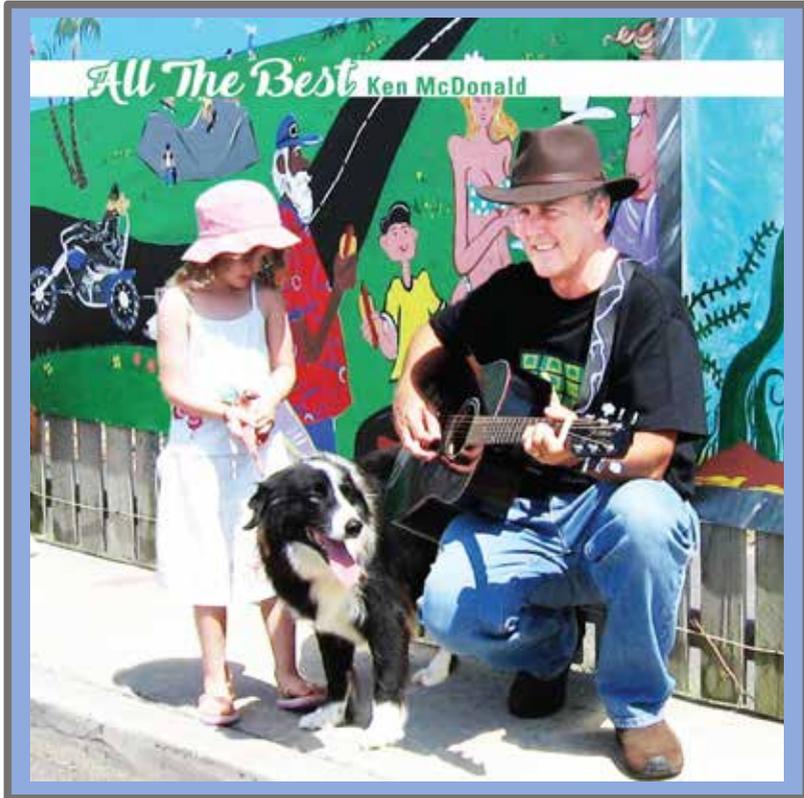


Compendium to 'All the Best'  
Lyrics and Stories of 20 songs

*Ken McDonald*



Kyra, Leo, Ken at Coolum about 2007

**Interesting people  
doing  
interesting things  
in  
interesting places.**



My family all loved songs, music and sang. Being the 6<sup>th</sup> son and having a younger sister was a luxury. Mum got worn out trying to get all the older boys to play the piano so we discussed the issue and she bought me a cheap guitar. Malcolm (no.5) and I sang in a church choir as kids. Harmonies were part of the deal that enrich most songs. Laurie (no.4) eventually taught be a few chords. Doug (no. 3) wrote a good song 'Miss Crocodilly' that inspired me to try songwriting. 50 years later I look back and wonder how it all happened.

I have written about 200 songs and recorded about 100, starting at age 15. Most of my early songs were kid songs for my nephews and nieces. I gradually moved on to anything that seemed interesting. With the benefit of hindsight, many of my songs are about life and what I thought were interesting people, doing interesting things in interesting places. There was no particular strategy or plan. It was a fun trip. This album All the Best is the best of songs recorded ... I think.

My oldest brother Ron died in 1989 and Dad died in 1993. About 1994 two of Ron's sons Lockie and Stuart, who both worked in the arts industry travelled with me from Brisbane to Emerald and back. Ron was a gifted writer and wanted to write a book of short stories titled "Green Side of a Gun". It did not happen. Lockie and Stu suggested I record my songs so they would not be 'lost'.

I gave it some thought then about 1995, I went to Melbourne to do a pilot album "Dust and Gems" with Craig Pilkington. Craig was excellent and I was impressed with the result. Subsequently we recorded two more albums "Pigdogs Orchids and Paraburdoo" and "Billygoat and Crocodilly Rock". It was very satisfying and there are so many good musicians in Melbourne. Three long albums of 16 songs each were then recorded in Brisbane - "Fire after Flood" where I experimented with birdcalls. 'The North Wind' a poem Laurie wrote was impressive and Macca has played it on 'Australia All Over' for about 15 years. 2 more long albums - "Curious Dilemmas" was recorded by Dean Patterson then "Ramshackle Junction" recorded by Michael Patterson. Family and friends contributed plus some excellent professional musicians. A garage band of friends "Fig Tree Jam" recorded an album including 'Rodeo Rider'. In addition, 5 songs were recorded in Canada where I was doing consulting work. There were a few more recorded with Dean Patterson and a few with Geoff McGahan. So "All the Best" has 20 tracks mostly my own. Dean wrote "Brunswick Street" and I sang. As a member of Redland City Choir, I wrote 'Where We Belong' and a couple of other songs for them. I feel proud and satisfied with the work of so many very good people. It is not 'not-for-profit', but is 'fit-for-purpose'.

Fraser my son built a wonderful web site. My wife of 45 years Heather died of melanomas in her brain in 2016. She was the third wife of us 6 boys to die of cancer, so now all of my CD sales at \$10 each go to cancer research. I hope you enjoy the stories and the lyrics.

All the best, Ken McDonald

Originally this was a short song "Curious Dilemmas" on a namesake album. Five family members sang it. 'Seven Bridges Road' by the Eagles inspired me to write an archapella song. Subsequently I did more work and added a bridge and chorus. Laurie helped a lot with lyrics. Anita Taylor the leader of the Redland City Choir created the melody for the chorus and wrote the parts. Family and choir members sang. The choir also recorded it. I reckon it's a cracker. 2017.



Kym, Brylee



### Where We Belong

Will you walk with me, on our ochre track      Bonnie,  
     Traipsing on beaches, 'n sandy outback      Naomi  
 Will you swim with friends, blue waves turning white  
     Heavy now weightless, hiding in daylight  
 Would you fly with strangers, blue sky so bright  
     Southern Cross eternal, guiding in the night

### Chorus



Dave, Ken

**Like a flower in the desert**  
**A troubled soul can rise**  
**Reach out sing your song**  
**Home - where we belong**



Jim, Ken

Do you feel the rain, dark cloud in sight  
 See brightest stars, in the blackest night  
 Would you dream with me, whispering ideas  
 Curious dilemmas, swallowing our fears  
 Will you smile like sunshine, take a stand  
 Reaching the fallen, lend a calming hand

Anita  
Taylor

### Chorus

Will you walk ... will you walk  
 Will you talk ... will you talk  
 Will you sing ... will you sing ... with me  
 Will you walk ... will you walk  
 Will you talk ... will you talk  
 Will you sing ... will you sing ... with me  
 Chorus Chorus "home where we belong" repeat



I was 'killing time' walking around the streets of Melbourne in 1979 on a one day trip. I came in from the airport on a bus after flying from Weipa that morning and sat beside an American lady who had beautiful eyes. We chatted for a while but I did not see her again once we stepped off the bus. The song popped into my head later that day. There is some nice guitar from James Patterson and violin by Michael Patterson. One of the few songs where I played a mandolin. Jo Kahler my niece was a backup vocalist.



### **Hazel Eyes**

Her eyes are like fire in the night  
 Her eyes are like candles burning bright  
 Her eyes can turn you on  
 Her eyes make you feel so strong  
 Her eyes are like fire  
 Burning on and on and on

**Chorus My little lover with the hazel eyes  
 I've learned to love you like Melbourne skies  
 The sun is shining then turning grey  
 And then another long raining day**

Her eyes can turn a misty shade of grey  
 Her eyes can be nighttime in the day  
 Her eyes can fade away  
 Her eyes are like moonshine day  
 Her eyes are like rain clouds  
 That never go away  
 Chorus Chorus

My little lover with the hazel eyes  
 I've learned to love you like Melbourne skies  
 The sun is shining then turning grey  
 And then another long raining day  
 My little lover she can turn you on  
 Kindle your fire ... you're burning strong  
 Then suddenly the flame fades away  
 And then another long raining day  
 Chorus

I saw the first 6 words of this song on a letter from a consulting company to a drilling company. My mother's family the Nixons developed the 'Devon Court' Hereford stud near Miles. I see my cousins there from time to time. It is tough and dry a lot. Many people on the land are capital rich and cash poor. Mungalalla is near Roma. Tarragindi and Woolloongabba are suburbs of Brisbane. Rainfall away from the coast is very unpredictable and generally low. Some nice sax ... and harmonies from my family ... Laurie, Naomi, Fraser from memory. Probably written about 2002. Toowoomba was where I was born. Beautiful place known for the flower festival. Toby Nixon's scrap steel art is below.



**Jimmy Flood**



Out in the wild blue yonder, Jimmy Flood's under a tree  
 Sitting there and he wonders, how this all came to be  
 I got land here worth millions of dollars, but I can't make ends meet  
 His hands are layers of leather, he's got blisters on his feet

He's heard of Woolloongabba thunder, he's heard of Tarragindi rain  
 How come it rains in the city, nothing out here again  
 They got taps pipes and hoses, laid on in every street  
 Will they pay for wayward sprinklers, they got cool water at their feet

Out near the middle of nowhere, Jan Flood is up off her knees  
 No longer praying each day now, dreaming of life in the city  
 They got taps pipes and hoses, laid on in every street  
 Why should I pray for water, I want cool water at my feet

Water give me water ...  
 Cool cool cool water ...

Signed out of Mungalalla, resigned years of no rain  
 Heading to live in Toowoomba, start all over again  
 They got taps pipes and hoses, laid on in every street  
 Some homes have swimming pools, they got flowers the main street

Water give me water ... cool cool cool water ...

The original song was written about 1968. I had another crack at it about 2005 and recorded it in Sudbury Ontario when I was there doing consulting work. The talking voice was added later in the mix as a joke and I suggested leaving it there. I sailed a lot as a kid so the analogy was strong to me.



### Waiting for the Tide

Lying in the white sand listening to a dirt band  
 Lying in the warm sand thinking of your cold plan  
 Lying in the warm white sand  
 Lying in the warm white sand

You coulda been here too  
 If you really really wanted to  
 You coulda been here now  
 You kept saying "anyhow"  
 You coulda been with me  
 At the Bay lapping up the sea

I'm waiting for the tide to turn ...

Walking in the moonlight water looking so bright  
 Walking in the moonlight wonder where you are to-night  
 Walking in the pale moon light  
 Walking in your fading light

You coulda been here too  
 You knew exactly what you're gonna do  
 You coulda been here now  
 Can still hear you saying "anyhow"  
 You coulda been with me  
 At the Bay swimming in the sea

I'm waiting for the tide to turn  
 I know tide is gonna turn ...

I dreamt the chorus one night about 2012. It took a while to write the rest. Aimee Erickson, Naomi McDonald's sister starts the song. Naomi does harmonies. I sang then added a bass guitar and tambourine later. Have always found it interesting that you can write a song about anything ... or nothing.



### **Nothing at All**

Heard songs about love  
Hurt pride and redemption  
Loneliness and pain  
Songs about weather  
Floods 'n the never never  
Thundering fire and rain



Heard songs that are brighter  
Than a sky full of stardust  
Sugar-pie the birds and the bees  
There's songs about moons  
Fire lakes and loons  
The wind the waves and the sea



### **Chorus**

**I long for a song  
About sweet fanny adams  
A song 'bout nothing at all  
Let's all sing along  
For sweet fanny adams  
Singing 'bout nothing at all**

Nothing at all is a bottle of air  
Or tryin' to catch rain in a drought or  
Or tryin' to go sailin' on a dead calm day  
Or thinking you're in when you're out

Some ask more questions  
Than a kid on a roll  
Your mind will wander 'n roam  
Some make your body  
Dance wild abandon  
There's a thousand 'bout going back home  
Choruses



This funky song was written by Dean Patterson about The Valley in Brisbane which is a music centre. Fun to sing as I was trying to sing 'dirty'. The beat and arrangements are a credit to Dean who plays bass guitar, 6 string guitar, drums and piano. Gifted musician and thoughtful about music and songs. Fraser and I helped a bit with lyrics. Dean was my neighbour and his sons James (guitar) and Michael (violin) have helped me a lot over the years. Lucky connection.

### **Brunswick Street**

Heading down Brunswick Street  
 That's where people meet  
 For a good time Friday night  
 Looking for a music treat  
 Irish pub 'n rocking beat  
 For a good time Friday night

### **Chorus**

**Cos we're hanging loose running free**  
**Dancing down Brunswick Street**  
**R 'n B rock 'n roll**  
**Hip hop 'n a funky soul**

Older people living young  
 Young pretending they're 21  
 For a good time Friday night  
 Spilling out from a zoo  
 Another club another queue  
 For a good time Friday night

### **Chorus**

Billy Dan's gonna make a move  
 Sally's band something to prove  
 For a good time Friday night  
 Chorus



Laurie wrote this poem after his first wife Dianne died of cancer in Dec '96, then he did a trip through NT. I figured out a way to put it to music. We were fortunate to get William Barton. It 'worked' and Macca plays it.



### The North Wind

So long to the office and 9 to 5, Where daylight glows from a tube  
 So long to the crash of traffic lights, And the crush of the big city blues  
 Bring me the sigh of a desert dawn, The touch of a star filled sky  
 Send me the hush of a warm north wind, Tell me the reasons why.  
 Outback in the soul of an ancient land, Eternal stands Uluru  
 Timeless as the dream time song, Of Mutitjulu, Mala, Anangu  
 And I walk the rock in the lonely haze, And wonder at a world turned colder  
 When down the rock rolls a warm north wind, That settles on my shoulder.

#### Refrain

**"The north wind blows forever, 'n the soul of the bush in the air"**

Kings Canyon down the gorges glides, The graceful grey strike thrush  
 And far off purple mountains pose, For Namatjira's brush  
 In the shadow of the rock like a synagogue, Stand the domes of Kata Tjuta  
 As desert oaks and spinifex pose, For the wide eyed camera shooter  
 Have you seen a town like Alice? Have you seen a desert rose?  
 Have you seen the wide brown river? Where the water rarely flows?  
 I've seen a town like Alice, Watched the doctor flying home  
 Where the teacher sees the children, Through an HF microphone.

#### Refrain

I've swum in the lush of Mataranka Springs, In the warmth of the secret river  
 An oasis in a dryland woodland, Beyond the never never  
 And I fell in love with Katherine, Gorgeous in orange robes  
 What are those sounds in the soft evening light? Only Nitmiluk knows  
 Have you been this close to the milky way? Have you heard a star shed a tear?  
 Reached up and touched Venus on a clear outback night? God how I wish you were here.  
 Yet somewhere in the dance of the dry desert haze, In the starfilled night so clear  
 Wafting soft in that warm north wind, I feel your hand still near

#### Refrain

The red centre rolls back as the top end rolls in, Under Capricorn's tropical skies  
 Gagadju calls down Kakadu's walls, From Nourlangie, Namarrgon strikes  
 Lotus lillies laze on Yellow Waters green, Bee-eaters swerve and swoop  
 Sea eagle rules from his throne on high, Crocodile stalks Jabiru  
 When I dream of Darwin on cold southern nights, Cool beer on a balmy beach  
 Bougainvillea blooms heal Tracy's wounds, Along a warm Arafura Sea.  
 When I'm back in the bustle, the rush and hustle, With traffic lights yelling at me  
 Then let the traffic lights yell - I'll wait. I'll be dreaming of the Territory

#### Refrain

In 1979 I went to these two mines to look at mine planning computer systems. The chorus popped into my head. I wrote the verses in about 1995 before recording it with Craig Pilkington. Greg Smith's sax is fantastic. Dave Folley on drums and Kiernan Box on piano do a very nice job. Craig doubled up 2 tracks of my vocals in places. He said I sang it the same way 3 times ...

### **Mount Tom Price and Paraburdo**

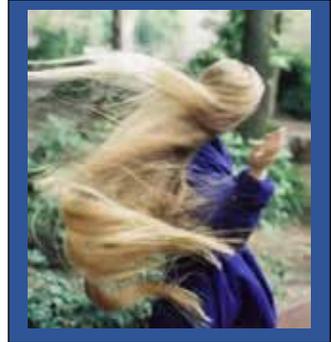
**Chorus Mount Tom Price and Paraburdo  
They're mining mountains no hullabaloo  
One of these days these great big holes  
Could be the world's biggest swimming pools**

Working in a heatwave  
Don't know what I'm gonna save  
I'm telling you it's the way to make a start  
A good operator is worth his weight in gold  
When I build a home I'll be too cool too cool too cool  
Chorus .... for me and you

Money for the iron ore  
Dig and rail and ship them more  
Still got Mandurah cornered in my mind  
Make another pay day another brick and room  
When I build a home I'll build a pool a pool a pool  
Chorus .... and Marandoo

Thinking 'bout heading south  
Been enough to Exmouth  
Packed up my fortune - got it in the bag  
Shimmer in my mind - Mandurah's in my hand  
Now they can't say that I'm a fool a fool a fool  
Chorus .... no hullabaloo

Toolooa is a suburb and a school in Gladstone. I love the word. Like so many Aboriginal words with more than one 'oo' they are melodic. Attractive girls at high school always create a lot of talk. Kyra my oldest grand-daughter plays flute on this track. Nice back-ups from Naomi and Janet my daughter-in-law and daughter. Great recording job by Michael Patterson. 2012.



### **Toolooa**

I saw Toolooa at High School  
 Seemed like everybody knew her  
 A line of galahs gawking and squawking  
 All talking about Toolooa

#### **Chorus**

**Hey Toolooa, Toolooa, Toolooa**  
**Where did she go, she go, where'd she go**  
**I knew it, I knew it, I knew it**  
**Where Toolooa goes, nobody knows**  
**You never forget her body and her clothes**  
**Like a mudcrab in mangroves**  
**Sweeter than sweet her memory grows.**

He-hey, she shoulda been a model  
 Wooow, she coulda been a God  
 Mmmm, she could get you deep in trouble  
 Some blokes stared 'n croaked like a frog

#### **Chorus**

A lucky man married Toolooa  
 No one I know really knows  
 So's he trying to hide her  
 Her memory grows and grows

#### **Chorus**

This was a very old song with lousy lyrics, so I completely re-wrote the words in Canada about 2008 after reading a book about 'The Band' who wrote a lot of great songs including 'The Weight'. They used nicknames of people they knew in Toronto. I used some old Weipa nicknames of real people. There is some truth but a lot of poetic licence. Fun to play in a band or solo.

### **Hard to Beat Home**

Wake up to-morrow you won't see me for dust  
 I'll be outa here on a home bound bus  
 Make sure and tell Betty look after my truck  
 That old Caterpillar could change her luck  
 I'll miss all you crew so don't get me wrong  
 I hate to be leaving but it's hard to beat home

Someone tell the Moth my lights will be out  
 So don't come looking for your 21st shout  
 Say good-bye to Lik Lik the final trim king  
 I wish I coulda been half as good as him  
 I love all you people you people who roam  
 I hate to be leaving but it's hard to beat home

### **Chorus**

**Hard to beat home it's hard to beat home  
 I'm missing the family I'm tired of the phone  
 Hard to beat home hard to beat home  
 I'll be with my honey together alone**

Tell Betty I love her she's had a bad run  
 Sometime you get thunder sometime there's sun  
 Good fortune misfortune they both take a turn  
 You gotta be patient and willing to learn  
 Whatever turns out for right or for wrong  
 Betty's a gun but I gotta get home

### **Chorus**

I wonder if Shelly will welcome me back  
 I been gone a while will she talk about that  
 I guess I won't know til she's there in my arms  
 One thing for sure I got a heap of good yarns  
 Sometimes I'm aching I ache to the bones  
 I hate to be leaving but it's hard to beat home

### **Chorus**



This song is a tribute to the late Tim Savo who grew up in Mapoon and worked for Comalco for a long time. He was respected as probably the most knowledgeable bushman on the north Western Cape. Quiet and humble. Like my father he had 6 sons and a daughter. I wrote a poem after Tim passed away and later sang it like I thought John Prine might. John Lavery recorded with me. A local pheasant birdcall (kukathi) was recorded in Weipa and a kulap made from seed pods was used. I played a knife and fork on a saucepan lid. The chorus at the end was a late addition. Tim was a quiet achiever. Like so many, they often get overlooked.

### **Campfire Man**

He lit a small campfire, In everybody's heart  
Spark in the eye, a ready smile, A chuckle in his laugh

The fire was there to dry the socks, To dry the boots and shirts  
To boil the billy, to cook a feed, And draw pictures, in the dirt

He was a Mapoon man, a gentleman, A horseman from the bush  
Working steady, got things done, There was never any fuss

Rescued others from another place, During troubled World War 2  
No big deal when you got a horse, Just another job to do

Had a full time job, to raise his mob, There were 6 boys and a girl  
With his wife, they toiled, to keep a home, In a unique kinda world

He was a chainman, the offsider, He packed up all the gear  
Bush was like, another home, In the stringybark year by year

Now he's gone off riding, In the night sky, to the west  
We know we're gonna miss him, But not the campfire in our breast

**Chorus 4 times.**

**Yeah the campfire man  
Left those golden embers  
That keep glowing in our heart**



I went to the Blair Athol Rodeo near Clermont in 2003. The song took a while to write. 'Fig Tree Jam' did a great job recording it. Good fun in the Fig Tree Jam band. Rodeos are amazing.

### Rodeo Rider

Rodeo is back in town, cowboys ready to ride  
 Bull and the broncs, chock full of grain  
 They're gonna buck with pride  
 People in the town people on the land wearing  
 Hats belts buckles and boots  
 They're goin out to have a great time  
 When they fire out the chutes

**Chorus Yeah Rodeo Rider gates gonna open  
 Boney hands wrapped up in rope  
 Eight seconds an eternity  
 I don't give em any hope**

Cowboys will ride 'em kick 'em and hold on  
 Then get dusted down

They go so high when they look around  
 See water towers in the town  
 Bulls and the broncs there for buckability  
 They're firey stubborn and proud  
 They got a little unpredictability  
 Maybe buck 'em to the crowd

Chorus

Another year slips by  
 Like the flick of a tail  
 How can 8 seconds take forever  
 On the rodeo trail



Kids on their poddies popped up like popcorn  
 Grandad grinning ear to ear  
 Grandma doesn't get the funny side  
 Crowd are poppin more beer  
 Clowns dancing on their wits and their toes  
 Never showing any fear  
 They know they'll all be coming back again  
 Same time and place next year  
 Chorus Chorus



Love at first sight happens to some apparently. I made most of this up while I was sailing a boat in Weipa in the late '70's. Simple but it feels good. I have sung it at quite a few weddings.

### **Love Crept Up on You and Me**

We didn't read the signs  
 We didn't look behind  
 We didn't see it coming  
 But it's been there for some time  
 As I look across the water  
 I get that old feeling of a sailor  
 And I wish the wind would blow us out across the sea

#### **Chorus**

**Love crept up on you and me  
 Love crept up on you and me  
 And I wish the wind would blow us out across the sea**

Memories of yesterday  
 Will never fade away  
 We didn't see it coming  
 But we know now it's here to stay  
 You're my fantasy lover  
 Clear breeze you're like no other  
 And I've been sailing single handed far too long

#### **Chorus**

We didn't read the signs  
 We didn't need the lines  
 We didn't feel it coming  
 But it's been there for some time  
 As I look across the water  
 I get that old feeling of a sailor  
 And I wish the wind would roll us out across the sea

#### **Chorus**



The photo and the lyrics tell the story. Geoff Wharton, a friend and historian showed me some photos like this long after my 9 years in Weipa. The story is better known now. Craig Pilkington did a nice job on the arrangements. One of many amazing stories in the war years in Cape York.

### **All the Way to Mapoon**

Flying up the Cape in '43, raining so heavy they couldn't see  
 The pilot's face a furrowed frown, had to put their new baby down  
 Sea on the left trees on the right, tide was out a miracle sight  
 Long white runway of sand, waiting for their baby to land  
 They put her down Winnie the Pooh, the Beaufort Bomber four man crew  
 Bounced along a beach near Janie, broken down, down near Mapoon

#### **Chorus**

**Step by step they all came together**

**Winnie the Pooh didn't really mind the weather**

**Rather be here than winging it to heaven, people all the way to Mapoon**

**Women and kids men on horse, blind old man a leading voice**

**9 mile walk along a long white shore, had to pull her all the way to Mapoon,**

**Had to pull her all the way to Mapoon**

Flyers were safe Winnie was broken

The RAAF were in doubt, another mere token

People of Mapoon dancing to another tune, had to get her back home soon

Zig zag her out, hold her broken tail, out with the ropes, pull like a whale

One way tug-a-war, walk and walk, chanting mob of bodies work

Tim and Ina, Susie and Bill, another 97 a ton of goodwill

1 mile, 2 mile, 3 mile north, 9 mile, home like a hawk

#### **Chorus**

Pulled her apart and put her on the luggers

Sailed around the Tip back with the others

Revive Winnie down in Charters Towers, there she's back in flying colours  
 Why not sing about the unsung heroes, pulled together to counter the zeroes

Was it just a lucky escape, or another rescue on the Cape

8 Yanks parachuted in '42, always remember the humble few

Jimmy James up from the south, Tim Savo riding down from the north

#### **Chorus**

This is a tribute to Australian singer songwriters, artists and writers. It's tough to be successful. I wrote it about 1972 and love playing it. Anna Burley and Craig Pilkington sing with me. The Hugh Sawrey painting below is wonderful.



### Goldmine

Been around this country it's big and it's old  
 Stories of people burn to be told  
 Picture the places there for the brush  
 Swag full of songs flow with a rush

For the singer and the song there's a dusty old road  
 Rolling the dice winning the gold  
 But the man who's a digger's gonna make it to fame  
 If the wind doesn't win and blow out his claim

### Chorus

**It's a goldmine, it's a goldmine  
 Picture the paintings songs to be sung  
 Stories all waiting for their day in the sun**

It's fine to be one of nature's gentleman  
 But you get knocked down again and again  
 It's not so easy to come up with a gem  
 Been painting pictures since I can't remember when

### Chorus

It's not exactly a bag full of fun  
 Pushing a pen the green side of a gun  
 There's no dividend from a hackneyed pun  
 I've made more money from the songs that I've sung

### Chorus

Been around this country it's big and it's old  
 Many a story is there to be told  
 Many a picture is there for the brush  
 Many a song has gone with the rush  
 It's a goldmine, it's a goldmine....



This is about the Brisbane River fireworks. The guitar work by Shenton Gregory is a feature. 'Shenzo' is a master violinist but plays a large number of other instruments. Amazing lead guitar work. He's a friend of Michael Patterson.



### **Fire Licked the River**

Fire on the river  
 Crowd gape in awe  
 "He' hey, this is awesome"  
 "Ye'ah, give us more"  
 Crazy Mr Gunpowder  
 Lighting up the sky  
 Orchestrated detonators  
 Crowd on a high

### **Chorus**

**When the fire licked the river  
 My memory kicked alight  
 By the wicked water  
 Young lovers kiss the night**

Easy Mr Gunpowder  
 Beware old wounds  
 '74 and twenty eleven  
 Echo in the tombs  
 Easy Mr Gunpowder  
 Our river runs deep  
 Let it be like a mirror  
 In a peaceful sleep

### **Chorus**

Fire on the river  
 Drama in the skies  
 Crazy man in a frenzy  
 Guy Faulkes in disguise  
 Flame from the fighter plane  
 Highlight of the night  
 Let her rip dump and burn  
 Disappear out of sight  
 Chorus



We had a dog Laddy shown with Laurie as a young dog in 1953 approx. Laddy at Urangan, Hervey Bay in the 50's and 60's would bark like crazy at other dogs, then go and sleep under a tree. I made this song up to use a lot of chords (about 9) at the age of 19 ... so 1970. The story was fiction.

### **The Dogs are Sleeping**

Penny Holmes having trouble with her boyfriend  
 She's been up half the night worrying  
 But you know it's never gonna change him  
 And the dogs are sleeping

Her sister Mary feeling so unhappy  
 She's had a go in with her Daddy  
 She's been awake for hours weeping  
 And the dogs are sleeping

You always thought them crazy  
 Running up and down the fence all day yeah  
 You always thought them stupid  
 It's a good thing they didn't know what you did  
 The dogs have got you beaten  
 They're getting their good nights sleeping  
 The dogs have got you licked  
 Even though you might think it's a trick

Brother Nathan on a rampage  
 Heading backwards through another stage  
 Threatens leaving he always stays  
 And the dogs are sleeping

Mum and Dad sticking together  
 One fight battle on forever  
 They vowed to rough all weather  
 And the dogs are sleeping

You always thought them crazy  
 Lying in the shade all day yeah  
 You always thought them stupid  
 It's a good thing they didn't know what you did  
 The dogs have got you beaten ...

I wrote this song a long time ago ... 1970's. Harry Rigney, a friend, sang with me and did most of the guitar work. William Barton, the master, plays didge. It is always interesting why some people love a place and someone else thinks it's the pits ...



### Desert Heart

Never seen nothing like it before in your life  
 They say don't come and work here it can cut like a knife  
 You could wind up in a truckload of strife  
 Drinking your way into a dog trailer life

**Chorus. Some people love it while it tears some apart  
 Living in the heat of the desert heart  
 Some people love it while it tears some apart  
 Living in the desert heart**

Look all around you and there's nothing...no trees  
 Makes you wanna fall down to beg on your knees  
 The rain if you're lucky will come along once every year  
 Just enough to make you think it looks queer  
 Chorus

You gotta get outa the sun ... your eternal friend  
 Flies sticking around ya friend to the end  
 People living out here can make it worthwhile  
 Just get a load of them boomerang smiles  
 Chorus

Mike Foulkes a neighbour in Weipa was a very good story writer. I asked him if he had any ideas to give me words for a song. This was one of two 'songs' he wrote. I put the melody to it and it came up quite well. Originally about 1985. I guess Mike worked on a prawn trawler.

### **Shots Away**

Pulled out of Port Douglas on a Sunday evening  
 With a full load of diesel  
 Heading up north on a starry night  
 Through a sea that was smooth and green  
 Gliding through the reef like a knife through a sheath  
 On a course for the tip of Cape York  
 Seabirds settling on the foredeck calling  
 And I'm heading for the home of the hawk



**Chorus** And if I ever get my say  
**We'll be getting our shots away**  
**In the night-time we'll be trawling**  
**In the morning we'll be falling**  
**And I won't hear the seabirds calling**  
**While I sleep on Albatross Bay**

Cruised into TI a short stopover  
 Straight into the setting sun  
 Quick trip in quick trip out  
 We were looking to have some fun  
 Went up to the Grand to listen to the band  
 And the Mills Sisters for a while  
 Some quiet beers then back on board  
 It was time to make a mile



**Chorus**  
 Came around Dyfken in a hard sou-easter  
 It was just getting down to dark  
 Ninety-two trawlers with their deck lights glaring  
 Like a scene from Luna Park  
 Sailed up the middle of the whole damn fiddle  
 Like I was heading to a berthing pen  
 Then I called up Beagle said the old sea eagle  
 Is back in the Gulf again

**Chorus**

This song was written in a hurry before recording "Ramshackle Junction" in 2013. It is basically about many of my mistakes from not seeing other people's beliefs so clearly. Common problem. There is a small amount of poetic licence.



### **Shoulda Known Better**

Been working with cashed up bogans  
 I'm talking concepts they're talking slogans  
 We all work with different notions  
 I shoulda known better  
 Talking to the brass it all turned funny  
 I'm talking people they're talking money  
 They need a plan but they just want the honey  
 I shoulda known better

### **Refrain**

**I shoulda known better, shoulda known, shoulda known  
 I shoulda known better, shoulda known better**

I once chaired a secret meeting  
 In no time flat there was a big dam leaking  
 Good stories travel like a wild man streaking  
 I shoulda known better  
 I knew a bloke lost in a rage  
 He didn't see the anger through the haze  
 We all look through a different cage  
 I shoulda known better

### **Refrain**

I work with guns 'n I work with hacks  
 Some give it all and some are plain slacks  
 We all roll down our own set of tracks  
 I shoulda known better  
 I wondered why we're called the human race  
 Why all the hurry and breakneck pace  
 Got caught napping in a sleepy place  
 I shoulda known better

### **Refrain**



Craig Pilkington recorded my first 3 albums in Melbourne.



About 1994 Lockie and Stuart McDonald suggested I record my songs ... turning point for me.



Harry Rigney, Ray Perrin, Laurie, Moi, Dean, Fraser and Naomi McD. ... "The Blue Waves".



Dean Patterson ex-neighbour and friend. Recorded the 'Curious Dilemmas' ... album No. 5.



Laurie McDonald, brother, poet, singer and lyric advisor.



Michael Patterson, violinist on many tracks. Also recorded "Ramshackle Junction" ... album No. 6.



"Fig Tree Jam" Gail Paratz, Ken, Dean, John Lavery, Alan Mason. Graham Patterson the drummer not in photo. Helped on many songs and 'Rodeo Rider'.

Songwriting is a curious thing. It happens in lots of different ways. Some songs just pop out quickly. Some start with a lyric or trigger words while others are built off a rhythm section or melody. If you are lucky the words and the melody come together. In most cases, for me, a good song requires a lot of thought to the structure, lyrics and melody. The arrangements in a recording is another challenge. There are lots of examples of great songs that did not 'take off' until the arrangements and singer got it right. Performing on stage or in a video is another dimension again. Some songs can take a very long time to work through. It seems that great recorded popular songs have a number things. 1. Strong and interesting melody 2. Interesting lyrics 3. Catchy rhythm or beat 4. Excellent arrangements. The lead vocalist of course makes a big difference. Good harmonies are like gold. Sounds easy. It's been an interesting ride.

My son Fraser has done a great job building up our music web site [www.kenmcdonaldmusic.com](http://www.kenmcdonaldmusic.com) There are some excellent videos. If you want to contact me, my mobile is 0419664258 and email [ken.mcdonald@masteringmanagement.com.au](mailto:ken.mcdonald@masteringmanagement.com.au)

