

My Old Black Billy

Words are by Ted Harrington, and the music by Roy Jeffries (1915). Harrington (1895-1966) was an Australian poet and short story writer, the last of the bush balladists. He served in Palestine with the Australian Light Horse and took part in the charge on Beersheba. Like many returned soldiers his health never recovered from his war experiences, but he kept up his writing.

Verse

I've humped my blue - y through all the
states, With my old black bil - ly, the best of mates;
For years I've camped and toiled and
tramped On roads that are rough and hil - ly,
With my plain and sen-sib - le, in - dis - pen - sa - ble, Old black bil - ly.

Chorus

My old black bil - ly, my old black bil ly,
Wheth - er the wind be warm or chil - ly,
I al - ways find, when the shad - ows fall,
That my old black bil - ly's the best mate of all.

I have carried my swag on the parched Paroo,
Where the water is scarce and the houses few,
On many a track in the great Outback,
Where the heat would drive you silly,
I've carried my sensible, indispensable,
Old black billy.

When my tramping days at last are o'er,
And I drop my swag at the Golden Door,
Saint Peter will stare when he sees me there,
Then he'll say, "Poor wandering Willie,
Come in with your sensible, indispensable,
Old black billy.