



Peter Hamilton and Edgar Waters in their sandstone recording studio

Early Wattle Records with A.L.Lloyd

Euabalong Ball / Lime-Juice Tub
MacColl & Lloyd Convicts and Currency Lassies
A L Lloyd Banks of the Condamine
MacColl & Lloyd Singing Sailors
MacColl & Lloyd Shanties and Foc'sle Songs
A L Lloyd Across the Western Plains

The folk song revival in Britain the US and Australia would not have been the same without Lloyd's scholarly passion, wit and inventiveness. He proved one of the most generous and sought after performers and story tellers in the movement always ready to encourage attempts to keep the movement relevant and innovative. His championing of groups like the Watsonsons and Fairport Convention in Britain and his admiration of and association with performers like Pete Seeger, Doc Watson, Peggy Seeger, Hedy West, Margaret Barry and Bob Dylan indicated a broad minded approach to performance styles, topical songwriting and rebellious souls. His introduction to bush songs in Australia in the 1930s depression helped set him on an amazing trajectory that encompassed folklore, field recording, film making, radio and journalism, a body of work that had resonance far and wide.

Lloyd spent the last 2 years of his life translating from the French Romanian folklorist Constantin Brailoiu's scattered writings to English. The resulting compilation *Problems of Ethnomusicology*



From 1940 Lloyd also worked for ten years on Picture Post a widely English read photo journalism magazine that had a broadly progressive world view. Strangely enough one of Lloyd's articles for the magazine was republished in Tasmania in the newspaper the *Examiner*; 6 September 1947. It was an article attributed to Lloyd titled *Hypnotism: Science or Stunt?*

The folklorist and folk singer Dave Arthur published his biography “*Bert The life and Times of A.L.Lloyd*” through Pluto Press in 2012.

In his autobiography, *A Radical Life*, the historian Russel Ward proposes this estimation of Lloyd: ***This singing Englishman probably did more to preserve Australian folk songs for posterity than anyone else but Banjo Paterson himself.***

A.L.Lloyd on You Tube

See – <http://songarchived.blogspot.com.au>

Bert Lloyd



Introductory notes by Mark Gregory

A.L.Lloyd and folklore in Australia

(29 February 1908 – 29 September 1982)

Born in Wandsworth, London

He was an assisted migrant to Australia in a scheme organised by the British Legion.

Arrived 21 November on Sydney on SS *Euripides* in 1924 registered as Mr Albert Lloyd, aged 16. As an incoming migrant passenger he was designated for work as a farm labourer. The first job he was allocated was in the Cowra district.

He spent his first New Years Eve in Australia in the Cowra District Hospital, It was here that he first heard a performance Australian bush song. When he got out of hospital his job was gone and it was through the Labour Exchange was offered work on a sheep station in Bethungra becoming a member of the Pastoral Workers' Union in 1925.

He worked at the Stevenson Station in NSW and at Bogandillon and White Cliffs before returning to London in 1930.

His six years experience of working in Australia certainly proved to be an education regarding Australian bush songs a number of which he learned and would later record. Most of these recordings became available in Australia especially those released by Wattle Records, and thus it was that his Australian experience began affect the Australian folk song revival.

My conscious interest in folk songs began then. I liked what my fellow station hands and shearers sang, and I kept exercise books for copying songs in.

Working at the Stevenson Station also introduced him to the bush-workers postal loan scheme run by the Sydney Library Service. This gave him access to the cultural material that interested him Proust, Tolstoy, Joyce, Twain and books about art painting and music:

I already had quite a reasonable view of the modern music of the time, even of composers like Bartok, without ever having heard a note of it, just on the

strength of the books. And the same with painting; I was going by black and white illustrations in the books, but still I had some acquaintance with modern painting as well as with classical painting through the books. Then, too, although by modern standards gramophone records cost the earth - I remember HMV Red Label, the twelve inch, records, cost 10/6; there was only eight minutes music on them, and 10/6 in those days was an awful lot of money. (Interview A.L.Lloyd recorded by Mark Gregory published in Overland (1970)

Soon after settling back in London he met and became friends with the labour historian A.L.Morton famous for his work *A People's History of England* (1933)

Morton was one of the non-academic members of the Communist Party Historians Group which included academics like Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm, Raphael Samuel, George Rude and E. P. Thompson.

In the 1930's Lloyd found work first in the foreign languages department and later in the art department of Foyle's Bookshop where he organised a telegram to Hitler regarding the infamous May 10 1933 public burning of books:

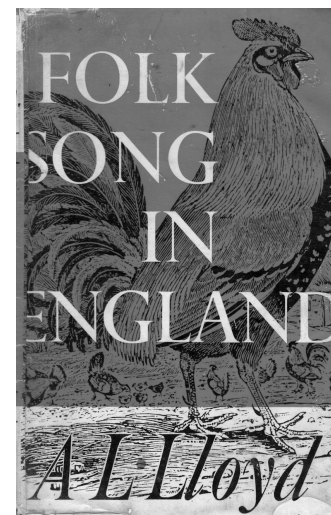
PLEASE BURN NO MORE BOOKS. STOP. WE WILL PAY HIGHEST CASH PRICES. STOP. WILL GIVE MONEY TO GERMAN RELIEF.

In 1935 Lloyd contributed an article in the pamphlet *5 On Revolutionary Art* which included articles by Henry Read, F.D. Klingender, Eric Gill and Alec West

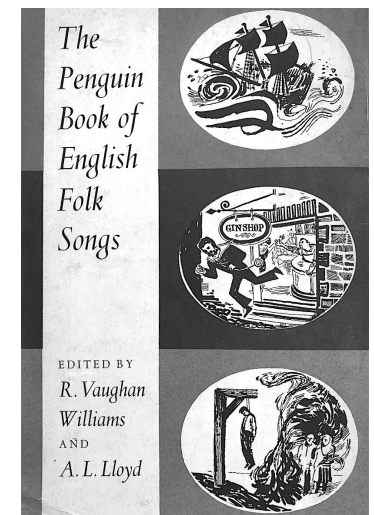
Morton was amazed by Lloyd's facility with language and a number of translations by Lloyd appeared in print including his 1937 translation of Federico Garcia Lorca's *Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter and Other Poems* from the Spanish and Kafka's *Metamorphosis* from the German.

In 1937 Lloyd spent six months at sea working on an Antarctic Whaler, an experience that encouraged him to prepare a script for the BBC. In 1938 Laurence Gilliam of BBC's radio documentary accepted his script *Voice of the Seamen* for broadcast. A synopsis published before the broadcast reads:

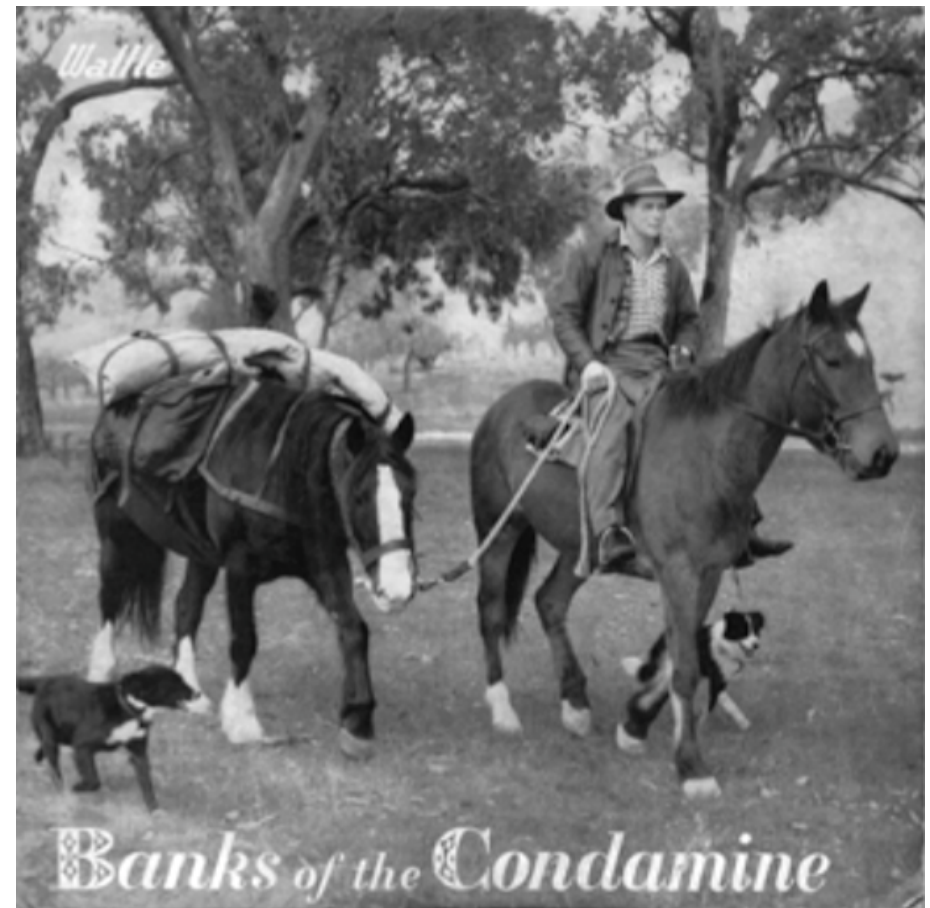
To present a comprehensive picture of merchant shipping, with all that it implies, is an almost Herculean task, yet A. L. Lloyd has done it. Whether it is in the feeling of an oil-tanker sweltering down to Ahadan, in the atmosphere of the Madeira docks, fogged with coal dust, or in the tinkling music of a Panama seamen's 'dive', the Mercantile Marine will come right across tonight. In the concluding words of the broadcast, 'keeping Great Britain maritime nation number one is a hell of a big job', and here is the story of how it is done.



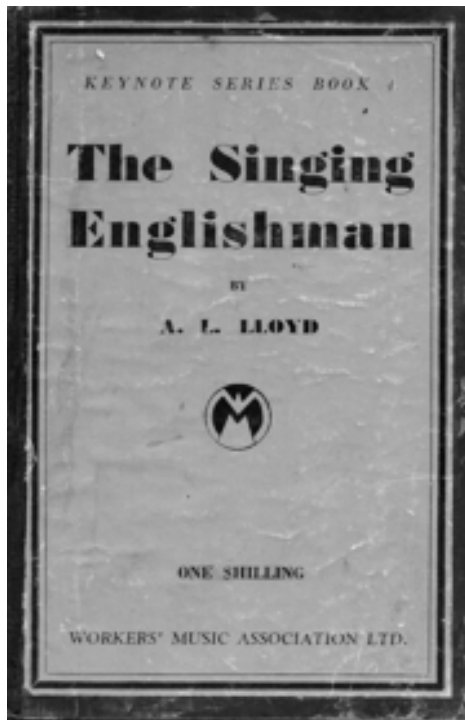
1967



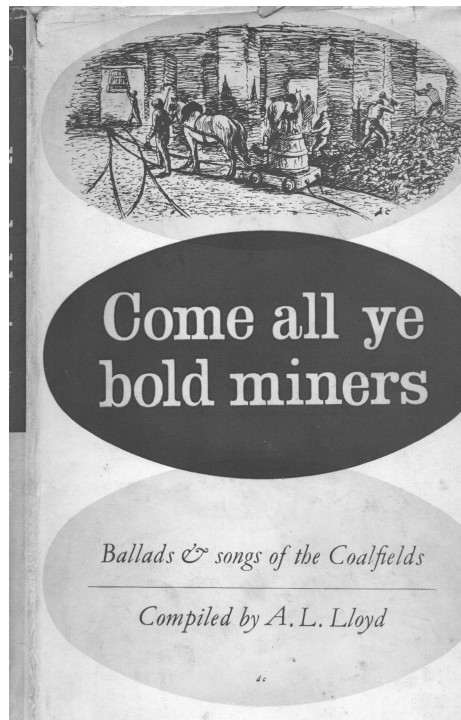
1959



A.L.Lloyd 12 track LP – Wattle Record



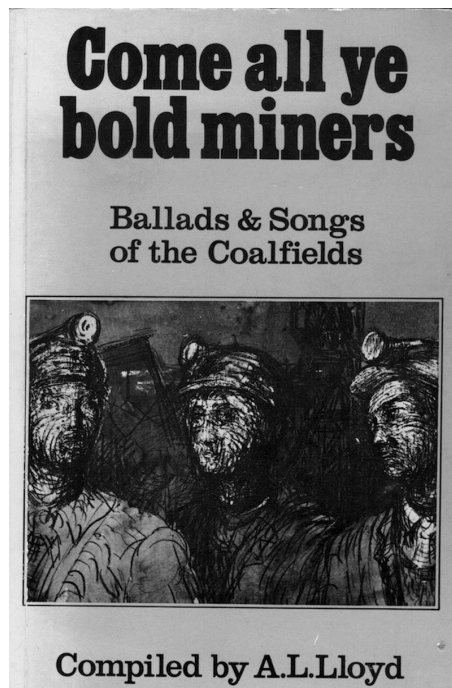
1944



1952 edition



1949



1968 edition

While his pioneer program created something of a furore among shipowners and their parliamentary supporters, it proved to the BBC that he was on the way to becoming an extraordinary broadcaster and the next broadcast he was responsible for was the 1939 docu-drama *Shadow of the Swastika*, broadcast in 8 episodes to whoever the BBC could reach. In Britain alone a record 12 million listeners tune in for each episode.

In 1940 Lloyd's script was refashioned as a book. The drama was of the words was enhanced with a series of black and white photo montages after the fashion of the German anti-nazi John Heartfield. Searches of Australian newspapers show that it was being reviewed and sold in Australia in 1940:



HITLER'S RISE.

"The Shadow of the Swastika" by A. L. Lloyd and Igor Vinogradof, London: John Lane, 5/- . From the publisher.

"THE Shadow of the Swastika" is the script of the British Broadcasting Corporation's most memorable venture in radio drama. An introduction by the authors recites the circumstances under which the work was undertaken and the measures that were adopted by them in association with the B.B.C. to ensure that their work would faithfully portray the German scene from the end of the world war of 1914-18 to the Polish invasion.



Igor Vinogradoff and A.L.Lloyd at BBC working on *The Shadow of the Swastika*

In March 1942 Lloyd joined the Royal Armoured Corps enrolled in a crash course for the tank regiment. His language and publishing skills were recognised by the war office and he was detailed to work on and translate for a Russian magazine *The British Ally*. His work on folksong developed at this time and by 1944 he had written a 72 page booklet titled *The Singing Englishman* which was published by the Workers Music Association. This was a reassessment of English folksong that took into account the importance of songs in a way that historians were beginning to describe as history from below. Lloyd's friend Leslie Morton described the book as having a:

sparkle and spontaneity and a boldness of attack which made it a model for the application of Marxist ways of thinking to cultural questions. It looks squarely at folk song as music and poetry, the peak of the cultural achievement of the English lower classes.

Corn on the Cob

Popular and Traditional Poetry of the U.S.A.

Lloyd's interest in American folk music, sparked by years of listening to BBC recordings, encouraged him to him to publish an introduction for the growing home interest. Titled *Corn on the Cob, Popular and Traditional Poetry of the U.S.A.* (1945)

In the introduction of the collection he writes:

This is a little book but it has a lot of work to do: and what is asked of it is that, in sixty odd pages, it should give English readers as complete an idea as it can of the American folk tradition in poetry. No less.

It seems to me that Lloyd was opening up the possible ways of thinking about folk song in a the rapidly changing world that followed the Second World War.

Lloyd was broadening his investigations into other folk music's in Europe and as a founding member of Topic Records and a broadcaster for the BBC in the 1960s he was determined to promote such LP records as *Folk Music of Bulgaria* (1964), *Folk Music of Albania* (1964) and he wrote the notes for Folkways' *Romanian Folk Music* (1958)

In 1967 he published his most famous book *Folk Song in England*

His renewed investigations alerted him to the corpus of lyrical material that came to be known as Industrial Ballads or Industrial Folk Song. Lloyd began collecting and publishing these making use of the newly nationalised Coal Board to public his venture though a film of him requesting mining songs and the Board's magazine *Coal Review*.

The results of his efforts were published in 1952 in a slim volume titled *Come All Ye Coal Miners*.

By now the folk song revival was in full swing in Australia as well and Britain and of course North and South America. and A.L.Lloyd's influence had an international dimension. The Encyclopaedia Britannica invited him to write a major article about folk music for their 1965 edition.

In 1967 he published his most famous book *Folk Song in England*. We know from newspaper searches that this book was available in Australia in 1970. The Communist Party of Australia news paper *Tribune* review tells us:

The famous folk singer A. L. Lloyd is about, to visit Australia, and in FOLK SONG IN ENGLAND you will find the results of his lifetime of study of English folk song. His main theme concerns the relationship of the evolution of English society—tracing how, after the primitive development of ritual song, lyrical song began to flourish with the growth of the towns and merchant society. There are many subsidiary themes concerning, for instance, English modal music and the decorative art of English singing. An in-valuable book for the young folk singer. International Publishers.

What this review doesn't tell us is that the final chapter of the book is the longest and sets out in detail Lloyd's understanding of a relatively unexplored category of folk song, a chapter titled *The Industrial Songs*. Here we find the songs of working men and women, songs that reflect on the industrial revolution and the mechanised industries of mine and mill in the inferno of Victorian Britain.

Lloyd sets the scene as follows:

Capitalism killed folk song, we are told: enclosure starved it, the steam engine put paid to it, the miseries of the nineteenth century industrialism blighted the culture of the working people. A gloomy picture: is it just?

He also muses to his readers about the authenticity of the industrial songs

This so-called industrial folk song, is it authentic? What is authenticity? We have seen that the old classic kind of rural folk songs itself no thoroughbred: for centuries it was 'contaminated' by print, and influenced in sundry ways by the usages of towns and even borrowings from abroad.

This chapter includes some 39 examples of such songs complete with music and many of them in regional dialect.

In 1978 this groundbreaking work was soon followed by a much enlarged edition of *Come All Ye Bold Miners*.