

Waltzing Matilda

START

ONCE A JOLLY SWAG MAN CAMPED BESIDE A BIL = A = BONG

UNDER THE SHADE OF A COLL = I = BAH TREE AND HE

SANG AS HE SAT AND WAITED 'TIL HIS BILLY BOILED

YOU'LL COME A WALTZING MATILDA WITH ME

WALTZING MATILDA WALTZING MATILDA YOU'LL

COME A WALTZING MATILDA WITH ME AND HE

SANG AS HE SAT AND WAITED 'TIL HIS BILLY BOILED

YOU'LL COME A WALTZING MATILDA WITH ME

END

Lyrics

There are no "official" lyrics to "Waltzing Matilda".

James Inglis 1903 Version.

Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong
Under the shade of a coolibah tree,
And he sang as he watched and waited till his "Billy"
boiled,
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda, with me."

Chorus:
Waltzing Matilda, waltzing Matilda,
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda, with me,
And he sang as he watched and waited till his "Billy"
boiled,
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda, with me."

Down came a jumbuck to drink at that billabong,
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee,
And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tucker bag,
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda, with me."

(Chorus)

Up rode the squatter, mounted on his thoroughbred.
Down came the troopers, one, two, and three.
"Whose is that jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda, with me."

(Chorus)

Up jumped the swagman and sprang into the billabong.
"You'll never catch me alive!" said he
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong:
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda, with me."

(Chorus)

Queensland Version

Oh there once was a swagman camped in a billabong
Under the shade of the coolibah tree
And he sang as he looked at his old billy boiling
Who'll come a waltzing Matilda with me?

Chorus:
Who'll come a'waltzing Matilda my darling?
Who'll come a'waltzing Matilda with me?
Waltzing Matilda and leading a water bag
Who'll come a'waltzing Matilda with me?

Down came a jumbuck to drink at the water hole
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee
And he sang as he stowed him away in his tucker bag
You'll come a'waltzing Matilda with me

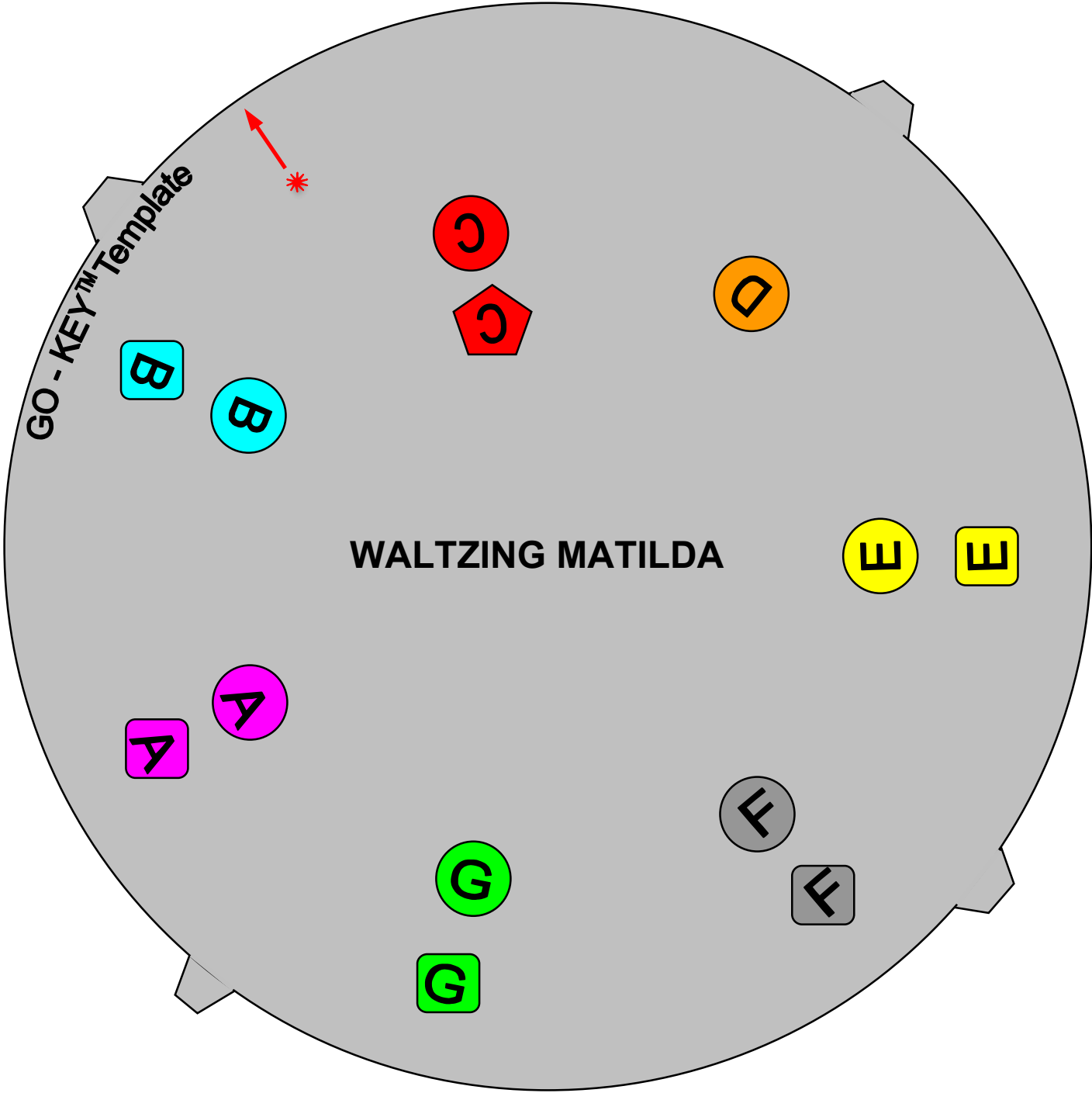
(Chorus)

Down came the squatter a'riding his thoroughbred
Down came policemen one two three
Whose is the jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?
You'll come a'waltzing Matilda with me

(Chorus)

But the swagman he up and he jumped in the water hole
Drowning himself by the coolibah tree
And his ghost may be heard as it sings in the billabong
Who'll come a'waltzing Matilda with me?

(Chorus)



History and Origin

"Waltzing Matilda" is Australia's best-known bush ballad, and has been described as the country's "unofficial national anthem".

The title was Australian slang for travelling on foot (waltzing) with one's belongings in a "matilda" (swag) slung over one's back. The song narrates the story of an itinerant worker, or "swagman", making a drink of billy tea at a bush camp and capturing a stray jumbuck (ram) to eat. When the jumbuck's owner, a squatter (landowner), and three mounted policemen pursue the swagman for theft, he declares "You'll never catch me alive!" and commits suicide by drowning himself in a nearby billabong (watering hole), after which his ghost haunts the site.

The original lyrics were written in 1895 by Australian poet Banjo Paterson, and were first published as sheet music in 1903. Extensive folklore surrounds the song and the process of its creation, to the extent that it has its own museum, the Waltzing Matilda Centre in Winton, in the Queensland outback, where Paterson wrote the lyrics. In 2012, to remind Australians of the song's significance, Winton organised the inaugural Waltzing Matilda Day to be held on 6 April, the anniversary of its first performance.

The song was first recorded in 1926 as performed by John Collinson and Russell Callow. In 2008, this recording of "Waltzing Matilda" was added to the Sounds of Australia registry in the National Film and Sound Archive which says that there are more recordings of "Waltzing Matilda" than any other Australian song.

Combo Waterhole, thought to be the location of the story that inspired "Waltzing Matilda" The Australian poet Banjo Paterson wrote the words to "Waltzing Matilda" in January 1895 while staying at Dagworth Station, a sheep and cattle station near Winton in Central West Queensland owned by the Macpherson family. The words were written to a tune played on a zither or autoharp by 31-year-old Christina Macpherson (1864–1936), one of the family members at the station.

The song itself was first performed on 6 April 1895 by Sir Herbert Ramsay at the North Gregory Hotel in Winton, Queensland. The occasion was a banquet for the Premier of Queensland.

Ownership

In 1903 Marie Cowan was hired to alter the song lyrics for use as an advertising jingle for Billy Tea, making it nationally famous. A third variation on the song, with a slightly different chorus, was published in 1907. Paterson sold the rights to "Waltzing Matilda" and "some other pieces" to Angus & Robertson for five Australian pounds.

Although no copyright applied to the song in Australia and many other countries, the Australian Olympic organisers had to pay royalties to an American publisher, Carl Fischer Music, following the song being played at the 1996 Summer Olympics held in Atlanta. According to some reports, the song was copyrighted by Carl Fischer Music in 1941 as an original composition. However, The Sydney Morning Herald said that Carl Fischer Music had collected the royalties on behalf of Messrs Allan & Co, an Australian publisher that claimed to have bought the original copyright, though Allan's claim "remains unclear". Arrangements such as those claimed by Richard D. Magoffin remain in copyright in America.