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The Mt Kembla Mining Disaster (song)

Abstract

A winter sun bathed old Mt. Kembla
And miner's clothes hang on the line
And bush sounds made a gentle
background
To grinding winches at the mine...

The Mt Kembla Mining Disaster

By Kevin Baker

A winter sun bathed old Mt. Kembla
And miner's clothes hang on the line
And bush sounds made a gentle background
To grinding winches at the mine.

A sudden blast shocked all to stillness
Smoke wreathed into the cloudless sky
And tackle men in gangs had lifted
Was flung into the air on high.

CHORUS

O village weep your men are dying
Soon every house must grieve and moan
In tunnels dark the damp is rising
Soon ninety-six dead men you'll own.

Mothers and wives raced to the pithead
And rescue teams were fast away
They risked their lives to save their comrades
And see which friends had died today.

After a while teams came returning
Their stretchers burdened with the dead
And women keened at each loss learning
In anguished cries their grief was shed.

CHORUS (Repeat)

For sixty hours the death toll mounted
And coffin-cargoes rushed by rail
In each and every miner's cottage
The living did their loss bewail.

And widows wept in Windy Gully
Where miners found their final bed
Grief for the lost will have its moment
But wives and children must be fed

CHORUS (Repeat)

All mining men hard times must weather
And miner's wives know fortunes blight
The reins of tragedy they'll tether
And help each other in their plight.

A blanket passed 'round this new nation
From Bulli's welfare fund came aid
Those who knew toil and exploitation
The debts of Brotherhood soon paid

CHORUS (Repeat)

In seven weeks new rosters started
Survivors crept back to the face
And silent thoughts of those departed
Made Kembla mine an eerie place.

A miner's life is fraught with danger
In open tombs they ply their trade
In foreign banks sleek wealthy strangers
Feed off the profits miner made

CHORUS (Repeat)

A year ago came independence
This Southern Nation we proclaimed
Where Rights of Man would gain ascendancy
Not where the poor are killed and maimed

No killer mountain shall defeat us
We'll come back stronger in the fight
Nor will our foreign bosses beat us
Though windy gully grieves our sigh

CHORUS

O village weep your men are dying
Soon every house must grieve and moan
In tunnels dark the damp is rising
Soon ninety-six dead men you'll own.