

Songs of Coober Pedy

From notes about the songs written by Gary Atkins:

These songs, here labelled "Songs of Coober Pedy," were written in 1973.

I wrote the first one, "Noodlin' Ned (Fossicking Fred)." David Clark wrote "Coober Pedy" and "Opal Game."

David and I worked together for that year, touring as a duo throughout South Australia as professional folksingers. We came to Coober Pedy as part of our very first country tour. On that trip we also went to Woomera, Port Augusta, and Marree, where we performed at the Marree Camel Club. In Coober Pedy we performed at the school, and at Johnny Roufos' Acropolis Restaurant.

David had a Roneo duplicator. After we wrote the songs, we typed them on to a stencil, and ran off copies of the words. We walked the main street of Coober Pedy, singing the songs, and selling the duplicated copies of the song words. There was a lot of cash around at the time, with Seventeen Mile at a peak, and we sold quite a few songsheets.

David and I, later in 1973, jointly recorded our songs in a studio in Hindley Street, and we published 500 copies of them in a 12" vinyl LP, titled "Sung in South Australia", and sold them while touring.

In 1975, I published another 12" LP vinyl recording, titled "Nothin' Else Around". "Noodlin' Ned" was one of the twelve songs of mine on that LP.

A few years later, The ABC with my permission, and with payment to me, used the tune of Noodlin' Ned, to which I wrote some different words, calling it "My Dad's a Working Man", and they published it in the ABC Music for Schools Radio Broadcast.

Later again, Noodlin' Ned featured as one of the songs in an anthology of South Australian folksongs, published in a CD.

The words and music of my songs are copyright, in my name, and are cited as original work, by the Australasian Performing Right Association, of which I am an Associate Member.

Noodlin' Ned

My wife's in Coober jail for getting drunk last night,
And I just got out yesterday after starting up a fight.
So now I must go noodlin' to raise cash for her bail.
One good parcel should be enough to get her out of jail.

I'll walk out to the 2-mile, that won't be too far;
It's better at the 17 but I have got no car.
Well I noodled at the 2-mile and found a pocket of blobs,
I sold the parcel and went to town to see the Coober Cops.

The money I got was more than enough to pay for my wife's bail.
But after that I got drunk and landed back in jail,
So my wife's gone noodlin' to raise cash for my bail;
One good parcel should be enough to get me out of jail.

COOBER PEDY

Oh, Coober Pedy, Oh, Coober Pedy,
That's a place where I would like to go,
Oh, Coober Pedy, Oh, Coober Pedy,
Where the dust flies around like famin' snow.

In, Coober Pedy, In, Coober Pedy,
Read the weekly paper and you'll find,
In Coober Pedy, In Coober Pedy,
Someone's pinched the opal from your mine.

Oh, Coober Pedy, Oh, Coober Pedy,
Where the water costs more than flamin' beer,
Oh, Coober Pedy, Oh, Coober Pedy,
Where you only have a shower once a year.

OPAL GAME AM

Oh at Coober the miner sells to the dealer.
An oz will bring you \$50 or more.
Just set it in a ring the price is 10 fold.
No wonder the miners are so poor.

Oh I went up to the opal fields for digging
I thought I'd make my fortune in a day
But I've been here now for 5 years
And for an opal strike each day I pray.

And I'll probably keep on awaiting
Until the day I make that lucky strike
And then with my fortune in my pocket
I'll be heading off to start a new life.

Oh I'll buy my building in Adelaide
Or a night club in the centre of Kings Cross
And I'll think of my days in Coober Pedy
And all the piles of rocks I had to toss.

And if my money starts to run out again
And the opal bug within me is still there
I'll be heading off once more to Coober Pedy
To dig myself up another share.