# WHEN GIPPSLAND WON THE CATTLEMEN'S CUP

The drought sat heavy on Gippsland for three long dusty years,
and many that lived upon the land had left with nothing but tears.
And those that stayed with dying stock toiled on because they must,
maintain their forebears' legacy, and not betray their trust.

Their football teams were failing, dogged stalwarts worn right through,
they'd always turned to timber, but the mills were closing too.
Yet Gippsland folk had one small spark to win them back some pride,
they sent a young slip of a girl in the Cattlemen's Cup to ride.

That race held by the mountains is a test of man and horse,
steep bush and river crossings mark a tough and dangerous course.
For the bushmen train stockhorses racing cattle through the scrub,
the hardest riders in the mountains come to win the Cattlemen's Cup.

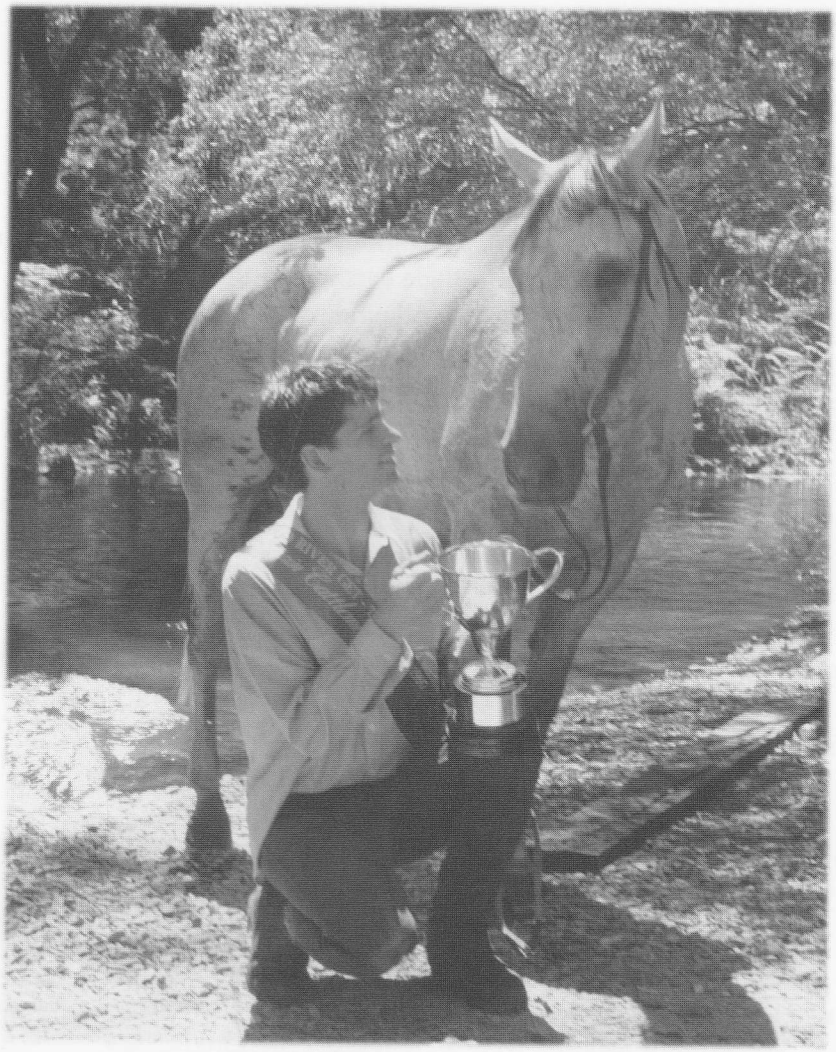
She rode a horse called Monkey, he was a legend to the last,
they bumped and knocked and shut her out, you must be tough and fast.
Despite the odds she carried through, a brave first across the line,
but cheers died when they changed the rules, for a woman it wasn't time.

Next year she raced as a jockey, set to prove what she could do,
won her first three starts with ease, and raced the season through.
But at her last race in the country, she was leading when she fell,
and the whole field raced right over her and kicked her body to hell.

For seventeen days in a coma, her life held by a thread,
and her close friends at her bedside swore she couldn't end up dead.
They said she'd never ride again, as in her bed she lay,
but a young man by her bedside swore she'd hold the Cup one day.

Though the greatest prize she ever sought was out of reach for good,
her cheerful courage inspired others, more than her winning ever could.
And next year she was at the Cup, wheelchair bound and racked with pain,
but not for pity did she show, but to cheer for Gippsland again.

This time the Gippsland hopes rode on the young man, tall and raw,
who'd mustered cattle since a boy, and burned to settle the score.
The race it was a mighty fray, he gave more than his best,
and he held his way to the final strait, determined to win his quest.



The crowd roared out a mighty cheer, they'd all wanted him to win,
but he dismounted teary eyed and for the frail girl saved his grin.
They dragged him to the winners stand, the tears were long and loud,
but his eyes never left that smiling girl, and he said "My God, I'm proud".

"It's hard to keep our spirits alive when the paddocks are dust and black,
it's things like this that give us heart to go on and not turn back.
We're battling just to keep our schools and field a cricket side,"
"OK," they said, "we understand, now come and take your prize."

But he walked back down the stairway without his prize or Cup,
and came up holding in his arms the girl that would not give up.
"You'll not give the Cup to me," he said, "it's time to right the past."
And with trembling hands, and glowing smile, she held her Cup at last.