

Greg Champion

Newsletter - Tamworth Special

Issue 6AD February 2005

Tamworth Festival 2005

Well, that was the fifteenth straight Tamworth, and each one is still better than the last.

This one was undeniably the best fun - yet again - owing to, I think, the optimum line-up (we've got it just right now), an improving repertoire, the best crowd numbers, and the best stage sound, all adding up to a good fun show.....

Many things about Tamworth Festival never change: the ten day endurance event, the heat, the fun and friendships. As we have for the past six years or so, we did five straight two-hour lunch shows at the Longyard, and then a final big one with special guests Jane Saunders, Rod McCormack, Gina Jeffreys and Michael Fix. That one was a real buzz, with Michael and Rod playing some very tasty guitar behind Jane Saunders, and Gina wowing the crowd inevitably.

There are the friends and followers you may only see once a year, but it's every year without fail. So a big thankyou to Rhonda & Greg of Cessnock, Lynette & Tracy of Yarville, Alison & Gloria of Portland, Laid and his kids from Canberra, Alan & Glenda from Cowra, Sally from Tamworth, John & Yvonne of Tamworth and the Newcastle mob, some of whom are there for almost all our shows .

For the first time, the Coodabeen Champions attended, and we broadcast from the outdoor stage in the park. The lads also attended the Awards Concert, a glittering night for four thousand people, and the after Awards party, a not-to-be-missed event.

I had a late call to present the Heritage Award during the concert, which went to Lee Kernaghan and Colin Buchanan, and it's a real pleasure to be involved in that way.

The Coodabeens also managed to stay at the guitar-shaped pool motel, another milestone.

The final Saturday brings the Cavalcade, and this year I was on the float with other ABC artists Beccy Cole, Sara Storer and Adam Harvey, among others. I was customarily late arriving and had to chase the float down the street in front of spectators in order to scramble on belatedly.

It was after about the fourth Tamworth that we came home and realized - well, nothing will be more fun than that for the rest of the year. Since then we've known that Tamworth is as much fun as you can have, and the rest of the year is just a foggy dream until it rolls around once again.....



Longyard 2005

Gary Carruthers, Rod McCormack, Jane Saunders, Champs, Michael Fix, Robyn Martin

See you along the track, greg

Tamworth Times – The Editor asks Champs:

How many Tamworths is that now, and were some better than others?

That's fifteen straight, and they've all been equal, as well as each one being better than the last.

What is the essence of Tamworth and what draws you back each time?

It's the ideal combination of hugely enjoyable fun and it's 'career-advancing' as well - i.e. the 'industry' is all there and you're seen by the powers that be. You know the movie/Scottish fable, Brigadoon? The Scottish village miraculously appears out of the mist every 200 years, the townsfolk live a normal day, and then it disappears back into the mists of time again. Tamworth is like that. The ten days is a long enough chunk of the year to convince you that you're living this life permanently, and that's why we all get Post Festival Depression -- as well as Pre-Festival tension.

Is each Tamworth a different experience.?

They're remarkably similar. For all fifteen years my shows have been at the Longyard Hotel, and for the first twelve years we stayed in the same room at the same motel, the one with the guitar-shaped pool. And the friends tend to be the same, so you know what to expect every time.

Can you describe three Tamworth memories that will always be with you?



Sitting with John Williamson at 5am at the end of the After Awards Party, still having fun.



Doing Elvis impersonations at the Bushwackers' Elvis tribute show.



The late night singalong jams with Ted Egan and others under the vines at the Longyard - dubbed 'testifying'.



Winning the country singers' tennis tournament some years ago.



Batting with Rod McCormack at this year's charity cricket match.



Having the same supporters turn up to all your shows for five years straight.



Seeing the Awards Concert when it was still at the old Rodeo Arena....

(OK so there's more than three....)



Jane and Greg

Heard on ABC Grandstand Radio

on 5 February.

Peter Walsh was talking to Champs about his new CD *The Cricket's on the Radio*. Champs said it was the fourth season the song had been used on the ABC so he thought it was time to make a fresh recording of this track, originally written because the phrase appealed to him. Greg is really pleased that many others identify the phrase with enjoying the cricket. The CD has 9 tracks including a reggae number dedicated to the West Indies and songs about Glen McGrath and Shane Warne. Of course there's the classic *I made a hundred in the back yard at Mum's* and Greg's personal favourite *You're going home in the back of a divvy van*.

The CD will be released on ABC Radio on 14 March.

FROM LEONGATHA/TEXAS

Dear Greg, thank you for a great year of Coodabeens entertainment, and I want to tell you how much your "Bucko and Champs" Christmas music has been appreciated by the grade 1/2 class I teach in Leongatha, Victoria and my sister's neighbours in Texas. I was speaking to my sister, who lives in Houston, yesterday and she told me that they played your music at their court Christmas party on Saturday and it went down very well with those who could understand it. Fiona Power

FROM ADELAIDE

Hi Greg, I love the 'Life is lazy, Cricket on radio' and 'That's the thing I like about football' songs. They sum up the atmosphere of the two codes beautifully. Best thing since, and probably including 'Up there gazaly' for prompting memories of childhood sporting games etc. Loved your rendition of 'Too many bridges' It is a very sweet song and would be on the latest North & South album ? Peter Fotheringham

FROM MONT ALBERT SCHOOL, MELBOURNE

Hello Greg, I like your song called "Gotta do the gardening". It's a really fast but I still like it very much. This Friday we have a garden opening and only our grade is singing your song called Gotta do the Gardening! How can you sing so fast in that song? I'm practising singing it so fast!!! Good luck, From Judie

FROM QLD

Hello Greg. Just a quick email to ask why there is no mention of Tidewater on your website. A long time ago I know but boy that is a fantastic (if generally unknown) country rock album. I guess with so much material and things that have happened in your career Tidewater was merely a blip on the radar. What happened to all the other guys in that band? Cheers, Rich McGrath Hervey Bay

[Greg says: that record came out in 1976 when I was just out of Uni., and with respect, I think 'fantastic' is way too kind for such an early LP]

*To email Champs
champs@gregchampion.com.au*

*To keep your finger on the pulse
www.gregchampion.com.au
www.coodabeens.com.au*

FROM BRAIDWOOD

Thank you for the new song Walk Alongside Of You [Ed.: Greg sang it on ABC radio on a Sunday night]. The song touches a very warm place on the heart. For me, it has strong echoes of my guiding light as a parent, Khalil Gilbran's verse "Your Children". The poem is built around the metaphor of the archer who aims (teaches, guides, supports) and lets go. The tricky bit is getting the balance right between the guiding and supporting and the letting go. Cheers, Michael O'Brien

Your Letters

FROM THE USA

G'Day Greg, I am an Aussie living in the US and am having the hardest time locating your new disc North & South. I have been on walkabout in several malls for months. Is there any store that you know that sells the disc here. Or can I order it from your website straight away? I heard the "Banks Of The Condamine" on a flight back from Oz last month and loved it, but it only reinvigorated my desperate attempt to find your disc here in the US. Thanks much, Josh.

[Greg says: we fixed him up...]

FROM SOMEWHERE IN OZ

Champs, as the recently elected captain of my indoor cricket team.....Is there any chance that you have the words of "Kim Hughes has got the Blues" hanging around? Regards, Grant Fraser

[Greg says: that song was from 1985. Together we eventually remembered the lyrics.]

More of Your Letters

FROM THE USA

G'day, Greg!

My wife and I met 20 years ago while she was working as a traveling primary teacher in Outback South Australia (Leigh Creek, Nepabunna, Marree, Leigh Creek and Hawker). Your music was part of our courtship (don't ask!).

I would like to give her your "Best of" CD -- and the Coodabeen Champions (Live in Studio) CD or cassette -- as a very special 20th Valentine's Day gift. Is there any hope of you sending these by air-mail to the USA in time? What is the best way of paying you?

Thanks for your response, your music and your sense of humour, Jonathan



FROM THE U.K

Hi Gregg, could you let me have details on the purchase of the subject CD. Can I purchase over the net using my UK Visa. I heard you track 'further Up The Mountain' on Mike Kear's blue-grass Show and Mike emailed the details. Patrick Moore

FROM BALLARAT

I only discovered your cd's a few weeks ago while down at the ABC shop at Chadstone, I bought North & South I had never heard any of the song's on the album but enjoy the song's you do on the radio! Congratulations on a excellent cd, it has been played a lot of times, I cant wait to buy the rest of your cd's. I am a huge fan of Australian singer/songwriters, I will keep an eye on your web site for upcoming concerts. Many Thanks Brett Polanske,

FROM GLEN IRIS MELBOURNE

Re: never turn right at Burke Rd Malvern:

Dear Greg, Our 17y old son is learning to drive, and we live in Glen Iris and wait patiently at Burke Road in Malvern many, many times each week and he doesn't believe that anyone has written lyrics about somewhere so suburban. Was the song ever on a CD? and what was its title? We'd dearly love to play it for him, if only to convince him that his frustration at the intersections are nothing new. The only thing he DOES believe is that if anyone wrote a song about it, YOU would have. Hope you can help, (wish we'd taped all those shows on ABC) with thanks, Carolann Thomson

travel dates

February 12
Launceston Casino
Tasmania

February 13
Vic Country Music Festival
Whittlesea

February 15
Kingston Heath Golf Club
Melbourne

February 17
Briagalong Hotel
Victoria

February 18
Berwick Folk Club
Victoria

February 20
Ashburton Community Festival
Melbourne

February 25
Montanna Restaurant
Lennox Head NSW

March 11 to 14
Port Fairy Folk Festival
Victoria

March 18
Acoustic Concert \
Trinity Church, Adelaide

March 19 and 20
Kapunda Celtic Festival
South Australia

March 26
Bendigo Folk Festival
Victoria