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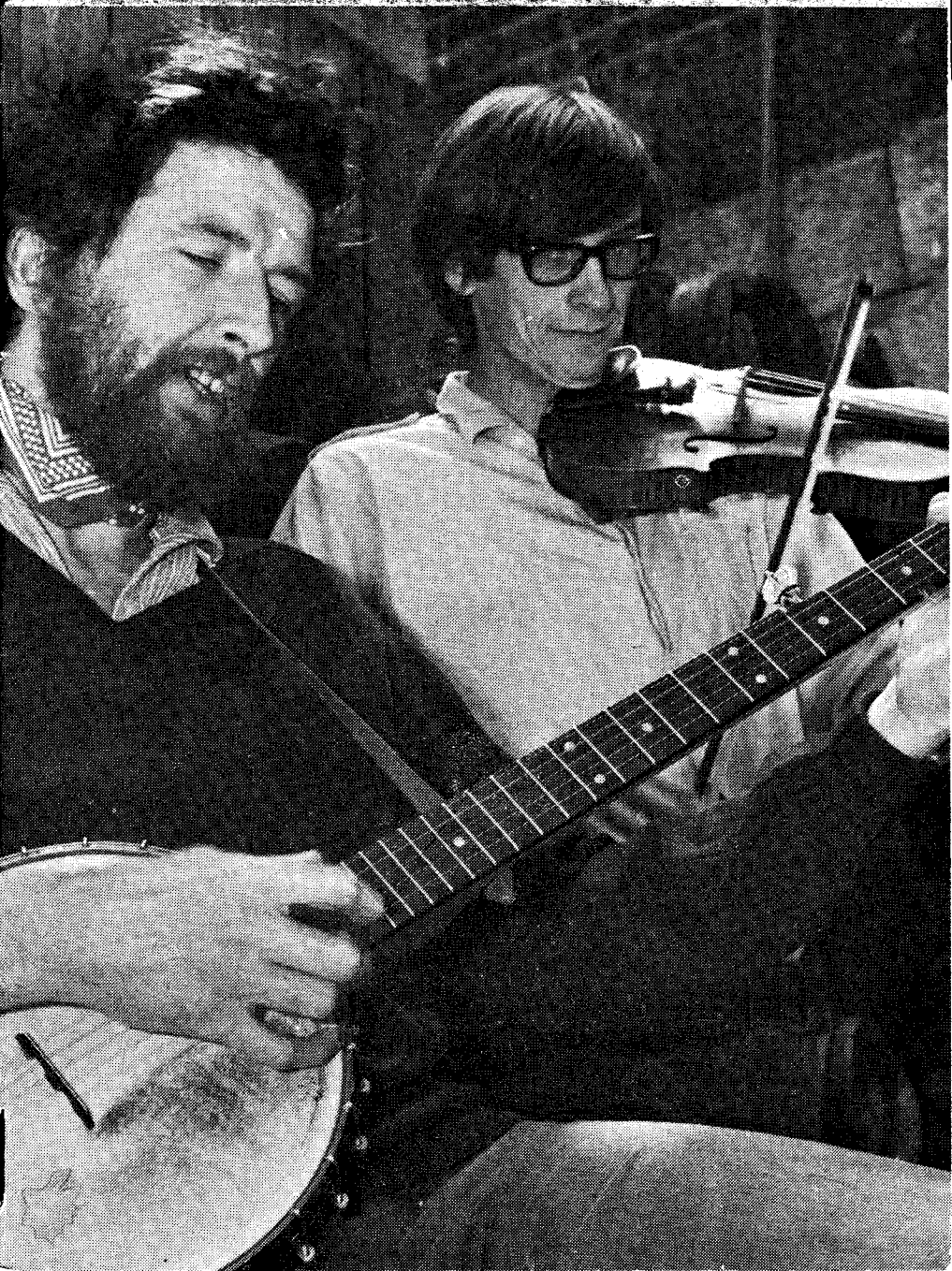

Stand for Matilda ?

Horrified to hear someone, of whom I think well, say at the Sydney Festival, that Waltzing Matilda should be our national anthem.

May I quote: **Keith Dunstan,** Melbourne "Sun", 2-5-69.

" 'Waltzing Matilda' is a great song, as Australian as the tote or the dim sim.

"The story, too, is utterly Australian, about the swaggie knocking off a sheep and being pushed around by the coppers.

"The jumping into the billabong is symbolic of the Australian desire for escape and freedom.

"Making it a National Anthem would be the kiss of death. We would hear it and hear it to the point of agony.

"To be honest, National Anthems are a trial. They are a bore at the beginning and end of concerts and pictures.

"They are barely tolerated at football finals.

"However, my plea is this. Don't make 'Waltzing Matilda' the National Anthem. We love it too much."

— **Continued on Inside Back Cover.**

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Front Cover: Declan Affley and accompanying on the violin, Chris Duffy.

APOLOGY. We accidentally omitted to credit the fine cover photo of our last issue. The picture of the Canberra Woolshed Dance was by Bob Bolton.

Tradition

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THE FOLKLORE SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

AND

THE VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB

Box 2025 S G.P.O. 3001. Australia

Journal of Victorian Folk Music Club and Folk & Lore Society of Victoria.

Editorial

1973 is Tradition's tenth anniversary. The Gumsucker's Gazette appeared as a magazine in 1963, and Tradition (first series) appeared in 1964. In its present format, Tradition first appeared in 1965, so we can have another tenth birthday next year, if we like.

However, what we would like to do is to get support from clubs all over Australia as a 10th birthday present, as our loss is getting a bit much for the Victorian Folk Music Club. So we'll be writing to your club soon to ask will you support us with a guaranteed annual donation, an annual fund-raising function, or what have you. Will you?

Unfortunately, on this, our tenth birthday, we are compelled to raise our price to 50c. No apologies. You all know about the cost of living, and it's been 40c for ten years!

Suggestions that Tradition should print more about the doings of the societies which publish it, inspired us to announce in issue No. 28 that we would devote a page or two in each issue to Club history and doings. Shirley and I wrote the first, and finished up optimistically: "Over to members and friends."

However, the only contributions since, have come from the same stable. I hereby solemnly declare that in our next issue one full page will be reserved for Club news, whether there is any material contributed or not. After all, a bit of white space is always nice. So, come on, folks. Put your money where your mouth is!

Wendy Lowenstein.

REVIEWS

The Clancy That Overflowed, by Wilbur Howcroft; Sirius Publications
Obtainable from the author, c/o Tradition — $1.25.

Every collector has a favourite informant, one who not only tells tales and makes up poems, etc. about his locality, workplace, friends, neighbours, but who adds artistic embellishments, and turns it into a work of creative literature. Wilbur Howcroft is one of these. Fortunately, unlike most collectors and creators of folklore, he has taken to writing down his stuff and publishing it. I recommend this book to everyone who delights in the Australian tradition of straight faced yarn spinning and reminiscences.

One of my favourites relates to a local Council Meeting, when a rather snobbish and unpopular Councillor arose and proposed that a bridge be built over a certain creek. Such a bridge, by the way, would benefit no one but the very gentleman who had recommended the project.

At this, a fellow jumped up and protested vigorously. Said he: "Put a blanky bridge over a little squib of a creek like that? You must be off your rocker. Why, I could spit halfway across the blasted thing!"

Highly enraged, the first members banged the table, and shouted: "You're out of order, sir. You're out of order!"

"I know that," bellowed the other dissenting one; "otherwise I'd spit right across the bloody thing!"

Received For Review:

Ron Edwards, **Index to 1972, Australian Folk Song.**
Check List of Australian Folk Song Tunes.

Pete Seeger, **The Incompleat Folk Singer.**

We did hope to review these in this issue, but as they are important works and demand comprehensive treatment, time makes it impossible to include them. Next time. It's a promise. — **Ed.**

A DICTIONARY OF AUSTRALIAN TERMS

Edited by Wendy Lowenstein

A number of distinguished researchers have compiled lists of the Australian vernacular, but the beauty of language is that it is constantly changing, adapting itself to the needs of life as we live it today. Words come, and some go (like quid, deener, etc.); they change and come to the fore again sometimes altogether different in meaning, sometimes with the meaning subtly altered and providing a fascinating link with our beginnings.

Readers are invited to contribute their favourite expressions to this list, which I hope will be a regular feature; also to comment on the definitions already printed. Modern terms are particularly welcome, although those connected with our folk songs are of wide general interest.

If you are interested in the Australian Language, the list of references below should give you a starter:

B. Bows. The curved hand grips of hand shears look like a capital B. The grip is against the bows which thus cause the blades to spring open after each cut. The name was also used for the shears themselves. (3) (4).

Blades: Hand shears were usually called blades, and hand shearers were "blade" shearers (3). Max Dyer, of Benambra (4) says that to have your blades pulled back, meant that they were bent slightly backwards, or outwards, from the heel of the blade, so that the points were not fully closed even when the shears were not in use. This gave the shearer a "wide blow" as in **Click Go The Shears.** "Wide is his blow, and his blades pulled back."

Bungaree: Small township not far from Ballarat, on the rich chocolate soil. Famous in folk lore as the home of a large Irish population, many of whom grew potatoes. Ballarat residents who wanted to be offensive would refer to "The gentlemen of Ballarat and the savages of Bungaree." Apparently the primitive way of life described in the **Cockies of Bungaree** was quite commonly attributed to the locality.

Cobbler: The last sheep left in the catching pen because it was difficult to shear, was called a cobbler, because like the shoe-maker it "stuck to the last." It also is sometimes called the "snob", a further play on the cobbler theme, as a cobbler is also said to do "snobbing" for a living (5). Alan Scott notes that Shakespeare has "snip and snob" for a tailor and a cobbler. A "cobbler" is now often used for any rough sheep.

Easy Lifers: Old blokes who camp in the bush catching rabbits or perhaps fish to eke out the pension or their savings. They may get rations or perhaps assistance from local property owners, although informants tell me that this is less common than it was, and then only in the more settled areas (4).

Floater: Sometimes called a pie floater (?). This is a meat pie submerged or floating in pea soup. It is an Adelaide delicacy.

Fritz: South Australian name for "German Sausage" or "Strasburg."

Johnny Cake: A small damper cooked quickly for lunch, or when travelling. Baker (1) says, however, that those who link it with the American journey cake are astray. Can be cooked on the coals of a fire or on a dry pan. Not highly thought of by bushmen, as being cooked in a hurry without proper coals, they are likely to be half raw, or if carried to eat cold they are likely to become rock hard. See "Buggars on the Coals" in this issue. (Fieldworkers in Folklore).

Knockers: Small pads, usually of leather or softwood, inset near the heel of the hand shears. They stop jarring and prevent the blades from closing too far and cutting the shearer's hand (3). In spite of **Click go the Shears,** a pair of blades with cork knockers and patent thumb guards do not click, but swish softly (2).

Shooting through like . . . A few days after Gunsynd's triumphant retiring tour of his birth-place, I read that someone "shot through like the Goondiwindi Grey," (pronounced Gundiwindi). It used to be a Bondi tram!

Lamb's Fry: A euphemism for the testicles from "marked" or castrated lambs. An old timer quoted in Baker (1) writes: "In the old days when all hands and the cook went out on horseback to mark a paddock, the wives of station hands and others along the track used to come out to us with pillow slips, calico bags or billy cans with the request that we bring them back a feed of lamb's fry. In the evenings every saddle would have gory bundles dangling from the D's which were eagerly and thankfully received by the populace. On the job or towards tuckertime, when men were beginning to feel hungry, many cods were swallowed like raw oysters . . . " Our later use of the lamb's fry for lamb's liver is one of our most refined additions to the English language.

Patterson, Tom: "Hungry" Patterson features in **Flash Jack from Gundagai.** He "took up Ulonga Station in 1871, and added to it it till the property amounted to 300,000 acres, taking in most of the One Tree Plain. Flash Jack must have been written between 1888 when the Wolseley shearing machines were first invented and introduced, and 1893, when the Bank of Australasia became owners of Ulonga." (2).

Pie'n Peas: A plain old meat pie served wth a scoop of boiled dried peas of a peculiar gray green colour. (A Queensland delicacy).

Pigweed: A variety of portulaca indigenous to Australia and a common bush vegetable. In **The Bullockies' Ball,** "a poultice of pigweed stopped her mouth." Aborigines wash and grind the small seeds and eat them raw. The tuberous roots are also eaten. The succulent leaves, which are eaten raw, resemble water cress and prevent scurvy. The Brazilian variety is commonly grown in gardens for its brilliant flowers. (This description does not appear to fit the indigenous "Pig Face." Can anyone tell us more about pigweed?).

Prog: Food (?). No one has encountered prog either in the field or in literature. **The Bullocky's Ball** celebrates "Buckets of grog and plenty of prog." Can anyone help?

Reffo: A word which was current in Melbourne (and elsewhere?) during the late 1930's and through World War 2. Usually a "bloody reffo." "B.F." was also current in Melbourne, mostly amongst war-time refugees from Hitler, referring semi-humourously to Australians' attitudes towards them. "Bloody "Reffo" gave way briefly to "Balt" when the first post-war wave of migrants arrived from the Baltic countries, against the opposition of trade unions, who feared that these migrants would undermine working conditions (4). This gave way to the officially sponsored "New Australian" which, in turn, is giving way to "migrant."

Tar: Stockholm tar was once used as an antiseptic sealer on cuts to sheep during shearing, and although this has been generally replaced by improved antiseptics and special oil against flies, these new substances are still called "tar." The tarboy has been replaced by any convenient shed hand. (3)

Thumb Guards: Max Dyer, of Benambra, describes a thumb guard as a piece of metal fixed to the shear (usually after purchase) which curves around and protects the thumb of the shearer. (4)

Tiger, Tigering: A general term to describe men who work under hard conditions, and their labour. It was a very popular word in shearing. Used in **Lachlan Tigers.** (3)

Trade Union Shears: These were a very popular brand of hand shears or "blades." They may still be seen about today, and have the initials T.U.S. arranged in the form of a circle. Mr. Bert Ellard, of formerly Pt. Macdonald, S.A., told me that in his area, the T.U.S. were sold at a discount to union members so that, in the course of a season, a shearer would save the price of his union ticket. However, other old (N.S.W.) shearers do not seem to have had this experience. (4)

See P.10

THE GREAT SHEEP DOG TRIALS

BILL SCOTT

My Uncle Arch had a sheepdog called Charles once, and it was the smartest sheepdog between Melbourne and wherever Arch happened to be at the time. It could read brands on horses. It was entirely trustworthy, too. Most of the time they weren't working Arch used to let Charles carry their money round with him. This saved him having to worry about paying bus conductors; but it was sometimes awkward when they were on a railway station and he needed a penny in a hurry. Charles never needed a penny. In fact, Arch made this plain to me one day when we were talking. I said to him: "I expect Charlie's got a good pedigree?"

"What's a pedigree?" said Arch.

"A family tree," I said.

"Any old tree does Charlie," said Arch. "And don't call him Charlie."

He told me this years after the dog was dead. Arch told me he missed Charles something awful. Especially as he had all the money when he died and he passed on before he could go and dig it up and hand it over. But that's beside the point. The point is that Charles was waiting on the verandah of the pub that time at Muckadilla when Arch got into the argument with the three drovers who were taking this big mob of sheep down to Moree. New South Welshmen, they were. I mean, said Arch, nobody can help where they are born, but you don't have to go on living there after you know that there's a place like Queensland just a bit north. Not that I've got anything against New South Welshmen, but I wouldn't want one to marry my sister.

It turned out that these three blokes all had the smartest sheep dog in the world. They were standing arguing at the bar, and drinking raspberry in their rum, which should have warned Arch that they weren't Queenslanders, and the next thing he knew he was talking to them just as though they weren't foreigners. Really it started out with him quietly telling them that they were all mistaken. They wouldn't believe him, and one thing led to another, as things sometimes do in bars at places like Muckadilla. It finished up with Arch challenging the three of them to come out the back where the bull fed and try their luck. He was very debonair in his youth, says Arch; gay and reckless like that bloke D'Artagnan in The Three Musketeers — the only bloke I know who challenged three blokes to fight him at the same time. Well, there was old Ban Ban Jackson at Biggenden that time, but nobody is ever going to tell that story.

So there was Arch ready to strip off his waistcoat and into these three blokes at the woodheap while the admiring dogs watched, when the parson in the parlour came running out and asked what the trouble was. When they explained it, he said: "Come, Come," and things like that. He pointed out that fighting would only settle who was the best fighter, not whose dog was the smartest. He suggested that the dogs be given a trial, youngest first, and that if they cared to put a small wager on the result he would hold the stakes as an impartial observer. That's what he said. When Arch explained all this to Charles, Charles said that he was confident that he could beat two of the other dogs after listening to them talk; but that there was one big old kelpie that he wasn't too sure about. Anyhow, Arch made him give him the money, and they all put up a fiver a side and gave it to the parson to hold while they put the dogs through their paces.

At straight out sheep work there wasn't anything between them. They could all cut a marked wether out of the mob and yard it by itself in no time. So it came down to fancy tricks. The youngest dog went up first. The drover pretended to be asleep on the ground beside his fire. The dog fetched some kindling, blew up the coals until the fire burned up, filled the billy from the waterbag. Then it woke the drover when the billy boiled.

A good standard average performance, but nothing to the competition that was there that day. The second drover laughed, and pretended to go to sleep. His dog did the same as the younger one, only it made the tea and poured a cup for the drover before it woke him. Fair enough. Then the third drover pretended to go to sleep. His dog, the old red kelpie, did all that the others had done, only it put a spoon of sugar in the tea, carried it to the drover, blew on it till it was cool, and then woke him up. Arch could see it would be a close go, but he needn't have worried. Charles did all the things that the other three dogs had done, except that he milked a passing nanny-goat as well, and milked Arch's tea before he woke him; and then went back to the billy and poured out one for himself.

"Well, I don't know," said the parson. "I think we must eliminate the first two contestants. Let us proceed to a final test between the two remaining animals."

The other two drovers wanted to argue, but Arch had the other bloke on his side this time and they told the others to shut up.

The parson went into the bar and got two old empty hock bottles that a passing loco driver had left there. These he placed side by side on the ground about three feet apart. Then he caught a blowfly out of the millions that were flying round the publican and marked it on the back with a spot of white paint and let it go again. Then he stood back and invited the dogs to put the fly into either of the two bottles.

The big red kelpie went first. He quartered back and forth with his belly close to the ground. He never barked. He shouldered the other blowflies aside, and when they got too thick he got up on their backs and ran across them in mid-air, and all the time he relentlessly drove that one marked blowfly towards the two bottles. Eventually he had it poised outside the neck of one of the bottles. He crouched motionless on the ground, menacing the blowfly. The blowfly stamped its forefoot at him, but it recognised its master and turned disconsolately and buzzed into the bottle, which the dog then corked and took to his master.

Even Arch could scarce forebear to cheer.

Arch was worried. He knew that Charles was good, but it began to look as though he'd met his match at last in this big ugly red dog. The kelpie sneered at Charles and winked at the local dogs who had gathered to watch. A small lady fox terrier present was heard to remark that the kelpie was welcome to put his boots under her bed any time he felt like it. Arch looked at Charles in a worried sort of way. Charles just grinned back confidently at him and winked. The other drovers demanded a fresh blowfly, as the one that was yarded was used to being worked by this and would be easier.

The parson caught a real leggy big blowfly and barely touched him with the paint. The minute he let it go it went and sat on the big ugly red dog's back and sneered at Charles. Charles waited until the other drover had emptied the fly out of the bottle and put it back on the ground. Then he went into action.

First he flew into the big red kelpie and bit him until he screamed for mercy and headed back for camp; probably to make himself a mug of tea. This dislodged the blowfly. With deadly skill and cunning, Charles worked the blowfly. He worked it in and out the bystanders. Then he took it three times round the pub and then over to the railway station and back through the store. He ran it until his buzz fell off. Quickly he rounded up the buzz and chased it into one of the bottles, which he quickly corked. You couldn't see it, but if you put the bottle to your ear you could hear it very faintly through the glass. Of course, the blowfly couldn't fly very well without its buzz, so it was child's play to put it into the other bottle, which he also corked. Then he put the three drovers in an empty beer barrel that was standing nearby, and drove the bung in so they couldn't get out. Then he stopped and waited for Arch.

Arch said: "Well, it looks like Charles won. He's a real Queensland dog."

See P.20

THE WALLABY TRACK

Collected by Ron Edwards — from Ron Mackay, Townsville, May, 1970

One morning I rolled up the few things I have got,
I tied to my saddle my quart and pint pot,
I told my old boss that I soon would be back:
I was off for a trip on the Wallaby Track.

The morning was fine, though it grew rather cold,
The sun it was glittering the mountains with gold,
My favourite old dingo was close to my back,
For he knew I was off on the Wallaby Track.

I had a long way to go to an old camping place,
And I rattled along at a very fine pace,
Where friends I would meet when provisions were slack,
For they lived close to the Wallaby Track.

I had not gone very far, I suppose,
When I met with a girl who cried, "Hullo, Joe."
I said, "You're mistaken, my name it is Jack,
And I'm off for a trip on the Wallaby Track."

She said: "Get off your horse and rest yourself now,
Did you see in your travels my old poley cow?
You remember the one that we used to call Black,
I'm afraid she has gone on the Wallaby Track."

I got off my horse and I patted my dog,
And we both sat down on a stringybark log.
I made a fire, boiled the quart, and rattled the pack,
And we both had a meal on the Wallaby Track.

I told that young girl that I wanted a wife,
And if she'd take on a partner for life.
Like a sensible girl, she said: "It's a whack."
And that ended my trip on the Wallaby Track.

Notes: The Wallaby Track tells simple little story in a simple way. There are, however, some odd points; for instance, while the girl did not know the rider's name, she expected him to know the name of her cow. The hero was a real bushman. You notice that the first thing he did on alighting to to court the girl was to pat his dog. Ron Mackay said that he learned this song around 1933 in the Cloncurry area, while working as a contract carpenter round various stations.

Edwards Notebook

John Meredith collected a single verse of a song with the same name from Sally Sloane (Folk Songs of Australia, p.186). This fragment differs in both text and tune from that given here; the only thing that it has in common is that the verse ends with the words, "On The Wallaby Track," as do all the verses given here. — **R.E.**

(I collected another version of The Wallaby Track at Armidale, N.S.W., from Basil Cosgrove, which was published in Tradition, No. 26.

This has three verses in common with the one printed here, and also quite a nice Toorali-oorali sort of chorus. Although they all have different tunes, the verses of the three versions can be sung to either of the tunes given.

Interesting is the use of the word "boss" in Ron's version. Basil's tune has "master." This would appear to date it as an earlier version, because "master" carries connotations of the Master and Servant's Act, which made it illegal for a servant to leave his "master's" employment until the terms of their contract had expired. — **W.L.).**

MORE SAMBO. Mention of the children's song SAMBO in the 30th issue of Tradition has brought a longer version from Beryl Cusworth, of Werribee, Vic. She learned hers in the early 1960's while I recalled mine from the 1930's, which only serves to show how tradition is preserved among children. This is her version, which has a third verse that is new to me.

SAMBO

Sambo had an aunty, an aunty very poor,
One day she said to Sambo: "I'll make you scrub the floor,
Sambo, feeling tired, went upstairs to bed,
Sliding down the banisters he fell right on his head.
BANG! CRASH!

Chorus:

More work for the undertaker,
Seven and six for the tombstone maker,
Off to the local cemetery, on his tombstone you will see,
"Sambo, that's me."

Sambo had an uncle, an uncle very rich,
One day he said to Sambo: "I'll give you two and six",
Sambo feeling thirsty went into a shop,
Ten lemonades and ten ginger beers and Sambo went off "Pop!"

WHIZZ! BANG!! CRASH!!!

Sambo went to work one day without his overcoat,
They made him scrub the railway line with a bar of Velvet soap,
And what do you know he pulled up his sleeves and pushed that engine back,

WHIZZ! BANG!! CRASH!!!

TALL TALES OF A COUNTRY CONSTABLE

DON LAYCOCK

Did I ever tell you about my uncle, Gotcher-Gotcher Laycock? He was a constable out on the Speewah — trooper, they called them in those days — and a soft cop it was, too (no pun intended). He was supposed to make a circuit of the Speewah country and keep an eye on things, but the area was so large he only made one circuit in the fifty years he was stationed there.

It was the day after his wedding that he set out, too. He kissed his bride goodbye, and rode off. He got back just in time for his silver wedding party, thrown by his grandchildren. There were fifty-seven of them, and two hundred and nineteen great-grandchildren. His wife had had quadruplets the year he left, and it had run in the family, because they'd been breeding like rabbits all the time he'd been away, with just the odd triplets and twins thrown in to cut the average down a bit.

Anyway, it was on this trip that Gotcher-Gotcher called in at Speewah Station, looking for Backblocks Paddy in connection with the Kangaroo Murders. This was in the days before they modernised the sheds at Speewah, and they were still using the old long shed. But the boss had got on a bit, and was tired of running up and down the shed on his motorbike, so he invested a few quid in one of those astronomical telescopes, and he'd stand up at one end, and, with a bit of fiddling with the focussing, he could train it on anyone in the shed.

Well, anyway, Gotcher-Gotcher rode in and asked him if he had heard anything of Backblocks Paddy. Now the Boss of the Speewah had a memory like a blackfellow, and knew the names of every shearer that had ever worked on the station — there must have been millions of them. He thought for a minute.

"Backblocks Paddy? Can't say I've ever heard of him. But we took on a new shearer last week called Flatback Paddy. Would that be him?"

"Nah, different bloke. But don't tell me you've given a job to Flatback Paddy! He'd be about the laziest cow this side of the blacks' camp. They call him Flatback 'cos his spine's as straight as a sawn sapling from lying on it all the time. He's so lazy that when he camped on a bull-ant's nest he didn't get up till the ants had chewed off half of his left buttock and were coming back for the other one."

"Why, the lying so-and-so!" said the Boss. "He told me he was called Flatback because he could shear so fast, and grab the next one from the pen so quick, that his back never had time to get bent. Anyway, I'll fix him. I'll just have a look and see what he's up to now."

So the Boss goes up to his telescope and sets it on maximum distance, 'cos, naturally, Flatback Paddy had picked a pen as far away from the Boss as possible. The Boss put his eye to the hole of the telescope, and after about ten minutes the end of the shed came into view — it used to take that long to see the end of the shed even with the telescope. And there was Flatback Paddy, flat on his back on a pile of new fleeces, reading "The Life and Holy Miracles of the Blessed Saint Bridget." — and the tar-boy was turning the pages for him. The Boss was so mad that he whipped out his pistol and fired it straight down the shed at Flatback Paddy.

Well, that should have been the end of the incident, especially as my uncle, who was wise to the ways of the bush, turned a blind eye to the shooting. But a few months later, when the sheds had cut out and the men were lining up for their cheques — the Boss had a hundred overseers to help him, otherwise they'd still be paying them — who should front up to the Boss for his dough but Flatback Paddy.

"What the hell are you doing here?" yelled the Boss. "I thought I shot you!"

"And when would that be now?" asked Flatback Paddy.

"About two months ago," said the Boss.

"Ah, well now, that explains it," answered Flatback Paddy. "With the help of the Blessed Saint Bridget, and the length of the Speewah shed, that accursed bullet hasn't reached the end of the shed yet!"

He was right, too. When the rouseabout went into the western end of the shed, a few days later, to clean up, the bullet took off his left earlobe. For years after he always reckoned that was what caused his headaches.

But what I really started out to tell you was how my uncle got to be called Gotcher-Gotcher. You see, he stammered a bit when he was excited, and that was what used to come out, instead of the more formal, "I arrest you in the name of the law." He was going off duty one night when he saw a man coming down the street on a bike without a lamp on it. He chased after him and put his hand on his shoulder, and blurted out: "Gotcher, gotcher! Riding a light without a bicycle!" And they called him Gotcher-Gotcher ever after.

Never mind about the Kangaroo Murders; I'll tell you another time. Let me tell you what happened to me when I was up north. No, not on the Speewah, I never was there; this was just out of Alice Springs, round Palm Valley. I was having a bit of a yarn with this old blackfellow called Rockeye Nelson, when I noticed that all the time he was staring to the north. There he was, sucking away on his pipe, and watching this tiny puff of smoke on the northern horizon.

"Smoke signal, Rockeye?" says I.

"Mm," he says.

"What they telling you?" I asked. "Some men gone and killed a kangaroo that way?"

"Nah," he says. "That's me brother Andy. He's in the back yard of the Oriental at Darwin, watching Peyton Place through the window of the lounge and sending it to me by smoke."

Well, I watched for a bit, but couldn't follow it. But suddenly Rockeye leapt to his feet and started puffing on his pipe like mad, sending up great clouds of smoke.

"What's the matter, Rockeye?" I asked.

"Bloody commercial," he snorted. "They said this is Marlboro country, but this bloody Arunta country, and always bloody well has been, and I'm bloody well telling them so."

It wasn't till I got back to the Alice that I remembered that Peyton Place was on in the evening, and here was Rockeye claiming to watch it in the middle of the afternoon. But a bloke in the pub explained that to me: the relay from Sydney doesn't reach Darwin till the next afternoon. I reckon Rockeye's smoke signal was quicker.

I never did get round to telling my uncle Gotcher-Gotcher that story. He was a disbelieving sod, anyhow.

★★★

PATSY FAGAN

Collected by Alan Scott from Mr. P. Crowley.
From A Collector's Songbook, by Alan Scott, Bush Music Club, Sydney.

I left my home in Ireland, twas many years ago,
I left my home in Ireland, where the pigs and praties grow,
And since I left old Ireland it's always been my plan
To show these Aussie people that I'm a decent Irishman.

Chorus:

Hullo Patsy Fagan, you'll hear the girls all cry,
Hullo Patsy Fagan, you're the apple of my eye.
You're a decent lad from Ireland, there's no one can deny,
You're a harum scarum devil may carum decent Irish boy.

I'm working here in Aussie, and I've got a decent job,
Shovelling bricks and mortar and the pay is fifty bob,
O, I wake up in the morning and I wake up with the lark,
And as I'm walking down the street you'll hear the girls remark:

Chorus:

I'm working here in Aussie,
Now if there's one among you who'd care to marry me,
I'll take you to my little home across the Irish Sea.
I'll dress you up in satin and I'll please you all I can,
Just to let these Aussie people know I'm a decent Irishman.

ALEXANDER ROBERTSON

1861 - 1888

Anthony Robertson, O.F.M., CAP.

Aroused by the article in the Spring, 1972, edition of "Australian Tradition" concerning my great-great-uncle, Alex Robertson, I made use of a recent holiday in Geelong to see some of the older members of the family, who along with varied sources of information, enabled me to collect the following:

Alexander Robertson was born in Geelong in 1861. It seems that he developed an interest (and a degree of ability) with horses while young. One of his first jobs when he left school was to ride the mail between Geelong and Anakie for the postmaster, Mr. Miles.

He was renowned as a jockey and in 1884 he rode the legendary Malua, to victory in the Melbourne Cup, making it the first Tasmanian horse to do so. After this win, Robertson built a home for his mother in Little Malop St., Geelong. The house was named "Malua Cott" and it was here that my grandfather was born and lived his early years.

The fatal ride in which Alex died was the 1888 Tattersall's Cup. A report of the incident was sent by telegraph from Sydney to Geelong. A section of the report reads:

> "When the horses were approaching the straight, Vespasia was seen to fall and almost simultaneously Silvermine came down over her, while in a twinkling, Invader fell on the pair. For an instant there was a confused mass struggling on the ground, but Vespasia and Invader, with their riders, were soon seen to rise, while Silvermine and his jockey Robertson, were stretched out where they fell. Willing hands were soon to work and Robertson was taken in the ambulance to the casualty room, where an examination proved that the base of the skull and collar-bone were fractured and he was otherwise badly injured. The sufferer was taken to St. Vincent's Hospital where he died yesterday morning. The horse, Silvermine, had its back broken and had to be destroyed."

Although the cable for the next day indicated that the jockey's body would be brought back to Geelong for burial, a funeral was conducted in Sydney and Alex was interred in the Catholic section of the Waverley cemetery. Mention is made that a wreath tied with the colours worn by the jockey at the time of the accident was sent by Mr. R. Foulsham, a prominent trainer at the time. The headstone on Alex's grave reads:

IN MEMORY OF
ALEC ROBERTSON
AGED 27
WHO WAS ACCIDENTALLY KILLED AT RANDWICK
ON THE 2nd JANUARY, 1888
WHILST RIDING SILVERMINE,
IN TATTERSALL'S CUP
REQUIESCAT IN PACE
THIS MEMORIAL WAS ERECTED BY WILLIAM COOPER
AS A MARK OF ESTEEM AND RESPECT.

Just as an interesting side-line. I notice that there seems to be some confusion over the correct spelling of the name. Even on the head-stone, Alex is spelt with a "c". Traditionally, the name "Alexander" goes to the eldest son of each generation of the family. Both my father and grandfather have the name. However, although as the eldest in the present generation, I should carry the name, the only link existing is that I am an A. Robertson . . . . the "A" standing for Anthony.

FESTIVAL — 1973

The Port Phillip (7th National) Folk Festival, held in Melbourne at Easter, attracted some hundreds of interstate visitors as well as a goodly selection of local fans. On the whole it was a very successful festival with more to praise than to blame. The most obvious problem is that most people who come to festivals want to participate, not just look and listen. Unfortunately, festival organisers, at least where big city festivals are concerned, face insuperable difficulties in catering for this need and, at the same time, catering for the general public that a large festival attracts.

Quite apart from organised participation, everyone enjoys informal sessions but where, oh where, can one find venues with a place for informal sessions, accompanied by the occasional jar, tube, or what have you? Dan O'Connell's pub featured as an annexe to the 7th national festival at least on some days, and some good music sessions were held there. But it would add a lot to any festival to be able to have these convivial informal sessions nearby to wherever the official sessions are running.

The few workshops which were based on audience participation proved to be very popular. Chris Hector ran an excellent one on group singing. He was particularly successful in creating a friendly and relaxed relationship both with the singers leading the songs and with the audience. Everyone was sorry when it was time to wind up this session.

I was very impressed with the enthusiastic level of participation at this dance workshop. There was no difficulty in getting people to dance, and with the assistance of Scottish and Irish dance groups we kept the dancing going all one afternoon. This was good, as we were able to cater both for those people who just popped in for a while, as well as for the really hardy enthusiasts who stayed the whole course.

The reception, held at the Royal Park Hall, had started the festival off well with a friendly hospitable atmosphere. The dancing, featured for the first time at a festival reception, was very successful. This was capably conducted by Jim Buchanan, who managed to overcome the twin disadvantages of the difficult accoustics of that hall and the conviviality of the audience.

The workshops were well attended and were generally of a good standard, although somewhat restricted in subjects. The more academic aspects of folklore, which had been strongly presented at early Port Phillip festivals, were rather neglected. Similarly, this festival did not reflect the steadily increasing interest in Australia in our national folk music and folk lore. Most people running workshops did a good job in involving as many performers as possible.

The main problem, as usual, came from the necessity of using the evening concerts to help with the financial cost of putting on such a large festival. This means that concerts tend to be planned to attract the general

public rather than as an integrated part of the festival. Those at this Port Phillip Festival were a really extreme example of this sort of planning. Viewed simply as concerts for musical enjoyment and entertainment they were really first class. The only deficiency was some amateurish stage management on the Saturday night, which allowed much opening and shutting of the doors to the back of the stage, so that sounds of vigorous practice interfered with the artists on stage.

Limiting the number of performers does, nevertheless, have serious limitations for a festival concert, and until someone can come up with other satisfactory alternatives for the many good singers, particularly those from interstate, who do not get on to these concerts, this method of designing concerts which continue to cause friction, I favour a larger number of performers each with a shorter time at a festival concert.. What may be lost in artistic effect, is compensated for in the better integration of the concerts with other festival activities, greater variety and the opportunity to hear interstate singers otherwise missed, as one cannot attend all workshops. In addition, I believe that new ways of providing performers, especially new ones, with audiences at festivals, need to be explored.

Everyone who has had anything to do with running festivals will know how difficult "Come-All-Ye's" are to run well. Sure, you have thousands of people wanting to perform, but you can't always guarantee them a decent audience if interesting workshops are running simultaneously. It might be worthwhile trying a system of having shorter workshops with short day-time concerts in between, or staggering starting and finishing times of workshops so that people could look in on those concerts part-time. The system of allowing audiences access to workshops only from the rear of the lecture theatres worked extremely well at the Port Phillip festival, and this would allow for this sort of flexibility in coming and going without disturbing performers or lecturers unduly.

Another experiment which might be worth trying would be a sort of troubadour approach by having performers circulating to take advantage of any ready-made audience that is temporarily available. They could be used to fill up those delays that occur at the beginning of most workshops while people are waiting for proceedings to start. They could also perform to some of those informal groups which often mill around rather aimlessly. Of course, this sort of flexible organising is much more difficult than the conventional kind. Still, the clamour for more exposure to audiences has been the criticism most often raised by performers at all festivals since 1967, so maybe new ways of doing this should be tried out.

One successful attempt to extend participation was the inclusion of a few of the other cultural groups resident in Australia. Due to the Easter break only four of the fourteen groups approached were available, but these Czech, Latvian, Scottish and Irish groups performed to large and enthusiastic audiences.

Folk festivals are burgeoning all over Australia. As well as the 7th national festival, 1973 will have seen festivals in Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, Alice Springs, Wagga, Newcastle, Nariel and Nimbin. American experience has indicated that the larger festivals tend to become self-destructive after a period. It is good to see the Aquarius Festival getting away from the conventional format this time and taking to the outdoor life at Nimbin. The Nariel festivals have already demonstrated how attractive festivals held in pleasant country surroundings can be. I'm sure if some enterprising characters could find other pleasantly rural venues for festivals, not too far from some of our capital cities, they would have a sure-fire success of a festival on their hands. So, if you are still arguing about who will go on the big festival concerts in 10 years' time, don't forget that we did warn you.

— Shirley Andrews.

BONNY JESS

Words: Thomas Spencer. **Melody: Gary Shearston.**

Now the shearing time is over, Bonny Jess,
And the sheep are in the clover, Bonny Jess,
By the creek the cattle are lowing,
And the golden crops are growing,
While the setting sun is glowing, Bonny Jess,
And a kiss for thee I'm throwing, Bonny Jess.

To thy face the crimson's rushing, Bonny Jess,
And I know why thou art blushing, Bonny Jess.
'Tis the memory appearing,
Of the promise in the clearing,
When you said 'twixt hope and fearing, Bonny Jess,
You would wed me after shearing, Bonny Jess.

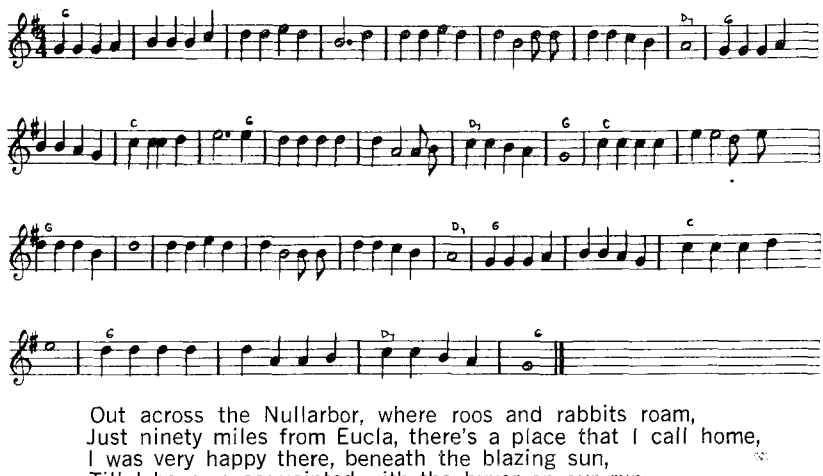
And now shearing time is over, Bonnie Jess.
Thou art looking for thy lover, Bonnie Jess.
And my horse's hooves are ringing,
As along the road I'm swinging,
And a song for thee I'm singing, Bonny Jess,
And the wedding ring I'm bringing, Bonny Jess.

This, despite its fancy language, all the "arts" and "thee's" and "thou's", is a particularly nice song, specially welcome since there are so few good love songs in the Australian song repertoire. Try substituting "you" for "thee" and so on. — **Ed.**

TWO SONGS ABOUT RABB

THE BUYER ON OUR RUN

Words: Anon. Music: Fai Hockley
Collected: Wendy and Werner Lowenstein — Madura, 1969.



Out across the Nullarbor, where roos and rabbits roam,
Just ninety miles from Eucla, there's a place that I call home,
I was very happy there, beneath the blazing sun,
Till I became acquainted with the buyer on our run.

Give you an example of the silly things he'd do,
Waited back to see him, on the day that he came through,
Pairing rabbits by the string, but I guess he didn't see,
Cause the silly so and so ran right over me.

Now, I am just a trapper, trapping for a crust,
Fighting for survival in the biting wind and dust,
And if these troubles aren't enough there is another one:
I can't divulge his name, but he's the buyer on our run.

I'll tell you that it's real good fun, to set two hundred traps,
To know that you'll get ninety or a hundred pair, perhaps;
To find when you come home at night, from the dust and heat,
That he's forgot your order and you're out of bread and meat.

Now if you plan on travelling, and across the plains you go,
Take a tip from me, I'm the guy that ought to know,
Plan your trip ahead my friend, be sure you plan it right,
So that you pass Madura in the middle of the night.

Chances are he'll be there, to have himself a whirl,
Has a taste for grape juice, has a taste for girls,
Avoid him like the plague, my friend; he is the devil's son,
You don't know trouble till you've met the buyer on our run.

See Inside Back Cover.

tor's Choice

)NGS ABOUT RABBITS

ai Hockley

THE RABBIT TRAPPER'S SONG

Collected by Wendy Lowenstein and Dave de Hugard from Basil Cosgrove, Armidale, N.S.W.

Oh, my traps are all a-jangle, at an easy swinging tangle,
I'm setting in a circle keeping round a fringe of trees;
Although I'm mud and gory spattered, and my clobber's torn and tattered
I'm as carefree as the bunnies till they fall for one of these.

Oh, I'm under no man's orders and I recognise no borders,
There's a welcome everywhere for me and my old dungarees;
I'm a ..... (1) rabbit trapper, and a canny bunny snapper,
And I (whistle) through the bushland, though I'm wet up to the knees (3).

While you guys are courting tabbies, I'm out among the rabbies,
I can hear them bucking, squealing, oh, a dozen traps ahead,
And again while you are flirting (2) at the last trap I am certain
To be bagging up my bunnies, keeping tally as I tread.

So Ginger make the railway early, there's a shy and dinkum girlie
Lets me juggle (4) with the cream cans as she write cheques out for me.

Notes: Basil Cosgrove, who is in his sixties, works and has lived most of his life in the New England District of N.S.W., where he works as a ring-barker. Basil has an immense repertoire of songs, some very old. (Tradition No. 23, Page 31). 2 He said that the words for this song were written by a lady and published in 'The Women's Weekly' about "50 years ago." He adds that "we put a tune to it."

I found this song specially interesting because it is, as far as I know, only the second one collected from oral tradition which celebrates the life of the rabbit trapper. It was recorded at a party with Ian White, Tom Rummery, Dave de Hugard and others, at Armidale, N.S.W.

Dave later recorded it again, and a few of the more doubtful words were clarified. The words are a trifle garbled, but it is quite easy to add a word here and there, to arrive at a singable version.

1. Sometimes "spurting." 2. Sounded like "snowpole" or "smokehole".
3. "Whistle" is my addition.
Sometimes Basil sang a different line, first part unclear, and second part concluding "to my trapper melody."
4. Sometimes "she juggles."

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k Cover.

DANCE NOTES AND BOOKLIST

Compiled by Shirley Andrews

Maybe the last copy of Tradition has inspired some other people to do some research into traditional Australian dancing. There is lots more information still to be gathered about dances done in the early days before living memory and also about styles of dancing, etc. Much of this useful information is waiting to be discovered in old newspapers, autobiographies and books of reminiscences.

Anyone who wants to make a more thorough study of traditional dancing might like to have a list of some of the basic reference books which I have found useful for this. One essential one **The Social Dances of the 19th Century** by Philip J. S. Richardson, 1960, London; Routledge and Kegan Paul, covers this and earlier eras.

A broad knowledge of the development of folk dancing in Europe is also necessary so as to see Australian traditional dancing in its correct perspective. An excellent account is given in **European Folk Dance** by Joan Lawson, 1953, London; Sir Isaac Pitman. **The Dance; an Historical Survey of Dancing in Europe** by C. J. Sharp and A. P. Oppe, (1924), is also valuable. There are many books with fuller details of the folk dances of particular countries, too numerous to list here.

Other useful books on the historical aspects of dancing include **Some Historical Dances (12th to 19th Century)** by Melusine Wood, 1952; **A History of Dancing** by G. Vuillier, 1898, English Translation by Heinemann, London; **Dancing** by Mrs. Lily Grove, 1895, London; Longmans, Green & Co.; **Traditional Dancing in Scotland** by J. F. & T. M. Flett, 1964, London; Routledge and Kegan Paul; **Scotland Through Her Country Dances,** by George Emmerson, 1967, London; Johnson Publications Ltd., **Dancing** by C. J. S. Thompson, London; Collins; **The Dance: Its Place in Art and Life,** by Troy and Margaret West Kinney, 1914; **The Dance: An Historical Survey,** by C. J. Sharpe and A. P. Oppe, 1924.

For descriptions of folk dances from Great Britain, the Community Dance Manuals Nos. 1-7, published by the English Folk Dance and Song Society; also Cecil Sharp's Country Dance Books 1-6, and English Country Dance 1-9, and the Scottish Country Dance Society's Scottish Country Dance Books 1-11. There are many useful books giving the instructions for the social dances of the 19th and early 20th century under the name of Old Time Dancing. One authoritative one with very detailed descriptions is **Old Time and Sequence Dancing** by Michael Gwynne, 1950, London; Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd.

There are a few interesting old books of dance instructions published in Australia during the last 30 years of the 19th century in our main reference libraries. These include:

Mrs. Chas Read's Australian Ball Room Guide: The 9th ed. is in the National Library at Canberra.

Roberts' Manual of Fashionable Dancing, 2nd ed. 1876, published by George Robertson, Melbourne, is in the State Library, Melbourne. The Messieurs and Miss Roberts ran a series of successful dancing academies at that time, one in Collins Street, one in St. Kilda and one in Sydney. **A Manual of Dancing and Etiquette** by Professor J. H. Christison, 1882, published by the "Mercury Office," Maitland, is in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

One depressing sidelight of this work has been the observation that the good collection of early books on this subject that was in the State Public Library in Melbourne is likely to be completely lost to us soon. When I first started consulting these, about 1962, most of those listed in the catalogue as being held upstairs could readily be produced by the library staff when requested. Recently I have found many of them to be missing. It seems that this library is so starved for finance and staff that there is no chance of the fine collection of books amassed in the early days being properly looked after.

There are some interesting books on social dancing in America where, apart from the American-style square dances, the dances done were very similar to those in Australia. **The Round Dance Book** by Lloyd L. Shaw (1949) is one of the most comprehensive.

The best reference collection of books on folk dancing that I have found so far is that in the library of the Secondary Teachers' College at the Sydney University. They also have a magnificent index listing all the dances in all their books and where each may be located.

The information gathered about dances done in Australia in the early days is much more scattered and was obtained from many sources, far too numerous to list here. Margaret Kiddle's **Men of Yesterday,** 1961, Melbourne University Press, is one of the few serious historical studies I could find which has a number of accounts of dancing. Another is an M.A. thesis on **Social Life and Conditions in Early Melbourne prior to Separation,** by Rose McGowan, held in the Baillieu Library at Melbourne University. Most of the rest of my information came from brief accounts or comments on dancing in a variety of early books and newspapers. A selection of these was included in the last Tradition, but I am sure that there are many others that could be added to our collection. $or

N.B.: Alan Scott, in his **Collector's Songbook,** 1970, Bush Music Club, also mentions an article by Mr. Percy Gresser, called "The Songs They Sang And the Dances They Did," written about the Bathurst district. The article is in the Mitchell Library.

Thady, You Gander.

The dance, **Thady You Gander** or **The Irish Trot,** was included in the last Tradition (Page 14). I said I had been unable to find the meaning of the first name. Jacko Kevins, well known as a fine player of dance music, particularly Irish music, has come to light with it. Jacko says that Thady is an Irish name so that the title is apparently somewhat an uncomplimentary remark addressed to some character of that name. Gander has its usual meaning as the husband of Mrs. Goose, traditionally represented as being rather silly.

This dance seemed to be known all over Great Britain, but as it was listed under its other title, **Irish Trot,** in the 1st edition of the **English Dancing Master,** published in 1650 by John Playford, it may have come originally from Ireland.

The Tempest

The Tempest is one of those dances which combines some of the characteristics of the country dance with those of the social dances of the eighteenth century. An anonymous Ballroom Guide of the 1860's states that it was introduced into England from Paris about 1860 and "speedily became a favourite and for several seasons was much danced in London and the Provinces. It unites the cheerfulness of the quadrille with the sociability of the Country Dance."

It apparently became popular all over England and many parts of Scotland so that the English Song and Dance Society have a number of versions collected in different places. The version given in the last Tradition is almost

the same as the one collected in Wiltshire. It is also reported by J. F. and T. M. Flett in **Traditional Dancing in Scotland** that it was done in various places there.

A Further Note on "The Tempest."

"The Tempest" is one of those early Victorian ballroom dances which eventually turned up in the English and Scottish countryside where they were **discovered** around the turn of the Century by folk dance collectors.

Under the ballroom name of "La Tempete," it is described in a number of ballroom dance guides from at least 1840. As "The Tempest," it is described today in the English Folk Dance and Song Society publication, Community Dance Manual, No. 3, and this description is almost identical to that given in the Dance Issue of Australian Tradition. (The difference being that the Outside balance during the righthand star. The music is identical). As "Tom Pate" (a sort of anglicized spelling of the French title!), it is described in the Community Dance Manual, No. 6, although in a variation that is sufficiently different so that it could almost be regarded as another dance.

According to J. F. and T. M. Flett, in their "Traditional Dancing in Scotland" (1964), "La Tempete" was certainly still being taught in Scotland in the 1890's.

G. D. Towner.

THE GREAT SHEEP DOG TRIALS

The parson looked a bit put out by this. "If it comes to that, I'm from across the border myself," he said.

Before Arch could offer to fight him, Charles had put him away, too; but I'm not going to say where he droved the parson. Use your imagination. But before he locked him in he drove the stakes out of the parson's pocket and into Arch's pocket. Then he shot round the front of the pub and came back leading the pack horse and the saddle horse by the bridle, and Arch took the hint and rode out of there.

So don't mention smart sheepdogs when you're round Arch. He had a better one once.

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NINEPINS QUADRILLE

Formation: Quadrille set of 4 couples*, with one extra man in the centre —

First couple galop round. With ballroom hold, 1st couple move round the ninepin with sideways galop step. The ninepin in the centre should dodge

Second couple galop round.

Third couple galop round.

Fourth couple galop round.

All circle left. The whole set take hands in a ring and circle to the left with slip steps.

Circle back again. Circle back to places, with slip steps to right.

Ladies circle left. The four ladies form a ring and circle left.

Circle back again. Slip steps to right back to places.

Men march round. The men march round one behind the other, the ninepin joins them. The ladies stand in their places. When the music stops, each man seizes a partner; the man left over is the ninepin.

NINEPINS QUADRILLE (LADIES' CHOICE VERSION)

Formation: As above, but with a lady in the centre.

The dance is the same up to "All circle left."

After this, **Men only circle left** and **back again.**

Ladies march round, men remain in places and each lady siezes a new partner when the music stops.

* The Quadrille set numbers the couples as follows:

The top or first couple is the couple nearest the musicians (who traditionally would be at the top of the hall); the second couple is opposite the first couple; the third couple is on the right of the first couple, and the fourth couple is on the left of the first couple. All four couples stand in a square, facing inwards, ladies on the right hand side of their partners.

Music — Lively jigs or reels. At least 48 bars, but the musicians should vary the length of the music and stop playing suddenly while the four men (or ladies) and the ninepin are circling in the centre.

Notes: The *Ninepins Quadrille* is another of these dances known over large areas of Great Britain. A version similar to this was taught to Warren Fahey by a lady in the Maitland district. This quadrille version was developed from earlier country dances, such as the ninesome reel, pin reel, etc. A dance called the Country Bumpkin was mentioned in a quotation from the Sydney Gazette of May 15th, 1803. (See Eye-Witness Accounts, Australian Tradition No. 30, page 5).

Victorian Folk Music Club

TRAD. DANCING IS POPULAR

The Victorian Folk Music Club is very active on the dance front. Members don't only study and write about Australian traditional dancing — they dance themselves and also persuade lots of other people to have a go at it. The Club has always been able to rustle up demonstration groups from among its members. Some of these groups have appeared at Moomba and other large folk concerts and other special functions the Club has been involved in. They have taken a leading part in the dancing at a number of national folk festivals. Last year a new demonstration group of younger members was organised by Ken Farrow. It has been kept busy ever since and 1973 has been particularly hectic.

As well as the regular Club functions, this group assists with many functions with the V.F.M.C. concert parties. Some of these functions have taken the form of woolshed dances similar to those which the Club organises for itself. These require a whole evening of dancing and a demonstration group makes these easier to run and more enjoyable for those people who have not seen the dances before. The demonstration group has also been able to make a worthwhile contribution to the work of the concert party at the monthly performances at Emu Bottom.

This group was really overworked at the dance workshop at the Port Phillip Folk Festival, held at Easter. as this continued on all afternoon. Shirley Andrews had invited a Scottish and an Irish dance group to take part as guest artists to give variety to the programme and also to give our dancers and musicians a rest. After each of their demonstrations they taught us one of their dances. However, as our dancers were also keen to learn these dances, too, they certainly didn't spend much time sitting down.

Members of the group which assisted at the festival were Ann Dunnadge, Sandra Ede, Marian Thiessen, Jenny and John Stuart, Ken Farrow, David Entwhistle and Kevin Hadringham. The group is doing a lot to assist the Club's work in teaching Australian dances, but is urgently in need of new members. One previous member, Ian Dunnadge, is temporarily out of action, waiting for a broken leg to mend, and another member has gone overseas. It can often happen that personal commitments clash with concert party bookings so that new members are needed to allow the group to cope with all requests for dance demonstrations. Anyone interested in joining the group is invited to write, C/o Tradition, or telephone Shirley Andrews, at 30-1176; or Ken Farrow at 46-4078.

The regular monthly dance nights run by the Club on the second Tuesday each month at the Royal Park Hall, have been well attended and quite a few new dances have been added to our repertoire this year. Some of the older traditional dances that we are keen to revive are not very easy to learn from their original instructions. Shirley Andrews (30-1176) would like to hear from anyone who really knows how to do the Schottische and/or the Redowa.

The V.F.M.C. has also been doing good work in training musicians to play for dancing. The regular musicians at the monthly dance nights are Frank and Russell Pitt, with Don Newman and Bert Thompson when available. Others who play at Singabouts and other functions include Frank Nickels, Len and Nick Dow, Andy Orr and Jack Beed on the melody instruments; Noel Nickels, Jim Buchanan, Geoff Upson and Les Harsant on percussion. With so many commitments, we sometimes find ourselves short of accordeon players; this instrument being indispensable to provide sufficient volume of sound.

Accompanying dancing is not everyone's cup of tea as the musician has to tailor his playing to suit the dance, and really good dance musicians are scarce. The Club is always keen to hear from any musicians, particularly accordeon players, who are interested in playing dance music with us.

FIELDWORKERS IN FOLKLORE

"Our first home was a grass humpy, a "thatched" place, but after Father got established a bit, then he built a nice house out of bush timber.

"And before you get any further, Norman, what do you mean by a 'grass' house? Just how is it built and what is it built of?

"The framework is built of bush timber. Then you cut the long cane grass and 'tack' it — that is, place it on the framework and tie it down with greenhide — the greenhide of a bullock, cut into strips to thatch the grass so that it buckles up against one another and every bundle laps over where the hide goes. The grass is tied around the battens on the building with strips of greenhide. Each bundle is pulled up to go tight and then the next lot overlaps over that and so on to the roof ridge. The sides — or walls — are built in the same way. It is quite water proof."

The above is a recording made by oral historian, Mr. John Thompson, with Mr. Norman Bridge, at Hall's Creek, W.A., in May, 1966. Mr. Thompson's tapes, or a transcript of them, are in the Battye Library, Perth. John Thompson and the Battye Library have been pioneers in this work.

The collecting of folk crafts like these of home building, etc. is in its infancy. It would be good to see someone specialising here.

Has anyone else come across the expression "buggars on the coals" for johnny cakes. I know that Baker gives it as an alternative, but thought it was obsolete. However, Cec. Cory, of Cairns, gave me the following description and poem in 1972.

"You get some pretty tough drovers in charge of cattle in these small areas (1) because a lot of chaps would take up a block of country and while they are improving it they would do droving for the stations to get a few bob to carry on with. Well, mostly they're pretty hungry.

"I always think of one chap particularly. He was the worst I'd ever been with, and he'd start off perhaps a week or a fortnight's trip with cattle . . . . with about two loaves of bread for three or four men. That would only last for two meals. and then he'd make some johnny cakes on the coals. We used to call them buggars on the coals. They were just dough blisters. After you got into camp you'd have to mix up a bit of dough, with salt and baking powder and then scratch out some coals and put them on; and, of course, you'd be damn hungry, and wouldn't wait for them to cook much. They'd really burn on the outside and be blisters inside. We used to put a bit of Golden Syrup on them. That was called Bullockies' Joy, or Cockies' Joy.

"When I was listening to Slim Dusty's song about his droving days and how he longs for them again, I made a little verse myself on **my** droving days.

BUGGARS ON THE COALS

Now I'm living in retirement, and I live a life of ease,
Catching up on all my hobbies just exactly as I please,
But when my thoughts they wander to **my** droving days of old
I can't say that I hanker for those buggars on the coals. (2)

As the result of an article by Henry Mayer in "The Australian" I have received a number of political songs, mostly of the World War I period. Does any reader have any more, or know of political records issued for election or other campaigns and circulating in channels which would not be widely known. — **W.L.**

1. South Queensland near Goondiwindi.
2. **Tape recorded collection.** Latrobe Library, Melbourne.

WORK IN HAND:

Ron Edwards is working on bush crafts such as whip plaiting, hitches, knots, etc.

See Overleaf.

Wendy Lowenstein is working on the Depression, and would appreciate any contacts who have reminiscences, tales (tall or otherwise) and/or songs, poems, etc. Any one who was on the track at the time and city or country unemployed workers are sought.

She is also working on a collection of songs, poems, stories, reminiscences, legends, attitudes about the bushrangers. Any reader who knows of any helpful leads, or any collector who has collected useful material?

Brad Tate and the above mentioned collectors are working on bawdry Any contributions?

A QUIET NAG WHO DID NO KICKING RIDDEN TO DEATH BY TORRENCE McMICKING.

The story of a drover — by John McMicking.

recorded by John Thompson

"John, you are only a comparatively young man. How old would you be?"

"Thirty-five."

"You seem to have seen the way of life of the 'old-timers.' I would like to ask you, what do you think of present day developments? There is, certainly a changing of the way of life in this land, of what had been known as the land of wait a while and plenty of time!" (1).

"Oh, well, I don't think you could say that it is the same kind of land today. I wouldn't say it is a better land than it has been — it would be a matter of opinion, I suppose; but there is a lot more rush and bustle about the country today and the trouble is that it would be true with stock work, too. Stock just travel the same as they always have done and at the same speed and the people that are going into the industry these days are a bit more inclined to think faster and move faster than our ancestors and I don't know whether that is such a hell of a lot of good for the industry or not."

"You were saying earlier that whilst a transport truck now loaded with gear and stuff, would take, say 10 hours, to go the 240 or so miles, to Hall's Creek, but when motor trucks first commenced operations here, it might take two or three days to do the same trip, and if they met another traveller on the road they would always pull up and have a talk and a drink. Is that right?"

"Yes, that would be about the size of it. Travelling from Wyndham to Hall's Creek might take three days' travelling time; but, of course, that wouldn't include "camping time" if you meet someone on the road."

"Camping time' means any time that you meet somebody; it doesn't necessarily mean camping overnight?"

"Well, regular stops or irregular stops, you could say. It just depends on where you happen to be, when someone else comes along. Of course, quite often, you would do the trip down and back and see nobody; so when the time came that you met a mate — or even somebody you might not have met before, well, it would be all the same; you would pull up for a yarn and boil the billy, even if you didn't have anything else to drink!"

"Getting on to another topic, I understand you have done quite a bit of rhyming and have written the words of one or more songs. Will you tell us the story about the pencilling on the dried skulls of horses and bullocks at places where drovers generally camp?"

"Oh, well, that is an old lurk. An ordinary lead pencil shows up clearly and lasts for quite a while on the white bleached skull or shoulder blade of a beast — and there were always bones of cattle about. Most things I have ever seen on shoulder blades or bullocks' heads or horses' heads have not been greatly complimentary to people. As a rule you didn't usually write love letters on them! You might just have a dig at somebody you know, or don't know, or somebody you don't like, or anything at all, just to keep the ball rolling. On one occasion we came across a skull hanging on a tank at Emu Bore up in Cockatoo Sands — an old horse skull tied up and it had written on it in rather large type:—

"A quiet nag who did no kicking,
Ridden to death by Torrence McMicking."

"Did you write a reply to it in similar vein?"

"Yes, I did. It took me about two bullock's heads and a shoulder blade, I think, to make the reply, and I hung it upon a bullock paddock gate. I believe the chap found it because we heard of him later on. It wasn't really complimentary. I can't remember it all at the moment, but it started off:

There have been mobs and mobs of drovers down the road past Emu Bore;
But there is none can hold a candle to a bastard called Tex Moore.
For the mobs that he delivers are weary, sore and lame,
For they have travelled long dry stages and they haven't fed for ages;
And he hasn't even watered them . . . his horses are the same.

and then the last verse, I think, was:

If a dust cloud passes you, on the road past Emu Bore,
With horns and hooves a rattle you will know,
It is a mob of cattle on the way to Wyndham Meat Works
In the tender care of Moore.

That is not really complimentary to a drover, but he started it, so we wrote a bit more. He wasn't around next year, otherwise we would have probably kept writing "notes" to each other. I met him later on and did a night watch for him when he was short-handed. We were all buddies, of course; but you have got to have a dig at somebody now and then!"

"Well, can you recall any more such rhymes?"

"There was one bullock's head on the bend of the Ord, and it had written on it —

Here I lie by the bend of the Ord,
Driven to death by big Bob Ford.

Bob Ford was one of the old timers that was droving in those days. I didn't meet him myself. I don't know who wrote it, but the bullock's head was there anyway, so that is enough evidence of that one."

"There was no reply to that one?"

"I didn't see any."

"Very good. I expect you have a few more. I will hand over to you again."

"Well, yes! In this country there is a lot of songs made up at different times and parodies on other tunes. You might get a few verses made up in Queensland and a few verses made up in Western Australia, and somebody adds a share of his own and you might have one song with exactly the same meaning somewhere and find another one which means the same and using different words in another part of the country. If you happen to get all the verses together you would probably get about 100 verses to the lot of them. Well, one is sort of a version of 'Home on the Range':

Oh give me a home where the wild pikers (1) roam,
Where the lubra and young quieae (2) play;
Where a man is supplied with a gin for a bride,
And the Ord River flows on its way.

Home, Home on Sudan,
I wish I was back there, young man;
Just to hear drovers skite
Around the camp fire at night,
While we drink cold black tea from a can.

I'm known very well at the Six Mile Hotel;
I have often stopped there for a snort.
How I long to be
Neath an old bottle tree,
Just to drink O.P. Rum from a quart.(3)

"Well, there are mobs of verses like that all over the country. The last verse, incidentally, is mine, and the other ones could come from anywhere. You will find versions of that one all over the stock country. There was another song written by Burt Sharp. He was one of the old time carriers I had in mind when I was speaking about trucks going down the road and having a bit of a spell on the way. Old Burt used to hammer(4) the six wheelers (5) between here and Hall's Creek, and young Donny, his son, is here today. He is only a young man, but old Burt had him driving trucks sitting up on a box when he was about 12 or 14 or 15, and right through his young years, driving one of those old G.M.C.'s and Chevs that they used to have. Bring 'em in young, break them in young! And he is carrying on the business today. But old Burt was a great old songster. He used to make up rhymes. One was about a motor truck that old Arthur Bruton purchased when he had the Six Mile out here, around about 1950 or earlier than that. He had an Inter (6)"

"That is the Six Mile pub, of course?"

"Yes, that is the Six Mile pub. Old Arthur built it. He completed the building about '51. I was the barman there the first year it opened. They call it an old pub, but actually it is not. The building is only 15 years old. But when old Bruton brought his new truck out, Burt made up this bit of a rhyme:—

It is a flash affair with 'Inter' on it,
And when you look beneath the bonnet,
There is no sturdy block of four,
But a tin affair, with two plugs (7) more.
Downhill you should see it pull a load,
That is, of course, on a bitumen road.
But when it gets stuck in the muck,
And that is the place to test a truck.
It gives a fart and then a hiss,
And then the bastard starts to miss.

"So you can see old Burt was never short of words. There is another one I remember. He sent his wife a telegram — I think from the Bow River, where he broke an axle going down one trip. He sent the telegram over the pedal radio set, and said:

Broke axle in the Bow:
Do you love me,
Yes or no?

"So she sent him back an answer to that one, again over the pedal radio, of course:

Glad you broke axle in the Bow.
Send me some dough
And away I'll go."

"Apparently she was a bit of rhymester, too!"

"Oh, yes, she could match him word for word alright. Then there was another song he made about the Six Mile. He had the Six Mile in mind for this one, concerning Emu beer and what have you! (It is to the tune of 'Wearing of the Green')"

It was on a hot dry Saturday, a Saturday, I think,
When I saw a pub in Kimberley, and stopped to have a drink.
I was carting from the Meat Works; it was nice and cool in here,
And I pushed my way up to the bar and bought a glass of beer.
Now the day was hot and dusty, and before I had downed my third,
They were fighting all around me, and such screams I had never heard.

Refrain:

Oh they shouldn't brew it now; no, it shouldn't be allowed.
They should bring in prohibition, so they couldn't brew it now.

For the bar was clear in no time, I was standing by myself.
And I started conversation with the man behind the shelf.
I asked about those fighters at the Meat Works the other night,
About those mighty champions of the Joe Brown - Mosey fight.
Why, you talk about your fighting, we see better bouts in here.
We see 20 rounds for nothing when we are serving Emu beer.
There is a fight in every bottle; there is death in every case.
You can tell who is drinking Emu from the bruises on his face.

Refrain:

Oh they shouldn't brew it now; no it shouldn't be allowed,
They should bring in prohibition so they couldn't brew it now.

But I have got myself a notion that should bring me in a pile:
I will get myself a fighter and I'll train him Emu style.
Sure, I'll get myself a fighter; every morning, noon and night,
I will just fill him up with Emu for a month before the fight.
If I can't find a fighter who is sound in wind and health;
I'll just buy a case of Emu and drink the bloody lot myself.

"Well, that song, I believe, was made up by old Burt . . . .

You said earlier that I had been around a fair bit for a man of my age. I think it is only because I probably started young and lived with older people. For instance, when I was 9 or 10 years old I was off-siding for an old chap called George Richie, who went out 'dogging' with pack horses Old George was one of the old brigade, came from over east-Sydney side somewhere and settled in the West. Used to be an old prospector, dogger, anything you like — 'You name it and I'll do it'. He used to run the Rabbit Proof Fence. . . . .

"We were brought up with George Richey and old Teddy Harris — another old timer — and used to follow them around all over the place, just like little pups!

"In shearing time, of course, we had to leave our correspondence classes, and assist in the mustering. By the time we were about 12 and 13, we were getting quite useful around the place, and would go out mustering on our own. We had become quite handy."

"You have done a considerable amount of droving both of sheep and cattle and have been moved to write a rhyme about it. We have already recorded your brother Torrence, in which he sang the words you had to the tune of 'Galway Bay.' Perhaps you could tell us something about some of the characters that were mentioned in that song, like 'Slippery' . . . . . I think his name was — and others, and what prompted the words of the song."

"Yes, certainly. Well that particular song I made up after a sojourn in Wyndham for a little while. We had just delivered a 'mob' (8) and we were only a day or two behind old Slippery. Slippery had delivered his mob a couple of days before we did, and he was in town just nicely basking in the sun, on the front steps of Gee's Hotel when we arrived. We had never met him before, but the brother knew his brother, Splinter, and so he bowled up to him and said: 'Well, Good-day Slip', and Slip said, 'You have got in on me mate,. You're Slippery . . . . . ?' and he said, 'Yes, that's right! Who the hell are you?' and he said 'Torrence McMicking,' and he said, 'Oh, yes, my brother told me to watch out for you, you bastard'. So, anyway, after a few other polite remarks like that, we decided to go in and sample the proceeds that Gee could turn out. Well, we stayed in town for a couple of days, had quite a time, in a quiet sort of a way without getting into too much bother or stopping out of too much. When we left, of course, we had a bit of a cargo (9) with us to chase the bugs away, while we were on our way out — and dilute the water at the '12 Mile' (10) because after you put about 20,000 or 30,000 bullocks through the '12 Mile' that water gets a bit strong, so you use a bit of rum to break it down. Well we kept ourselves in a sort of a semi daze for the first day or so and at one stage of the game, old Slip got off his horse and said: 'Leave me boys; leave me here. I'll catch up later,' and he just choked down on the flat and caught hold of the reins in his hands and said: 'Leave the reins in my hands, mate; I'll be right. I'll be right, don't worry about me. I'll be right.' We said 'No, Slip, no old fellow, we couldn't leave you, Slip; no we are mates Slip. We couldn't leave you.' Course we couldn't leave him; he still had the rum! So we tied his horse up to a tree and dragged him into the shade and sat down and grogged on regardless. Later on we got him on his feet and put him on his old horse, and the old horse had a bit of a job staying between him and the ground! He did alright and when we got to camp at Goose Hill that night, he climbs off his horse and starts looking, and screaming at the horse tailer to know where he has unloaded his swag. He couldn't find it because he had his head on it, poor fellow! So we left him there. Hell, I am not having a go at poor old Slip; we weren't so much better. And next day we got out around the bend of the Ord and old Slippery starts bounding around the flat, and he says: 'Ain't it dandy to be sober.' Well, we thought, 'it's a change; it's nice, yes, admittedly,' and old Slip and the rest of us, that is the brother and I, and Slip's three blackfellows, and our four or five, continued on with him right out as far is Auvergne, when we met with one of the other drovers coming in with a mob — old Tex Moore. He was pretty short handed, so we stopped with him a night and gave him a night watch, so they could get a bit of sleep, because there was only four of them altogether in the camp, and they hadn't been getting too much sleep."

"That was the code of the road, I suppose — that if, under those circumstances, you met another fellow you would give him a helping hand; because, for one thing, you would never know when you might need help."

"Yes, you usually do that as a rule; anyway, unless you really hate his guts, you always like to give him a bit of a hand, and especially when they are short handed. You know how tough it is yourself from experience.

"Incidentally, on this occasion one of the horse tailers thought he would be smart and 'knock off' (11) one of our bells — just to show how grateful he was for our assistance; but, of course, we had our eyes open for that sort of thing. It goes on now and then, and your bells and hobbles in droving are pretty precious. If you see a decent sort of a horse-shoe on the ground that hasn't been worn out too much, and which may have come off someone else's horse's hoof — that season, or the season before — you pick it up, because you can use it. You can't carry a lot of things with you in the packs (12), so you make use of every little bit you get. You generally don't pick them up if they are still on a horse or something like that, but some people will. Of course, if you have been on the road for a while you watch for that sort of thing."

"In the words of that song we already mentioned that you composed to the tune of 'Galway Bay,' there is a reference —

'You could hear the Victoria drovers skiting.'

"I take it that there wouldn't be any real animosity against people from other places, but I expect they like to sling off (13) at each other! What would you have to say about that one, John?"

"Well, by 'Victoria,' John, I meant 'Victoria River Downs'."

"I had in mind, of course, the Prendergasts, both of the brothers, and Tex Moore, who we wrote the poem about, on the bullock's head; it was all just a sort of friendly rivalry. Nobody likes to forget where he came from, and Queenslanders especially, seem to be always boring in your ear about the wonderful place Queensland is; but you have got a good answer for that. You want to know why so many of them leave the joint if it is so good! The West Australians, of course, are in the minority over here (14). Most people either are straight from Queensland or their people have come from Queensland and they have been bred here, but we don't get much of an influx from the West up in this neck of the wood. Once you get into the Kimberleys, the great majority of men — or cattle men, anyway — come from the other side . . . . the Territory or Queensland.

"Most of the people further south from Fitzroy (Crossing) have come up from the West. I think pretty well all that I know of down that way are West Australians, but this neck of the woods is like an outpost of Queensland.

"If we want any good saddlery, or any good riding gear at all, we have to send East. Western Australia just doesn't cater for the top line in boots, trousers, saddles or anything else — but they try to make out they do. If you buy West Australian boots you only buy them for the 'jackies'; you never buy them for yourself. Most of the 'jackies' don't see fit to wear them either, unless they are too poor to buy others."

"The 'jackies' are the jackeroos, I take it?"

"No, black fellows, I mean. Oh, jackeroos have always got the best gear, of course!"

"John, today, of course, most of the cattle are brought in by the road trains, mechanical transport; but there are still a small percentage anyway of cattle walked-in, in the style of the old time drovers. I would like you to comment on that? Do you think that they will entirely disappear?"

"Oh, yes, I think it will be all road trains in time.* How long it will take before the drover completely disappears I don't know. At the moment there is only about — just at a quick stab— about 5,000, or might have been 6,000, walked in this year. To a total kill of about 23,000 - 24,000, the rest go by train. Of course, with trains you get a lot of cattle off that otherwise would never be able to walk in. You get old cattle away, or stuff that wouldn't last the road; but then again, with fat cattle, you get a lot more bruising than you do by walking them in. But then again, you don't get the loss of weight, so there is a lot of things for and against in both cases. I think

until we get this country more sub-divided, and get more fences, more yards; cattle get handled more often and quietened down more, the full benefit of road trains will not be felt; because the cattle now, are still in the stage, where they have hardly ever seen the yard. You don't draft road bullocks in a yard, you draft them out on the flat; they are handled like this all their lives and then all of a sudden you put them in a yard and start poking them up a race.(15). Well, they are not just used to it. Whereas, if they have been worked from the time they were poddies (16) — from the time they were weaned, and worked through yards and handled more, like on some places they are, the difference is very obvious in the 'kill' (17) between such cattle that have come from places where the open range prevails. In the old days the latter cattle were alright, when walked in, but not alright by road trains, as now. The difference is mainly in handling. Of course, it is said that road trains bruise them; well, the road trains certainly do bruise them, especially the fatter and heavier cattle; the better the bullock the more he bruises and the more he bruises the worse he turns out. Lean cattle, light cattle, travel very well but heavy bullocks get knocked about. A lot of bruising, of course, is done in the yards. You can't blame the trucks for it all. It is all done in the particular handling. In the yards, a lot would depend on the way the men handle them and the way the cattle take to being handled in yards. There is quite a lot for, and against, on both sides. I favour droving a lot wherever you are close enough or the road is good enough for feed on the road, or you can get a man who will look after them. That is another thing — droving can't be condemned entirely on one of two cases, because you get a big variation in the ability of different men handling cattle. I like walking them in wherever possible. Wherever your road will stand up to it , walking is the best, because your cattle arrive at their destination in better condition. You will get more for them as long as you don't have that big drop in weight and you won't get a big drop in weight walking them in, if the road's good and the man's good.

"When you say 'if the **road** will stand up to it' you mean that if there is enough herbage for the cattle to keep in fair condition?"

"Yes, that is what I mean — adequate watering and feed. Water is most necessary, even more important than feed, because you must keep water in the beast to keep his carcase in good nick. (18) One day's perishing is far worse than one day going without feed — it makes more difference in the meat. And as far as road trains are concerned, the roads (I mean 'man' roads as we used to call them in the old days — there is 'bullock' roads and 'man roads'. If a bloke was coming up the road you would always say 'bullock' road or 'man' road, otherwise you would get boxed up which way he was coming). The 'man' roads are not as good as they should be. There has been big steps made to improve them; but, until they're all bitumenized and improved, and all these big dips taken out of them, and a few more million quid spent on them, well we won't really have very successful road training of cattle."

"By 'bullock roads' you mean just going through the bush, I take it?"

"The 'bullock road" — stock route, yes!"

"Oh, I see. John, I understand that there is a shortage of white stockmen in the Kimberleys and that many of them are brought over from the East. Is that so?"

"Well, yes, that is quite right. There is a lot of them being imported into the country. I think this has been so for many years. There has always

been a shortage of ringers (19), and they bring them in whenever they can. Hookers, for instance, charter a plane at the beginning of the season; they have done this for three years at least, I think. Charter a plane and they will hire men as far away as Brisbane, or even Rockhampton and Sydney, and fly them here . . . ."

* This transcript from tapes made by John Thompson, now of Perth, for the Battye Library, Perth, W.A., in N.W. Australia, about 1967.

(7) "Plugs" — spark plugs.
(1) "pikers" — cattle.
(2) "quieae" — young aboriginal girl.
(3) "quart" — quart pot (stockman's combined billy can and cup).
(4) "Hammer" — slang for drive.
(5) "Six Wheeler" — Six wheel motor truck (when dual rear wheels were first introduced).
(6) "Inter" — abbreviation for "International" (make of motor truck).
(8) Mob — of cattle.
(9) "Cargo" — of alcoholic drink.
(10) "The 12 Mile" — the 12 mile waterhole.
(11) "knock off" — steal.
(12) "packs" — pack saddles.
(13) "sling-off" — to badger, tease.
(14) "here" — the Kimberley area.
(15) Race — narrow channel constructed for loading cattle.
(16) Poddies — calves.
(17) the "Kill" — carcases.
(18) "nick" — condition.
(19) "Ringers" — stock men.

GENTLEMAN DROVER'S SONG

by John McMicking

TUNE: GALWAY BAY

If you travel up the Gulf to Wyndham,
And if you don't it might be just as well,
You will see the pale moon rising o'er the Six Mile,
And watch the sun go down on Gee's hotel.

Just to hear again the Victoria drovers skiting,
How they never lost a bullock all the way;
Just to sit before a schooner at the window,
And watch those barefoot butchers at their play.

We will see the Pentecost there full as usual,
Old Spinner with the stockwhip in his claw,
While Slippery with his belly full of O.P.,
Will probably be choked down on the floor.

So we'll sit and sip old Gee's most potent vintage,
And persuade ourselves to stay another day,
Then we'll fill our packbags up with O.P. Beenleigh,
And saddle up and go upon our way.

Now if by chance we fall from off our horses,
And oft times that has happened, as before,
While the sober ones will stay and wait there for us,
And sit down in the shade and have some more.

Sung by Torrance McMicking. Recorded in Hall's Creek pub by John Thompson.

Dear Mrs. Lowenstein,

Many thanks for the copy of **Tradition** with the Mumble the Peg article. I am very glad to have it for the article, of course, but it is also fascinating to have a glimpse of the folklore scene in Australia.

Stan Boyd's recollections of the mumble-the-peg fever among the stockmen are wonderful, and reported in full as you gave them they show what a skilful game it used to be. I am reminded of the skill of marbles played at championship level, by the team who have won the Tinsley Green British Marbles Championship every year for as long as we have been aware of the event, which must be ten or more years now.

You have a rich folklore field to work in. I imagine (and have found from experience) that Australians cling to traditions from the Old Country, so one is more likely to find the older singing games lingering longer than they would over here; though there is an influx of new lore from America which comes to you quicker than us.

I am also glad to write of the arrival of Split the Kipper into the Addenda to the **Games** (the additions to the nursery rhyme books, Lore and Language, and Games, almost outshine the original material, but such is folklorist's fate).

— Iona Opie.

Dear Friend,

In reply to your letter of 15th April, addressed to the Federation, I have to inform you of the following decisions:—

First, I am enclosing a cheque for $19.25, representing —

(a) two years' subscription to Tradition for the Federation; and

(b) the cost as quoted of a relatively complete set of Tradition and Gumsuckers Gazette back copies (including photo copies if necessary — cost quoted $16.50).

Secondly, the points raised in your two letters regarding our Federation's support of Tradition has been considered and the following decisions have been made:

1. The Federation will support Tradition by running an annual function to raise funds for Tradition.
2. We will include with our Annual Membership subscriptions optional Tradition subscriptions as suggested, and will forward subscriptions received to Tradition.
3. We will endeavour to promote Tradition through our various functions, literature and clubs, and through regular correspondence regarding items of interest from W.A. in particular.

We will also endeavour to display and sell Tradition

JEFF CORFIELD, Secretary,
W.A. Folk Federation.

From Police Life: 15-11-1969:

Melbourne, 26 Sept., 1856.

Sir,

I have the honor tc report that I have this day sentenced Constable Richard Stewart to 3 days' imprisonment in Richmond Depot Prison for being absent from barracks without leave and found Drunk at 10 minutes past 12 o'clock last night. As he has upwards of 30 reports against him, many of them for dunkenness and other serious offences, I beg respectully to recommend his dismissal from the service as he is useless as a constable.

Signed J. E. F.
Chief Commissioner of Police.

Wallaby Stew

It is really most exciting to find that someone quite unknown to you, has been doing similar work, and doing it very well. Mr. John Thompson, formerly a forester working for the West Australian Government in the North West, collected a series of interviews with characters of the North working in conjunction with the Battye Library of Perth. These tapes have been transscribed and one of them, an interview with John McMicking, a rover, is reproduced in part, in this issue.

If only there were more people who, even if they are never going to write that book that everyone tells them they ought to, would organise themselves into putting their life experiences down on tape, the students of the future, the writers and the dramatists to mention only a few, would have a rich store of material to draw on.

Tradition has been helping balance the budget by supplying back sets to readers and above all, to libraries, some of whom have at last managed to overcome the triviality barrier and admit folk lore is important. As we get $17.50 for a back set, including Gumsuckers' Gazette, this is very lucrative. So whatever you do, if you have any Gumsuckers, Tradition Series I (1964, offset) or early editions of the present series (specially the ones with Martin Wyndham Reade, Gary Shearston, Don Henderson, Glen Tomassetti and Brian Mooney on the front) don't throw them out. Ring us, and we'll arrange to collect them. We're sick of standing in queues to photocopy missing issues.

Thanks to the N.S.W. Folk Federation who donated half the proceeds of the Bush Dance at Sofala to Tradition ($52). The other half went to the restoration of the historic swing bridge at the old gold town.

Thanks also to the Newcastle Folk Club, who have now sent us about $20 in two donations, and to the W.A. Folk Federation, who have promised to run a function in support of Tradition, and also to offer a subscription to Tradition as an optional extra with their own subscription.

Australian Folk Books

Interesting new development on the Australian folk lore front is the establishment of a new co-operative publishing venture to be known (probably) as Tradition Publications.

Ron Edwards, Wendy Lowenstein, Shirley Andrews and Warren Fahey are the originators of the scheme and they propose to publish occasional booklets of their collected material, whether it be songs, poems, crafts, dances or what have you. At the moment we envisage a series of small booklets, each of which will be published by the author and marketed as part of a series.

Collectors' Choice Continued.

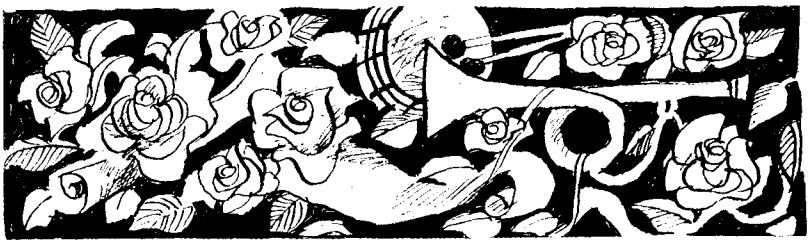
The Buyer on Our Run is a contemporary work song, collected in 1969 on a trip across the Nullarbor Plains, from Fai Hockley, who was the wife of a rabbit trapper working on the treeless desert of the Nullarbor Plains. The role of the rabbit buyer is all important to the trapper who relies on him not merely to take the rabbits away, but to bring food and mail, etc., out from the nearest township. Fai sang this in the country and western style, with overtones of yodelling. Afterwards she sang and yodelled other country and western style songs.

Fai said that the words were written by an old trapper mate. I have lost touch with Fai, and would like to hear from her again. — C.L.

CONCERTS: Having been liberated as long as I can remember, I can't get very very involved with Women's Lib. I find it depressing, too, to hear so many women trying to prove that they are better than men, who, I reckon, are every bit as good as us!). So I went along to the Women's Lib concert, SHE, in Melbourne Town Hall on June 1; more from a sense of duty than enthusiasm — and I couldn't have been more surprised. Imaginatively and co-operatively organised by Glen Tomasetti, it featured singers like Glen, Jean Lewis, Margaret Roadknight, Sue McCullock, and a large group of performers who formed and reformed groups without formal programming. No upstaging, no long brackets, nor reluctance to fit in with the overall concept, no announcement of names, no need for an M.C. (though there was a rather redundant narration). In fact, a joyful collective.

Without doubt, Glen Tomasetti has improved immensely as a song writer, and the best singers in the folk scene today are still women. Glen hasn't been seen around the Folk Festival scene lately, and I think it may be because the programming has controlled by young men who don't care for intelligent, strong minded, talented women with ideas !

As one old bloke who goes to all the concerts said to me: "I haven't ever enjoyed a concert more — even Pete Seeger didn't get such enthusiasm." **W.L.**



An Afternoon of Feminist Songs on Sunday, August 12th, at the Women's Centre, 16 Little Latrobe Street, 1 p.m. If you have written a song and would like to sing it yourself, contact Glen Tomasetti, 20 7345. Admission Free.

THE BOREE LOG