

Woodford Folk Festival - aftermath and legless



Christine Kremser, Helena van Stockum and Philippa Leader (left to right) in front of the Grand pavillion. Below, the amazing fish lantern.

by Philippa Leader

Aah, the festival is alive and well in Woodford! Woodford 2007 was my first festival experience and blew my socks off! How could that be; an old greenie like me making my Woodford debut? A pantheon of extraordinary events unfolded each day and for those of you who have not been to this festival, I would like to share some precious Woodford experiences.

The festival site is a huge transient tent city that sprawls up an undulating slope towards a valley that cocoons the amphitheatre – the pulsing heart. Winding pathways are peopled with a gentle crowd who ebb and flow from one event to another.

These good souls moving shoulder to shoulder represented the Australian peace movement, multicultural Australia, Indigenous Australians, and alternative lifestyle as well as those who love the middle of the road, your everyday Ozzies. The sense of goodwill towards men was astounding and the sense of purpose shared by all was like glue. The common passions were appreciation of music and celebration of the senses, concern for the planet and a sense that we are one Australia. We revelled in all that was to offer at the cutting edge of our cultural banquet.

In the aftermath I am legless. My thigh muscles have danced all night and criss-crossed the site countless times by day. Some memorable delights and highlights include jams in the Chai tent by Bobby Singh and Taro Terahara and tradition Irish jigs and melodies by Irish

fiddler Martin Hayes and his guitar accompanist Dennis Cahill. Oscar and Marigold explored exquisite melodic forms in their rendition of Medieval Spanish songs from Jewish, Christian and Islamic tradition. Another stunning performance was given by the teenage ensemble Turkish Delight who played in the Macedonian tradition with a delightful lightness of touch and fervor. The sublime Hindu devotional dance by year 9 student Rohith Badya was unspeakably beautiful and Oka epitomized the spirit of the place with an impressive full sound as big as they are in person. What a blast! There was so much to see and other people saw what I missed of the best, such as Leo, Kaki King and The Bird.

The fire event is the famous grand finale at Woodford and has the potential to bring together the performers, artists and musicians to synthesize a peak experience. As far as I was concerned it lacked a meaningful narrative and it was the only aspect of the festival that disappointed me. Despite that, I enjoyed the kindling of the fire in Aboriginal tradition, the fireworks and the lantern parade.

Also the three minute silence was remarkable. Surrounded by thousands of silent people, I was overcome by the physical beauty of that valley. With the moon shining down on the hills, ringed with stately gums, the sky clear, the air clean and the crickets chirping, I felt I had come home to a new Australia that I love.



On the campaign trail



Confident. Peter Lanyon at the Nimbin (above) and Kyogle (below) launch of Country Labor's campaign for the state seat of Lismore. He believes he can win the 8% needed to unseat Thomas George.



Exodus Live Festival to carry on



The organisers of the recent **Exodus Live Festival** would like to congratulate all the coordinators, crew, stallholders and performers for creating such an exhilarating and successful event.

An amazing collaboration of talents pulled it together in only 8 short, intense weeks. The feedback has been fantastic, and we are thrilled to announce that we can look positively ahead for another **Exodus Live Festival** for January 2008.

A big heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated and worked with such commitment to create a truly spectacular, fun, creative and

ecologically sound event.

To all those who purchased tickets----thank you. You are the glue in the sustainability and viability of **Exodus Live**.

We have a full year ahead to plan a truly quality event for January 2008. We are looking into proposed new sites for the ultimate summer bush holiday festival. We are keen to hear from those of you who are keen to participate in any and all aspects of this community event.

Please send us your proposals and feedback to: <exodus@exoduslivefestival.com> or Mullum Essentials, PO Box 260, Mullumbimby 2482. And visit <http://www.exoduslivefestival.com>

Nimbin poets rock Woodford



by Robin Archbold

Nimbin's best-known poet David Hallett has triumphed at the Spirit of Woodford Original Stories and Yarns Performance Award at the recent Woodford Folk Festival.

David was one of three finalists chosen by a judging panel from submitted entries to perform their story in front of a large and appreciative audience at The Bazaar Marquee. The story had to capture the spirit of the Woodford Folk Festival or any other cultural event in Australia, the winner to be decided by audience reaction recorded by sound monitors at the venue.

David's work was titled "A Woodford Story" and captured the magic and colourful mayhem that makes the festival the largest event of its kind in Australia. "Breakfast is poetry, dinner is dance, church is a choir under a gum tree, sundown is cocktail hour (cheers), supper is samba, rumba, reggae and jazz; midnight is blues, late movie, late late supper into candlelight and moonlight upon a sweet tangle of Chai Tent drummers, finally silent, and asleep in their straw; and the soft word on their lips is Woodford, Woodford, Woodford..."

Not only was the writing transporting but the quality of performance was Hallett at his beguiling best as he gathered up the audience and took them on a five minute muse-ical journey through the marvelous potpourri of Woodford as seen through his eyes, finally returning them to their seats wondering if it was all a dream.

A supportive Nimbin delegation's raucous contribution to the applause levels was rendered inconsequential (no small feat) as the remainder of the crowd merely confirmed what was obvious to the

Poetic. David Hallett (left) accepting his award from Jeni Kendall; Archie in full flight (right)

hearing-unimpaired. The cup and \$2000 prize was awarded to David by Lillian Rock film maker Jeni Kendall on behalf of the sponsor, the Queensland Folk Federation.

Nimbin was represented by not only by David, but the usual suspects from The Oasis Café Poetry Nights who added colour and chaos to the Poetry Breakfast each morning. Long the domain of more mainstream performers and bush poets, the breakfast was initially disconcerted then enthralled as Janie Treasure, Bob Tissott, Gail M Clarke and Robin Archbold (Archie) unveiled their brand of off-the-wall humour, personal vulnerability and saw-toothed political comment. Walls crumbled, blinkers were lifted and bridges built as poetic diplomacy blossomed over the week.

Meanwhile, over at the Empire Theatre, stronghold of edgy, urban, in-your-face performance poetry, ruled in no uncertain terms by hosts David "Ghostboy" Stavenger and Miles Merrill, winner and finalist of the Nimbin Performance Poetry World Cup 2005 and 2006 respectively, Archie came perilously close to carrying off the Woodford Poetry Slam, pipped at the post by the winner of last year's Queensland Poetry Festival Slam.

The packed house was left squirming and reeling in guilty delight at his schizophrenic portrayal of a sophisticated new age man with lust and political correctness clashing in his quest to woo a liberated woman across a café table.

In typical Mouse That Roared style, Nimbin took poetry to the masses once again.

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More art for Allsopp Park

Allsopp Park, in the centre of Nimbin, is to get a new sculpture, as a result of an innovative Work For The Dole (WFTD) project.

Sculptor Hamish - he preferred first names only - is undertaking a six-week project to produce the wooden piece, under the supervision of the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre.

The work is appropriately titled "Community Spirit" and features lots of smiling, happy carved figures apparently dancing playfully under large love-heart symbols.

Hamish said he developed the project in consultation with NNIC staff, to make something of lasting value to the community.

"It's what I wanted to do," he said.



Well-deserved Australia Day Awards marred by political grandstanding

Nimbin was well represented in the Lismore Australia Day Awards this year, with awards in two categories going to well-deserving locals.

Terry McGovern and Karlin Bracegirdle received an award in the Environmental category, recognising their outstanding work over many years with Rivercare projects on local waterways.

An award in the Arts and Culture section went to Gaill M. Clarke, compere of the monthly Nimbin poetry nights and organiser of the Nimbin

Performance Poetry World Cup, now in its fourth year.

None of the Nimbin recipients were able to attend the ceremony on Australia Day to receive their awards, so they missed mayor Merv King's tirade against the Labor party, presented in the guise of an official welcoming speech.

Despite such National party grandstanding, the awards provide recognition of the hard-working, committed individuals in our community who give so much to enhance our quality of life.



Cultured. Gail M. Clarke in her familiar role as poetry compere at the Oasis café.

Mulgum management mutterings

Unconfirmed reports from tenants suggest that Mulgum House, Nimbin's independent aged accommodation facility, will be soon be managed by Lismore Challenge.

Details are still being finalised, but it appears that a building upgrade will take place and seven rooms will then be used to house people with intellectual disabilities,

possibly with a live-in manager.

At present the facility is run by the Office of Public Housing, in what was intended to be an interim measure. Only three of its ten rooms are currently tenanted, and a freeze has been placed on accommodating any more aged tenants.

A date in late March has been suggested for the hand-over, prior to Seniors week.

Skate park sound tests



Great interest. Part of the crowd of interested spectators (left) watching the skaters, including skate park builder Zac, and NCDA personnel Marcus Mantschaff and Dick Hopkins. At right, the environmental engineer Beau Weyers close to the sound source.

Finally, weather conditions were favourable and on 23rd January the noise monitoring of the Nimbin Skate Park went ahead.

Dozens of skaters rolled up, eager to take advantage of a rare opportunity to try out the challenging half-pipes.

The monitoring, or logging as it is called, was conducted by Beau Weyers, an environmental engineer. He had previously conducted background noise logging, which monitors exactly what noise exists in the area during normal operation. "This will be utilised to provide a criteria against which to assess the

influence of the noise source, the skate park," he said.

Mr Weyers was able to take plenty of readings, and will now undertake noise modelling for the site. He admitted, "Our noise models generally have very conservative predictions and consider worst likely noise events and meteorology."

The engineers' report is expected to be completed in March, and will contain proposals for further sound mitigation measures. The cost, estimated at \$5000, will be borne by the NCDA.

Two Australias

by Peter Lanyon

Australia Day brings mixed emotions. If you arrive early enough at a local town you can enjoy billy tea and damper or snags and tomatoes and then chat with locals before wandering to the town's old hall and find a chair with friends. Looking around you see townsfolk and the elderly, Aussie flags and nervous school captains rehearsing their speeches.

Microphone tested and then all of us are welcomed. The local dignitary recounts the war and mateship and the mayor tells us how much we've achieved since last year. The distinguished guest tells of his Paralympic experience and inspires us all. We hear about multiculturalism, a fair go and the lucky country. We watch as a white Zimbabwe family recite aloud their promise to abide by our Australian laws and we watch as even the children sign a paper making them new Australians.

Australia Day programs are turned to fans in the heat and primary aged boys furtively finger forbidden gameboys. A group of traditionally dressed Philippino folk show us their traditional dance on stage and we lean forward to see how those dancing sticks consistently avoid crushing their ankles.

Australia Day awards are announced with the tension of academy awards and we congratulate these quiet Australians for their decades of service or sporting prowess. The guitar and vocalist appear and we hum along to "I still call Australia Home" and then, to a person, we all waltz with Matilda. The kids'colouring competition winners are announced and we stand to lustily sing "Advance Australia Fair"

— both verses. Australians at their best.

But a drive to the next town, same day, to the Soup Kitchen shows another Aussie scene. Mostly men, first names only, sun burned, thin, subdued, talking of Centrelink, costs, food, hostels and their restrictions, the friend who overdosed and "can I get a ride?". Many homeless, some hopeless, all at the Soupie.

One nation, two societies, both Australian.



Celebrate. At Nimbin Bowling Club, Doug and Biskit's performance on Australia Day inspired the patrons to dance, barefoot on the carpet.

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