

# WHO WILL RIDE WITH STUART?

(Neil Murray)

*I've driven the Stuart Highway too many times, and then after reading "Mr Stuart's Track" by John Bailey this song tumbled out.*

John McDoull Stuart was a Scotsman  
when his sweetheart kissed another  
it made him change his plan  
Caught a ship out to Australia to see what he might find  
never let another woman stray into his mind

A surveyor by trade he worked away from town  
Loyal to his patron uncomfortable in a crowd  
Had the instinct of a bushman, diffident and shy  
If it wasn't for the drink he'd a led a saintly life

Found redemption in the desert away from the grog  
He was fearless and determined to be his own boss  
He'd ride out in unknown country without a second breath  
Taking all who went with him on a dance with death

He set his aim to cross the continent from the south  
But not for fame and fortune only to prove himself  
It took seven expeditions before he made it through  
In the scrub of Van Diemens Gulf he glimpsed that shimmerin blue

The party gathered on the beach  
and raised the union jack  
with the task now done Stuart all but collapsed  
He became a brooding figure,  
racked with scurvy and half blind  
He was lauded by the public  
but lost all purpose in his life

Too ill for the desert he sought refuge in the bottle  
He was soon poverty stricken and all but forgotten  
One day he boarded a ship that sailed away  
Went back home to Scotland  
and there he found his grave

Australia's greatest explorer was never one to boast  
to be first across the country becomes a hollow toast  
if you intrude blindly into native people's homes  
taking lethal force can eat away your soul

So who will ride with Stuart, who'll suffer where he goes,  
who will starve and thirst but not falter from the goal  
They say he opened up the country for progress to come  
Others say he was cursed for what he done

John McDoull Stuart was a Scotsman.