

WAR COMES TO NERRIGUNDAH

By **JOE JESSOP**

Now that the war is drawing near
And we may have to fight for home so dear
To arrange for the enemy a proper beating
We all attended a public meeting.

The meeting was held up in the hall
And was well attended by great and small
Councillor Murphy was very soon there
And Al' once was voted to take the chair.

He said "Never since The Clarke bushrangers
Have we been faced with so many dangers
But it will be the Japs' first blunder
If ever they try to take Nerrigundah".

He said "We can see how others have faired
But I will not act till war is declared.
It may be wrong but I will risk it".
He then sat down and ate a biscuit.

Alf Pollock was asked to try by all means
To keep a look out for small submarines
He said he would search every inch of the creek
Two or three times at least each week.

The Chairman said he would write to the Yanks
To see if they could supply us with tanks
We will want two or three or perhaps even more
Then Billy Boyle said Pollock had four.

Alf Dixon proposed that all our benzine
Should be put in a place where it couldn't be seen
With someone to guard each drum and bouser
But that could be left to Toots and Touser.

We would need someone to take great pains
To listen in for aeroplanes
And Joe Jessop thought it would be nice
To propose both Billy and Alfie Brice.

Arthur Shepherd proposed to one and all
To get the machine gun out of the hall
To move it Bob Boyle could bring the bus up
A good idea said old Steve Jessop.

I'll tell you what said Roy O'Toole
We'll need a runner to run to and fro,
So who could be better than old Robo.

Just then Watt came down the road
And on his back he carried a load
He said "Don't think I've gone off my nut
But before I left I burned down my hut.

But now that I'm here I'll tell you what
We'll need someone on the roof to spot
Now that will require a very smart codger
I can think of no-one better than Roger."

It seems to me said Leslie Bollard
The Japs will very soon be collared
So the Chairman declared that the meeting be
closed
But Billy Boyle sat on and dozed.

The Characters

Of course one has to understand the characters to appreciate this poem.

For instance –

- Billy and Alfie Brice were both deaf,
- Jim (Robo) Robinson had arthritis and could hardly watch.
- Roger Murphy was a clumsy man who could trip over his own shadow.
- We all knew Toots and his dog Touser
- The Chairman Councillor Murphy nearly always carried a bag of biscuits in his pocket.
- Alf Pollock had four water tanks.
- There has always been an old machine gun displayed in the Nerrigundah Hall.
- Bob Boyle always referred to his old trap as a bus.
- Billy Boyle of course usually fell asleep anywhere.

The poem was supplied by Mr & Mrs Boyle of Ulladulla. It was given to Mr Boyle by his aunt Annie Jessop (nee Boyle) who was married to Joseph's oldest brother William.

The Poet

Joe's father William Jessop settled in Nerrigundah, where in 1867 he married Maria Ann Murray. Joe was born in 1873 and married Catherine Callaghan in 1915. Their son Gilbert Murray Jessop, born in 1918, served in the second world war and died in Sydney in 1996. Joe died in 1949 and is buried at Nerrigundah.