

## Shearing in a Bar

Collected from Duke Tritton by several members of the Bush Music Club including John Meredith and Alan Scott.  
Pete Seeger filmed Duke performing this song during his Australian tour in 1963.

My shear-ing days are o - ver, though I nev - er was a gun,  
I could al - ways count my twen - ty at the end of ev - 'ry run.  
I used the old Trade Un - ion shears, and the blades were al - ways full  
As I drove 'em to the knock - ers, and I chopped a - way the wool.  
I shore at Goor - i - - an - a - wa, and nev - er got the sack,  
From Breez - a out to Com - pa - dore I al - ways could go back,  
And though I am a truth - ful man, I find when in a bar  
That my tal - lies seem to doub - le and I nev - er call for tar

Shearing on the western plains where the fleece is full of sand,  
And the clover burr and corkscrew grass, is the place to try your hand,  
For the sheep are tall and wiry where they feed on the Mitchell grass,  
And every second one of them is close to the cobbler class;  
And a pen chock full of cobbles is a shearer's dream of hell,  
So, loud and lurid are their words when they catch one on the bell;  
But when we're pouring down the grog, you'll hear no call for tar,  
For a shearer never cuts 'em when he's shearing in a bar.

At Louth I caught the bell sheep, a wrinkly tough-wooled brute,  
Who never stopped his kicking till I tossed him down the chute.  
Though my wrist was aching badly, I fought him all the way,  
I couldn't afford to miss a blow, I must earn my pound a day.  
So when I took a strip of skin, I would hide it with my knee,  
Turn the sheep around a bit where the right bower couldn't see,  
Then try to catch the rousie's eye and softly whisper - Tar!  
But it never seems to happen when I'm shearing in a bar.

I shore away the belly wool, then trimmed the crutch and hocks,  
Opened up along the neck, while the broomie swept the locks;  
Then smartly swung the sheep around and dumped him on his rear;  
Two blows to clip away the wig – I also took an ear.  
Then down around the shoulder and the blades were opened wide,  
As I drove 'em on the long blow and down the whipping side.  
And when the fleece fell on the board, He was nearly black with tar,  
But this is never mentioned when I'm shearing in a bar.

Now when the season's ended and my grandsons all come back,  
In their buggies and their sulkies – I was always on the track;  
They come and take me into town to fill me up with beer,  
And I sit on a corner stool and listen to them shear.  
There's not a bit of difference, it must make the angels weep  
To hear a mob of shearers in a bar room shearing sheep;  
For the sheep go rattling down the race with never a call for tar,  
For they still don't seem to cut 'em when they're shearing in a bar.

Then memories come crowding and they wipe away the years,  
And my hand begins to tighten and I seem to feel the shears.  
I want to tell them of the sheds, of sheds where I have shorn,  
Full fifty years or sometimes more before these boys were born.  
I want to speak of Yarragrין, Dunlop, or Wingadee,  
But the beer has started working and I'm wobbling at the knee.  
So I'd better not start shearing, I'd be bound to call for tar,  
Then be treated like a blackleg when I'm shearing in a bar.