

# BANJO PATERSON

(1864 - 1941)

**‘Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong, under the shade of a coolabah tree, and he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boiled, you’ll come a waltzing matilda with me.’**

‘Banjo’ Paterson was a poet who captured the magic of Australia’s bush and the characters who lived there.

His ballads inspired a pride in Australian country’s history.

Banjo’s **"Waltzing Matilda"** has become Australia’s unofficial national anthem.

**Andrew Barton Paterson** was born in 1864 on a farm in New South Wales, the eldest of seven children.

Banjo wrote about his childhood for his grandchildren. These stories were published in a book *"The Illalong Children"*.

*"My first impressions are of life on a mixed sheep and cattle station called Buckinbah in the west of New South Wales somewhere about 1868.*

*"My father was away from home a lot, looking after our Queensland place and my mother was busy from daylight until dark with household work."*

When Banjo was seven years old the family moved to "Illalong" - a property near the Snowy Mountains.

*"Every morning I had to walk a mile or so up the paddock, freezing with cold in the winter or sweating with heat in the summer, catch my pony then off on the four mile ride to school, up the big hill."*

He learnt to love the animals and birds of the bush, and his great love of horses which he carried right throughout his life.

*"All good things must come to an end however, and I was sent to school in Sydney, where I lived during term-time with my grandmother."*

After finishing school Paterson worked as a clerk for a law firm and eventually became a lawyer. But his passion was poetry, so in his early twenties he sent some of his poems to be published in a popular newspaper called "The Bulletin".

He signed his poems **‘The Banjo’** - the name of a favourite horse and the name stuck.

When **‘The Man from Snowy River’** was published in 1890 it caught the imagination of Australian readers and made twenty-six year old Banjo the toast of the nation

*‘There was movement at the station for the word had passed around; the cold from Old Regret had got away.*

*But the man from Snowy River let the pony have his head,*

*And he swung his stockwhip round and gave cheer,*

*And he raced him down the mountain like a torrent down its bed,*

*While the others stood and watched in very fear.’*

People loved Banjo’s poems. **"Saltbush Bill"**, **"The Man from Ironbark"** and **"Clancy of the Overflow"** became part of Australia’s folklore literature.

Banjo died in 1941. He was almost seventy-seven.

"I hope that my grandfather will be remembered as a great Australian."

**Acknowledgement to Nancy Bird**

[www.abc.net.au/btn/australians/bpatterson.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/btn/australians/bpatterson.htm)



## Gawler on Sunday Afternoon

It was Sunday and the phone rang. ‘Les! I’ll bring some information round for the newsletter.’ Within a blink, Fred arrived with his daughter Natasha.

‘Do you fancy going up to **Gawler** to see the band playing at **Fibber Magee’s Irish Pub**.

Fond of the occasional pint of Guinness as I am, I accepted the invitation.

# Friends United



Barbara, Doug, John, Aileen

OK it was Sunday and the church bells had stopped ringing. The ringing I could now hear was the sound of banjo, guitars, squeeze box and harmonica.

These guys had the aisles rocking and overflowing with an active congregation singing, cheering, laughing and having a happy time.

I’ve never been to Ireland, but I’ve heard that this is the way it is there too..... **‘To be sure, to be sure’.**

Eddie (Guitar) and friends Monz (Banjo), Dan (Bass), Ken (Squeeze Box/ Harmonica) played extremely well. Their music creating an atmosphere of cheer.

Singing duo Maureen and Jan Murphy also provided a valid contribution to the atmosphere.

Hey! Yes it was a great day but I wondered why my better half Tina was getting so excited!

To add to the day’s event, there balancing precariously on top of a table awarding a prize for charity was **Aaron Jeffery** who plays the part of **Alex in McLeod’s Daughters**.

You meet loads of interesting folk in **Gawler**.

## Rock Fwd, Rock Back

You may wonder what the title of this article is all about.....

Yes, I know, it’s open to the imagination.

**‘Ahhha!’** I hear you say. ‘That’s what it’s about!’

**Yes..... it’s an extract from line dancing instructions.**

At the October show I had the pleasure of chatting with **Barbara, Aileen, Doug and John**.

**Doug** a country music fan, told me how he used to teach ballroom dancing many years back, and how he became **converted to line dancing** around eleven years ago.

Doug has visited **Tamworth, Mildura, and Barmera** music festivals.

Doug and Barbara explained how they moved house to live in Hope Valley.

Aileen and John, close friends, visited them from Paralowie on a number of occasions. They liked the area and the line dancing connection and they too moved to live in the area...

So they are now neighbours, all with a passion for line dancing. Doug’s favourite music is **Brooks and Dunn, Alan Jackson, George Strait, Bellamy Brothers, Boxcar Willie.....**

**But there’s more.....**

**‘STEP 1, 2, & 3, 4 Rock fwd R, Rock back.....’**

**‘Stop it Doug..... you’re spoiling my concentration.....’**

**Doug leads the team** as an active organiser of the **Line Dancing School** in their area, providing lessons to 10 to 20 students on a regular basis.

His excellent team also visits nursing homes giving exhibitions.

‘Most of the people they visit are elderly, but it keeps them active and it is good for body and soul.’

The four line dancing enthusiasts travel together to other country music shows.

One member of the **Friends United** team (who shall remain anonymous) commented that they have visited many clubs and for **Real Country Music.....**

**‘Gawler Country Music Club is simply the best!’**

**Thanks folks. It was a pleasure to get to know you.**

## Country Travellers



**Rosemary and Dennis from Kapunda and Jan from Saddleworth**

having a pleasant sip as they listen to the music **Bernie and the Bandits..**

**Rosemary says** ‘Everyone should become involved in **Country Music**. It’s a happy pastime.’

