



West Coast Songbook

SONGS IMAGES AND STORIES
OF
TASMANIA'S WEST COASTERS

BY
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From Williamsford to Rosebery Town

Photo: Jack Becker with his grand daughter Zoe



About this song

Jacky Becker and his brother Bill were awarded apprenticeships at the Rosebery mine whilst living in Williamsford in the mid 1950's. Jack told me this story first hand. For five years they rode their pushbikes down into Rosebery and then back home. Does not sound like much unless you know the area and the terrain. Rain for nine months of the year. Frost, snow, gravel road, flies and once across the Stitt River bridge an uphill climb of 800 feet and five miles with no gears to get home after 8 hours at work and then technical school. We laud our sporting heroes these days. They would not hold a candle to Bill and Jack.

From Williamsford to Rosebery Town

Verse 1

All four seasons – rolling down/ Down a winding sliding track
Dust and gravel – frosted ground/ Drizzle patterns on their backs
From Williamsford to Rosebery Town/ Bill and Jack come rolling down

Verse 2:

Pull up at the carpenter's shop/ Off your bike and on you clock
Know your place - look and learn/ Trim the lathe – shape and turn
Speak the lingo: truss and bevel/ Mitre, backsaw, spirit level
From Williamsford to Rosebery Town/ Bill and Jack come rolling down

Verse 3:

Wash your hands then off to Tech/ Apprentices aren't finished yet
Fractions, inches, yards and feet/ Angles, planes and drawing sheets
Be precise and do your sums/ Back on your bike when day is done

Verse 4

For now the hard grind really starts/ In Bill and Jack there's grit and heart
Across the Stitt and up they climb/ Just one more dip then cruel incline
Five miles home – five miles back/ Five years apprenticed on that track
From Williamsford to Rosebery Town/ Bill and Jack come rolling down

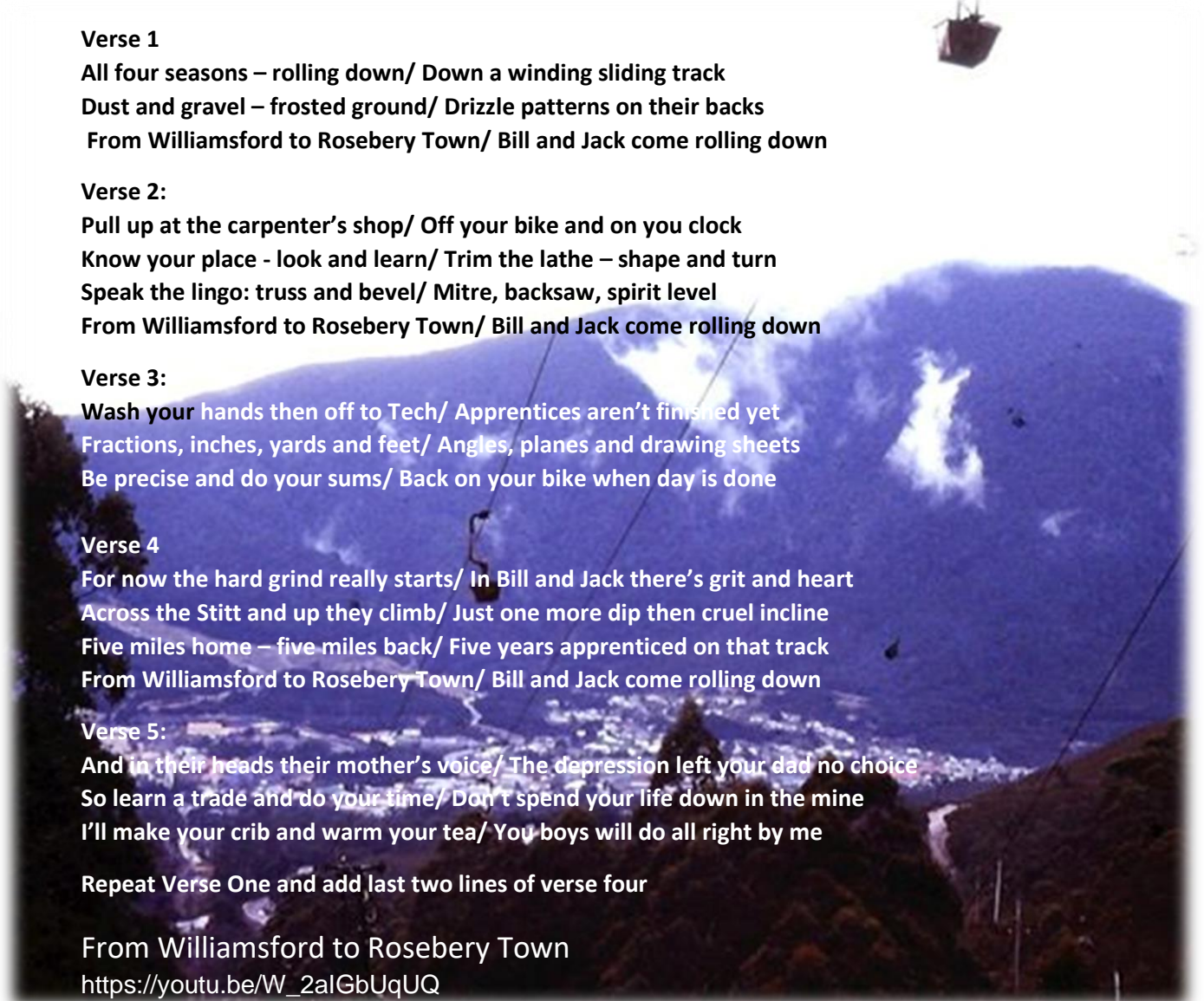
Verse 5:

And in their heads their mother's voice/ The depression left your dad no choice
So learn a trade and do your time/ Don't spend your life down in the mine
I'll make your crib and warm your tea/ You boys will do all right by me

Repeat Verse One and add last two lines of verse four

From Williamsford to Rosebery Town

https://youtu.be/W_2aIGbUqUQ





Gravel and Mud

**Photo: Gormanston V Lyell
Galley Museum**

About this song

Much has been written about the gravel oval. When the Queenstown and Rosebery Football Associations combined in the early 1960's the turf oval at Rosebery came into play. During the football and hockey season four football teams and four hockey teams pounded the rain soaked surface to a muddy pulp. Torn skin was a regular hazard on both grounds along with poisoned knees and the common array of Australian Rules injuries of muscle strains and tears, stitches and broken bones. Competition was fierce and the miners played hard both on and off the field. Only two clubs play football on the West Coast now with mining stocks reflecting the rise and fall of this still much loved sport.

Gravel and Mud

Verse 1

How many words to paint the earth?
How much is contained in a miner's curse?
There's a world of difference in mullock and dirt
There's luck and sorrow in a miner's worth

Chorus:

There are fields of play beneath Lyell and Read
There's grit and grace in the West Coast creed
There's blood and stitches and the game they love
The Earth The Elements Gravel and Mud

Refrain:

Gravel and Mud Stitches and Blood
West Coast spirit in the game they love

Verse 2

How many words to paint the sky?
How much is contained in a miner's sigh?
There's a world of difference in drizzle and rain
There's winter and darkness in a miner's veins

Chorus/Refrain

Gravel and Mud

https://youtu.be/8f50Y_c0tMw

Verse 3

How many words to paint the past?
Just how long does a miner's luck last?

There's a world of difference in graft and gain
There's regret and riches in a miner's pain

Chorus/Refrain

Verse 4

How many words to paint the here and now?

How much patience in a mining town?

There's a world of difference in boom and bust

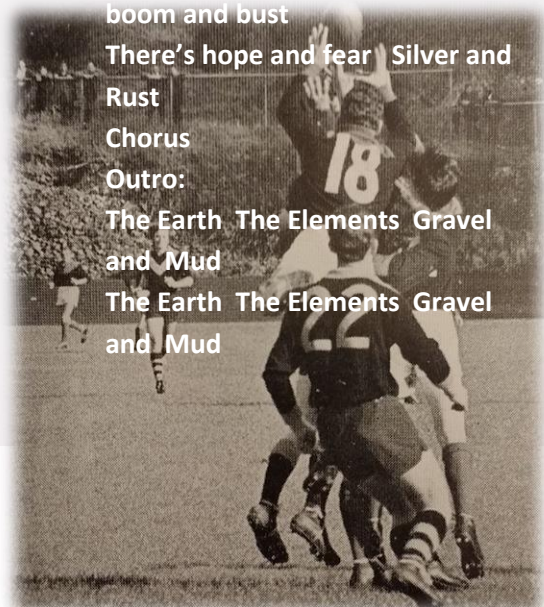
There's hope and fear Silver and Rust

Chorus

Outro:

The Earth The Elements Gravel and Mud

The Earth The Elements Gravel and Mud





Green Coach Line Blues

**Photo: Green Coach & Winskill's
Newsagency - Rosebery 1960's**

About this song

In 1953 the Tasmanian Government launched the Green Coach Line. These buses traversed the state and became a major lifeline between Hobart, Launceston, the North West Coast and the remote West Coast Towns. Passengers aside - the mail and newspapers they delivered were the equivalent of today's internet. Their arrival around midday in Rosebery and around four o'clock in Queenstown were a highlight - that is if they were on time. Gravel roads, rain, ice, snow and mountainous terrain were a regular hazard. Many west coasters have fond memories of these sturdy buses and stoic drivers

Green Coach Line Blues

Intro

I'm travellin' on the Green Coach line
Down Mt Black where the sun don't shine
I've got papers - I've got news
I've got those Green Coach Line blues

Verse One:

There's passengers front and back
A swag of mail in a canvas sack
There's a mob outside the paper shop
They've been there since twelve o'clock

Chorus:

Oh driver on the Green Coach line
Why don't you ever run on time
When you're livin' in a mining town
You're hungry for what's goin' down

Verse Two:

Here's Kerry Dunn right on cue
He'll give you all a seein' to
Frank and Minnie give him space
The rest of us know our place

Verse Three:

Fetch the papers - out of my way
The highlight of his Saturday
The Mercury. The Advocate
The Melbourne Sun from interstate

Verse Four

The Sporting Globe in splendid pink
The Age for toffs with time to think
Best Bets for your losing streak
Disney comics on pay week

Chorus

Verse Five

Where would we be without the news
Without those cryptic crossword clues
I've grown up a newspaper man
Best enjoy it while I can

Verse Six

I'm hangin' on the I.T. line
I'm plugged in and wastin' time
If I could I'd trade my fate
For the Green Coach when its running
late

Outro (repeat intro)

The Green Coach Line Blues
<https://youtu.be/LGW9HE9HuCE>



Heaven's An Eight Hour Day

**Photo: Peter Stewart, Neil Griffiths
& Brownie Mullins - Hercules Mine
Williamsford 1970's**



About this song

Brian 'Porky' Dick grew up in Rosebery and spent his first twenty years of employment working eight hours on day shift at the EZ Rosebery mine. In the early 1970's the company placed the majority of its underground workforce onto a two shift roster - day and afternoon. The worst shift of all? Pay Friday afternoon shift. Porky hated this shift with all his heart and soul. The miners with their dark humour always referred to this shift as 'The Good One'. No miner works an eight hour day anymore and their communities are materially the richer and spiritually the poorer.

Heaven's an Eight Hour day

Verse One:

When you're working underground/ You like a night out
on the town/ At the end of the working week
You've bored and fired and worked your stope/ Smoke and
dust have parched your throat/ You've earned all your
pay and keep
Up on top you wash and scrub/ Then you're off to the pub
Happy your day is done
On the way out you pass/ Porky looking all downcast
His day has just begun

Chorus:

For...Porky's on the good one/ He's got his hat and his
flannel on
He won't be spending his pay
His mates are drinking beer and rum/ He's at work while
they're having fun / Porky's on the good one today

Verse Two:

His shoulders slump and his face is bleak/ On dayshift he'd
be giving cheek
His mood goes from bad to worse

When I up and die says he/ They'll take me to the cemetery
In the afternoon shift hearse

Refrain:

Well then he's in for a fright/ If he meets St Peter
on a Friday night
For this is what he will say
I'm sorry mate but the gates are locked/
We knocked off at four o'clock
Heaven's an eight hour day (repeat)

Chorus:

Verse Three:

Now once he gets down underground/ He
starts to turn his mood around
And climbs up into his job
He shines his light along the stope/ Says his
cross shift are a joke
Swears they're not worth two bob
He pulls out his tobacco pouch/ Makes himself
a Hessian couch/ And doesn't do anything

Chorus

Outro/Refrain:

Yes...Porky's in for a fright/ If he meets St Peter
on a Friday night
For this is what he will say
I'm sorry mate but the gates are locked/ We
knocked off at four o'clock
Heaven's an eight hour day
Heaven's an eight hour day
Heaven's an eight hour day



In A Miner's House

**Photo: Trevor Sumner - Miners Cottage
Primrose St, Rosebery - 1964**

About this song

Growing up in the 1950's and 60's was like being suspended between two worlds. Families were reducing in size but five or six children were quite

common. Hangovers from the depression such as meat safes, coppers, dunnies and detached bathrooms were still a part of daily life alongside electric refrigerators, showers and television. Houses were tiny and bedrooms were crowded. Somehow we all got along - most of the time!

In A Miner's House

Verse One:

In a miner's house all the rooms are small
There's lino in the kitchen and a stool along the wall
There's carrots and potatoes and corned beef in a pot
Where you're mother firmly sat you and made you
eat the lot

There's a toilet in the bathroom and a queue of three
or four

Where your brother stashed a 'Phantom' and bolted
the door

Chorus

In a miner's house (repeat)

In a miner's house - now that I recall
It's the blessings that are large and the trials that are
small

There's no sense of deprivation of being second best
Just the message we were gifted: 'You're as good
as all the rest'

In a miner's house

Verse two:

There's ochre on the fireplace and kindling in a box
Flannels on the clothesline and a westward weather cock
A copper stick and bluo and a meat safe out the back
A bow saw in the shed and a ton of wood to stack
A weekly bath with only soap to wash your stringy hair
A hand knitted jumper and fresh white underwear
Chorus (omit fourth and fifth lines)

Verse Three

Around the kitchen table no prayers were ever
said

Just a mother's grace to bind us with a fierce
and tender thread

There's happy Christmas memories of rich and
steaming pud

And if you never found a sixpence it did not
taste as good

There's black and white TV – Emma Peel and
Steed

The solitude of rain when you're snuggled up
to read

Chorus (omit fourth and fifth lines)

Verse Four:

There's four beds for us brothers in a room just
for the boys

There's two beds for our sister – one just for
her toys

There's nugget for our school shoes and
darning in our socks

Blue Hills on the radio and wind-up-wake-up
clocks

There's iodine to sting you for cuts and other
woes

Hot water bottles and silence when it snows

Outro: Full Chorus

In A Miner's House

<https://youtu.be/esur4Eu8Px4>

Mt Black Braves

Photo: Bennion Kids - Mt Black 1948

Jenny Bennion



About this song

Half the fun of photography before digital cameras was the anticipation of getting your film developed. It never ceased to surprise when a carefully framed photo of friends and family would return completely dominated by the landscape in which we lived. The bush was everywhere and Mt Black with its foothills dominated by thick swathes of tea-tree and eucalypts was our childhood playground. Literally a universe into which we could disappear. This song is dedicated to my brother Peter and to the memory of Chris 'Sparrow' Thomas who left us much too early.

Mt Black Braves

Verse 1

**Cross the road and out of sight
Tea-tree curtain green and tight
Gumboot track a narrow groove
A Universe in which to move
Little axes by our sides
The deadly weapons of our tribe
Bloodless battles daily waged
The daring deeds of Mt Black braves**

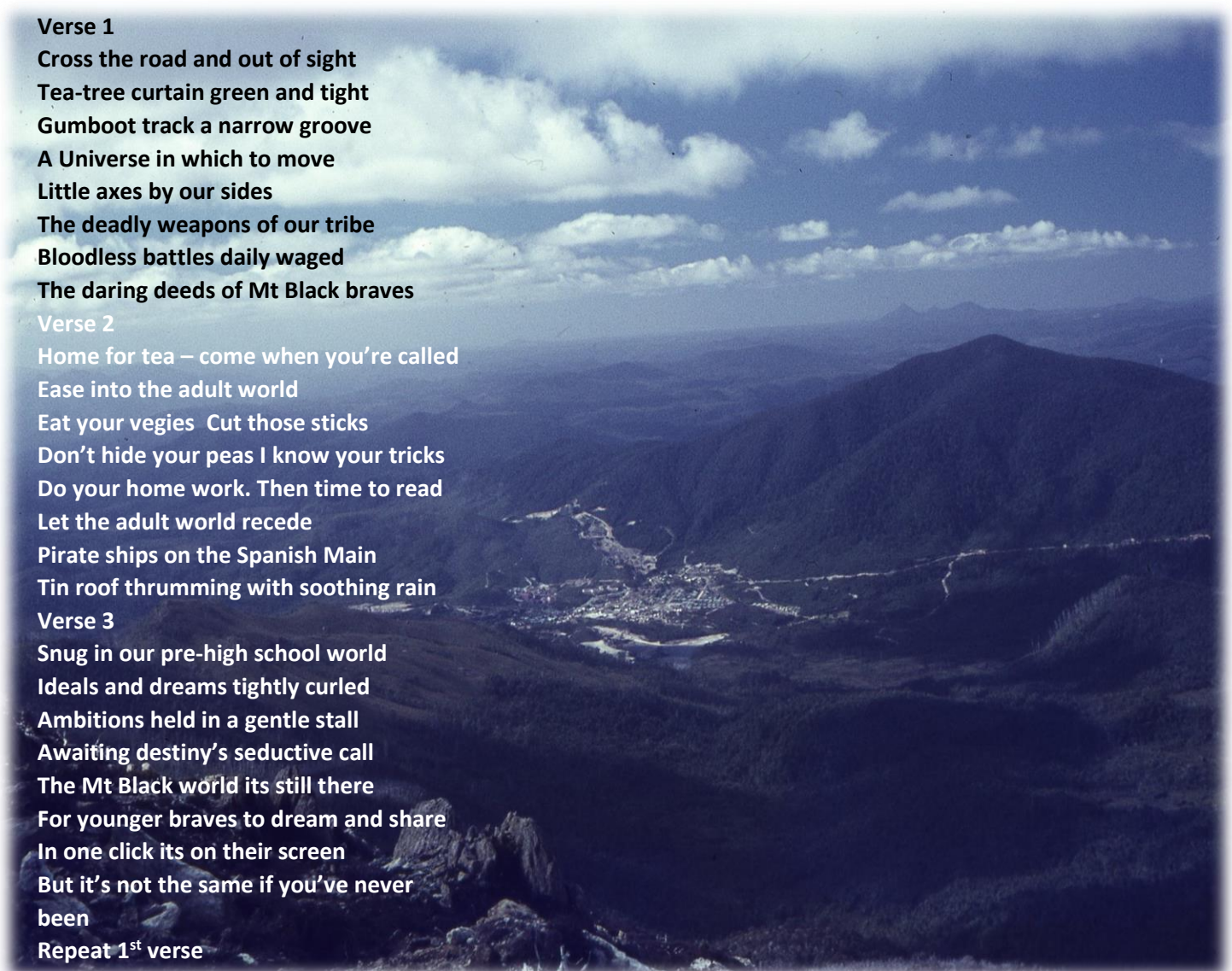
Verse 2

**Home for tea – come when you're called
Ease into the adult world
Eat your vegies Cut those sticks
Don't hide your peas I know your tricks
Do your home work. Then time to read
Let the adult world recede
Pirate ships on the Spanish Main
Tin roof thrumming with soothing rain**

Verse 3

**Snug in our pre-high school world
Ideals and dreams tightly curled
Ambitions held in a gentle stall
Awaiting destiny's seductive call
The Mt Black world its still there
For younger braves to dream and share
In one click its on their screen
But it's not the same if you've never
been**

Repeat 1st verse



Raindrops on Rinadeena



**Photo: Teepookana Kids
1939 Lindon Hubbard**



About this song

The Abt railway now known as the West Coast Wilderness Railway was maintained by families living on the line. Their children caught the train to school in Strahan. The Rinadeena kids were literally up at dawn and not home till eight and occasionally midnight. Lindon is pictured here front left with two Marshall brothers.

Raindrops on Rinadeena

Verse One

Eight O' Clock at Miner's Siding/ Number One a head of steam

The tortured earth and man colliding/ Beside the rusting rushing Queen

Chorus:

Raindrops on Rinadeena, Fleabite and Sailor Jack

The Quartermile at Teepookana - Cross the Iron Bridge and back

Kingfishers on the water - Lowana on the flat

Rinadeena Teepookana Dubbil Barril Sailor Jack

Verse Two

Cogs and wheels slowly grinding/ The genius of Roman Abt

Rack and pinion staunchly winding/ Rising steeply from the flat

Atop the ridge a lonely station/ The Marshall brothers up at dawn

Invested with a stoic patience/ On their way to school in Strahan

Chorus

Interlude

Ralph and Colin/ Well dressed Roslyn/ Off to learn the golden rule

Up at dawn/home from Strahan/ Another day of primary school

Verse Three

Cogs and wheels slowly grinding/ At Dubbil Barril coming back

Rack and pinion staunchly winding/ On the homeward stretch of track

Edward Driffield and Fred Cutten/ The right men for the harsh terrain

Engineers to put your trust in/ Persistent as the constant rain

Chorus

Outro

Eight O' Clock at Miner's Siding/ Number One a head of steam

The tortured earth and man colliding/ Beside the rusting rushing Queen

Raindrops on Rinadeena 2019 version

<https://youtu.be/pe880mYjvOE>

Song for Marion

**Photo: Marion Oak Sticht
On the Gordon River**



About this song

Marion Sticht was the wife of metallurgist and eventual Mt Lyell mine manager Robert Sticht. They arrived in Queenstown in the mid 1890's. Just about as far from their American roots as they could travel in those times. The climate was hostile, the facilities rudimentary and the social life far from Vassar College in New York that Marion had attended as a younger woman. In just under thirty years Marion would return home only once. She would spend nearly all that time in Western Tasmania. She would bury her husband and find her final resting place in Melbourne. This song was written from my own personal perspective - but upon reading **Brett Martin's magnificent book Marion**, a much more worthy subject emerged. Our songs about loss are invariably about romantic love. This is not one of these.

Song for Marion

Refrain

Never goin' back home / Never goin' back home
We can only ever dream

Verse 1

Yet the feelin's strong / Oh how I long
For one more breath of where I've been
Of a time and place/ The familiar face
Of long departed kin and friends
Of the warmth and fun/ of a youthful sun
Of days we thought would never end

Refrain

Verse 2

Never going to change/ What's been arranged
We only have one life to lead
Deep down we know/ We must let go
We only have one heart to grieve

Verse 3

It's a fantasy/ Indulge with me
Think of what we'd have to share
Gathered round the hearth/ Oh how we'd laugh
If only dreams could take us there

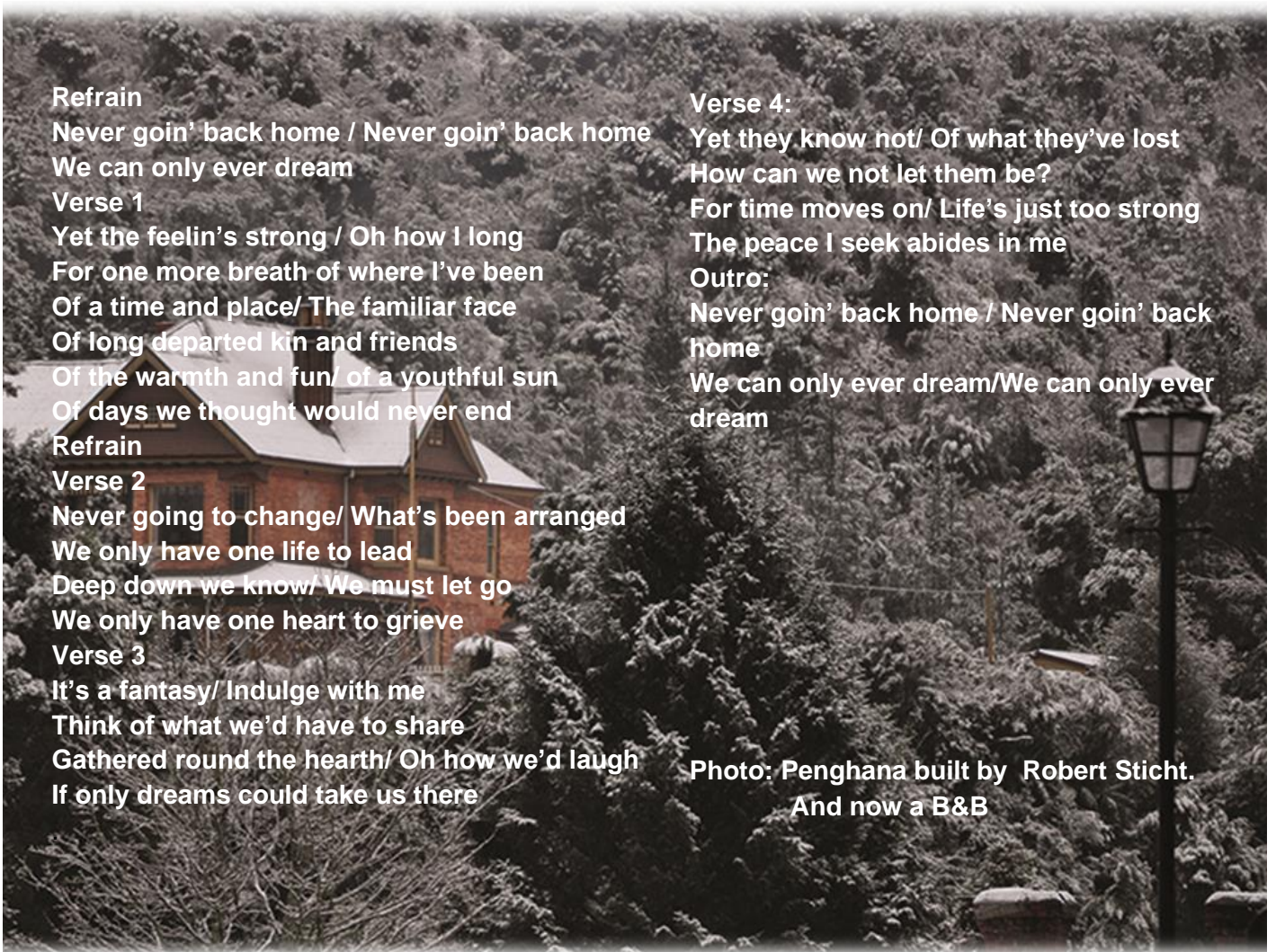
Verse 4:

Yet they know not/ Of what they've lost
How can we not let them be?
For time moves on/ Life's just too strong
The peace I seek abides in me

Outro:

Never goin' back home / Never goin' back home
We can only ever dream/We can only ever dream

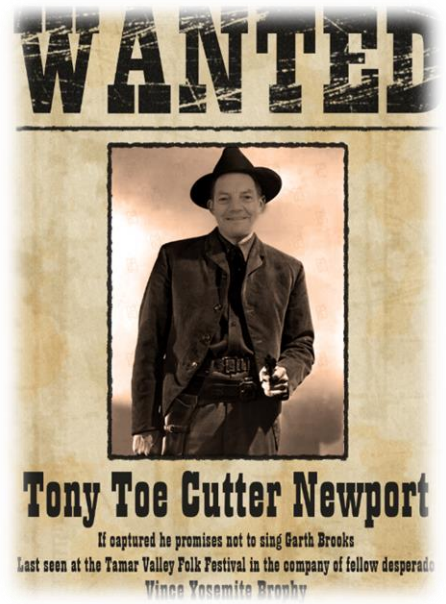
**Photo: Penghana built by Robert Sticht.
And now a B&B**



Struttin' Down Agnes

Photo: Poster by Rowen Hill at Bokprint

Below: Sid Simms. Pictured on middle elephant
Agnes St 1978



About this song

Imagine giving a sixteen year old a loaded pistol and instructing him to walk down to the post office with his only slightly older colleague to pick up the mining company payroll. This was the task assigned to me and I suspect many others working as bank officers in the innocent days of the late 1960's where people left cars and houses unlocked, rode bikes without helmets, smoked wherever they pleased and drank far too much full strength beer.

Struttin' Down Agnes

Verse 1

Just sixteen with a thirty eight
Struttin' down Agnes with my banking
mate

Three piece suit and a pimpled chin
Scrambled note for my next of kin

Chorus:

What was it they were thinkin'?
A shootout on Agnes Street
What was it they were drinkin'?
A less deadly pair you'd never meet

Verse 2

Hedley's proppin' up his shop verandah
Hat pushed back - ready for banter
A well aimed spit and a knowin' smile
"G'day cowboys I like your style
What's in your trousers? Are you pleased to see me
You blokes been watchin' too much TV"

Refrain:

Walkin' with my Smith and Wesson
Pickin' up the EZ pay
Greener than the cash in question
Keepin' Hedley's spit at bay

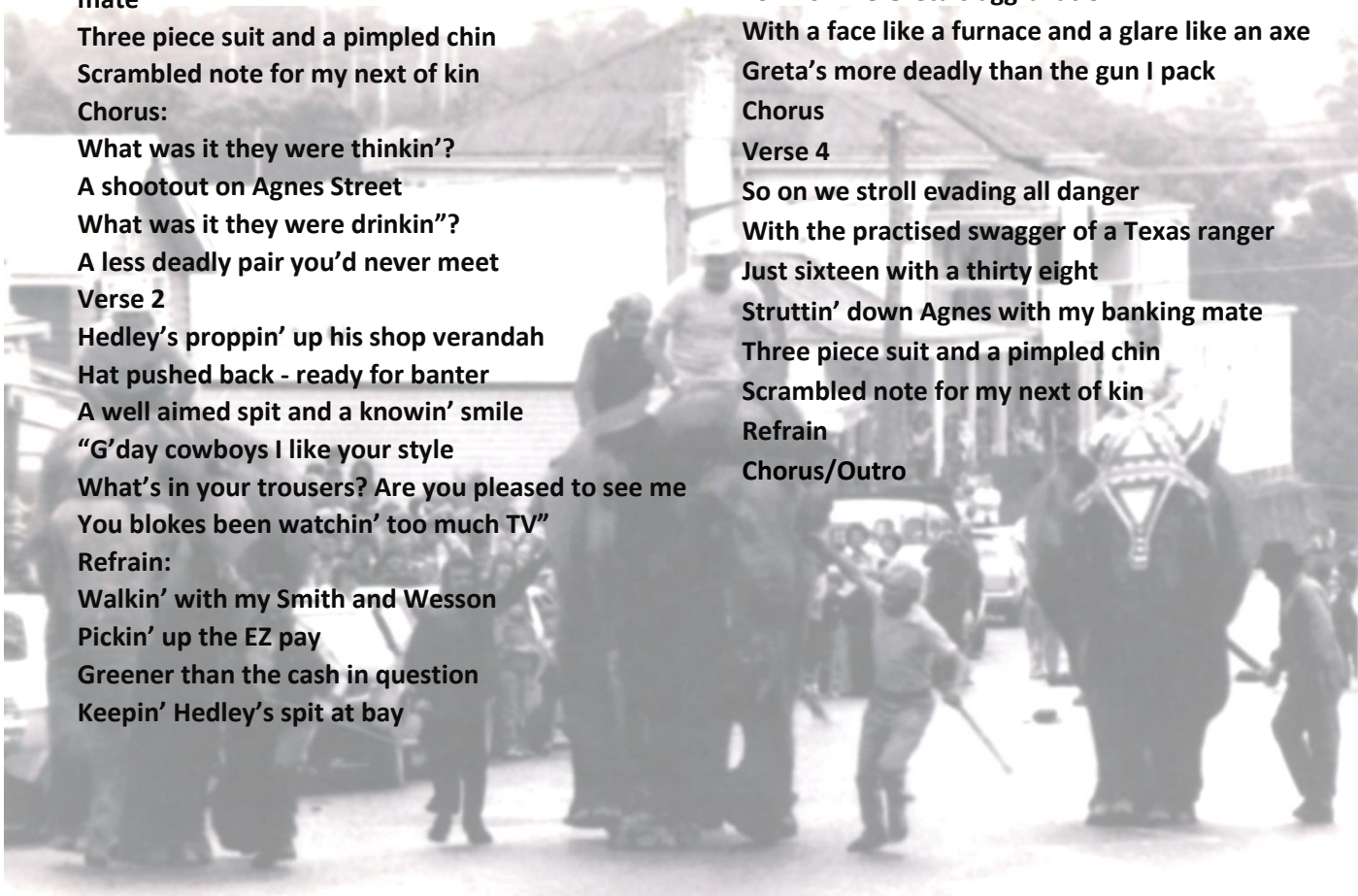
Verse 3

Hedley's charm is benign compensation
For his wife Greta's aggravation
With a face like a furnace and a glare like an axe
Greta's more deadly than the gun I pack
Chorus

Verse 4

So on we stroll evading all danger
With the practised swagger of a Texas ranger
Just sixteen with a thirty eight
Struttin' down Agnes with my banking mate
Three piece suit and a pimpled chin
Scrambled note for my next of kin
Refrain

Chorus/Outro



The Bradshaw Mill

Photo: The Bradshaw Harp



About this song

The Fiddleback Blackwood and Quarter Sawn King Billy for this harp were donated by Ian Bradshaw. The harp was built by Paul Mineur a Hobart Luthier who was born in Queenstown. Paul added some Huon Pine buttons and bar holders plus a Mother of Pearl inlay of a Tasmanian Kingfisher. Cliff Bradshaw founded the mill in the Linda Valley in 1936.

Ian the son of Bern is a third generation saw miller. This instrument reflects the sound and soul of the west coast.

The Bradshaw Mill

Refrain:

Give me a compass. Set my course/ Cliff and Bern. My own true north
The scent of rain. The forest earth / The mountain valleys of my birth

Verse One

We cut a track through the Raglan Range/ Logged King Billy with horse and chain
Built a road down the Collingwood/ Where Celery Top and big Oak stood

Verse Two

The old steam mills. They caught on fire/ Whirring blades. A lethal choir
The random mayhem of a timber mill/ Can count on all my fingers still

Chorus

We'll build a bridge of celery pine/ We'll cut the timber for the mine
Down by the banks of the Bradshaw Mill/ Where the Princess waters now lie still

Verse Three:

Now Burbury has drowned the sound/ Our childhood. Our hallowed ground
Our legacy lies in the hands/ Of tourist guides and artisans

Verse Four:

Some things don't change. Nonetheless/ The kindred spirit of the West
The strength and heart of the sturdy oak/ Still resides in West Coast folk

Verse Five:

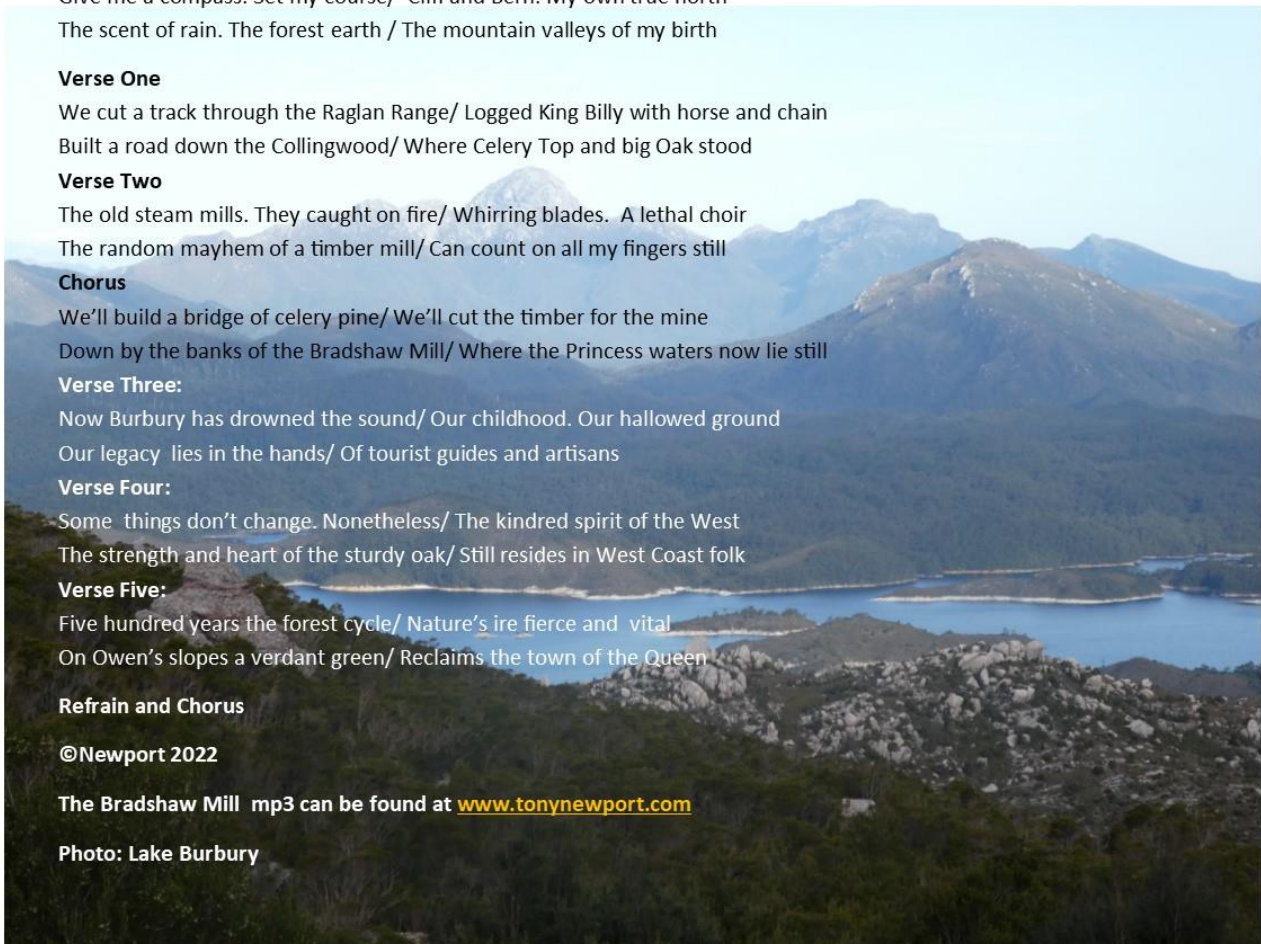
Five hundred years the forest cycle/ Nature's ire fierce and vital
On Owen's slopes a verdant green/ Reclaims the town of the Queen

Refrain and Chorus

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The Bradshaw Mill mp3 can be found at www.tonynewport.com

Photo: Lake Burbury



The Essence of Our island (Song for Jude)

**Photo: Harvest Market Launceston
Discover Tasmania**



About this song

This song is based on the food my mother cooked.

Growing up in Rosebery in the 50's, 60's and 70's. Jude is my sister who was for a short time incapacitated in a Brisbane Hospital and is now fully recovered. Food is comfort and is right up with there with what we bring to those who are confined to a hospital bed. I was in Tasmania so this song was the next best thing that I could offer. No one could cook braised rabbit like my Mum.

The Essence of Our Island

Intro

There are foods that I would bring you / A taste of now
and then

The essence of our island/ to grow up Tasmanian

Verse One

A mutton bird at Easter/ A lady in the snow
Green peas in November/ A rabbit cooked real slow
Pink eyes at Christmas/ King Edwards baked and crisp
Tasman's in their jackets/ Kennebecs for chips

Refrain:

These foods that I would bring you /With a tale to tell
The essence of our island/A wish to see you well

Verse 2

Berries by the bucket/ Of every different hue
Raspberries , straw and black/ And little pearls of blue
Golden syrup dumplings/ A Cox's apple pie
Beer battered scallops/ And barbecued blue eye
Duck River butter/ a plate of oxtail stew
Beef rissoles and gravy/ and Uncle Len's homebrew

Refrain:

These foods that I would bring you /A taste of now and then
The essence of our island / To grow up Tasmanian

Verse 3

Leatherwood honey crumpets/ some Stone's green
ginger wine
A bottle of the doings / For warmth in wintertime
Double decker scones / sometimes made with cheese
How I'd love to pack a hamper / filled with all of
these

Refrain:

These foods that I would bring you /Just to wish you
well

The essence of our island/You cannot buy or sell

Coda

And can you hear our mother? Hear her plaintive
voice again?
Calling us for dinner/ To come in out of the rain
This I cannot send you/ This must come from above
Just these memories I'll share with you/ For our food
was cooked with love

Outro: repeat intro



The Essence of Our Island – Song For Jude
<https://youtu.be/9CCNVMBk9uM>

The Mother Lode

Photo: Peter Janout
Top of Hercules Haulage
Looking down.



About this song

The old miners often referred to the Hercules mine on Mt Read as the 'mother lode' of the West Coast. This an ancient and dense wilderness. In 1995 a Huon Pine with clones of 1000 to 2000 years old and dating back 10,500 years to the original plant was discovered on the slopes of Mt Read. The 19th century prospectors endured much in this terrain and the miners and the families who came after inherited some of their hardiness and grit. We lived in Williamsford in the late 1950's. The men worked hard and women endured. The women of the west are often overlooked around the romanticism of mining - and yet we do after all call it the MOTHER lode.

The Mother Lode

Verse 1

The mother lode it starts up high /Where Hercules
meets the sky
Where wire ropes and horses strain /And Westerlies
dump drenching rain

Where tramway lines tumble down /To rock hard
men on lower ground

Chorus:

Searching for the mother lode
Craving like a Dundas leech
Find another Iron Blow
Comb another un-worked lease

Verse 2

As the winder spools and turns / The wiser men their
lessons learned
Strive to teach their strapping sons /A miner's dreams
are all hard won
And as they wash down their last face /The young men
rise to take their place

Chorus

Verse 3

When snow lays on old Williamsford/ And miner's ghosts
can roam unseen
Soft voices rise in sweet accord /As mothers sigh and
gently keen
For abandoned dreams they once held dear / For a life envisaged
far from here

Chorus

Verse 4

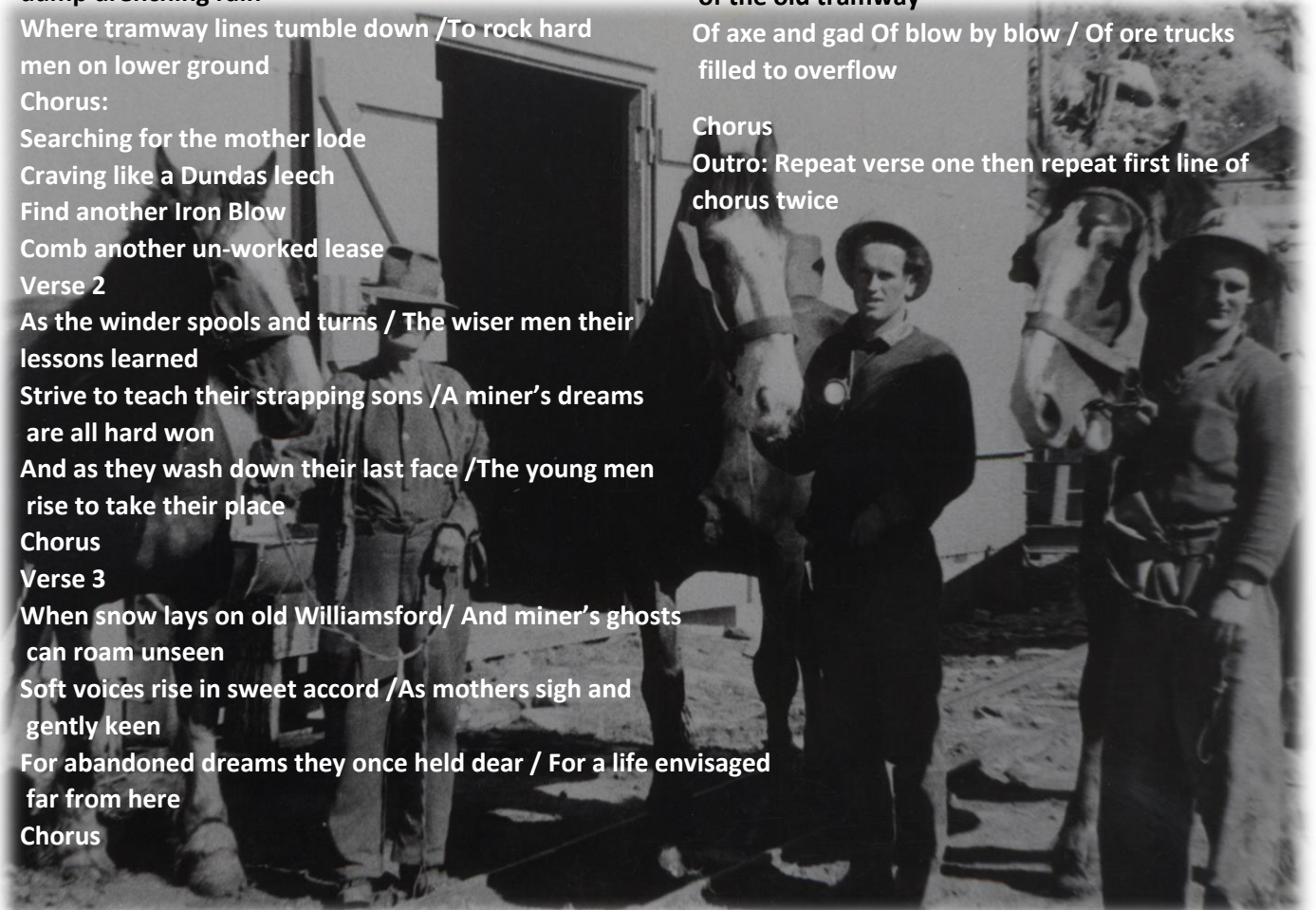
On the walk to Montezuma /On a brilliant
summer's day

The little creeks they all murmur / Of the time
of the old tramway

Of axe and gad Of blow by blow / Of ore trucks
filled to overflow

Chorus

Outro: Repeat verse one then repeat first line of
chorus twice





The Pieman River Rag

**Photo: From the Movie
Van Diemen's land.**

About this song

Three movies have been made about Alexander Pearce the convict cannibal who escaped twice from Sarah Island in Macquarie Harbour in the 1820's.

Van Diemen's Land (pictured above). The Last Confession of Alexander Pearce and For the Term of His Natural Life (pictured below). West coasters were wrongly informed growing up that the Pieman River was named after him.

The Pieman River Rag

Verse One

Alexander Pearce was small /just sixty three inches tall
He was not a man to brag/ this nondescript convict lag
Exiled to the gates of hell/ the wilderness his prison cell
With his convict mates in flight/ he grew a man sized
appetite

With his trusty axe he'd swing/ then afterwards he'd
dance and sing

The Pieman River Rag

Chorus

Exiled to the gates of hell/ wilderness their prison cell
From the Pieman to the King/ disembodied voices sing
The Pieman River Rag

Verse Two.

His reputation dark and grim/ when Tommy Cox
befriended him

So he escaped a second time/ with a mate on which to dine
When they reached the rushing King/ Tommy said: I
cannot swim

I will not cross, says he/ this will be the death of me
Alexander said: Relax! / then he hit him with his axe
And with the devils around the fire/ he sang in their
demented choir

The Pieman River Rag

Chorus

Verse Three.

Now Alexander had no plate/ Upon which he could eat
his mate

Back in gaol in Hobart Town/ the warders grimace and
they frown

The thought of Pearce affects their mood/ and puts them
off their finger food

Eventually he's tried and hung/ and the warders sang as
he swung

The Pieman River Rag

Chorus

Verse Four.

Now it was thought - upon a whim/ The Pieman was
named after him

In fact it was another gent/ A felon by the name of
Kent

A pastry cook and a thief/ A connoisseur of pork and
beef

Of mutton, fowl and sometime horse/ A lover of
meat pie with sauce

And when the roaring forties howl/ like a devil
chorus on the prowl

You'll feel the breath of a vicious swing/ and hear
demented voices sing

The Pieman River Rag

Outro: Chorus



Thirteen Level Blues

**Photo: Rosebery Miners
Circa 1950
Loreen Higbid-Gorrie**



About this song

Thirteen level would have been a relatively new or yet to developed part of the mine when this photo was taken.

Nonetheless the legacy of these men - some of whom were still working underground - was still to be found in the mid seventies on these old levels. Mateship was not a cliché. You worked in two man parties and looked after each other. Usually the old miners nurturing the young ones. They were tough, they marked you hard, they had a rugged sense of humour but most importantly they had your back. Back then there was also a card game revered by all: Forties/Forty Fives.

Thirteen Level Blues

Verse One

Well my union mate don' told me
You gotta pay those union dues
Without your union ticket
They're gunna cut you loose
They'll send you up to Coventry (with)
Those 13 level blues

Verse Two

Well I'm working for Brian Sumner
On the Res - i - due
Standin' heavy timber
The whole shift through
Sweatin' and a strainin' (to)
Those 13 level blues

Verse Three

Well my back. Its nearly breakin'
But what's it all to you
Up there in the outside
In your brown suede shoes
Far away from breathin'
Those 13 level blues

Verse Four

Dan the trucker's always singin'
He never blows a fuse

You can hear him back in Zeehan
Tellin' Roy the news
How he gives those big dirt slackers
Those 13 level blues

Verse Five

Sid's sleepin' in the corner
He likes his crib time snooze
Porky's playin' forties
He's got that five finger muse
Whistlin' like a jailer (to)
Those 13 level blues

Verse Six

I'm standin' on the platform
With the dayshift crew
Three and three on the knocker
Put on your dancin' shoes
Behind us we are leavin'
Those 13 level blues

Chorus

Thirteen Level Blues

<https://youtu.be/EOWGTtETyPA>



Waratah Girls

**Photo: Betty Sumner (nee Dunn)
Gail Roberts (nee Whyman)**



About this song

My mother Betty was born in the middle of the depression in Waratah when these small

West Coast mining communities were truly remote. It was a tough time. No unemployment benefits or antibiotics and death by pneumonia, septicaemia and tuberculosis was common. Families were large and still births frequent. Gail who also features in this song lost three siblings to still birth and was born weighing just two pounds and lucky to survive. She is still with us - a hale and hearty 85 years old in 2020.

Waratah Girls

Verse One

Deep in the depression/ stalked by pneumonia
and TB

Miners scratched for tin/ to feed their family
Mothers harnessed to the living/ little time to
mourn their dead

Every other year a baby/ barely time to wet their head
Born a middle child/ into a mob of ten
First up best dressed/ was no jest back then
Betty learned to make a stand/ to know and
old her place

To temper her fire/ with her humour and her grace

Chorus:

They weren't born – to lace and curls
They were down to earth and gritty
They were smart and they were pretty
Betty and Gail were Waratah Girls
Betty and Gail were Waratah Girls

Verse Two

Weighing just two pounds/ skin turning a dark blue
Courage, luck and love/ helped pull Gail through
A shoe box by the fire/ a crib made by her Pop
Doctor Walker's prescription/ brandy by the drop
Plum jobs at the Post Office/ on the telephone exchange
Excursions to Burnie/ on the EBR train
The thrill of the pursuit/ for the right to win their hand
All too soon surrendered for a wedding band
Hockey, kids and washing/ take care of your men
Lock them out on a drunk/ every now and again
When you marry a miner/ you take on their life
The heartbeat, the gentle/ mainstay, mother, wife

Chorus

Verse Three

The children have all grown/ all their boats have
sailed

Betty's at peace/ and now there's only Gail
In her home in Lutana/ never straying far
From the memories of her childhood/ and her days
in Waratah

Of the Bischoff Hotel/ owned by her Uncle Ray
Damask and silver service/ the order of the day
The pub is still standing/ and the patrons linger on
But the grace that went before them/ it's a long time
gone

A long time gone...

A long time gone...

A long time gone...

A long time gone

Chorus/Outro



Wee Georgie Wood

Photo: Pinterest

About this song

This little train has been lovingly restored along with a track that runs around Tullah and Lake McIntosh. Up until 1962 it was the lifeline for Tullah residents with no road into the town until the Murchison highway connected it to

Rosebery and Burnie. Angela Powell told me the story of her mother buying her father a pianola for his 21st birthday. This of course was brought in on the train along with all other essentials. Jim loved to have a yarn, play the pianola and tell you he was pretty handy at football.



Wee Georgie Wood

Intro

Wee Georgie Wood/ The little train that could
No payload's too good/ For wee Georgie Wood

Verse 1:

Mail and parcels from all over/ Bushell's tea and
Coca cola

The parish priest, the drunk and sober/Jimmy Powell's
pianola

Refrain

No payload's too good/ For wee Georgie Wood

Verse 2:

Blundstone boots and dancing shoes/The Advocate
daily news

Diamond drills and wedding gowns/ The lifeblood of
old Tullah Town

Refrain

Wee Georgie Wood / The little train that could

Verse 3:

Winter tracks all awash/Whistle at the Macintosh
Singin' "Rum and Coca Cola/ 'Round Jimmy
Powell's pianola

Calypso Aside:

Singin' "Rum and Coca Cola/ Round Jimmy Powell's
pianola

Those merry miners from Tullah/ Round Jimmy
Powell's pianola

Refrain

Wee Georgie Wood/ No payload's too good

Verse Four:

The Pieman flows all dark and cold/Wee Georgie
winds along its fold

Blundstone boots and dancing shoes/ The Advocate
daily news

Diamond drills and wedding gowns/The lifeblood of
old Tullah Town

Outro:

Wee Georgie Wood/ The little train that could
No payload's too good/ For wee Georgie Wood

Wee Georgie Wood

Wee Georgie Medley

<https://youtu.be/ZwgVc7JBjrs>





West Coast Mining Town

An original Poem by Geoffrey Miller

Photo: Rosebery 1930's

Adrian Price

Below: St Josephs Queenstown

Primary - Unconformity 2016

About this song

Geoff read this poem out at my Uncle Larry's funeral. It was a fitting tribute to my uncle and to west coasters in general. He then gracefully gave me permission to put it into song. The lyrics speak for themselves. This poem is wonderfully evocative of growing up in a West Coast mining town. St Josephs Primary School in Queenstown sang this song at The Unconformity in 2016

West Coast Mining Town

Verse 1
 If you've known mist upon the mountains/and
 valleys lost in fog
 If drizzling rain at playtime/ left you cold and
 water logged
 and you've trudged home with wet schoolbooks/
 and a friendly mongrel dog
 Then you've grown up in a west coast mining town
 You've grown up in a west coast mining town

Verse 2
 If you close your eyes and cockies cry/ high on
 a timbered ridge
 And the boys jump in to skinny dip/ just below the
 bridge
 If the banter of the miners/ leaves a smile upon
 your mind
 Then the West Coast's left a mark on you/ that
 won't be moved by time

Verse 3
 If your memory sees the sun rise/ through a gap
 between the hills
 And a mountain stream goes dancing/ on the pond
 in which it spills
 If man ferns grow in silence/ beneath walls of
 weeping stone
 (Then) your heart has told your restless soul/ the
 West Coast is your home

Repeat Verse One

West Coast Mining Town

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKGRPcj-7Zs>

Where the Goshawk Flies

Photo: Grey Goshawk
Tarkine Wilderness Lodge



About this song

Many of us who grew up on Tasmania's west coast are far from intrepid explorers. We like our creature comforts the same as anyone else. This is what living in a mining town brings to such a remarkable region. The opportunity to experience a rainforest in your backyard. This gets imprinted on your soul. Even the outline of a foreign mountain range can invoke a sense of home such is the power and the beauty of this special place.

Where the Goshawk Flies

Verse 1

Button grass with tannin veins
Mountain rivers dark and stained
Craggy peaks austere and old
A sea of green that fills my soul

Verse 2

Thunder clouds rollin' in
Pelting rain on rooves of tin
Buffered up and battened down
The rhythm of a west coast town

Chorus

Gondwana dreaming in my bones
Where I was born and my heart's at home
Where the Thylacine spirit lies
Where the air is pure and the Goshawk flies

Verse 3

Driftwood on Trial Harbour sand
Five thousand miles to reach land
Huon Pine on Mount Read
Ten thousand years of just one seed

Refrain:

Where the Thylacine spirit lies
Where the air is pure and Goshawk Flies

Verse 4

Shining tarns in a summer moon
Mating frogs spruik their tune
Pademelons drink and feed
With tiger snakes in water reeds

Chorus

Repeat verse 1 and 2

Outro/Refrain

Where the Thylacine spirit lies
Where the air is pure and Goshawk Flies
Where the Thylacine spirit lies
Where the air is pure and Goshawk Flies

