

# YE OLDE ENGLYSHE FAYRES:

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

At least three semi-permanent Ye Olde Englyshe Fayres operated in Western Australia around the turn of the century. The earliest found to date was located in Howick St, in the Perth suburb of Burswood (1895-96). A second one opened at the corner of Hay and King's street in the city in late 1896 under the management of Jones and Lawrence, and continued through until early 1898, albeit with a break between Easter and November 1897. Jones and Lawrence also mounted a regional tour billed as YOEF in 1897. Elise Court and T. W. Butcher opened the third YOEF in Fremantle in 1897. Later leased by several prominent variety entrepreneurs this YOEF effectively closed down in 1899, although the building was occasionally used for concerts until it was closed down by the Central Board of Health in 1902. Arthur A. Snell also engaged a company from the eastern States to play at Perth's YOEF in early 1900. The Fayre concept was revived several times during the twentieth century, as part of local fundraising efforts. These included 1914 (Children's Hospital), 1927 (Children's Protection Society) and 1937 (Perth Hospital).

### Perth: 1895-1896

Situated in Howick Street, Burswood, Perth's first YOEF was opened on 14 December 1895 under the auspices of the Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre Co. The management comprised Ralph Potts (Business Manager), George R. Lawrence (Ground Manager) and J. Pearse (Secretary/Treasurer). Among the artists engaged were Billy Warner, Neva Carr-Glynn, George A. Jones, Pearl Akerman and Ettie Williams. A 20-piece orchestra was also engaged, with the conductor being Prof. Williams.

The Perth season, which closed on 29 February 1896 was followed by a farewell week at the Fremantle Town Hall (2-9 March).



*Daily News (Perth) 14 Dec. (1895), 5.*

### Perth: 1896-1898

**YE OLDE ENGLYSHE FAYRE**  
Director:— Messrs. Jones and Lawrence.  
**15TH WEEK 15TH.**  
The Most Fashionable and Popular Evening Resort.  
**CHANGE OF PROGRAMME AND NEW PICTURES TO-NIGHT.**  
The **LUMIERE CINEMATOGAPHE BOOM** And **YE OLDE ENGLYSHE FAYRE CO.** IS THE TALK OF THE CITY.  
No matter whom you may meet on St. George's-terrace — Sharebrokers, Bank Managers, Mine Managers, Contractors, and many Prominent people from the Far West, they will greet you with, " Good day, Have you seen the **LUMIERE CINEMATOGAPHE ?**  
If not, Go. They are without doubt **LIVING PICTURES LIVING PICTURES."**  
**NOW Messrs. JONES & LAWRENCE** make known to W.A. their future arrangements with Messrs. **WILLIAMSON & MUSGROVE.** The following Artistes will appear under their management:—The **Banvard Family**, 8 in number; **Leoni Clarke**, the Great Cat King; **The Dashing Soubrette**, **Miss Daisy Churd**; **The Lucifers**, **Lady and Gent. Team**, also others will follow from the Renowned Firm and play in conjunction with Messrs. **JONES and LAWRENCE.**

Opened on 14 November 1896 by George A. Jones and George R. Lawrence, Perth's second YOEF was situated at the corner of Hay and Kings Streets and could reportedly accommodate more than 2,000 patrons. Under their management the YOEF operated until Easter 1897, and was then re-opened on 6 November that same year, running through until 25 February. Charlie Pope and Thomas Delohery (then members of two YOEF headline acts) subleased the Theatre Royal from Jones and Lawrence, taking most of the company with them (as the Elite Vaudeville Co).

There were fully two thousand persons present at Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre on Saturday night, when the programme was again changed, and a number of interesting items were presented. This open air place of amusement has now fairly "caught on," and it is certain now that summer weather has set in that the coffers of the Fayre will be filled and the enterprise of the promoters will be fully rewarded (WA: 29 Nov. 1897, 3)

*West Australian 17 Feb. (1897), 1.*

Among the artists engaged during the Jones and Lawrence YOEF venture were Priscilla Verne, Madge Stagpoole, James Mooney, Ida Holbein, The Bovis Bros and the Flying Jordans (1896-97); and Pope and Sayles, Delohery Craydon and Holland, Charles Cogill, W.B. Warner, Ettie Williams, Millie Herberte and Alice St John (1897-98).

Between 15 and 24 January 1898, Jones and Lawrence (Perth YOEF) and Court and Butcher (Fremantle YOEF) swapped venues.

### Regional tour: 1897

Financed by Jones and Lawrence, the tour comprised artists from the 1896/97 Perth season – notably James Mooney, Ida Holbein, Ouda, Bob Bell, Madge Stagpoole and Emmie Smith. George A. Jones toured as manager/performer. While little is yet known of the itinerary, the company is known to have played the Theatre Royal, Coolgardie between ca. 2-17 March. Reviews in the *Coolgardie Miner* record that the first half of the show involved "the usual minstrelsy business" with a concluding farce, while the second half was devoted to the Lumiere cinematographe.

### Fremantle: 1897-1902

Referred to as the Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre grounds, and situated next to the Freemason's Hotel in South Terrace, this al fresco establishment was built by Court, Butcher and Co (Elsie Court and Thomas W. Butcher). Although scheduled to begin operations on 9 October 1897 this was delayed until the 13<sup>th</sup> when the grounds' new electric lights failed on opening night. The first season of entertainment, organised by E. H. Banvard (Banvard's Star Co), included vaudeville by acts such as Joe Cowen, Emmie Smith, Harry Fitzmaurice and the Banvard Family. The company also staged burlesques and farces such as *Fun on the Bristol*.

On 4 December 1897 Fitzmaurice returned to Perth from the East Coast to take control of the entertainment, bringing with him such stars as W. H. "Billy" Speed, Joe Cowan, Ruby Clifford, Fred Williamson and Dick Davis. Later artists included comedian John Tudor and prima donna Edith Moore. The company also presented an original Christmas pantomime called *The Golden West*. Advertising in the *West Australian* claims that this was the first pantomime to be produced in the state (18 Dec. 1897, 1).

The YOEFs management was taken over by Mrs Billy Speed on 28 March 1898. Three days later the Court/Butcher partnership was dissolved, with Butcher remaining briefly as the venue's manager (by the end of 1898 the sole owner was Alfred Court). On 30 April the YOEF lease was taken up by F.M. Clark and Charles Cogill (Silk Stockings Co), with the season ending ca. 24 May.

**YE OLDE ENGLISHE FAYRE.**  
 South Terrace, Fremantle.  
**OPENING NIGHT—TO-NIGHT.**  
**OPENING NIGHT—TO-NIGHT.**  
 →  
 New Engine and Electric Fittings.  
 New Engine and Electric Fittings.  
 Gas Laid On. Gas Laid On.  
**NO DISAPPOINTMENT POSSIBLE**  
 (Weather Permitting).  
**BANVARDS' STAR COMPANY.**  
 18 ARTISTES IS  
 All acknowledged Stars in their respective lines  
 of business.  
 No DUMMIES.  
**THE HEAD-FIRST DIVE.**  
**THE MARVELLOUS TRAPEZE ACT.**  
 Everything New to Fremantle.  
**AFTER THE RACES—**  
**GO TO THE FAYRE.**  
 Hear, See, and Judge for Yourselves.  
*West Australian* 13 Oct. (1897, 1).

**YE OLDE ENGLISHE FAYRE,**  
**FREMANTLE.**  
 Under the Direction of Mrs. W. H. SPEED.  
 The Evening Resort for Pleasurable Pastime  
**THIS (MONDAY) EVENING,**  
 Our New First Part,  
**THE GOLDFIELDS' CAMP,**  
 Introducing  
 New Songs, New Costumes, New Scenery.  
 20 STELLING ARTISTES, 20  
 Including New Arrivals per S.S. Kalgoorlie,  
 Miss AMY SABONY,  
 The Piquante Soubrette,  
 Miss LOTTIE DE LOERNE,  
 The Graceful and Dashing Serie Comia,  
 Also, Special Engagement of  
 Miss MILLIE HERBERTE,  
 Australia's Own Descriptive Vocalist,  
 And  
 Miss FLORA ST. CLAIR,  
 The Charming Song and Dance Artists  
 The above Company will be headed by  
 Mr W. H. SPEED,  
 The Great Guiding Star of Minstrelsy.  
**FRIDAY, APRIL 1,**  
**JOE COWAN'S BENEFIT.**  
**T. W. BUTCHER, Acting Manager.**

Used for occasional benefits and boxing (as the New Pavilion Theatre) during the winter, the YOEF was reopened on 19 November 1898 under the management of Martyn Hagan and W. H. Speed. The opening show was a production of the musical comedy *The Widow O'Brien's Trip to Chicago*. After Hagan left to join the *Cinderella* pantomime at the Theatre Royal, the venue came under the sole lesseeship of Speed. He departed under controversial circumstances in early January 1899, however, when Alfred Court had him charged with larceny (Speed was later acquitted).

Between 15 and 24 January 1898, Jones and Lawrence (Perth YOEF) and Court and Butcher (Fremantle YOEF) swapped venues.

Court appears to have managed the venue briefly, presenting an array of entertainments (including drama) and community events (fashion shoes etc.) before it closed down.

*West Australian* 28 Mar. (1898), 2.

**PRELIMINARY NOTICE.**  
**YE OLDE ENGLYSHE FAYRE,**  
 Next Freemasons' Hotel, Fremantle, the most  
 magnificently equipped and lighted place of  
 amusement in W.A. The entertainment under  
 the sole and personal supervision of  
**Mr. E. H. BANVARD.**  
 Largest and Most Versatile Variety Company  
 that has yet appeared in W.A.  
**OPENING NIGHT, OCTOBER 9, 1897.**

*West Australian 29 Sept (1897), 1.*

**YE OLDE ENGLYSHE FAYRE,**  
**FREMANTLE.**  
 (Now Covered In.)  
**TO-NIGHT. TO-NIGHT.**  
**GRAND FAREWELL**  
 To the  
**LESLIE BROS.**  
 Under the Patronage of the Mayor and  
 Councillors.  
**MAMMOTH PROGRAMME**  
 By the following artistes:—Miss Priscilla  
 Verne, Miss Rose Leslie, Miss Mabel Leslie,  
 Sisters Andrew, Mr. Geo. Harrison, Mr. Fred.  
 Davis, Mr. Harry Joyce, Mr. Harry Little,  
 Mr. Jack Devereaux, Mr. Will Watts, Mr.  
 Joe. Gerton, Mr. Dick Davis. The Leslie  
 Brothers (three). Also, Mr. J. B. McDonald,  
 of Fremantle, who has kindly promised to  
 assist and the Loco. Minstrels. Musical direc-  
 tor, Mr. Weichard.

*West Australian 13 June (1898), 1.*

**YE OLDE ENGLYSHE FAYRE.**

The open-air amusement resort at which,  
 under the above name, variety entertain-  
 ments were presented with such success  
 during last summer season nights is to be  
 opened again on November 9 next for a  
 season extending throughout the season  
 into the new year. The new management  
 contemplate the re-naming the resort  
 "The Continental Gardens" and of pre-  
 senting vaudeville entertainments of an  
 attractive nature. With this end in view,  
 a representative of the management is  
 about to visit the Eastern colonies to  
 engage variety talent, artistes who have  
 not yet appeared in Perth. In this morn-  
 ing's issue tenders are called for by adver-  
 tisement for the rights of advertising in  
 the Gardens, the same closing at 4 p.m. on  
 the 13th instant.

*Western Australian 8 Sept. (1898), 2*

Between 1900 and 1901 the site was used for occasional "rational concerts" by Jones and Lawrence and one-off events such as Daisy Harcourt's farewell benefit (12 Mar. 1902). On 21 March 1902 the Central Board of Health moved to prohibit the further use of the YOEF unless improvements were made. No further references to these entertainments have been located after that date.

**"RATIONAL" CONCERT AT FRE-  
 MANTLE.**

To-morrow (Sunday) night the Jones-  
 Lawrence Cremorne (Perth) Company  
 will present a "rational" concert pro-  
 gramme in Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre  
 Grounds, Fremantle.

*Western Australian 18 May (1901), 5.*

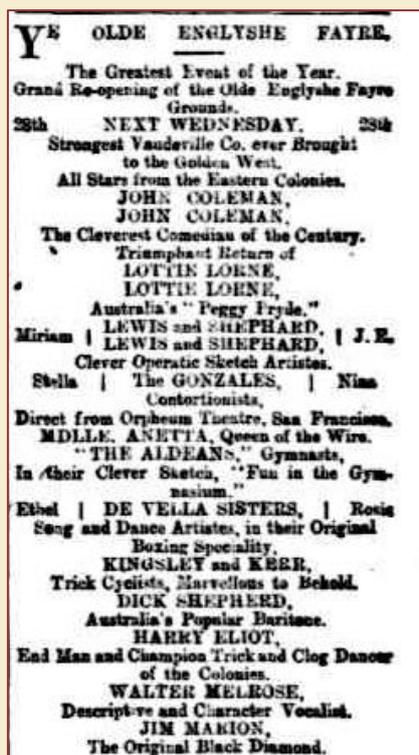
**Perth: 1900**

On 28 February Arthur A. Snell re-opened the "spacious" Perth site with a company engaged from the eastern states. The *Western Australian* reports that the performers, who arrived several days before the opening, were greeted on the Wednesday night premiere by "an audience whose numbers cannot have been less than a couple of thousand." The writer goes on to note:

[It is] an indication that the enterprise of the lessee and manager has been recognised and will receive due encouragement. The place has been thoroughly renovated and the arrangements, notwithstanding the disadvantages attendant upon an opening night, were admirable (1 Mar. 1900, 5).

The artists engaged during the course of the venture included John Coleman, Bert Gleeson, Shepherd and Lewis, Lottie Lorne, Little Nina, the Gonzales, Walter Melrose, Harry Elliot, and Jim Marion. The entertainment also featured a series of "living pictures." An event of some special importance also occurred on 6 March when John Coleman and Lottie Lorne announced to the audience that they had married earlier that afternoon (WA: 7 Mar. 1900, 5).

The company concluded its al fresco season on 20 March, transferring the following night to the Theatre Royal. The premiere was given under the patronage of the Mayor and councillors of Perth. The new season, which continued to be billed as Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre, saw the addition of several new artists, including Norah Martin, Ada Baker and W. B. Warner. It closed on 5 April.



*Western Australian* 27 Feb. (1900), 1.

### Perth: 1914

Organised by the secretary of the Children's Hospital, Mr Killick, the 1914 Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre was located on a reserve beside the Swan River. Opening on 13 February the event proved so popular that its proposed two week season was extended to 9 March. In an extensive preview of the event the *West Australian* records:

The grounds have been laid out in streets, and at night when large scheme of electric lighting flashes into view the brilliance of the scene will be even more marked than in the daytime. Stalls have been erected where purchases of the most tempting wares can be made at prices which, together with the object for which the carnival is held, should appeal with irresistible results, to the hearts and purse strings of the visitors. Side shows in abundance are provided.... [and] the committee provides merry-go-rounds, donkey and pony rides, shooting galleries and other attractions common to the village fairs in the days of old, such as a gypsy encampment, fortune-telling, and organ grinder with his inevitable monkey. Combing modernity with old-time pleasures, there is to be a highly diverting laughing gallery, a scouts' X-ray and Marconi station and a moving picture show (12 Feb. 1914.

Other feature entertainments included displays of Morris dancing and a dolls gallery.

### SEE ALSO

- [Jones and Lawrence](#)
- [Martyn Hagen](#)
- [W. H. 'Billy' Speed](#)
- [Cogill Brothers](#)
- [F. M. Clark](#)

### ADDITIONAL QUOTATIONS

- Two open-air theatres or gardens were flourishing [in Perth] by the end of 1896 - the Cremorne Gardens, between Murray-street and Hay-street, where is now the Y.M.C.A., with a small theatre attached to transfer to when the weather happened to be disagreeable and for winter use; and Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre, where is now His Majesty's Theatre. Some first rate artists and companies played at both places... Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre was not quite so well appointed or embellished [as the Cremorne] and its life was comparatively short. It was long defunct when His Majesty's Theatre rose on the sight (WA: 7 Apr. (1934), 5).

## HISTORICAL NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

1. During Jones and Lawrence's tenure (1896-98) the site was also referred to on occasion as Ye Olde English marketplace and Fayre.

**T E N D E R S**

Will be received at the  
**THEATRE ROYAL**  
 For the  
**CATERING at the OLDE ENGLYSHE  
 FAYRE,**  
 Comprising the Sale of Soft Drinks, Confectionery, Fruit, Tobacco, and Cigars.  
 For further particulars apply to—  
**MESSES. JONES & LAWRENCE.**

*Western Australian 13 Oct. (1897), 1.*

2. On 9 November 1898 Messrs Thomas and Rotton opened the Continental Gardens at the corner of Hay and King Streets. Advertising in the lead up to that date, and for sometime after, routinely refers to the site as "Late Ye Olde English Fayre."
3. The electric lighting system used for the opening of the 1897 Fremantle Ye Olde English Fayre was reportedly the "first installation in the town" (WA: 14 Oct. 1897, 6).

<p><b>YE OLDE ENGLISH FAYRE.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Location: — HOWICK STREET.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Business Manager ... RALPH POTTS.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GRAND OPENING</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TO-NIGHT! TO-NIGHT!! TO-NIGHT!!!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12TH.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GRAND SPECTACULAR AND ARTISTIC DISPLAY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ILLUMINATED BY MYRIADS OF LIGHTS</p> <p>The following STAR ARTISTS will appear this Evening:—</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MADAME DE LA ROCHÉ,</b> The Greatest Thaumaturgist of the Day.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Miss PEARL ANARMAN, The Living Serpent.</p> <p>Special engagement of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Miss DOT HARTZ, The Charming Soprano.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PROFESSOR SCOUT, The World's Light Weight Athlete.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">J. W. KILMER, the well-known Baritone.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE BANJO QUARTET,</b> Under the Leadership of Mr. Bayley.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">R. FELLOWS, Champion Highland Dancer of Victoria.</p> <p>Special engagement of</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE CLAYVELL FAMILY,</b> Champion Clog Dancers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Master JOHN CLAYVELL (13 years of age)</p> <p>The Champion Boy Clog Dancer of the World.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">And the Celebrated <b>FAMIE OF GOLD (HARLES SILVSTER)</b> And Family of Eight Performers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FULL BAND of 20 Performers under the baton of PRCP. WILLIAMS.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SPECIAL NOTE.—Free List entirely sus- pended (grass excepted).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">POPULAR PRICES.</p> <p>ADMISSION TO } ONE SHILLING. FAYRE } AND CONCERT. }</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Children Half Price.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Doors open at 7.15; Curtains rise at 8 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">J. PEARSE, Secretary and Treasurer.</p>
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**Opening bill for the first Ye Olde  
Englyshe Fayre**

*Western Australian 14 Dec. (1895), 1.*

## **FURTHER REFERENCE**

- "Adsum." "[Old Perth Theatres](#)." WA: 7 Apr. (1934), 5.
- "[Entertainments: Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre](#)." WA: 12 Mar. (1900), 3.
- "[Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre](#)." WA: 29 Nov. (1897), 3.
- "[Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre](#)." WA: 16 Dec. (1895), 3.
- "[Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre](#)." WA: 11 Oct. (1897), 2. [re: Fremantle]
- "[Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre](#)." WA: 14 Oct. (1897), 6.
- "[Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre](#)." WA: 1 Mar. (1900), 5.
- "[Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre](#)." *Western Australia Cinemaweb*. Australian Museum of Motion Picture and Television Inc. Leederville, W.A. [sighted 15/10/2014]
- "[Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre: Opening Ceremony Today](#)." WA: 13 Feb. (1914), 7.
- "[Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre: The Children's Hospital Fund](#)." WA: 12 Feb. (1914), 4.

WA: 6 Nov. (1897), 1. [Advert](#).

### **See also:**

**WA:** 2 Dec. (1897), 1 • 21 Dec. (1897), 1 • 6 Feb. (1900), 4 • 24 Mar. (1902), 4 [re: closure of Fremantle YOEF by Central Board of Health]