

I'll See You at "the Amateurs"... When September Comes to Cairns



They're coming in on the Hercules, by stagecoach and limousine,
Clad in cotton, Dacron, denim, linen, lace and gaberdine,
Ringers, station masters, jillaroos and movie stars,
Politicians, shop assistants, sporting greats and corporate czars,
Tribal trooping of the colours through the outer and the stands,
I'll See You at "the Amateurs" ... When September Comes to Cairns.

This unique extravaganza in "fifty-nine" commenced to bloom,
The year the Morris Mini launched, and the Russians touched the moon,
"The Amateurs" was up and running, a dream had taken wings,
On the strands of silk and saddle... the noble sport of kings.

Syd Williams and Les Gallagher had thrashed the idea 'round,
Publican Les tossed in the capital, a crisp five hundred pound,
Couldn't know the giant they'd seeded, the event they'd set in place,
Would set in train a million movements that would change a nation's face.

The ranks are represented, 'mongst the toffs and the well-heeled,
It's a platform and a palette where mega-national deals are sealed,
She's an Aussie institution that continues to pour forth
To turbo charge the compass needle in the engine of the north.

Starter's button... they're off and running, a mighty voice runs through the crowd,
It's the crème de la crème of Queensland callers, the legendary Keith Noud,
There's a spirit born of mateship and it binds the friends you're with,
Rubbing shoulders with Bjelke, Joh... and Sir Henry Able Smith,
Birds of a feather, 'paddock together' in our finest fab regalia,
The "biggest and best of bush racing"... "the Amateurs" of Northern Australia.



The bunting's up, the flags are flying, then the national
anthem's played,
Soon the racing's at a standstill to preview the grand
parade,
For there's beauty here abundant, for Cairns Amateurs are
wing-keeled,
With leading ladies of our haute couture... "fashions on the
field",
A prediction from the founder, Sir Syd, would come to pass
That racing would be important, but ladies' fashion would
set the class.

There's beer and champagne flowing for the favourite's
just got up,
And barrel mounts; contest "Shamateurs"... to claim its cryptic "Kup",
The moon is up; the balls are on, as parties rock the clock,
As the Cannon's welcome dinner guests to their legendary White Rock.

The great Keith Noud had called it a day; Dick Chant then filled the breach,
For near twenty years, Dick called the colours in his trackside art of speech.
As we cheered for the horses and jockeys, and those Amateurs, engineers,
That host of unsung heroes... committees, sponsors, volunteers,

Then we lost our "Amateur" status and a great tradition passed,
The pros were in, we'd failed to win... but "the Amateurs" held fast,
"Lunches, dinner parties, interdispersed with a bit of racing",
All the while a mind was working, facilitating, interlacing,
Spearheading a phenomenon, tinged with Flemington's Melbourne push,
Syd linked the culture of the outback to the city and the bush,
Mobilised a nobler army near the top end of our nation,
"For the further north you move from Canberra... the greater the civilisation".
(Sen Jim Killen)

But now the ranks have fallen silent for Sydney passed away this year,
Cairns Amateurs founding father, its guiding light, first engineer,
And his last words seem to semaphore...

"Mate... its bursting at the seams,
"Cairns is in the national spotlight... *It's gone beyond my wildest dreams*",
And his invocation echoes... and his
invitation stands,
*I'll see you at "the Amateurs"... When
September Comes to Cairns."*

