

LARRIKIN TALES OF THE BRISBANE VALLEY

VOLUME 2



Prepared by E. DeLacy on behalf of
Brisbane Valley Heritage Trails Inc, 2006



These tales are representative of the larrikin, knockabout lives of those families that opened up the Brisbane Valley and the other settlers who ‘came behind’. Reg McCallum, the larrikin Mayor of Nanango and our first Life Member has heard them all and contributed more than a few. If they bring one happy memory to Reg in his 80th year we will be well pleased with our birthday present this year.

You will all remember Reg and his epic rides along the postal routes his grandfather rode through the Brisbane Valley before Separation. You may also remember a young Queensland Times reporter thinking up the flash headline: “Mayor rides the Old Grey Mare”. Sadly, the big grey horse Reg rode was a gelding, and as Reg is quick to point out, he was the only other one in the story.

So “Happy Birthday to the Old Grey Mayor”, recent winner of the prestigious Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation Government Achievement Award for opening the Linville to Blackbutt Rail Line and still a force to be reckoned with.

The editors would like to thank the many people and organisations who contributed to the second collection of larrikin tales by Brisbane Valley Heritage Trails Inc., especially the Esk (later Somerset), Nanango (now South Burnett) and Rosalie (amalgamated) Shire Councils whose support we valued.

Except where the stories have been published previously, the story tellers have not been identified, and these tales have been printed in the certain knowledge that no larrikin allows the truth to get in the road of a good story.

May we take this opportunity to wish our readers a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year?

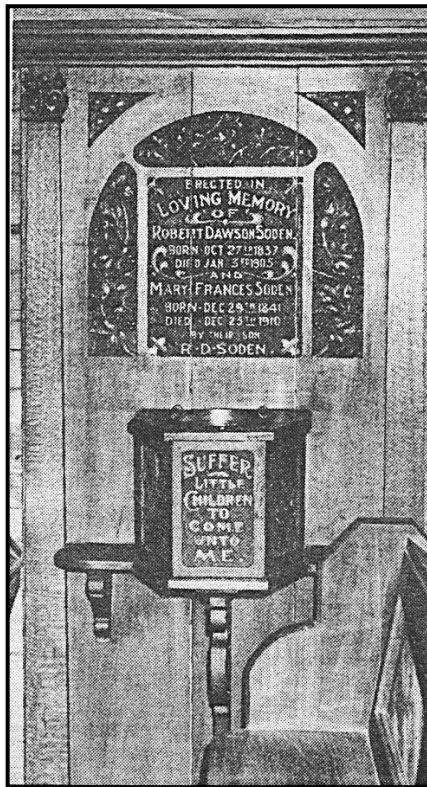


Larrikin Tales of the Brisbane Valley (Vol. 2)

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1. All Creatures Great and Small.



Baptismal font & plaque for Robert & Mary Soden, Caboonbah Undenominational Church

A well-known Esk Councillor went up north to attend a family christening and took with her a puppy that had been promised as a present for one of the guests. It was high summer and it would have been cruel to leave the dog in the car, so she tucked it under her coat and went to church. The puppy was absolutely quiet during the ceremony and, thinking she had got away with it, the Councillor trooped out of the Church with the rest of her family. Before she got to the door, however, the female Pastor drew her aside and invited her into the vestry. "I wonder" she said, "if you would like the puppy baptised as well. It could certainly be arranged but don't tell the archbishop."



2. Where there's smoke, there's fire.

Two likely lads had been left at home while their parents went to town. There was a rat plague that year, so they decided to chase rats. But the rats were more than a match for two young children and they all ran into a long hollow log. Not to be outwitted by rodents, the children decided to pour petrol into the log and smoke them out. Unfortunately there was more fire than smoke, and dozens of blazing rats headed for sanctuary in the fully stacked hay shed. The 'game' had taken a very serious turn for the worse and two desperate little boys became expert rat catchers before their parents returned.

Much later, one of the lads was to 'borrow' a train from the Esk Railway Station, park it at the Lyceum Hall and stagger home, because he had the sense to realise that he was not capable of walking all the way home legless.

3. Pub Crawl

In terms of law and order, everyone's an expert and everyone's a critic. And thus it ever was! The following scathing report of police efforts to catch a local bushranger appeared in Queensland Times, 14 February, 1880 "It would appear from the following communication, which we have received from a correspondent at Fernvale, that the now notorious aboriginal bushranger Campbell is at present in the district:-

News reached here yesterday (the 12th) that Campbell had, on Tuesday last, stuck up Mrs. Frampton and Mrs. Ralph Stewart, in their respective houses, about ten miles from here. Mrs. Stewart passed here yesterday on her road to Ipswich. Her husband being away from home, she was too alarmed to remain in the house; so I suppose the news has already reached you. Should the police be reported "in hot pursuit", I should just mention that, if my information is correct, they started at 6 p.m. yesterday, but did not reach Fernvale til about 8 o'clock this morning and at about 11:30 a.m. they were enjoying sweet repose at the Fernvale Hotel. However, it appears that they did pass up at about 1 p.m. in company with Mr. Stewart; but judging from the time (according to my information) that it took the police to travel from Ipswich to Fernvale they will about reach the Wivenhoe Hotel this evening."



Royal Exchange Hotel, Fernvale c 1900

4. The Larrikin Push

With the nearest police station at Wivenhoe, it is hardly surprising that the local Fernvale lads in 1890 should make hay while the sun shone. Various acts of delinquency had been perpetrated on the outraged public. Full bottles of alcohol were removed from Mr. George Brightwell's (Royal Exchange) hotel verandah that must have been a sore temptation to any drinker. A chain was removed from a bullock harness (presumably while the animal was wearing the equipment), and a merry time was surely had by all as the beast broke ranks in the middle of town.

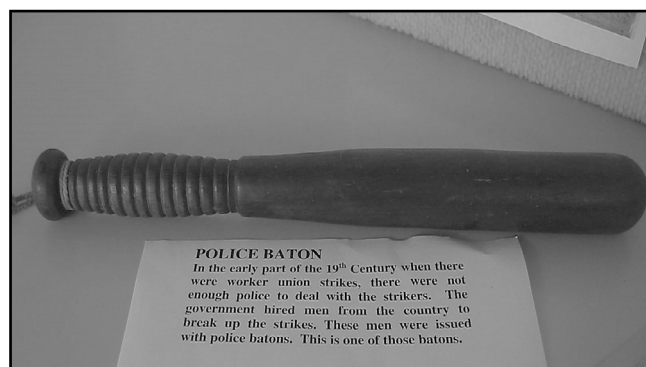
The stone thrown through the church window missed the choristers, but raised the ire of the congregation sufficiently to call for a resident police presence, which was probably the agenda of the townsfolk all along. Removing the throat straps of the horses while their owners were in church was inspired devilry, but the delinquents may have over-reached themselves with this prank. Seven months later the Queensland Times reported that the 'gang' had been caught at last and the ringleader was now in the hands of the Wivenhoe police. A satisfying result, no doubt, but not in the same league as the bushranger who got away.



Travers Boyle c1960

5. Budding Burglars over-awed.

“During the last seven months the residents of Fernvale have been annoyed by a gang of larrikins, who always carried on their pranks at night, when people had retired to rest, so that it was impossible to catch them. Between 8 and 9 o’clock, on Monday last, the cowardly gang marched again to their usual games. A missile was thrown through the windows of a general storekeeper, and the glass was broken all over the shop. The gang was exposed at last, and the ring-leader was caught. The matter is, at present, in the hands of the Wivenhoe police. It is only recently that the same stores were entered, and goods obtained by presenting forged orders. It would be only fair and just to the inhabitants of Fernvale and district to have a police station in the township, so that budding burglars might be over-awed.” (*Queensland Times*, 2 October 1890)



Police baton issued to Mt Stanley selectors to break the General Strike in Brisbane, 1912

6. School Days at Fernvale

This story is a verbatim report of the establishment of the original Fernvale School.

“Thomas Barrett Guppy arrived in Brisbane with his family on board the ship Alexandra on 14 April 1874, and the next day applied to the Department of Public Instruction for a situation, his credentials rating him as a class three teacher. The Department were impressed with his general

suitability and engaged him for the position of teacher at Harrisborough (later Fernvale).

Mr Guppy wrote to the Department on 6 May 1874 saying: 'I came to Harrisborough and hired a carpenter to alter the counters and some of the shelves (from Harris's general store and cotton shed, built in 1872) into desks and forms as it was impossible to commence school without them. He takes a great deal more time than I thought he would. He has taken eight days and I expect it will be another day before he has finished. He will then have made six desks and six forms. He is to have eight shillings per day. It took some time to remove the counters etc out of the way. The shed that the hides were in would be easily convertible into closets. Am I to get a man to do it? It is impossible to keep a mixed school without closets. We also require inkwells and require a tank to hold rain water. The river is a mile away.'

And was the community grateful for all these preparations and the expenditure of £3/12/- of public money. Not a bit of it!

"I opened the school on Monday but no-one attended as the children are all picking cotton. The people tell me that it will be impossible for them to send their children for three or four weeks at the earliest. I have attended every day but no-one comes."

Perhaps a meeting of the parents on the school committee might solve this problem?

"You ask for a list of the names of the School Committee. There is no Committee. Will you advise me what steps I am to take in the matter?"

In mounting desperation Mr. Guppy engages in some very lateral thinking to solve his problems. *"There is a number of children on the other side of the river that would come to school but are unable as there is neither bridge nor punt."* Perhaps his tardy carpenter might be better at bridge or boat building?

Eventually Mr. Guppy's prayers were answered. *"Closets, a blackboard and stand, hat pegs and a below ground brick tank ten feet deep by eight feet in diameter holding seven thousand gallons with a hardwood top and hand pump were provided, and by July there were 54 children on the school roll. The Department's number for the school 170."*

And virtue must clearly be its own reward. *"When District School Inspector Thomas McIntyre inspected the school in December 1874 the number of pupils on the school roll was 70. Thomas McIntyre said 'their progress is of a marked nature when the fact that most of the pupils are of German parentage and knowing little English when they came to school. There is no School Committee.'* And neither were there any other words of fulsome praise in this report for the patient and multi-talented immigrant teacher of Fernvale.

7. Fund Raising, Country Style

By 1907 there certainly was a School Committee at Fernvale who, in collusion with the Head Teacher, had a definite eye on the main chance. "The Committee during these years had with the consent of the Head

Teacher and the Department been in the habit of allowing mobs of travelling cattle to graze in the school's 80¾ acre paddock during the night. The money received, about 12 pounds per year, being of considerable service in erecting a buggy shed for the Head Teacher, in making minor repairs and in contributing half to the school prize fund.”

8. School Crossing

The advent of the ‘lollipop lady’ to help children cross a busy road to school is a fairly recent phenomenon. But the need for safe access to school is age old. In 1912 the quickest route for pupils from Fernvale and Lowood to their local school was to wade through the low places in the Brisbane River – and we wondered why children came barefoot to school in those days! However, “with even a moderate rise this (path) is rendered impassable, and they have to go over the Fernvale Bridge whereby the distance is increased by three miles (approx 5 km each way).” Worried parents made representation to the Dept. of Public Instruction about “the number of young children who have either just reached school age, or are approaching it, and who cannot be trusted to cross the Brisbane River!!! The Department of Public Instruction, ‘after due consideration’, conceded that ‘a fair case had been made’ and re-opened the dilapidated but otherwise safer Fernvale School.



9. Nor any drop to drink

In 1877, the embattled teacher at the Mount Esk Primary School, built a quarter of a mile from Sandy Creek, was replying to a Departmental request for receipts for water cartage for the school. He writes, “It is not in my power to supply any 'Water Carter' receipts as there are not any here. It would take three horses and two men to bring up a small barrel of water, the banks of the creek being so steep. The charge here is exorbitant. The blacks are the only water carriers that I can employ, and it takes five of them three days to fill my water barrel for which I have to pay them cash, rations, tobacco and clothes. On an average since May last, it has cost me one shilling per day. I am obliged by the three shillings per week allowed by the Department, but I trust you will be enabled, on this representation, to grant me the amount I have actually paid for so indispensable an article as water.” It appears that the Department’s response was not satisfactory and the teacher resigned at the end of 1877, with a school enrolment at that time of 48 thirsty children.

10. The Hills Are Alive With the Sound of Music

In 1900 there was a strong push to build a railway line through Coal Creek and Mt. Beppo on its way to Nanango. The Commissioner of Railways was exploring this option, and after lunching with the McConnel family at Cressbrook, he went on to the Mt. Beppo School. As a visiting dignitary, he was greeted by Mt. Beppo's famous combined bands. The Railway Commissioner, Mr. McLean, was later reported as saying that this was the first purely agricultural settlement he'd seen where the community had developed a band first before they had built a township.



Mt. Beppo Band

11. There's One Born Every Minute

The proximity of Lowood and Vernor to each other and to the Brisbane River was too good an opportunity to miss, and some local larrikins circa 1907 began a rumour that there was a bunyip in the river that had recently



been taking calves. So desperate had the situation become that the same locals organized a hunt and emptied the local hotels, which was probably a pertinent fact in the success of the story! A reward of £200 was offered. For this sort of money, enthusiasts quickly identified and shot the water creature that turned out to be a huge hoax perpetrated by

Messrs Lindemann, Smythe and Nunn. The bunyip had been created by Fred Smythe on a pulley arrangement that he manipulated from the Vernor side of the river, ably supported by Jack Lindemann from Lowood. After the 'kill', the bunyip was photographed and displayed at the Lowood Railway Station and hung as a trophy for some time in the Royal Hotel.

12. As Others See Us

We seldom see ourselves as others see us, and the Annual Report from a Travelling Dairy Instructor to the Department of Agriculture in 1892/3 is instructive. This worthy person provided instruction for local farmers on modern methods of cheese and butter making and he went to Wivenhoe Pocket, Fernvale, Deep Creek, Moombra, Esk and 'Mr Williams' farm near Cressbrook' in the Brisbane Valley.

In general he notes that there is 'great disunity among the farmers, jealousy and 'fossilised ideas''.

At Fernvale where the soil was rich, the art of cheese making was almost unknown.

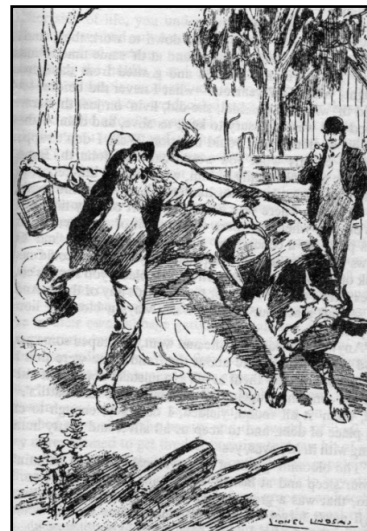
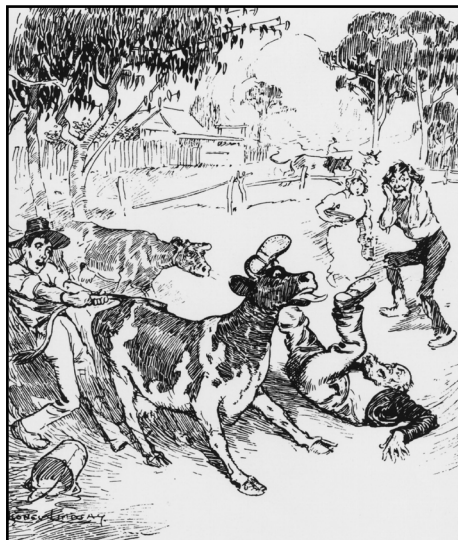
At Lowood, on the other hand, a butter factory had been established that was privately owned but local disunity ensured that it was not patronised by local farmers.

The petty jealousies of the farmers of Deep Creek came in for special mention. He thought that the farmers in this region who were the most prejudiced against modern machinery were the first to obtain it and 'the man who happens to own a few cows more than his neighbour considers himself so much better and will have no connection with him'.

At Moombra there had been meetings to consider the establishment of a creamery, but the farmers were too scattered to make such an enterprise a success.

It was at Esk, however, where the hard pressed instructor was confronted with the 'fossilized ideas of the farmers' that he was certain must undergo a change if there is to be any advance in the dairy industry.

As an example of these 'ideas', and absolutely contrary to world's best practice, cows were routinely chased by a fast horse before milking. He was polite enough to say that cheese is the chief dairy product at Esk because of distance from markets. No relationship was drawn between regular campdrafting of the milkers and the curdled milk necessary for making cheese.



13. The Primary Vote

Universal suffrage had a long way to go in the Brisbane Valley in 1888. The Queensland Times published the electoral lists for Ipswich, Bundamba and Stanley that showed the voter's name, property and polling district. In Fernvale, only one resident, George Pullen, was eligible to vote in 1888.

14. The lesser of two evils?

When the railway line was completed as far as Lowood in 1884, the inevitable celebrations were arranged. These took the form of a Special train from Ipswich and sports at Fernvale. Five hundred hardy souls suffered the ‘torturous serpentine railway’ to the terminus where it was reported that there was ‘little attraction at Lowood’. The Queensland Times, having dispensed with Lowood in this fashion, then went on to record that ‘Luncheon was provided (at Fernvale) and a hearty meal was partaken of in a somewhat primitive fashion.’ There is no mention of the sports events, although lampooning the locals by newspaper reporters seems to have been popular.



Lowood Railway Station pre-1900

15. And Baby Makes Three?

Innuendo has long been the ploy to avoid law suits, but it seems that the Queensland Times of 7 January 1890 might have sailed very close to the wind with the following report that has been printed in full.

Fernvale Gossip By Veritas

That the noble youth of Fernvale are racing mad – foot racing I mean.

That in the time of Secretary W. Michel, it was “cricket on the brain”.

That since the latter’s step out of the district, the noble game has suffered.

That only two matches have been played during the first half of this season!

That this is the club which prides itself on being the crack one in West Moreton!

That this is not wholly the new secretary’s fault.

That – where are you, Stonewall Chislett, happy Jo Gates, slogging Bolden?

And you Cronau, Ferguson, and Noonan, demons of the leather?

That there is no newspaper-office at Fernvale, no resident surgeon and no resident clergyman.

That, considering the absence of these three agents of good, it is not surprising that we have amongst us several back-biting scandal-mongers.

That the powers of their mean imagination have had a fair trial lately.

That no respectable young lady can leave the township without these scandalmongers attempting to make hash of her character.

That one singular case has lately occurred.

That it is understood that the young lady intends to take legal proceedings.

That the scandalmonger society has encircled Lowood.

That another young lady, at that township, having left it, hears startling news of herself while fanning herself on the Western ranges.

That she, too, intends to take legal proceedings.

That if these young ladies lay their fingers on the right persons, it will teach them to “hold their tongues” on future occasions.
 That there is talk of athletic sports shortly
 That “Veritas” calls upon the athletic sports committee to arrange a programme out of that large surplus from the last meeting!
 That – what about our regatta?
 That what about our School of Arts committee?
 That it is pleasing to find one person at least who is doing all he can for the School of Arts, and is doing it, I believe, independently of the School of Arts committee.”

Talk about Friendly Fire!

16. War Weary

Country hospitality has not always been extended to strangers in the Brisbane Valley. This was particularly so of a Japanese man who settled outside Toogoolawah. He had been there for many years farming fish when he acquired a new neighbour from Brisbane. He mentioned to her in poor English that he had been robbed on several occasions and each time his rifle had been stolen. His neighbour became worried that she had moved into a lawless district and enquired of one of the locals whether she should take extra precautions against thieves. The old timer’s laconic reply was very much to the point. “Aw, I shouldn’t think so, Missus. Taki’s a Jap and the only thing to do with a Jap is disarm him.”



17. Christmas under the Car Port

Nor did other Asian nationalities fare much better. A Linville granny invited one of the locals to Christmas dinner to introduce his new wife, who was originally from the Philippines. Granny was 91 and her eyesight was not as sharp as it had been. She had also lived in fear during the War in the Pacific and was deeply suspicious of the motives of Asian cultures in general. As a consequence the dinner party was not a resounding success and the newlyweds took their leave as soon as decently possible. The new bride wrapped a shawl around her shoulders as she left, and granny’s paranoia and poor vision produced an unnerving result. Armed with a rolling pin, an incensed senior citizen chased her departing guests shouting, “Stop thief. She’s stealing my tablecloth!”

18. The Block Vote

In March 1893 there is an odd warning to German settlers in the Queensland Times. The correspondent asserts that “Germans decide all the elections in their own districts by all voting the same way” and goes on to ask them to be on their guard against “professors and decoys of all sorts.” Although the “culprits” are not identified in print, it seems likely that “the professor” was William Lane, sometimes described as the ‘most dangerous man in Australia’ and editor of two opposition newspapers, the Boomerang and later The Worker. He was thought to be the influence behind the

Shearers' Strike in 1891 and published "The Working Man's Paradise" in 1892. Labour parties were being established in Queensland during the 1890's, and the first Labor government in the world took office in Queensland in 1899 – for seven days. Their policies were almost certainly the 'decoys of all sorts', and some foresighted conservatives were already warning of the party's impending appeal to impoverished migrant workers at the turn of the twentieth century. Since that time the political landscape has changed considerably, but stories of the influence of German voters in local elections in the Brisbane Valley are as fresh and as frequently repeated today as they were in 1893.

19. A Rose by Any Other Name

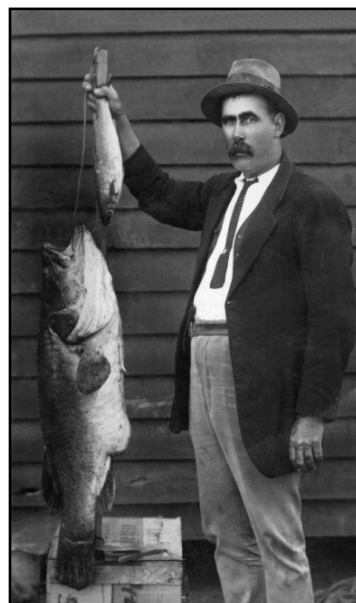


While railway lines are popular, railway towns often receive bad press. The railway terminus at Moorabool (now Yimbun) in 1904 was described by H.P. Somerset in an election speech in that year as "a swampy hollow". In fact even the rail line came in for bad press on this occasion. "Whether they adopted the permanent survey as they did, or the Coal Creek, Mt. Beppo route – which I believe to be the better paying line and the one serving the district best – in either case the line should have stopped at Toogoolawah, or have been carried on to Stanley Gates (now

Moore), and not be left in a swampy hollow at Moorabool (Applause)." These opinions contributed to the election of H.P. Somerset as the Member for Stanley in that year.

"Stinking Gully" as a description of the new community of Fernvale was unacceptable to the Department of Public Instruction who called the first state school there "Harrisborough" after the first storekeeper and in whose empty store the first school was established. Queensland Rail preferred the name Fernvale for the station and that name stuck. There is still a characteristic and pungent smell from the re-named Ferny Gully in Fernvale that explains the original description.

In 1878 Glenrock was also known as Sandy Creek, Esk, Mt. Esk and Gallinani and the Queensland Times reported that "The government have chosen the latter name." In somewhat scathing tones, the reporter goes on to say, "I do not expect a Beenleigh very soon at Glenrock".



20. The One That Got Away

A (Pop) Mimus was a Lebanese draper who set up his business in Toogoolawah in 1917. He was something of a fisherman, amongst other accomplishments. After work on Saturday afternoon he and his mates would entertain themselves fishing on the banks of the Brisbane River. On this afternoon Pop Mimus was

accompanied by his wife, his eldest son and a very good larrikin friend called Conny Marr. The fishing was clearly engrossing and suddenly Mr. Mimus noticed that his son had gone missing and immediately feared the worst. Pop Mimus could not swim and in his agitation called on his friend, Conny Marr, to take off his clothes and dive in to save his drowning son. As an afterthought he added the assurance that, "Mrs. Mimus won't be looking." History is silent on the action of either Conny Marr or Mrs. Mimus, but Mimus Junior thought it prudent at this stage to come out of hiding behind a nearby tree. To excuse his excess of European excitability on this occasion, Pop Mimus was heard to declare, "You little bugger, I knew you were there all the time."

21. Top Dog

Hunting on foot with dogs was also a popular weekend pastime, and Pop Mimus had a hunting dog. He appears to have been the least successful dog in the district, while Conny Marr's dog was a huge success. A visitor to the district had also joined the group on this occasion with a hunting dog of prodigious reputation and they were all after a fox – with the visiting dog in the lead and Pop Mimus's dog a sorry last. So incompetent was this dog that it had just managed to fall over a dead log. At this very moment the fox suddenly doubled back on its tracks, and Pop Mimus's dog, back on its feet after the fall, was uncharacteristically in the lead. His moment of fame was not to be missed as Pop Mimus called to Conny Marr, "Now who's got the best dog?" In this unlikely field the fox was a very short priced favourite.



22. Boarding School Fees are Due.

Often in the mid-to-late 60's you could place \$2.50 on the bar at a local establishment and drink until closing time or the early hours of the morning. If the publican was enjoying himself he would simply neglect to take the money. One Friday night an unsuspecting Character with a newly printed \$50 note placed it on the bar. As quick as you like the Publican swooped on the note and delivered a Pot. After an elongated pause, the bewildered Customer inquired as to the whereabouts of his change. The muffled answer he got from the publican was simply "Boarding School fees are due!"

23. A Decent Brew

A Wild Colonial Type would arrive at a top end Pub on a Friday afternoon and leave some time latermaybe Monday or Tuesday! He had lots of Party Tricks that included drinking whole bottles of Worcestershire sauce, eating a beer glass and biting women on their bottoms. This Wild Colonial Boy had an ardent dislike for authority he would often just walk up to white collar types and Bang Tail their Ties. {For the uninitiated this meant that he would chop their ties off just below the Knot, usually with a rusty pocket knife}. In later years he would bang tail their Ponytails as well.

On one very hot afternoon he arrived at the local and ordered a beer. After taking barely a mouthful he replaced the beer on the bar and left. He returned a few minutes later with a packet of Billy Tea. He threw the tea at the publican and announced, "Throw that in your beer, it's hot enough to brew Tea!"

24. Gone Fishin'

Hector Williams occasionally had difficulty in controlling his car after a long drinking session. Fence posts and trees were known to move in front of the vehicle and the upright supporting the awning of the Harlin Store got in his way more than once. On this particular occasion the Harlin Bridge appears to have moved, and Hector drove his car into the water. He was so overcome with fatigue that he was unable to get out, and he was found there the following morning. His rescuer, not unreasonably, wanted to know what Hector thought he was doing there at that time of the morning. His reply was vintage Hector Williams. "Always wanted to go fishing. Never had the time."



Grand Hotel at Harlin

25. Pests.

A helicopter landed in Hector William's paddock one memorable day and he was surprised – although it took a lot to surprise him. As he told his listeners in the pub that afternoon, "Biggest grasshopper I ever saw!"

26. All It Needs Now Is Drought

This is a Farmer's Lament from Barker Creek in 1913. "First of all I tried to get the burr under control before I could get a strike of lucerne. The burr must have been seeding for years and I ploughed it in several times before I tried a crop of maize. It was coming along well but the neighbour's donkeys got in and had a good feed. They were a persevering lot. When the cobs were well formed, the cockatoos found it. A flock of white cockatoos would come early in the morning and a few such visits would ruin the crop. This meant getting out before daylight and waiting for them. Beating a kerosene tin was alright, but one had to be there first. What a life, I thought! If it's not burr, it's donkeys, then it's cockatoos. All it needs now is drought."



The Linville Donkey

27. True Blue

“Blue” the cattle dog lives on “Everyfarm”. He answers to the name of Blue, Red, Rusty, Dusty, Spot or Patch. Blue is expected to earn his keep by chasing cows. He much prefers to chase cars, trucks, tractors, motor bikes, milk tankers and the school bus. In fact, Blue’s energy levels are only activated by the sound of a key turning in the ignition of a vehicle. It also switches on the sound effects and barking, yapping and tyre biting commence immediately.

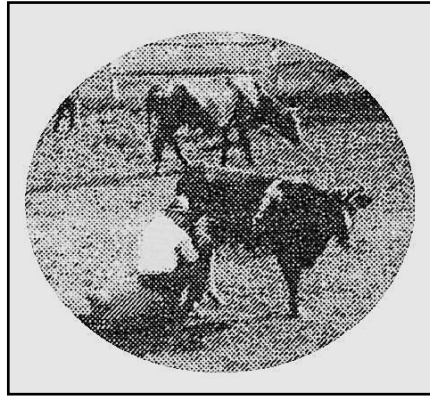
While the vehicle is in motion, Blue performs some incredible feats – rapid sideways dashes to bite the heel of a docile four legged creature, fantastic pirouettes in the air leaping after birds and butterflies, lightning pursuits of hares, goannas or cats and savage lunges at a crippled veteran of the cow herd. The moment the vehicle stops, however, Blue ceases action the same instant. Furious commands to “Skitch it”, which means “Go chase that cow” result in a look of blank disdain from Blue.



Blue is a superb fieldsman in the kid’s cricket matches. At the hint of a cricket game about to begin, his senses are quivering in anticipation. His nose twitches and his eyes dart to detect the slightest tremor from the ball. His fielding skills are masterly and the ball, covered in slobber, is retrieved at blinding speed. Blue also has a fetish for rubber boots, and early morning search parties to locate boots under thorny shrubbery in the yard somewhere are a dreary fact of life. Tired out by his hardworking life, Blue snoozes in the shade under his favourite vehicle. Everybody loves Blue.

28. The New Milking Shed, 1929

When Andy Taylor started dairying in East Nanango he did not have a cow yard. He milked six or seven quiet cows by hand out in the open and carried around a box to sit on. Then Andy decided to start afresh in a big way. He built a new shed with four bales and an engine room, installed milking machines, constructed a new yard and acquired 60 odd new cows. Mick Firth and Arthur Bright were two out-of-work teenagers who were



glad to help Andy for £2 a week. Andy said he did not expect any trouble in the new shed. He also said he was used to cows and everything would be alright. The cows would soon be going through the new shed and become accustomed to the noise. How wrong he was! The cows took fright at the machines and played up doing everything they shouldn't. Mick and I had a constant job with the shovel.

Milking machines in the 1920s were far from perfect. When one set fell off, they all fell off and they kept sucking, so we had a constant job just keeping the floor clean. In those beginning days of dairying in Andy's new shed, we started milking at three o'clock in the afternoon and finished at ten o'clock at night by the light of a hurricane lantern. One night things were in a greater state of bedlam than we realised when the kerosene tin of cream from the night's separating was tipped into the pigs' trough with the tins of skim milk. *(Story by Arthur Bright, photo by Earnest Hannaford)*

29. The Dinkum Dunny Man

Until quite recently an essential service for most small towns was the removal of night soil by the dunny man. This was important but not always very challenging work, and those who plied this trade were not always the sharpest knives in the drawer. On one occasion the Linville dunny man was driving his truck at Caboolture when he was pulled up by the police for exceeding the speed limit by many kilometres. With the certainty of a man who has not yet mastered the metric system, he assured the policeman that the reading couldn't be right because his old truck only travelled in miles. It is not reported whether he offered to pay the fine in pounds, shillings and pence.



30. Myth, Madness or Method

In a country where rainfall is erratic and water shortages are chronic, a topic which never fails to provoke excited discussion among farmers is the subject of water divining. It has its fanatical adherents and its cynical disbelievers. Whether it be searching for underground aquifers for irrigation purposes along creek flats or locating streams to drill for stock water bores in hilly terrain, the methods of detection are much the same.

The tools of the water diviner range from twigs of tea-tree, fork sticks cut from peach trees, green and pliable, and one or more bits of wire or metal bent into various shapes. These instruments may be gripped firmly by hand, swung over the head, or clenched between the teeth. The diviner then strides across the paddock in a purposeful manner until movement from the instrument indicates the position of an underground water source. The 'find' is usually accompanied by the loud proclamation, "You're going to get big water here!" Perhaps, in the future, some technological innovation will enable the imaging of the underground patterns of these mysterious, hidden streams and the days of the water diviner will disappear.



31. Sales Talk

A popular gathering place for Nanango farmers has always been at the saleyards – pig and calf sales, cattle sales, machinery sales or clearing sales. Here every matter under the sun can be thoroughly dissected and analysed – gloomy predictions about the weather or market trends, remarks about this neighbour or that, dry comments about politicians or well known local identities, yarns about days gone by. This is the very stuff that farmers live and breathe for. Imagine the talk at the

MONSTER CLEARING SALE MONDAY MARCH 10, 1913

Under instructions from Mr. James Green of Lindale, near Nanango, the auctioneers disposed of the whole of his agricultural properties, livestock and farming implements. The sale included:

273 Dairy Cattle – The best milking herd in the district with 120 superior milking cows, 100 heifers, 50 calves and 3 bulls.

18 horses – 10 draughts (6 mares and foals), 1 entire, 7 saddle and harness horses,

27 pigs – sows, litters, boar and porkers

Implements – buggy, sulkies, carts, stripper, harvester, ploughs, harrows, Massey Harris mower, rotary pump and cream cans

"Lindale" was later owned by Tom & Tricia Perrett

32. Forces of Nature

Every farming man and woman will have a tale of an encounter with the elements that defies description. The most disastrous flood that came swirling down Barker Creek, in turgid torrents, washing away livestock and denuding soils, the fiercest storms with hailstones the size of golf balls that covered the hills in sweeping white swathes like an alpine snowfield, the most terrifying tornado that twisted giant eucalypt trees and wrenched buildings from their moorings, the longest icicles that hung from the fence under the irrigation spray lines until midday one July, the most devastating drought (was it 1902, 1919, 1936, 1977, 1994 or 2006) that left the land desolate and barren.

33. The Mother of all Bush Fires

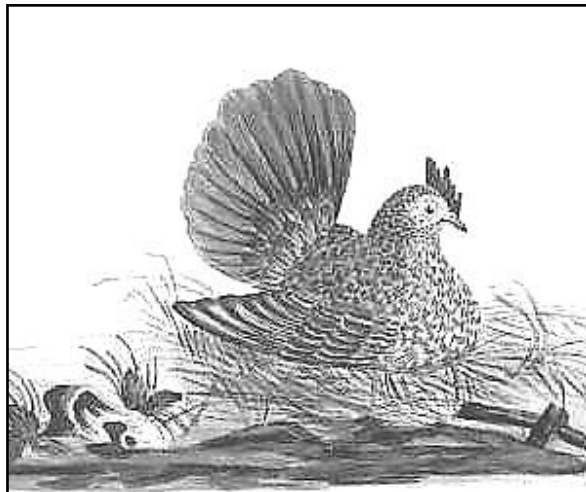
Reg McCallum considers that the 'mother of all stories' in his struggle with the elements was the 1951 bush fire. The fire began on September 28 in rough country on the western side of the Brisbane River. By September 30,

with the wind blowing a gale and no dew, the fire continued to burn all night in the heavy body of grass. On October 1, it swept into this area. Rural fire brigades were unheard of. There were very few farm tractors and there was only one privately owned water truck in town belonging to Reg McColl.

The townspeople rallied with rakes, axes and wet bags. An estimated 150 people arrived at 'Glen Elgin' which became the headquarters for this area. Edna and her helpers were continually cooking scones and making tea for the workers. The efforts of all the fire fighters were in vain. Changing winds made it extremely difficult with the flames leaping roads and creeks.

Vince Montgomery from the Fitzroy Hotel arrived with 12 dozen bottles of beer in an 80 gallon water tank which was loaded on the back of Jim Pitts' Dodge utility.

The devastation was incredible. Miles of fences were destroyed. Our private tree-to-tree telephone line, eight miles long, had to be completely renewed. A large amount of dead and green timber was destroyed. In this area all the boundary fences were burned down. Our neighbour's cattle roamed the countryside looking for feed that did not exist. Frank Hams, our neighbour, said we would not have enough grass left to make a nest for a bantam hen!



Bantam Hen by Thomas Lord, 1791

34. Blue Suede Shoes

As we celebrate 50 years of television viewing in Queensland the old story of arranged marriages for Johnny O'Keefe fans has resurfaced.

Two women were discussing their preference for a husband and one announced that she intended to marry four times and in this order: a banker, an entertainer, a clergyman and an undertaker. Her reasons were musical. She was marrying one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready and four for when she had to go, go, go!

35. Condamine Jack by Timbertown Ted Guy

P.O. Box 188, Blackbutt Qld. 4306

We travelled to Miles to have a look
There I saw an old bloke reading a book.
He said, "Hello mate, how's your day?"
I said, "G'day, I am Ted, this is Fay."

He was sitting on the verandah in an old chair,
 We got talking; he said he had been everywhere
 He was now eighty-one and settled down.
 He had rode a lot of horses and pushed cattle around
 The old bloke told me some stories of his life,
 He was now all-alone without a good wife,
 Then he started to recite some poems for me,
 He had been writing poems since 1933.
 He told me his book was for sale in the shop outback
 It was called –Me and My Cow- by Condamine Jack.
 Now Condamine Jack is famous all around the west
 And I took his photo to add to the rest.
 He was modest to say his poems were not always the best
 And he liked Henry Lawson, may he always rest – in peace.
 In his time Old Jack may have downed a drink of three
 But there's been a lot of living in his life you could see.
 I wished him well as he said goodbye to me
 Out there at Miles the stories of Condamine Jack are free.

36. The Greyhound by Ted Guy

Greyhounds grow up with just one thing on
 their mind
 To run fast and faster like all of their kind.
 They are bred to chase and to seek a prey
 But all greyhounds love their master; that
 is their way.
 So here is a toast to the Greyhound, a much maligned
 canine
 He will always be a favourite of mine.



37. Roosters by Ted Guy

It is 4:30 a.m. in the country
 On this lovely spring morning,
 When old Brown's Game Rooster starts crowing
 Without any warning.
 At the next farmhouse down
 He starts off O'Brien's Rhode Island Red,
 Then Rosentrieter's Leghorn gives out his call
 And jumps down from the shed.
 Across the misty valley crowing loudly
 Is Wilson's Plymouth Rock.
 Up the hill on Schumacher's tractor seat
 On cue is their Australorp cock.
 On the outskirts of town
 Bill McPherson's bantams
 Start a chorus of song
 Everyone in the country is now awake
 And it didn't take long.



38. My Mate Blue by Ted Guy

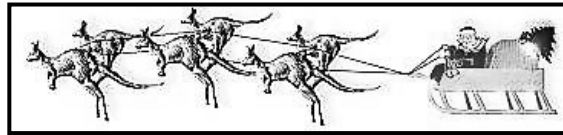
I said to my pet mouse Blue
 Who was very sulky and angry too,
 "What's the matter, old mate?"

You seem out of sorts of late.”
 He replied, “I want to fight someone I hate”.
 So into his cage I threw a big black rat,
 The rat was dead in one minute flat!
 I let him out and he jumped the cat
 Fur went flying, the cat was no more.
 Next he tackled the dog, it was war,
 The dog ran away, scratched and sore.
 Diving from the sky was a hungry chicken hawk,
 Blue said, “Quick, get me a knife and fork.”



I took Blue down to our local Zoo
 He saw a lion and beat him up too.

I carried Blue home and locked him away.
 I said, “You can get a leopard-skin rug to
 lay on another day.”



39. Australian Christmas by Ted Guy

Dad’s on the verandah, getting very bl—dy cranky.
 Mum is in the bedroom, crying into her hanky,
 The young ones are fighting out the back,
 Dad is about to give them all a bl—dy smack.
 Sister is yelling and will not do the washing up
 Because last week she broke a bl—dy cup.

Brother is in the garage fixing his bike with a piece of wire,
 The turkey is in the oven about to catch on bl—dy fire,



The house is hot and fans are
 on the blink,
 I am sitting here trying to
 bl—dy think.
 Nana and Grandpop will be
 here in a little while,
 Nana will sit there without a
 bl—dy smile.
 Pop will say, “Heads down
 before you start”,
 And most likely will let out a
 bl--dy fart.
 It will be a great Christmas
 with lots of cheer,
 I only hope I won’t be here
 next bl—dy year.