

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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A Bush Christening

A Bush Christening
(A.B. (Banjo) Paterson)

On the outer Barcoo where the churches are few,
And men of religion are scanty,
On a road never cross'd 'cept by folk that are lost
One Michael Magee had a shanty

Now this Mike was the dad of a ten year old lad,
Plump, healthy, and stoutly conditioned;
He was strong as the best, but poor Mike had no rest
For the youngster had never been christened

And his wife used to cry, "If the darlin' should die,
Saint Peter would not recognize him."
But by luck he survived till a preacher arrived ,
Who agreed straightaway to baptize him.

Now the artful young rogue, while they held their colloque
With his ear to the key hole was listenin'
And he muttered in fright, while his features turned white
"What the divil and all is this christening?"

He was none of your dolts - he had seen them brand colts
And it seemed to his small understanding
If the man in the frock made him one of the flock
It must mean something very like branding.

So away with a rush he set off for the bush
While the tears in his eyelids they glistened
'Tis outrageous," said he "to brand youngsters like me;
I'll be dashed if I'll stop to be christened."

Like a young native dog he ran into a log,
And his father with language uncivil,
Never heeding the "praste", cried aloud in his haste
"Come out and be christened, you divil!."

But he lay there as snug as a bug in a rug,
And his parents in vain might reprove him,
Till his reverence spoke (he was fond of a joke)
"I've a notion," says he," that'll move him.

"Poke a stick up the log, give the spaleen a prog;

Poke him aisy - don't hurt him or maim him;
"Tis not long that he'll stand, I've the water in hand,
As he rushes out this end I'll name him."

"Here he comes, and for shame! Ye've forgotten the name
Is it Patsy, or Michael, or Dennis?"
Here the youngster ran out, and the priest gave a shout,
"Take your chance anyhow, wid Maginnis!"

As the howling young cub ran away to the scrub
Where he knew pursuit would be risky,
The priest, as he fled, flung a flask at his head
That was labelled "Maginnis's Whiskey"!

Now Maginnis Magee has been made a J.P.
And the one thing he hates more than sin is:
To be asked by the folk, who have heard of the joke,
How he came to be christened Maginnis!

Banjo Paterson was an Australian born in 1864, died 1941.
He is accepted as a national poet in Australia. Ian Wallis,
and his band (Wallis and Matilda) have recorded many of
Banjo Paterson's songs. The most famous of Banjo's works
is Waltzing Matilda. RHJ

RHJ

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