

# SINGABOUT

**AUGUST 2016**

## PARODIES

With the upcoming third John Dengate Commemorative Concert, it seemed a good occasion to air the art of parody that he used to great effect, and find room for some material that didn't fit with the June issue.

The history of Australian Folk music includes many parodies, often modifying a memorable popular song to make a statement about an issue of the time. This is of course not restricted to Folk. Many of the popular radio stations have created humorous parodies and anti-ads to improve the ratings - they seem to strike a chord with the Australian audience. For example, I still have a CD somewhere of some of the less tasteless material Doug Mulray created for his morning show.

In the folk scene there were also some pretty rough parodies, but the ones that seem to survive are those like John's work that make a statement with a clever adaption of the original song.

In his recollections of The Bushwhackers, Chris Kempster wrote:

*"Brian introduced us, explaining that some people said there was no Australian Folk Music - only parodies, to imported tunes from Ireland or such. If so, said Brian, then we're all the same, everyone here, we're all from the same sources as the music and we're all parodies, the only Australians are the Aborigines."*

This comment is still relevant today with the current debates about immigration.

## Dying Fettler

A strapping young fettler lay dying  
With a shovel supporting his head  
The ganger and crew round him crying  
As he let go his pick handle and said

Chorus

Wrap me up in a tent or a fly boys  
And bury me deep down below  
Where the trolleys and trains won't molest me  
To show there's a navvy below

There's tea in the old battered billy-can  
Place the dogs spikes out in a row  
And we'll spike to the next merry meeting  
To show there's a navvy below

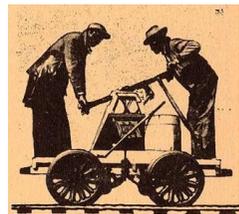
Hark, there's the wail of a trolley  
Far, far away it seems  
It sounds like the inspector is coming  
And hopes to see us all here

So back to your shovels my boy-lads  
And bend your backs backs with a will  
For this inspector has no kind of judgement  
To know there's a navvy below

Given the recent loss of railway enthusiast Brian Dunnett, this seemed an appropriate piece to open with as he loved everything with a railway theme.

It was collected at Lappa Junction in north Queensland in 1966 and closely parodies the Dying Stockman, similarly relating the tough life of a railway labourer.

More old songs at <http://folkstream.com>



# Terrorist Song

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Tune: Knickerbocker Line

As I was walking down the road, he suddenly appeared:  
A bloody turbaned Moslem with a big Bin Laden beard;  
I asked, "Are you a terrorist, is that your bloody lurk?"  
He said, "No, I'm a carpenter, I'm on my way to work."

## Chorus

I watched him, tracked him, rang up A.S.I.O.  
I dobbed him into Alan Jones on talk-back radio.  
I may not be a beauty and I don't have any sense  
But, by God, I know my duty to the national defence!

They're going to bomb the Harbour Bridge then quiet as a mouse,  
They'll sneak up with explosives and blow up the Opera House.  
They're going to blow up Murphy's pub. I've heard about the plot...  
I hope they get the pokies 'cause I'm losing quite a lot.

There's terrorism everywhere; it makes a man afraid...  
I'm buying a machine gun and I'll build a barricade.  
You'll have to know the password if you come and visit me.  
Shoot first, ask questions later mate, that's my philosophy.

My Auntie May's eccentric; "You're paranoid," she said.  
She doesn't believe the terrorists are underneath the bed.  
She reckons it's "hysteria"... I don't know what she meant...  
She said she's far more frightened of the Federal Government.

John Howard will protect us, he is very strong and brave;  
He's passing legislation that will make you all behave!  
You won't be facing Mecca on that silly bloody mat  
You'll all be Church of England, Abdul, cogitate on that!

## Final Chorus

Watch them, track them...

Some of the names have changed, but unfortunately the issues are just as relevant today. The song arrived as the Knickerbocker Line, and has also been modified to The Great Northern Line, and even Lachlan Tigers.

## Lies like 'illegal'

by Jenny Fitzgibbon <http://www.jennyfitzgibbon.com>

Adapted from the tune of "When the Boat Comes in". Trad - Northumberland

Asylum they come seeking            In a boat that's leaking  
Gets the polliès freakin'            When the boat comes in

No peace for Baba, No peace for Maman  
No peace for koodak, surely it's a sin

Zero information            goes out to the nation  
An abomination            When the boat comes in

To 'secure' our borders            We give Navy orders  
Racists would applaud us            When the boat comes in

No peace for Baba, No peace for Maman  
No peace for koodak, surely it's a sin

Why say a prayer            Teach our kids to care  
Then refuse to share            When the boat comes in

Private corporations            Profit from our nation's  
Freedom deprivations            When the boat comes in

No peace for Baba, No peace for Maman  
No peace for koodak, surely it's a sin

Forked tongues a-lashing            In a right-wing fashion  
Why not show compassion            When the boat comes in

Even though there's no 'queue'            take the pain you've been thru  
To Manus or Nauru            When the boat comes in

No peace for Baba, No peace for Maman  
No peace for koodak, surely it's a sin

Children in detention            Human rights suspension  
We must pay attention            When the boat comes in

If I'd a son or daughter            fleeing famine or slaughter  
I'd cross any water            When the boat comes in

No peace for Baba, No peace for Maman  
No peace for koodak, surely it's a sin

A label like 'illegals'            Lies like 'illegal'  
Should be illegal            When the boat comes in

While the tune has become popular here via a more modern communication path it is well known to many people and is therefore a good tune to parody.

Baba - father, Maman - mother, Koodak - child (Persian)