze, we'll swing from trees
At lonely Hayes's Gap.



Duke Tritton was an enthusiastic member of the Bush Music Club. He lived and loved Australia's rich bush tradition and contributed many treasured items to our national folk heritage. Here are a couple of them. The first continues the swaggie theme introduced by John Short, and in that on the following page the bitterness shines through a sarcastic account of harsh conditions endured by workers in 1932.



Advice To A Young Swagman

When you're stony broke and walking, and your tucker bag is flat,
It will never get you nowhere, if you start to 'whip the cat',
For there ain't no time for weeping, when you're on a hungry track,
And we have no use for squealers on the roads that run outback.

You must keep your independence and, if a squatter snarls at you,
You snarl right back and tell him, what you think he ought to do;
You can query his ancestry, which will mostly start a brawl,
Win or lose, it shows the squatter, that you're never one to crawl.

But when the grass is long and dry, you will find them all polite,
And you'll get a good hand out, if you work your noddle right.
You just flash a box of matches, and speak of the 'Wild Red Steer',
He'll most likely call you 'mister'. He might even shout a beer.

And if ever you are short of meat, it's really not a sin
For to knock a jumbuck over, but be sure you plant the skin.
For if they catch you with it, you'll surely get it hot,
For the magistrate's a squatter and he'll hand you out the lot

You may be busted up and broke. Well, you are not the first
To shove a cheque across the bar to satisfy your thirst.
You'll have plenty other troubles, but keep them under your hat;
One thing no dinkum swagman does, is whip the flamin' cat.

Duke Tritton

BOOK REVIEW

"Time Means Tucker" by Duke Tritton.

The September 2020 edition of "Mulga Wire" featured an article "from the archives" about H.P. "Duke" Tritton, the bush worker, singer, collector and composer after whom our own "Tritton Hall" is named.

The article mentions Duke's book "Time Means Tucker". Duke wrote this book about the four years that he and his mate, "Dutchy" Bishop, spent carrying their swags around New South Wales working and travelling. For anyone with even a passing interest in Australian bush history, I thoroughly recommend this book as a great read. The writing style is simple and straightforward, but very entertaining and extremely detailed.

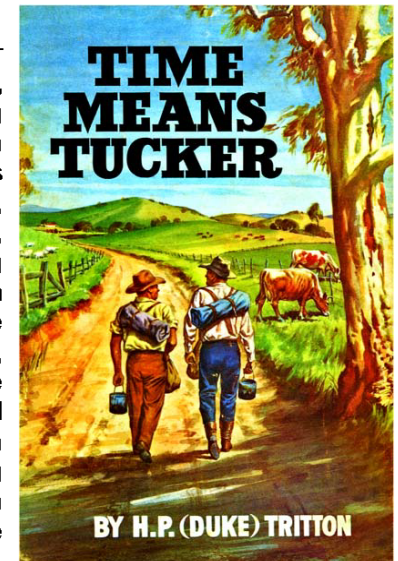
The title, by the way, comes from the Henry Lawson poem, "Outback".

*"For time means tucker and tramp you must
Where the scrubs and plains are wide,
With seldom a track that a man can trust
Or a mountain peak to guide;*

*All day long in the dust and heat,
When the summer is on the track,
With stinted stomachs and blistered feet
We carry our swags outback."*

Duke's book starts in 1905 and, as in Henry Lawson's poem, Duke and Dutchy spend a lot of time carrying their swags looking for work, as did many others of the time. Often they would hear of work at a distant property or in a town, but by the time they arrived the jobs had been filled. Then it was back to the track, following up on the next rumour of work.

That is a major theme of the book. The need for itinerant workers to be constantly on the move, hearing of leads for work, following the shearing or droving or station work or whatever else in order to make some money. In Duke's case, this also included driving a poison cart (killing rabbits), riding race horses, singing in the street or a pub, driving a Cobb and Co coach and even going rounds in a boxing tent! (By the way, it was when boxing that he was given the name "Duke". He was fighting an experienced boxer called Prince, who was the crowd's favourite, and they were cheering for "The Prince". As Harold Percival Tritton started to get the upper hand, someone in the audience grew tired of the one-sided cheering and called out "What about the Duke?" Soon others in the crowd joined in the chant and the



name Duke stuck for the rest of his life.)

The book is also a reminder to the modern reader about how different work is today and how few people need to be constantly travelling as part of their work routine. And, of course, how much easier it is to travel and communicate today compared to those times. Motor cars and mobile phones have made life easy in a way that Duke and Dutchy could only have dreamed.



While on a remote track, the boys met a young couple walking with a six month old baby. The man carried a swag and his wife pushed the pram. They were going to Sydney! They had covered 70 miles and had 200 miles to go. They were enjoying the journey they said, but their biggest concern was that the pram tyres wouldn't last the distance.

On another occasion, after a country town show had finished, Duke saw a family of five packing up to go home. The two children (a boy of four and a girl of seven) rode one horse while their Mum and Dad each rode a horse, taking it in turns to lead the packhorse and carry the baby in their arms! Their property was fifty miles away and to get there they would need to camp overnight. (And we complain about the drive to work...)

Duke himself noted the problems of travelling in the bush. He wrote *"Thirty miles from tree to tree does not seem far in a motor car, but padding the hoof is a different matter especially under a burning sun"*.

Because travel was difficult, people often used innovative means to overcome the "tyranny of distance". "Jumping" goods trains was a popular, though illegal, means of travel. However Duke also explains a couple of less well known methods of transport.



For example, he tells how two people could travel with only one bicycle. The two travellers would strap their swags to the bike. One would ride off on the bike while the other started walking. A few miles up the road the rider parks the bike on the side of the road and starts walking. When the other person arrives at the parked bike, he starts riding, overtakes his mate, and rides on a further few miles. He parks the bike and starts walking and so the process is repeated. Duke said that two men could, without difficulty, cover 50 miles a day in this way.

However Duke mentions another means of travel that I am sure is uniquely Australian. The situation he described occurred in central New South Wales where four men shared a bicycle and a horse drawn, two-

seater sulky.

Dave, who owned the sulky, rode it exclusively. However he allowed the other three to load their swags on to it.

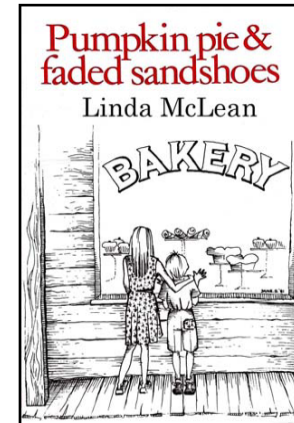
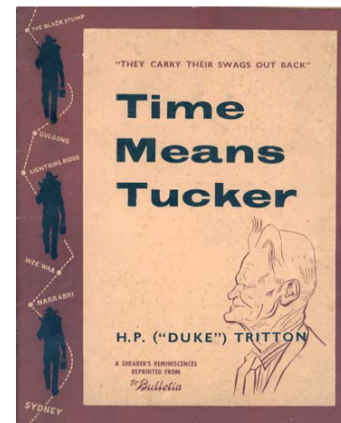
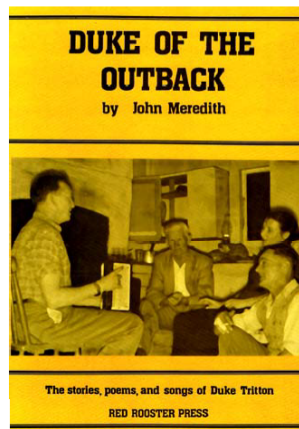
Duke rode with Dave. Jack rode the bike a few miles, leaned it against a tree and started walking. Dutchy jogged behind the sulky until he came to the bike. He mounted it and rode past Jack. Then he parked the bike and started walking. When the sulky caught up with Jack, Jack hopped in the sulky and Duke jogged behind until they came to the parked bike. Duke then rode the bike and the process was repeated.

This is actually a very sophisticated means of travel. It provides the three men with an occasional rest (riding in the sulky) and alternates their efforts between walking, jogging and cycling, and no one has to carry their swag. Unfortunately Duke doesn't mention how far they were able to travel each day. However, we can thank Duke for documenting this means of travel, as I have not seen it described anywhere else.

If you feel you would like to read more about the travels of Duke and Dutchy, get a copy of *"Time Means Tucker"*. I'm sure you won't be disappointed.

Duke's book is out of print but try your local second hand book shop, or internet-based sellers such as Abe Books. I bought my copy at a garage sale for \$2, easily the best \$2 book I've ever read!

John Short



For the convenience of you ardent book searchers here are some more covers to look for. *"Duke of the Outback"* or *"The Adventures of a Shearer Named Tritton"* by John Meredith is a collection items from the papers of Duke. The second is an early soft newsprint publication. The third is a continuation of the story of Dukes family written by Duke's daughter Linda McLean—a graphic description of their life and experiences during the great depression of the 1930's. (Ed.)