

# **Wattle Day Workshops**

## **Australian Song Session**

### **Song List**

<b>Song title</b>	<b>Lead by</b>
1. When I got left behind	Mick Kearon
2. The Drovers	Peter Kernebone
3. A flag of our own	Michael Hassett
4. Flow on sweet Mitta	Margie Voake
5. Big Poll the grog seller	Steve Bullock
6. Bonnie Jess	Joan Mundy
7. The Old Palmer song	Maree Buttler
8. Weevils in the flour	Bill Buttler
9. The old girl	Mick Kearon
10. The roaring days	Peter Kernebone
11. The bush girl	Michael Hassett
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13. Cross of the South	Steve Bullock
14. The teams	Maree Buttler
15. The overlanders	Bill Buttler

## WHEN I GOT LEFT BEHIND

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I'm watching the ANZAC Service, in a palliative care home bed  
To march in parade, I'm too old and frail, so It's on TV instead  
In 1915 for adventure, with the A.I.F. I signed  
Listen, I'll tell a story of, when I got left behind.

From the cities, towns and country, men answered to the call  
Fathers, husbands, sons signed up all eager for the war  
I joined up with old mates from school, we didn't have a clue  
Of the choice we made, and the price we'd pay, and all that we'd go through.

In a cove that's now called ANZAC, our boats were towed ashore  
We never dared to say out loud, would we see our homes once more  
Then our officer gave the order, and we all leapt o'er the side  
At the end of day in that Turkish bay, there was only me alive.

*My legs were crushed between two boats, lurching in the tide  
I was saved but on the beach, my mates all fought and died  
The nurse on Lemnos, said each night I'd cry out in my sleep  
But she couldn't see the visions of the company I'd keep.*

And so became the legend, of 'They shall not grow old'  
For me a life of endless guilt and visions to behold  
Now I see the dawn flame burning as the bugle plays "Last Post"  
My old mates are here beside my bed, saying, "It's time to come with us"

# The Drovers

Words: Stella P. Bell

Music: Peter Kernebone

I've seen the mobs of cattle, and drovers on the track,  
And in the heat and dust and flies, on the plains in the outback.  
I've been there when at sundown, the campfires have been lit,  
And sit around them talking, as drovers like to sit.

I've heard the night watch singing as he rides around the mob,  
I know it gives him pleasure, it isn't just a job.  
I've shared their damper with them, and mugs of billy tea,  
I've listened to their stories of how life used to be.

They tell of many changes that they've seen come and go,  
They tell that droving's had its day, and they should really know.  
The stock trains are replacing these hard and wiry men,  
The days of tea and damper will never come again.

I'm glad that I have been there, and know how it was when  
Droving cattle was the business of these, now forgotten, men.

# A Flag of Our Own

Song by John Williamson

Ned Kelly came 'round to see me today  
I guess I was dreaming, oh-oh-oh-oh  
Dumbfounded, I couldn't think what to say  
Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh

I beckoned him in, but he shook his head  
He said, "I'm a bit grubby and a bit poorly bred  
I'd rather we yarned out the back in the shed  
I can leave m' boots on that way"

Well, he took a stiff whisky and laid down his gun  
He said, "I won't keep you long, 'cause I've got to run  
Got to ride to the mountains before night is done"  
Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh

He said, "Word's got around 'bout the music you play  
You truly believe in the fair dinkum way  
That the bush must remain for our spirit to stay  
And we must have a flag of our own"

He said, "I learned long ago when I was still young  
Like the lizard that spits and sticks out his tongue  
Oh, the way to get shot is to carry a gun"  
Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh

"There's a new world order", the leaders all shout  
And everyone's frantic they're gonna miss out  
And the red, white and blues are still marching about  
Oh, we must have a flag of our own

'Cause this is Australia and that's where we're from  
We're not Yankee side-kicks or second class Poms  
And tell the Frogs what they can do with their bomb  
And we must have a flag of our own

Yeah, this is Australia and that's where we're from  
We're not Yankee side-kicks or second class Poms  
And tell the Frogs what they can do with their bomb  
And we must have a flag of our own

## Flow On, Sweet Mitta

1. Flow on, sweet Mitta, so close to my door,  
Caressing the willows that grow by your shore,  
Reflecting the shadows and dancing with rain,  
Those golden leaves passing will ne'er pass again.
2. You come from the mountains of ice, wind and snow,  
And cascade down valleys, to green fields below.  
It's there that you linger, it's there that you stay,  
Sporting with fishes, by night and by day.
3. Oft' when I'm weary, as evening draws nigh,  
I sit by my window to watch you flow by,  
You haunt and you charm me like the sweet scented air,  
That drifts o'er the mountains, and dwells with me here.
4. You're a soul-soothing river, so deep and so calm,  
When storm waters gather, you do me no harm,  
Do you flow on for ever, or like man must die,  
When my soul is resting, I know you'll pass by.

## Big Poll The Grog-Seller

1. Big Poll the Grog-seller gets up every day,  
And her small rowdy tent sweeps out.  
She's turning in plenty of tin, people say,  
For she knows what she's about, for she knows what she's about.

Polly's good-looking, and Polly is young,  
And Polly's possessed of a smooth oily tongue,  
She's an innocent face and a good head of hair,  
And a lot of young fellows will often go there,  
And they keep dropping in handsome Polly to court,  
And she smiles and supplies them with brandy and port,  
And the neighbours all say that the whole blessed day  
She is grog-selling late and early, she is grog-selling late and early.

2. Two sly-grog detectives have come up from town,  
And they both roam about in disguise,  
And several retailers of grog are done brown,  
And have reason to open their eyes, and have reason to open their eyes.

Of her small rowdy crib they are soon on the scent,  
But Polly's prepared when they enter her tent;  
They call for some brandy ... "We don't sell it here,  
But," says Poll, "I can give you some nice ginger beer,"  
And she adds, "Do you see any green in my eye?  
To your fine artful dodge and disguise I am fly,  
For if Polly you'd nail, you'd have, without fail,  
To get up in the morning early, to get up in the morning early."

## Bonnie Jess

Garry Shearston

Now the shearing time is over, Bonnie Jess  
And the sheep are in the clover, Bonnie Jess  
By the creek the cattle are lowing  
And the golden crops are growing  
While the setting sun is glowing, Bonnie Jess  
And a kiss to you he's blowing, Bonnie Jess

To your face the crimson's rushing, Bonnie Jess  
Ah! I know why you are blushing, Bonnie Jess  
'Tis the memory appearing  
Of the promise in the clearing  
When you said twixt hope and fearing, Bonnie Jess  
You would wed him after shearing, Bonnie Jess

And now the shearing time is over, Bonnie Jess  
And you're looking for your lover, Bonnie Jess  
And his horse's hooves are ringing  
As along the road he's swinging  
And a song for you he's singing, Bonnie Jess  
And the wedding ring he's bringing, Bonnie Jess

## The Old Palmer Song

1. The wind is fair and free, my boys, the wind is fair and free,  
The steamer's course is north, my boys, and the Palmer we will see,  
The Palmer we will see, my boys, and Cooktown's muddy shore,  
Where I've been told there's lots of gold, so stay down south no more.

Chorus:     So, blow ye winds, heigh-ho!  
              A-digging we will go;  
              I'll stay no more down south, my boys,  
              So let the music play.  
              In spite of what I'm told,  
              I'm off in search of gold,  
              I'll make a push for that new rush  
              A thousand miles away.



2. They say the blacks are troublesome, and spear both horse and man,  
The rivers are all wide and deep, no bridges them do span,  
No bridges them do span, my boys, and so you'll have to swim,  
But never fear the yarns you hear, and gold you're sure to win.
3. So let us make a move, my boys, for that new promised land,  
And do the best we can, my boys, to lend a helping hand,  
To lend a helping hand, my boys, where the soil is rich and new;  
In spite of the blacks and unknown tracks, we'll show what we can do.

### Notes:

Written around 1874, the language may offend some readers today. The first line of verse 2 refers to First Australians as being 'troublesome', which is from the white settler's point of view. In fact, indigenous Australians were being massacred and forced off their original tribal lands, and it would not be surprising if they fought back.



# Weevils in the flour

Dorothy Hewett

1. On an island in a river,  
How that bitter river ran,  
We lived on scraps of charity  
In the best way that you can.  
On an island in a river,  
Where I grew to be a man.

Chorus: For dole bread is bitter bread,  
Bitter bread and sour.  
There's grief in the taste of it  
There's weevils in the flour,  
There's weevils in the flour.

2. And just across the river  
Stood the might BHP,  
Poured pollution on the water,  
Poured the lead of misery,  
And its smoke was black as Hades  
Rolling hungry to the sea.

3. In those humpies by the river  
We lived on dole and stew,  
While just across the river  
Those greedy smokestacks grew,  
And the hunger of the many  
Filled the bellies of the few.

4. On an island in a river,  
How the bitter river ran,  
It broke the banks of charity  
And baked the bread of man.  
On an island in a river  
Where I grew to be a man.

## THE OLD GIRL

The old girl's been a part of me forever  
There's hardly been a day we've not made sail  
She's a schooner trim and fine, her timbers Huon pine  
And she'll weather any Roaring Forties gale.

I was born in the old girls cabin crossing Bass Strait  
Mum said the wind and waves foretold my fate  
"neath my Fathers guiding hand, I crawled her deck before dry land  
And when he crossed o'er the bar I took command.

*Now she talks to me out there upon the water  
As we glide before the wind across the swell  
From her gentle whispered creak, to her rigging's wind swept shriek  
The old girl's every mood I've learned to tell.*

I've watched the sea miles stretch out far behind us  
A silver road, down which, we've both been borne  
We're patched up and we're frayed, we've both seen better days  
Like her timbers my old bones are tired and worn.

So it's time to 'go about', and make our landfall  
To be pulled up on the beach's sandy shore  
The tides that ebb and flow, have seen us both laid low  
And now old girl, we'll go to sea no more.

*No more, no more, we'll hear the trade winds roar  
It's time for us to turn our heads to shore  
The end has finally come, our voyages are all done  
And now old girl we'll go to sea no more.*

## The Roaring Days

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Words: Henry Lawson

Arr: Gay Scott to the tune Ten Thousand Miles Away

I got this from "The Songs of Henry Lawson", compiled by Chris Kempster

The night too quickly passes and we are growing old,  
so let us fill our glasses and toast the Days of Gold;  
When finds of wondrous treasure set all the South ablaze,  
And you and I were faithful mates all through the roaring days!

Chorus:

All through the roaring days my boys, all through the roaring days,  
And you and I were faithful mates all through the roaring days.

Then stately ships came sailing from every harbour's mouth,  
And sought the land of promise that beacons in the South;  
The brooding bush, awakened, was stirred in wild unrest,  
And all the year a human stream went pouring to the West.

And when the cheery campfire explored the bush with gleams,  
Then camping grounds were crowded with caravans of teams;  
Then home the jests were driven, and good old songs were sung,  
And choruses were given the strength of heart and lung.

Oft when the camps were dreaming, and fires begin to pale,  
Through rugged ranges gleaming swept on the Royal Mail.  
Behind six foaming horses, and lit by flashing lamps,  
Old Cobb and Co., in royal state, went dashing past the camps.

O who would paint a goldfield, and paint the picture right,  
As we have often seen it in early morning's light;  
The yellow mounds of mullock with spots of red and white,  
The scattered quartz that glistened like diamonds in light.

But golden days are vanished, and altered is the scene;  
The diggings are deserted, the camping grounds are green;  
The flaunting flag of progress is in the West unfurled,  
The mighty Bush with iron rails is tethered to the world.

# The Bush Girl

from a poem by Henry Lawson

So you rode from the range where your brothers select  
Through the ghostly grey bush in the dawn  
You rode slowly at first lest her heart should suspect  
That you were so glad to be gone  
You had scarcely the courage to glance back at her  
By the homestead receding from view  
And you breathed with relief as you rounded the spur  
For the world was a wide world to you

*Chorus (repeat after each verse):*

Grey eyes that grow sadder than sunset or rain  
Fond heart that is ever more true  
Firm faith that grows firmer for watching in vain  
She'll wait by the sliprails for you

Ah the world is a new and a wide one to you  
But the world to your sweetheart is shut  
For a change never comes to the lonely bush girl  
From the stockyard the bush and the hut  
And the only relief from its dullness she feels  
Is when ridges grow softened and dim  
And away in the dusk to the sliprails she steals  
To dream of past meetings with him

Do you think where in place of bare fences dry creeks  
Clear streams and green hedges are seen  
Where the girls have lily and rose in their cheeks  
And the grass in midsummer is green?  
Do you think now and then now or then in the whirl  
Of the city while London is new  
Of the hut in the bush and the freckled-face girl  
Who is eating her heart out for you?

Grey eyes that grow sadder than sunset or rain  
Bruised heart that is ever more true  
Fond faith that is firmer for trusting in vain  
She waits by the sliprails for you

## **Bare-legged Kate**

written by John Dengate for his mother  
Kathleen Mary Kelly born 1914 Gundagai NSW

Bare legged Kate with your natural grace,  
The big sad eyes in the Irish face.  
A poor bush girl when the summer is high  
In the stony hills of Gundagai

Bare legged Kate why do you weep  
When the men ride by with their traveling sheep  
Does the sight of the drover make you sad?  
Do you think of the father you never had?

Bare legged Kate why do you run,  
Down to the creek in the setting sun,  
Down where the eyes of the world cannot see –  
Run Kate run from poverty.

Bare legged Kate, there is gold in the hills  
But you know that the cyanide process kills.  
Poisons the miners and cuts them down  
In the mean little homes below the town.

Bare legged Kate, when the floods come down  
It's the poor on the creek are the ones who drown:  
When the great Murrumbidgee is thundering by  
Through the haunted hills of Gundagai.

Bare legged Kate with your natural grace,  
The big sad eyes in the Irish face.  
A poor bush girl when the summer is high  
In the haunted hills of Gundagai.

## The Cross of the South

Words: Kenneth Cook,

Tune: Traditional (Kelly the Boy From Killane)

'Twas the month of December, the year '54  
When the men of Eureka rebelled.  
And they swore that the flag that they made for themselves  
Ever proudly aloft would be held.  
The miners took arms in the stockade that day,  
These proud words poured from their mouths  
'We will stand by the flag and the stars that it bears,  
White stars of the Cross of the South'.

Though the hot blood of the heroes ran strong in their veins,  
There was but one man they obeyed.  
And that hero of heroes they chose from their ranks  
Peter Lalor that hero they made.  
Peter Lalor said, 'Men, we must stand by our guns,  
And fear not the cannon's fierce mouth!  
For I see that the soldiers are gathering now  
To tear down the Cross of the South'.

Captain Thomas, he charged the Eureka Stockade,  
With three hundred troops by his side.  
Fire and steel met them there and they fell back again,  
But the first of the miners had died.  
And the smoke from the battle had scarce cleared away  
When the soldiers came charging once more,  
And the miners, they died as they stood by the flag  
Or fell from the wounds that they bore.

Bold Peter Lalor lay shot on the ground  
Where the soldiers had left him for dead,  
And the flag that he loved lay there by his side,  
The white stars all stained with red.  
Peter Lalor, he rose on his knees in the dust,  
These wild words poured from his mouth:  
'You can murder us all in black tyranny's name,  
But you can't kill the Cross of the South'.

# The Teams

From a poem by Henry Lawson, music by Cathie O'Sullivan

A cloud of dust on the long white road,  
And the teams go creeping on  
Inch by inch with their weary load;  
And by the power of the green-hide goad  
The distant goal is won.

With eyes half-shut to the blinding dust,  
And necks to the yokes bent low,  
The beasts are pulling as bullocks must;  
And the shining tires might almost rust  
While the spokes are turning slow.

With face half-hid 'neath a broad-brimmed hat  
That shades from the heat's white waves,  
And shouldered whip with its green-hide plait,  
The driver plods with a gait like that  
Of his weary, patient slaves.

He wipes his brow, for the day is hot,  
And spits to the left with spite;  
He shouts at 'Bally', and flicks at 'Scot',  
And raises dust from the back of 'Spot',  
And spits to the dusty right.

He'll sometimes pause as a matter of form  
In front of a settler's door,  
And ask for a drink, and remark 'It's warm,  
Or say 'There's signs of a thunder-storm';  
But he seldom utters more.

But the rains are heavy on roads like these;  
And, fronting his lonely home,  
For weeks together the settler sees  
The wagons bogged to the axletrees,  
Or ploughing the sodden loam.

And then when the roads are at their worst,  
The bushman's children hear  
The cruel blows of the whips reversed  
While bullocks pull as their hearts would burst,  
And bellow with pain and fear.

And thus with little of joy or rest  
Are the long, long journeys done;  
And thus 'tis a cruel war at the best  
Is distance fought in the mighty West,  
And the lonely battles won.

## The Overlanders

There's a trade you all know well  
It's bringing the cattle over  
On every track to the gulf and back  
Men know the Queensland drover

Chorus:

So it's pass the billy round boys  
Don't let the pint pot stand there  
For tonight we'll drink the health  
Of every Overlander

I come from the Northern plains  
Where the girls and grass are scanty  
Where the creeks run dry or ten feet high  
And it's either drought or plenty

There are men from every land  
From Spain and France and Flanders  
They're a well mixed pack, both white and black  
The Queensland Overlanders

When we've earned a spree in town  
We'll live like pigs in clover  
And the whole damn cheque pours down the neck  
Of many a Queensland drover

As I pass along the road  
The children raise my dander  
Shouting "Mother dear, take in the clothes  
Here comes an Overlander"