

## BALLAD OF THE BUSH SAVERS

Verse by Anne Ringwood

Illustrated by Joyce Mills

The Privet stands in countless ranks,  
Lantana wave on wave;  
Blackberry snarls about the flanks  
To dig the bushland's grave.



The Morning Glory soars on high,  
Triumphant, tall and proud;  
Its flaunting banners reach the sky  
And knit for trees a shroud.

Meanwhile below and round and through  
There oozes softly, bad as bad,  
The never-resting Wandering...Who?  
(not being fascist), call it Trad.



The spreading Blackbutts fail and die,  
No saplings at their feet,  
To stave off last defeat.



It looks, they say, a hopeless case,  
The hostile occupation strong.  
The natives are a dying race,  
Just blame the bats – forget the wrong.



*But no, we'd rather not!  
We friends of bats demur.  
A few can hatch a plot,  
And so (to rhyme) it were!*



Yes, change the tense and if you wish, the tune,  
I'm here to tell you this is what occurred:  
A regiment of women (well, platoon)  
Began one day an enterprise absurd,

This batty bunch moved in from Edward Street  
Untelevised, no trumpet and no drum,  
And in an hour had each removed one weed.  
That left a mere ten million yet to come.

Who was the first? Some finger and some thumb  
Reached out and with a gentle tweak  
Began the revolution. Someone's Mum  
Going Goliath-tackling once a week.

Would you believe, no chainsaw, dynamite or such?  
Bulldozer digs and so on barred as well.  
We go unpicking chaos like embroidery, by touch,  
Slow inch by inch until each has an ell.

And ells add up. Just look around at trees  
Now soaring free and leafing with new hope,  
At good bush grasses reaching up to knees  
And racing fast to clothe the rescued slope.

The little war goes on unceasing. Listen!  
"Oh dear, who's got some Rid?" "whatever's this'n"  
"I've lost my secateurs," "Now stop and let's have tea!"

*The bats keep up a chorus  
And hear the whip bird crack!  
Rosellas chime-in for us .....  
Next Tuesday we'll be back.*

