

Duke's Song

Written by singer/songwriter Gary Shearston (1939~2013) for 'Duke' Tritton, published in John Meredith's "Duke of the Outback". Shearston was a leading figure of the folk music revival of the 1960s notably performing Australian traditional folk songs.

C F G7 F C
Come gath - er round me peop - le and list - en to my song,
C F C F C G7
I want to tell you of a man whose time has passed and gone;
C G7 C Am
In case you nev - er knew him, he was one of the good old kind,
C Am Dm G7 C
And I'm glad to say that through his songs, that he was a friend of mine.
G7 F C G7 C G7 C
(4 bar instrumental - except last verse)

Duke Tritton was a bushman, and writer and singer too.
As shearer and a drover he'd often humped his blue,
And at timber cutting or building roads he often turned a hand,
And high on the Warrumbungle Range the fences he built still stand.

When first he took to the bush, with Dutchy Bishop, his mate,
They did some busking in country towns, a coin or two to make.
On Sundays outside an Anglican church they'd sing 'Abide with Me',
Then race round to the Catholic mob and hit them with 'Ave Marie'.

He shore in most of the famous sheds and saw big tallies done,
They called him 'The Duke' in a boxing troupe, 'cause most of the time he won;
And back in the hungry thirties, when tucker meant your time,
He worked as a powder monkey on the Sandy Hollow Line.

There are songs that he wrote and songs that he sang, and stories that he told
Of every trade that a working man could try in the days of old.
With his blue eyes fairly blazing, and gripping his ghostly blade,
He could tell us more than any man of how the land was made.

And now his time is over and he's tramped beyond the skies;
If there isn't a union where he's gone, he's the one who'll organise,
And I'll bet if the angels are out of tunes, or their songs aren't up to par,
It won't be long till he'll have them singing 'Shearing in a Bar'.
So long old timer, and thanks mate for the songs you left behind.