

The Western Herald

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BOURKE, THURSDAY, 23rd JULY, 2009



Following Henry's footsteps

On Saturday morning, two adventurers shouldered their swags and hit the Hungerford Road, following in the footsteps of Henry Lawson who made the long trek to the border town in the summer of 1892.

Writer and Journalist Bruce Elder has described Henry Lawson's walk as "possibly the most important trek in Australian literary History". It was while tramping the great, grey plain that Lawson forged his unique style of prose and picked up a wealth of material that he drew upon throughout the rest of his writing career.

For Greg Bryan and Sean Morahan recreating Lawson's walk to Hungerford is something they have longed to do ever since they were first introduced to his writing in school.

"From then, he has always been my favourite writer and just because of that, I'm not sure why, but I just wanted to walk in his footsteps and see and do some of the things that he did that obviously had such a huge influence on his life and his writing and as a result had an influence on the way we Australians see ourselves. So I just wanted to get out here and walk where he walked and to have that experience," said Greg.

In preparation for the journey the two men visited Lawson's grave in Sydney and spent time examining a collection of his artifacts at the Mitchell Library.

"They were good enough to show me some of their special collections, so we saw a couple of walking sticks Henry had and a couple of his pipes, some pens and pencils that he'd used... so they were terrific to show us all of that stuff and that was a wonderful way to prepare for this trip," said Greg.

Greg and Sean have been mates nearly their whole lives, since they attended primary school together in Mount Gambia, South Australia. But Sean moved to Sydney while in year 8 and Greg now lives in Canada and this is one of the rare opportunities the two have had to catch up.

As mateship was such an important theme of Lawson's writing, Greg said it makes the trek a special experience.



Photo: The Western Herald caught up with Sean Morahan and Greg Bryan on Walkden's Plain, Saturday morning. The two men are attempting to re-enact Henry Lawson's walk to Hungerford in the summer of 1892.

"We were talking earlier, that's about 30 years ago and we've kept in touch but this is only the fourth time we've been together in 30 years," said Greg.

"So there is a real mateship part of this which is very consistent with the way Henry saw the world so that just adds to the charm and beauty of it for me and I suspect for Sean as well."

Greg and Sean arrived in Bourke on Friday and (armed with photographs of Lawson and a copy of Andrew Hull's account of his Hungerford Walk) set out early the next morning. They planned on walking 40 kilometres a day, arriving in Hungerford some time today (Thursday).

Greg's family has also travelled to Bourke with him and are dropping supplies to the two men on the road.

Bourke may have air service by February

Air services to Bourke and other western NSW towns could be up and flying early next year.

A senior policy officer from the Ministry of Transport gave an indication air services may be reinstated by February when he met with the Chief Executive Officers of the Walgett and Bourke Aboriginal Medical Services.

Judy Johnson of the Bourke Aboriginal Health Service said not having an air service flying to Bourke has severely affected their ability to provide specialist services.

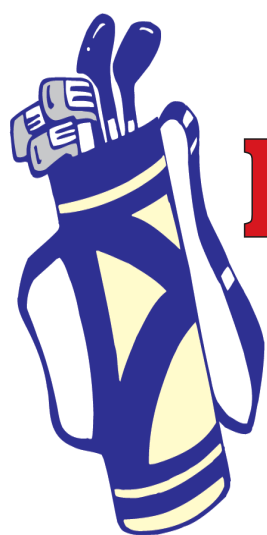
"It is costing us - one of the main costs is the staff, specialist services flying in flying out as they used to, are no longer able to do that so they are on the road four hours each way plus doing their weekly visits," she said.

"We have lost two specialists already. They won't go; the travel is just too much. Whereas before they'd fly in, jump in a car, do their daily visits across to Walgett, jump in a plane and be back in Sydney in two hours, now it is a full day and they are just not able to do it. It is just too much for them and they are worn out."

Mrs Johnson said they were able to put forward these concerns to the Transport Ministry representative and believes it was a very positive meeting.

"He was extremely interested. We had sent him a lot of correspondence and documents before hand but not in one package like we did this time... But I think this is the first time they're actually intending to take action, they intend to do something to support us," Mrs Johnson said.

(Continued on page 4)



NEW VOGUE



Bourke Open Golf Tournament

THIS WEEKEND - 25th & 26th July

Saturday 25th:
Mixed American Foursomes
starting time 11am



Sunday 27th: 27 Hole Mens
and Ladies Open Tournament
Starting time 8.30 am

ALL
VISITORS
WELCOME



FOR FUEL AND EAT IN OR TAKE-AWAY FOOD SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS NEW VOGUE

PUBLIC MEETING

A Public Meeting to form a Pro-Am Committee will be held at the Port of Bourke Hotel at 6pm on Wednesday 29th July

PUBLIC MEETING