

The Gympie Researcher

*The newsletter of the
Gympie Family History Society Inc.*

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MEMBERSHIP FEES:	Annual fees are: All due by 31st August each year Single Membership \$35 Family Membership \$45 (Two members of an immediate family residing at the one address) PRO RATA till 31st August 2016:		
	Dec to Feb	Mar to May	Jun to Aug
Single Membership	\$30	\$20	\$10
Family Membership	\$40	\$30	\$20
INFORMATION:	Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Gympie Family History Society Inc.		
WEB PAGE:	www.gympiefhs.egympie.com.au		

EDITORS COMMENTS

This edition I have put together stories of people connected to the arts and entertainment industry. I remember singing 'Blue Tail'd Fly' around the piano as a child and the tune is starting to haunt me! As always anyone with anything to offer please let me know. Lyn

MEMBERSHIP: WE CURRENTLY HAVE 63 MEMBERS

PRESIDENTS REPORT;

Welcome to all, another month has gone by so quickly. It has been a hive of activity in our rooms, we have some members coming in to help so we will try to get certain projects started. We are working on it.

With all newspaper reports on what is going on with the Rattler, I would like us to have a meeting with the new council to refresh our interest in the old station. We did have some input but that was with the former council.

The Mystery Tour on the 1st May was, to all accounts a great day so I missed out sadly but I have been shown some great photos especially old objects at the Museum in keeping with my age as I can relate to most things.

WW1 items are being put together. It is amazing what they are finding.

Thank you to everyone for all your help in any way.

MARGARET

RESEARCH -

KIM WARD, Re—Norman Percival *Tyack* burial records - emailed

MARIE PRENDERGAST, Re –David Fitzgerald *Moylan*. Wanting to know if additional details could be added to what she had. I had a look, only a few small details eg 1860 Electoral Roll Info.

EILEEN NEWCOMBE, Re– Catherine *Hamill* and Thomas *Jones*

NOEL HARRISON, Re—*Henderson, Craig* Family (past client) wanting more details

MAREA MCMAHON, Re-Matthew *McMahon* and Catherine *Garrigle*,

PETER CASEY, Re-John *Casey* and Jane Elizabeth *Webber*, Researching

MARIE PARK, Brisbane, Re-Robert *Brennan* and Mary enquiring.

RENEE REED, Re-Alfred Douglas and Thelma Jane *Whitfield* Headstone Photograph

MARJORIE HEAD– Photo identification 1 found 3 photo's ID's of a wedding of William Henry *Cook* to Mary *Prouse* in 1914 in Townsville. The Duffy children remain a mystery. Photos look to be Prouse *Duffy* families.

Faye Kennedy

RESEARCH FEES

Members Free (when visiting personally to the rooms and doing your own research although we are happy to help guide you or if you are from interstate and are not able to do your own research)

Non Members (at our discretion)

Mail & Internet Inquiries

\$30.00 Australia

\$35.00 overseas

For Research Requests:

email c/- gfh@spiderweb.com.au or mail to: GFHS, P O Box 767, Gympie QLD 4570

The Research Process Explained:

You make your enquiry, we then look to see what information we can find quickly—then we contact you to see if you wish to proceed and advise of the fees.

If you do, we ask for \$30 (or \$35 overseas—to cover extra postage). Once payment is received, we then investigate either your specific queries or start at the beginning and check cemetery records, BDM registers, local registers, school registers, pedigree charts, some shipping, local history books, Gympie Times records, previous cemetery crawl presentations, previous research requests, mining, electoral rolls and so the list goes on.

We hold a lot of various local registers and cuttings and basic items you would find in a local history library. We also have access to the internet and can often suggest websites and ways of searching that you may not have thought of.

We do many hours of ongoing research and then either email the information to you as we go, or mail packets to you so you have the hard copies. We then also keep the information we have researched for you on file and it is then available to future people who may be researching your names too. Many times we have put people in touch with other searchers of their own trees.

Our research people do so much more work than you would realise to help you in your search for information. Please feel confident that everything possible is done by our volunteers to supply you with any relevant information we may have in our library.

The funds raised from your payments for our research, assist us with obtaining further records and to produce books and CD's for easy access of family details in Gympie and the surrounds.

Payment can be by either cheque sent to our P O Box as above or direct deposit into our Bank account is another option for those who feel comfortable with the method. Details of our bank account are: BSB 633000 Account# 153118963 and is with Bendigo Bank. We ask that you confirm by email to gfh@spiderweb.com.au. if possible when you have made the payment. Then we can allocate your payment and get on with the research!

Our research officer is Faye Kennedy.

www.gympiefhs.egympie.com.au

Our website is being updated as events come up and lists change. Our indexing is constantly under way thanks to Val and Joyce especially and the new list of surnames is now up to about 230,000. Have a look at the new and old lists on the “research” section of the website and see if anyone new in your family has turned up. Check back from time to time too as we are updating often. If you want a copy of the page of the book that is of interest to you—contact us and we can arrange to pop it through to you. Some costs are involved of course but it is only small and dependant on how much you need.

Many thanks to Kerry-Ann for doing such a sterling job of finally getting our site updated and clean. If you find something that doesn't work or that you can amend—please just send an email to gfhs@spiderweb.com.au and we will pass it on and get it changed or fixed. Kerry-Ann has never done a website before so she is self taught and although possibly a little bit greyer and sillier (due to stress) she has learnt a lot and helped us have a website we can be proud of and that is finally creating interest again.

We have talked about it for years and finally it is a reality.....

2016 Programme

Gympie Family History Society
Cnr Station Rd & Chapple Sts

22 June—Gympie Cemetery Crawl
11 Sep—Bus Tour—Mystery History Tour
19th Oct—Gympie Cemetery Crawl

Details—contact Di Woodstock 0419 224 628
gfhs@spiderweb.com.au

GFHS facebook page

www.gympiefhs.egympie.com.au

LIBRARY HOURS

Wednesday 9.30am to 2pm
Friday 9.30am to 12pm
Saturday 1pm to 4pm

Cemetery Crawl

Wednesday 22 June 2016

- Time: 6.30pm start (so come along a little earlier for a chat and to meet new people) - there is also a vege tray raffle \$1 ticket
- Where: Meet at the shed at the Gympie Cemetery
- Cost: \$7.50 (includes soup & a booklet) {**\$5 members**}
- Bring: Good walking shoes, a torch, bug spray,
- To Book: Ring Di Woodstock on 0419 224 628

Names included: McIntosh, Veal, Turk, Moessinger, Purcell, Stumm, Barlow

Diggers Books WWI

We are putting together the series of books on Widgee Shire and the effects of the Great War on the families of the time.

If you have family in the area who was affected in anyway and you are happy to tell the story for us, PLEASE contact Di Woodstock on di@magicality.com.au

We are currently compiling a complete list of the men and women who enlisted or were connected to the area during 1914-1919 and would love to have any photos or personal stories and copies of items you have.

We are especially interested in anyone who was in the first sailing of the **Omrah** in 1914. There was a large group of Gympie men who were band members and they all enlisted together and sailed on the **Omrah**—

Please share their story with us if you have a connection at all.

Lest We Forget



11th September 2016

Mark it in your diary so you don't miss out.

We will be running our second
Mystery History Tour—to somewhere we have never been before...

The first one was on the 1st May and we went out through the Mary Valley region and visited Dagon, Kandanga, Imbil and ended the day in Kenilworth at the Historical Museum and the Cheese Factory.

Everyone enjoyed it immensely.

“Full and just recognition does not always come to those who deserve it.” The start of a story by the Gympie Amateur Radio Club in recognition of their founder :-

ARTHUR ERNEST DILLON

Arthur was born on the 11th February 1902 in Gympie, Queensland. His father was William Joseph Dillon born in Ireland on the 30th May 1870 and his mother Ann Josephine Liddy born in Gympie on the 14th July 1871. William and Ann were married on the 26th February 1895 and lived in Crescent Road, Gympie, Williams occupation—Boot maker. In February 1902 William applied and received a liquor license for the Inglewood Hotel and in August 1903 sold his license to Robert Burns Campbell.

Arthur was educated at Christian Brothers College, Gympie and his first place of employment was as a Cadet Journalist for the Gympie Times. 1921 Arthur moved to Brisbane, his occupation was an electrician. Although he didn't always get the recognition he deserved it is claimed he was the first sound broadcaster in Queensland. With only raw materials to work with, he constructed his own station and on the 25th July 1921 he broadcasted the first Sound Broadcast, he was 19 years of age.

In 1828 convicts were used to build a 'Windmill' at Wickham Terrace, Spring Hill in Brisbane. It is the oldest surviving building in Queensland and is Heritage Listed. It has had many uses over the centuries, originally used for grinding grain, two Aboriginal men were hanged from a beam from an upper window after being found guilty of murdering members of a surveying party near Mount Lindesay in 1841. It was the first home of the Queensland Museum in 1862 and later a signal tower and later still a weather observatory.



Early in 1922 Arthur E Dillon 4CH was the first experimenter to conduct MV tests and transmissions from the tower. The tower was ideally suited for this endeavor as it had a panoramic view from Moreton Bay in the east to the Darling Downs in the west. Said to be the most impressive configuration of it's kind in Queensland at the time. Nearby he erected a 150 feet (45 m) tower and strung a 80 feet (24 m) antenna between it and the tower. Under his direction 240V AC was supplied, simplifying

the problem of power supplies and allowing his tests to be conducted on a lower wave length transmission.

Arthur was largely responsible for the formation of The Queensland Institute of Radio Engineers (QIRE) and became its first Secretary/Treasurer. The body claimed to be the first of its kind in Australia, its aim was to raise the status of wireless 'tinkering' to that of an organised science. Its members consisted of Academics, Scientists and Businessmen, these members willing to assist anyone interested in intelligent research. The Institute set up its headquarters in the Observatory Tower, installed its own transmitter and operated under the call sign 4EZ. The inaugural meeting was held in March 1922 and the first broadcast a month later in April 1922. The Daily Mail Newspaper reported the test as a phenomenal success. *"Using only 6 watts, reception of music and voice was logged as far south as Sydney, New South Wales,"* Success indeed. Arthur was better known as Ernie or Ernie 4CH. Returning to Gympie and with the help of his former employer, The Gympie Times, he called on all those interested to form a radio club. The Gympie Amateur Radio Club came into being, May 1923, a first for Gympie and another first for 4CH.

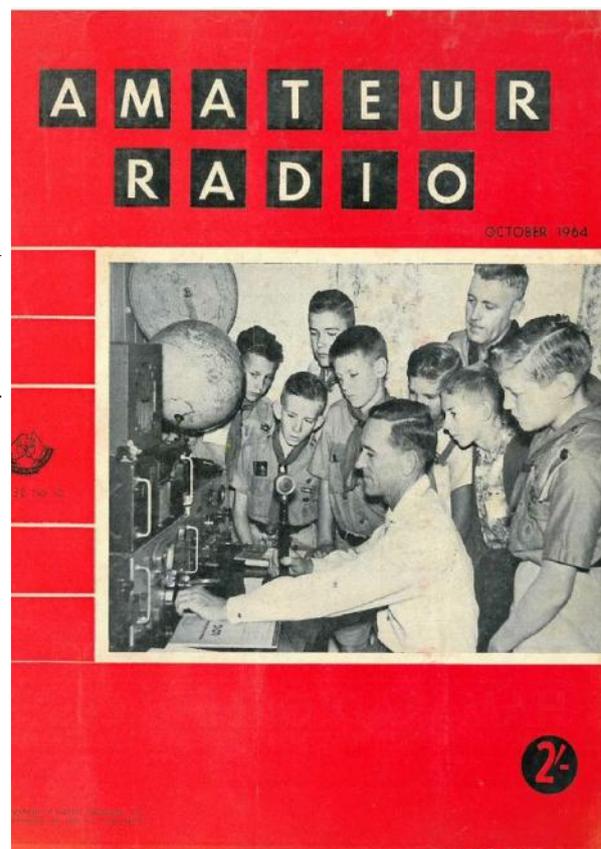
October 1923 saw Ernie participating in a demonstration of wireless transmission to the general public. Using 25 watts of power a musical programme was transmitted from the tower and listened to by 1000 people attending a concert at the South Brisbane Technical College. Yet another successful first for Ernie 4CH, a telegram was received from Sydney saying *"Reception was loud and clear."*

Ernie gave his all to his work juggling his 8 to 5 job as a electrical and wireless contractor with wireless broadcasts from both the Tower and his home at New Farm, also making himself available as a guest speaker. When asked, he accepted the position of Technical Editor and Advisor for the newly formed magazine "The Queensland Radio News." this was one of his most successful efforts and stimulated radio progress in Queensland. Census records from 1931 to 1943 have Ernie living in Atherton, his occupation Electrical Engineer. At this time he seems to have dropped his experimental, broadcasting, administration and journalist work and left Brisbane to work in North Queensland. On the 29th May 1942 he married Myrtle Evelyn Mead, Myrtle was born on the 19th June 1914.at Inglewood. They had two children Brian and Ernene. On the 29th May 1942 Ernie enlisted in the 3rd Battalion Volunteer Defence Corps, being discharged in 1945. Ernie suffered a heart attack, and passed away on the 24th March 1960, he was only 58 years of age. A true 'Pioneer of Radio.'

Lyn Fleming

Source: Greg Weir Gympie Communications & Electronics Group Inc., Ancestry, Trove, Wikipedia

Picture of Gympie Scouts 1964 viewing Radio Station at Gympie,.



GYMPIE BORN ACHIEVER. THELMA CARNE

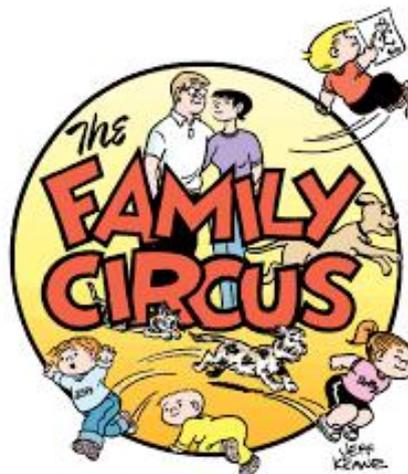


Thelma was born in Gympie on the 15th March 1925 to Herbert Harold Carne and Esther Beatrice Mayfield. Her father was a banana farmer and for much of her early childhood Thelma lived in a four-room canvas tent within the borders of the Amamoor Forest Reserve while her father worked on a local reforestation project. She lived with relatives in Gympie while in High School and returned home to her family on weekends.

During the Second World War Thelma worked in the United States war bonds office in Brisbane. She was hired as an accounting secretary, and her desk and workstation was situated next to Bil Keane a United States

Army Promotional Artist who drew posters and flyers for the war effort. Bil would tell anyone who would listen, *'Thel was a very pretty 18 year old with a gorgeous figure, long brown hair and I just happened to have a desk drawing next to her and I got the nerve to ask her out. We started laughing then and never stopped.'* They were married in 1948, and with the 15000 other wives of American Servicemen, she left Australia for Roslyn, Pennsylvania. The couple had five children between 1949 and 1958 and the family moved to Paradise Valley Arizona in 1959.

Bil Keane began drawing 'The Family Circus' in 1960. He modeled the Mummy in the cartoon on his wife, Thelma, she was even named "Thel" after his wife's nickname. Bil reported *'She was the inspiration for all of my success. When the cartoon first appeared, she looked so much like Mommy that if she was in the supermarket pushing her cart around, people would come up to her and say , 'Aren't you the Mommy in 'Family Circus?'' and she would admit it.*



Thelma worked as a full time financial and business manager for her husband. Her family credited her business skills as the main reason that Bill Keane became one of the first syndicated newspaper cartoonists in the country to regain the full right to his comic. She led the 1988

negotiations with King Features Syndicate to return the copyrights for *The Family Circus*.” King Features finally agreed to return the rights of the cartoon to Bil after long and protracted talks with Thelma. The comic strip ran in approximately 1500 newspapers.

Thelma Keane died at the age of 82 at the Barton House assisted living facility in Paradise Valley, Arizona on May 23rd 2008. She had been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. Her youngest son Jeff Keane continued to help his father draw and publish *The Family Circus* as an assistant inker and colourist, taking the full time role of being the lead cartoonist after Bil Keane died in 2011.



Lyn Fleming Source—Wikipedia; Find a Grave

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



“... And we each had a bottle of soda. Daddy brought his own in his pocket.”



HENRY ERNEST BOOTE:

Born on the 2nd May 1865 in Liverpool, England. Henry was a Socialist Propagandist. He educated himself by reading in a local free library and developed an interest in painting. An art dealer engaged him as a copyist and he later commissioned works for sale. He migrated to Australia in 1889 finding work as a compositor in Brisbane. He founded the Gympie Truth for Andrew Fisher in 1896, and was a lodger at Andrew Fishers house. He later became Editor of 'The Worker' in Brisbane, and Australian Worker in Sydney. He was a journalist and writer and established himself as an essayist and Poet along with Henry Lawson and Dame Mary Gilmore. His articles went under the pseudonym *Touchstone* which led to the publication of his first book of essays, 'A Fool's Talk' in 1915. Below is the first and last verse of one of his poems.

*A GOLDEN BIRD IN A GOLDEN CAGE -
I GAVE IT A SEED FOR A SONG,
AND FOR THIS SCANT AND SIMPLE WAGE
IT SANG THROUGH THE WINTER LONG.*

*A SONG FOR A SEED, A SEED FOR A SONG
AND SUCH IS THE POET'S WAGE;
HIS SOUL IS A SINGER SWEET AND STRONG, AND HIS HEART IS A
GOLDEN CAGE.*

Henry had a strong working class consciousness and became a keen trade unionist which shows in his poetry. Lyn Fleming Source: Trove, Australian Dictionary of Biography.

New Member Profile:

My name is Clem Brosnan and I was born in Timaru in the South Island of New Zealand on the 9th Sept 1945. I attended the local schools until at 15 I started work as a storeman for a paint, wallpaper and glass shop. During my early years I had various jobs but enjoyed the most being a coach (Bus) driver at Mt Cook. Living up in the mountains was just the best.

In 1992 I moved to Qld and managed a tourist park in Brisbane. A year later the offer to manage a service station in Maryborough came up and my wife and I and a dog and cat moved north. After almost 30 years a change of lifestyle came along to retire to Tasmania. After an enjoyable 5 years in the south, a decision was made to move north again to be with family and I have settled in Gympie. Since before Christmas I have met so many friendly people and almost feel like a local.

I am looking forward to doing my bit for local history and at present I am doing research into the transport of the local area. Any items of interest will be welcome. Written notes can be left at the family history room.

UNA CATHERINE VOWLES

Una was born on the 30th October 1904 in Gympie, Queensland. Her parents were Reginald Vowles, a miner, and Mary Ellen {nee Shanahan}. Una was the eldest of six children and in 1918 a terrible tragedy shook the family.

Gympie Times 10th August 1918:- *Yesterday afternoon, about 4 o'clock, an accident occurred by which two young children lost their lives through drowning. It appears that a young nurse-girl named Gladys Meagher, aged 18 years, employed by Mrs. Shanahan, Licensee of the Sydney Hotel, One Mile, took four children of Mrs. Mary Ellen Vowles, who resides at the Sydney Hotel, down to Deep Creek. The children were Agnes Marion aged 7 years and 3 months, Reginald John 5 years and 2 younger ones. They all sat down on the bank, the children playing along it. The boy Reginald John crossed the creek on the foot bridge, and the girl Meagher went after him to try and bring him back. Before she could reach him, he fell into the creek, which is about 12 feet deep at this part. She went to put the baby, which she was carrying in her arms down on the ground, but before she could do this, the girl Agnes Marion followed her, and fell into the creek. She promptly jumped in after them and succeeded in getting hold of both the children, endeavouring to rescue them. She became exhausted however, and had to let them go. They both sank.. The nursemaid was rescued by a man named Byrne. The bodies of the two children were eventually recovered, locked in each others arms, about an hour afterwards by a man named Thomas Barson, of Excelsior Road, Gympie, who dived for them.*

It is hard to imagine the effect of such a tragedy on the family and it is not surprising the electoral rolls of 1919 have the family living at Main Camp, Enoggera Railway, Brisbane, Reginalds' occupation timekeeper.

Newspaper articles referred to Una as *'the dainty and vivacious little elocutionist'*. In 1930 Una travelled to London where she gained her Fellowship at Trinity College, attended a special course of study taking particular interest in children's rhythmic work and voice speaking choir. *(This consists of poetry being spoken by a choir composed of men and women instead of only one person)* and a form of poetry she hoped to introduce to Brisbane. In London she also studied under Lionel Logue (*Speech therapist for King George VI*) in the correction of speech defects. Before returning to Brisbane she toured Europe and took time out from her sight seeing to do some study in Germany.



November 1936 saw Una travelling to America, most of her time being spent in Hollywood and New York. Her five months trip was undertaken with the object of obtaining first hand knowledge of the American Theatre and of film production. She visited some of the big studios seeing Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, Nelson Eddy and other stars at work. Her impres-

sions of Hollywood "She held immense admiration for the Writers, Producers, Directors and Editors whose genius is the main cause of Hollywood's success. The life of a film star is anything but enviable, except for the satisfaction that is to be won from hard work. Work begins at 7 a.m. and might continue until midnight, with only a minute and a half of actual film time produced.", and "Broadway was full of dramatic success". She had the opportunity of learning something of the methods of the New York School of the Theatre, directed by Elizabeth Grimball. She also had the opportunity of producing a couple of plays at Radio City.

Even more dramatic than anything she had seen in the United States, Una was to find herself in a capsized railway carriage on the edge of a frozen lake in Canada. A broken rail caused the derailment of five carriages attached to the train in which she was travelling. She was obliged to break a window before she could get out, only to find herself knee deep in snow. The only injury she received was shock but decided to cancel her proposed trip to Yokohama and return to Brisbane. As a teacher of Dramatic Art she realized her dream and held several recitals of Verse Speaking Choir. She also staged several plays *Cradle Days* and *The Patsy* to name a few, playing the leading role.

On the 11th October 1937 Una married Jack Mulholland. Jack was born in Gympie on the 8th August 1903, the son of William Andrew Mulholland and Alice Letitia Worrell {nee Raymond}. Jack attended Gympie State High School, winning a scholarship to attend the University of Queensland. There he gained a Bachelor of Engineering. In 1926 he received first class honours in Civil Engineering, and the following year he received the Walter and Wliza Hall Engineering Fellowship, studying water supply and sewerage in the United States. 1928-29 he attended Harvard Engineering School and received a Master of Science Degree of Engineering with the highest place in the examination. He graduated in 1933 with a Master of Civil Engineering.



MRS. UNA MULHOLLAND, newly-appointed Literature Board of Review member, reads aloud to her family. Left to right: Robert, 8, Mary Rose, 14, John, 12, Genevieve, 10. And the book—the famed Kon-Tiki expedition.

Their wedding was held at the residence of Archbishop Duhig with only relatives and a few intimate friends attending. The bride was unattended, and after the ceremony the bridal party, and guests, numbering 20 lunched at the National Hotel.

Una was the mother of 4 children, was a member of the International Phonetic Association, Licentiate and Fellow of Trinity College, London, and an Associate and Licentiate of the Art of Speech, Australia. In 1954 she was elected the only women member of the Board of Literature Review. Una was adjudicator at eisteddfods in Brisbane and Sydney.

Sadly Una and Jack went their separate ways. Una lived to the age of 95, passing away on the 9th February 1999.

By Lyn Fleming Source: Trove, Ancestry, Dictionary of Biography.

JIM CRACK CORN or THE BLUE TAIL FLY

When I was young I used to wait
On Massa's an hand him de plate;
Pass down the bottle when he git dry,
And bresh away de blue tail fly.

CHORUS Jim crack corn I don't care,
Jim crack corn I don't care
Jim crack corn I don't care,
Ole Massa gone away.



This is the story of **Robert 'Billy' Barlow**—The Inimitable Blue-Tail'd Fly.

During the 19th century 'Blackface' or 'Minstrel' was a form of theatrical makeup used by performers to represent a black person. Originating in America, it became a form of entertainment that was popular the world over. Billy Barlow was one of these performers and this story is taken from historical records and has no racial intent.

Robert Barlow was born in England around 1819. He was a very versatile musician well known in the theatre district of the British Isles and America. He was on stage from childhood and performed his first solo in Dublin at the age of 18. His first appearance in Australia was in 1852 performing in Rowe's American Circus where he was billed as:

"the justly celebrated Mr. Barlow, whose surpassing delineation of negro character has obtained for him from the London Audiences and the Press the appellation of Prince of Ethiopian Comedians."



He also played the Rock Harmonicon, formed of common pieces of stone (found in the Lake District England) and played upon with sticks. An advertisement for a Melbourne concert Billy was to perform in read: *"The celebrated and world-renowned vocalist, on which occasion he will introduce several new characters, new local songs, new chime band of harmonicons and a new musical instrument, the flutonion (native American Flute)"*

Billy travelled between Australia, New Zealand and the British Isles gaining rave reviews for his comedy routines, vocals and instrumental scores. On a tour through the ports of the China Seas he was shipwrecked and attacked by pirates. In Billy style he turned this situation into 'a narrative in song and verse of his perilous adventures.' A newspaper article of 1855 advertises the sale of Billie's house. Even his advertisement had a style of its own. It read: *'Richmond, Near the Cremorne Gardens, Sale by Auction, Not of Shakespeare's House, But the residence of Robert Barlow Esq., of Blue-tail'd Fly Notoriety, who is leaving for the interior.'* His life was full of adventure, of music and song, of fortunes won and lost on at least three goldfields, one of which was Gympie.

In the early 1840's he married Jane Matthews who shared Billy's stage life and was beside

him through all his wanderings and adventures. Around this time he was hailed as one of the greatest monologists in the world. The 1847 Theatrical Times of London advertises: *Barlow's Nigger melodist. Each consisting of fifty new and choice Darky Ballads, much of which are so spicy, that the Virginny Niggers can't sing 'em without sneezing.* For the next ten years he was referred to as the *American Barlow* in English and Australian newspapers. American Barlow was the only Copyright Series of the genuine Darky Chaunts published in England.

In 1852 Billie and Jane immigrated to Australia, settling in Victoria. During this time he was associated with Rowe's Circus, J.C. Rainer, George Coppin, Campbell's Minstrels, and Frank Clark as well as his own troupe.

Jane Margaret Drummond was born in Perthshire, Scotland in 1850. Her mother died in Melbourne's Tent town soon after arriving in 1853, and her father six months later. In 1855 at the age of five, Jane was adopted by entertainer Robert Barlow and his wife Jane. She was renamed Jane Margaret Drummond Barlow. Billie and Jane had no other children.

Numerous stories of Billie filled the newspaper as people wrote of their favourite skits: a play about the Crimean War called *The Siege of Sebastopol*, a costume with a sailor front where he sang sea faring songs and danced the horn pipe and the back a Lancashire man where he would jump four feet in the air turn around and sing a song while doing a clog dance. But of course the all time favourite was *Blue Tail'd Fly* where everyone would sing along while Billie sang and chased the imaginary fly around the stage.

In 1870 he had the privilege of singing to the then Prince of Wales and Duke of Edinburgh. Billie thought the Royals carriage deserved to be pulled by matching black horses and put his own horses at their disposal. The Duke honoured him with his patronage for his forthcoming trips through the colonies.

Jane Drummond Barlow married Adam Black in 1869. It is probable she met him while Billy was performing in New Zealand. Adam Black was born in England in 1839, the son of George Black and Marjorie Hogg. He left Britain in the mid 1860's and sailed to NZ, before arriving in Gympie in 1868, where he gained farming and mining experience. He was one of the four pioneers of quartz mining in Gympie and owned significant gold interests in the New Zealand Reef. The mine was always a show place because of it's richness in gold and distinguished visitors often went down to inspect it. On one occasion the Governor was to visit. The walls were washed down so that the crystal and gold in the quartz would glisten and the level was brilliantly lit with candles stuck in clay. A table was set. The Managers wife, along with Jane and other Directors' wives, went down and arranged the banquet table, but when the Vice Regal party arrived, the ladies left them to the complete enjoyment of the banquet. Adam Black was a member of many different societies. The Agricultural Society, the Gympie School of Arts, the Agricultural Mining and Pastoral Society, the Gympie Divisional Board of the Gympie City Council, the Presbyterian Church, and was associated with the first horse racing at Widgee Crossing. In 1870 Adam acquired a property in Logan and settled there. He represented Logan in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland in 1875, but didn't like Parliamentary life so did not seek re-election. The family of 9 children, including 7 boys, returned to Gympie to pursue mining operations again but did not meet with the same success as his previous efforts.

In 1868 when Gympie was still in the tent stage (10 months after gold was discovered), Bil-

lie Barlow built a Music Hall and Hotel, calling it *Barlows Apollonian Philharmonic Music Hall Hotel*. The word Apollonian comes from the ancient Greek Sun-God Apollo, God of theatre and music. Built of timber with a wood shingle roof, it was located right in the centre of the gold field area and built quickly from whatever materials could be obtained. On the 18th of September 1868 he was granted a hotel license for his Apollonian Hall. Many stories were written about the hotel. Some say Billie catered to the public taste, others say he was fond of singing bawdy topical songs about the local people. Some say the hotel was a rowdy, rough and disagreeable establishment. His many advertisements in the Gympie Times show he employed a step dancer, violinists, singers, actors of note, and a band. He staged elaborate performances of vaudeville and music, as well as dances.

He invited the public to a soiree to be held at Barlow's new Apollonian Hall, on the One Mile Road, by the ladies and gentlemen connected with the Presbyterian Church of Gympie, where the erection of a place of worship will be discussed. There seemed to be a conflict of sorts as many stories were told in regard to his 'proper' behaviour. It is possibly Billie thought the occupation of hotelier to be undignified or perhaps gossip could potentially affect his daughter as four days after his daughters marriage Billie sold the Hall. By the



1870's he is recorded as having a sugar cane farm on the Albert River. This would be at the same time Adam and Jane purchased their property in Logan. He had one of the finest plantations and perhaps one of the neatest and most comfortable homesteads in the district. A conflict with German employees which resulted in their dismissal. Soon after one of his horses was found shot in the jaw, another slashed in the shoulder with a tomahawk and a third missing. A carcass answering its description was found floating in the river. The horses were valued at £18 to £20 each. Billie was so disgusted with the affair he considered selling.

At this time his troupe was still performing all over Australia and New Zealand. Whilst performing in New Zealand, there was ill feeling between the troupe. Poor houses caused financial problems and Billie disbanded the troupe. He went it alone, but a year later had formed a new troupe and continued performances in Australia. In November 1888 Billie bought a property five miles out of Gympie on the Noosa Road. He was always hopeful of finding gold, and this venture looked like a good idea. Some gold was found, however, he must have lost a good deal of money as it is recorded in 1890 he was stranded in

Brisbane Hospital without friends or means. This is strange, as Billie's daughter and son in law were living near Gympie and there was no mention of his wife. Many newspapers in Australia and New Zealand reported his misfortune and a collection was made for him.

Billie went back to the only profession he excelled at—performing. He left for New Zealand. It is said he had been retired for four years. This must be the time he was mining at Noosa Road in Gympie. His wife was not with him but it is said he was as sprightly and energetic as ever. A newspaper reporter said: *“It would hardly be believed that a man of 72 years could lift two men, one weighing 17 stone and the other 16 stone, at the one time, but he did it several times.”* Billie did do weight lifting as part of his act at Rowe’s Circus in the 1850’s.

By January 1895 he is back in Gympie performing at the Olympic Theatre for the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science. On November 25th 1897 there was an article in the Cairns Post saying—*Barlow is in Gympie Hospital suffering from ‘rheumatic gout.’* Barlow said his problem stemmed from sleeping in a damp bed while in Victoria. It was here Billie held his last performance. He sang for two hours. He was 86 years old.

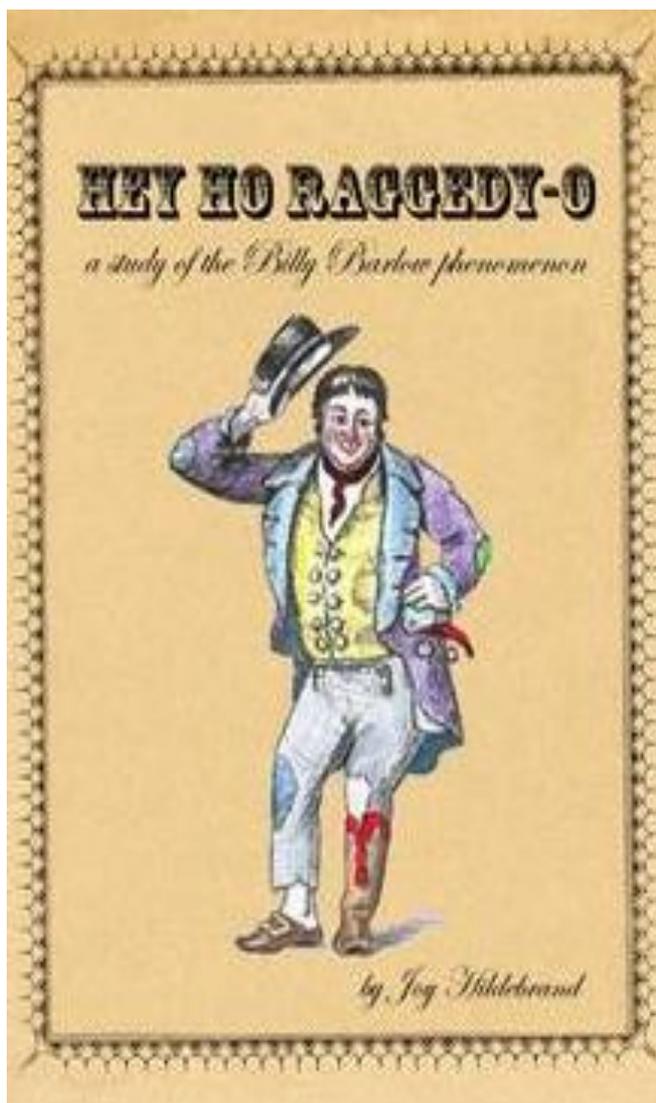
Newspaper articles in 1906 mention Billie and Jane celebrating their Diamond Wedding Anniversary, but this doesn’t fit with their marriage date. He sang his old songs for the visitors and was in high spirits.

On the 4th February 1901, Jane Margaret Drummond Black passed away, followed a year later by her husband Adam Black. In 1905 many newspapers in Australia and New Zealand reported: *“Billie Barlow of Blue Tail Fly memory is living in straightened circumstances in Crown Road, Gympie.”* It also noted that Billie and Jane were very infirmed. On February 12th 1907 Billie passed away from rheumatic arthritis, enteritis and exhaustion. He was 87 years and 11 months. Jane passed away in May 1910 she was 84. All are buried in Gympie Cemetery sadly they have no headstones.

Ole Massa’s gone, now let ‘Im rest,
Dey say all tings am for de best;
I neber shall forget till de day I die,
Ole Massa an’ de blue tail fly.

Story by Lyn Fleming.

Sources: Barlow the inimitable Blue-tail’d Fly by Joy Hildebrand ; Trove, Ancestry, Wikipedia, Pubs of Gympie



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