

The Unofficial National Anthem  
"Waltzing Matilda"  
A.B. "Banjo" Paterson

Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong,  
Under the shade of a coolibah-tree,  
And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boiled,  
"Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?  
Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda,  
Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?"  
And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boiled,  
"Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?"

Down came a jumbuck to drink at the billabong:  
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee.  
And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tucker-bag,  
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me.  
Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda,  
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me."  
And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tucker-bag,  
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me."

Up rode a squatter, mounted on his thoroughbred;  
Down came the troopers, one, two, three:  
"Who's that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker-bag?  
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!  
Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda,  
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me.  
Who's that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker-bag?  
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!"

Up jumped the swagman and sprang into the billabong;  
"You'll never catch me alive!" said he;  
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong,  
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!  
Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda,  
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!"  
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong,  
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!"

**Billabong** A type of lake

**billy** A tin can with a handle attached to the top rim, used to boil water to make tea.

**coolibah tree** A particular kind of eucalyptus that grows beside billabongs.

**jumbuck** A sheep.

**squatter** As Australia was settled, there was of course little or no authority and bureaucracy in place. People 'squatted' ("sat") on patches of land, grazed their animals, grew their crops and built their houses and fences. Later, as authority arrived, it generally accepted the claims of whoever was in apparent possession of the land (aboriginals had been no match for armed white men, and anyway were largely nomadic across reasonably large areas). The squatters often became rich. To non-land-owners, squatters were an object of resentment.

**swagman** A gentleman of the road, a drifter, a tramp, a hobo. Carried his few belongings slung in a cloth or "swag".

**troopers** A policeman

**tucker-bag** A bag to keep tucker in. Tucker is food.

**waltzing matilda**

Matilda was a mock-romantic word for a swag, and to waltz matilda was to hit the road with a swag on your back. "Matilda" is a woman's name.

Australians are said to be "anti-authoritarian". We're one of the most urbanised nations in the world, but yearn for the wide open spaces (of which there are many) and the freedom that is imagined to go with it

[G] Once a jolly [D] swagman [C] Camped by a billabong  
[G] Under the shade of a [D] coolabah tree  
And he [G] sang as he [D] watched and [C] waited 'til his billy boiled  
[G] Who'll come a-waltzing [D] Matilda with [G] me?

Chorus:

Waltzing Matilda [C] Waltzing Matilda  
[G] You'll come a-waltzing [D] Matilda with me  
And he [G] sang as he [D] watched and [C] waited 'til his billy boiled  
[G] 'You'll come a-waltzing, Ma[D]tilda with [G] me'

Down come a jumbuck to drink at the water hole  
Up jumped a swagman and grabbed him in glee  
And he sang as he stowed him away in his tucker bag  
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me".

Up rode the Squatter a riding his thoroughbred  
Up rode the Trooper - one, two, three  
"Where's that jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?",  
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me".

But the swagman he up and jumped in the water hole  
Drowning himself by the Coolabah tree,  
And his ghost may be heard as it sings in the Billabong,  
"Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?"

## A. B. "Banjo" Paterson

Andrew Barton "Banjo" Paterson (1864 - 1941) was a famous Australian 'bush poet'. He wrote many ballads and poems about Australian life, focusing particularly on the rural and outback areas.

One of his most famous poems is *Waltzing Matilda*, which was set to music and became one of Australia's most famous songs. Others include *The Man From Snowy River*, which (loosely) inspired a movie in 1980 and *Clancy of the Overflow*, the tale of a Queensland "drover" (cattle handler responsible for herding large mobs of cattle long distances to market).

Paterson's poems mostly presented a highly romantic view of rural Australia. Paterson himself, like a majority of Australians even then and even more so since, was city-based and indeed was a practising lawyer. One may contrast his work with the prose of Henry Lawson, a contemporary of Patterson's, including his work "*The Drover's Wife*", which presented a considerably less sugar-coated view of the harshness of rural existence of the late 19th century.

His image and a short section from one of his poems appears on the (AUD) \$10 note.



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## **And the band played "Waltzing Matilda"**

This song was written after observing an ANZAC Day parade.

Comments by Eric Bogle, the author and singer of the song:

"This... in Australia, every year, we have... we celebrate... we remember "ANZAC DAY" -- an' it's a very important day in Australia... the whole day is given over to remembering the soldiers who died in... all the wars and... the whole day -- in Britain, in England, they have two minutes of silence once a year.

It's important in Australia, because at Gallipoli, in 1915, for the first time, the Australian soldiers had Australian officers -- before then, the Australian army had British officers.

And... by this time, it was an all-Australian army, and they did quite well... and Australia was very proud of 'em. And they engendered a great sense of national pride, back home in Australia.

The saying arose that Australia became a nation founded on the blood of our soldiers who died at Gallipoli. So... it was very important to Australia.

We have... in Britain just now.. and THEN it was "our brave boys at Gallipoli"... in Britain, "our brave boys in the Falkland Islands." The jingoism always remains the same... it's just the wars that are different... but they seem stupid, hackneyed phrases... which demeans the soldiers...

Right... I'll get off my pulpit... stop preaching and sing a song... I get quite heated about this subject..."

## ***And the band played "Waltzing Matilda"***

Now when I was a young man I carried me pack  
And I lived the free life of the rover.  
From the Murray's green basin to the dusty outback,  
Well, I waltzed my Matilda all over.  
Then in 1915, my country said, "Son,  
It's time you stop ramblin', there's work to be done."  
So they gave me a tin hat, and they gave me a gun,  
And they marched me away to the war.

And the band played "Waltzing Matilda,"  
As the ship pulled away from the quay,  
And amidst all the cheers, the flag waving, and tears,  
We sailed off for Gallipoli.

And how well I remember that terrible day,  
How our blood stained the sand and the water;  
And of how in that hell that they call Suvla Bay  
We were butchered like lambs at the slaughter.  
Johnny Turk, he was waitin', he primed himself well;  
He showered us with bullets, and he rained us with shell --  
And in five minutes flat, he'd blown us all to hell,  
Nearly blew us right back to Australia.

But the band played "Waltzing Matilda,"  
When we stopped to bury our slain,  
Well, we buried ours, and the Turks buried theirs,  
Then we started all over again.

And those that were left, well, we tried to survive  
In that mad world of blood, death and fire.  
And for ten weary weeks I kept myself alive  
Though around me the corpses piled higher.  
Then a big Turkish shell knocked me arse over head,  
And when I woke up in me hospital bed  
And saw what it had done, well, I wished I was dead --  
Never knew there was worse things than dying.

For I'll go no more "Waltzing Matilda,"  
All around the green bush far and free --  
To hump tents and pegs, a man needs both legs,  
No more "Waltzing Matilda" for me.

So they gathered the crippled, the wounded, the maimed,  
And they shipped us back home to Australia.  
The armless, the legless, the blind, the insane,  
Those proud wounded heroes of Suvla.  
And as our ship sailed into Circular Quay,  
I looked at the place where me legs used to be,  
And thanked Christ there was nobody waiting for me,  
To grieve, to mourn and to pity.

But the band played "Waltzing Matilda,"  
As they carried us down the gangway,  
But nobody cheered, they just stood and stared,  
Then they turned all their faces away.

And so now every April, I sit on my porch  
And I watch the parade pass before me.  
And I see my old comrades, how proudly they march,  
Reviving old dreams of past glory,  
And the old men march slowly, all bones stiff and sore,  
They're tired old heroes from a forgotten war  
And the young people ask "What are they marching for?"  
And I ask meself the same question.

But the band plays "Waltzing Matilda,"  
And the old men still answer the call,  
But as year follows year, more old men disappear  
Someday, no one will march there at all.

Waltzing Matilda, waltzing Matilda.  
Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?  
And their ghosts may be heard as they march by the billabong,  
Who'll come a-Waltzing Matilda with me?

## Guitar chords

D A

When I was a young man, I carried my pack.

E A

And I lived the free life, of a roamer.

E D

>From the marie's (?) green basin,

A

To the dusty outback,

E A

I waltzed my matilda all over.

E D A

Then in 1915, my country said son.

E D

It's time to stop rambling,

A

Cuz there's work to be done.

D

So they gave me a tin hat,

A

And they gave me a gun,

E A

And they sent me away to the war.

D A

And the band played Waltzing Matilda,

D E

As we sailed away from the quay.

D

And amidst all the cheers,

A

And the shouts and the tears,

E A

We sailed off for Gallipoli

A D

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda

A E

Who's gonna waltz the matilda with me?