

BOBBY'S DAD ARTHUR, TOP OF THE LADDER, WORKING ON THE ROOF OF THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S BUILDING IN PHILLIP STREET, SYDNEY DURING 1938.

conductor took the fares from the outside of the tram where he clung by his eyebrows while standing on the running board in all sorts of weather conditions. Petrol was also rationed. The owner of a car would receive so many ration tickets for a work car during the war. Trucks were fitted with charcoal burners and most had solid narrow rubber tyres with no inner tyre. Rubber was scarce in those days.

One day it was raining and I took the tram home from work. It was packed and when I was getting out at Marrickville Station my umbrella was stuck in the crowd. When I pulled it, this bloke started yelling, "Stop! stop!".

I looked around and saw that my umbrella's handle was hooked into his fly and had pulled off the buttons. They never wore underpants in those days and all I could see was the hair! It was so embarrassing but I couldn't tell anyone.

During those war years there were large numbers of 'swag-gies' — men who walked the country with their swags on their backs and a billy tied on with wire to the swag. This would swing as they walked. They usually carried a mouth organ or a Jew's Harp in their pocket. They had no home and no work. Sometimes their wives died because of lack of food as there was no welfare to assist them at that time.

I was told that during the First World War, when the husband left his wife and children to go to war he would fold a penny with a hammer to conceal its date which was their wedding year or a birthday. He would give it to his wife and say, "I'll be true to you and I will be back".

(To obtain a copy of *Bobby*, see the ad on page 11.)

Poetic Patinas*

David Anthony waxes

ONE OF MY DAYDREAMINGS while driving around the local district is reconstructing the stories of the landscape by adding the dynamic processes of time, functionality and significance to visual remnants both natural and human in origin that I come across during my daily journeys.

Eroded rocks — that bear witness to the massive processes that have occurred over huge expanse of geological time.

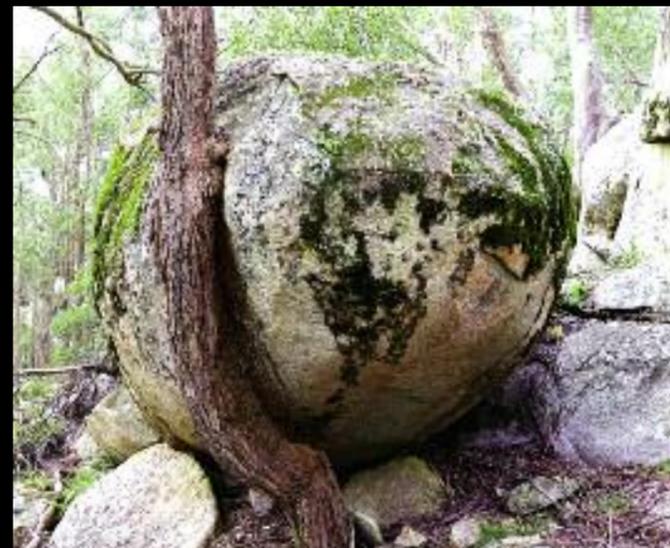
Abandoned cars — the shining symbols of functional modernism finally succumbing to nature's colonisation. Complex patinas of rust and decaying colour revealing both beauty and the impermanence of these aging objects of desire.

Bound trees and fence posts — markers of man's imposition of an artificial order on a continuum of nature

What you can't see in these photos is the poetic rhythm of time, not just the realisation that everything is in a constant state of flux, but the order and juxtaposition of these images that make up the background rhythmic patina of the day.



* Patina: 'a film or incrustation produced by oxidation over time'.



Kate Stevens again makes finalist for portrait prize

Tom Alder gets the story and the photo

I WANTED TO PAINT A PORTRAIT that showed two sides of masculinity. He's just come out of blasting inside a cement silo and he's wearing the 'uniform' of masculinity — and then the pose is in complete contrast to that.

I wanted to show the actual softness of the character with the pose and the conflict with the environment. I hadn't seen that depicted before, so it's a new way of showing the role of being the hero, of being a male in this day and age. It's a portrait of Jonny Beale a local photographer because for the Portia Geach, as in the Archibald, you have to paint someone who's prominent in science, writing or the arts.

I chose to paint Jonny not as a photographer but in the other part of his life — the hydro blasting, the part that earns the money. I like the contrast — because behind most artists there's a real job [laughs].

It took a long time to paint. I had to do it in stages, first the background then the figure emerging on top. Because of the colours I had to physically paint it in that way, building it up so that the figure just pops out.

I loved painting it — I really enjoyed the process of it.