

Royal Park

It was in 1845 that Governor La Trobe
Said "Let's make our city, Melbourne, the finest on the Globe."
He laid out parks and gardens, and boulevards and streets
With places for our factories and places just to meet.
And on our fair young city, he really left his mark.
He made our city famous for its fine Victorian parks.
And because to good old England he was still so very loyal
The largest one of all the parks was designated Royal.

*Dig, dig, dig,
No one cares a fig,
Royal Park has endless space
It's very, very big.*

Now in the year of '51 they found some gold next door,
This made the world's adventurers come flocking to our shore.
Melbourne's streets and boulevards were filled to overflowing,
And every person's pocket with that yellow metal glowing.
It was a situation that I'm sure you'll understand
If from the edges of the Park we take a little land.
We called the suburb Parkville, and it surely eased the strain,
And its fine Victorian houses are everybody's gain.

*Dig, dig, dig,
No one cares a fig,
Royal Park has boundless space
It's very, very big.*

Now every modern city must have a proper zoo,
And Melbourne planned to get its own by 1862.

But a zoo is big and noisy and it has a quite strong smell,
And animals are dangerous and might escape as well.

And we want it close to children who can get there on the trams
So the middle of our Royal Park just seemed the best of plans.
The zoo was built, with roads and trams and even with a train
And the zoo with all its gardens was everybody's gain.

*Dig, dig, dig,
No one cares a fig,
Royal Park has such vast space
It's very, very big.*

And then the Park was left alone, at least for forty years.
We needed a new hospital, but don't shed any tears.

We'll name it after Royal Park, and make it very good,
We'll treat the very least of men as if of Royal blood.

When far off Europe went to war, in the summer of '14,
Australia jumped to England's aid, we were so very keen.
And to make sure our men were fit when joining in this lark,
A factory for vaccines, of course in Royal Park.

*Dig, dig, dig,
No one cares a fig,
Royal Park has so much space
It's very, very big.*

And then in 1929, we built a school of schools,
Where our finest teachers could be taught the latest rules,
And university researchers could ensure which rules were best,
And our very brightest students could be sure to pass the test.

And land for research institutes, of one or other kind,
That elucidate the workings of the body and the mind,
And then another hospital, or maybe two, or three,
And the latest of these hospitals was built in '63.

*Dig, dig, dig,
No one cares a fig,
Royal Park has lots of space
It's very, very big.*

Now there have been opportunities to give land back to trees.
Like at the end of World War II, though that took fifteen years.
We must free our mental prisoners, the theory is quite sound,
So they closed the mental hospital, which had extensive grounds.
And for a while it was a space where man and dog roamed free,
But then the land was taken for the CG PPP,
And they built the Athletes Village, it was really rather fine,
But now the land is private, and no longer yours and mine.

*Dig, dig, dig,
No one cares a fig,
Royal Park has space to spare
It still is very big.*

Now back in 1996, Jeff Kennet had a dream
To make the state Victoria move forward at full steam.

One certain way to do this was to plan and dig and build,
And into the economy a lot of cash is spilled.

Roads, events and stadia, and encouraged by his Mentor,
He set himself the noble task to build a Hockey Centre.
He took the land from Royal Park, but don't call him a hog,
The land he took was only used by a lady, and her dog.

*Dig, dig, dig,
No one cares a fig,
Royal Park has still got space
It really is quite big.*

Today the raiders of our Park, have really had to think,
Of course the city has to have a proper East-West link,
It has to cut through parkland, and this must be understood,
In spite of all the evidence that freeways do no good.

They simply shift the traffic jams from one place to another
They cost a lot of money and they cause a lot of bother.
But anyone with half an eye or half a soul can see,
The beauty of an overpass, as it soars o'er you and me.

*Dig, dig, dig,
No one cares a fig,
Royal Park has not much space
It isn't very big.*

It seems the raiders of our Park have lost their East-West link,
It was a tight fought battle, they took it to the brink.

But where to now? . . . Let's think it through.

We need to swell the visitors that come to Melbourne Zoo.

We'll need to add more parking, they can't come by train or bus,
A car is so much simpler, there's no ticket and no fuss.

You say this is a travesty, I wouldn't go that far

Just to the prefix "Royal" now add "multistory car".

Dig, dig, dig,

No one cares a fig,

Royal Park takes lots of work

We don't want it too big

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2017