

OLD CURYO

*May your days through the future whenever you go
Be as bright as the days spent in old Curyo, July 1930*

By a Mallee Railway Station, stood the Bartlett's General Store,

It was built in added sections with a Wine Saloon next door.

The struggling settlers (near and far) each night would congregate *within range*

To collect their mail and papers when the train came in at eight.

Those meeting nights together with the friends of other years

Were happy times to capture all those things that life endears.

It was three years in succession that the drought had claimed the land,

Searing all God's creations with the scorching wind swept sand.

The Banker's claims were overdue, and the water tanks were low,

Another year of wasted hope with a future none could know,

Another year to start again and another year of toil,

For like the drought starved Mallee gums, we were anchored to the soil.

We would meet ^{to} and talk things over in some idle afternoon,

In the mateship of the Bar Room of the Bartlett's Wine Saloon.

And we'd reminisce and ponder, as we yarned and lounged about,

And our troubles grew less urgent with each succeeding shout.

Then the future was forever, there were seasons yet to be,

When crops grew tall and dams were *full* filled when we all got on the spree.

We held a dance on New Year's Eve with old Cockie Light M.C.,

The dancing rhythms moved in time to the music's melody.

Then old Cockie called for order and Jack Thompson took the floor,

And sang a song of better times that were knocking on the door.

Then we chorused all together, though our spirit sometimes flags,

But we'll fight the drought and mortgage till the wheat is in the bags.

So, it's 'All now take your partners', as the music strikes a beat,

Then you rush to claim the fairest and you're floating on your feet.

And I felt the touch of Heaven as around the floor I whirled,

With the lovely Nancy Clancy, the one of all the world.

And old Leo in the corner with his music swinging free,

And it's 'Hi Ho the Merryo', just as long as she loves me.

When the hours grow long and weary and we dance the last request,

Then my partner plans for leaving for her distant farm out West,

And we walk alone together, and the balmy moonlight rays

Seemed to fill the night with rapture in the drowsy summer haze.

And I held her close and kissed her and she said she loved me so.

And her yielding held me captive on that night so long ago.

Now the years have cast asunder all those happy days since then,

And the old place too is by-passed with a strip of bitumen.

The old friends who were dearest have vanished from the scene,

And the idle dreams are scattered in the wasted years between.

In a world of living memories, still the dearest spot I know,

Is the Store beside the Railway, in my fond old Curyo.

A.W. Llewellyn.

*First two handwritten lines appeared at the bottom of a verse
"The Optimistic Club" published in the Berkeby paper
in July 1930*

THE OPTIMISTIC CLUB

'Tis an august congregation, of a Sat'day afternoon,
That gathers in the Bar Room of Cec Bartlett's Wine Saloon.
There's a long bloke there, you'd know him, his vocabulary is blessed,
There's the Morris Ville exponents and the sophists from the West.

And thus they gather weekly and with philosophic stealth,
Debate their views profusely to the Nation's Civic wealth.
And should your thoughts be hazy and there's much you'd like to know,
No need to seek for Bill's advice, just come to Curyo.

I mind of how one Sat'day we had got a drop of rain,
And the prospects for the future was the topic once again;
The Premier was talking of an Optimistic Club
And hoped to get it going in the towns and in the scrub.

So 'Longun', with good purpose, just to help the cause along,
Got up with all his gusto and addressed the learned throng.
He painted pretty pictures of prosperity ahead,
Then drank the Club's good fortune with a drop of Bart's Red Ned.

He talked of crops aplenty, of a past of vain regrets
And the Cockies soon forgot about their mortgages and debts,
But alas, their muse was shattered when one member of the school
Implored the speaker bluntly not to be a blasted fool.

It was no good talking bull dust, for he knew the country's worth,
And their prospects for the future were the lousiest on earth.
So Ned Hogan's dream envisioned of an Optimistic Club,
Are remembered with derision by the patrons of the pub.

A.W.Llewellyn.

Note: During the drought and the world depression in the 1930's, Ned Hogan, the Premier of Victoria put forward the idea of forming an 'Optimistic Club' to solve our problems.

Signatures to the above appeared and copies distributed. Jack Thompson used to sing the songs I made up, at the dances. He died Feb. 1990 age 86. The words: - May your days through the future Where ever you go.

*Be as bright as the days spent
In old Curyo. Curyo is 228 miles from Melbourne
on the Maldura line. I worked on the station 1929/30.*

*To Andrew McDonald
from Allan Llewellyn.*

TO AN OLD SWEETHEART

Through the long silent years, that have sundered us far,
My thoughts reach out to wherever you are,
And I wonder too, in some chance reverie,
Do your thoughts ever turn to those moments with me.

racing.
Do you dream still? Enthralled! as the full moon comes
Through the half dead limbs, of the drought starved gums,
And the fleeting clouds with their shadow plays,
A moving dance on the warm night haze.

With only the sounds that the bush can hear
And the beat of my heart as you sidled near,
Then the warm embrace, and a joy revealed
As I felt the touch of your soft form yield.

I knew in that moment of ecstasy,
That you and the world belonged to me.
Though the memories fade, as memories will,
They are pictures real, in my memory still.

And often at times as my memory strays,
I dream the old dreams of the olden days.
And then in my fancy I gather you near,
and I whisper my love, and I pray ~~but~~ you hear,

and I cuddle you close, and I hold you tight
And I live in a world of feigned delight.
Then tenderly there as the fond thoughts weave,
I kiss you again in make believe.

In the world of dreams where my fancy plays,
It is there you abide in those dreams always.
~~May your days through the future, where ever you go,~~
~~Be as bright as the days spent in old days.~~

A.W. (LLEW) LLEWELLYN.

To Andrew Mc Donald
from Allan Llewellyn.

I got a person to type my verse, but they made
a lot of mistakes.