

Cattle Pads Volume 5 Issue 4

Monday, 05 January 2009

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CATTLE PADS

The official newsletter of The Drover's Camp Assn Inc. Camooweal
VOL # 5 Issue 4 December 2008

President's Report

Good Day All,

What a wonderful year! Am afraid it is almost to an end & the only bad thing I can say is it is still dry here - do hope Santa remembers the land owners of N.W. Qld & all other drought stricken places this year.

Since the festival Col and I have had three weeks break with our youngest son and his family at Middlemount. We recharged our batteries & are now gearing up for the next festival.

The Drover's Camp have just won a grant to purchase a new tractor with a post hole digger, fork lift, trench digger, blade and bucket and are eagerly awaiting it's delivery. Our thanks to Col for doing the grant and to the Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund for the grant. When it arrives we will be able to do a lot more landscaping and will be more independent at festival time.

Once again a Member's Draw & Life Member's Draw has been done. Results are on the following page. Merry Christmas to everyone & I hope that 2009 is a prosperous new year.

Yours in droving,

Liz Flood

Member's Draws

The Life Member Draw winner (\$250) is Ruth Leahy from Tarago in NSW.

The Member Draw winner (\$250) is Dick Bryan of Jerilderie in NSW.

CONGRATULATIONS

The winning team of The Last Great Mail in 2008 was "Pin Built".

(L to R) - Reece Chadwick, Reece MacMillian, Clayton Mentelou & Shane Bunyan

Vale

Danny Fowler

It's with sadness we acknowledge the passing of Danny on the 24th October, 2008, surrounded by his family in Townsville. He was interred in the Camooweal cemetery on Friday, 14th of November, 2008. He will be sadly missed by those who knew and loved him. Danny and his brothers grew up on Gallipoli Station and he was well known throughout the North West district.

Vale

Mervyn Edward Dundee (Blue) Bostock

With sadness we inform you that on the 27th of September, 2008, Blue Bostock passed away. Bluey was a avid supporter of the Drover's Camp in the early days and worked tirelessly for many festivals, keeping everyone in great humour with his pranks and jokes during festival week. Bluey was a world renowned rodeo bull fighter who protected the lives of many rodeo riders with his incredible timing and fearless clowning in the rodeo ring. His great humour also kept the the crowds in stitches between events. Bluey was also an outstanding boxer, winning many fights at Festival Hall in Brisbane. He was a larrikin, wheeler and dealer, and tried his hand at many ventures in his life. He ran his own businesses, was a fisherman, worked in the bush, was a father and grandfather, wrote excellent bush poetry and was a impressive entertainer, public speaker, and dancer. He often spoke of his love of the sea when visiting for the festival. The Drover's Camp wish to offer their condolences to Bluey's family and friends at this sad time.

Dreams of Yester-year

As he sleeps there in a wheelchair does he dream of yester-year.

When he was young and active, never knew the scent of fear.

Each day was just a challenge, met with jest or joke,

Without a care or worry, just another bush bred bloke.
Life has little now to offer, only memories of the past,

His mates have had their call-ups, numbers dwindling fast.

Does he dream of drafting bullocks on an open grassy flat,

Swapping his Akubra and Moleskins for a Gun and Digger's hat.
He hears the sound of Ack-Acks, the scream of falling shell,

The nesting birds at sunset, the tinkle of a bell.

Is he dreaming of El-Alamein or a fox hole at Tobruk,

Or drifting down past Middleton, with a mob from Quambetook.
Is he droving down the Cooper where the Western rivers flow,

Or mustering in the channels, where the Lignum bushes grow.

Beside the mighty Burdekin, with the gear he would sport,

A worn Carr poley saddle and a battered Jenkins quart.
Does he dream of outback dances, a piano out of tune,

Hear the wild dogs howling at the rising of the moon.

Can he hear the noisy city, the footsteps in the street,

Maybe back at Batheaston, where the grass is green and sweet.
See the Bronco horse straining with a Mickey at the ramp,

Or a mob of contented bullocks feeding onto night camp.

See the storm clouds brewing; hear the thunders distant roar,

Watering thirsty cattle at some outback Flowing bore.
Breaking in at Lyndhurst, where the horses twist and buck,

Or stony broke in Camooweal, let down by Lady Luck.

Can he hear the Magpie singing, the carking of the crow,

Riding up the Leichhardt, where the winter winds still blow.
Is he coming up the Gilbert, with a mob of Strathmore stags

Running pikers out on Woodstock, through the Spinifex and crags.

Is he listening to the Curlew, with its sad and mournful call,

Or mustering down the Fletcher beside the Basalt Wall.
Does he dream of Bullshead bullocks, as he braves the Murrانji,

Perhaps he's doing night watch with the Southern Cross on high

With a big mob down near Birdville in the land of shifting sand,

Or riding a Basalt outlaw that wear the pint-pot brand.
Safely in the land of Nod, gnarled hands on stiffened knees,

He dreams of distant cattle runs the smell of Gidyea trees.

Of drinking Rum with long gone Ringer mates,

Waiting for the signal to come through the Pearly Gates.

© Charlie Edgar, 2008

AVAILABLE NOW!!!

2008 DROVER'S FESTIVAL DVD - TWO DISC PACK

FEATURING - Street Parade, Bronco Branding, Mail Race and Walk up performances. Selection of Neville Anderson, Peter Denahy and Sunny Cowgirls songs performed at the festival and much more!!!! \$25 per pack + \$5.00 postage. Please place orders with Liz Flood on 07 47482022 or post cheque/postal money order with name and address to The Drover's Camp, P.O. Box 21, Camooweal 4828 Qld.

AVAILABLE NOW!!!

2008 Australian Bronco Branding Championships at the Drover's Camp.

Watch all the action at the Competition and Presentations for 2008.

\$25 per pack + \$5.00 postage. Please place orders with Liz Flood on 07 47482022 or post cheque/postal money order with name and address to The Drover's Camp, P.O. Box 21, Camooweal 4828 Qld.

The Drover - The Blacksmith - The Fire Ring
(recollections of Vince Challenor)

I was born in Quilpie in 1933, and as a youngster spent much of my non-school hours watching my father Jim Challenor ply his trade as a blacksmith-wheelwright in those early days before the advent of large motor hauled road trains that now traverse the vast outback.

These huge transport units haul livestock to and from the same territory once serviced by the drover and his ringers as they walked cattle over hundreds of miles of country using nothing more than horse and bridle, saddle and pack saddle and horse drawn wagonettes.

Drovers in the main were able to maintain the working condition of their horses particularly when shoeing became necessary. After traveling hundreds, and sometimes thousands of miles over all kinds of country the lifeblood of the drover; namely the steel tyred wagonettes; which carried such things as the men's swags, food supplies, clean water, spare saddlery and harness needs and frequently held together with fencing wire and green hide, required the expert hands of the blacksmith-wheelwright to restore the wagon back to a condition sound enough to enable it to cover similar distances again.

Jim Challenor was one such "smithy". Jim's father, Richard Challenor, established a blacksmith shop in Cunnamulla in 1885. Jim, learned the trade apprenticed to his father. In 1917, when the Great Western Railway Line extended from Charleville to Quilpie, they decided to share the progress, sold their business in Cunnamulla and moved to Quilpie where they re-established themselves in Boonkai Street.

Richard worked in partnership with son Jim until 1935 before retiring and moving to live in Taringa, Brisbane. My father, Jim Challenor, continued in business in Quilpie until 1968. He then retired to Ipswich. He died there in 1974.

As the son of a blacksmith I have many memories of life in the outback but amongst the most indelible are the recollections of those stony faced, wind beaten, sun hardened heroes of our past - the great drover. I recall those men in their smelly clothes literally rotting from saddle sweat and weeks or months on the road, with bodies tired and worn from endless days and nights in the saddle, enduring all kinds of weather as they battled the odds to land their mobs at the Quilpie rail trucking yards on an appointed date, a contract that "without exception" was always met.

After trucking was completed, their wagonettes, when overhauling was required, were placed with my father Jim for repairs to damage caused by wear and tear on the wooden wheels, where the wear on the spoke ends either into the

hub or the fellies (the outer wooden wheel) caused subsequent loose fitting of the outer steel tyres. I spent many afternoons and Saturday mornings helping my father place hot tyres back on to repaired wooden wheels.

This required a large ten feet (3m) diameter steel plate, holed in the centre, with a fixed screw pole with plate and handle necessary to control the expansion and contraction experienced as the near red hot tyres were placed on the wheels, held firmly in place by the centre screw pole and water applied causing immediate contraction of the steel tyre to the wooded wheel.

The heat necessary to cause expansion to the steel tyres was generated by placing pine from broken down fruit cases and mulga stumps around the tyres in a ring with kerosene sprinkled all over and a match applied causing uniformity of heating around the entire circle of the steel tyre.

My father Jim would face the fire with a special lifting tool, lift quickly, while I and another person, one at each end of a long length of galvanized pipe slipped the pipe back and under the heated tyre and the three of us walked quickly in unison to the steel plated pit, dropping the tyre in place on the wheel with the help of Dad's heavy hand hammer. Water was then quickly applied from four gallon drums with the sudden contraction placing enormous pressure on the wooden wheel.

During these crucial moments my dad applied and released pressure on the wheel hub by the use of the centre screw device. Once cool and the pressure relieved he was able to remove the now rigid wheel in readiness for the same work process on the next wheel. We would normally re-tyre two or four wheels at a time. On occasions when the spokes and fellies were badly worn the steel tyres had to be reduced in circumference to maintain a tight fit on to the wheel. This required a section of the tyre to be cut out and the tyre rejoined by heat welding through the bellows driven fire. This was referred to as "cutting and shutting". If the circumference difference between the tyre and the wheel was not great, the difference could be taken up by heating a small section of the tyre in the bellows fire and the tyre placed in a "crimping" machine. This was a method of locking the steel tyre in fixed jaws and pressure applied from a lever or wheel, the tyre circumference shortened by a crunching process. With the processes complete the wheels could be safely replaced on the wagonettes and that work of the blacksmith-wheelwright was complete. The wagon was then ready to hit the road again, facing many more miles following the large mobs of cattle over the vast outback. Other jobs that might have been carried out while the drover's wagonettes was in the hands of the blacksmith could have been repairing or making new swindle bars, making new swindle bar hooks, replacing broken poles or shafts, resetting springs, or relining brake shoes. An order for a pair of spurs was commonplace. Dad often used a pair of pennies to make spur rollers. Highly illegal but very useful.

These are just a few brief memories that remain with me when I recall the days of the drovers and their contribution to the early growth of this great nation. The Camooweal organisers of the drover's reunion should be commended for their efforts to highlight the role of the drovers making sure that their efforts are never forgotten.

Vince Challenor - Son of the Quilpie Blacksmith

The following is a list of drovers and ringers who I recall worked mobs of cattle and sheep into and around Quilpie in the 1940's, 50's & 60's. My apology to those who I may have unintentionally forgotten to mention, but you will know who you are, and the role you played in those tough but memorable days in the saddle playing such an important role in the earlier history of Australia's vast outback.

Ron Briggs

Ken Boggs

Charlie Bloomfield

Tom Brennan

Ray Becker

Whaley Brassington

Jack Boggs

Dinny Condon

Ned Castles Snr

Ned Castles Jnr

Morrie Castles

Teddy Connelly

Johny Costello

Walter Cowan

Billy Costello

Pat Costello

Jim Connelly Snr

Kevin Costello

John Costello

Jim Connelly Jnr

Jim Crummy

Fred Collins

Jack Carroll

Tom Condon

Bert Crouch

Tom Doneman

Alby Doneman

Barry Desailley

Mick Davis

Bill Eastern (Blinker)

Harold Edmonstone

John Ellis

Norm Fraser

Arthur French

Jim Fraser

Ned Fraser

Eric Fraser

Tom Goodman

Fred Goodman

Stan Goodman

Jack Guddy

Harry Gorringe

Teddy Gunner

Don Hughes

Lance Hughes

Peter Hood

Les Heinemann

Tom Henney

Tom Hackett

Mick Hackett

Joe Hackett

Fred Henney

Kevin "Long Tack" Joseph

Stan Jones

Bill Kemp

Snowy Kemp

Jimmy Kelly

George Kemp

Bill Kely

Laurie Kely

Glen Martin

Ron "Bronco" McConnell

Bob Murray

Jimmy McIntyre

John McNamara

Bill McKenzie

Horie Nunn

Bob O'Dea

Jack O'Dea

Jack Oates

Kevin Oates

Jack Pratt

Mort Rollo

Ken Sidebottom

Bill Sims

Bluey Seaton

Bill Stewart

Charlie Stewart

John Stewart

Jack Stead

Ernie Swan

Jack Swan

Jack Street

Walter Stanley

Harry Thompson

Charlie Till

Les Vettters

Jim Withers

Charlie Walton

Bob Ward

George Yorkston

Bill Yeomans

Naby Box (Indian Hawker)

Books for Sale

Keep the Branding Iron Hot—Bobbie Buchanan - \$\$29.95 + postage

In the Track of Old Bluey - Bobbie Buchanan - \$29.95 + postage

Legends of the Outback - Marie Mahood - \$25.95 + postage

Battlers of the Barkly - Alf Chambers - \$23.95 + postage

Wind on the Cattle - Merrice Briffa - \$24.75 + postage

Red Dust Rising - Marion Houldsworth - \$30.00 + postage

From the Gulf to God Knows Where - Marion Houldsworth - \$33.95 + postage

Maybe It'll Rain Tomorrow - Marion Houldsworth - \$33.95 + postage

Barefoot through the Bindies - Marion Houldsworth - \$29.95 + postage

Horse Bells and Hobble Chains - Jeff Hill - \$25.00 + postage

Traditional Bush Horsemanship - J. F. Simpson - \$21.50 + postage

Songs of the Droving Season - Bruce Simpson - \$20.00 + postage

The Murrniji Track - Ghost Road of the Drovers - Darrell Lewis - \$29.95 + postage

Roping in the History of Broncoing - Darrell Lewis - \$25.95 + postage

Rodeos and Ringers - Bill Crosbie - \$20.00 + postage

Tracks of Yesterday—Colleen McLaughlin - \$25.00 + postage
Childrens Books

Grandma's Precious Chest - Norah Kersh - \$15.00 + postage

Christmas Specials

China Drover's Camp Mug - \$10 each (RRP \$12.00)

2008 National Finals Shirt (Bronco Branding) \$30 (RRP \$50.00)
Easter raffle

Voucher for 200 Litres of fuel (diesel or unleaded).
\$2.00 per ticket or 3 for \$5.00

Drawn Saturday 11th April, 2009 at the Drover's Camp

Tickets available P.O. Box 21, Camooweal 4828

Wayne Bunyan driving Cobb & Co coach (with son Shane) owned by Meryl Pang at the Drover's Festival 2008