A LAWSON SCRAPBOOK

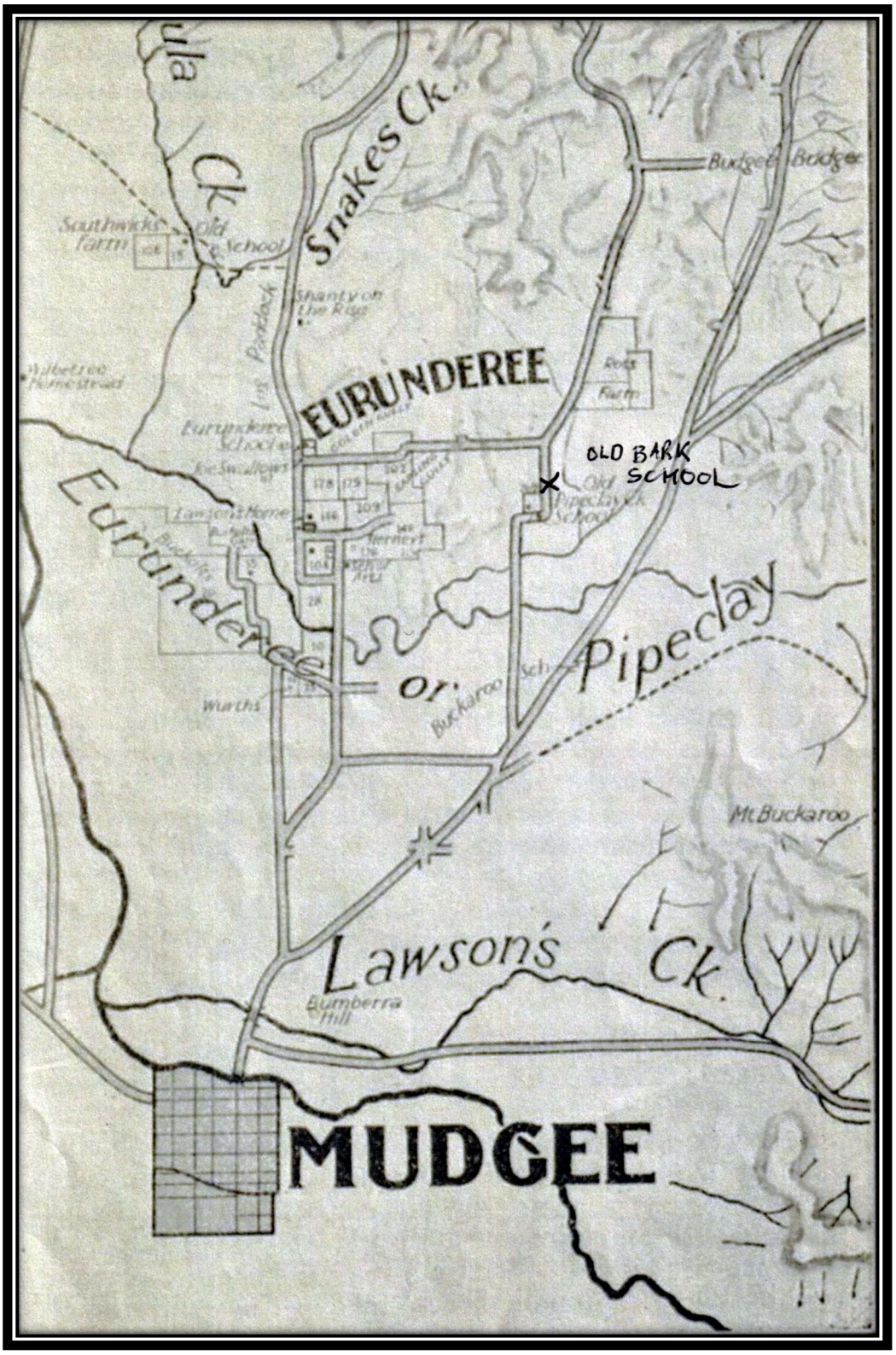
A LATE REVISTING OF THE LAWSON LEGEND

A COMPANION VOLUME TO 'TWO GREY DREAMERS'

MARK OLIVER SMITH

23 April 2021

Map of Eurunderee Showing the Location of the Old Bark School



Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, Volume 18, part 6, 1932

The Lawson Legend

The snippets of information contained in this collection provide a wider aperture into aspects of Henry Lawson's life. The newspaper cuttings and the references to new books and articles will confirm the fact that there were many causes to Henry's mental deterioration. A careful reading of his poems reveals that a number of them are strikingly autobiographical. Indeed, Lawson's prose and poetry provides an excellent introduction to the social history of Australia in the Roaring Days. The poems themselves depict the fact that Lawson gave a distinct voice to an Australian identity in the new *Land Down Under*.

Acknowledgements

Once again I wish to acknowledge the helpful assistance of Brian Wilson in the compilation and design of this book.

I am also indebted to Chris Nelson for his helpful research assistance. The encouragement he gave in our discussions of the meaning of Lawson's poems was a great help to me.

Mark Oliver Smith
Calvary Haydon Retirement Community
Bruce, ACT

The Quest of the Historical Lawson

(No thanks to Manning Clark)

It fell in shattered pieces,
An illusion on the ground.
Now fragmented in pieces-,
The truth had now been found.

In the name of 'storical' xactitude,
With a surgeon's knife he probed.
He stripped the mythical hero,
And Lawson stood exposed.

No tall bronzed Anzac
Was left for me to see.
Just a drink befuddled poet,
Full of beer and bigotry!

It wasn't the Lawson that I 'magined -
The big ten dollar man -
Just a swilling in the tailings,
A nugget tossed from the pan!

A victim of analysis,
My great Australian gem
Was reduced to tiny pieces –
Nothing left of him!

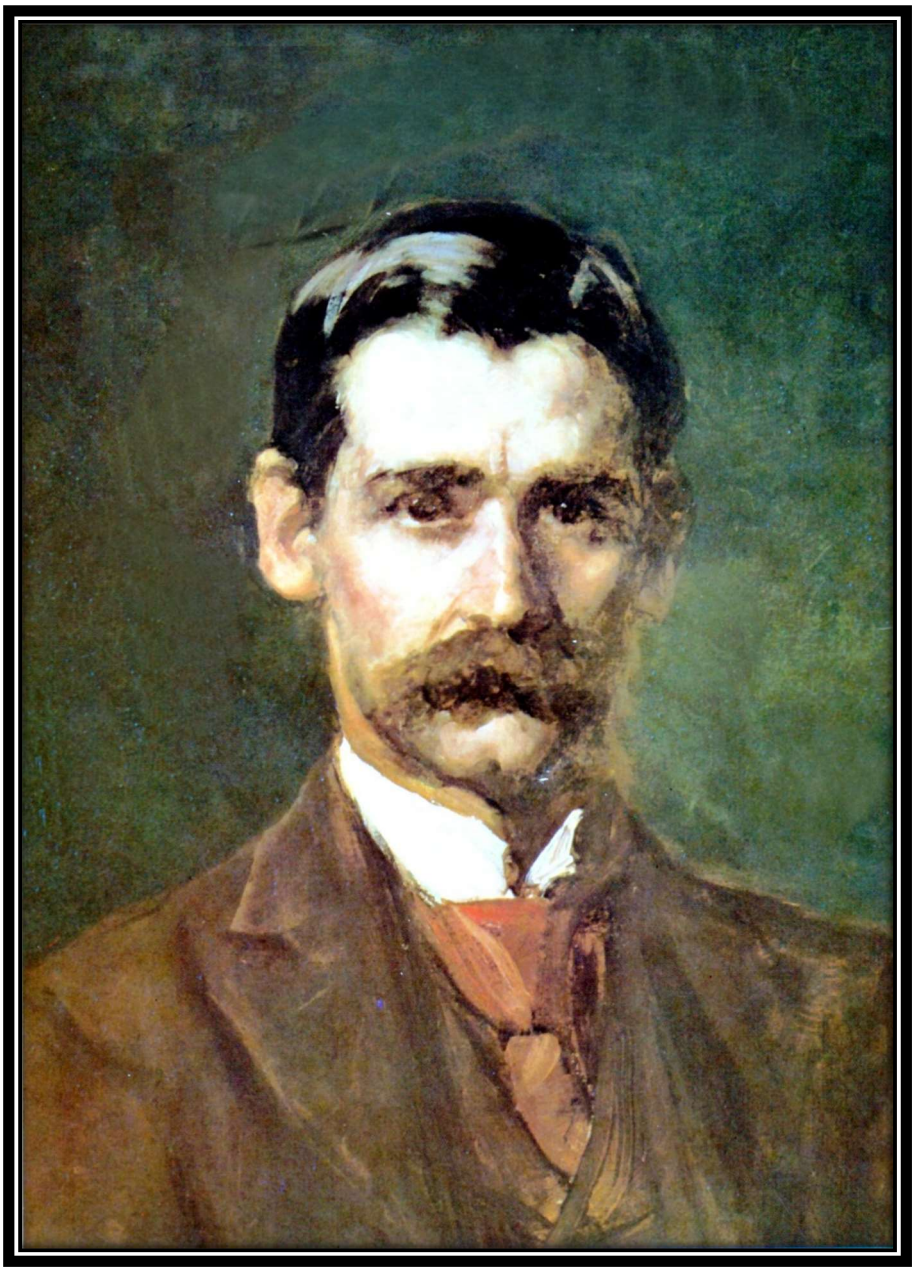
The parts may need examining
But the totals are there too.
The quest is all for meaning
For Henry and for you!

If I could pick up the pieces
Of the illusion on the ground,
I'd mosaic a more percipient image
Of an icon I had found.

By Mark Oliver Smith

POEMS INCLUDED IN THIS SCRAPBOOK

Portrait of Henry Lawson
by
John Longstaff (1900)



This portrait of Lawson was commissioned in 1900 by JF Archibald, editor of The Bulletin. It was painted in Melbourne shortly before Lawson's departure for England. Working rapidly, Longstaff captured the poet's characteristic expression. The finished portrait delighted Archibald and prompted him to establish the Archibald Prize, the non-acquisitive annual portraiture prize first awarded in 1921.

Comments on John Longstaff's Portrait

John Longstaff's portrait of Henry Lawson was painted in 1900. It was at a crossroads time in Lawson's life. He had returned from his teaching post at Mangamaunu, New Zealand, in 1898. His marriage to Bertha was about to collapse. Governor Tennyson paid for his trip to London and Hannah Thornburn emerged as a romantic partner. Henry's life was somewhat in disarray during this period.

Lawson as a Portrait Subject

Longstaff's portrait, at first glance, is of a handsome young man, affluent and self-assured. But first glances can be deceptive. Lawson's gaze with those limpid brown eyes has a far-away look with a faint suggestion of sadness. He is not so sure of himself as a first glance would suggest. He could even be hiding behind his overgrown moustache. There is no touch of humour in his slightly worried look and on second thoughts he may not be as self-assured as his tailored dress standard suggests.

Unfortunately, when I first discovered Lawson, I did not have Longstaff's portrait to form my own opinion of the man behind the mask.

A LAWSON SCRAPBOOK
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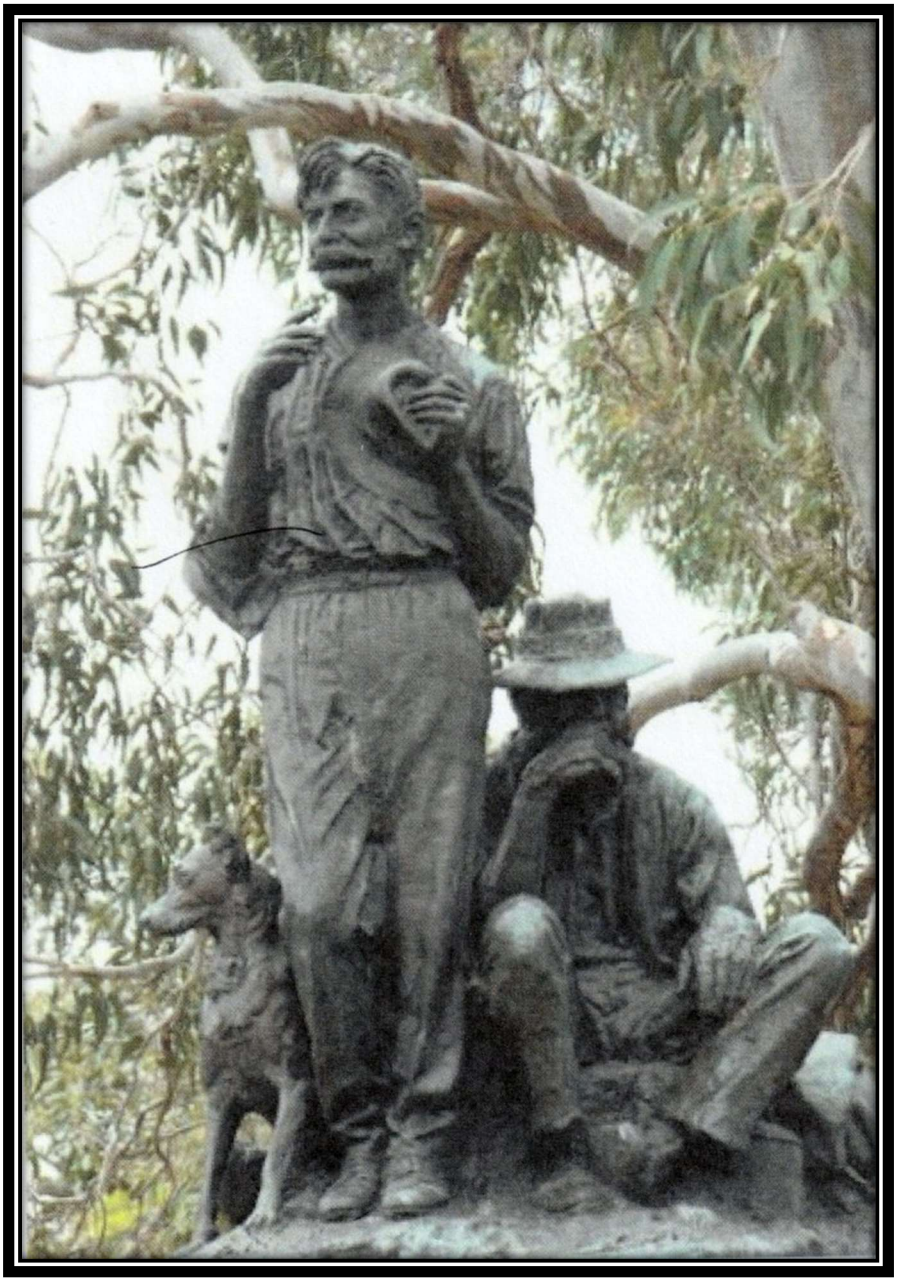
Henry Lawson



Memorial Statue in Hyde Park, Sydney

ENLARGING THE SCOPE OF THE LAWSON LEGEND

SECTION 1

From People's Poet to Tragic Hero

Lawson and his Cultured Critics
Poem by Henry Lawson – '*The Uncultured Rhymer to his Critics*'
The People's Poet
Lawson and His Cultural Critics
The Deterioration of Lawson's Mental Health
Women in Lawson's Life
Lawson as an Apostle of Mateship
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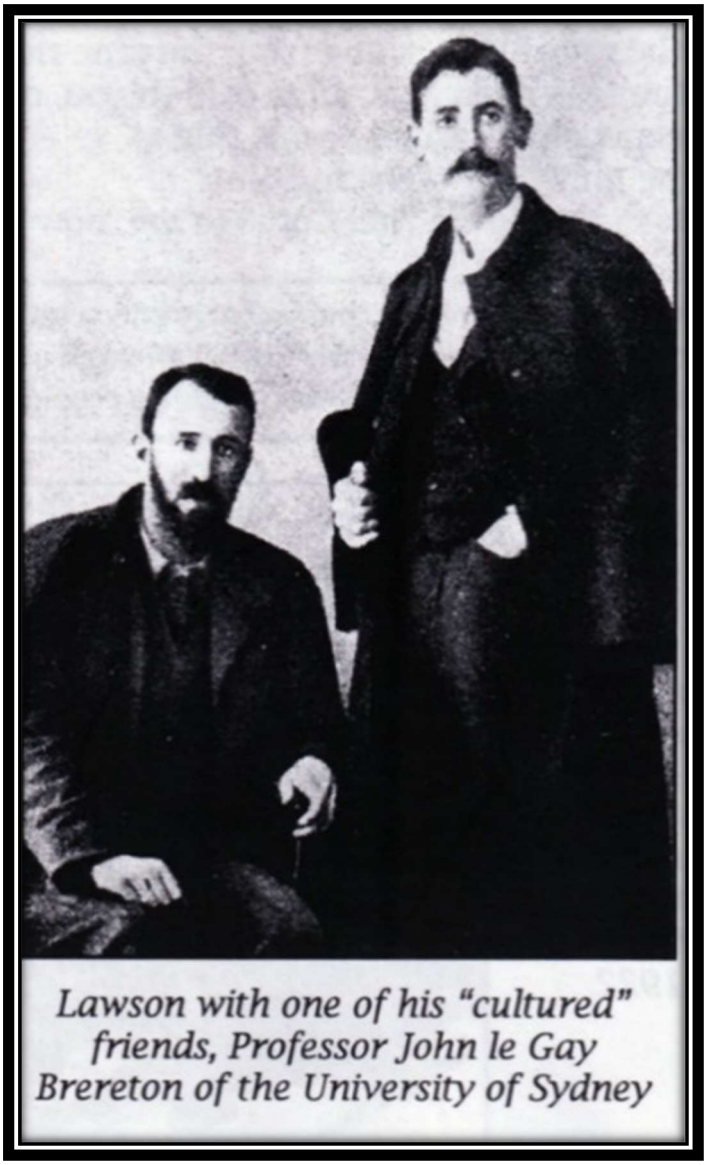
Lawson's Alcoholism
The Change in my Estimation of Lawson
The Devastating Effects of Hannah Thornburn's Death

Lawson and His Cultured Critics

Lawson will always have his critics whether they be cultured or otherwise. He knew some of the earlier ones quite well. In '***The Drover's Sweetheart'*** he has this to say to them:

"Must I turn aside from my destined way
For a task your Joss would find me?
I come with strength of the living day,
And with half the World behind me;
I leave you alone in your cultured halls
To drivel and croak and cavil:
Till your voice goes farther than College walls,
Keep out of the tracks we travel!"



Lawson with one of his "cultured" friends, Professor John le Gay Brereton of the University of Sydney

The Uncultured Rhymer to His Critics by Henry Lawson

The Uncultured Rhymer to His Critics

Fight through ignorance, want, and care –
Through the griefs that crush the spirit;
Push your way to a fortune fair,
And the smiles of the world you'll merit.
Long, as a boy, for the chance to learn –
For the chance that Fate denies You;
Win degrees where the Life-lights burn,
And scores will teach and advise you.
My cultured friends! you have come too late
With your bypath nicely graded;
I've fought thus far on my track of Fate,
And I'll follow the rest unaided.
Must I be stopped by a college gate
On the track of Life encroaching?
Be dumb to Love, and be dumb to Hate,
For the lack of a college coaching?

You grope for Truth in a language dead –
In the dust 'neath tower and steeple!
What know you of the tracks we tread?
And what know you of our people?
'I must read this, and that, and the rest,'
And write as the cult expects me? –
I'll read the book that may please me best,
And write as my heart directs me!

You were quick to pick on a faulty line
That I strove to put my soul in:
Your eyes were keen for a 'dash' of mine
In the place of a semi-colon –
And blind to the rest. And is it for such
As you I must brook restriction?
'I was taught too little?' I learnt too much
To care for a pedant's diction!

Cont'd...

Must I turn aside from my destined way
For a task your Joss would find me?
I come with strength of the living day,
And with half the world behind me;
I leave you alone in your cultured halls
To drivel and croak and cavil:
Till your voice goes further than college walls,
Keep out of the tracks we travel!

Henry attended school at Eurunderee commencing second grade age nine years. He then had a brief spell at New Pipeclay School. His mother then transferred him to the Catholic School in Mudgee. He left school at 14 years of age. Lawson was not only familiar with schools in the region but he knew a great deal about the local geography. He mentions O'Brien's Hill, Mt Buckaroo, Mt Frome and the Cudgegong river in his first youthful poem about Eurunderee.

Old Bark School - Strikers Lane, Mudgee
Bulletin 1897

From People's Poet to Tragic Hero

People's Poet

Lawson's death at the age of 55 years was memorialized in the granting of a Commonwealth funded 'State Funeral'. His early death occurred in 1922. At the time of his death he was eulogized as a national poet who would be recognized in the same way that Burns had become to Scotland and Dickens to England. He was nationally recognized as a 'People's Poet'. An estimated I00,000 people attended his funeral.

Lawson and his Cultured Critics.

During his lifetime as a poet Lawson was not without his critics. They criticized him for his grammatical imperfections and faults in his rhythm and rhyming schemes. Lawson replied to these critics in a poem entitled 'To My Cultured Critics'. He was not criticized for the thematic elements of his poetry or his depiction of the struggle of the country life he described in his poems. He was praised for his representations.

Indeed, Lawson knew that his poetry could, on many occasions, be improved by simple editorial correction. The critics also knew that Lawson's writings were authentic. His poetry lacked pretension. It described Australian bush life through Australian eyes. The drover and shearer and the lonely wife could not only relate to what they read, they could identify with his characters and the country setting. Lawson's observations of bush life were outstanding. He knew bush life intimately.

The Deterioration of Lawson's Mental Health.

The origins of Lawson's mental health deterioration are probably found in the conflicted arguments between his parents. This led to their eventual separation with Henry under the care of his father. As a young school boy Henry was bullied in the playground and sent to the Catholic School in Mudgee. His ear infection at aged nine had progressively led to a form of deafness. It played a significant part in the development of an introspective and solitary life-style. Later events in his life led to a tragic end. Lawson's childhood experiences were a significant factor in his mental deterioration.

Lawson's Women.

There can be little doubt that Henry's relationship with women was not negotiated with much success. Indeed, these relationships were often hurtful and sometimes tumultuous. The significant women in his life included his mother Louisa, his sweetheart Mary Cameron, his wife Bertha, his daughter 'Barta' and his beloved Hannah Thornburn. His housekeeper and carer, Isobel Byers, was 20 years older than Henry. She was also significant in his life.

Lawson's Aunt Phoebe who lived at Bowning was also a confidant and an admirer of Lawson. At least she was always good for a loan. On one occasion she was reported as saying *'Henry should have been born a girl!'* Perhaps Henry's attitude to women is best reflected in his poem 'The Last Review':

'Let this also be recorded
When I've answered to the roll,
That I pitied anxious women
Wrote for them with all my soul'.

Lawson as an Apostle of Mateship

Lawson has often been eulogized as 'the apostle of mateship'. A great deal of his poetry and prose is concerned with men. ln his poem 'My Last Review' he takes care to mention characters such as Peter McIntosh, Mason, Jimmie Nowlett, Joe Wilson, Arvie Aspirall, 'Steelman' and 'Mitchell'. There are a great number of other names mentioned in his writings. It might be said that most of these were **'mates in passing'**. Lawson did not stay in one place for long. He was continually on the move.

Lawson's Admirers

Lawson had another group of friends. They were really **admirers** rather than friends. Some in this group included J.F. Archibald, owner of 'The Bulletin' newspapers, William Lane owner of 'The Queensland Worker' newspaper, the book publishers Angus and Robinson, Tom Mutch and E.J. Brady. Tom Mutch was, at one time, a Minister for Education in the NSW Parliament.

Lawson's wife's sister had married Jack Lang. Lang became a Labor Premier of the NSW Government. These admirers of Lawson were not only influential, they were rich. Archibald commissioned John Longstaff to paint a portrait of Lawson. The Governor of NSW, Tennyson, paid for Lawson's trip to London in 1900. Tom Mutch and E.J. Brady covered expenses for Lawson's holiday trip to Mallacoota. Mutch's influence probably made it possible for Lawson to be given an appointment as a teacher in New Zealand and later as a publicist for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme at Leeton. Section 4 of this book has a photograph of a letter. It reveals that Lawson wrote to his financial admirers to solicit financial assistance. Of Lawson's admirers, Tom Mutch appears to be most like a close friend.

'Mates: The Friendship That Sustained Lawson by Professor Gregory Bryan.'

ln this book Bryan examines the 'pointers' to the 'special' relationship that Lawson had to Jim Gordon. A summary of his claims appear in the newspaper cuttings in this Scrapbook. However, what sustained him most was the secret love he held for Hannah Thornburn. His grief at her death could never be assauged. She became his 'spirit guide'.

Lawson's Alcoholism

Lawson's alcoholism was his way of coping. It was his solution to the numerous conflicting circumstances of his life. These circumstances usually involved relationships that broke down. The psycho-social crises of divorces/separations and joblessness could only be handled by constant running-away behavior and having a drink with anyone willing to 'shout'!

Even though the general public was well aware of his alcoholism they did not know the range of problems that had led to his drinking.

At his death the general public, led by Mary Gilmore, persuaded the Prime Minister, Mr. Billie Hughes, to afford him a State Funeral.

The Changes in My Estimation of Lawson

My quest for the historical Lawson was originally concerned with the problem of finding out how my exalted bush hero could degenerate into a tragic alcoholic! I thought I found the cause in the domestic arguments of his parents and their bitter separation. To this cause I added Lawson's early deafness. When I viewed the play 'All My Love' I thought I had located the primary cause of his self-destruction in the behavior of his mother. She had withheld the correspondence between Mary

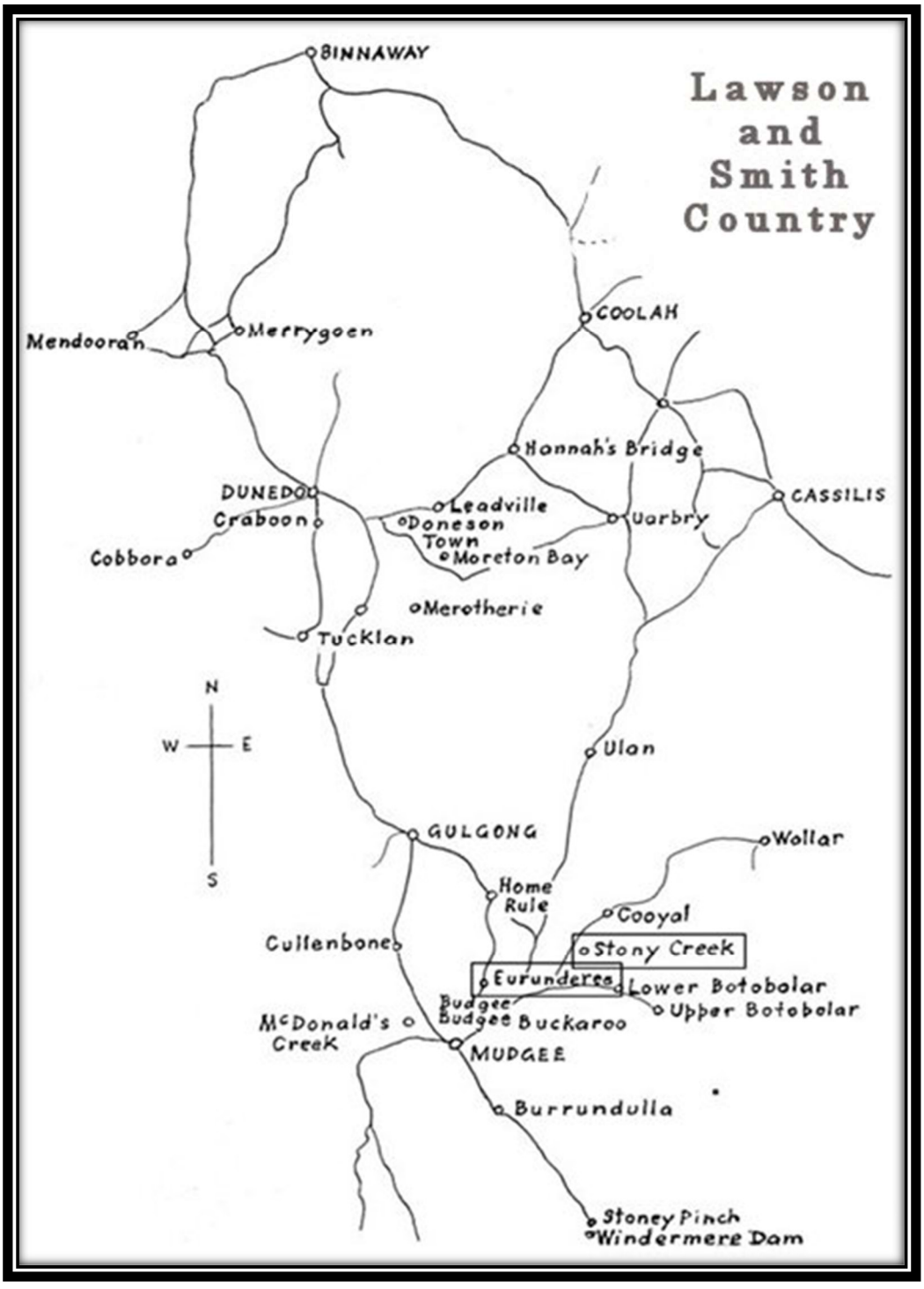
Cameron and Henry. This had led to Henry's unfortunate marriage to Bertha Bredt and the subsequent separation with all its bitterness and acrimony. With this range of behaviours I certainly had enough causes to understand why Henry had sunken into the depths of despair. But there was more! ln recent disclosures I was to learn of Henry's great love for Hannah Thornburn and his grief following her unfortunate death. I have included three of Henry's poems that directly and indirectly refer to this tragic circumstance. They are:

- To Hannah
- Ruth and Henry Lawson 1902
- Hannah Thornburn

The Devastating Effects of the Death of Hannah

These effects are sadly recorded in the three poems listed above. Hannah's death alone would have been enough to propel Henry to drink. Also, it came as no great surprise to me when I learnt of Henry's close relationship to Jim Gordon. This had begun in 1892 before his marriage to Bertha. Henry was 25 years old and Jim was a lad of 17 years. The newspaper cutting in this scrapbook is a review of Frank Moorehouse's account of this relationship. There can be little doubt that this mateship and the 're-mating' at Leeton in 1916, provided Henry with some relief. The accumulated effect of all these events converted Lawson into a tragic Sydney-sider. The public response to his death was both a heartfelt loss at the death of a popular poet, and a vote of sympathy for a person who had experienced more than his fair share of trials and tribulations.

Location Map
Eurunderee - Mudgee



The Lawsons lived at Eurunderee, and
The Smiths lived at Stoney Creek.

ENLARGING THE SCOPE OF THE LAWSON LEGEND

SECTION 2
Lawson in the 'Roaring Days'

An Observant Traveller

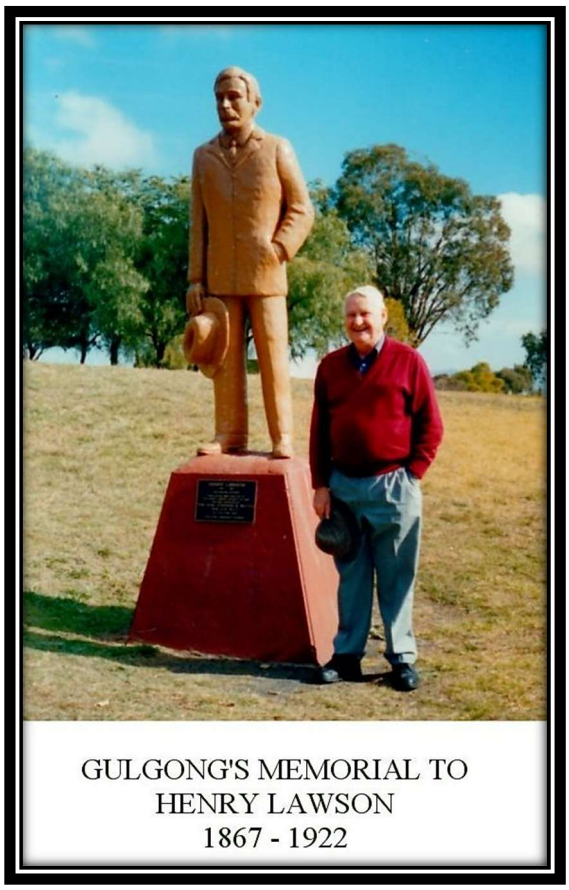
Lawson was a great traveller for his times. This was despite his impoverishment and his poorly remunerated occupation as a poet. Lawson had trips to England and New Zealand as well as more than his fair share of country travelling in New South Wales. He even stepped into Queensland and Victoria. This section provides a sample of the places he memorialised in his poetry. The brief chronology at the beginning of this section provides further details

Local Landscape in Lawson's Poems

- Grenfell (birth), Waverley (cemetery)
- Grenfell Memorial Monument (and poem)
- Eurunderee (No. 1 poem)
- Eurunderee (No. 2 poem)
- Mount Buckaroo (poem)
- Gulgong

Some Favourite Lawson Poems

- 'The Roaring Days'
- 'Waratah and Wattle'
- 'The Teams'



GULGONG'S MEMORIAL TO
HENRY LAWSON
1867 - 1922

BRIEF CHRONOLOGY

HENRY LAWSON
17 June 1867 – 2 September 1922

1867	BIRTH on 17 June 1867 in a tent on the Grenfell Goldfields Father: Peter Larsen, Norwegian Seaman, Carpenter Mother: Louise Albury (2nd daughter of Harry Albury and Harriet)
1868	New Pipeclay near Mudgee.
1871	Gulgong diggings near the Happy Valley mine. When five years old Henry visited Sydney with his mother and brother.
1873	EURUNDEREE. At age 9 years Henry's ear became infected and lead to his deafness. Henry attended the little school at Eurunderee starting 2nd grade when he was 9, then he had a brief spell at the New Pipeclay school, then his mother sent him to the Catholic School at Mudgee.
1876	Peter Larsen built a new home of sawn hardwood school. At 14 Henry left school.
1883	Apprenticed to Hudson Bros. of Clyde as a coach-builder. He started night school. However, he left both tasks and became a 'painters improver'.
1887	Had 'Sons of the South ', a Republican poem printed in the Bulletin by J.F. Archibald.
1890	Lawson met Mary Jane Cameron (late Dame Mary Gilmore) at Neutral Bay.
1891	He had begun writing for William Lane's Queensland 'Worker' and the 'Boomerang', a Brisbane weekly. He was retrenched. In 1895 Angus and Robertson published: *'In The Days When the World Was Wide and Other Verses'.*
1896	On 15 April l896 Henry married Bertha Bredt. ln order to break his drinking habit Bertha persuaded him to accept a post as school master in a little Maori school at Mangamaunu in the South Island with Bertha as his assistant. ln 1898 a son was born, Jim, and Henry decided to return to Sydney. A daughter, Bertha, was born at North Sydney. As Mrs Jago, this daughter was later well known in Gulgong.

1900	The Governor Tennyson, paid for Lawson to sail to London. During this period Bertha must have decided to separate from Henry. Hannah Thornburn came into Henry's thoughts during this turbulent time.
1910	Henry went to Mallacoota with Tom Mutch and E.J. Brady.
1916	The NSW Government arranged for him to 'dry out' at Leeton.
1920	Lawson's mother died in 1920. Between 1908-1922 Lawson was admitted to the Mental Hospital at Darlinghurst for 'drying-out' treatment. For some years Mrs Isobel Byers, an elderly widow, took him in to look after him. The NSW Government allocated him a grant of £2 per week but he slipped further into the despair of alcoholism.
1922	On 2 September 1922 he was found dead at his writing table in his home at Abbotsford. The Prime Minister, Mr Billy Hughes, granted him a state funeral. The ceremony was performed in St Andrew's Anglican cathedral, Sydney. Lawson was buried in Waverley Cemetery

The Henry Lawson Society of Australasia has its headquarters in Mayne Street, Gulgong.

Daughter Helen examining the Memorial Plaque
Below the Statue of Henry Lawson
Gulgong

Henry Lawson

Birth Place at Grenfell NSW

Born 17 June 1867

Waverley Cemetery

At Gravesite of Henry Lawson
Died 2nd September 1922

Grenfell Memorial

O Said Grenfell to my spirit
Though you write of breezy peaks
Golden gullies wattle sidings
And tae pools in she-oak creeks
Of the place your Kith were born
In the childhood that you knew
And your father's distant Norway
(Though it has some claim on you)
Though you sing of dear old Mudgee
And the home of pipeclay flat
You were born on Grenfell goldfield
And you can't get over that!

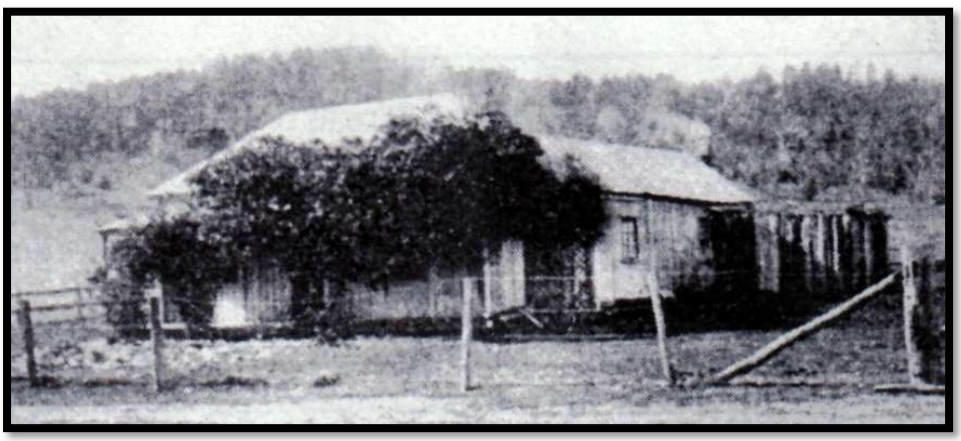
Henry Lawson Aged 14

Eurunderee

Seen plainly from O'Brien's Hill,
That stands by our old home,
Mount Buckaroo is standing still,
And likewise old Mount Frome;
Lowe's Peak and all its hills are ranged
Just as in memory,
And Granite Ridge is little changed
As far as I can see.

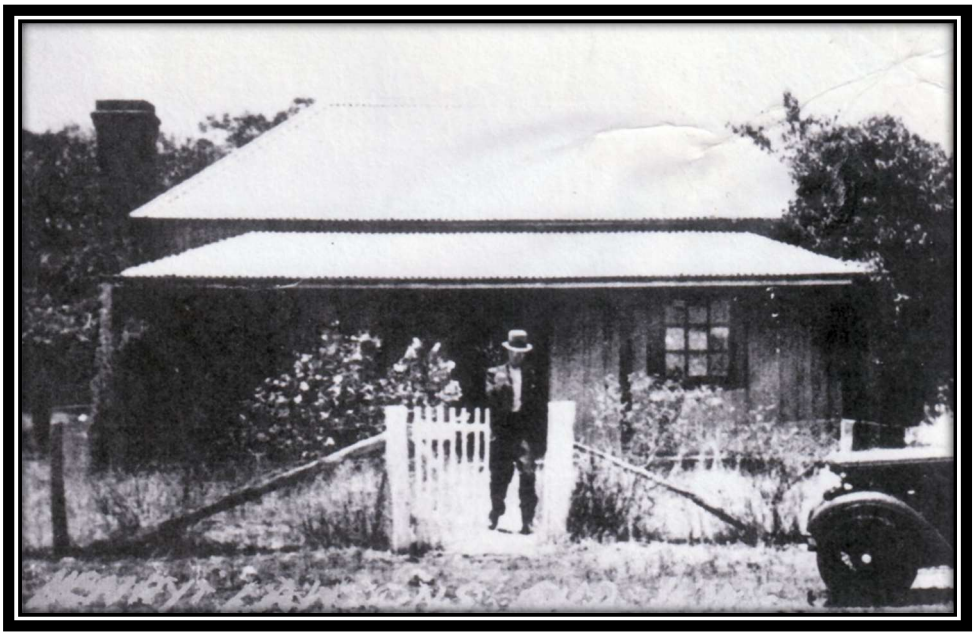
The creek that I can ne'er forget
Its destiny fulfils,
The glow of sunrise purples yet
Along the Mudgee hills;
The flats and sidings seem to lie
Unchanged by Mudgee town,
And with the same old song and sigh
The Cudgegong goes down.

The little town is just as fair
As when I steered the plough -
(The same old sign-boards seem to need
The same re-touching now);
And though the gigs have mostly left
The spring-cart in the lurch,
The same old sort of country folk
Go driving in to church.



The Lawson family's house at Eurunderee.

Lawson's Childhood Home at Eurunderee



Built in 1873 by his Father - Peter

Lawson's 'old home' at Eurunderee where he spent much of his childhood. It was erected by his father and was a typical settler's dwelling of the period. In his later years Lawson looked back to it as an unhappy home and it was here that Louisa's resentment at the trammels of life in the country made it no place for a woman. She left it in 1883.
In the 1930s, as Lawson's stature in Australian literature developed, a movement was initiated by various literary societies to have it restored as a literary shrine or memorial. The scheme was found to be impracticable owing to structural deterioration and it was ultimately demolished.

Memorial Remains - 1977

Lawson Revisits Eurunderee (1891)

Eurunderee

There are scenes in the distance where beauty is not,
On the desolate flats where gaunt apple-trees rot.
Where the brooding old ridge rises up to the breeze
From his dark lonely gullies of stringy-bark trees,
There are voice-haunted gaps, ever su1len and strange;
But Eurunderee lies like a gem in the range.

Still I see in my fancy the dark-green and blue
Of the box-covered hills where the five-corners grew;
And the rugged old sheoaks that sighed in the bend
O'er the lily-decked pools where the dark ridges end,
And the scrub-covered spurs running down from the Peak
To the deep grassy banks of Eurunderee Creek.

On the knolls where the vineyards and fruit-gardens are
There's a beauty that even the drought cannot mar:
For it came to me oft, in the days that are lost,
As I strolled on the sidling where lingered the frost,
And, the shadows of night from the gullies withdrawn,
The hills in the background were flushed by the dawn.

I was there in late years, but there's many a change
Where the Cudgegong River flows down through the range;
For the curse of the town with the railroad has come,
And the goldfields are dead. And the girl, and the chum,
And the old home were gone; yet the oaks seemed to speak
Of the hazy old days on Eurunderee Creek.

And I stood by that creek, ere the sunset grew cold,
When the leaves of the sheoaks were traced on the gold,
And I thought of old days, and I thought of old folks,
Till I sighed in my heart to the sigh of the oaks;
For the years waste away like the waters that leak
Through the pebbles and sand of Eurunderee Creek.

Mount Bukaroo

Only one old post is standing –
Solid yet, but only one –
Where the milking, and the branding,
And the slaughtering were done.
Later years have brought dejection,
Care, and sorrow; but we knew
Happy days on that selection
Underneath old Bukaroo.

Then the light of day commencing
Found us at the gully's head,
Splitting timber for the fencing,
Stripping bark to roof the shed.
Hands and hearts the labour strengthened;
Weariness we never knew,
Even when the shadows lengthened
Round the base of Bukaroo.

There for days below the paddock
How the wilderness would yield
To the spade, and pick, and mattock,
While we toiled to win the field.
Bronz6d hands we used to sully
Till they were of darkest hue,
'Burning off' down in the gully
At the back of Bukaroo.

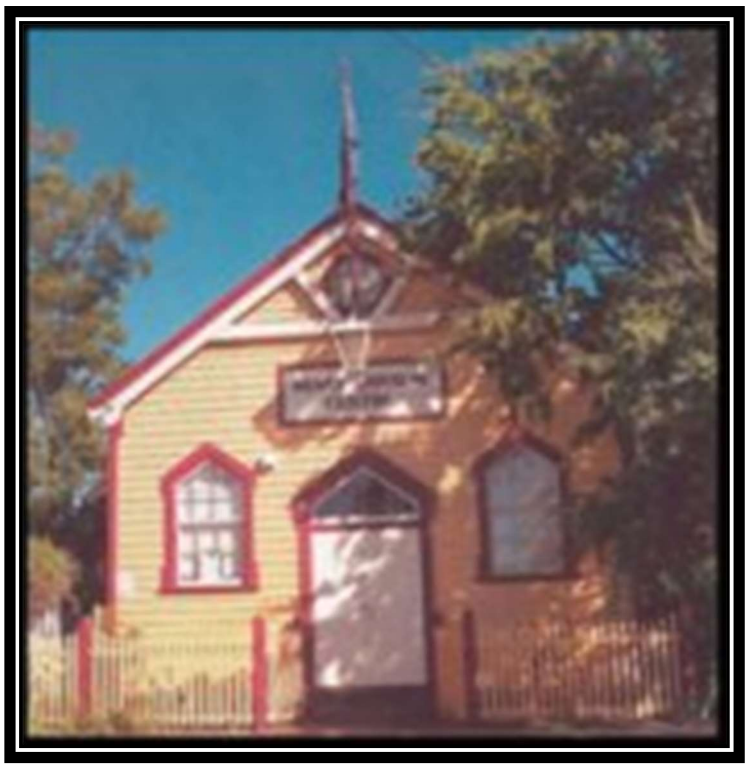
When we came the baby brother
Left in haste his broken toys,
Shouted to the busy mother:
'Here is dadda and the boys!'
Strange it seems that she was able
For the work that she would do;
How she'd bustle round the table
In the hut 'neath Bukaroo!
When the cows were safely yarded,
And the calves were in the pen,
All the cares of day discarded,
Closed we round the hut-fire then.
Rang the roof with boyish laughter
While the flames o'er-topped the flue;
Happy days remembered after –
Far away from Bukaroo

But the years were full of changes,
And a sorrow found us there;
For our home amid the ranges
Was not safe from searching Care.
On he came, a silent creeper;
And another mountain threw
O'er our lives a shadow deeper
Than the shade of Bukaroo.

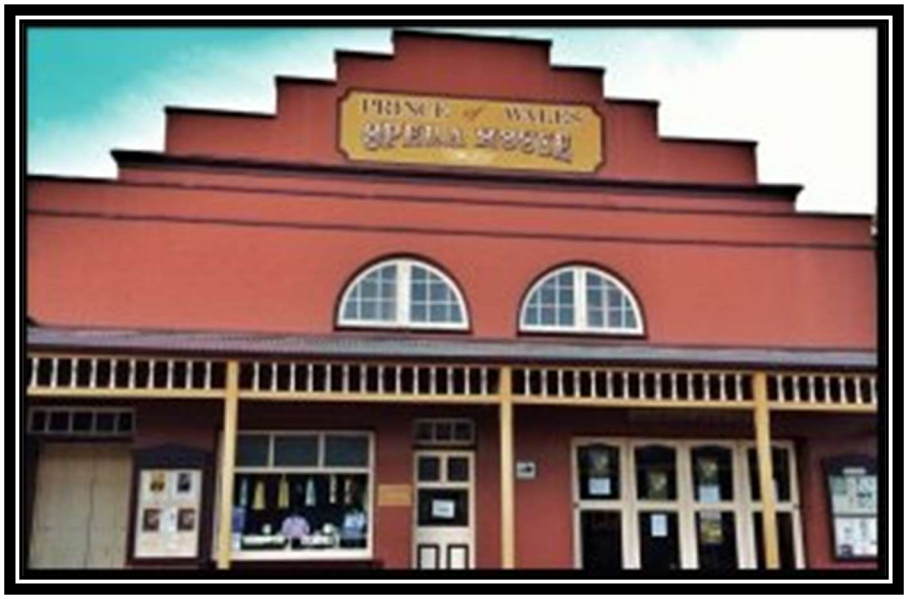
All the farm is disappearing;
For the home has vanished now,
Mountain scrub has choked the clearing,
Hid the furrows of the plough.
Nearer still the scrub is creeping
Where the little garden grew;
And the old folks now are sleeping
At the foot of Bukaroo.

Henry Lawson (1889)

Gulgong in the Roaring Days



The Salvation Army Church Hall in Gulgong is now used as a museum.
It displays a fine collection of Henry Lawson memorabilia.



'Rough Built Theatre'

The Prince of Wales is the oldest still-operating Opera House in the Southern Hemisphere. It was built in 1871 by John Hart Cogden. This classic building is now owned by the Gulgong Amateur Musical and Dramatical Society. Dame Nelly Melba has performed on its stage, several generations have seen their first theatrical production under this historic roof. Open for inspection by arrangement.

The Roaring Days

The night too quickly passes
And we are growing old,
So let us fill our glasses
And toast the Days of Gold;
When finds of wondrous treasure
Set all the South ablaze,
And you and I were faithful mates
All through the Roaring Days!

Then stately ships came sailing
From every harbour's mouth,
And sought the Land of Promise
That beaconed in the South;
Then southward streamed their streamers
And swelled their canvas full
To speed the wildest dreamers
E'er borne in vessel's hull.

Their shining Eldorado
Beneath the southern skies
Was day and night for ever
Before their eager eyes.
The brooding bush, awakened,
Was stirred in wild unrest,
And all the year a human stream
Went pouring to the West.

The rough bush roads re-echoed
The bar-room's noisy din,
When troops of stalwart horsemen
Dismounted at the inn.
And oft the hearty greetings
And hearty clasp of hands
Would tell of sudden meetings
Of friends from other lands.

And when the cheery camp-fire
Explored the bush with gleams,
The camping-grounds were crowded
With caravans of teams;
Then home the jests were driven,
And good old songs were sung,
And choruses were given
The strength of heart and lung.

Oft when the camps were dreaming,
And fires began to pale,
Through rugged ranges gleaming
Swept on the Royal Mail.
Behind six foaming horses,
And lit by flashing lamps,
Old Cobb and Co., in royal state,
Went dashing past the camps.

Oh, who would paint a goldfield,
And paint the picture right,
As we have often seen it.
In early morning's light?
The yellow mounds of mullock
With spots of red and white,
The scattered quartz that glistened
Like diamonds in light;

The azure line of ridges,
The bush of darkest green,
The little homes of calico
That dotted all the scene.
The flat straw hats, with ribands,
That old engravings show-
The dress that still reminds us
Of sailors, long ago.

Cont'd...

I hear the fall of timber
From distant flats and fells,
The pealing of the anvils
As clear as little bells,
The rattle of the cradle,
The clack of windlass-boles,
The flutter of the crimson flags
Above the golden holes.

Ah, then their hearts were bolder,
And if Dame Fortune frowned
Their swags they'd lightly shoulder
And tramp to other ground.
Oh, they were lion-hearted
Who gave our country birth!
Stout sons, of stoutest fathers born,
From all the lands on earth!

A brilliant evocation of the excitement and romance of the gold rushes of the 1860s in Australia. Events, people and places would have become alive to Lawson as he listened to his elders re-living the period.

Those golden days are vanished,
And altered is the scene;
The diggings are deserted,
The camping-grounds are green;
The flaunting flag of progress
Is in the West unfurled,
The mighty Bush with iron rails
Is tethered to the world.

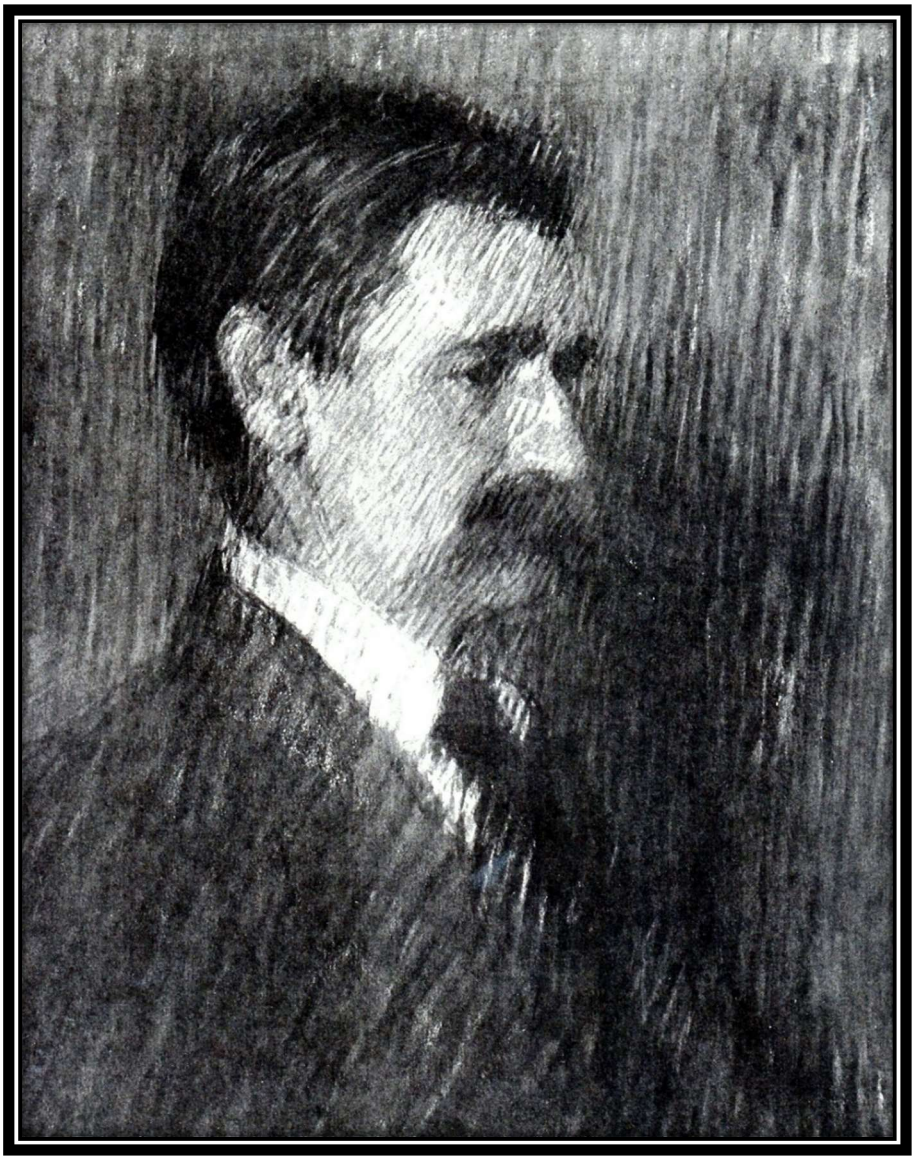
Henry Lawson and Gulgong streetscape on an early $10 note

Waratah and Wattle

Though poor and in trouble I wander alone,
With a rebel cockade in my hat;
Though friends may desert me, and kindred disown,
My country will never do that!
You may sing of the Shamrock, the Thistle, the Rose,
Or the three in a bunch, if you will;
But I know of a country that gathered all those,
And I love the great land where the Waratah grows,
And the Wattle-bough blooms on the hill.

Australia! Australia! so fair to behold-
While the blue sky is arching above;
The stranger should never have need to be told,
That the Wattle-bloom means that her heart is of gold,
And the Waratah's red with her love.

Australia! Australia! most beautiful name,
Most kindly and bountiful land;
I would die every death that might save her from shame,
If a black cloud should rise on the strand;
But whatever the quarrel, whoever her foes,
Let them come! Let them come when they will!
Though the struggle be grim, 'tis Australia that knows
That her children shall fight while the Waratah grows,
And the Wattle blooms out on the hill.



Florence Rodway (1881-1971) Henry Lawson (1913)
62.3x48cm Pastel drawing
Reproduced with the kind permission of the Dixon Gallery, The Library of NSW, Sydney

The Teams

A cloud of dust on the long white road,
And the teams go creeping on
Inch by inch with the weary load;
And by the power of the green-hide goad
The distant goal is won.

With eyes half-shut to the blinding dust,
And necks to the yokes bent low,
The beasts are pulling as bullocks must
And the shining tires might almost rust
While the spokes are turning slow.

With face half-hid 'neath a broad-brimmed hat
That shades from the heat's white waves,
And shouldered whip with its green-hide plait,
The driver plods with a gait like that
Of his weary, patient slaves.

He wipes his brow, for the day is hot,
And spits to the left with spite;
He shouts at 'Bally', and flicks at 'Scot',
And raises dust from the back of 'Spot',
And spits to the dusty right.

He'll sometimes pause as a thing of form
In front of a settler's door,
And ask for a drink, and remark 'It's warm',
Or say 'There's signs of a thunder-storm';
But he seldom utters more.

But the rains are heavy on roads like these;
And, fronting his lonely home,
For weeks together the settler sees
The teams bogged down to the axletrees,
Or ploughing the sodden loam.

Cont'd...

And then when the roads are at their worst,
The bushman's children hear
The cruel blows of the whips reversed
While bullocks pull as their hearts would burst,
And bellow with pain and fear.

And thus with little of joy or rest
Are the long, long journeys done;
And thus – 'Tis a cruel war at the best –
Is distance fought in the mighty West,
And the lonely battles won.

Henry Lawson, 1889

Goldfields Gulgong

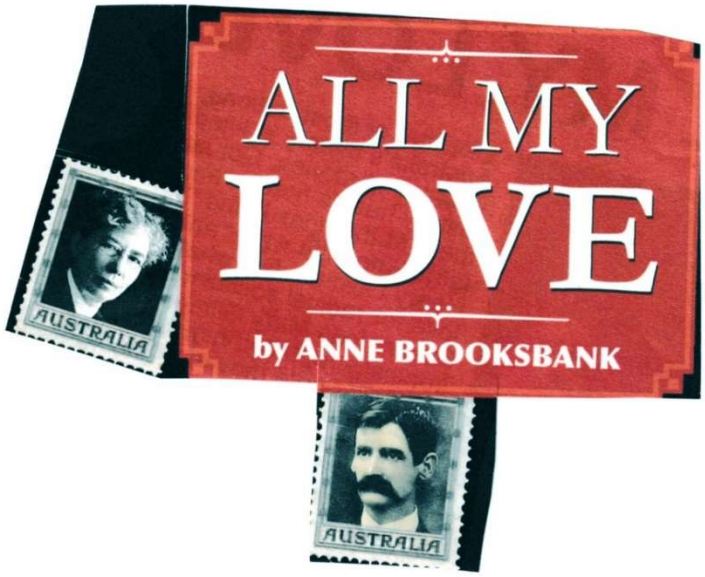
This photograph shows Bill Delves viewing a painting donated by Kenneth John Smith to the Gulgong Pioneers Museum. The museum also contains other memorabilia related to the Smith and Bayliss families.

ENLARGING THE SCOPE OF THE LAWSON LEGEND

SECTION 3
Seven Close Relationships of Lawson

1. **Mary Cameron** (Sweetheart) (Later Dame Mary Gilmore)
   Radical Socialist and Literary Icon.
   'All My Love' by Anne Brooksbank (Play)
2. **Bertha Bredt** (Wife)
   Married in April 1896
   Judicial Separation in 1903
3. **'Jim' Lawson** (Son) (James Joseph)
   Born 1898 died 1978
   'To Jim' (Poem by Lawson)
4. **'Barta' Lawson** (Daughter)
   Born 1900 died 1985 as Mrs Jago
   'Barta' (Poem by Lawson)
5. **Hannah Thornburn** (Lover and 'Spirit Girl') 'The Love of My Life'
   They met in1900 just before the Lawsons sailed to London. She died not long before he returned.
   Poems to Hannah and about Hannah:
   1902 - 'Ruth' (not included)
   1903 - New Life, New Love
   1904 - To Hannah
   1905 - Hannah Thornburn
   1907 - The Lily of St Leonards
6. **Isobel Byers** (Housekeeper – North Sydney, Leeton and Abbotsford)
   Poem by Mark Smith 'Isabel Byers'
   Photograph of dedicating Henry Lawson Park at Abbotsford where Henry died.
7. **Jim Gordon** (A Special Mate)
   1894 travel together from Bourke to Hungerford.
   1916 'Re-Mated' at Leeton.
   'To An Old Mate' (Poem by Lawson)
   See Frank Moorhouse's 'The Drover's Wife' for a discussion about Lawson's sexuality.

Theatre Advertisement



Like that of most nations, Australia's history is filled with interesting stories. Our literary history has its heroes and right up there at the apex is the larger-than-life writer and poet, Henry Lawson. But what of his love for radical socialist and literary icon Mary Gilmore, who ironically replaced him when our ten dollar note moved from paper to polymer. Surely theirs must have been a fascinating relationship.

This is the assumption realised in the sensitive new Australian work "All My Love", which brings to life their little known passionate love affair. Their lives could have been written so differently. Both were heroes of literature that had enormous influence over each other. Both were secretly betrothed to each other.

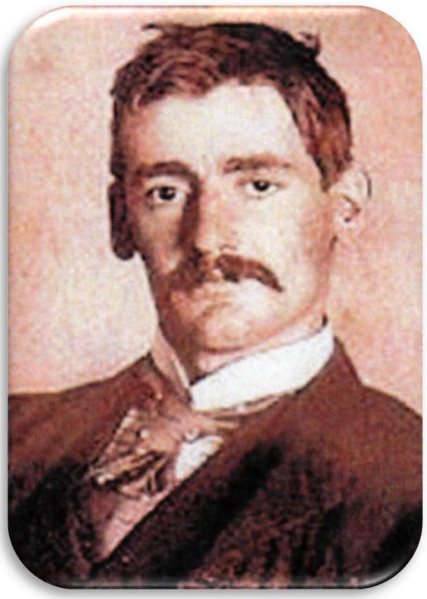
At the end of the 19th Century, Mary Gilmore was introduced to the young Henry Lawson. As their friendship developed, Mary found herself caught in the midst of an intense relationship between Henry and his formidable mother, the suffragette Louise Lawson.

What followed was the beginning of a love affair soon thwarted by a devastating deception.

After researching Mary Gilmore's memoirs, writer Anne Brooksbank first uncovered the tale of loving promises between two of Australia's most famous writers. Taken from excerpts from the couple's surviving letters, this is the first time Henry and Mary's forbidden relationship has been brought to the professional stage.

No.1
Lawson and Mary Cameron

Sweethearts or Pen-friends?



'All My Love' by Anne Brooksbank
(27 February 2016 at the Q Theatre Queanbeyan)

Background Briefing

This play has been scripted from a 'distinguished novel' which, in turn, was based on the correspondence by letters of two poets. These letters were uncovered in the memoirs of one of the poets viz Mary Gilmore. These letters reveal her love for Henry Lawson and his love for her. Unfortunately Henry's mother, Louisa Lawson, interfered in the letter exchanges between the two poets. The play reveals the damaging effects that this interference had on the lives of Mary Gilmore and more especially on Henry Lawson.

Understanding Lawson's Character

As a Henry Lawson 'buff' I have always known that he had loved Mary Gilmore. I imagined this love to have been an unrequited infatuation. After seeing *'All My* Love' I can see how shallow and uninformed my understanding of Lawson had been. After Manning Clark had destroyed my fanciful image of Henry Lawson, I formed the view that although he was a sensitive writer he had a weak character. I assumed that he became a social misfit and a public embarrassment because of his childhood deafness and poor parenting.

After viewing *'All My Love'* I can see how mistaken my analysis of Lawson had been. Anne Brookbank's play introduced another important element into the shaping of Lawson's character. This new element concerned the interference of Henry's mother in the romance of Henry and Mary Cameron who later became Mary Gilmore.

Mrs Louisa Lawson and Mrs Cameron

The details in the play reveal the hidden animosity between Henry's mother and Mary's mother. They were both committed feminists and they each applied for the same advertised vacancy. They were thus both rivals. Henry's mother (Louisa) did not want her son to have anything to do with her rival's daughter. Indeed, Louise deliberately withheld Mary's letters to Henry. This tactic destroyed the possibility of a life-long union in marriage. It also led to an incompatible marriage for Henry and a barely satisfactory marriage for Mary to Mr Gilmore.

From Social-Misfit to Tragic Figure

The machinations of Louisa Lawson against her son Henry provides an explanation for the deterioration of Henry's mental health. At his best Henry was somewhat an awkward social misfit. The loss of his self-confidence and the loving friendship of Mary Cameron through the scheming of his mother changed his personality into one of self-pity. His drift into alcoholism made him a pathetic and, later, a tragic figure.

This revealed information enables the insightful fan to grasp the meaning of those most quoted Lines of Lawson's **'Sweeny'**:

'And I fancy that of evenings,
When the track is growing dim,
What he 'might have been and wasn't'
Comes along and troubles him.'

Last Review

Henry Lawson was a gifted writer of prose and an above-average versifier. His skills in these areas arose from his acute observations and his innate sensibilities' He was a child of the bush and he was well acquainted with the depressing aspects of country life. His deafness contributed to a solitary lifestyle with a hidden need to find a drinking friend. His sweetheart, Mary Gilmore, led the public clamour to honour him with a State Funeral. He was buried with full honours at Waverley Cemetery, Sydney in 1922, aged 55 years.

Addendum

Although Mary Cameron from Neutral Bay was Henry's sweetheart, he later had a more romantic affair with Hannah Thornburn of St Leonards. This occurred while married to Bertha.

No.2
Bertha Lawson (nee Bredt)

Mrs Bertha Lawson.in the garden of her home at Northbridge, a Sydney suburb, in the 1930s. In 1943 her reminiscences of her courtship, marriage, and life subsequent to the judicial separation in 1903, after six years, were published in 'My Henry Lawson' (Sydney, Frank Johnson). The slender volume, in the compilation and writing of which she was assisted by Will Lawson, a New Zealand author and journalist, occasioned much comment at the time and threw little light on Lawson's biography.

After parting from her husband, she worked for a time for Angus & Robertson, among others, before finally becoming an officer of the Children's Welfare Department in New South Wales. She continued to take a keen interest in the literary life of Sydney until her death in July 1957.

Henry and Bertha's Tumultuous Marriage

Henry Lawson's married life was tumultuous. Bertha and Henry were married in 1895 and had two children, Jim and Barta. In an April 1903 affidavit Bertha alleged that Henry was habitually drunk and cruel. They received judicial separation on June 4 of the same year. She wrote "God alone knows how often I have forgiven you and how hard I struggled for you. And how have you treated me. Harry there is no power on the earth will ever reunite us. You are dead to me as far as affection goes. The suffering I have been through lately has killed any thought of feeling I may have had for you."

Their daughter, Barta, once wrote that her mother was sometimes overly dramatic. In July 1903 Bertha wrote "I am forced to write to you. I do not think you realize my position. I will be laid up either the end of October or first week in November... There is the nurse to engage, and all my sewing to do, you know I have not any baby clothes."

In Section 4 of this book there are two references supporting Bertha's case. In the end Bertha obtained a judicial separation and Henry was legally required to pay maintenance of thirty shillings per week. He defaulted on payment on several occasions and spent time in Darlinghurst gaol on several occasions. Later he was to spend time at Rivendell Psychiatric Hospital.

Lawson's Farewell on His London Trip in 1900

For He is a Jolly Good Fellow (1907),

Description of Bertha (Wife):

He is a peevish kid – another at his knee;
The wife whom he could bid farewell – eternally
Stood nagging at his side in tones that none could hear,
And deared him, tender eyed, when passengers came near
(The cabin waits below the row and children's squall,
And not a soul to know the bitter farce of all).

Description of Hannah (Lover):

They cheered from cargo ways and ballast heap and pile,
To last him all his days – they sent him off in style
(He only took his book.) He only turned his head
In one last hopeless look towards a cargo shed
Where one stood brimming eyed in silence by the wall –
No jealous eyes espied that last farewell of all.

In Defence of Bertha

HENRY LAWSON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

Sir,—Of Henry Lawson, poet and prose writer, little need be said, for his work has unquestionably placed him among the immortals. But the tributes to his memory which have appeared during the past week in the columns of the Press throughout Australia, also establish beyond all doubt his place in the "hearts" of the people of the sunny Southland he loved so well.

As one who has been on the most intimate terms of friendship with the family for a quarter of a century I have been much pained and greatly grieved at statements (not in the "Herald") which seem to belittle and discredit his widow and children. Knowing as I do the noble part that Mrs. Bertha Lawson has played during the whole period of our friendship, knowing the bitter anguish she has suffered and the strenuous time through which she has passed while making a home and educating her two children, knowing how both for the sake of the children and their father she has suffered in silence during all those long, weary, heartbreaking years, it does seem to me the very utmost refinement of cruelty that one word should have been uttered which was calculated to give her pain.

In conclusion I would express my honest conviction that no truer or more loyal woman, no more loving, devoted, and self-sacrificing mother ever lived, toiled, and suffered for children and husband than the widow of Australia's greatest writer and sweetest songster, Henry Lawson.—I am, etc.,

Sept. 12. ROSE SCOTT.

Sydney Morning Herald - 1922

No.3
Son of Henry Lawson

James (Jim) Joseph Lawson
State Library of NSW

Lawson's Son Jim (James Joseph)

To Jim

I gaze upon my son once more,
With eyes and heart that tire,
As solemnly he stands before
The screen drawn round the fire;
With hands behind clasped hand in hand,
Now loosely and now fast -
Just as his fathers used to stand
For generations past.

A fair and slight and childish form,
And big brown thoughtful eyes -
God help him! for a life of storm
And stress before him lies:
A wanderer and a gipsy wild,
I've learnt the world and know,
For I was such another child -
Ah, many years ago!

But in those dreamy eyes of him
There is no hint of doubt -
I wish that you could tell me, Jim,
The things you dream about.
Dream on, my son, that all is true
And things not what they seem -
'Twill be a bitter day for you
When wakened from your dream.

You are a child of field and flood,
But with the gipsy strains
A strong Norwegian sailor's blood
Is running through your veins.
Be true, and slander never stings,
Be straight, and all may frown -
You'll have the strength to grapple things
That dragged your father down.

These lines I write with bitter tears
And failing heart and hand,
But you will read in after years,
And you will understand:
You'll hear the slander of the crowd,
They'll whisper tales of shame,
But days will come when you'll be proud
To bear your father's name.

But oh! I beware of bitterness
When you are wronged, my lad -
I wish I had the faith in men
And women that I had!
'Tis better far (for I have felt
The sadness in my song)
To trust all men and still be wronged
Than to trust none and wrong.

Be generous and still do good
And banish while you live
The spectre of ingratitude
That haunts the ones who give.
But if the crisis comes at length
That your future might be marred,
Strike hard, my son, with all your strength!
For your own self's sake, strike hard!

Henry Lawson, 1904

No.4
Lawson's Daughter Bertha

Bertha

Wide, solemn eyes that question me,
Wee hand that pats my head –
Where only two have stroked before,
And both of them are dead.
"Ah, poo-ah Daddy mire," she says,
With wondrous sympathy –
Oh, baby girl, you don't know how
You break the heart in me!

Henry Lawson and his Daughter, Bertha, when she was two years of age.

Bertha ('Barta') later in life became well known in Gulgong as Mrs Barta Jago.

Lawson's Daughter Bertha

Bertha (Barta) Lawson
State Library of NSW

Barta

Wide solemn eyes that question me,
Wee hand that pats my head –
Where only two have stroked before,
And both of them are dead.
'Ah, poo-ah Daddy mine,' she says,
With wondrous sympathy –
Oh, baby girl, you don't know how
You break the heart in me!

Let friends and kinsfolk work their worst,
And the world say what it will,
Your baby arms go round my neck –
I'm your own Daddy still!
And you kiss me and I kiss you,
Fresh kisses frank and free –
Ah, baby girl, you don't know how
You break the heart in me!

I dreamed when I was good that when
The snow showed in my hair,
A household angel in her teens
Would flit about my chair,
To comfort me as I grew old;
But that shall never be –
Ah, baby girl, you don't know how
You break the heart in me!

But one shall love me while I live
And soothe my troubled head,
And never hear an unkind word
Of me when I am dead.
Her eyes shall light to hear my name
How e'er disgraced it be –
Ah, baby girl, you don't know how
You help the heart in me!

Henry Lawson, 1902

No.5
Lawson and His Secret Love

Hannah Thornburn

Henry Lawson met Hannah in 1900 just before his trip to London. Hannah had an enormous impact on Henry. Hannah would die from the complications of an abortion on the 1st of June 1902. Henry received the news of her death as he made his way back from London. His trip to London with his wife, his son Joseph and his daughter of just over two months, Bertha, was what Lawson called a 'nightmare'. While adjusting a new life in a new climate with a young family his wife spent three months in a hospital as a mental patient. By April 1902 he was arranging for Bertha to return home with the children. He followed soon after and they were all back in Sydney before the end of July, a couple weeks after Hannah's death.

The presence of Hannah can be seen in a number of poems that were written about her. They include Ruth (1902), To Hannah (1904), and Hannah Thornburn (misprinted as Hannah Thornburn by the publishers in 1905).

Then there are the poems that allude to a Hannah-like figure. They include:

New Life, New Love (1903)

I have found a light in my long dark night,
Brighter than stars or moon;
I have lost the fear of the sunset drear,
And the sadness of afternoon.
Here let us stand while I hold your hand,
Where the lights on your golden head -
Oh! I feel the thrill that I used to feel
In the days ere my heart was dead.

The Peace Maker (1906)

There was the girl who married me ---Bertha Bredt
And bore my children twain,
We'll never meet each other's eyes
Like boy and girl again.
The very children's love and trust
By this foul thing was slain.

There was a girl my manhood loved, ---Hannah Thornburn
She'd Love's own red gold hair,
And grey eyes that were Pity's own

Cont'd...

And courage that was rare.
She sleeps amongst the suicides,
And this thing sent her there.

To Hannah

Spirit girl to whom 'twas given
To revisit scenes of pain,
From the hell I thought was Heaven
You have lifted me again;
Through the world that I inherit,
Where I loved her ere she died,
I am walking with the spirit
Of a dead girl by my side.

Through my old possessions only
For a very little while,
And they say that I am lonely,
And they pity, but I smile:
For the brighter side has won me
By the calmness that it brings,
And the peace that is upon me
Does not come of earthly things.

Spirit girl, the good is in me,
But the flesh you know is weak,
And with no pure soul to win me
I might miss the path I seek;
Lead me by the love you bore me
When you trod the earth with me,
Till the light is clear before me
And my spirit too is free.

Henry Lawson, 1904

Hannah Thornburn

They lifted her out of a story
Too sordid and selfish by far,
They left me the innocent glory
Of love that was pure as a star;
They left me all guiltless of "evil"
That would have brought years of distress
When the chance to be man, god or devil,
Was mine, on return from Success.

With a name and a courage uncommon
She had come in the soul striving days,
She had come as a child, girl and woman
Come only to comfort and praise.
There was never a church that could marry,
For never a court could divorce,
In the season of Hannah and Harry
When the love of my life ran its course.

Her hair was red gold on head Grecian,
But fluffed from the parting away,
And her eyes were the warm grey Venetian
That comes with the dawn of the day.
No Fashion nor Fad could entrap her,
And a simple print work dress wore she,
But her long limbs were formed for the "wrapper"
And her fair arms were meant to be free.

(Oh, I knew by the thrill of pure passion
At the touch of her elbow, or hand -
By the wife's loveless eyes that would flash on
The feeling I could not command.
Oh, I knew when revulsion came rushing -
Oh, I knew by the brush strokes that hurt
At the sight of a sculptor friend brushing
The clay from the hem of her skirt.)

Cont'd...

She was mine on return from succeeding
In a struggle that no one shall know;
She only knew my heart was bleeding,
She only knew what dealt the blow.
I had fought back the friends that were clutching,
I had forced back the heart-scalding tears
Just to lay my hot head to her touching
And to weep for two terrible years.

Oh! the hand on my hair that was greying!
Oh! the kiss on my brow that was lined I
Oh! the peace when my reason was straying
And the rest and relief for my mind.
Till, no longer world shackled or frightened,
The voice of the past would be stilled,
Hearts quickened, cheeks flushed and eyes brightened,
And the love of our lives be fulfilled!

It was Antwerp, and Plymouth - th' Atlantic
And, so well had Love's network been laid,
That I heard of her illness, grown frantic,
At Genoa, Naples - Port Said.
I was mad just to reach her and "tell her",
But a sandbank at Suez tripped me,
And we limped, with a crippled propeller,
Through all Hades adown the Red Sea.

Through the monsoon we rolled like a Jumbo
With a second blade shaken away,
There was never a dock in Colombo
So the captain drank hard to Bombay.
Then a "point" in the south like an anthill
Or seawastes - then hove into sight -
I called for no news at Fremantle
For I wanted to hope through the Bight.

Cont'd...

There's a gentleman, reading, shall know it,
There's an earl who will now understand
Why I "slighted" the son of their poet
(And a vice regal load of the land) -
Semaphore - and a burst through the wicket
On platform left guards in distress -
A run without luggage or ticket,
A cab, and the Melbourne Express.

'Twas a brother-in-grief of mine told me
With harsh eyes unwontedly dim,
With a hand on my shoulder to hold me
And a grip on my own - to hold him.
A dry choke, and words cracked and hurried,
A stare, as of something afraid,
And he told me that Hannah was buried
On the day I reached Port Adelaide.

They could greet me - let Heaven or Hell come,
They could weep - for the grave by the sea
Oh I the mother and father could welcome
And the kinsfolk without fear of me.
For they watched her safe out of a story
Where she slaved and suffered alone -
They could weep to the tune of the hoary
Old lie "If we only had known".

But I have the letter that followed
That she wrote to England and me -
That crossed us perchance as we wallowed
That birthday of mine on the sea,
That she wrote on the eve of her going,
Hopeful and loving and brave,
To keep me there, prosperous, knowing,
No care save the far away grave.

Cont'd...

They have lifted her out of a story
Too sordid and selfish by far,
And left me the innocent glory
Of love that was pure as a star:
That was human and strong though she hid it
To write before death in last lines –
And I kneel to the angels who did it
And I bow to the fate that refines.

Henry Lawson, 1905

The Lily of St Leonards (1907)

'Tis sunrise over Watson,
Where I sailed out to sea,
On that wild run to London
That wrecked and ruined me.
The beauty of the morning
On bluff and point and bay,
But the Lily of St Leonards
Was fairer than the day.

O Lily of St Leonards!
And I was mad to roam –
She died with loving words for me
Three days ere I came home.

As fair as lily whiteness,
As pure as lily gold,
And bright with childlike brightness
And wise as worlds of old.
Her heart for all was beating
And all hearts were her own –
Like sunshine through the Lily
Her purity was shown.

O Lily of St Leonards!
My night is on the track,
'Tis well you never lived to see
The wreck that I came back.

A leaden sky shuts over
A sobbing leaden sea,
For the Lily of St Leonards
Is never more for me.
I seek the wharf of Outward
Where the deck no longer thrills
Where she stood with great tears starting
Like the lights on dark wet hills.

The world was all before me
The laurels on my brow –
'Twas the world-star of the rovers,
'Tis the Star of Exile now.

No.6
Isobel Byers – Lawson's Housekeeper

Isabel Byers
Pittwater Online

Home of Isobel Byers, North Sydney

This is 31 Euroka Street, North Sydney, where Lawson resided with Mrs Byers for some years. Standing at the gate is Tom Mutch, one-time Minister for Education in the NSW State Parliament, who was Lawson's friend of many years. He recalled staying here with Lawson and Mrs Eyers, whom he greatly admired for her dedication to the writer.

In 1910 Mutch went with Lawson to Mallacoota and was the person the latter blamed for 'shanghaiing' him to such a place. In his last years Mr Mutch was a Trustee of the State Library of NSW, then known as the Public Library, on the steps of which he would stand and talk about Lawson and his life for as long as he had a listener, invariably winding up with the remark, 'The truth must be told, the truth must be told, my boy, some day it must be published.'

His papers are now at the State Library and are a valuable source of Lawson biographical material.

Isobel Byers

I met three women beside the river,
Another stood on the hill.
They mourned for the man they each had loved
And admitted they loved him still.

One was his wife, another his girl,
And the other a distant friend,
But the woman that looked from the top of the hill
Was his nurse to the bitter end.

The three had planted trees that day
For reasons that only they knew.
The other nurtured a seed in her heart
And the love she had was true.

Those scrawny trees can be seen today
In Henry Lawson Park, *
And Bertha and Mary and Ellen are there,
Their names etched on a plaque.

But there's one whose name you cannot find,
Though her love for him has grown.
It's not a tree in a stormy bay
It's a flame from a seed deep sown.

By Mark Smith

* Abbotsford

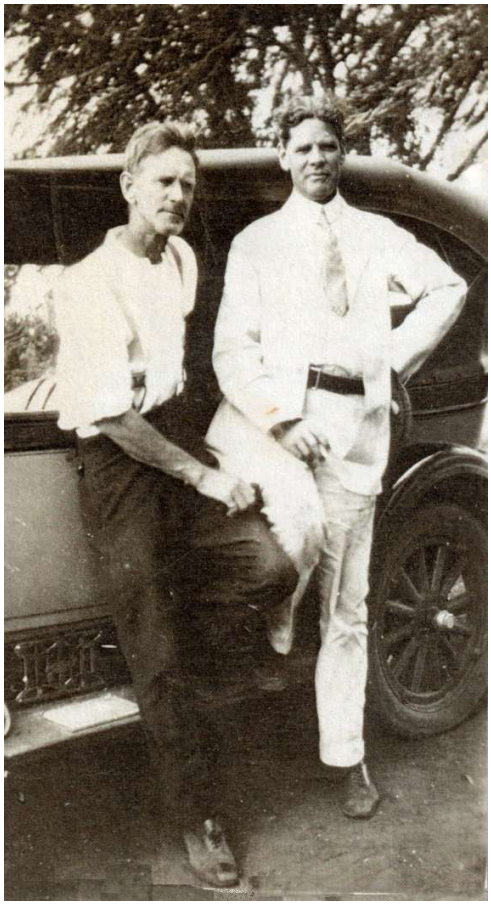
Henry Lawson Park, Abbotsford

Dedication and opening of the Henry Lawson Park, Abbottsford, Sydney, NSW

Henry Lawson Park at Abbotsford was officially dedicated on 3 September 1938 by Alderman Jacob Henley, Mayor of Drummoyne (on the left), Honourable William Mccall, Federal Member for Martin, and Alderman Thomas Higham. To mark the occasion, three trees were planted near the foreshore by Eileen M. Buckley of the Henry Lawson Literary Society, Bertha Lawson, his wife and Mary Gilmore, his friend and fellow poet. The tree planted by Mary Gilmore had a plaque with an original verse by her:

'As weeds grow out of graves and vaults
So from his broken heart his faults
And yet so marvellous his power
His very faults brought forth in flower.'

No.7
Lawson and Jim Gordon
'A Special Sort of Mateship'



Jim Gordon & Walter Jago.
Walter lived with Bertha Lawson,
Bertha changed her name to
Bertha Jago after his death.
State Library of Victoria.

Lawson at Leeton, 1917

Jim Gordon
A Special Mate

To an Old Mate

Old mate! In the gusty old weather,
When our hopes and our troubles were new,
In the years spent in wearing out leather,
I found you unselfish and true -
I have gathered these verses together
For the sake of our friendship and you.

You may think for awhile, and with reason,
Though still with a kindly regret,
That I've left it full late in the season
To prove I remember you yet;
But you'll never judge me by their treason
Who profit by friends - and forget.

I remember, Old Man, I remember -
The tracks that we followed are clear -
The jovial last nights of December,
The solemn first days of the Year,
Long tramps through the clearings and timber,
Short partings on platform and pier.

I can still feel the spirit that bore us,
And often the old stars will shine -
I remember the last spree in chorus
For the sake of that other Lang Syne,
When the tracks lay divided before us,
Your path through the future and mine.

Through the frost-wind that cut like whip-lashes,
Through the ever-blind haze of the drought -
And in fancy at times by the flashes
Of light in the darkness of doubt -
I have followed the tent poles and ashes
Of camps that we moved further out.

You will find in these pages a trace of
That side of our past which was bright,
And recognise sometimes the face of
A friend who has dropped out of sight -
I send them along in the place of
The letters I promised to write.

Henry Lawson, 1895

COVER STORY

Frank Moorhouse

A special sort of mateship

Miles Franklin Award winner Frank Moorhouse discovered uncanny parallels with his own life and sexuality when he explored literary great Henry Lawson.

While working on *The Drover's Wife* book I discovered, and I continue to feel, empathies with Henry Lawson as a person and as a writer, through parallels between his and my life which surprised me when they emerged as I researched the book.

I am not the first writer to find parallels in his life with Lawson and to claim him as something of a soulmate (I do not quite see him as a soulmate) – Frank Hardy (1917-1994) stands out for having embraced Lawson as a personal socialist comrade. However, I want strongly to stress that these emotional parallels with Lawson did not motivate the creation of my book – the book was initiated by my curiosity about why, from all of Lawson's writing, it is *The Drover's Wife* short story that uniquely survives in our cultural life.

Well into the 20th century, Lawson was frequently proclaimed as our greatest writer and his face was on the first decimal $10 banknote and on a stamp and his name on parks and streets throughout Australia,

However, the biggest surprise from my research was to learn of Lawson's effeminacy, or feminity, which showed in the way he presented himself and, according to some critics, in his writing, and which was seen as a weakness. In his diary, unpublished in his lifetime, he identified this effeminacy in himself and his contemporaries confirmed it in published commentary at the time. One of his aunts said that because of his sensitive and delicate nature he "should've been born a girl". The abundant evidence about his effeminate nature is recorded in my book.

It was a stark departure from the image of Lawson which had come to many of us as the bushman, the celebrator of a rugged Australian bush mateship (but he was never comfortable in the company of the shearers and drovers he wrote about) and the public image of a man with an exaggerated, almost theatrically masculine, moustache.

It led me to wonder if this ever expressed itself homosexually.

I know of no suggestion or record – nor would I expect to find it, given the inhibitions of the times – of Lawson having a homosexual life; that is, of having had sex with males or wishing to have sex with males. I am resistant to Manning (oh, oh the name) Clark's view of mateship as a form of "sublimated homosexuality". I do not accept the term "sublimated" and "repressed homosexuality", unless these terms are used by the person who feels that they are "sublimating" or "repressing", and a person's perceived gender characterisation often confounds lazy expectations: there are effeminate straight men and non-effeminate gay men.

But how did Lawson personally experience mateship?

Lawson had at least four romantically significant but difficult relationships with women (but remember, some so-called effeminate men have heterosexual relationships with women). When young, there was the poet Mary Gilmore, who for a short time assumed they were engaged; a woman called Hannah Thorburn who Lawson romanticised as his "spirit girl" and to whom he wrote a poem; his wife, Bertha, who divorced him after six years; and, after his marriage had failed, Lawson found some stability in a dependent relationship, on and off until his

Cont'd…

death at 55, with Isabel Byers who was 20 years older, and supported him in many ways.

I was, then, happily intrigued by the appearance of Professor Gregory Bryan's recent book *Mates: The Friendship that Sustained Henry Lawson*. Until Bryan's book, no deep, close relationship of Lawson with a male had come to my attention.

Bryan establishes that Lawson, aged 25, found a singularly intense bond with the 17-year-old Jim Gordon, a relationship which stands out from the other relationships Lawson had with any male friends or mates.

Even if the face-to-face relationship covered only five years of their lives, divided into two parts, it was perhaps the most intense bonding Lawson had with another person.

The relationship between Jim Gordon and Lawson began in 1892, when Lawson travelled to Bourke for the *Bulletin* magazine and met Jim. Jim described the meeting this way: "I had noticed this long-necked, flat-chested stripling eyeing me off each time we passed and I noticed too that he had the most beautiful and remarkable eyes I have ever seen on a human being ... soft as velvet and of a depth of brownness that is indescribable ... Lawson eventually said, 'Hullo' and introduced himself."

Jim says they quickly found empathy. Jim was on the track looking for work many miles from home, and was, at the time, he said, "as homesick as a motherless calf". "Where are you staying?" Lawson asked. Jim told him he was, "living at a hotel but that my sugar bag was running low ... " "Lawson became animated ... and gripped my hand and said, 'Come and camp with me'."

Lawson and Jim "humped their blueys" together on the track between Hungerford and Bourke, about 450 kilometres. The walk should have taken them three weeks; it took them three months as they stopped at sheep stations and worked as rouseabouts.

From what I have read of their descriptions, this trek was for Lawson and Jim emotionally the most important time in their lives. I know that male life and trekking, sleeping together under the stars, can be especially bonding. However, later, back in Bourke after the trek, Lawson abruptly left Jim and went to Sydney.

There is no information on why they parted,

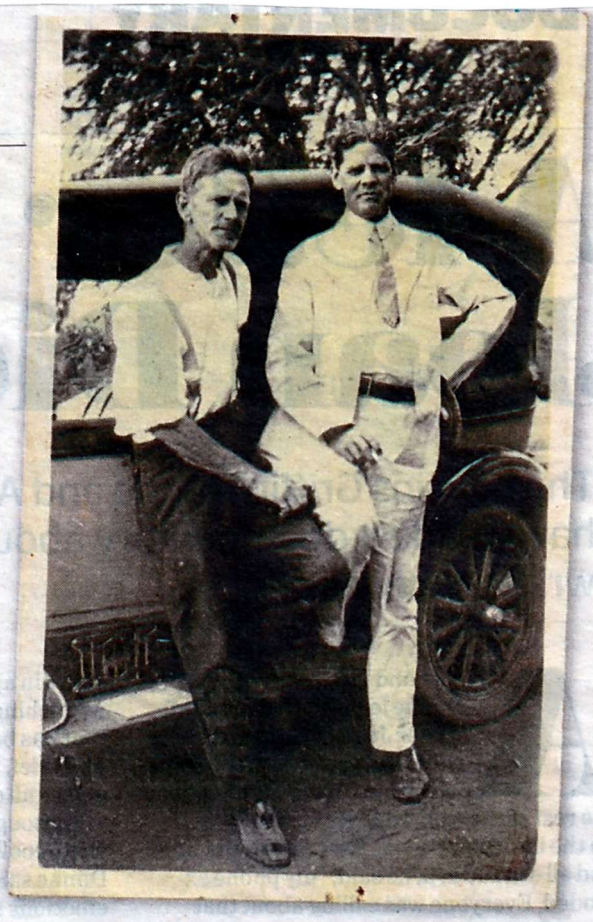
Cont'd…

but Lawson had other abrupt breaks throughout his life, a pattern of fleeing from the demands of emotional relationships. They did, however, live in each other's minds, and in their writing (mentored by Lawson, Jim became a published writer too). Three years after their separation, Lawson wrote a poem called *To an Old Mate* which the evidence shows was written for Jim: "You may think for a while, and with reason, / Though still with a kindly regret, / That I've left it full late in the season / ... I can still feel the spirit that bore us ... / When the tracks lay divided before us ... / You will find in these pages a trace of / That side of our past which was bright, / I send them along in the place of / The letters I promised to write."

"I can still feel the spirit that bore us" – they were not to meet again for 23 years. Given the evidence of Lawson's sexual attraction to women, if he did have a sexual relationship with Jim, he would today be described as bisexual, or perhaps bi-gendered (are we all bi-gendered to a certain degree?)

Both went on to marry and to father children. Jim's marriage seems to have been happy enough, and it survived; Lawson's did not.

In 1916, when Lawson was 49 and struggling with life, he was given a house and income in Leeton through the assistance of friends and the NSW government. Lawson had been given what we would now call a residency-fellowship to write about the great agricultural experiment with irrigation in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area of NSW (the MIA). Isabel Byers accompanied him.



It turned out that Jim was also in Leeton with his family, trying to make a go of a government-allotted, irrigated farm. Jim read of Lawson's arrival in the Murrumbidgee *Irrigator*. He sought him out and they met. They immediately bonded again as mates – Lawson used the expression "re-mated". Each day they spent more and more time with each other, camping together for days, away from their homes, on the Murrumbidgee River. Jim records that they spent their time talking and drinking. Jim's wife, Daisy, became jealous, but their kids loved Lawson.

Continued Page 15

Photo –Jim Gordon with Walter Jago

Cont'd…

Henry Lawson:

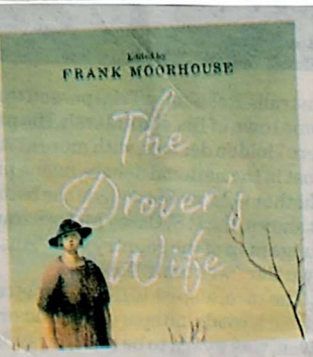
A special sort of mateship

From Page 9

Living with Isabel had also become acrimonious. Perhaps she, too, was jealous of Jim. After a year and a half, Henry could no longer stand small-town Leeton (and its alcohol prohibition) or the publicity work he was expected to do. Lawson abruptly left for Sydney; he didn't even pack his things or say goodbye to Jim. Another abrupt departure.

I talked with Bryan about the physical nature of their relationship. Jim recalled that they "talked and talked", and that Henry and he would walk arm in arm or "holding hands". Sometimes they walked and talked in the moonlight. They were "loath to part" at the end of each day. Bryan quotes Jim's poem *When Lawson Walked with Me*: "Henry gripped my fingers tight" and "linked arms with me".

Lawson wrote that the pet name he used to call Jim from the days of the trek, "surprised and disturbed" and caused "distress and pain" to Jim's wife Daisy. I would love to know what the name was. Bryan said to me that he found a line in *By the Banks of the Murrumbidgee*, written by Lawson shortly after the 1916 reunion in Leeton, particularly thought-provoking: "We first met in Bourke some 25 years ago, and thus we share two pasts, so as to speak; but we were very young men then, those pasts are boys' pasts; and being but recently remated we haven't got to speak of those pasts yet. There's a certain shyness about the matter, if you understand, which may or may not deepen as those 25 year pasts are cleared up".



The story Bryan tells is one of deep male bonding and of what seems to be the happiest relationship Lawson ever found. Lawson's daughter, Barta (originally Bertha), said that, "Dad loved Jim very much. And Jim loved him ... Dad said, 'After all, I think he's about the best thing I ever did'."

If he were alive today, Lawson may not be as destructively conflicted about, and disturbed by, his effeminacy and may be bolder in his assertion of implied self which it might have expressed. Lawson's moustache may have, to his surprise, made him more attractive to some gay men.

Who knows: he may yet become a hero to all Australian queer kids, or the broader LGBTQI movement. I argue that Lawson belongs just as much with this movement as with any of the sentimental nationalist and political movements which have, over the years, claimed him.

I, too, had a crucial bonding with an older man, which began when I was 17 and he 27. From the beginning, the relationship was sexual – my first – initiated by me. We lived together for a few years and he was an important mentor and our relationship continued on and off through my life for 50 years. We both went on to marry; in his case, he had children and his marriage has lasted. My only legal marriage, to my high-school girlfriend, was unsuccessful although we have remained in contact.

Back in Sydney when he returned from Leeton, Lawson was repeatedly hospitalised for alcoholism and mental illness, and, at times, he left Isabel and became a street itinerant.

Jim and Lawson kept in contact by letter and Jim would visit him in Sydney, where they would go on drinking sprees. Jim visited Lawson in hospital after he had had a stroke and brought him his favourite foods. In 1922 Lawson returned to Isabel and died in her home in Abbotsford, aged 55.

After Lawson's death, Jim wrote: "The stars have never seemed so bright / Since Lawson walked with me."

On the evidence, Lawson struggled with the conventional masculine role and, I believe, the unresolvable inner tensions of his sexuality. I speculate that his effeminate personality contributed to his abuse of alcohol, which can be both a relief from and, a form of, emotional absence within a relationship.

Some inklings of this were in Lawson's poem *The Wander-Light*, written in his diary in 1905, when he was 38: "For my ways are strange ways and new ways and old ways / And deep ways and steep ways and high ways and low; / I'm at home and at ease on a track that I know not, And restless and lost on a road that I know."

I think Lawson was saying that he was very much alone, inside his femininity and the solitary, isolated inner life of writing even when there was public acclaim.

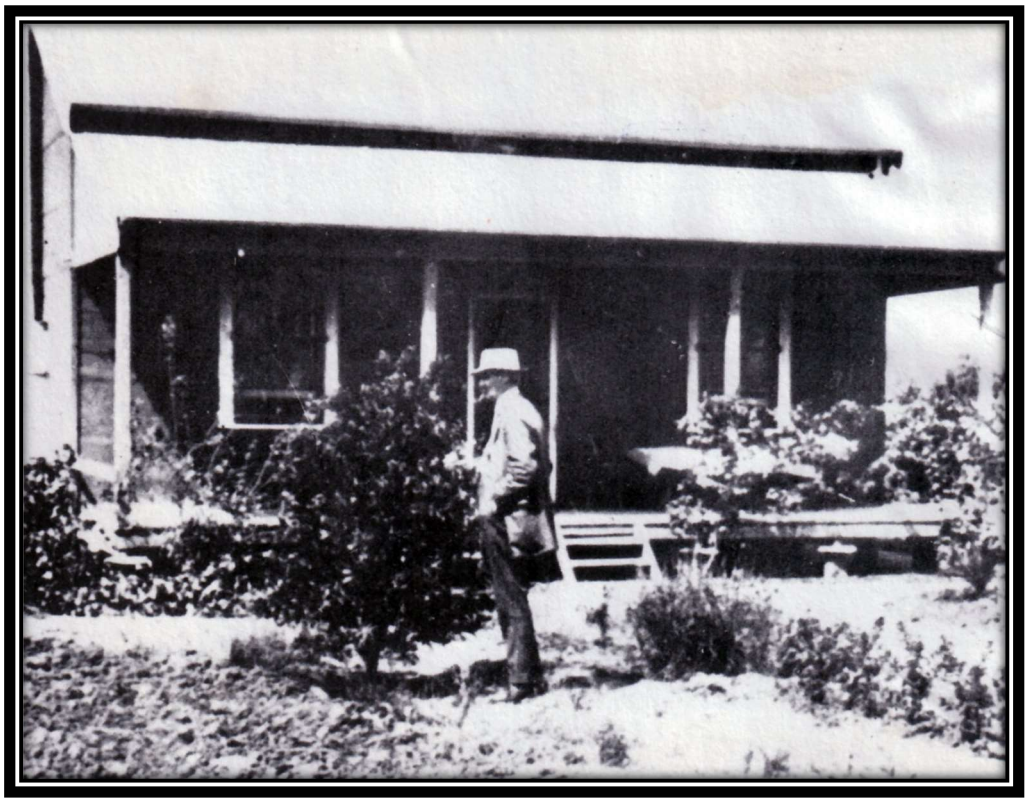
Maybe he was also affirming his exceptionalism.

The words were addressed to his conventional world and expressed, in a defensively superior way, his separateness.

And, in our history and literature, Lawson is exceptional.

This is an extract from *The Drover's Wife* edited by Frank Moorhouse which is published by Knopf on Monday at RRP $34.99.

Lawson as Publicist for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, Leeton NSW, 1917



Lawson outside his cottage at Leeton in 1917. It was provided for him as part of his agreement with the State Government of New South Wales when he was appointed as a roving publicist for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area.

A considerable part of his time was spent in this cottage editing a revised edition of his poems at the request of George Robertson. In reasonably good health, he wrote letters defending his lines, objecting or agreeing to changes only after much argument.

He nevertheless found time to absorb the atmosphere of the Area, as his short story 'The Green Lady'.

ENLARGING THE SCOPE OF THE LAWSON LEGEND

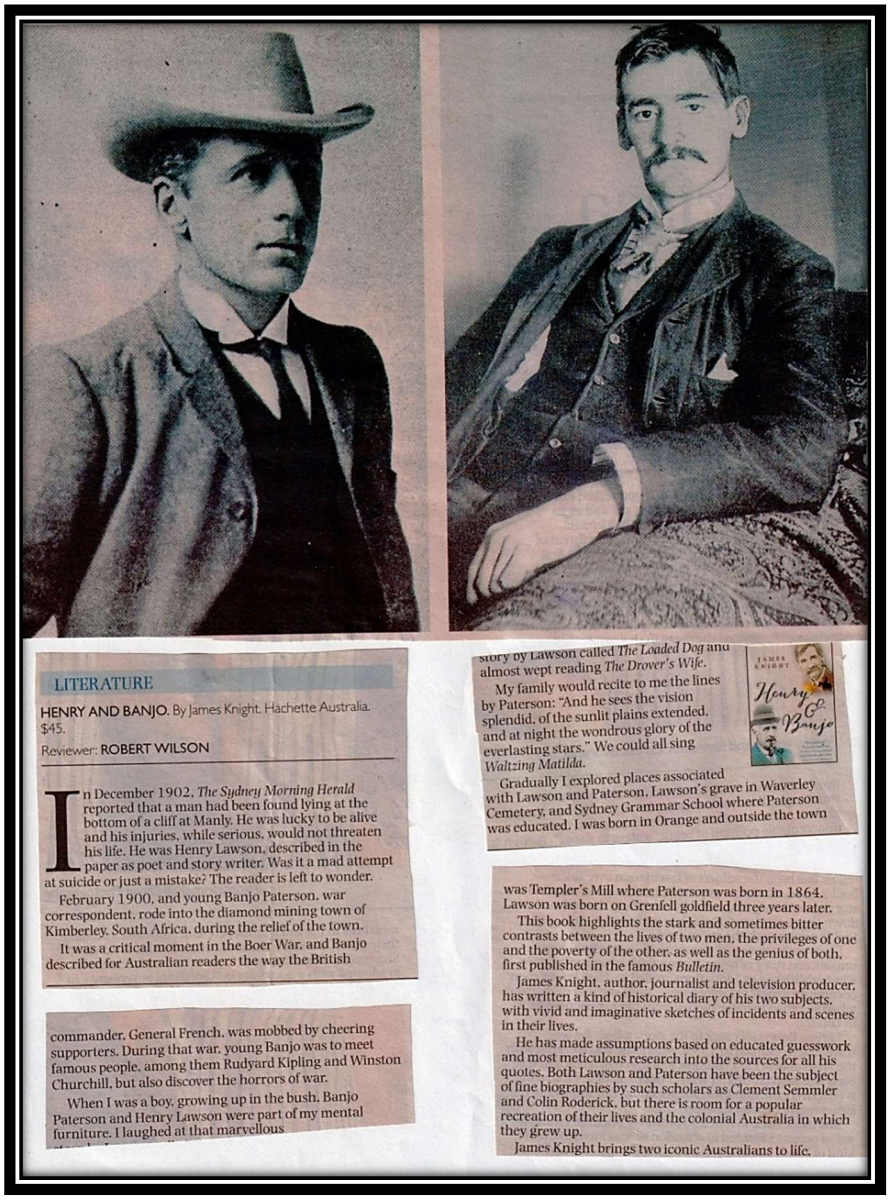
SECTION 4

The Poetic Rivalry Between Henry Lawson and 'Banjo' Paterson

Henry Lawson	'Banjo' Paterson's Reply
'Up the Country'	'In Defence of the Bush'
Bulletin, 18 July 1891	Bulletin, 23 July1892
'In Answer to Banjo and Otherwise'	'In Answer to Various Bards'
Bulletin, 6 August 1892	Bulletin, 1 October 1892
'The Poets of the Tomb'	'A Voice from the Town'
Bulletin, 8 October 1892	Bulletin, 20 October 1894

Panorama – The Canberra Times, 30 January 2016

Banjo b.17Feb 1864 Henry b.17June1867



LITERATURE

HENRY AND BANJO. By James Knight. Hachette Australia. $45.

Reviewer: ROBERT WILSON

In December 1902, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that a man had been found lying at the bottom of a cliff at Manly. He was lucky to be alive and his injuries, while serious, would not threaten his life. He was Henry Lawson, described in the paper as poet and story writer. Was it a mad attempt at suicide or just a mistake? The reader is left to wonder.

February 1900, and young Banjo Paterson, war correspondent, rode into the diamond mining town of Kimberley, South Africa, during the relief of the town.

It was a critical moment in the Boer War, and Banjo described for Australian readers the way the British commander, General French, was mobbed by cheering supporters. During that war, young Banjo was to meet famous people, among them Rudyard Kipling and Winston Churchill, but also discover the horrors of war.

When I was a boy, growing up in the bush, Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson were part of my mental furniture. I laughed at that marvellous story by Lawson called *The Loaded Dog* and almost wept reading *The Drover's Wife*.

My family would recite to me the lines by Paterson: "And he sees the vision splendid, of the sunlit plains extended, and at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars." We could all sing *Waltzing Matilda*.

Gradually I explored places associated with Lawson and Paterson, Lawson's grave in Waverley Cemetery, and Sydney Grammar School where Paterson was educated. I was born in Orange and outside the town was Templer's Mill where Paterson was born in 1864. Lawson was born on Grenfell goldfield three years later.

This book highlights the stark and sometimes bitter contrasts between the lives of two men, the privileges of one and the poverty of the other, as well as the genius of both, first published in the famous *Bulletin*.

James Knight, author, journalist and television producer, has written a kind of historical diary of his two subjects, with vivid and imaginative sketches of incidents and scenes in their lives.

He has made assumptions based on educated guesswork and most meticulous research into the sources for all his quotes. Both Lawson and Paterson have been the subject of fine biographies by such scholars as Clement Semmler and Colin Roderick, but there is room for a popular recreation of their lives and the colonial Australia in which they grew up.

James Knight brings two iconic Australians to life.

Lawson versus Paterson 'Friendly Rivalry'

The ‘Bulletin Debate’ was a well-publicised dispute in The Bulletin magazine between two of Australia's best known writers and poets, Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson. The debate took place via a series of poems about the merits of living in the Australian ‘bush’, published from 1892-93.

At the time, The Bulletin was a popular and influential publication, and often supported the typical national self-image held by many Australians, sometimes termed the ‘bush legend.’[1] Many Australian writers and poets, such as Banjo Paterson, were based primarily in the city, and had a tendency to romanticise bush life.

On 9 July 1892, Lawson published a poem in The Bulletin entitled ‘Borderland’, later retitled ‘Up The Country’. In this poem (beginning with the verse ‘I am back from up the country-very sorry that I went,-’), Lawson attacked the typical ‘romanticised’ view of bush life.

On 23 July 1892, Paterson published his reply to Lawson's poem, titled ‘ln Defense of the Bush’. While Lawson had accused writers such as Paterson of being ‘City Bushmen’, Paterson countered by claiming that Lawson's view of the bush-life was full of doom and gloom. He finished his poem with the line ‘For the bush will never suit you, and you'll never suit the bush.’ Other Australian writers, such as Edward Dyson, also later contributed to the debate.

ln 1939, Banjo Paterson recalled his thoughts about the Bulletin debate:

Henry Lawson was a man of remarkable insight in some things and of extraordinary simplicity in others. We were both looking for the same reef, if you get what I mean; but I had done my prospecting on horseback with my meals cooked for me, while Lawson has done his prospecting on foot and had had to cook for himself. Nobody realized this better than Lawson; and one day he suggested that we should write against each other, he putting the bush from his point of view, and I putting it from mine.

‘We ought to do pretty well out of it,’ he said. ‘We ought to be able to get in three or four sets of verses before they stop us.’

This suited me all right, for we were working on space, and the pay was very small ... so we slam-banged away at each other for weeks and weeks; not until they stopped us, but until we ran out of material ...

The Bulletin Debate was followed closely by widespread readers of the publication, reinforcing ‘the Bush’ as a significant part of Australia's national identity. There was never any clear ‘winner’ to this debate. However, Paterson presented Australia with the desired image of its national identity, and his short story collections received spectacular sales. Despite their vastly differing perspectives on Australian bush life, both Lawson and Paterson are often mentioned alongside each other as Australia's most iconic and influential writers.

Selected from Wikipedia

Works of Poetry Involved in the *Bulletin* Debate

Publication Date	Author	Title
9 July 1892	Henry Lawson	Lawson 'Borderland' (retitled 'Up The Country')
23 July 1892	Banjo Paterson	'ln Defence of the Bush'
30 July 1892	Edward Dyson	'The Fact of the Matter'
6 August 1892	Henry Lawson	'ln Answer to 'Banjo', and Otherwise' (retitled 'The City Bushman')
20 August 1892	'H.H.C.C.'	'The Overflow of Clancy'
27 August 1892	Francis Kenna	'Banjo, of the Overflow'
1 October 1892	Banjo Paterson	'ln Answer to Various Bards' (retitled 'An Answer to Various Bards')
8 October 1892	Henry Lawson	'The Poets of the Tomb'
20 October 1894	Banjo Paterson	'A Voice from the Town'

Up the Country - Henry Lawson
Bulletin, 8 July 1892

Up the Country

I am back from up the country - very sorry that I went -
Seeking for the Southern poets' land whereon to pitch my ten!
I have lost a lot of idols, which were broken on the track,
Burnt a lot of fancy verses, and I'm glad that I am back.
Further out may be the pleasant scenes of which our poets boast,
But I think the country's rather more inviting round the coast.
Anyway, I'll stay at present at a boarding-house in town,
Drinking beer and lemon-squashes, taking baths and cooling down.

'Sunny plains'! Great Scott! - those burning wastes of barren soil and sand
With their everlasting fences stretching out across the land!
Desolation where the crow is! Desert where the eagle flies,
Paddocks where the luny bullock starts and stares with reddened eyes;
Where, in clouds of dust enveloped, roasted bullock-drivers creep
Slowly past the sun-dried shepherd dragged behind his crawling sheep.
Stunted peak of granite gleaming, glaring like a molten mass
Turned from some infernal furnace on a plain devoid of grass.

Miles and miles of thirsty gutters - strings of muddy water-holes
In the place of 'shining rivers' - 'walled by cliffs and forest boles.'
Barren ridges, gullies, ridges! where the ever-madd'ning flies -
Fiercer than the plagues of Egypt - swarm about your blighted eyes!
Bush! where there is no horizon! where the buried bushman sees
Nothing - Nothing! but the sameness of the ragged, stunted trees!
Lonely hut where drought's eternal, suffocating atmosphere
Where the God-forgotten hatter dreams of city life and beer.

Treacherous tracks that trap the stranger, endless roads that gleam and glare,
Dark and evil-looking gullies, hiding secrets here and there!
Dull dumb flats and stony rises, where the toiling bullocks bake,
And the sinister 'goanna', and the lizard, and the snake.
Land of day and night - no morning freshness, and no afternoon,

Cont'd...

When the great white sun in rising bringeth summer heat in June.
Dismal country for the exile, when the shades begin to fall
From the sad heart-breaking sunset, to the new-chum worst of all.

Dreary land in rainy weather, with the endless clouds that drift
O'er the bushman like a blanket that the Lord will never lift -
Dismal land when it is raining - growl of floods, and, oh! the woosh
Of the rain and wind together on the dark bed of the bush -
Ghastly fires in lonely humpies where the granite rocks are piled
In the rain-swept wildernesses that are wildest of the wild.

Land where gaunt and haggard women live alone and work like men,
Till their husbands, gone a-droving, will return to them again:
Homes of men! if home had ever such a God-forgotten place,
Where the wild selector's children fly before a stranger's face.

Home of tragedy applauded by the dingoes' dismal yell,
Heaven of the shanty-keeper - fitting fiend for such a hell -
And the wallaroos and wombats, and, of course, the curlew's call -
And the lone sundowner tramping ever onward through it all!

I am back from up the country, up the country where I went
Seeking for the Southern poets' land whereon to pitch my tent;
I have shattered many idols out along the dusty track,
Burnt a lot of fancy verses - and I'm glad that I am back.
I believe the Southern poets' dream will not be realised
Till the plains are irrigated and the land is humanised.
I intend to stay at present, as I said before, in town
Drinking beer and lemon-squashes, taking baths and cooling down.

In Defence of the Bush - Banjo Paterson
The Bulletin, 23 July 1892

In Defence of the Bush

So you're back from up the country, Mister Lawson, where you went,
And you're cursing all the business in a bitter discontent;
Well, we grieve to disappoint you, and it makes us sad to hear
That it wasn't cool and shady -- and there wasn't whips of beer,
And the looney bullock snorted when you first came into view --
Well, you know it's not so often that he sees a swell like you;
And the roads were hot and dusty, and the plains were burnt and brown,
And no doubt you're better suited drinking lemon-squash in town.
Yet, perchance, if you should journey down the very track you went
In a month or two at furthest, you would wonder what it meant;
Where the sunbaked earth was gasping like a creature in its pain
You would find the grasses waving like a field of summer grain,
And the miles of thirsty gutters, blocked with sand and choked with mud,
You would find them mighty rivers with a turbid, sweeping flood.
For the rain and drought and sunshine make no changes in the street,
In the sullen line of buildings and the ceaseless tramp of feet;
But the bush has moods and changes, as the seasons rise and fall,
And the men who know the bush-land -- they are loyal through it all.

But you found the bush was dismal and a land of no delight --
Did you chance to hear a chorus in the shearers' huts at night?
Did they 'rise up William Riley' by the camp-fire's cheery blaze?
Did they rise him as we rose him in the good old droving days?
And the women of the homesteads and the men you chanced to meet -
Were their faces sour and saddened like the 'faces in the street'?
And the 'shy selector children' -- were they better now or worse
Than the little city urchins who would greet you with a curse?
Is not such a life much better than the squalid street and square
Where the fallen women flaunt it in the fierce electric glare,
Wher the sempstress plies her needle till her eyes are sore and red
In a filthy, dirty attic toiling on for daily bread?

Cont'd...

Did you hear no sweeter voices in the music of the bush
Than the roar of trams and buses, and the war-whoop of 'the push'?
Did the magpies rouse your slumbers with their carol sweet and strange?
Did you hear the silver chiming of the bell-birds on the range?
But, perchance, the wild birds' music by your senses was despised,
For you say you'll stay in townships till the bush is civilized.
Would you make it a tea-garden, and on Sundays have a band
Where the 'blokes' might take their 'donahs', with a 'public' close at hand?
You had better stick to Sydney and make merry with the 'push',
For the bush will never suit you, and you'll never suit the bush.

In Answer to Banjo, and Otherwise - Henry Lawson
Bulletin, 5 August 1892

In Answer to Banjo, and Otherwise

It was pleasant up the country, Mr. Banjo, where you went,
For you sought the greener patches and you travelled like a gent,
And you curse the trams and busses and the turmoil and the 'push,'
Tho' you know the 'squalid city' needn't keep you from the bush;
But we lately heard you singing of the 'plains where shade is not,'
And you mentioned it was dusty – 'all is dry and all is hot.'

True, the bush 'hath moods and changes,' and the bushman hath 'em, too–
For he's not a poet's dummy -- he's a man, the same as you;
But his back is growing rounder -- slaving for the 'absentee' –
And his toiling wife is thinner than a country wife should be,
For we noticed that the faces of the folks we chanced to meet
Should have made a stronger contrast to the faces in the street;
And, in short, we think the bushman's being driven to the wall,
But it's doubtful if his spirit will be 'loyal thro' it all.'

Tho' the bush has been romantic and it's nice to sing about,
There's a lot of patriotism that the land could do without –
Sort of BRITISH WORKMAN nonsense that shall perish in the scorn
Of the drover who is driven and the shearer who is shorn –
Of the struggling western farmers who have little time for rest,
And are ruin'd on selections in the squatter-ridden west –
Droving songs are very pretty, but they merit little thanks
From the people of country which is ridden by the Banks.

And the 'rise and fall of seasons' suits the rise and fall of rhyme,
But we know that western seasons do not run on 'schedule time;'
For the drought will go on drying while there's anything to dry,
Then it rains until you'd fancy it would bleach the 'sunny sky' –
Then it pelters out of reason, for the downpour day and night
Nearly sweeps the population to the Great Australian Bight,
It is up in Northern Queensland that the 'seasons' do their best,
But it's doubtful if you ever saw a season in the west,

Cont'd...

There are years without an autumn or a winter or a spring,
There are broiling Junes -- and summers when it rains like anything.

In the bush my ears were opened to the singing of the bird,
But the 'carol of the magpie' was a thing I never heard.
Once the beggar roused my slumbers in a shanty, it is true,
But I only heard him asking, 'Who the blanky blank are you?'
And the bell-bird in the ranges - but his 'silver chime' is harsh
When it's heard beside the solo of the curlew in the marsh.

Yes, I heard the shearers singing 'William Riley' out of tune
(Saw 'em fighting round a shanty on a Sunday afternoon),
But the bushman isn't always 'trapping bunnies in the night,'
Nor is he ever riding when 'the morn is fresh and bright,'
And he isn't always singing in the humpies on the run -

And the camp-fire's 'cheery blazes' are a trifle overdone;
We have grumbled with the bushmen round the fire on rainy days,
When the smoke would blind a bullock and there wasn't any blaze,
Save the blazes of our language, for we cursed the fire in turn
Till the atmosphere was heated and the wood began to burn.
Then we had to wring our blueys which were rotting in the swags,
And we saw the sugar leaking thro' the bottoms of the bags,
And we couldn't raise a 'chorus,' for the toothache and the cramp,
While we spent the hours of darkness draining puddles round the camp.

Would you like to change with Clancy - go a-droving? tell us true,
For we rather think that Clancy would be glad to change with you,
And be something in the city; but 'twould give your muse a shock
To be losing time and money thro' the foot-rot in the flock,
And you wouldn't mind the beauties underneath the starry dome
If you had a wife and children and a lot of bills at home.

Did you ever guard the cattle when the night was inky-black,
And it rained, and icy water trickled gently down your back

Cont'd...

Till your saddle-weary backbone fell a-aching to the roots
And you almost felt the croaking of the bull-frog in your boots -
Sit and shiver in the saddle, curse the restless stock and cough
Till a squatter's irate dummy cantered up to warn you off?
Did you fight the drought and 'pleuro' when the 'seasons' were asleep -
Falling she-oaks all the morning for a flock of starving sheep;
Drinking mud instead of water - climbing trees and lopping boughs
For the broken-hearted bullocks and the dry and dusty cows?

Do you think the bush was better in the 'good old droving days',
When the squatter ruled supremely as the king of western ways,
When you got a slip of paper for the little you could earn,
But were forced to take provisions from the station in return -
When you couldn't keep a chicken at your humpy on the run,
For the squatter wouldn't let you -- and your work was never done
When you had to leave the missus in a lonely hut forlorn
While you 'rose up Willy Riley,' in the days ere you were born?

Ah! we read about the drovers and the shearers and the like
Till we wonder why such happy and romantic fellows 'strike.'
Don't you fancy that the poets better give the bush a rest
Ere they raise a just rebellion in the over-written West?
Where the simple-minded bushman get a meal and bed and rum
Just by riding round reporting phantom flocks that never come;
Where the scalper - never troubled by the 'war-whoop of the push' -
Has a quiet little billet - breeding rabbits in the bush;
Where the idle shanty-keeper never fails to make a 'draw,'
And the dummy gets his tucker thro' provisions in the law;
Where the labour-agitator - when the shearers rise in might
Makes his money sacrificing all his substance for the right;
Where the squatter makes his fortune, and the seasons 'rise' and 'fall,'
And the poor and honest bushman has to suffer for it all,
Where the drovers and the shearers and the bushmen and the rest
Never reach the Eldorado of the poets of the West.

Cont'd...

And you think the bush is purer and that life is better there,
But it doesn't seem to pay you like the 'squalid street and square,'
Pray inform us, 'Mr. Banjo,' where you read, in prose or verse,
Of the awful 'city urchin' who would greet you with a curse.
There are golden hearts in gutters, tho' their owners lack the fat,
And we'll back a teamster's offspring to outswear a city brat;
Do you think we're never jolly where the trams and 'busses rage?
Did you hear the 'gods' in chorus when 'Ri-tooral' held the stage?
Did you catch a ring of sorrow in the city urchin's voice
When he yelled for 'Billy Elton,' when he thumped the floor for Royce?
Do the bushmen, down on pleasure, miss the everlasting stars
When they drink and flirt and so on in the glow of private bars?
What care you if fallen women 'flaunt?' God help 'em – let 'em flaunt,
And the seamstress seems to haunt you - to what purpose does she haunt?
You've a down on 'trams and busses,' or the 'roar' of 'em, you said,
And the 'filthy, dirty attic,' where you never toiled for bread.
(And about that self-same attic, tell us, Banjo, where you've been?
For the struggling needlewoman mostly keeps her attic clean.)
But you'll find it very jolly with the cuff-and-collar push,
And the city seems to suit you, while you rave about the bush.

P.S. _
You'll admit that 'up-the-country,' more especially in drought,
Isn't quite the Eldorado that the poets rave about,
Yet at times we long to gallop where the reckless bushman rides
In the wake of startled brumbies that are flying for their hides;
Long to fee the saddle tremble once again between our knees
And to hear the stockwhips rattle just like rifles in the trees!
Long to feel the bridle-leather tugging strongly in the hand
And to feel once more a little like a 'native of the land.'
And the ring of bitter feeling in the jingling of our rhymes
Isn't suited to the country nor the spirit of the times.
Let's us go together droving and returning, if we live,
Try to understand each other while we liquor up the 'div.'

In Answer to Various Bards - Banjo Paterson
Bulletin, 1 October 1892

In Answer to Various Bards

Well, I've waited mighty patient while they all came rolling in,
Mister Lawson, Mister Dyson, and the others of their kin,
With their dreadful, dismal stories of the Overlander's camp,
How his fire is always smoky, and his boots are always damp;
And they paint it so terrific it would fill one's soul with gloom --
But you know they're fond of writing about 'corpses' and 'the tomb'.
So, before they curse the bushland, they should let their fancy range,
And take something for their livers, and be cheerful for a change.
Now, for instance, Mr Lawson -- well, of course, we almost cried
At the sorrowful description how his 'little 'Arvie' died,
And we lachrymosed in silence when 'His Father's mate' was slain;
Then he went and killed the father, and we had to weep again.
Ben Duggan and Jack Denver, too, he caused them to expire,
After which he cooked the gander of Jack Dunn, of Nevertire;
And, no doubt, the bush is wretched if you judge it by the groan
Of the sad and soulful poet with a graveyard of his own.

And he spoke in terms prophetic of a revolution's heat,
When the world should hear the clamour of those people in the street;
But the shearer chaps who start it -- why, he rounds on them the blame,
And he calls 'em 'agitators who are living on the game'.
Bur I 'over-write' the bushmen! Well, I own without a doubt
That I always see the hero in the 'man from furthest out'.
I could never contemplate him through an atmosphere of gloom,
And a bushman never struck me as a subject for 'the tomb'.

If it ain't all 'golden sunshine' where the 'wattle branches wave',
Well, it ain't all damp and dismal, and it ain't all 'lonely grave'.
And, of course, there's no denying that the bushman's life is rough,
But a man can easy stand it if he's built of sterling stuff;
Though it's seldom that the drover gets a bed of eiderdown,
Yet the man who's born a bushman, he gets mighty sick of town,
For he's jotting down the figures, and he's adding up the bills

Cont'd...

While his heart is simply aching for a sight of Southern hills.

Then he hears a wool-team passing with a rumble and a lurch,
And, although the work is pressing, yet it brings him off his perch,
For it stirs him like a message from his station friends afar
And he seems to sniff the ranges in the scent of wool and tar;
And it takes him back in fancy, half in laughter, half in tears,
to a sound of other voices and a thought of other years,
When the woolshed rang with bustle from the dawning of the day,
And the shear-blades were a-clicking to the cry of 'Wool away!'

Then his face was somewhat browner, and his frame was firmer set --
And he feels his flabby muscles with a feeling of regret.
But the wool-team slowly passes, and his eyes go slowly back
To the dusty little table and the papers in the rack,
And his thoughts go to the terrace where his sickly children squall,
And he thinks there's something healthy in the bush-life after all.
But we'll go no more a-droving in the wind or in the sun,
For out fathers' hearts have failed us, and the droving days are done.

There's a nasty dash of danger where the long-horned bullock wheels,
And we like to live in comfort and to get our reg'lar meals.
For to hang around the township suits us better, you'll agree,
And a job at washing bottles is the job for such as we.
Let us herd into the cities, let us crush and crowd and push
Till we lose the love of roving, and we learn to hate the bush;
And we'll turn our aspirations to a city life and beer,
And we'll slip across to England -- it's a nicer place than here;

For there's not much risk of hardship where all comforts are in store,
And the theatres are in plenty, and the pubs are more and more.
But that ends it, Mr Lawson, and it's time to say good-bye,
So we must agree to differ in all friendship, you and I.
Yes, we'll work our own salvation with the stoutest hearts we may,
And if fortune only favours we will take the road someday,
And go droving down the river 'neath the sunshine and the stars,
And then return to Sydney and vermilionize the bars.

A.B (Banjo) Paterson
Born 17 February 1864

ANDREW BARTON PATERSON (1864-1941) was born near Orange, New South Wales, but spent most of his boyhood at Illalong Station in the Yass district. He was educated at Sydney Grammar School. He practised as a solicitor for some years and then, following the popular success of the verse about life at lllalong, which he published in the Bulletin under the pseudonym of "The Banjo", he gave up law and became a journalist. He went to the Boer War as a correspondent in 1899 and after his return to Australia, edited in turn the *Sydney Evening News* and *Sydney Town and Country Journal*.

"The Man from Snowy River" comes from the book of verse of that name published in 1895; other of his collections of verse were *Rio Grande's Last Race* (1902) and *Saltbush Bill, J.P.* (1917). *The Collected Verse of A.B. Paterson* was first published in Sydney in 1921 and has been reprinted numerous times.

A selection of his prose writings, edited by Dr Clement Semmler and entitled *The World of "Banjo" Paterson*, was published in 1967. Dr Semmler is also the author of *A.B. (Banjo) Paterson* (1965) and *The Banjo of the Bush: The Life and Times of A.B. Paterson* (1966, revised edition 1974).

CLEMENT SEMMLER

The Poets of the Tomb - Henry Lawson
The Bulletin,8 October 1892

The Poets of the Tomb

The world has had enough of bards who wish that they were dead,
'Tis time the people passed a law to knock 'em on the head,
For 'twould be lovely if their friends could grant the rest they crave -
Those bards of 'tears' and 'vanished hopes', those poets of the grave.
They say that life's an awful thing, and full of care and gloom,
They talk of peace and restfulness connected with the tomb.

They say that man is made of dirt, and die, of course, he must;
But, all the same, a man is made of pretty solid dust.
There is a thing that they forget, so let it here be writ,
That some are made of common mud, and some are made of GRIT;
Some try to help the world along while others fret and fume
And wish that they were slumbering in the silence of the tomb.

'Twixt mother's arms and coffin-gear a man has work to do!
And if he does his very best he mostly worries through,
And while there is a wrong to right, and while the world goes round,
An honest man alive is worth a million underground.
And yet, as long as sheoaks sigh and wattle-blossoms bloom,
The world shall hear the drivel of the poets of the tomb.

And though the graveyard poets long to vanish from the scene,
I notice that they mostly wish their resting-place kept green.
Now, were I rotting underground, I do not think I'd care
If wombats rooted on the mound or if the cows camped there;
And should I have some feelings left when I have gone before,
I think a ton of solid stone would hurt my feelings more.

Such wormy songs of mouldy joys can give me no delight;
I'll take my chances with the world, I'd rather live and fight.
Though Fortune laughs along my track, or wears her blackest frown,
I'll try to do the world some good before I tumble down.
Let's fight for things that ought to be, and try to make 'em boom;
We cannot help mankind when we are ashes in the tomb.

A Voice from the Town – Banjo Paterson
The Bulletin, 20 October 1894

A Voice from the Town

I thought, in the days of the droving,
Of steps I might hope to retrace,
To be done with the bush and the roving
And settle once more in my place.
With a heart that was well nigh to breaking,
In the long, lonely rides on the plain,
I thought of the pleasure of taking
The hand of a lady again.

I am back into civilization,
Once more in the stir and the strife,
But the old joys have lost their sensation --
The light has gone out of my life;
The men of my time they have married,
Made fortunes or gone to the wall;
Too long from the scene I have tarried,
And somehow, I'm out of it all.

For I go to the balls and the races
A lonely companionless elf,
And the ladies bestow all their graces
On others less grey than myself;
While the talk goes around I'm a dumb one
'Midst youngsters that chatter and prate,
And they call me 'The Man who was Someone
Way back in the year Sixty-eight.'

And I look, sour and old, at the dancers
That swing to the strains of the band,
And the ladies all give me the Lancers,
No waltzes -- I quite understand.
For matrons intent upon matching

Cont'd...

Their daughters with infinite push,
Would scarce think him worthy the catching,
The broken-down man from the bush.

New partners have come and new faces,
And I, of the bygone brigade,
Sharply feel that oblivion my place is -
I must lie with the rest in the shade.
And the youngsters, fresh-featured and pleasant,
They live as we lived -- fairly fast;
But I doubt if the men of the present
Are as good as the men of the past.

Of excitement and praise they are chary,
There is nothing much good upon earth;
Their watchword is nil admirari,
They are bored from the days of their birth
Where the life that we led was a revel
They 'wince and relent and refrain' --
I could show them the road -- to the devil,
Were I only a youngster again.

I could show them the road where the stumps are,
The pleasures that end in remorse,
And the game where the Devil's three trumps are
The woman, the card, and the horse.
Shall the blind lead the blind – shall the sower
Of wind read the storm as of yore?
Though they get to their goal somewhat slower,
They march where we hurried before.

For the world never learns -- just as we did
They gallantly go to their fate,
Unheeded all warnings, unheeded
The maxims of elders sedate.

Cont'd...

As the husbandman, patiently toiling,
Draws a harvest each year from the soil,
So the fools grow afresh for the spoiling,
And a new crop of thieves for the spoil.

But a truce to this dull moralizing,
Let them drink while the drops are of gold,
I have tasted the dregs --'twere surprising
Were the new wine to me like the old;
And I weary for lack of employment
In idleness day after day,
For the key to the door of enjoyment
Is Youth -- and I've thrown it away.

ENLARGING THE SCOPE OF THE LAWSON LEGEND

SECTION 5

Additional Items of Interest

1.	**In Defence of Bertha**	
	Summary of **Kerrie Davies'** Thesis	
2.	**Lawson in Gaol, Hospital and at North Sydney**	
	(a) Begging Letter to **Bland Holt**	
	(b) LW and M Tolmie's visit to **Rivendell Hospital**	
	(c) Lawson's Letter to Mr Mitchell	
3.	**Lawson at Bowning and a poem by Lawson on the future Capital of Australia (Canberra Times)**	
4.	**Sydney Morning Herald Report on the Funeral of Henry Lawson dated 5 September 1922.**	

Waverley Cemetery

No. 1
Summary of Dr Kerrie Davies' Thesis

Dr Kerrie Davies Revisiting Bertha Lawson, Henry Lawson's Wife

Thesis that formed the basis for her book "A Wife's Heart: The Untold Story of Bertha and Henry Lawson.

ln April 1903, Bertha Lawson, wife of the poet Henry Lawson, alleged in an affidavit that her husband had been habitually drunk and cruel. Two months later during court proceedings in Sydney, he was ordered to pay maintenance of 30 shillings a week to Bertha and their two young children. After defaulting on that maintenance order Lawson was periodically imprisoned at Darlinghurst Gaol, Sydney, now the National Art School. He died in 1922 and was given a state funeral in recognition of his contribution to Australian literature and identity. As late as 2001, the Sydney Morning Herald included Lawson in a list of 100 most influential Australians.

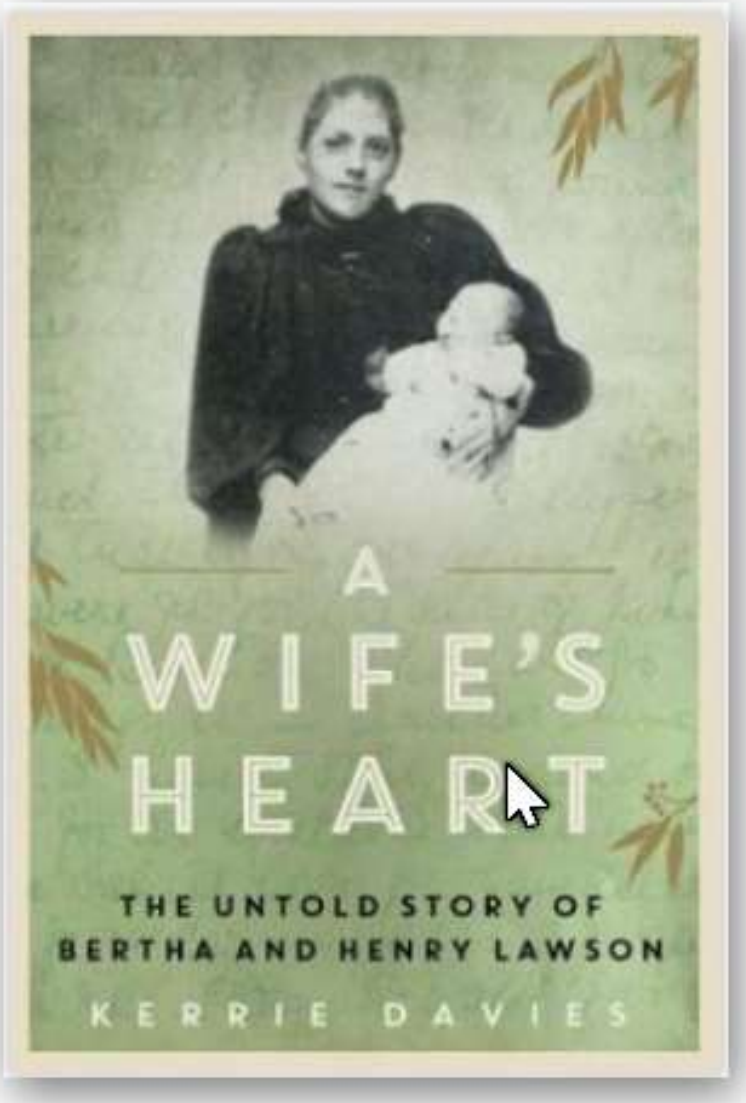
Bertha Lawson died in 1957. ln the decades since her death Lawson's principal biographers Colin Roderick (1982, 1989), Denton Prout (1963) and Manning Clark (1978) have portrayed Bertha as a demanding and highly-strung wife who could not cope with Lawson's bohemian lifestyle and post separation punished him with imprisonment. Bertha's actions are blamed for Lawson's creative and personal decline leading to his premature death and robbing Australia of the full potential of a revered writer. He is presented as a literary hero who was victim to both his wife and to his alcoholism that together curtailed his genius. Yet is that the only story of the Lawson marriage that should be considered or is there an alternative narrative? I revisited Bertha Lawson when I was told that Henry Lawson was incarcerated in Darlinghurst Gaol for non-payment of child support. This casual Lawson anecdote was the impetus for a work of creative nonfiction about the Lawson marriage and separation overlaid with a contemporary memoir of single parenting reflecting on Bertha's experiences.

If Bertha was so vengeful, why did she agree to stop further legal action, and inevitable jailing, if his mates could dry him out? I was comforted that Rose Scott wrote a letter in Bertha's defence to the Sydney Morning Herald in 1922 after Henry's death.

ln 1903, approximately 390 spouses petitioned the Divorce Court for dissolution of their marriage or judicial separation under the amended 1899 Matrimonial Causes Act. 1 Judicial separation decreed that the couple were legally separated and the children subject to child support but were unable to remarry without returning to court and applying for dissolution. The judicial separation required proof of at least two years of habitual desertion, drunkenness or cruelty if no adultery while the stricter dissolution demanded three years. Bertha's 1903 affidavit was carefully worded to fit the clauses on which she was petitioning: 'My husband has during three years and upwards been a habitual drunkard and habitually been guilty of cruelty towards me.'

As the marriage always remained in the limbo of judicial separation after Lawson's death Bertha was his widow. Ruth Park recalled that two years before Bertha died in 1957 she still introduced herself as 'Mrs. Henry Lawson'. Bertha and Henry's daughter, also called Bertha, wrote about her parents' complex personalities and separation in her unpublished memoirs now lodged in the State Library of NSW and these memories have been included in the revisited narrative of Bertha Lawson.

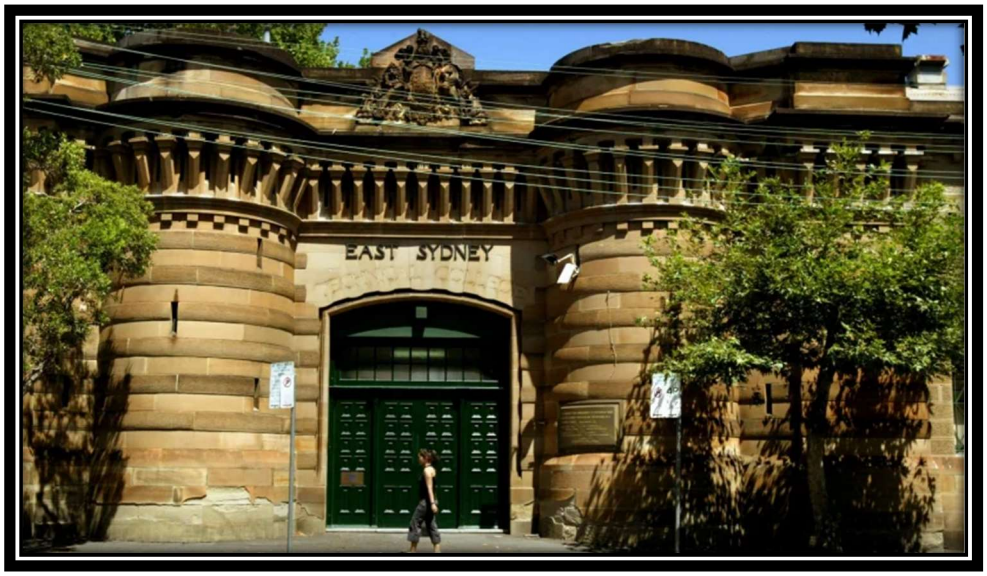
ln the years leading to Lawson's death, letters between him and Bertha show a reconciled civility in the shared interest of their children with the animosity largely dissipated. Perhaps Bertha loved Henry Lawson but couldn't live with him, which is why she resisted the final court application to dissolve the marriage. He never sought the decree either and instead lived platonically with the loyal Mrs. Byers.



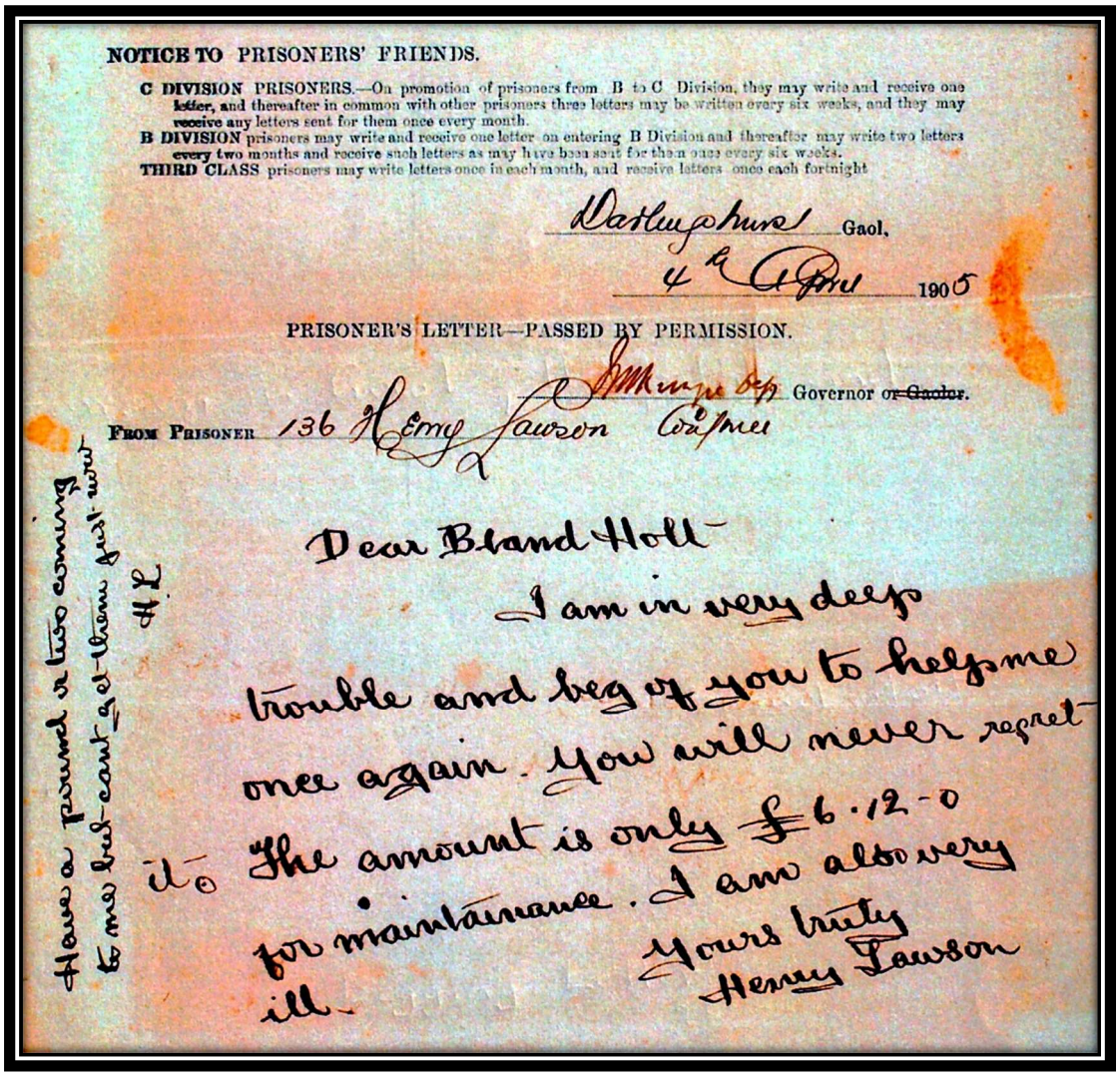
No.2 (a)
Darlinghurst Gaol

'The clever scoundrels are all outside
And the moneyless mugs in gaol –
Men do twelve months for a mad wife's lies
Or life for a trumpet's tale ……'

Henry Lawson
'One Hundred and Three'



Lawson was gaoled for 'drunkeness, wife desertion, child desertion and non-payment of Child Support, seven times between 1905 and 1919 for a total of 159 days.



NOTICE TO PRISONERS' FRIENDS.

C DIVISION PRISONERS.—On promotion of prisoners from B to C Division, they may write and receive one letter, and thereafter in common with other prisoners three letters may be written every six weeks, and they may receive any letters sent for them once every month.

B DIVISION prisoners may write and receive one letter on entering B Division and thereafter may write two letters every two months and receive such letters as may have been sent for them once every six weeks.

THIRD CLASS prisoners may write letters once in each month, and receive letters once each fortnight

Darlinghurst Gaol,

4th April 1905

PRISONER'S LETTER—PASSED BY PERMISSION.

J. Murphy Dep. Governor or ~~Gaoler~~.

FROM PRISONER 136 Henry Lawson Convict

Dear Bland Holt—

I am in very deep trouble and beg of you to help me once again. You will never regret it. The amount is only £6.12.0 for maintainance. I am also very ill.

Yours truly
Henry Lawson

Have a friend who is coming to Melbourne next week

H.L.

Lawson Requesting Money from Gaol

No.2 (b)
Rivendell Psychiatric Hospital
Parramatta River, Sydney

Rivendell Psychiatric Hospital, Sydney
Note the Dutch influenced Water Gate

The Main Gate faces south and has the Hospital Motto carved thereon. The motto appears in a line from a Lawson poem he wrote at the end of his 'convalescence'. Marie Bashir was Professor of Psychiatry and Director of Rivendell for a number of years.

Photograph supplied by Margaret Tolmie. Notes supplied by Laurie W. Tolmie in a personnel letter.

No.2 (b)
Letter to Mark and Mary from Laurie and Margaret Tolmie

Dear Mark and Mary,

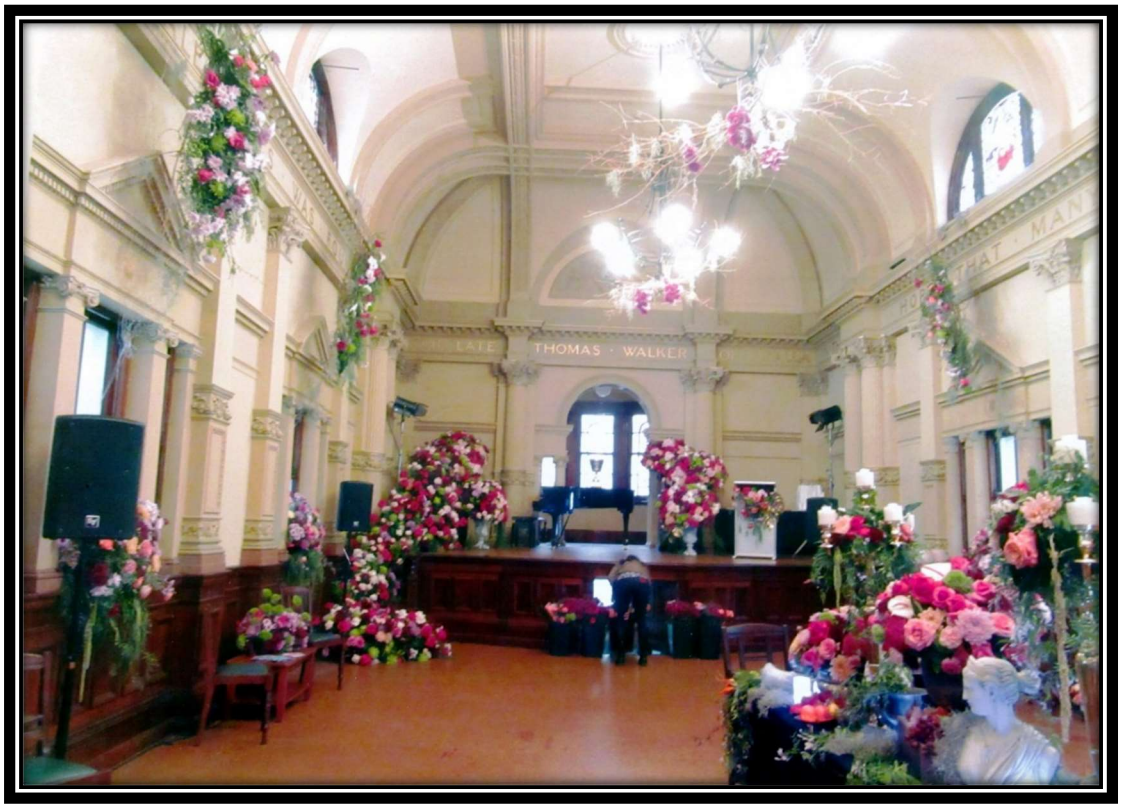
Rivendell Hospital and Lawson Again

We made a second visit here on its Flower Show open day in September.
I hadn't remembered what prompted for Lawson's 'Unknown Patient' poem, but here it is:

> 'Within a corner of the grounds, where patients seldom go,
> Well screened by firs and shrubbery a sandstone ledge runs low,
> And, penciled by an unknown hand upon the yellow stone,
> Is 'God bless Thomas Walker' – four simple words alone.'

Lawson is doubling as a second unknown patient in the poem, I guess, and he goes on to pay his own tribute to Walker in the last line, which is a slightly modified version of the Rivendell motto, "*Founded by the late Thomas Walker in the hope that many sufferers should be restored to health."*

This motto/dedication is on the impressive Land Gate, which is quite close to Concord Repatriation Hospital, which is also Walker prompted and endowed, of course. The motto is repeated around the lovely central hall, as you know (See photos l and 2).



Note the word "To", seen LH Side of the Hall Gallery (photo 2 (not included)). The word "Health" is next, its exclusion from the photo being an accidentally poignant result, I think; made more so, perhaps, by the flowers.

You can see from these photos what a virtuoso performance Sulman's 1893 masterwork is.

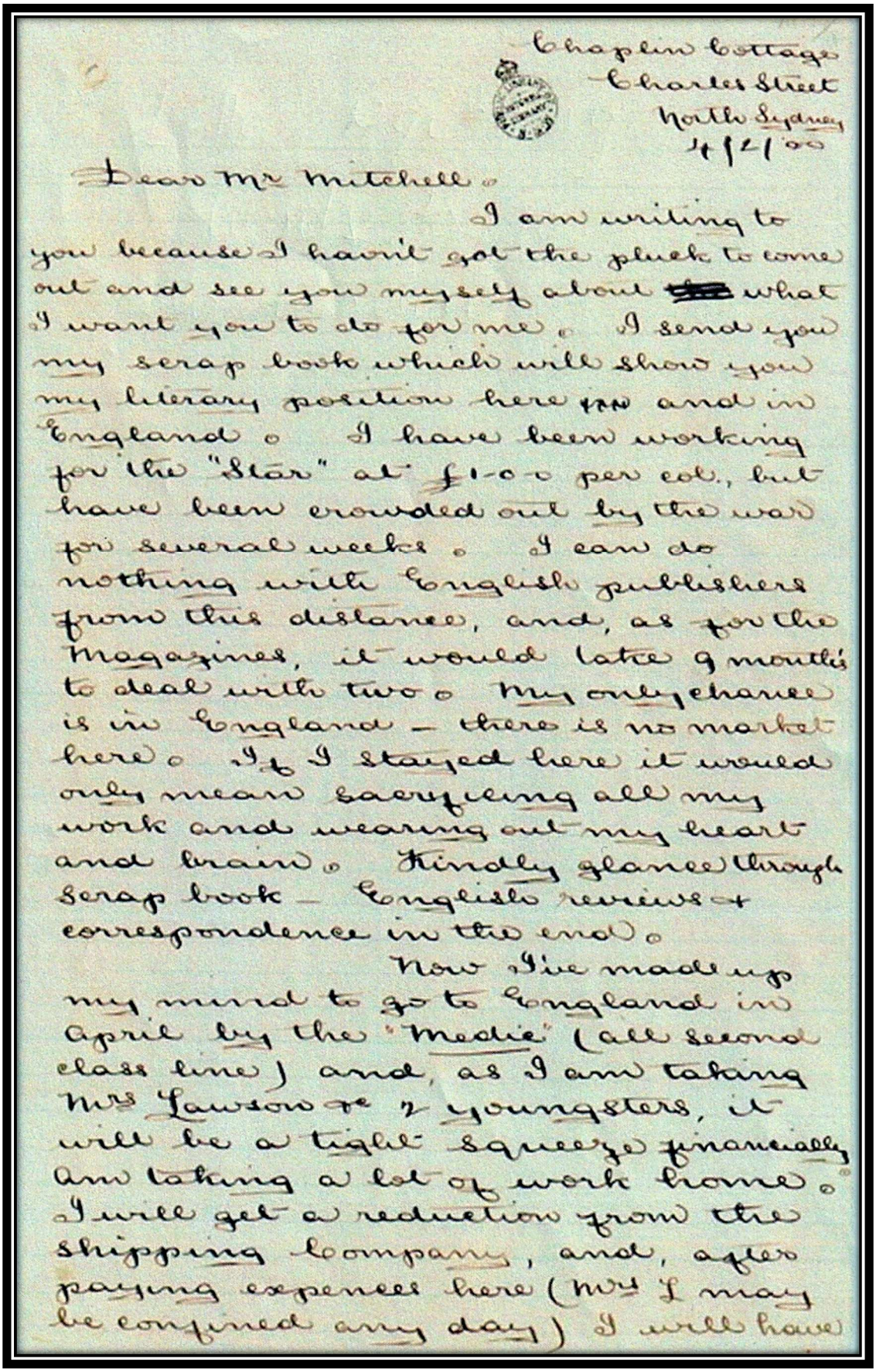
The front elevation is a wonderful fusion of handcrafted sandstone and "factory hard" brick (Photo 1). The female-form columns (Caryatides) of the Tower replicate those on the Ancient Greece Erechtheion Temple, Athens 406 BCE.

Photo 5 (not included) is the Courtyard of the West Wing, for female patients, the School being on this side also. The Symmetrically placed West Wing accommodated male patients.

Lawson was a patient here in 1915 and on several later occasions before his death in 1922. It's quite clear to me now that he is quoting Rivendell, not the other way round. I've actually seen one version of the poem which has quotation marks on that last line.

Love to you both,

No.2 (c)
A Begging Letter in Lawson's Handwriting



Chaplin Cottage
Charles Street
North Sydney
4/12/00

Dear Mr Mitchell.

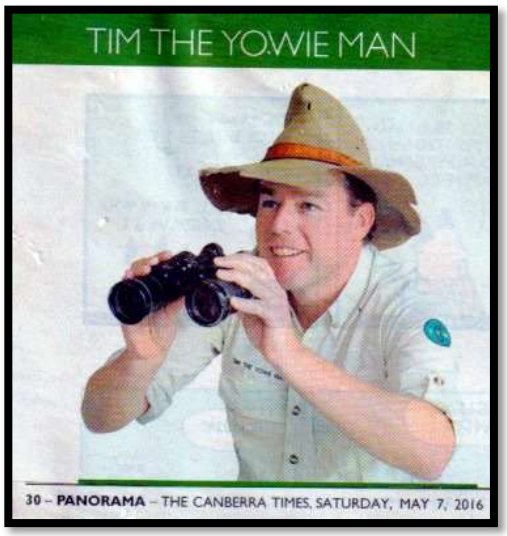
I am writing to you because I haven't got the pluck to come out and see you myself about what I want you to do for me. I send you my scrap book which will show you my literary position here now and in England. I have been working for the "Star" at £1-0-0 per col., but have been crowded out by the war for several weeks. I can do nothing with English publishers from this distance, and, as for the Magazines, it would take 9 months to deal with two. My only chance is in England – there is no market here. If I stayed here it would only mean sacrificing all my work and wearing out my heart and brain. Kindly glance through Scrap book – English reviews + correspondence in the end.

Now I've made up my mind to go to England in April by the "Medic" (all second class line) and, as I am taking Mrs Lawson + 2 youngsters, it will be a tight squeeze financially and taking a lot of work home. I will get a reduction from the shipping company, and, after paying expenses here (Mrs L may be confined any day) I will have

(2)

about £50 clear (I'll get about £70) in the beginning of April. Now £50 is not enough as I may want to hold out a month or so in Lond. to decide between Methuen & Fisher Unwin (See their letters in scrap book) If I had £100 clear I'd be all right, but can see no way of making it (the extra £50) except by sacrificing a 5th book out here or cadging the money. Another thing is I think I can get something done for my hearing in London — and — well, to look the thing square in the face, this is a begging letter — and I'd be the last man in Australia to write one if I didn't believe the whole future of my work depended on it. If I were a single man I'd work my way "home". All I can say is that I'm still getting good reviews and urgent letters from English & American publishers (there's no competition here); I've been a strict Teetotaler for 18 months, and will be to the end of my life and have every chance of success; and, if you help me I'll return the money as soon as I am on my feet — But, of course, you will take the possibility of my failure into consideration. Have, as you will see, letters from Garnett (of

No. 3
Lawson at Bowning
On the Future Federal City


TIM THE YOWIE MAN

30 – **PANORAMA** – THE CANBERRA TIMES, SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2016

Henry's footsteps

In the final part of a two-part series on famous poets of the Yass Valley, Tim the Yowie Man follows in the footsteps of Henry Lawson, the acclaimed "poet of the people" who penned many well-known short stories and poems including the slapstick *Loaded Dog* and the moving *The Drover's Wife*.

As the yowie mobile splutters into Yass it feels like a case of deja vu.

The first stop on this column's Banjo Paterson odyssey (Paterson Pilgrimage, April 30) was at a Yass park named in Banjo's honour, and now I'm about to pull up outside another park just a few streets away, named after his contemporary Henry Lawson.

Unlike Banjo Paterson Park, which sports a grandiose entrance, lush lawns, mature trees buzzing with birdlife and a larger-than-life bust of Banjo taking centre stage, I soon discover that Henry Lawson Park isn't quite of the same ilk. It's sparsely vegetated, the grass is barely alive and apart from a modest sign, there is no further reference to Henry.

Although I'm sure the local council didn't intend it this way, the two parks epitomise the pair's differing view of the bush, a disparity that led to a very public stoush, which played out in the pages of the then influential publication, *The Bulletin*, in the years 1892-1893.

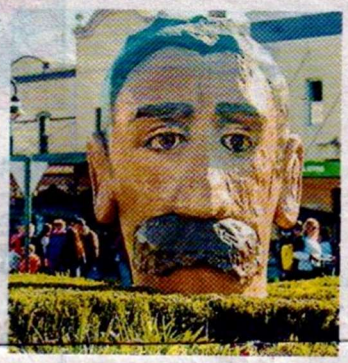
In one corner was Banjo, spruiking the romantic idyll of brave horsemen and beautiful scenery, and in the other was Henry, who portrayed the hardships of living in the bush as challenging at best. Although it is believed the so-called "*Bulletin Debate*" was a contrived plan to boost sales of the magazine, it did reinforce the bush as a significant part of Australia's national identity.

I leave the park underwhelmed (although it would be a good spot to fly a kite), hop back into the yowie mobile and motor further along the Hume Highway to the village of Bowning. Here, nestled behind a row of maple trees in Leake

St. is the 1857 sandstock Mayfield House that harbours a close connection to a tumultuous time in Henry's life between 1899 and 1913.

"Oral and documented history of Bowning suggests that Henry's Aunt Phoebe who lived here at Mayfield House would send money to Henry so that he could catch the train from Sydney to Bowning to help him 'dry out', to overcome his severe alcoholism," explain Cyril and Deb Cox who bought the historic home in 2013.

"During these regular visits to Bowning, Henry would write some of his poems before dispatching them to publishers on the train," says Cyril, who along with Deb has established a Mayfield Mews, a gift shop and cafe in the old coach house and stables that adjoins the house. The coffee must be good, for according to users of the whereismycoffee.com.au website, it's amongst the best in NSW.



The giant papier mache head of Henry Lawson on display in Grenfell.

As I sip on my latte (yes, it meets the lofty expectations), Cyril explains that Banjo, as highlighted in last week's column, "also lived and visited the Yass Valley during the early 1900s, would also sometimes dispatch some of his written works to Sydney by rail from the Bowning Railway Station".

"There's even stories of the two poets enjoying a drink or two together at the Commercial Hotel (now the Bowning Hotel)," reveals Cyril, adding that "it's unlikely, however, that Banjo stayed overnight at Mayfield House".

"Apparently Phoebe wouldn't let Banjo sleep in her house as he was a blue-blooded liberal and the Lawsons were staunch labor supporters," says Cyril with a chuckle.

The Coxs believe that Bowning's connection to two of Australia's greatest poets should be more widely promoted and as part of this campaign, the pair are developing an outdoor gallery at Mayfield Mews to display their increasing collection of Henry memorabilia.

Amongst their collection is a 1905 photo of a somewhat wobbly-looking Henry leaning on a post at the front of the row of shops, formerly home to the town's General Store, clear photographic evidence that Henry, one of our most lauded poets, did visit here.

Henry Lawson as he appeared on the Australian pre-polymer $10 note.

Following in Henry's footsteps, a little more stable on my legs, I pose in the same spot as Henry did more than a century ago, before continuing my journey another hour and a half north-west to Henry's birthplace, Grenfell, home to a giant-sized 3D artwork of the poet's head.

Unfortunately, on arrival in the central west town I'm disappointed to discover that "Henry's Head", crafted from papier mache by Grenfell resident Silvia Brind, is wheeled out only during the town's Henry Lawson festival, held on the June long weekend each year. Bummer, I'm a month early.

Thankfully, there are other, more-permanent tributes to Grenfell's favourite son scattered around town, including a bust of Henry on which you can push a button and listen to some of his most famous works. Really!

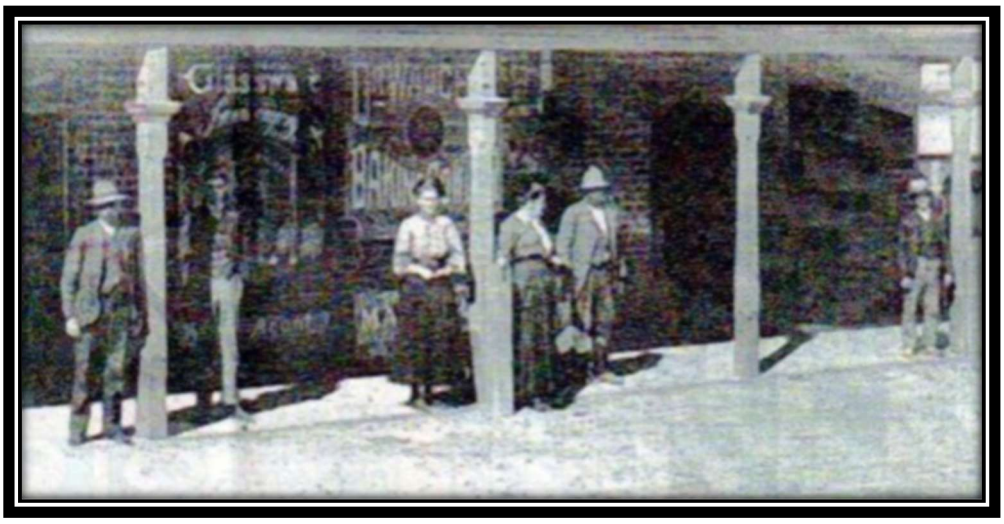
There's also a life-size bronze statue of Henry, poised, pen in hand, with a blank notepad, sitting on a park bench. A vacant place exists either side of Henry, and beckons me to take a seat.

Obligatory selfie taken, it's off to Grenfell's Albion Hotel for a drink. As I'm about to pay for my cleansing ale with a $10 note, a regular at the bar abruptly taps me on the shoulder.

"Hey mate, they aren't welcome around here," he gruffly mumbles, pointing disparagingly at the image of Banjo Paterson that prominently features on one side of the polymer note.

I'm somewhat taken aback, and the penny doesn't drop until the barfly pulls an original paper $10 note out of his wallet. It seems some folk out here are still miffed that Henry was replaced by Banjo when the polymer notes replaced the paper ones in 1993.

Not wishing to create a scene, I calmly swap the tenner with a $20 note and to avoid the possibility of "a Banjo"



Henry Lawson (front left) outside the Bowning Stores circa 1905

What our Henry wanted is not a pretty picture at all

And while on the subject of Canberra and verse a history-conscious reader has stumbled across an obscure but prophetic poem by our national bard Henry Lawson.

The poem is quite good as it is but would have more appeal as a rap version, that's fo'shizzle.

In this centenary year we're being especially sensitive about what some of the most inconsequential people on earth, like Guy Pearce and the Skywhale detractors (gosh, what a good name that would be for a pop group!) think of our city.

We shouldn't lose any sleep over them, but it's more worrying, surely, to know that the great Henry Lawson would disapprove of us.

In 1905, with the search for a site for a federal capital city under way, he made it clear in his poem *The Federal City* that "the beauty spots of the land" (like Canberra) weren't Australian enough.

Here's an abridged version of his argument that the federal capital city should have gone somewhere out the back of Bourke.

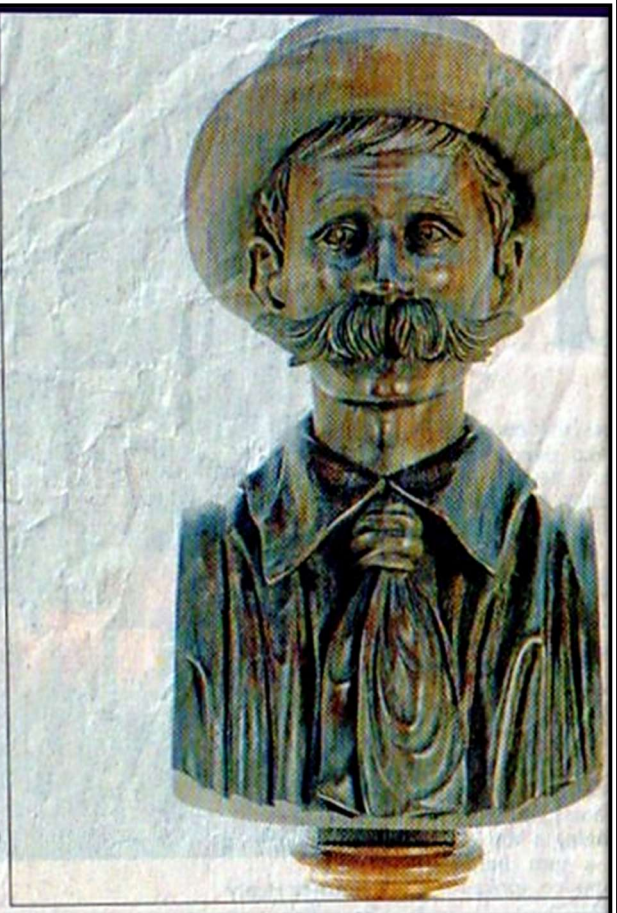
The Federal City

OH! the folly, the waste,
and the pity!
Oh, the time that is flung behind!
They are seeking a site for a city,
whose eyes shall be always blind
They are seeking a site for a city
By the hills
and the clear, cool rivers,
and under the softer skies,
Where the fat shall not melt,
and the ranter grow cool
in the fresh'ning breeze,
And the dwellers
drivel in comfort
and the boodlers swindle at ease.
They are seeking a site for a city
in the beauty spots of the land,
While I see so plainly,
my children,
where the Federal towers
should stand!
Where the heart of Australia
beats strongest and highest
in desert air.
Make a site for a Federal City,
and build you your capital there!
And there shall Australia sit
queenly, and there shall her
children be schooled,
For, I say, from the heart of
Australia shall the whole of
Australia be ruled.

Has Lawson's uncanny prophecy come true? Is Canberra a metropolis where "the dwellers drivel in comfort" (for isn't that an eerie description of the sorts of Canberra burghers who write letters to the Editor?) and where the boodlers (especially the parliamentary ones) boodle and swindle at ease?

WARNING: Canberrans of a sensitive disposition should exercise judicial care before reading attached poem from the quill of archetypical Australian bard Henry Lawson.

Photo: Bust of Henry Lawson, Courtesy National Library of Australia



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Where the heart of Australia
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Make a site for a Federal City,
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And there shall Australia sit queenly,
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No.4
Lawson's State Funeral

Promoter of Lawson's State Funeral
Mary Gilmore

Mary Gilmore in 1934. She had become part of the 'Henry Lawson legend' when as Mary Cameron she came from the country to teach at the Public School at Neutral Bay, on Sydney's North Shore, in 1890. A serious romance between the two was quickly scotched by Henry's mother, Louisa, although they remained friends for life. Over the years Mary Gilmore became a more than competent journalist, author and poet, was active in politics and various women's rights movements, and played a leading role in furthering Australian Literature for which she was created a Dame of the British Empire in 1938.
Her talents and her services to Australia were recognized on her death in 1962 with a State Funeral. She was then in her ninety-eighth year.

HENRY LAWSON.

STATE FUNERAL.

IMPRESSIVE SERVICE

. . . They'll take the golden sliprails down,
And let poor Corney in.

With those words, culled from one of the works of the late poet, Archdeacon D'Arcy Irvine concluded a touching address on the life of Henry Lawson at St. Andrew's Cathedral yesterday afternoon. It was in the course of one of the simplest yet most impressive services heard in the Cathedral, at which were present not only an overflowing gathering of people of all stations in life, but representatives of vice-royalty, the Commonwealth and State Governments, the judiciary, and the professional and business life of the city. It was the opening stage of a remarkable tribute paid by the State and its people to the memory of the late poet.

The mortal remains of the late Henry Lawson were lying in state at the mortuary chapel from early morning until noon, and in that time hundreds of people—personal friends for the most part—filed past to have a last glance at his face. Shortly after noon the casket was removed to St. Andrew's Cathedral, where again there was a continuous procession of mourners until the service commenced at 2.15 p.m. Some time before the commencement of the service, however, every seat in the great building had been occupied. The Lieutenant-Governor (Sir William Cullen) sat in one of the front pews, and near him were the Prime Minister and Ministers of both Federal and State Governments. And freely sprinkled among the others who crowded into the seats were men whose dress proclaimed that they had left their benches for an hour to pay a tribute to the man who knew them and whom they knew.

Upon the casket, as it lay in the Cathedral, lay a simple bunch of native roses, and about it lay a spray of gum leaves, a cluster of glowing wattle, and some bush ferns. On either side of the choir stalls, and before the altar rails, were dozens of magnificent wreaths, but it was by a peculiary happy thought that the simple bush flowers which Lawson loved should have had pride of place.

Speaking with marked feeling, Archdeacon D'Arcy Irvine said: "I have just a few simple words to say, for he was himself a man of simplicity. We have met to bury the body of Henry Lawson. The community has long found pleasure in his writings, and as a recognition of the merit of his work has given him a high and enduring place among Australian writers and poets. Credit is due to the Commonwealth and State authorities for their official recognition also, and for the inclusion of his name, in the days of his declining health, in the civil list of Australia.

"I think he is placed with Kendall and Gordon as the most widely known of Australian poets. As yet we are not a large community, but in the years to come we will have an Australia of 50,000,000 or 60,000,000 people instead of our five millions at present, and writers and literary men in those years to come will study with interest the work of the earlier writers. I think that even then the human note of Henry Lawson will still be heard in the land. He rests from his labours. As I conclude on that note some words of his come into my mind—'They'll take the golden sliprails down, and let poor Corney in.'"

After the playing of Chopin's Funeral March, the beautiful "Rock of Ages" was sung by the choir with remarkably fine effect. As the last few notes of the organ drifted into silence the congregation stood still for several minutes, the only sound being the audible emotion of many people in all parts of the Cathedral.

So dense was the crowd in George-street when the casket was borne out to the waiting hearse that it was some time before all the mourners could find their way to their carriages. As the cortege moved off, with troopers at its head, the Police Band, which preceded the hearse, played the Dead March in "Saul." The remarkable demonstration of public sympathy was not confined to the city streets, where for a time traffic was held up to allow the funeral to pass. As it passed through Paddington, Bondi Junction, and Waverley people lined both sides of the route almost continuously, and here and there groups of school children on their way home stood bareheaded at the kerb.

There were several hundred people waiting at the graveside in Waverley Cemetery, before the funeral arrived. As the poet's remains were lowered into the grave in which Kendall was first buried, Archdeacon D'Arcy Irvine read the burial service, which concluded with the playing, by the Police Band, of "Abide With Me."

THE MOURNERS.

and Mrs. W. H. Gocher and family, officers of the Public Library, Tyrells, Ltd., Arncliffe Public School, Adam M'Cay, proprietors and staff "Evening News," "Sunday News," and "Women's Budget," "Some Fellow Australians," Pambula branch Teachers' Federation, Mr. and Miss Foy, A. E. Southern, "Sunday Times," R. R. F. Hill, the Commonwealth Government, the literary staff of the "Daily Telegraph," Australian Journalists' Association, directors "Smith's Weekly," N.S.W. Institute of Journalists, Mr. Harris, pupils Marsfield Public School, Beaumont Smith, H. D. Mcintosh, M.L.C., literary staff "Daily Mail," the New South Wales Government, John Dailey, Australian Journalists' Association Federal executive, the Teachers' Federation, From the members of his immediate family, "With love from mother, Bert and Jim," "From Gertie" (his only sister, Mrs. O'Connor), "A token from the Albury family," his mother's people, and another from "Mother, Alice, and Will;" a tribute of sincere sympathy from "The Faces in the Street," Miss Isabel Ramsay (Paris), "A gentle thought from France," "The Worker" trustees, and the verse:—

We from the mateship of the past—
Of grim old fighting days,
We mourn you, at this tragic last. . .
Your life's work is your praise.

R. R. F. Hill, "The Theatre Magazine;" Miss Francesa Ross, "Just a little token in grateful remembrance for 'Joe Wilson and his Mates';" a mass of wattle, with the inscription "To Henry, from his old mate, Tom Mutch;" Mrs. Mary Gilmore, "The Worker" newspaper; Phillip Harris, "Aussie;" and an unnamed tribute running, "For the grave of Henry Lawson, from some fellow Australians."

FAMILY'S APPRECIATION.

Miss Bertha Lawson, daughter of the late Mr. Henry Lawson, said last night:—"On behalf of us all I desire to express our sincerest thanks and deepest gratitude to the State and Federal Governments and all the people of Australia for their magnificent tribute to my father's memory. There could be no higher reward for his life's work than that the love and sympathy of a great nation should follow him to rest. All that he himself would have most greatly desired has been done for him by the people of his country, to whom all his gifts of song and story-writing were dedicated; whom he loved so well; and whose lives in happiness and sorrow he so deeply understood. His dearest wish has been fulfilled, that rather than signs of mourning there should be sunshine, music, and flowers, and the good wishes and kindly thoughts of all who knew him. In conclusion, we tender our heartfelt thanks to all for their untold kindnesses, their messages of sympathy, and their beautiful tributes of flowers, and to those all over Australia, in country and town, who loved, admired, and paid their last homage to him. I would like especially to thank the little schoolchildren, whom he loved more than anyone, and who stood along the way to bid him farewell."

A REMINISCENCE.

(BY MADAME ROSE-SOLEY.)

The characteristic I most distinctly recall in Henry Lawson's modesty. I never exactly knew what attracted him to the tiny room, with its honeysuckled balcony and its glimpse of the Domain and Botanic Gardens. In these days I was a female bachelor—an "advance" product then eyed sternly by conservatives—and I "bached" in Dickensonian quarters over a decorator's shop, with ladders, barrels, workmen, and rats in the background. Yet sundry notabilities popped up in my "Latin Quarter," Henry Lawson among them.

At that time I knew his mother rather well. She was busy bringing out the "Dawn," and liked me to contribute. But it was not any journalistic interest that brought young Lawson up my corkscrew stairs with vague unrest on his face and scribbled papers in his pocket. Still extremely young, he was already talked about. His "Faces in the Street" had made a sensation, and readers were watching for more verse of the same mettle. It was more than enough to turn the head of youth, even poetic youth, yet Lawson's head remained absolutely steady. He was not so much flattered as surprised. Was it possible that he had been able to impress people, and would the impression do good? Would they really feel as he felt? For "Faces in the Street" was not a young man's pose, as some imagined; neither was it an evidence of morbidity, as others declared. It was the expression of a sensitive, sympathetic nature, alive to any evidence of human suffering, and resenting it with troubled puzzledom. That, I think, described his mental attitude. He was puzzled that sorrow should exist; puzzled that so few seemed to mind; and quite exceptionally puzzled that people should make a fuss because he minded and contrived to say so.

He did not get his brooding wistfulness from the mother to whom he owed his poetic inheritance. Mrs. Lawson had a practical side, without which she could never have fought her way out of a mentally-starved bush childhood and youth to active mentality in the city. Possibly, the Scandinavian blood on his father's side impelled young Lawson to dream over life's problems. Anyway, they absorbed him, and he loved to talk out his fancies. This was nothing new. Neither was it new to have a writer producing compositions to read. What was astoundingly

The Sydney Morning Herald, Tuesday September 5, 1922
Funeral of Henry Lawson at Waverley

Out in George Street a crowd of possibly one hundred thousand people assembled to pay their last tribute. A brass band played the 'Dead March' from *Saul* as the coffin was placed reverently on the hearse, and the procession started the last journey. At Waverley Cemetery a clergyman of the Church of England recited over the coffin the words which had been spoken over the mortal remains of another of Australia's great native sons just over fifty years before – William Charles Wentworth:

> The days of men are but as grass: for he flourisheth as a flower of the field. For as soon as the wind goeth over, it is gone: and the place thereof shall know it no more.

The words of the Psalmist were borrowed to sum up the life of a man whose *'heart was hot within him*'. Near that very vast sea to which so often Lawson had looked in vain for salvation a parson asked Jehovah to spare his wayward, vagrant spirit before he went from hence and was seen no more. He was buried in the same cemetery as JR Gribble, 'The Blackfellow's Friend', and Henry Kendall, 'Poet of Australia'.

THE MOURNERS.

The chief mourners and relatives present were: — Mrs. Henry Lawson (widow), Miss Bertha and Mr. James Lawson (children), Mrs. G. O.'Connor (sister), Mr. Peter Lawson and Mr. Charles Lawson (brothers), Messrs. J. O'Connor, J. Lloyd, S. Lawson, and P. Lawson (nephews), Miss Edith Lawson (niece), Mrs. Byers, Mrs. G. Falkiner, Mr. E. Albury, Mr. and Mrs. R. Stear, Mr. and Mrs. W. Gifford, Mrs. E. Albury, Messrs. E. W. Albury, J. H. J. Albury, A. H. Albury, H. Albury, F. Brooks, Mrs. E. Brooks, Miss M. Albury, and Miss Beryl Albury.

Vice-Royalty was represented by the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir William Cullen, and the Federal Government by the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), the Treasurer (Mr. Bruce), the Minister for Repatriation (Mr. Lamond), the Assistant Minister for Defence (Sir Granville Ryrie), and Major Marr, Mr. W. Mahony, and Mr. W. H. Lambert, Ms.P., and Sir Robert Garran, Commonwealth Solicitor-General. The Premier was represented by Mr. Clifford Hay, permanent head of the Premier's Department, and members of the State Parliament present were the Attorney-General (Mr. Bavin) representing the Government, the Minister for Education (Mr. Bruntnell), the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Dooley), and Messrs. J. T. Lang, C. Murphy, W. Dunn, J. Jackson, T. D. Mutch, W. J. O'Brien, and A. Grimm, Ms.L.A. The Lord Mayor was represented by the Deputy Town Clerk, Mr. W. G. Layton. Mr. Justice Ferguson represented the Judiciary. Those present on behalf of the University of Sydney included Professors MacCallum, Holme, and J. le Gay Brereton, and Messrs. W. A. Selle and H. M. Green. There was a large attendance both at the graveside and at the Cathedral of the late poet's literary friends and colleagues and representatives of various newspapers. They included Messrs. Adam McCay (president, Institute of Journalists), Howard Knapp (president, Australian Journalists' Association), L. S. Brooks (secretary), H. Burston (president), and R. Evans (Press Club), W. McLeod, W. T. Albert, and K. Prior ("Bulletin"), Miss Jean Williamson and Mr. A. P. Cooper ("The Sydney Morning Herald"), W. Farmer Whyte, P. E. Quinn, A. H. Hauptmann, W. J. O'Neill, E. Furley, J. Holland, H. Hall, J. Rolfe, and O. Lind ("Daily Telegraph"), A. H. Adams ("Sun"), R. N. Carrington ("Age"), M. J. Shanahan ("Daily Mail"), Gordon Bennett ("Farmer and Settler"), C. J. Haynes and G. Finey ("Smith's Weekly"), P. Harris and H. Mercer ("Aussie"), W. Jago ("Fair Play"), R. R. F. Hill ("Theatre Magazine"), J. Hinchcliffe ("Worker"), D. H. Souter ("Stock and Station Journal"), Roderic Quinn, Mrs. Mary Gilmore, G. Hawkesley and C. H. Utting. Others either at the Cathedral or the graveside included Messrs. J. Mitchell (Inspector General of Police), G. Robertson (chairman of directors Angus and Robertson), F. Weymark, S. McCure, J. Brodie and H. Ritchie (Angus and Robertson), A. E. Southern (N.S.W. Bookstall), E. P. Walker, D. F. Dwyer, Father J. M. Curran, J. A. Ferguson, S. W. Ridley, W. Ridley, H. J. Keenan, M. J. Dunphy, J. T. Sheehan, Maurice Walsh, T. J. Swiney, C. N. G. Kobsch, Chas. Collins, S. Hickey, J. Earle Herman, W. Freame (Royal Historical Society), P. P. McDonagh, D. Green, H. Mahoney, Dr. A. Burne (Millions Club), A. Vernon (United Labourers' Union), A. Fry, D. R. Hanby, G. Barry, Brother Wilbred (St. Joseph's College), H. E. Koch (W. H. Thompson and Co.), E. Bourne, J. R. Tyrrell, G. Tyrrell, W. Rowley, L. Ormsby, W. Carey (general secretary A.L.P.), J. Andrews, ex-Senator McDougall, J. Tyrrell (Municipal Employees' Association), A. J. Macaulay, Senator Gardiner, W. C. Crawford (president Ad. Men's Club), E. R. Grayndler, M.L.C., ex-Senator Barnes, N. McPhee (A.W.U.), R. Dennis, W. R. Beaver, W. J. Phillips, G. Freeman, Walter Mahony, W. Eury, ex-Senator Grant, Alderman M. Burke, and G. C. Corff. Messrs. W. H. B. Caggart (Premier's Department), H. W. H. Huntington, A. Cawardine, J. Waugh, J. Hay, F. Campbell, A. P. Morris (Ad. Men's Institute), J. Christie, J. M. Power, M.L.C. (president A.L.P.), W. J. Hendry (general secretary Teachers' Federation), P. McGarry, E. P. McGarry, F. Bryant, M.L.C., C. T. Burfitt (president Royal Historical Society), J. P. Jones, A. H. Newman, E. H. Blunder, Rev. G. Cowie, C. Cutts, W. Owen, W E. Chidgey (Master Builders' Association), T. Graham Wilson, J. M. Costello, F. Brown, W. F. L. Stratford, J. G. Lockley, and J. Lethbridge King.

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Memorial Seat, Church Street, Mudgee NSW

About the Author

Mark Smith had an extensive career in Education. Although trained as an English and History teacher he taught little History and English.

He began his career in the New South Wales Department of Education and as a District School counsellor and guidance officer before he became a Teacher College Lecturer. He transferred to the Commonwealth Teaching Service and became a Principal Education Officer. After being compulsory transferred to the newly created Northern Territory Teaching Service, he became *Superintendent of Guidance and Special Services*.

Mark's interest in poetry began when his uncle presented a copy of Henry Lawson's poetry to him in 1950. Now that he has retired to Canberra, he has collected some of his own verses to pay tribute to his favourite bush balladist.

In retirement Mark has enjoyed his membership in Probus. He has enjoyed interstate touring, genealogical research and historical studies with U3A. In gathering his poems together, he is seeking to honour an interest that was dormant for so long. This work is meant to acknowledge his debt to Henry Lawson.