

REGULAR MONTHLY AND WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

BEECROFT BUSH DANCE - Feb, May, Jul, Sep, Dec

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)

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

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

Monday afternoons 7.15 - 9.30pm
"Tritton Hall" Hut 44, 142 Addison Road, Marrickville

BEECROFT FAMILY DANCE (see details P 18)

SYDNEY SLOW IRISH SESSION - Feb to Dec

Sunday nights 6.30pm
Irish traditional music at a pace that suits beginners and intermediate players. \$10 (concession \$5) includes tea and bikkies.
"Tritton Hall" Hut 44, 142 Addison Road Marrickville

SINGABOUT SESSIONS - Feb to Dec

2nd Wednesday of the Month
Currently being held on zoom starting at 11am.
If interested, please contact the club on bmcmail1954@gmail.com

MARRICKVILLE MUSIC GROUP - Feb to Dec

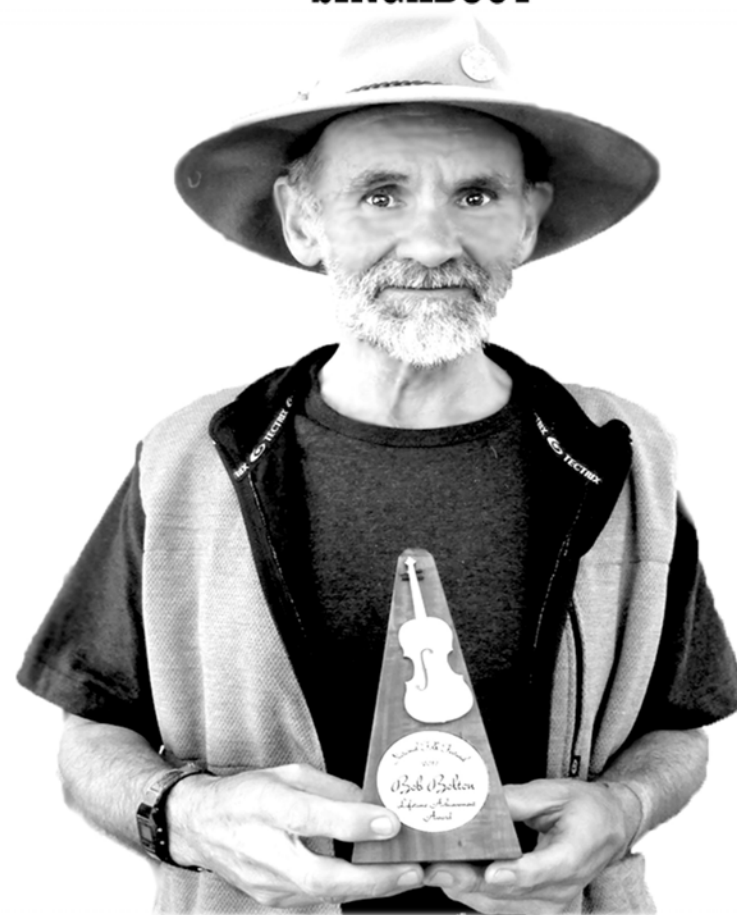
1st Wednesday of the Month 11am - 2pm
Music from all genres including bush. \$10 - tea and coffee provided.
"Tritton Hall" (Hut 44), 142 Addison Road Marrickville

PLAYFORD DANCING AT THE HUT - Feb to Dec

1st Tuesday of the Month 7.30 - 9.30pm
English Country Dancing, with *live music*. \$7
"Tritton Hall" Hut 44, 142 Addison Road Marrickville

MULGA WIRE

INCLUDING
SINGABOUT



No. 259

Registered by Australia Post
Publication PP 100001235



Spring 2023

ISSN 0157 - 3381
ISSN—2207- 7413 (online)

A Bush Music Club Publication

EDITORIAL

Well, here we are, back again..... after a brief hiatus Mulga Wire is back! And so am I. We all love our club magazine and we're all convinced how essential it is but somehow, someone still has to find time to prepare it and get it printed. So, I have firmly grasped the nettle once more. Hard to believe it's been going for over 46 years.

Thankfully, It's a lot simpler these days. Gone is the cranky old Underwood electric typewriter; the correcting tape and paint; the sticky, gluey past-ups; the rushed trips for bromides. Also gone, thanks to the march of technology, are those bleary-eyed, late night brainstorming and typing sessions that Bob, Dave and I inflicted on our spouses (or is that spice?) all those years ago when we first kicked this mag off.

We can only stand agog at the awesome work of **Bob Bolton, Mike Young, Colin Fong** and all the members of the publication teams over all those years. It's an achievement to be proud of. Thanks from all of us!

Now—down to biz. I expect you, the members, to give your ongoing enthusiastic support in the form of articles, letters, revues, stories, songs & poetry, photos, activity reports even *polite* criticism. Don't worry if you forget, I'll nag.

In this issue we have a bit of catching up to do, Importantly, there's the melancholy business of remembering and celebrating the lives of members sadly, no longer with us. We have outings and events to talk about. I'm grateful to Warren Fahey who writes to support our endeavours and highlights the importance of magazines like ours.

It's been a busy year for the club and many events have been left unreported but we may find space to fix that in coming issues. To that end *we hope to bring our Summer edition a little sooner in December so* start getting your ideas for contributions together. Cheers for now....



Ralph Pride
pridehome@msn.com.au

MULGA WIRE is published quarterly by the Bush Music Club Inc.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND ADVERTISING: Items for publication may be sent to the editor by email or posted to GPO Box 433, Sydney 2001 Copy should be received three weeks prior to publication

ADVERTISING:
Full page \$45 Half Page \$25 Quarter Page \$ 15 Business Cards \$7 Classifieds \$1.50/line Inserts \$30 min.

COPYRIGHT: Except where it is indicated that copyright is reserved, all articles published in Mulga Wire may be freely reprinted, provided that source and author are clearly acknowledged.

VIEWS EXPRESSED herein are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Bush Music Club or the editors.

VOLUNTEERS: Mulga wire is published and distributed by club members to whom we owe our thanks and support. Offers of assistance will be gratefully accepted.

PRINTERS: Unique Print, 134 Broadway, Chippendale, NSW.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE.....18th November 2023 (Xmas special edition)

COVER PICTURE:

At the 2012 National Folk Festival, BMC Life Member, **BOB BOLTON** was presented with the well-deserved **Lifetime Achievement Award**. Photo: Chris Woodland

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

President	Sharyn Mattern	9799 7439 (H)
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	

FOR MORE INFORMATION

GPO Box 433, Sydney 2001 Phone – 0466 877 423

Website -	http://www.bushmusic.org.au/
blog -	https://blog.bushmusic.org.au/
Youtube -	https://www.youtube.com/user/BushMusicClubInc
Email -	bmcm1954@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

Two important dates for 2024 !

The Bush Music Club turns 70 in 2024! To celebrate, the Club will be involved in various events but there are two special ones we invite you all to be part of: **a members' reunion** outside Sydney on **Sunday 26 May, 2024** at the Goulburn Club and **a get-together** on **Sunday 27 October, 2024** in Sydney at the Petersham Town Hall.

Reunion at the Goulburn Club in May

The day will start at 10 with a talk about the history of the club. There will be an on-going slide show of members throughout the years and an informal session in the round (favourite tune, yarn, song or poem). Between 12 and 1 we will stop for a hearty stew and catch-up. Lunch will be followed by a special concert with participation strongly encouraged.

Why not make a weekend of it? The Club often has a music session on Friday nights and 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.

Get-together at Petersham Town Hall in October, 2024

This day will start at 11 with a welcome cuppa and music session. You can also enjoy a slide show through the years. There will be a delicious buffet-style lunch between 12:30 and 2, an opportunity to catch up with friends. Lunch will be followed by a special afternoon dance between 2:00 and 4:20 with a number of callers and musicians taking part.

We look forward to celebrating 2024 with our Bush Music Club family in 2024.

The BMC 70th Anniversary Committee

Festival Dates

Kangaroo Valley Folk Festival

16-22 October 2023

www.kangaroovalleyfolkfestival.com.au

Bundanoon Folk Festival

24-26th November 2023 (see page 17)

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



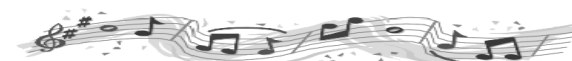
Welcome to the new look Spring Mulga Wire and a special welcome to our new editor, *Ralph Pride*.

Ralph brings a wealth of Bush Music Club knowledge as well as Australian history, bush traditions and so much more.

And a thousand thanks to *Mike Young*, who has been involved with MW for the past 10 years being on the editing team for a year then editor since 2014. Mike brought a fresh look to our magazine with his knowledge and interest in the folk scene. We wish Mike all the very best in his future endeavours.

The club has had a busy year with the BMC Ensemble playing for the Beecroft afternoon dances this year as well as a music workshop at the recent Sydney Festival and the Goulburn Gathering. Also, there are scheduled appearances at Kangaroo Valley Folk Festival (20-22/10) and a dance at Beecroft – for more information go to page 16 of this MW. If you're attending either of these activities be sure to come and make yourself known to the team.

We're getting closer to the big year – as 2014 is our 70th anniversary!! There's a lot going on (see page 18) so be sure to keep up to date with all the happenings via our web page, e-newsletter and the MW.



Sharyn Mattern,

IN THIS ISSUE

Letters	4
Vale Bob Bolton	6
Farewell Harry Kay	8
The Dungenyul Song	10
The Dry Canteen	song 11
"Mulga Wires"	poem 12
Polka Mazurka	music 13
Goulburn Gathering	revue 14
BMC Dancing News	16
Music Workshops	17
Concert Party	17
Breaking News	70th Anniversary 18
Festival Dates	18
About BMC	19
Regular Events	20

LETTERS

Loyalty by Bushies....

Just a short note to congratulate and thank all those wonderful Bush Music Club members and friends who supported the Club through the 3 year COVID health epidemic.

Musicians, dancers, singers, poets, learners and supporters from all walks in life continued to "bat on" against the odds whilst retaining their good humour and indomitable spirits.

The Bush Music Club, against difficult health odds, managed not only to continue almost as usual, but also attract new members, perform at new venues, utilize Hut 44 more frequently, apply Zoom shows and form new bush bands.

We have managed, for nearly 70 years, to ensure that the mighty bush remained "tethered to the world".



Folk Clubs and Publishing

When I started attending the Bush Music Club's weekly meetings in the early 1960s, the slightly rusty ring-bound copies of *Singabout* were the club's 'bible', and we boisterously sang the songs from cover to cover. I learned many songs I still sing today. Around the same time, I also subscribed to the Victorian Folk Music Club's magazine, *Australian Tradition*. I went on to form a lifetime friendship with its editor, Wendy Lowenstein, and through her, became close friends with the pioneer collectors Pat & Norm O'Connor and the dance historian Shirley Andrews. Looking back, I can't imagine the hard work that went into producing *Singabout* and, later, *Mulga Wire*, and I know keeping *Australian Tradition* published became a frustrating obsession for Wendy. She often would say, "I don't know why I bother. Those bloody folkies never put their hands in their pocket and never subscribe." Up in Queensland, collector Ron Edwards had the same frustration, and we both commiserated on how no one seemed to care about these modest magazines and the music and folklore they published. Well, I certainly appreciated all of them, and apart from learning songs from them, I also used much of the material on my various ABC radio programs. They were an invaluable inspiration.

....Publishing old songs, newly collected songs, dance music, etc. even in a modest way like Mulga Wire is essential, and I welcome its return.

Over the years, I have created numerous books, magazines and probably far too many recordings. Still, I am driven by the belief that my fellow Australians need to know about folk songs, recitations, and folklore. My interest in exploring and celebrating the Australian identity prompted much of my drive. One of the problems with living on a huge continent with a relatively small population is that it is often difficult to 'get the message across' to the population at large.....

MONDAY WORKSHOP NEWS

Slow Session

The numbers of attendees have remained static this month. We were pleased that one attendee has returned after a break of over two months due to a broken finger. We have continued to consolidate learning of two *jig sets* from the Yellow Book - progress has been slow. There has been a lot of interest in the *hornpipes* and *rag tunes* that have been introduced to the repertoire.

Evening Session

The new monthly theme "drinking" was a great success. Its successor "driving" has just come to an end. It was pleasing to see how many people got involved with researching material for this topic. Let's hope that the next topic "women in the bush" is equally well received. Our piano, which had been out of action with a stuck key, has now been fixed. Ralph and George endeavoured to fix it, but only succeeded in creating an additional issue upon which we won't elaborate. Attendances have been good.

CONCERT PARTY NEWS



BMC-CP on Radio

Ross Fear, a great supporter of Australian music is the host on **Alive 90.5**. The program has all Australian blues, roots, folk and contemporary artistes. He has special studio guests each week. 100% local Australian artistes for 14.5 years.

A BMC group were recently playing live to air (see photo) .

Here's a **direct link** to the podcast of our teams' broadcast. <https://omny.fm/shows/australian-spectrum-show/australian-spectrum-show-29-8-2023>

Upcoming Events

We are currently working towards the **Kangaroo Valley Folk Festival**, where we have three sessions - two on dance tunes, and the other on songs. To this extent we are revising the **Session Tunes Book 1**, and the **Pink Song Book No 3**.

The next **Beecroft Family Bush Dance** is just around the corner. Program and music coming soon.

George Bolliger



BMC DANCING NEWS

PENNANT HILLS DANCE WORKSHOP

Pennant Hills Community Centre
Yarrara Road Pennant Hills
Lower Hall, (downstairs from the library)
7.30pm to 9.30pm Mondays, (except public holidays).



Come and join us at the BMC's dance workshop for an enjoyable evening of dance with a bunch of happy people. Whether you are new to dancing or an old hand, our wide ranging programs will have something to interest you.

If you're brand new to dancing or less experienced the workshops give you an opportunity to learn the dances in a friendly atmosphere and the ability to ask questions, something that's difficult to do at a bush dance. On the other hand, if you're an experienced dancer then the workshops regularly feature new dances and some of the more traditional dances that you probably haven't seen for a while.

There are always opportunities to learn and practice specific dance movements and then incorporate them into a dance.

Wherever possible, we also practice for the upcoming Beecroft dances.

Looking ahead, our Christmas party is to be held on 11th December. This is always an enjoyable night of dancing with live music provided by the *BMC's own Concert Party*.

So there is plenty happening 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 \$19 / \$17 Concession

BMC Members \$14 Family \$39

2023 Diary Dates

4th November Heritage Band
With David Johnson leading.
2nd December BMC Concert Party
With Margaret Bolliger calling.

2024 Diary Dates

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



Sidney Kidman

some extraordinary archive film footage and, of course, rare photographs and music. I was very fortunate to be given custodianship of a series of 1920s films made by Sidney Kidman - they show the 'cattle king' on the track and really bring our history together. Incidentally, Kidman had a great love of bush poetry and loved nothing better than an evening around the campfire with his billy tea as he listened to songs and stories.

Warren Fahey
Photo Supplied.

Moreabout Singabout

On that note.....the entire 1956—1967 Singabout collection is shortly to be re-published under one cover as a 70th anniversary project. Those much loved, though very old, faded and falling apart pages have been restored to their former glory now in easily readable A4 format with a comprehensive index. *Editor*

Bribie Jammin....

For anyone travelling way north into Queensland's Sunshine Coast, you may be interested in participating with Bribie Jammin, Wednesday afternoons 4 pm till late, in Brennan Park on Bribie Island. Consult the FB page Bribie Jammin for updates and weather cancellations. All welcome to byo instruments, chairs and food for the electric BBQ.

Next year's Bribie Jammin festival set for 22/23/24 August 2023

Convenors Bill and Trish.

Adele Fielding.

VALE BOB BOLTON 1945 - 2023

I first met Bob when we were kids in East Bankstown—the sticks—or Greenacre as it is known these days. It was not too far from the area where Duke Tritton grew up, as Bob frequently reminded me. It really was the sticks back then with large wild tracts of the dominant ti-tree scrub. We kids made good use of it and ran wild. Then the post war housing boom happened rudely elbowing aside the chook farms, dairies, stables, secret bush tracks, kids' tree houses and forts.

I met up with Bob again 1963/4 when we attended BMC meetings in Castlereagh Street. He, along with his father Ken and brother Eric, wanted to produce an "Australian Scout Song Book" and were looking for more appropriate songs than the British and American material which was all that was available at the time. Bob and Eric became keen enough to take up instruments - Eric the banjo and Bob the button accordion - I already played fiddle so we began joining in at meetings and concert party performances. Then the travel bug got to us.

We joined up again in Tasmania in 1964/5 and after a short stint as itinerant fruit pickers we found work with a contractor at Meadowbank dam on the upper Derwent River. I was site-fitter and Bob was the time-keeper in the office but we both worked laying heavy cables when needed. We lived in workers' huts where Friday night singalongs allowed us to draw on our BMC experience. Keen bushwalkers, we enjoyed immensely the scenic grandeur of the high country and wild places. There were many camping trips — Cradle Mtn, Lake St Claire, Lake Pedder, etc. We toured too, Bob riding pillion on the back of my old Suzuki motorbike—staying in youth hostels. We made many friends and even found a folk club in Hobart.

After I went on to work in Hobart, Bob carried on in dams further up the Derwent, He eventually moved back to the mainland with the firm who were now contracting for the SMA on Murray No2. He stayed in barracks at Khancoban and had the opportunity to trip to Sydney to visit family & renewed contact with the BMC. He was also just across the river from Corryong where he encountered the Nariel Creek Band playing Saturday night dances.

We met up again a few years later, Bob returned to Tassie and we worked together for a while harvesting and processing broom from the mountainous forestry regions south of Hobart. We drove a ten-ton truck for our work and camped in forestry and pickers' huts. We didn't make much money but we both enjoyed working and being in the bush again. At about this time on our frequent trips back to civilisation, Bob met his future wife Pat who was flatting at Battery Point with my then fiancé Rose.

After a couple more years knocking about down south doing this and that, we four found ourselves back in Sydney, married and doing ordinary city type jobs.

The Bush Music Club's weekly meetings were now in the staff lunch room, building 38 of Sydney Tech.....the old Marcus Clarke Building on Broadway. This worked well for a while but the security staff objected to working late to lock up afterwards, Bob found a nicely sized venue at Burwood Council Hall where the club thrived for several years of weekly social music meetings and monthly themed sessions.

Bob became a publisher. He was secretary at that time and produced the club's monthly newsletter. In 1977 this transformed itself with the assistance at that time, of Dave Johnson and myself to become "**Mulga Wire**". Bob went on to carry several songbooks through to publication - John Dengate's "**My Shout**" in 1982; then "**My**

us with a set of singalong tunes.

Talking of singalongs, I very much enjoyed a session I led titled '**Round The Goanna**'. It was so good to accompany a jovial mob over some rousing bush songs and Aussie evergreens on the old honkytonk type piano in the club dining room. Then there was a glorious presentation by **Ralph Pride** of some of his recordings from the vast archive he's collected over the years, including some amazing concertina pieces by British master **Alexander Prince** as well as the Australian, **Alex Richards**. Interestingly **Helen Romeo** had been Alex's student way back in the day, and she gave us some great insights and anecdotes into his prowess on the old box.



Brian, Tony, Vanessa, Sharyn and Elaine belting it out at "Bush Croakey".

I could go on and on with further highlights, for example **Ray Mulligan's** amazing button box playing at sessions and his collected dance tunes workshop, **Ian Hayden's** lyrical re-interpretations of tunes from field recordings, **Peter Cahill's** singer-songwriter's workshop, **George Bolliger's** teaching of tunes from the Bush Music Club's easy tunes book, and believe me, that's truly only the half of it.

And when finally 'comes the time when we must say goodbye' the tune of which **Ralph Pride**, in all humility, told us was written by his maternal great-grandfather, **Edward Tyrrell**. Our swansong was an outdoor concert on the bandstand of the park that fronts the club for the delectation of those wandering around the bric-a-brac stalls on a sunny public holiday Monday, followed by a last session for the stragglers who like myself were wishing for more and were ever reluctant to hit the road home. Then came fond goodbyes until the next Bush Traditions weekend to take place in Gunning in February, and until we all meet again down the track at next year's not to be missed Goulburn Gathering.

Brian Gutkin



For more information <https://www.bundanoonfolkfestival.com.au/>

BUSH TRADITIONS GOULBURN GATHERING 2023

In case you are unfamiliar with Bush Traditions, in summary it is a not-for-profit organisation established in 2006 for the purpose of encouraging the playing and enjoyment of Australia's cultural heritage in words, bush songs, tunes and dance.

The Spring Gathering, usually held in Goulburn on the October long weekend never fails to delight, but this year's gathering outlived expectations. From all directions of N.S.W. as well as interstate, including Victoria and South Australia bush musicians descended on the comfortable and stately Goulburn Club for four days of traditional Australian folk music and song, poetry, and yarns.

The weekend was jam packed with concurrent presentations of workshops, sessions slow and fast, blackboard concerts, as well as presentations of rare archival film and audio footage. There was even karaoke, aptly titled '**Bush Croakey**' utilising not so traditional technologies to aid and abet audience participation, but with a live band to accompany willing karaokers, organised by the inimitable **Dave Johnson**.

In keeping with tradition there was a welcoming feast on arrival on Friday evening abuzz with conversation and conviviality. I really love this first catch-up and bonding with old friends, and some new chums too. I'm sure it is one of the factors which ensures that this weekend is always so friendly and relaxed. Yes relaxed, but never let it be said that it's relaxing.

As you can imagine at the end of the day one is usually totally sung and played out, head spinning with yarns and earworms, assisted if it is your want, by the club bar's well-appointed selection of draught beer and liquor, until you're ready for a good night's sleep. For not only is there full bar service throughout the weekend, the club boasts self-contained comfortable accommodation and even some limited parking for campervans at nominal cost, and if you prefer there is plentiful reasonably priced other accommodation nearby.

There were so many highlights it's difficult to choose what to write. I'd put the warm gentle camaraderie first. Then as a fiddler I particularly liked **Tony Stuart's** workshop on the tunes of Sofala fiddler **Joe Yates**, where we listened to and played with archival recordings of the great master born in 1895, as well as another led by him and **Jude Stuart** on musical expression in folk tunes. I also enjoyed a workshop by **Gary Lovejoy** on the concertina styles of the late **Dooley Chapman** since I am recently grappling with the absurdities of the Anglo



Stuart, Doreen, Sue and Don, "Round the Goanna" with Brian.

Concertina. An unusual departure for the gathering this year was the absolutely delightful presence of the Victorian duo of pianist **Stuart Simms** and button accordionist **Doreen** who gave a highly informative workshop on Old Timey dance rhythms some of which we all played along with, and who later amused



Shout Again" in 1989. For the BMC he produced the booklet "**Singabout—Selected Re-prints**" in 1985. Then John Dengate's later book, "**Songs Poems, Satire and Shouts all the way**". David Johnson's widely popular 100 page "**Bush Dance Tunes**" followed with "**Dance Instruction**" by Lance Green. All designed, illustrated and laid up by Bob with meticulously hand drawn music, and illustrations. So convincing was his music that John Meredith rang to enquire if he might borrow our "**music typewriter**." There were many others. "**The Sally Sloane Songbook**" edited by Gay Scott, and three volumes of **Mike Waters' Dances** to name a few.

He was a capable musician. Bob played the **button accordion, harmonica, tin-whistles, bones**. He made instruments too constructing **barcoo dogs** aka. Murrumbidgee rattlers. Bob was intrigued by the different sounds produced by wooden playing bones. He constructed hundreds of these instruments from different types of wood.

In the 1970s he played mouthorgan with "**Rouseabouts Bush Band**", button accordion with the "**Selectors Bush Band**" during 1980s, and with "**Backblocks Musicians**" which he subsequently led for many years. Through the 80's and 90's he organised and also led music for the "**BMC Concert Party**".

Bob trained as a talented, **professional photographer** and worked for many years with Energy Australia documenting, recording and publishing its activities. This talent was put to good use photographing many hundreds of folk artists performing live at clubs and festivals. His work was remarkable in that he mostly used only available light and his impeccable sense of timing. This work now forms an **invaluable historic record** consisting of thousands of photographs. In 2014 he was presented with a well-deserved "**Lifetime Achievement Award**" at the National Folk Festival.

Those who knew Bob well were devastated to see him fading away as the tragedy of dementia took its hold. He kept playing music for a while but eventually even that was taken from him. Pat stoically looked after him until it was no longer possible and he finally passed away earlier this year in a nursing home.

To say that he is missed would be a gross understatement. He was a significant and valued part of the BMC and our wider folk community. We all miss so much his generosity, loyalty, encyclopaedic knowledge, eagerness to help and most of all, his warm unconditional friendship.

He is survived by his wife Pat, brothers Eric, Brian, and Graeme and their families many of whom gathered with his old friends recently at Tritton Hall to celebrate his memory in true BMC style.

Ralph Pride
Photo by Bob Bolton!

FAREWELL HARRY KAY

The Australian folk scene and especially the Bush Music Club is a lot poorer with the passing of Harry Kay at 95 last year on the 19 August.

Harry Kay was a life member of the Bush Music Club and is remembered as being one of the Bushwhackers Band. In early photos of the Band, we see Harry playing his diatonic harmonica. Harry Kay and Chris Kempster joined the *Heathcote Bushwhackers*, consisting of John Meredith, Jack Barrie and Brian Loughlin. The band was then known as *The Bushwhackers*, singing Australian songs such as 'Botany Bay', 'Click go the Shears' and 'Nine Miles to Gundagai' to appreciative audiences at events such as union get-togethers. Alan Scott, Alex Hood and Cec Grivas joined the Band later.

All of the eight Bushwhackers were members of the Eureka Youth League, which originated from the Communist Party, and all had started out in a trade. Harry Kay was an apprentice at the *Sidchrome Electrical Company* in Brisbane, joined the *Amalgamated Engineering Union* (AEU) and later worked as a fitter and turner when he came to live in Sydney.

The play *Reedy River* by Dick Diamond in 1953 in Sydney played an important part in Harry's life. The musical *Reedy River* was based around the shearers' strike of 1891 and featured *The Bushwhackers* playing and singing Australian songs composed in the folk tradition. In the second production of the play in Sydney, Harry played the part of Nugget, a shearer, and had this to say about his acting ability (in an interview with Keith McKenry nearly two decades ago):



The Bushwhacker's Band on stage for the performance of *Reedy River* at New Theatre Newtown in 1953/4
L to R Harry Kay, Jack Barrie, John Meredith, Brian Loughlin, Chris Kempster

In this issue we say farewell to Bob Bolton. He supported the club's activities in many ways. We made mention of his music writing skill developed at a time when music script usually came only from the printing press, an expensive music typewriter or was laboriously hand drawn. Bob's neat handwriting was easily readable & helped many musicians to become familiar with traditional tunes at a time when there was no alternative. Here is an typical example of his fine work.

POLKA MAZURKA

JOE CASHMERE'S POLKA-MAZURKA FSA1: SOURCE: JOE CASHMERE



RODDA'S MAZURKA FSA2: 142 SOURCE: ERROL RODDA



MRS. CORRY'S POLKA MAZURKA (Ellis: C.C.#1) SOURCE: MRS. CORRY



DAISY'S TUNE (Ellis: C.C.#1) SOURCE: DAISY SUTTON



These verses were recently sent to Karen Fong. The term "Mulga Wire" isn't used much these days unless in reference to this illustrious magazine. I'm sure members will be familiar with the events pertaining to the 1891 shearers' strike as we so frequently find ourselves singing about it.

MULGA WIRE *n.* an unofficial communication, as by word of mouth; bush wire; bush telegraph.
(The Macquarie Dictionary of AUSTRALIAN Colloquialisms)

Mulga Wires

19th January 1891

I saw them at the crossing, saw one of them dismount,
He was tacking up a notice on a tree,
It was early morning, they'd come out to the camp
And from my look-out perched above..... they never noticed me.

I'd borrowed Scotty's 'glasses', and could read the heavy print,
Must've been sent by telegram from Brisbane just that morning,
I reckoned we should surprise them, and beat them at their own,
They'd have no clue how we found outand none to give them warning.

The sergeant rode up to our tent, and I said straightaway:
"Glad you called so early; can you tell us any more
About that proclamation wired from Brisbane just last night,
We think there's something been left out, but would like to know for sure".

"How did you get hold of it !!!??" perplexed to say the least,
"It's just come from the printers!!" couldn't work it out at all,
But I kept on regardless, not giving him a chance:
"What happens if we don't disperse,
It doesn't have a penalty clauseas you might recall."

Then: "Ever heard of a chap, Ned Kelly ? His telegraph's not a patch
On the system we've rigged up through our own '*mulga wires*'."
We kept them guessing, nonetheless; were accused of pinching mail,
While speculation fed the grist of the squatters' ire.

We didn't 'saw-through' any bridges, that wasn't our intent,
We were holding out for a fair go, not taking work as slaves,
And all the privilege of class whose money equalled power
Sore challenged by a man's just right to share the fortune made.

Rita Ashby, "Wirrinya" 2023

Adapted from 'Mulga Wires', p.122, Julian Stewart's book "Part of the Glory", published 1967, originally published in the *Brisbane Worker* and the *Australian Worker* in the 1920s. Julian Stewart was Chairman of the Strike Camp at Sandy Creek near Clermont in 1891, and subsequently sent to prison for 3 years as a result of that infamous trial of the QSU shearers at Rockhampton in May of that year.



Harry & Ann playing harmonicas, 2018

"And I've always said that the best acting I've ever done in my life is to drink a beer and pretend that I liked it. Because I hate the damned stuff. I can't stand the taste of it! That and Marmite, or Vegemite".

Harry's wife Anne, who he met in the *Unity Singers* choir, was also in this production of *Reedy River* as one of the dancers. Anne went on to teach folk dancing at various venues with Harry often playing button accordion or mouth organ.

When *The Bushwhackers* stopped playing as a group in the mid-1950s, Harry Kay, Alex Hood and Chris Kempster played on as *The Rambleers*. They did a couple of recordings: a 10-inch 33 rpm record called 'The Old Bark Hut' in 1958 and a 7-inch 33 rpm record called 'Waltzing Matilda' with the company Wattle. The two records also included dance tunes which Harry played solo on his mouth organ. *The Rambleers* were joined by two singers, Barbara Lisyak and Denis Kevans on some occasions.

Although we often see him playing his mouth organ, Harry Kay became proficient in many instruments. In the interview with Keith McKenry in 2004, Harry told Keith that, needing a bit of extra money, he was looking under 'M' for machinist in the Herald and saw an ad for a 'Music teacher'. Harry had already taught himself how to play the English concertina and button accordion but the job in the Herald required a teacher for the mandolin and guitar. With the help of the *Beresford School of Music Guitar Book*, Harry taught himself these instruments and was soon teaching students. This love of teaching music continued throughout Harry's life. Even in his early nineties, Harry managed to play a tune or two on his harmonica.

Karen Fong (committee member of the BMC)

Bibliography

Fong, Karen 2023 *Interview with Anne Kay*, Northmead on 13 January 2023

McKenry, Keith 2004 *Interview with Harry Kay*, Baulkham Hills on 17 March 2004 available at the National Library of Australia

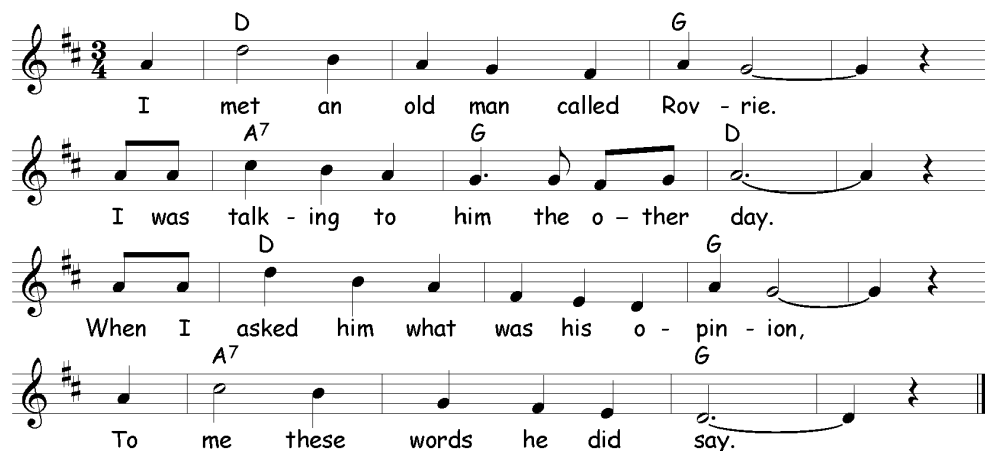
McKenry, Keith 2014 *More than a Life: John Meredith and the Fight for Australian Tradition* Rosenberg Publishing Pty Ltd, Dural, NSW

The Rambleers CD recording 2002 National Library of Australia, Recordings in the Wattle Collection.

Photos from BMC archives

As a new feature of our recent Monday night music sessions we have begun devoting the first hour to songs on a monthly theme. The first subject was DRINKING SONGS. Members brought along some very entertaining items. This example was collected in the 1950's by **Chris Woodland** who learned it from his Aboriginal workmates in the bush, back of Bourke. It was published soon after in Singabout Magazine. It was a good song but a bit short so we have extended it, made a chorus of one of the verses into and added a new verse. "Dungenyul" in the local dialect refers to "methyalted spirits". It should be noted that BMC does not recommend or condone consumption of the same and will accept no responsibility.

The Dungenyul Song



I met an old man called Rov - rie.
I was talk - ing to him the o - ther day.
When I asked him what was his o - pin - ion,
To me these words he did say.

I met an old man called Rovrie
I was talking to him the other day.
When I asked him what was his opinion
To me these words he did say:

***"Now beer is all froth and bubble,
And whisky will make a man moan,
And plonk's just another name for trouble
But the dungenyul's out on its own".***

Now I'm just a common old swaggie,
I wander, like some people say,
And I like my grog and my dungenyul
I guess I was brought up that way.

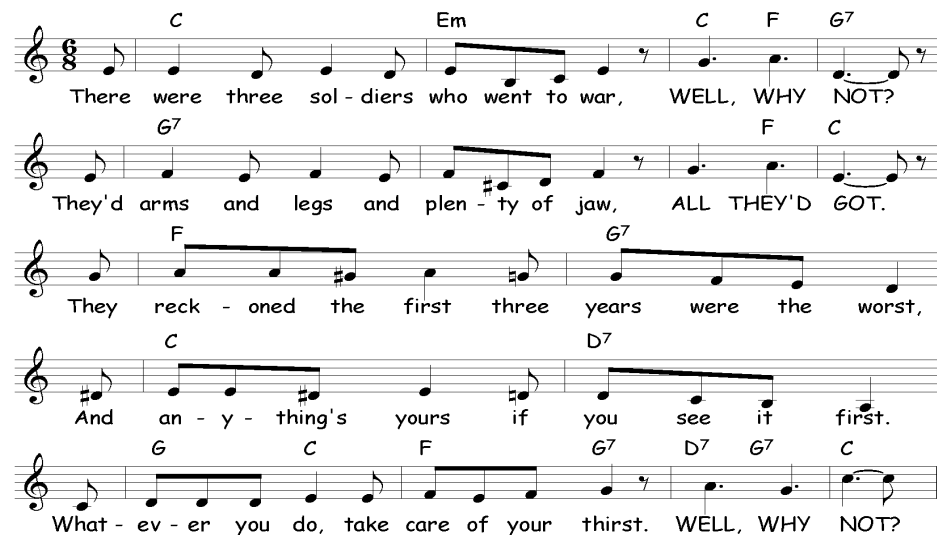
When you roll up your swag in the morning,
And take to the track for the day.
Remember those wise words of Rovrie
And sing as you go on your way.



Our Concert Party's trip to Yeoval for the Banjo Paterson Museum and Festival last February was a great success. Here is a humorous song we sang for our enthusiastic audience.

The Dry Canteen

This Soldiers' song was written by Banjo Paterson and set to music by Alfred Hill in 1940. It is not known if it was ever published. This version was transcribed and arranged by Ralph Pride in 2023 from a faded, handwritten manuscript found among Paterson's papers lodged with the National Library of Australia.



There were three sol - diers who went to war, WELL, WHY NOT?
They'd arms and legs and plen - ty of jaw, ALL THEY'D GOT.
They reck - oned the first three years were the worst,
And an - y - thing's yours if you see it first.
What - ev - er you do, take care of your thirst. WELL, WHY NOT?

There were three soldiers, who went to war..... WELL, WHY NOT ?
They'd arms and legs and plenty of jaw..... ALL THEY'D GOT !
They reckoned the first three years were the worst
And anything's yours, if you see it first,
Whatever you do take care of your thirst..... WELL, WHY NOT ?

And they made their way to the dry canteen..... WELL, WHY NOT ?
The drinks all tasted of gasoline..... ALL THEY'D GOT !
They handed the orderly bloke a wink,
He made them up a gallon of drink,
The sort for turning an elephant pink'..... WELL, WHY NOT ?

There were three horses hanging outside..... WELL, WHY NOT ?
Said they, 'We'll take the three for a ride.'..... ALL THEY'D GOT !
They galloped the garrison through and through
The sergeant ran like a kangaroo,
They reckoned the sergeant-major flew..... WELL, WHY NOT ?

The corporal came and gathered 'em in..... WELL, WHY NOT ?
Said he, "Who handed you rum and gin?"..... ALL THEY'D GOT !
They sorted 'em out and removed their caps:
"We don't run this place to oblige you chaps,
The colonel may shorten your lives, perhaps"..... PERHAPS NOT ?

The colonel told 'em, 'You're due for the clink'..... WELL, WHY NOT ?
"For filling yourselves with hinkey pink,"..... ALL THEY'D GOT !
"But listen, my boys, you're under the whip
And I might perhaps, forgive your slip,
If you put me wise where you got that nip"..... WELL, WHY NOT ?

