



**Some Songs
of
Duke Tritton**

Goorianawa

from Duke Tritton

The musical score is written in 6/8 time and consists of six staves of music. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 6/8 time signature, and a key signature of one flat. Above the first staff is a 'C' chord symbol. The second staff has 'F', 'C', and 'G7' chord symbols above it. The third staff has a 'C' chord symbol above it. The fourth staff has 'F', 'C', and 'G7' chord symbols above it. The fifth staff has a 'C' chord symbol above it. The sixth staff has 'F', 'C', 'G7', and 'C' chord symbols above it. The music is a simple melody with a consistent rhythm of eighth notes and rests.

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

Chorus: But, oh! my, I never saw before,
The way we had to knuckle down at Goorianawa.

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

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

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

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

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

Last chorus: But spare me flamin' days, I never saw before,
The way we had to knuckle down at Goorianawa.

Hughie

The Rouseabout's Prayer

Duke Tritton

Halfway through the shearing and the weather was very dry,
But the clouds were gathering, and lowdown in the sky;
Just as we were having a smoke, a shower came over the plain,
And we heard from the shearing shed the rouseabouts roaring refrain:

Chorus: Send it down a little bit harder, dear old Hughie do!
Send it down a little bit harder and we'll love you;
Send it down for a week or two,
All the rousies will stick like glue,
Just a little bit harder - dear old Hughie do!

It is known as the rouseabouts prayer, it's been sung in every shed,
For when the sheep are too wet to shear the rousies get board and bed,
And their pay goes on if it's wet or dry, and they haven't a worry or care,
So they lay in their bunk and sleep or read, and sing the rouseabouts' prayer:

Ten points of rain and the shearers vote on whether it's wet or dry,
And if they all decide to shear, you will hear the rouseabouts sigh,
'Spare me days', you will hear them say, 'There's frogs in the blanky wool',
And they stare over the counting pens and sing, for their hearts are full:

When the rain is tumbling down the shearers grumble and curse,
And the boss goes round with a hungry look, for it hits him in the purse;
So he prowls about the shed all day like a bull in a stockyard ring,
And grinds his teeth in futile rage when he hears the rouseabout sing:

Jacky Howe

Duke Tritton

When Meredith recorded Duke in October, 1955, he could remember only the chorus of this song, and one or two lines of the verses. He said he would work on it. He did, and about a year later had recalled all three verses given here.

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Jacky Howe' by Duke Tritton. It consists of six staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (D major). The time signature is 3/4. The notes are primarily quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. Chord symbols are placed above the staves: D, A7, Bm, and G. The music ends with a double bar line.

When you meet with a mob of old-timers
In woolsheds, in pubs or in town,
You will hear them speak of a shearer,
Jacky Howe, the man from the 'Downs'.
He was the greatest blade-shearer
That ever the world has known,
There was never a man that could catch him,
For Jack stood out on his own.

Chorus:
They were good for a rush or a rally,
But they hadn't the power to stay;
When Jack went out for a tally
He'd shear his three hundred a day.

You might mention the name of Joe Davis,
McDermott, Whalebone or Bill Home,
But they were not in the same class
As Jacky, the best shearer born.
Those were the days of the big guns,
Sullivan, Tom Power and Jim Vance;
Fast men they were, but none of them
With Jacky had ever a chance.

There were many who thought they could beat
him
But Jack, his blades running full,
Just cut them all down in a manner
That left them all blinded with wool.
'Twas at Alice Downs that he put up
The best score that's ever been done,
When he wiped out all the gun shearers
With his tally of three twenty one.

Great Northern Line

from Duke Tritton

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Great Northern Line' by Duke Tritton. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. The melody is presented on a single staff with various chords indicated above the notes. The chords are: Bm, A, A, Bm, Bm, A, Bm, A, Bm, F#7, Bm, Bm, A, Bm, A, Bm, F#7, Bm. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests and a final double bar line.

My love he is a teamster, a handsome man is he,
Red shirt, white moleskin trousers, and hat of cabbage-tree;
He drives a team of bullocks, and whether it's wet or fine
You will hear his whip a-cracking on the Great Northern Line.

Chorus:

Watch him, pipe him, twig him how he goes,
With his little team of bullocks, he cuts no dirty shows;
He's one of the flash young carriers that on the road do shine,
With his little team of bullocks on the Great Northern Line.

And when he swings the greenhide whip he raises skin and hair;
His bullocks all have shrivelled horns, for, Lordy, can he swear!
But I will always love him, this splendid man of mine,
With his little team of bullocks on the Great Northern Line.

When he bogged at Mundowie and the bullocks took the yoke,
They strained with bellies on the ground until the bar-chain broke.
He fixed it up with wire and brought wool from Bundamine
With his little team of bullocks on the Great Northern Line.

When he comes into Tamworth you will hear the ladies sigh,
And parents guard their daughters, for he has a roving eye;
But he signals with his bullock-whip as he comes through the pine,
With his little team of bullocks on the Great Northern Line.

The Sandy Hollow Line

by Duke Tritton

The sun was blazing in the sky and waves of shimmering heat
Glared down on the railway cutting, we were half dead on our feet,
And the ganger stood on the bank of the cut and snarled at the men below,
"You'd better keep them shovels full or all of you cows will go."

"I never saw such a useless mob, You'd make a feller sick.
As shovel men you're hopeless and you're no good with the pick."
There were men in the gang who could belt him with a hand tied at their back
But he had the power behind him and we daren't risk the sack.

So we took his insults in silence, for this was the period when
We lived in the great depression and nothing was cheaper than men,
And we drove the shovels and swung the picks and cursed the choking dust;
We'd wives and hungry kids to feed, so toil in the heat we must.

And as the sun rose higher the heat grew more intense,
The flies were in their millions, the air was thick and dense.
We found it very hard to breathe, our lungs were hot and tight
With the stink of sweating horses and the fumes of gelignite.

But still the ganger drove us on, we couldn't take much more,
We prayed for the day we'd get a chance to even up the score.
A man collapsed in the heat and dust, he was carried away to the side;
It didn't seem to matter a damn if the poor chap lived or died.

'He's only a loafer', the ganger said, 'A lazy useless cow.
I was going to sack him anyway, he's saved me the trouble now.'
He had no thoughts of the hungry kids, no thought of a woman's tears
As she struggled and fought to feed her brood all down the weary years.

But one of the Government horses fell down and died in the dray;
They hitched two horses to him and dragged his corpse away.
The ganger was a worried man and he said with a heavy sigh,
"It's a bloody terrible thing to see a good horse die."

"You chaps get back to your work, don't stand loafing there.
Get in and trim the batter down, I'll get the engineer."
The engineer came and looked around and said as he scratched his head,
"No horse could work in this dreadful heat or all of them will be dead."

"They're much too valuable to lose, they cost us quite a lot,
And I think it's a wicked shame to work them while it's hot.
So we will take them to the creek and spell them in the shade.
You men must all knock off at once. Of course you'll not be paid."

And so we plodded to our camps and it seemed to our weary brains
We were not better than convicts, though we didn't wear the chains.
And in those drear depression days we were unwanted men,
But we knew that when a war broke out we'd all be heroes then.

And we'd be handed a rifle and forced to fight for the swine Who tortured us
and starved us on the Sandy Hollow Line.

Shearing In A Bar

by Duke Tritton

My shearing days are over, though I never was a gun,
I could always count my twenty at the end of every run.
I used the old 'Trade Union' shears, and the blades were always full
As I drove 'em to the knockers, and I chopped away the wool.
I shore at Goorianawa, and didn't get the sack,
From Breeza out to Compadore I always could go back,
And though I am a truthful man, I find when in a bar
My tallies seem to double but I never call for tar.

Shearing on the western plains where the fleece is full of sand,
And the clover burr and corkscrew grass, is the place to try your hand,
For the sheep are tall and wiry where they feed on the Mitchell grass,
And every second one of them is close to the cobbler class;
And a pen chock full of cobblers is a shearer's dream of hell,
So, loud and lurid are their words when they catch one on the bell;
But when we're pouring down the grog, you'll hear no call for tar,
For a shearer never cuts 'em when he's shearing in a bar.

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

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

Now when the seasons' ended and my grandsons all come back,
In their buggies and their sulkies - I was always on the track;
They come and take me into town to fill me up with beer,
And I sit on a corner stool and listen to them shear.
There's not a bit of difference, it must make the angels weep
To hear a mob of shearers in a bar room shearing sheep;
For the sheep go rattling down the race with never a call for tar,
For they still don't seem to cut 'em when they're shearing in a bar.

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

Shores Of Botany Bay

from Duke Tritton

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Shores Of Botany Bay'. It consists of four staves of music in a single system. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is common time (C). The melody is written in a treble clef. Above the notes, there are guitar chord symbols: D, Bm, G, D, D, Bm, A7, D, Bm, G, A7, Bm, A7, and Bm. The music features a mix of quarter and eighth notes, with some rests and a final fermata.

Oh, I'm on my way down to the quay where a big ship now does lay,
For to take a gang of navvies I was told to engage;
But I thought I would call in for a while before I went away,
For to take a trip in an emigrant ship
To the shores of Botany Bay.

For the boss came up this morning, and he said, 'Well Pat, hello!
If you do not mix that mortar fast be sure you'll have to go.'
Of course he did insult me, I demanded my pay,
And I told him straight, I was going to emigrate
To the shores of Botany Bay.

Farewell to your bricks and mortar, farewell to your dirty lime.
Farewell to your gangway hand gang planks and to hell with your overtime;
For the good ship Rag of Muffin is a-lying at the quay,
For to take old Pat with a shovel on his back,
To the shores of Botany Bay.

And when I reach Australia, I'll go and dig for gold,
Sure there's plenty there for the digging, or so I have been told.
Or I might go back into my trade, eight hundred bricks I'll lay
In an eight hour day for eight bob pay
On the shores of Botany Bay.

Duke's Song

by Gary Shearston

The musical score is written in 6/8 time and consists of five staves. The chords are indicated above the notes:

- Staff 1: C, F, G7, F, C
- Staff 2: C, F, C, F, C, G7
- Staff 3: C, G7, C, Am
- Staff 4: C, Am, Dm, G7, C
- Staff 5: G7, F, C, G7, C, G7, C

Come gather round me people and listen to my song,
I want to tell you of a man whose time has passed and gone;
In case you never knew him, he was one of the good old kind,
And I'm proud to say when I sing his songs, that he was a friend of mine.

Duke Tritton was a bushman, and writer and singer too.
As shearer and a drover he'd often humped his blue,
And at timber cutting or building roads he often turned a hand,
And high on the Warrumbungle Range the fences he built still stand.

When first he took to the bush,, with Dutchy Bishop,, his mate,
They did some busking in country towns, a coin or two to make.
On Sundays outside an Anglican church they'd sing 'Abide with Me',
Then race round to the Catholic mob and hit them with 'Ave Marie'.

He shored in most of the famous sheds and saw big tallies done,
They called him 'The Duke' in a boxing troupe, 'cause most of the time he won;
And back in the hungry thirties, when tucker meant your time,
He worked as a powder monkey on the Sandy Hollow Line.

There are songs that he wrote and songs that he sang, and stories that he told
Of every trade that a man could take up in the days of old.
With his blue eyes fairly blazing, and gripping his ghostly blade,
He told me more than any man of how the land was made.

And now his time is over and he's tramped beyond the skies;
If there isn't a union where he's gone, he's the one who'll organise,
And I'll bet if the angels are out of tunes, or their songs aren't up to par,
It won't be long till he'll have them singing 'Shearing in a Bar'.

Ending:

So long old timer, and thanks mate for the songs you left behind.

