

Stuart Town's Man From Ironbark Festival

Easter Saturday, 31st March 2018

Information Kit



Presented By:
Stuart Town Advancement Association Incorporated
32 Molong Street Stuart Town NSW 2820

THE MAN FROM IRONBARK by A.B. "Banjo" Paterson

It was the man from Ironbark who struck the Sydney town, He wandered over street and park, he wandered up and down. He loitered here, he loitered there, till he was like to drop, Until at last in sheer despair he sought a barber's shop. "'Ere! shave my beard and whiskers off, I'll be a man of mark, I'll go and do the Sydney toff up home in Ironbark."

The barber man was small and flash, as barbers mostly are, He wore a strike-your-fancy sash, he smoked a huge cigar; He was a humorist of note and keen at repartee, He laid the odds and kept a "tote", whatever that may be, And when he saw our friend arrive, he whispered, "Here's a lark! Just watch me catch him all alive, this man from Ironbark."

There were some gilded youths that sat along the barber's wall. Their eyes were dull, their heads were flat, they had no brains at all; To them the barber passed the wink, his dexter eyelid shut, "I'll make this bloomin' yokel think his bloomin' throat is cut." And as he soaped and rubbed it in he made a rude remark: "I s'pose the flats is pretty green up there in Ironbark."

A grunt was all reply he got; he shaved the bushman's chin, Then made the water boiling hot and dipped the razor in. He raised his hand, his brow grew black, he paused awhile to gloat, Then slashed the red-hot razor-back across his victim's throat: Upon the newly-shaven skin it made a livid mark - No doubt it fairly took him in - the man from Ironbark.

He fetched a wild up-country yell might wake the dead to hear, And though his throat, he knew full well, was cut from ear to ear, He struggled gamely to his feet, and faced the murd'rous foe: "You've done for me! you dog, I'm beat! one hit before I go! I only wish I had a knife, you blessed murdering shark! But you'll remember all your life the man from Ironbark."

He lifted up his hairy paw, with one tremendous clout He landed on the barber's jaw, and knocked the barber out. He set to work with nail and tooth, he made the place a wreck; He grabbed the nearest gilded youth, and tried to break his neck. And all the while his throat he held to save his vital spark, And "Murder! Bloody murder!" yelled the man from Ironbark.

A peeler man who heard the din came in to see the show; He tried to run the bushman in, but he refused to go. And when at last the barber spoke, and said "'Twas all in fun— 'Twas just a little harmless joke, a trifle overdone." "A joke!" he cried, "By George, that's fine; a lively sort of lark; I'd like to catch that murdering swine some night in Ironbark."

And now while round the shearing floor the list'ning shearers gape, He tells the story o'er and o'er, and brags of his escape. "Them barber chaps what keeps a tote, By George, I've had enough, One tried to cut my bloomin' throat, but thank the Lord it's tough." And whether he's believed or no, there's one thing to remark, That flowing beards are all the go way up in Ironbark.

The Bulletin, 17 December 1892



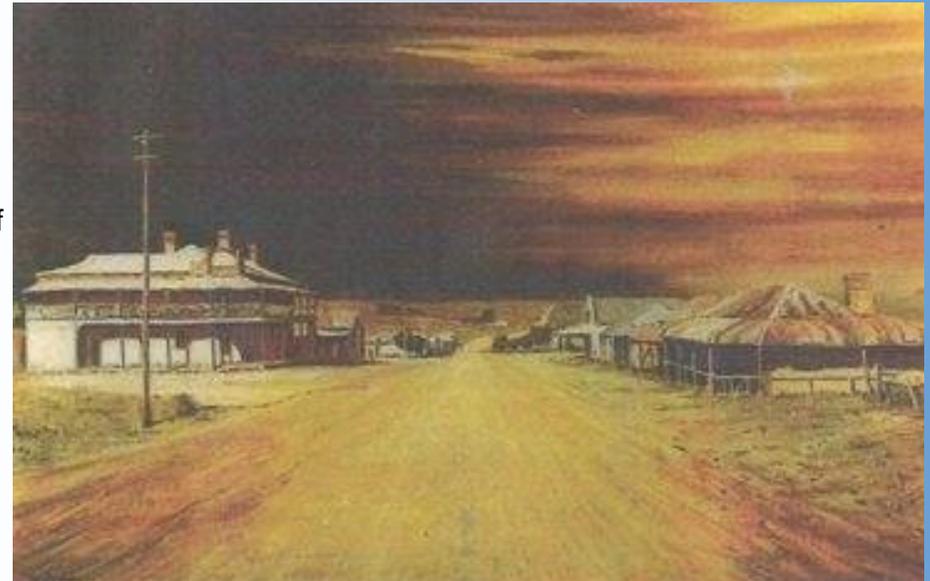
A brief overview of Stuart Town

Stuart Town (including Mookerawa Park) is a small service centre in the Central Western Slopes of NSW. Stuart Town is a small town of about 300 people which is situated in a hillside hollow, 34 km south-east of Wellington and 380 km north-west of Sydney. It is a small service centre to the surrounding area where sheep and cattle farming and orchards are the major enterprises. There is a hotel and general store.

Stuart Town (like Mookerawa) sprang up when a gold rush was sparked in the 1870s, although it is claimed that the gold was first found in the 1840s by a shepherd who did not know what he had.

The settlement was originally known as Ironbarks, after the trees in the area. As such, it is the 'Ironbark' mentioned in 'Banjo' Paterson's well-known poem, 'The Man from Ironbark'.

It has been claimed that there were as many as 6000 persons working the local fields at the peak of activities, though this may well be an exaggeration. At any rate it is clear that they were of very mixed origins, including many Chinese. While the Europeans worked individually or in small groups, the Chinese worked in units numbering in the hundreds which consisted of a large extended family and friends. They worked in shifts and built water races which ran for kilometres to supply water for washing. The old water races can be still seen when going up river from Mookerawa by boat.



Reef mining was also extensively conducted, though water-logging defeated many as the effort of clearing tunnels by bucket was so exhausting and slow. After its retrieval the ore was crushed in a stamper battery. The gold was retained on mercury-coated copper plates. By 1880 there were four hotels in existence, with another at Mookerawa. The first gold dredging in NSW was believed to have been carried out here in 1899. Most mining had ceased in 1914, although some dredging continued until 1958. Reef and alluvial activities retrieved 4 metric tonnes of gold between 1875 and 1914. In the early days an ounce (28.3 g) of gold was worth three times an average weekly wage.

The riches attracted a number of bushrangers. Ben Hall and his associates robbed a wine shanty at Mookerawa at one point.

The well-known NSW Premier, Sir Robert Askin, lived in Stuart Town and attended the Stuart Town Public School when he was 5 years of age (around 1906). His mother's maiden name was Halliday. A bridge on the Mookerawa Road was opened and named after Sir Robert Askin.

Stuart Town's elevation is 548m above sea level.

Organised and run by the Stuart Town Advancement Association Incorporated, the 2018 festival is set to be bigger and better than ever.

Staged on Easter Saturday, 31st March 2018, this annual event has become one of the district's largest events attracting over 5000 people to the village. Featuring market stalls, poets and musical performances, food stalls, amusement rides and much more there is something for the entire family.

The street parade will once again feature the 'Ride on Convoy' and the Helicopter will be providing scenic flights.



The Lachlan Living History Group will return and present a special re enactment performances.



This year the festival will also feature a special appearance of the Chinese Lion Dances, this symbolises Stuart Towns unique link to the Chinese community.



Award winning Bush Poet Carol Heuchan will performing. Last years star poet Bob 'PA' Kettle will also be returning

Ever popular former resident, Barry Dickerson will also be returning as our feature entertainer.



The Sydney to Dubbo Countrylink Train (XPT) stops in Stuart Town, offering additional transport for the day.



The committee's wish is for locals and visitors to participate and enjoy this unique event. So mark the date in your diary and come to Stuart Town this Easter Saturday and enjoy this truly unique event.

Key Contacts

Market Stall Bookings

Barbara Eade: 0428 468 242

Mel Howard: 0434 224 171

Jan Pulbrook: 6846 8399



Special Features & General Enquiries

Richard Eade: 0427 262 439

Ray Pulbrook: 0447 220 302

Promotion & Sponsorship

Marcus Hanney: 0417 467 459

Event Organisers

Stuart Town Advancement Association Inc.

32 Molong Street Stuart Town NSW 2820

manfromironbark@hotmail.com



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