THE RUNAMUCK CUP

A blazing white sun lit the old Gibbo run,
swirling ghosts raised by dust from the utes.
Kelpies guarded their swags; bright-eyed kids led their nags,
parents dozed in their hats and their boots.
'Twas the final communion, of the cattlemen's reunion-
welcome break from that summer's hard luck.
'Fore headin' back to the drought, stood their mates one last shout,
and ran a race called the Runamuck cup.

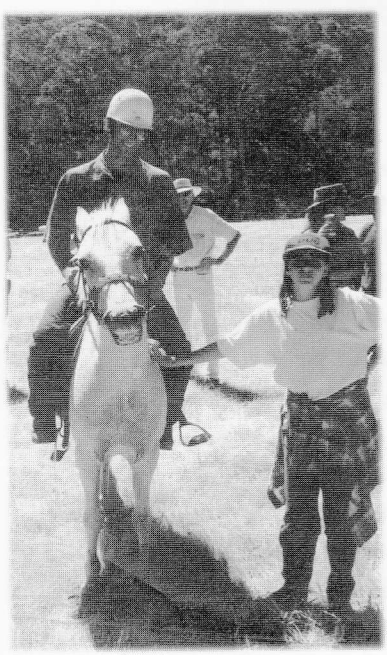
First the atmosphere warmed, as the syndicates formed,
to bid a horse for their gang's star rider,
and the Mansfield mob did a hell of a job,
signing ten Cookes and half of Benambra.
'Twas their crack rider's task – check the horses for class,
to ensure that they bid for a speedster.
Took his place with a grin, in the auctioneers ring,
with a jump jockey ready to ride her.

Then the bidding went brisk, as a new horse they'd whisk,
to be knocked down for less than a ton,
and the boys turned to pray as in came the big bay,
that she'd be the racehorse they won.
But jaws dropped in surprise, as before their glazeded eyes,
the bidding went past the five hundred!
For the gelding they vied, but the owners voice cried,
and out bid 'em – and with eyes closed they shuddered.

For the last horse led in, and their last chance to win,
she had spirit, and strength in her carriage,
but the syndicate wept, for what could you expect,
from a Shetland and Welsh Pony's marriage.
At a proud ten hands high, who could do more than cry,
she's no match for the gelding or bay;
then a figure stood tall, and them hushed with his drawl,
"I can ride her to win, there's a way."

'Twas Dave Stoney no less, that made this bold jest,
with his long legs as tall as the pony.
"'Tis no ordinary race, and we'll lose on the pace,
but there's a chance for the tall and the bony."
So they mustered their steeds, and the last bets were seized,
as the starter brought his motley field up.
Then off and away, 'cross the freshly cut hay,
raced the cattlemen, for the Runamuck Cup.

Fast the horses broke rank – a wild dash to the bank,
with Dave last and forlorn on the course,
as they churned up the stream, we heard one wag scream
"That's the plan, Dave, you spare your horse!"
In a wide sweep they rushed – he was lost in their dust,
as they circled the scrub thick and rank,
for halfway on their run was to round a tall gum,
then tear back to the river's muddy bank.



But Dave's pony ran straight, like a bull at a gate,
and his bold plan began to unfold,
he cut under the bush, spun around in a rush,
then splashed mud into the streambed cold.
Now, each rider must scrag a pile of stones in a bag,
which Dave on his steed could do mounted,
while the field splashed on foot, in waters muddy as soot,
and he led onto the straight when it counted.

Well, a fifty yard lead is all most horses need,
and those little legs pounded like crazy,
but the gelding and bay, they were pounding the hay,
and he soon ate their dust, thick and hazy.
Now first past the post will win races most,
and brave Lightning galloped third in their paths,
but they poured out the beers and we heard his mob's cheers.
"No, we won, 'cos we had the most laughs!"