

Story Notes and Behind the Scenes at



No. 52 The Tea and Sugar Train, Part One

Story Notes

The Melbourne Cup is Australia's major thoroughbred horse race. It is run at Flemington Racecourse in Melbourne, Australia. The event starts at 3pm on the first Tuesday in November and is known locally as "the race that stops a nation". (From Wikipedia).

Now it is probably not true that trains stop in Australia, but many other business's and work does. Including an exam I was sitting back in 1976. At a few minutes before three o'clock, half way through an exam, the teacher ordered everyone to stop writing, so we could all watch the race on television. (What!? This doesn't happen in Britain). Five minutes later the exam restarted. (I didn't pass this exam).

The Lego diesel engine used in this story (and in the photographs, see the Behind the Scenes pages below), is similar in design to the Santa Fe Super Chief locomotive produced by Lego. So this is my version of that train. It wasn't scratch built, I merely sourced the relevant parts and then followed the Lego Santa Fe Super Chief train instructions, but used different colours. The locomotive was made well over a year ago, which shows just how long I have been thinking about creating these stories!

Hairy Panic is an Australian term for a fast growing tumbleweed. In February 2016, some residents of Wangaratta, a city 230km north of Melbourne, Australia found their gardens invaded by the fast growing tumbleweed. This isn't a common occurrence, but in this particular year, the weed had managed to get out of control.

Notes about some of the words used in the poem.

A **Kookaburra** is a large Australian Kingfisher bird and is also known as the Laughing Kookaburra as it makes a noise like a human laughing.

The bush refers to the Australian country-side or outback

Gum drops are dried blood-red sap that oozes from eucalyptus trees. The sap can't be eaten and if you did you would be ill.

There are no wild **monkeys** living in Australia. Koalas and possums are the only wild animals that climb trees in the country.

Gay in this instance means happy and carefree.

The complete Kookaburra song is reproduced below.

Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree,
Merry merry king of the bush is he.
Laugh, Kookaburra, laugh, Kookaburra,
Gay your life must be!

Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree,
Eating all the gum drops he can see.
Stop Kookaburra, stop Kookaburra
Save some there for me!

Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree,
Counting all the monkeys he can see.
Stop Kookaburra, stop Kookaburra.
That's not a monkey, that's me!