

Waltzing Matilda



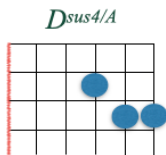
Words by Banjo Paterson, August 1895, music by Thomas Bulch, early 1890s © all rights reserved
Sing along with Slim Dusty @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqttbbYfSM>

D A D G
Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong,
D A
Under the shade of a coolibah tree.
D A D G
He sang as he watched and waited 'til his billy boiled;
D A D
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me.

D G
Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda;
D Dsus4/A D G A
You'll come a-Walt - - zing Matilda, with me.
D A D G
He sang as he watched and waited 'til his billy boiled;
D A D D A D
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me.

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

D G
Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda;
D Dsus4/A D G A
You'll come a-Walt - - zing Matilda, with me.
D A D G
He sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tucker bag,
D A D D A D
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me.



D A D G
Up rode the squatter, mounted on his thoroughbred,
D A A A
Up rode the troopers, one, two, three,
D A D G
With the jolly jumbuck that you've got in your tucker bag,
D A D
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me.

D G
Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda;
D Dsus4/A D G A
You'll come a-Walt - - zing Matilda, with me.
D A D G
With the jolly jumbuck that you've got in your tucker bag,
D A D D A D
You'll come a-Waltzing, you scoundrel with me.

D A D G
Up jumped the swagman and sprang into the billabong,
D A
You'll never take me alive, said he,
D A D G
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong,
D A D
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me.

D G
Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda;
D Dsus4/A D G A
You'll come a-Walt - - zing Matilda, with me.
D A D G
His ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong,
D A D
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me.

D G
Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda;
D Dsus4/A D G A
You'll come a-Walt - - zing Matilda, with me.
D A D G
His ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong,
D A D
Oh, you'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me.

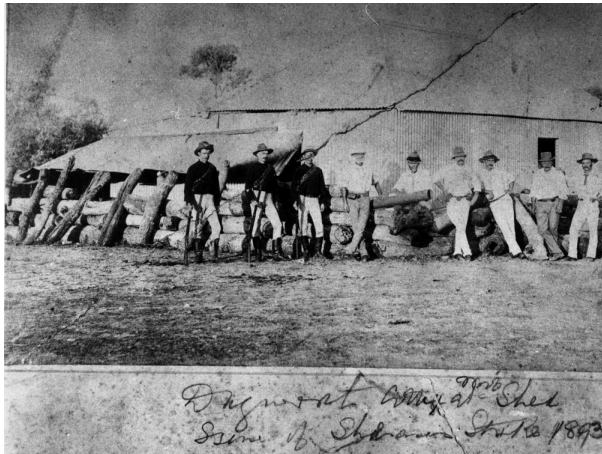
History

The Australian poet Banjo Paterson wrote the words to "**Waltzing Matilda**" in August 1895 while staying at Dagworth, a sheep and cattle station, near Winton in Central West Queensland owned by the Macpherson family. The words were written to a tune played on a zither or autoharp by 31-year-old Christina Macpherson (1864–1936), one of the family members at the station.

Macpherson had heard the tune "The Craigielee March" played by a military band while attending the Warrnambool steeplechase in Victoria in April 1894, and played it back by ear at Dagworth. The march was based on music composed by Scott James Barr in 1818 for Robert Tannahill's 1806 poem "Thou Bonnie Wood of Craigielee". In the early 1890s it was arranged as "The Craigielee" march music for brass band by Australian composer Thomas Bulch.

"**Waltzing Matilda**" (slang for traveling on foot 'waltzing' with one's belongings in a 'matilda' or swag slung over one's back) is described as Australia's unofficial national anthem. It is widely accepted that the anthem is based on the following story:

The Great Shearers' Strike in Queensland in 1891 brought the colony close to civil war and was broken only after the Premier of Queensland, Samuel Griffith, called in the military. In September 1894, some shearers at Dagworth Station were again on strike. The shearing force was often composed of swagmen, also known as



swaggies, sundowners or tussockers who were transient laborers traveling by foot from farm to farm carrying their belongings in a swag or bedroll. The situation turned violent with the striking shearers firing their rifles and pistols in the air and setting fire to the wool shed at Dagworth, killing dozens of sheep. The owner of Dagworth Station and three policemen gave chase to a man named Samuel Hoffmeister, also known as "Frenchy", an immigrant said to have been born in Batavia.

In the song, the Hoffmeister character is surprised at his billabong (an oxbow lake) camp while boiling his tea, accused by a squatter (a person using unoccupied land for pasture) of stealing a jumbuck (a male sheep), and hiding it in his tucker bag where swagmen carried their food. He then jumps in and drowns in the billabong to avoid capture. In the actual incident, Mr Hoffmeister, shot and killed himself to avoid incarceration at the 4-Mile Creek south of Kynuna at 12:30pm on 2 September, 1894.

Fortified temporary shearing shed at Dagwood Station following the 1894 arson of the main shed. The three troopers at left are thought to be those referred to in "Waltzing Matilda", while the squatter was Bob Macpherson, fourth from right.

Photo credit [Item is held by John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.](#)

Bob Macpherson (the brother of Christina) and Paterson are said to have taken rides together at Dagworth. Here they would probably have passed the Combo Waterhole, where Macpherson is purported to have told this story to Paterson. Although not remaining in close contact, Paterson and Christina Macpherson had different recollections of where the song was first composed - Christina said it was composed "in Winton" while Paterson said it was at "Dick's Creek" on the road to Winton. Amongst Macpherson's belongings, found after her death in 1936, was an unopened letter to a music researcher that read "... one day I played (from ear) a tune, which I had heard played by

a band at the Races in Warrnambool ... he [Paterson] then said he thought he could write some words to it. He then and there wrote the first verse. We tried it and thought it went well, so he then wrote the other verses." Similarly, in the early 1930s on ABC radio Paterson said: "The shearers staged a strike and Macpherson's wool shed at Dagworth was burnt down and a man was picked up dead ... Miss Macpherson used to play a little Scottish tune on a zither and I put words to it and called it *Waltzing Matilda*."

Slim Dusty, AO MBE (born **David Gordon Kirkpatrick**; 13 June 1927 – 19 September 2003) was an Australian country music singer-songwriter, guitarist and producer. He was an Australian cultural icon and one of the country's most awarded stars, with a career spanning nearly seven decades and producing numerous recordings. He was known to record songs in the legacy of Australia, particularly of bush life. Renowned Australian bush poets Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson represented the lifestyle. The music genre was coined the "bush ballad", a style first made popular by Buddy Williams, the first artist to perform the genre in Australia, and also for his many trucking songs.

Dusty was the first Australian to have a No. 1 international hit song, with a version of Gordon Parsons' "A Pub with No Beer". He received an unequalled 45 Golden Guitar and an Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) award. He was inducted into the ARIA Hall of Fame and Australian Roll of Renown. At the time of his death, at the age of 76, Dusty had been working on his 106th album for EMI Records. In 2007, his domestic record sales in Australia surpassed seven million. During his lifetime, Dusty was considered an Australian National Treasure. He performed "Waltzing Matilda", a very famous song in Australia, at the closing ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

Wikipedia



Slim Dusty ~ photo credit themusicnetwork.com