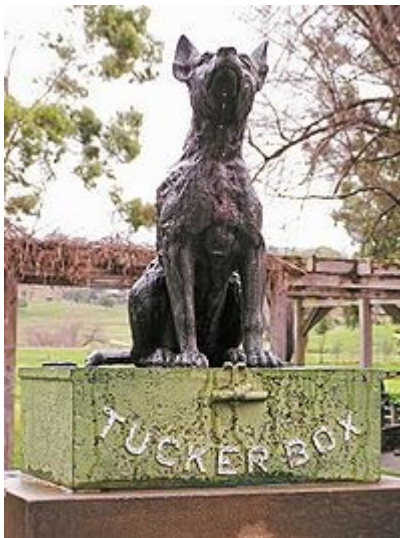


The Dog Sat On The Tuckerbox

Written by Andy Owen



The Dog on the Tuckerbox



The earlier monument in 1926

In 1857, a poem called Bullocky Bill was published anonymously by 'Bowyang York' in Australia. It humourously described a series of misfortunes faced by a bullock driver, as his dog kept either sitting on, or ruining, the food in his tuckerbox.

A tuckerbox is similar to our lunchbox, but quite a bit larger.

In 1920, a poet called Jack Moses wrote an updated and more accomplished version of this tale and it immediately became very popular. It created great interest in Gundagai, inspired songs - and a local resident erected a statue in 1926.

A few years later, a local stonemason called Frank Rusconi suggested that a more substantial and visually attractive memorial to the legend was created.

Much discussion took place, and finally, in 1932, the locals approved the idea and Rusconi created the dog section of the monument and its base and both were cast at Oliver's Foundry in Sydney.

It was felt that a suitable inscription should be put on the monument and a nationwide competition was held. The chosen one was written by Brian Fitzpatrick of Sydney.

It says:

"Earth's self upholds this monument, to conquerors who won her when wooing was dangerous and now are gathered unto her again"

The Dog on the Tuckerbox monument was completed and finally erected in November 1932. It was a high-profile occasion, being part of 'Back to Gundagai' week, and a large crowd gathered to witness the unveiling by the Prime Minister Joseph Lyons.

The "Dog on the Tuckerbox" festival has been held every year since 1992, the 60th anniversary of the erection of the monument. Attendances have grown over the years and the event is now a two-day affair, with many festivities taking place at the Dog on the Tuckerbox Centre.

It's now a historical monument and tourist attraction, located at Snake Gully, approximately five miles from Gundagai, which is in New South Wales.

Here is the Jack Moses poem - Nine Miles From Gundagai - that I stumbled upon and it really got me interested in this fascinating story:

**I've done my share of shearing sheep, of droving and all that,
And bogged a bullock team as well, on a Murrumbidgee flat.
I've seen the bullock stretch and strain, and blink his bleary eye,
And the dog sit on the tucker box, nine miles from Gundagai.**

**I've been jilted, jarred and crossed in love, and sand-bagged in the dark,
Till if a mountain fell on me, I'd treat it as a lark.
It's when you've got your bullocks bogged, that's the time you flog and cry,
And the dog sits on the tucker box, nine miles from Gundagai.**

**We've all got our little troubles, in life's hard, thorny way.
Some strike them in a motor car, and others in a dray.
But when your dog and bullocks strike, it ain't no apple pie,
And the dog sat on the tucker box, nine miles from Gundagai.**

**But that's all past and dead and gone, and I've sold the team for meat,
And perhaps some day where I was bogged, there'll be an asphalt street,
The dog, ah! well he got a bait, and thought he'd like to die,
So I buried him in the tucker box, nine miles from Gundagai.**