**2019 Silkstone Eisteddfod Choral Speaking**

**OPEN**

**Green and Gold Malaria**

by Rupert McCall

The day would soon arrive when I could not ignore the rash.
I was obviously ill and so I called on Doctor Nash.
This standard consultation would adjudicate my fate.
I walked into his surgery and gave it to him straight:
`Doc, I wonder if you might explain this allergy of mine,
I get these pins and needles running up and down my spine.
From there, across my body, I will suddenly extend -
My neck will feel a shiver and the hairs will stand on end.
And then there is the symptom that only a man can fear -
A choking in the throat, and the crying of a tear.'
Well, the Doctor scratched his melon with a rather worried look.
His furrowed brow suggested that the news to come was crook.
`What is it Doc?' I motioned. `Have I got a rare disease?
I'm man enough to cop it sweet, so give it to me, please.'
`I'm not too sure,' he answered, in a puzzled kind of way.
`You've got some kind of fever, but it's hard for me to say.
When is it that you feel this most peculiar condition?'
I thought for just a moment, then I gave him my position:
`I get it when I'm standing in an Anzac Day parade,
And I get it when the anthem of our native land is played,
And I get it when Meninga makes a Kiwi-crunching run,
And when Border grits his teeth to score a really gutsy ton.
I got it back in '91 when Farr-Jones held the Cup,
And I got it when Japan was stormed by Better Loosen Up.
I get it when Banjo takes me down the Snowy River,
And Matilda sends me waltzing with a billy-boiling shiver.
It hit me hard when Sydney was awarded the Games,
And I get it when I see our farmers fighting for their names.
It flattened me when Bertrand raised the boxing kangaroo,
And when Perkins smashed the record, well, the rashes were true blue.
So tell me, Doc,' I questioned. `Am I really gonna die?'
He broke into a smile before he looked me in the eye.
As he fumbled with his stethoscope and pushed it out of reach,
He wiped away a tear and then he gave me this stirring speech:
`From the beaches here in Queensland to the sweeping shores of Broome,
On the Harbour banks of Sydney where the waratah's in bloom.
From Uluru at sunset to the Mighty Tasman Sea,
In the Adelaide cathedrals, at the roaring MCG.
From the Great Australian Bight up to the Gulf of Carpentaria,
The medical profession call it "green and gold malaria".
But forget about the text books, son, the truth I shouldn't hide.
The rash that you've contracted here is "good old Aussie pride".
I'm afraid that you were born with it and one thing is for sure -
You'll die with it, young man, because there isn't any cure.'