



Between the Lines

The Folk Process at work in Australia

By Jason Roweth



"These songs are meant to be shared."

- Carrie Milliner

Hi Folks. This column aims to present the results of some of my many happy hours listening to field recordings of traditional Australian singers and aims to include reader contributions as space allows. Please do not hesitate to send an item to me if you feel you have something to contribute - ditties, parodies, songs, even fragments of songs, stories about the singers & musicians...

My great thanks go to the collectors of Australian folklore, and to The National Library of Australia for supporting so much of their work. Thanks also to Chloe Roweth for her help with the transcriptions and map of NSW. Also I'd like to note that 'Goorianawa' and both 'Rattle' songs are available in the John Meredith and Hugh Anderson publication 'Folk Songs of Australia Volume 1' (O.O.P.).

Anyone who has any information regarding these songs, or any other interesting tales regarding song histories in Australia, please don't hesitate to contact me via The Millthorpe Post Office, NSW, 2798 or on 0263 663 260.

This is the fifth 'Between the Lines' instalment. Previous columns have contained the following songs...please contact 'Trad & Now' for back issues of the magazine.

Issue 1 - I Don't Work for a Living

- The Rambling Bachelors
- Cocky's Daughter (Fragment)

Issue 2 - The Drunkard's Child

- The Dark Eyed Gypsy
- Parodies of Show Me the Way to Go Home, Mademoiselle and Daisy

Issue 3 - Molly Baun Lavery

- I Landed Here in Melbourne
- More parodies

Issue 4 - The Death of Ben Hall

- Moreton Bay (Collected Version)



Goorianawa

Traditional



Goorianawa

I've been many years a shearer and I fancied I could shear, I've shore for Rouse of Guntawang and always missed the spear, I've shore for Nicholas Bayly, and I declare to you That on his pure Merinos, I could always struggle through.

But it's O my, I never saw before the way we had to knuckle down at Goorianawa.

I've been shearing down the Bogan as far as Dandaloo, For good old Reid of Tabratong I've often cut a few. Haddon Rig and Quambone, and even Wingadee; I could close my shears a six o'clock with a quiet century.

I've shore for Bob McMaster down on the Rockedgiel Creek And I could always dish him up with thirty score a week. I've shore at Terramungamine, and on the Talbraga And I ran McDermott for the cobbler when we shore at Buckingbar

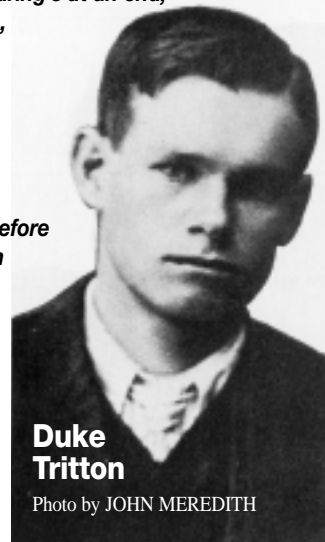
I've been shearing on the Goulburn side, and down at Douglas Park, Where every day 'twas "Wool Away!" and toby did his work. I've shore for General Stewart whose tomb is on The Mount; And the sprees I've had with Scrammy Jack are more than I can count.

I've been shearing at Eugowra - I'll never forget the name, Where Gardiner robbed the escort, which from the Lachlan came. I've shore for Bob Fitzgerald down at the Dabee Rocks, McPhillamy of Charlton, and your Mister Henry Cox.

But that was in the good old days - you might have heard them say How Skillycorn from Bathurst rode to Sydney in a day. Now I'm broken mouthed and my shearing's at an end, And although they call me Whalebone, I was never known to bend.

I've shorn in every woolshed from the Barwon to the sea, But I got speared at Goorianawa before I'd barbered three. For by the living Joseph I never saw before Such sheep as made us knuckle down at Goorianawa.

But it's spare me flamin' days! I never saw before the way we had to knuckle down at Goorianawa.



Duke Tritton

Photo by JOHN MEREDITH

Engines they Rattle / Machine-Guns they Rattle

Another two songs collected by John Meredith. These came from Bill Hughes, a man who had also shorn the sheds of eastern Australia. The first was the 'bush version'. The second obviously reflected new experiences.

They Rattle

Bill Hughes



Engines they Rattle

*The engines they rattle, the cutters they roar,
I don't want to shear these rough sheep anymore.
Take me over the plain, where these rough sheep I won't see again.
O dear, I don't want to shear,
I want to go home.*

Machine-Guns they Rattle

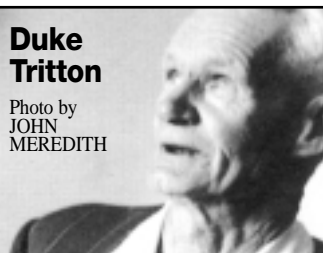
*Machine-guns they rattle, Jack Johnsons they roar,
I don't want to fight with these Fritz anymore.
Take me over the sea, where the Germans they can't get at me.
O my, I don't want to die, I want to go home.*

Shearing in the Bar

This is another fine song from 'Duke' Tritton. This one is his own composition. The melody is written very straight. All the folks that we've heard sing this one will stretch the notes to suit the lyrics.

Duke Tritton

Photo by
JOHN
MEREDITH



Shearing in the Bar

Duke Tritton

Musical notation for the song 'Shearing in the Bar' in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music with lyrics written below the notes.

My shearing days are o-ver, though I ne-ver was a gun, I could al-ways count my twen-ty at the end of ev-ery run. I
used the old Trade Un-ion shears, and the blades were al-ways full as I drove them to the knock-ers and I clipped a-way the wool. I
shore at Goo-ri-an-a-wa and ne-ver got the sack from Bree-za out to Comp-a-dore. I al-ways could go back. And
'though I am a truth-ful man I find when in a bar my tal-ies seem to doub-le and I ne-ver call for tar.

Shearing in the Bar

*My shearing days are over, though I never was a gun,
I could always count my twenty at the end of every run.
I used the old Trade Union shears, and the blades were always full,
As I drove 'em to the knockers, and I clipped away the wool.
I shore at Goorianawa and never got the sack,
From Breeza out to Compadore, I always could go back,
And though I am a truthful man, I find when in a bar
My tallies seem to double, and I never call for tar.*

*Shearing on the western plains where the fleece is full of sand,
And the clover burr and corkscrew grass, is the place to try your hand;
For the sheep are tall and wiry where they feed on the Mitchell grass,*

The cover of the book 'Direct Roots 2' features a globe with musical instruments like a violin and a guitar overlaid on it. The title 'Direct Roots 2' is prominently displayed in a large, white, serif font. A diagonal banner in the top right corner reads 'foreword by Ralph McTell'. The background is a dark, textured surface.

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The Green Man Review

Logos for Mrs Casey Music, Music Union, and Ledgard Jepson creative design are visible at the bottom.

*And every second one of them is close to the cobbler class.
And a pen chock full of cobblers is a shearers dream of hell,
So loud and lurid are their words when they catch one on the bell.
But when we're pouring down the grog, you'll hear no call for tar -
For a shearer never cuts 'em - when he's shearing in a bar.*

*At Louth I caught the bell sheep, a wrinkled, tough wooled brute,
Who never stopped his kicking till I tossed him down the chute.
My wrist was aching badly, but I fought him all the way,
Couldn't afford to miss a blow, I must earn my pound a day.
So when I'd take a strip of skin, I'd hide it with my knee.
Turn the sheep around a bit where the right bower couldn't see.
Then try and catch the rousie's eye and softly whisper "tar"-
But it never seems to happen - when I'm shearing in the bar.*

*I shore away the belly wool and trimmed the crutch and hocks,
Opened up along the neck while the rousie swept the locks.
Then smartly swung the sheep around and dumped him on his rear,
Two blows to clip away the wig - I also took an ear.
Then down around the shoulder and the blades were open wide
As I drove 'em on the long blow and down the whipping side.
And when the fleece fell on the board, he was nearly black with tar -
But this is never mentioned - when I'm shearing in a bar.*

*Now when the seasons ended and my grandsons all come back
In their buggies (Vanguards) and their sulkies (Holdens) - I was always on the track.*

*They come and take me into town to fill me up with beer,
And I sit on a corner stool and listen to them shear.
There's not a bit of difference - it must make the angels weep
To hear a mob of shearers in a barroom shearing sheep;
For the sheep go rattling down the race with never a call for tar -
For a shearer never cuts 'em - when he's shearing in a bar.*

*Then memories come a crowding and they wipe away the years,
And my hand begins to tighten and I seem to feel the shears.
I want to tell them of the sheds, the sheds where I have shorn,
Full fifty years and sometimes more, before these boys were born.
I want to speak of Yarragrin, Dunlop or Wingadee,
But the beer has started working and I'm wobbling at the knees.
So I'd better not start shearing, I'd be bound to call for tar
Then be treated as a blackleg - when I'm shearing in a bar.*

