My little collie pup works silently and wide
You’ll see her climbing up along the mountainside
As silent as a fox, you’ll see her come and go
A shadow through the rocks, where ash and messmate grow
Then list to sight and sound, behind some rugged steep, she works her way around and gathers up the sheep

Mountain Squatter

In the 1950’s Yass very proudly dedicated a park in the township to the memory of Banjo Paterson.

You can wander around the rose garden and admire his bust in bonze, excerpts from some of his most well known poems as well as information regarding his connection to the area about his life.
Andrew Barton (Bartie) Paterson was the oldest of seven Paterson children. He was five when his father moved to ‘Illalong Station’ near Binalong.

The station lay on the main route between Sydney & Melbourne, so there were frequent travellers along the road from bullockies to Cobb & Co coaches.

Young Bartie was fascinated with the bullocks, although warned by his parents not to talk or become friendly with them, he nevertheless yawned to many passing by. Without a doubt these men formed the beginnings of some of the great characters of the bush, that he would write about later in life.

A trip to the racetrack at Bogolong (known now as Bookham) was perhaps the inspiration for ‘Old Pardon, the Son of Reprieve’. At 8, the stations roustabout took young Bartie to the New Year’s Day race meet. The pony Bartie rode had a very light saddle and one of the jockeys borrowed it for the race, promising him a ginger beer if he won. Bartie collected his ginger beer after the horse ‘Pardon’ won by a comfortable margin.

The love of the bush never left ‘Banjo’, a pen name he took from a horse, owned by his family.

After years in the city, he was ready to return to his ‘Mountain Station’ and the opportunity came through an advertisement in the Town & Country Journal. The advertisement offered the property of ‘Coodravale’, near Wee Jasper for sale, in the rugged country between what is now Canberra and Yass. Paterson, with a syndicate, took over the 40,00 acre property. It offered his children the opportunity to grow up experiencing country life, which was his wish.

Paterson’s experience at “Coodravale” were reflected with at least two ballads - ‘The Road to Hogan’s Gap’ & ‘Mountain Squatter’