



Mary Gilmore (1865-1962)

Brief Biography Mary Jean Cameron (1864-1962) was born in New South Wales, and was a school teacher before she joined William Lane's New Australia experiment in Paraguay, South America (a kind of socialist society) ; there she married William Gilmore in 1897. They returned to Australia in 1902 and settled on a farm. In 1908 she began to edit the Women's Page of the *Sydney Worker*, which she continued to do until 1931. Her life span of nearly a century joined pioneering Australia to the modern Commonwealth. Mary Gilmore is one of two Australian writers (A.B. Paterson is the other) featured on the 1993 ten-dollar note.

Old Botany Bay

I'm old
Botany Bay
Stiff in the joints,
Little to say

I am he
Who paved the way
That you might walk
At your ease today;

I was the conscript
Sent to hell
To make in the desert
The living well;

I bore the heat
I blazed the track -
Furrowed and bloody
Upon my back.

I split the rock
I felled the tree
The nation was -
Because of me