

The Limejuice Tub

Collected by A L Lloyd while working in the Riverina in the 1930s. Bert Lloyd (1908–1982) was an English folk singer and collector, and a key figure in the folk music revival of the 1950s and 1960s, most widely known for his work with British folk music. He worked briefly in Australia and made several records of Australian Bush ballads.

When shear-ing comes lay down your drums, Step to the board, you brand-new-chums,
With a rah-dum, dah-dum, rub-a-dub-dub, We'll send you home in a lime-juice tub.

Chorus (or verse)

Here we are in New South Wales,
Shearing sheep as big as whales,
With leather necks and daggy tails,
And fleece as tough as rusty nails.

There's brand-new chums and cockies' sons,
They fancy that they are great guns,
They fancy they can shear the wool,
But the beggars can only tear and pull.

Since they have crossed the briny deep,
They fancy they can shear the sheep,
With a rah-dum, dah-dum, rub-a-dub-dub,
We'll send them home in a lime-juice tub.

The very next job they undertake
Is to press the wool, but they make a mistake,
They press the wool without any bales,
Oh shearing's hell in New South Wales.

They tar the sheep till they're nearly black,
Roll up', roll up', you'll get the sack'.
Once more, we're away on the wallaby track,
Once more to look for work outback.

And when they meet upon the road,
From off their backs throw down their load,
Then at the sun they take a look,
And reckon it's time to breast the cook.

We camp in huts without any doors,
Sleep upon the dirty floors,
With a pannikin of flour and a sheet of bark
We wallop up a damper in the dark.

You cockatoos, you never need fret,
For to show you up I'll not forget,
For I'm the man who's willing to bet
You're up to your heads, heels first in debt.

And though you live beyond your means,
Your daughters wear no crinolines,
Nor are they troubled with boots or shoes,
For they're wild in the bush with the kangaroos.

It's home, it's home I'd like to be,
Not humping the drum in this country,
Sixteen thousand miles I've come,
To march along with a blanket drum.