

JOHNNY BUNURONG

by Harry Dunn

received 24-04-2012

**My name bin Johnny Bunurong
You bin hear about my tribe?
Must be hundred years or more
Since last I bin alibe,
Now resting with Black brudders up here in the sky
In Dreamtime Happy Hunting Ground
Where Kooris go when die.**

**Great Black Spirit run dis place,
One day she say to me
Johnny, go down and look aroun'
And see what old Whitey's up to
In our campsite by the sea,
See how dey bin treat dat place;
Come back, report to me.**

**So down I go to campsite
Behind big wall of sand
Just up from ramp,where we used to camp
And sacred gum-trees stand
Cripes! I hardly knew dat place
Nothin' look da same
Bin put a plurry bowlin club
Called Inva-bloody- something-
Me forgot da plurry name.**

**Bin lookin pretty funny
With not a tree in sight
Me wonderin what he hides behind
When Whitey needs a shite.
No sign of sea-shell midden
Or campfire place at night
No dingo, yam or witchetty
And not a 'roo in sight.
Then two mobs of Whitey elders
Roll up in blues and whites
Well bugger me, am I gonna see
The grandma of all fights?**

**Whitey blokes - dey got big guts
From too much beer and wine
And lubras mostly got a gen'rous bot
More generous yours and mine
All smellum sweet as roses,
Perfume, musta bin
Not smellem good to me-
Much rather nice black gin!**

And old Whitey bowler comes prepared
To fight - or so mine tink
Dragg - em somethin' round in dilly-bag
On wheels, out onto rink.
And old white bloke - must be a joke
Got war paint on him nose,
On ears and lips and forrid;
Might be good to keep off sun
But it bin lookin' bloody horrid.

Then 'stead of spearem leg
To start corroboree
Old bloke rolls down a chook-egg
Stops rollin next to me,
A chook's egg round as rainbow
And white as dingo-turd
Then White lubra finds an emu's-egg;
She hold 'im up to show,
And big white chief at other end
Yells "whichever hand preferred"
So then she lets 'im go.

Well, this goes on the whole day long
No stoppem for a cuppa,
They hittem chook's egg plenty time
Try crack'im up for supper,
But no sign of crack in old chook's egg
Must be made of rock
(if you want to crack'im real hard egg, you gotta stand up close
And gibb'im real good shock)

Silly bugger Whitey does this, till evening sun goes down,
Then packs up all his emu's eggs
And heads back into town,
But some hang round a little while
And say dey die of thirst
No need to rush home early
Only make'im things seem worse,
So check'im wallet, find'im plenty shilling
Then head for club-house wurlie
For thirsty beer-glass filling.

Then one big feller say, "No bloody way
Bass Council throw us out,
Because our fifty years on site
Gives us bowlers plenty clout
So we t'ink it right to stay and fight
This place bin ours, no doubt."
But Council man bin present,
And him say "Hold on , mate,

**We bin own your bit of land, past hundred years and more -
In the name of God and State
So Council got the prior right.
And off you go to Thompson's -
We got plans for this old site.**

**Mine tinkit this bin real good chance
For Blacks to call'um bluff
If length of tenure proves who owns -
Ten thousand years bin plenty,
More than years enough
So *we* must own that bowling club
Just west of Townsend's Bluff.**

**So back I go to Big Boss,
Dreamtime In The Sky;
She sits me down and asks me
"Johnny, what goes on down there, and why?"
So I bin tell her story, same I tell'im you,
How bowlin greens bin built
And white-man wurlies ,too
On old ground by sea and silt.**

**And when I bin finish tell'im
I say - Great Spirit In The Sky,
Bowlin Club must be ours,
And I tell her how and why:
White man's law bin very clear
'Bout ownership of land
And Kooris got ten t'ousand years
On that old piece of sand.**

**Great Spirit, she look down at me,
A tear in both her eye
And say, " Young Johnny, I no tinks
Dat place worth having now,
Up here in Dreamtime Sky.
And anyway, from what you say, nowadays it stinks-
Old Whitey's stuffed it up, replacing sacred trees
With his lawns and greens and rinks.
So, let Council men and bowlers
Fight each other for that land-
Land bin ours since Dream-time:
But no point in tell'um Whitey this
Him never understand."**