

Bert Lloyd Centenary



National Folk Festival 2009

Introductory notes by Mark Gregory

Bert Lloyd films at the festival

TEN THOUSAND MILES: A.L.Lloyd in Australia • 1970 • Director Ken Taylor • 30 min

Henley Theatre, Saturday 11 April, 11.30 am

BERT: A Personal Memoir • 1984 • Director Barrie Gavin • 61 min

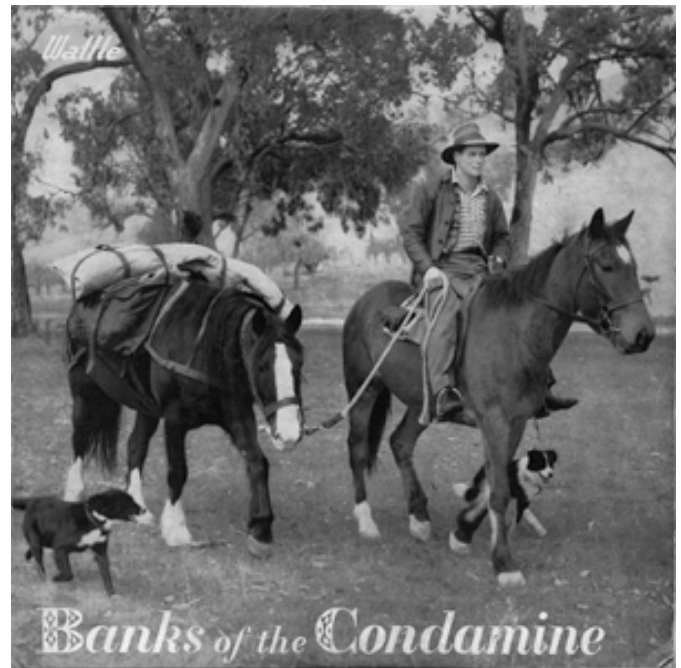
Henley Theatre, Saturday 11 April, 12.00 noon ... also Sunday 12 April, 3.00 pm

A.L. Lloyd 1908 - 1982

Bert Lloyd sailed for Sydney from London in October 1924 on the 'Euripides' when he was 16. He was sent to Australia after his mother and sister fell sick and died. Shortly after arriving in Australia his father and his other sister also died.

Bert worked as a station hand in NSW at Cowra, Bethungra, Bogandillon, and Condoblin. Working in the bush he made use of the Sydney Public Library's distance education services receiving postal deliveries in the closest town a variety of novels and books on art and music.

He lived and worked in Australia till 1930 when he decided to return to London. It was the Depression, and while he was on the dole he continued his self education. In 1937 he found a job as a merchant seaman on the Antarctic whaling ship, 'Southern Empress'.



A.L. Lloyd - 1958 Wattle 10" LP

book 'Folk Song In England' which includes a final chapter devoted to industrial songs.

Though he had no formal training as an ethnomusicologist, Bert developed a formidable knowledge of folk song from the British Isles, the Americas and Eastern Europe. He was also a gifted linguist. The historian A.L. Morton remarked that he was able to pick up a working knowledge of a language in a matter of weeks.

He was a founding member of Topic Records, and besides writing many sleeve notes he also sang on many of the recordings. His first recording for Topic

Come all ye bold miners

Ballads & Songs
of the Coalfields



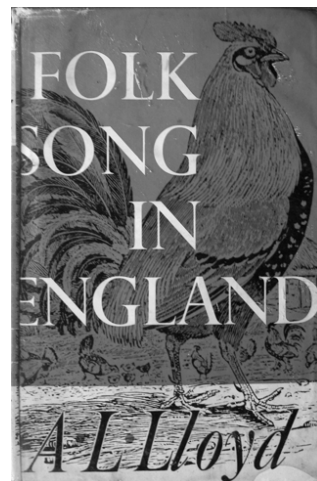
Compiled by A.L.Lloyd

His early work experiences seem to have influenced his interest in folk song, particularly work songs and industrial folk songs - an interest reflected in his 1945 publication of American songs and poems 'Corn On The Cob', his 1952 collection of miners' songs 'Come All Ye Bold Miners', his 1963 Topic LP 'The Iron Muse: A Panorama of Industrial Folk Song' and his 1967



Bert Lloyd was invited back to Australia in 1970 to present a series of lectures. While he was here a film was made of him revisiting Condoblin where he had worked forty years earlier.

For the film he was accompanied by his old friend the folklorist Edgar Waters and was interviewed by Ian Turner. The film is called 'Ten Thousand Miles' and was broadcast by the ABC in 1970.



Recordings of Bert's Australian lectures and a radio program he made during his visit are archived in the National Library of Australia.

Records in 1954 was a 78 with two Australian songs, 'Bold Jack Donahue' and 'The Banks of the Condamine'. Altogether he recorded around 200 songs on some 50 records for a number of labels.

Bert Lloyd was a musicologist with an international reputation. As a folklorist and singer he occupied a unique position in the folk song revival that began in the early 1950s.

Respect for his knowledge of music was such that he was invited to write the folk music entry in the 1965 Encyclopaedia Britannica. From 1971 he taught at Goldsmiths' College where his papers now reside.

In 1969 and 1970 I recorded two interviews with Bert at his home in London. The first was at the suggestion of Australian historian Ian Turner. The interview was published in *Overland* in 1970 and is now online at:

<http://folkstream.com/reviews/lloyd/>

I also recorded a concert of Australian folk songs Bert had organised at the Singers Club in London where he was joined on stage by Martyn Wyndham-Read and Brian and Phyllis Mooney.

Towards the end of that concert Bert brought the house down with 'Hold On Hamilton', a bush story embellished, perhaps, with some of the 'imaginative detail' for which he was famous.

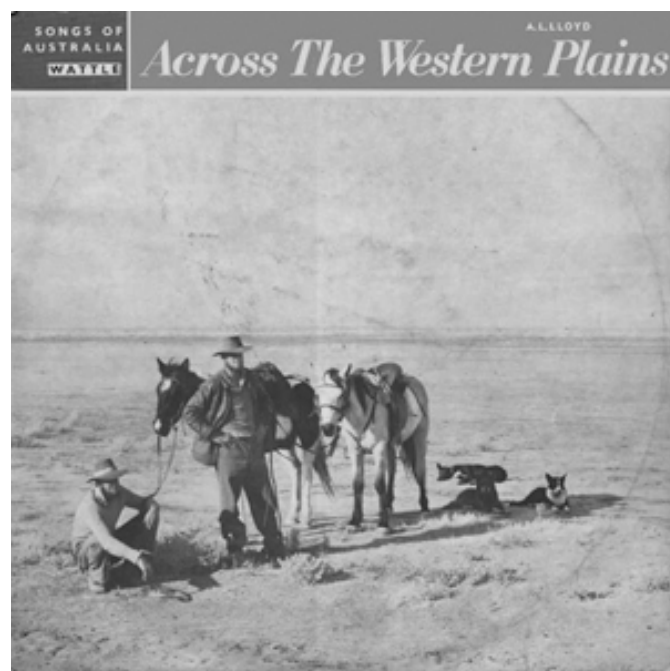
Nearly forty years later the recording of that story still sounds pretty good. It's twelve and a half minutes long. Listen to it online at:

<http://folkstream.com/reviews/lloyd/centenary.html>

For more about Bert Lloyd Centenary celebrations and comprehensive links to information about Bert Lloyd visit:

<http://folkstream.com/reviews/lloyd/centenary.html>

Mark Gregory April 2009



A.L. Lloyd - 1958 Wattle 12" LP