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Stanthorpe Today

Multiple award-winning paper



Bush poet's latest book chronicles forgotten miner

By Jeremy Cook

North Queenslander Jim McLannett spent more than 50 years researching one of Australia's greatest prospectors before he sadly passed away.

Stanthorpe bush poet Jack Drake was later asked to complete the work by McLannett's widow. The result is Drake's sixth book, titled "The Stringybark Fox", which is set for official release at the annual Outback Writers Festival in Winton next month.

The book tells the tale of the Stringybark Fox, also known as John Dickie, an early Queensland miner who migrated from Scotland in 1866.

Stories of gold rushes, rich lodes and lost gold fields have fascinated Australians since gold first changed the face of the population and economy back in the mid nineteenth century.

From Edward Hargraves who stole the credit for our first major find, to Lassiter's Lost Reef that may or may not exist, the search for yellow metal has enthralled many and consumed the lives of some.

John Dickie had almost been forgotten by history but thanks to 50 years of dedicated

research, he is now rescued from oblivion. He first tried his hand at agriculture taking up sugar country near Mackay. Romance entered his life but disapproval by his wife's influential family caused a move northward.

In jungle country north of Cardwell, his wife sickened and died causing his daughter to be taken into foster care.

Heartbroken, he took to the bush spending the rest of his life seeking and finding mineral wealth on Cape York, Central Australia, the Kimberleys and Western Australia's eastern goldfields.

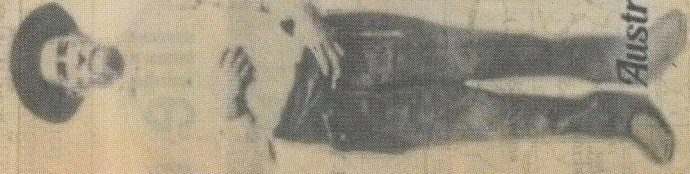
Dickie found three major goldfields as well as wolfram and antimony deposits. One reefing field he discovered and lost again remains undiscovered in the ranges to this day.

He crossed Australia coast to coast from east to west and west to east.

His second crossing took him through the dead heart with three Australian Waler horses across deserts that turned back explorers using camels.

The book follows on from Drake's other work which includes titles such as "Queensland's Frontier Wars", "The Anzacs" and "The Cattledog's Revenge" among others.

STRINGYBARK FOX
QUEENSLAND
JOHN DICKIE



Australia's Greatest Prospector
1848 - 1924

Bush poet Jack Drake will release his newest book "The Stringybark Fox" next month in Winton. Picture: SUPPLIED

Book tells mine tale

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