

To The Sir John Franklin Gold Mine From Gooleys Creek

Journey With Me

'Tis best to go on the morning dew,
When birds flit by you, as bush birds do .
Or return, as soft shadows are quietly falling .
Step lightly , then listen. No need to strain
To hear the lyrebird's magnificent refrain ,
As he dances and mimics bush sounds so clear,
For his mate , and those fortunate to be near.

Before we reach Gooleys, at the bend in the road,
Goes a path, towards a once rich lode .
Well over grown , it is Stander's Track.
By-pass it we shall , or lose our way back .
Then with Gooleys in sight
At Ma Duffy's , the old sycamores grow,
A mother tree with numerous seedlings,
They make Autumn glow .

Old Gooleys nestles , as the Goulburn bends,
Two miles from Wood's Point , where Gooleys road ends
At the foot of once busy Johnstons Hill.
Nothing remains , so all is still .
This side of the river , from the Sycamore Hotel ,
Was the Chinaman's shop , that once did sell ,
Best pies in the land , and more as well .
The business almost went bust , because of a joke so unwise.
When the Chinaman quipped . "No puppies no pies ".

At Gooleys Creek , on the left , the small track begins ,
Wending it's way through gullies , and 'round spurs .
Through dense bush , ferns and annoying burrs.
With antics brought into use , was the dynamite
To widen the track . It gave such a fright !
Dust settled . Now few crystals remain . Do take a look .
Oh. The 'fun and games' . Dad could have written a book .

A little further to the right , are the Chinese diggings .
Their ghosts and stonework now silent . What pickings ?
Next the cool tunnel , before the spring .
A drink from Dad's hat brim was just the thing.
Now the track takes a turn , overlooking the flume .
It goes far up the hill , through the thick yellow broom .

Along here, on the thirteenth of January '39,
Albert, and Jo five years , almost crossed the line
As they fled wild bush fires , that fateful day .
Pitch dark early noon . with Jo on his back . Albert sped this way .
Like the back of his hand , he knew that track
On Black Friday . Each summer memories flood back .
The new bush keeps secret , where few now know ,
Of the drama and heartache , that took place long ago .

Pass the black log where all would rest ,
Coming and going with supplies , for the pan or to test .
Also the samples , with sweat from the brow,
To post to assayers in far Bendigo. What now ?
High hopes for results of a successful show .
For his ship to come in , Dad gave it a good go .

Happiness spliced with humour , was rife
In the bush , and the new married life
Of Albert and Maisie making do , with what was at hand.
High in the Divide of that promised land .

We continue on the track now steep , don't quiver,
It goes way down , to the huge gum , 'tailored' to bridge the river .
It was blasted just so , causing a scatter and fuss.
When a quote from Henry Lawson , fitted aptly thus .
As a voice yelled . " Save yourselves, there's no hope for us' .
Chinese toiled market gardens on this small river flat .
Protected from weather , by a distinctive hat .

Stroll 'neath the manner gums . How they soar .
Then up the incline , to the water race track once more .
There's the iron frame , grown high with the tree .
Near the stone chimney . Of old , a busy bakery .
Dad's sluice gate was in the race near here , well made not awry .
It was always of interest as we passed it by .
It sent pressured water to workings downhill ,
When the bend in the Goulburn , was diverted to reveal nil !

Further along , above the race , see the logo , chipped into rock ,
Mostly covered in moss . To Dad , it once meant a lot .
Buttercups grew in abundance about here .
Nan reflected them on my chin . So clear .
Then there were mouse ears , overgrown like a weed .
And shivery grass , fascinating to a child , when in seed .

Look down at the Goulburn , as you make your way ,
Thinking of memories as they come into play .
The small bridge on the left , leads to the house below .
Dad built it , so many years ago .
A telegram arrived , as his task at the bridge , came to an end .
To Albert and Maisie , a daughter was born ,
A complete days journey away , in Melbourne ..
Then all of a sudden , we turn a wee bend .
Finally we are here , at the Franklin . Journeys end .

Thank you for your company .
Thelma Sutcliffe nee Holliday {Jo}
1..12..0004