

12 July 1980.
15 July 1980.
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The Riders of the Range

by "Hiker"

Because of the current Kosciuszko Huts controversy, we thought the poem published below would be of interest to readers. It was written many years ago, (author unknown) and contains interesting references to the Huts and early stockmen of the region.

A long long way from Sydney town
 The Snowy Mountains rise,
 Beside the Great Dividing Range
 Their rugged beauty lies.
 In winter time these hills are clad
 With mantle white of snow,
 And only folk on snowshoes then
 Can wander to and fro.

But when the summer comes again
 And clears the snow away;
 It leaves a land of verdant green
 And tiny flowers gay.
 And where the hills are sheltered most
 From sun and wind and rain,
 Great snowdrifts last the summer thru,
 Till winter comes again.

And everywhere flow tiny creeks,
 Down hills and through the grass
 ...crystal streams of melted snow
 As cold and clear as glass
like silver in the sun,
 And slowly wend their way
 To where the rushing river foams
 In torrents day by day.

The summer days are long and hot,
 The nights are icy cold,
 The sky above is deepest blue,
 The stars shine white and bold,
 And to this land the drovers come
 With cattle and with sheep,
 Across the undulating plains,
 'Cross marsh where waters seep.

We wandered over hill and dale,
 Where'er our fancies led,
 And there we met those Cattlemer
 Of whom we've often read.
 And oh, what wondrous men they are
 At first quite shy and strange
 With kindly words they welcomed us,
 These riders of the range.

They showed us hospitality,
 In truest country style,
 And gave us shelter from the cold,
 And bade us stay awhile.
 They lived in comfy two roomed huts,
 Right in between the hills,
 Where neither road nor mailman comes
 Where flow the sparkling rills.

And now our journey's nearly done,
 We've left them far behind,
 We feel as though we've left good friends,
 The best friends one could find.
 And so that we'll remember them
 When we are back in town,
 We write this verse about them all,
 The riders lean and brown.

They know these hills and valleys well,
 Such fearless riders they,
 They roam the mountains day by day,
 Though skies be blue or grey.
 They love their horses and their dogs,
 And make them earn their keep,
 By rounding up their cattle herds,
 And mustering mobs of sheep.

The first we met was Arty Yan,
 His eyes were darkest brown,
 He comes from out Kiandra way,
 That tiny sleepy town.
 And at the hut at Tabletop,

Where Mr Nixon dwelt,
 We felt as though it was our home,
 So happy there we felt.

Dick Hagger and Des Crowe we met,
 At Boobee Hut they live,
 These boundary riders did to us
 Much entertainment give.
 They sheltered us one cold wet night,
 And shared with us their home,
 You'll never find two finer chaps,
 No matter where you roam.

And then we met the two McPhies,
 At Greymare Hut one day,
 They'd brought their cattle from the plains
 So many miles away.
 And with them Des Delany came
 To help them drive the herd,
 His horse's name was Vanity,
 'Twas swift as any bird.

And Trigger, Angus calls his horse,
 While Chidley's owned by Max,
 At first they three looked rather quiet
 But soon they did relax.
 So Des and Max and Angus sat,
 And we three wanderers too,
 Around the hearth till late at night,
 And sang of songs a few.

And while we stayed at Greymare Hut,
 Two drovers came our way,
 Big William Pendergast was one,
 So hearty, bluff and gay.
 Don Whitehead was the other chap,
 An expert with the whip,
 He tried to teach me how 'twas done,
 And laughed when I did slip.

While staying at the Mawson Hut,
 We made a lot of friends,
 Tall Lindsay Willis is the one
 Who butchers, bakes and mends,
 As Jack-of-all-trades Lindsay's known
 He bakes the scones and bread,
 And packs the salt out to the lick
 With which the sheep are fed.

Dave Williamson lives there as well,
 As Scotty he is known,
 He's boss of twenty thousand sheep

And has some all his own.
 A five mile fence two men will build
 Without the aid of map,
 Dick Harvey, Ulric Weston, they
 Live in Kerry's Gap.

The Man that traps the dingo dogs,
 Came to the kitchen door,
 He got an awful shock when first
 He saw us on the floor.
 He's also quite a patient man,
 And shoes his horses well,
 Jack Bolton is this trapper's name,
 And he good tales can tell.

Now Laurie Adams is the man,
 Who drives the bullock dray,
 With many shouts and cracks of whip
 He gets them on their way.
 He has the nicest, shyest smile,
 And speaks with richest drawl,
 Each day he's moving further on,
 And welcomed is by all.

Across at Dickie Cooper's Hut,
 Two more men earn their pay,
 They both are boundary riding men,
 And ride the run each day,
 They meet the sheep and turn them back,
 And will not let them stray,
 Our gentle Billy Primmer,
 Our Andrew Adams gay.

On Spencer's Hut just near the road,
 We met an old man,
 He'd lived among the hills he said
 For quite a lengthy span.
 He talked of back in eighty eight,
 Of how he lived here then,
 John Adams was this vet'ran's name,
 Of him we'll think again.

Though lonely lives they live out there,
 Among the creeks and hills,
 They seem to love it just the same,
 And have their share of thrills.
 Whatever comes is just their work.
 They do not think it strange,
 To them I give unstinting praise.
 The riders of the range.