

NORTH CAULFIELD LAMENT

Written about 1974 (by my father Stanley Manfred)

I was up in Caulfield, one Saturday night,
On a walk through the park,
When I noticed a light,
I walked through a gaol door, and Oh!
What a sight,
A room full of boozers, all merry and tight,
"Come meet the boys" said one called Bob.
"Now hit your kick,
It's eight for ten" said Bob.
I saw one old boy starting to reel,
"He's alright" Bob said,
"That's Granpappy Neil"
They gave me a pie and slap on the back,
And said "ere meet Lindsay,
He opens the attack".
A sliding door opened, and I nearly dropped dead,
A mop hair called Walshie, was standing on his head.
I downed my beer and gazed around,
My head was already starting to pound,
I was introduced to one called Doug,
He quickly poured me another jug,
Don't let him corner you or you're a mug,
You'll come away with a busted lug,
I met young Les, a gentleman no doubt,
He'll fix you up, from your head to your spout.
In walked Geoff Read: another plumber I think,
He's known at times to cause quite a stink.
"This ere's not bad", yelled a bloke named Bert,
as he sunk his teeth into a big frankfurt,
I could see old Boog going crook like hell.
He was paying out on a bloke named Bell.
I asked them why they called one "Mr Whippy".
And was told he counts, those things white and drippy.
The time was starting to roll along,
When all of a sudden they burst into song.
North Caulfield forever, and that sort of thing,
Boy! Did that make the rafters ring.
Then when they said "Meet our loved President"
I thought to myself, "This is time I went.
A jovial chap, by the name of "Horse",
He'll shout everytime, if YOU pay, of course,
"Hit the booze" someone yelled, this barrels a gasser,
They told me later, his name was masser.
Gary Holwell's a postie, gets rid of the mail,
He also knows how to get rid of an ale.
I staggered outside for a well earned wee,
And fell over some bottles under a tree.
Geoff Bottom's nickname they tell me is Mouse,
"Good drop" he smirked, "in fact it's grouse.
Then I heard a rattle at the door,
In came a cricket bag, and in it was more.
"Yeh man" yelled Pongy, Frankie tells no lies,
When it's his turn to shout, Frankie always buys.
Terry Butler as a waiter he did try,
But the boss promptly said, "Hello and Goodbye".
So he's back to serving pies and grog,
Waking up next morning sick as a dog.
Then I asked them what the name of the team is,
They all roared out, "North Caulfield the premiers".
Little Richard let out with a loud "Dewey Dewey"
If you ask me, they're all bloody screwy.

Asleep on the seat, was a bloke called Graham,
 With his lovely curls, I bet he can slay 'em.
 I lit up a smoke and started to muse,
 These blokes must play, on hot dogs and booze.
 Up staggered John Parker, another brickie,
 "Get it into you" he said, "I'll buy you a quickie".
 Then there was Jim, a figure so trim,
 He's won so many bras, they're not sure it's all him.
 "Come on" they yelled, "we'll raffle a chook",
 I gave my watch a hasty look,
 "Come here" said Les, "Give us ya swy"
 "If we don't sell it soon, the bloody thing will fly."
 "Let me out," I pleaded, "please open the gate",
 Getting trapped up here is a man's worst fate,
 Every doll that came in, one bloke had his lamps on,
 His name turned out to be Rodney Sampson.
 Barry Wasley's a runner, of class there's no doubt,
 He's first everytime when the club has a shout.
 I thought "To get out of here, I'll need a break",
 When I walked Wally, with a great big steak.
 After I polished off one with salad and egg,
 I thought they must be pulling my leg,
 In through the door, skipped a bloke all in white,
 T'was Dr. Sullivan – going on for the night.
 While wondering who next, I would try and con,
 I met a dark chap, by the name of John.
 And this is a fact; I'll tell you no lies,
 When they turned out the light,
 All could be seen, were the whites of his eyes.
 By this time, it was 4 o'clock in the morn',
 I'll be lucky to roll out at dawn,
 I'll probably get landed, right in the slot,
 But that's better than being earbashed by Scott.
 Stewie Watson they said, is a bit of a spark,
 But they use Wato's head, to light up the park.
 "I've had me two beers" roared Rube with a shout,
 Then keeled right over, onto his snout.
 Ronnie Hookway, they don't seem to know much about,
 He's got brains – he's keeping right out.
 I started to think, this is the life,
 But when I get home I'll be minus one wife.
 Barry Sampson, they told me, is a teetotaller I think,
 The only one that goes broke, buying soft drink.
 I heard a hiss, and a bit of a twang,
 "It's all gone," said the barman, who they called Donnie Strang.
 I met his mate, by name Johnie Barkwith,
 He kept telling me about the fairy he'd parked with.
 Another of the boys, is Strangie's mate Rod,
 Hasn't been long here yet – my goodness, thank God!
 Then there is Brian, comes from the bush,
 If he drinks much more, he'll be on his moosh.
 I finally met the captain called shoes,
 Was crook on the world, they'd run out of booze.
 But to criticize now, I have no right,-----I ended up staying, the whole bloody night!

(All names are strictly fictional, and any reference to any living soul is strictly co-incidental). Joe the black*

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Footnote: on 'Joe the Black'

My father had very dark olive skin and broad facial features. He was often mistaken for an aboriginal and was in fact almost beaten to death because of it one night in Richmond. Some of his mates would tease him about his features. Who knows, maybe he was aboriginal. Back then it was not the thing to do to chase up ones heritage. Mysteries were far more interesting in a person's character even if it got him into strife.

Stanley's epic poem written for his monthly Cricket Club Newsletter, 'The North Caulfield Lament' is a wonderful example of Australian Strine.

TO MY DAD

By Helen Norton to father Stanley 25 years later

I searched and searched
For your flashing white teeth,
Uplifted in grin.
I wandered through
The empty pavilions,
Time and time again.
Looking for something,
A surprise.
Standing small
As I was
Amongst the legs of men tall,
The world of white soldiers
My heroes hummed above me.
Sometimes one
Would pick me up
And raise me high,
Where I would feel
The buds of my wings
Pushing at my back.
My belly nervous
But poised I was to fly
As big hands
Gently
Put me down
Into the forest of white trunks
And the level of the beer keg
And when I was tired
As I lay on a wooden bench
My declining army
Hummed me to sleep
Somewhere in the middle tones
Of a laughing jackal
Fading to purring
I watched through the curtain
Of my closing eyes
Smoky light dimming
Into a dream of murmuring whispers.
And the cleaning of the glasses
Became the clanging bells
In the fog
As the lost men cried
In their beer
For the direction of the soldier
Was the quest for unity
On a drowning ship
And as the day mixed up together
With the night
And dawn brought her stinging acid
For the bedraggled army
To realize their losses

I watched you cringe
From her clean face
Shining reality
Pouring lemon juice
Into cracks and crevices
Of your hide
Unable to shed the previous seasons coat
You were not reborn
With her light
We put away the white uniforms
Until the next calling
Of the eleven men.
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