aka G.H. Birch

(1862-1917) English-born theatrical manager/entrepreneur, hotelier. [Born in Hull, Yorkshire]

George Henry Birch came to Australia in the mid-1880s as a customs officer and later worked as a brewery inspector before turning to the hotel industry. As lessee of Rockhampton's Union Hotel and Theatre Royal from 1892 he played a major role in promoting live entertainment. He also pioneered moving pictures in Rockhampton (with the British Bioscope Company in 1908) and toured film and vaudeville shows out west. In 1909 Birch and Edward J. Carroll formed the partnership that would eventually become Queensland's most successful entertainment circuit - Birch and Carroll (later Birch, Carroll and Coyle). The following year he purchased the Goodson's Concert Grounds in Denham Street and redeveloped it as Earl's Court. Films were first shown there in September 1910, but it continued to operate as both a cinema and live performance venue throughout its lifetime. Before his death on 18 August 1917, Birch upgraded and enclosed Earl's Court. He also purchased several other local venues. The company trading as Birch and Carroll (1911-1923), also added the Air-dome Theatres at North Rockhampton and Mount Morgan to their operations.

- Among the hotels Birch leased and/or managed were of the Grand Hotel, Emu Park (1887-92), Comley's Hotel, Emu Park (1892), Union Hotel, Rockhampton (1892-) and Criterion Hotel, Rockhampton (1903-).
- After Birch's death his business activities continued to be run by his widow, Mary. Prior to this she had a played a major role in her husband's various business ventures, including co-managing their hotels. The inclusion of the Birch name in the formation of Birch, Carroll and Coyle Ltd in 1923 was therefore as much an acknowledgement of her involvement in the continued success of the Birch-Carroll firm as her husband's.

See also

Birch and Carroll • British Bioscope Company

Further Reference:

1887

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATIONS.

(From This Day’s Government Gazette.)

BREWERY INSPECTORS.—The following have been appointed inspectors of breweries:—J. Archibald, H. E. Ashley, A. Bell, G. H. Bennett, G. H. Birch, W. Boudet, W. Bradford, J. Brown, cont...


1888


Capricornian (Rockhampton, Qld) 5 May 1888, 14.

THE GRAND HOTEL,

EMU PARK,

Two minutes’ walk from the Railway Station, Post and Telegraph Offices, and a few yards from the Beach.

G. H. BIRCH, PROPRIETOR.

This Magnificent Hotel is just completed. The rooms are of the most lofty proportions. It contains Spacious Sitting-rooms and Bed-rooms, and, as a Family Hotel, stands unrivalled for comfort, attention and convenience. The Hotel is so situated that it commands the grandest outlook from all points, and to Visitors, and the Public generally, it offers Every Facility for Comfort and Convenience. The Bath-rooms and Offices are most commodious, and the whole structure is fitted up with the latest improvements. The Proprietor is desirous of stating that the Cuisine is placed under especially Competent Supervision, and that

WINES, SPIRITS, ALES, &c.

Of the Best Quality only, are dispensed,

Letters or Telegrams addressed to the Proprietor promptly attended to.

Capricornian (Rockhampton, Qld) 10 Nov. 1888, 20.
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION.

A re-adjourned meeting of the Committee of the above Union was held last evening in the club-room of the Belmore Arms Hotel. There were present:—Messrs. T. Kelly (in the chair), H. B. Gavin, T. McWilliam, J. Thomas, V. H. Oelrichs, and C. Mathias (Secretary).

MINUTES.
The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

CORRESPONDENCE.
Mr. G. H. Birch, landlord of the Grand Hotel, Emu Park, wrote offering a challenge cup of the value of five guineas, to be played for by clubs connected with the Union, at Emu Park, next season, on dates to be arranged by the Union. The prize is to be known as "The Grand Hotel Trophy, Emu Park."—The Secretary said he had been speaking to Mr. Birch, and that gentleman said he was not particular as to what name was given to the trophy. The Chairman said he was glad to hear that, because he thought at first that it was a public-house advertisement, and that Mr. Birch was trying to get at the members. That was the sort of thing he did not believe in, and that he would not countenance in any way. There was too much of the public-house business altogether, and three-fourths of the people who gave trophies did so for the sake of advertising—and nothing more.—On the motion of Mr. Gavin, it was decided to accept the trophy on the same terms as that offered by Messrs. J. C. Browne and Co.

It will be interesting to visitors to Emu Park to know that Messrs. F. Comley and G. H. Birch have taken out fishing and boating licences. Mr. Comley is also taking up Pelican Island as an oyster ground.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS.

BIRTH.

A berth—On the 15th instant, at Emu Park, the wife of G. H. Birch of a daughter.
The Grand Hotel occupies a fine position at the corner of Granville and Pattison Streets, facing the sea, which is within fifty or sixty yards. The house was erected at the end of last year, and no pains or expense were spared in making it strong, substantial, and attractive. The house is owned by Mr. M. H. Harris, and is leased to Mr. G. H. Birch. The longest frontage of the building is towards Granville-street, facing the sea. In the main building there are twenty-two bedrooms, all of which are very tastefully furnished, and contain a chest of drawers in addition to the usual furniture. The coffee-room, on the ground floor, is 24 feet by 21 feet, and is arranged with eight tables, each capable of seating six persons. The object of this arrangement is to allow small parties and families to have tables to themselves, thus securing a semi-privacy not otherwise to be obtained. A splendid piano is here for the use of the public. The room is lofty and well-ventilated, and by the removal of folding doors to another room, nearly double the seating capacity is obtained, bringing the number up to nearly a hundred. Except in times of a rush this room, which faces Pattison-street, is used as a reading and smoking room. Adjoining is another large room intended for a billiard room, but at present used for anything specially required in times of need. On the second floor is a public drawing-room, 20 feet by 18 feet, capably furnished, including a good piano. A magnificent view can be obtained from the balconies, which offer a splendid promenade right round the entire building. Lounges and easy chairs are plentiful, and a more cool, pleasant prospect could scarcely be wished for on a moonlight night. Chinese blinds are hung all round the balconies. Underneath the floors are zinclined, and covered above. The landing from the main stairway is broad, and delightfully cool on a hot day. A tower some sixty feet in height commands a view of the whole township, the islands, and the Bay. A feature of the hotel is the splendid bar it contains. This is at the extreme corner of the two streets. It is cool, pretty, and nicely arranged, and is superior to anything of the kind at Einu Park. Though the Grand is not so large as some of the other hotels, the proprietor is able to find beds for fifty persons (including the detached cottage), and at times of necessity a similar number can find accommodation on the balconies in stretchers. The kitchen is fitted with all requisites, and adjoining are pantry, store-room, and other conveniences. At the rear is a four-stalled stable, coachhouse, and other buildings. Further along Granville-street, Mr. Birch has a four-roomed cottage, which if needed can be appointed for a private family. A buggy visits every train. Milk, butter, fish, oysters, &c., are in good supply. Mr. Birch attends to the outside business, and Mrs. Birch, who has won golden opinions for her kindness and attention, looks after the household affairs. Only a coffee-room table is kept, at similar prices to other houses.

SMALL DEBTS COURT.

Thursday, December 19.
Before the Police Magistrate and Mr. F. J. Byrley, J.P.

UNDEFENDED CAUSES.

In the case of Palmer v. Birch, Mr. Lyons, who appeared for the defendant, said that when his client bought the goods he understood he would not have to pay until after Christmas, and it would be very awkward for him to meet the payment now. He would be willing to give half the money within three weeks, and the balance by the end of January, or so much a week. The last few months had been very dull; he had had scarcely anyone in his house, and had taken barely enough to pay the wages of the servants.—Mr. Pattison, who represented the plaintiff, said his friend’s instructions were not correct. The goods were supplied in May, and he had offered to pay £14 on the 28th instant.—Mr. Lyons said he was aware of that. Mr. Birch was still willing to pay the £14 on the 28th instant, and the balance at the end of January, or say £3 a week.—Mr. Pattison remarked that there was a bill-of-sale over Mr. Birch’s furniture—he entered the house on the last occasion under a bill-of-sale—and no one could go in and recover; and if he took it into his head to walk out with the money he received at Christmas time—and he had heard that there was a probability of his leaving after the holidays—Mr. Palmer would lose everything. He had been down at the Park frequently, and knew that the defendant had had a good many people in his house during the last few months.—The Bench entered a verdict for the amount claimed with the costs mentioned above—£14 to be paid on the 28th instant, and the balance on the 14th of January.
1890 - 1899

1890

Grand Hotel, EMU PARK.
The Premier Watering Place of Central Queensland.

G. H. BIRCH, Proprietor.

VISITORS to Emu Park will find superior accommodation at this first-class Family Hotel, facing the sea, and within fifty yards of the beach, and close to the railway station.

Patronised by the elite of Rockhampton and Central District.

Buggy meets every train.

Letters or telegrams addressed to the proprietor promptly attended to.

Western Champion (Blackall/Barcaldine, Qld) 28 Jan. 1890, 1.

1892

In the outward correspondence were letters to Mr. G. H. Birch, of the Emu Park Hotel, Emu Park, requesting the removal of a slaughter yard (and the refuse about it) near his hotel, and threatening legal proceedings against him under the Health Act in the event of his neglect to comply with the demand; to Mr. J. Collinson, of Emu Park, ordering him to remove a tent, &c., from the foreshore at Emu Park under pain of prosecution; and to Inspector Murray, of the Rockhampton police, asking him to render the Board assistance in the matter of enforcing the provisions of the Health Act at Emu Park.—The action of the Chairman in this matter was confirmed.

Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld) 3 Feb. 1892, 6.

SMALL DEBTS COURT.

Thursday, 5th May, 1892.

Before the Police Magistrate and Lieut.-Colonel Armitage, J.P.

UNDEFEATED CASES.

In the following undefended cases verdicts were given for the plaintiffs for the amounts claimed, with costs:—R. Sharples v. J. Jones, goods, £10 10s. 3d., 5s. costs of Court; M. A. Power v. J. G. Loughran, goods, £3 12s. 7d., 5s. costs of Court; G. H. Birch v. W. John, accommodation, £13 9s., 5s. costs of Court, £1 1s. witness's expenses, and £1 1s. professional costs.

Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld) 6 May 1892, 6.

1892

Comley's Hotel, EMU PARK.

G. H. BIRCH (late Grand Hotel, Emu Park) begs to inform his old Friends and Customers that he has now taken the above old-established first-class Hotel, and trusts to receive the support of the Western people which this Hotel has always been favored with.

Letters or telegrams promptly attended to,

G. H. BIRCH,
Proprietor.

Western Champion and General Advertiser for the Central-Western Districts (Barcaldine, Qld) 24 May 1892, 12.
in connection with the late meeting. A letter was received from Mr. G. H. Birch, of the Union Hotel, inclosing a cheque for £12, part of the proceeds of the Calcutta sweeps held at his hotel. The Secretary was instructed to acknowledge the amount with thanks. The Secretary, Mr. M. H. Harris, cont...

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Pantomime Company v. Rockhampton Muffins.
A match will be played on the Cricket Ground this afternoon between a team from Messrs. York and Jones's Empire Pantomime Company, and Eleven Rockhampton Muffins, commencing at two o'clock sharp. Gentlemen will be charged sixpence at the gate, the takings to be for the benefit of the Rockhampton Hospital. Ladies will be admitted free of charge. The teams are:—Pantomime Eleven: F. York, G. Jones, J. Tudor, J. Friedman, Williams, G. Franks, Norton, H. Gilbert, Wyatt, Jasper, Brewster. Muffins: G. H. Birch, H. Bachert, W. G. Corbett, O. Sandel, J. A. Collier, H. Goode, W. Pureell, T. H. Harris, Jas. Ferguson, E. Bole, R. J. Wilkins.

The Queensland Championship Meeting.

A Visit to the Sunny North.

And How It Was Brought About—Sportsmen Meet Sportsmen—And All Ends Happily.

(By R. Coombes.)

I cannot but help looking back at the late Championship Sports Meeting in Rockhampton with feelings of great delight and satisfaction, not on account of the victory of the New Wales representatives, not on account of the pleasure derived from a singularly pleasant holiday trip, but by reason of the fact that my efforts as a peacemaker in endeavoring to heal the breach between the amateur athletes of South and Central Queensland have happily been crowned with success. Ever cont...

Referee (Sydney) 24 July 1895.
BILIARDS!  BILIARDS!

A MATCH will be played at BIRCH'S UNION HOTEL, on THURSDAY NIGHT, between

HARRY EVANS,
Champion of Australia, and a Local Amateur (Mr. W. S. ROSS). The game will be 1000 up (the Champion conceding 800 points), spot stroke barred.

PLAY TO COMMENCE, EIGHT SHARP.

ADMISSION 2s. 6d.

At the conclusion of the game Mr. EVANS will give an Exhibition of FANCY SHOTS.

Permission has been granted to Mr. G. H. Birch, Union Hotel, to have a booth on the Union Ground for the cycling sports this afternoon and on Monday.
1900

McDOO'S GEORGIA MINSTRELS.

The McAdoo Georgia Minstrels and Cake-Walkers concluded a very successful season of seven nights at the Theatre Royal last evening. During each performance Mr. H. Wise sang Kipling's famous song, "The Absent-Minded Beggar," the spectator being invited to contribute to the war fund by throwing what money they chose on to the stage. During the stay of the company the handsome sum of £17 16s. 9d. was contributed, which Mr. McAdoo handed over to Mr. G. H. Birch, as the company left last night for the north. The troupe will return here in about a month's time, and will stage "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld) 15 Feb. 1900, 4.

1901

SMALL DEBTS COURT.

Thursday, 14th February.
Before the Acting Police Magistrate (Mr. O. Armstrong).

Undecided Cases.

Verdicts for the amount claimed with costs were entered for the plaintiffs in the following undecided cases: — R. A. Tracey v. R. Gittins, refreshments supplied, £1 10s. 6d., and 8s. 6d. mileage; T. Kelly v. L. Hart, goods sold, 16s. 6d.; M. Allen and Co. v. J. Flannigan, goods sold, £3 0s. 4d.; A. Reid and Sons v. Mrs. Peterson, goods sold, 15s. 11d.; A. Reid and Sons v. Mrs. Handley, goods sold, 5s. 9d.

G. H. Birch sued M. D. Smyth for £20 10s. 4d., the amount of a dishonoured cheque. Mr. J. Pattison (Messrs. Pattison and Tyler) appeared for the plaintiff, for whom a verdict was given with £1 1s. professional expenses.

Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld) 15 Feb. 1901, 3.

1902

The Capricornian (Rockhampton, Qld. : 1875 - 1929) Saturday 17 May 1902 Page 38

There were wooden buildings — theatre and hotel combined — where Birch's and the Theatre Royal now stand, several blank allotments, then the old Bull and Mouth —

"In the Early Days"
THE ABOGINIES RESERVE.

The deputation to protest against the selection of South Keppel Island as a reserve for aborigines that waited upon Mr. Foxton at the Criterion Hotel in the evening consisted of Messrs. K. M. Grant, W. Kidston, A. C. Cooper, M.M., A., G. S. Curtis, G. H. Birch, B. Long, T. S. P. Wilson, H. Moran, Eglinton, R. G. McDowell, R. Thomas, W. S. Buzaocott, and G. D. McKAY.

cont...


THEATRE ROYAL.

Lessee ................ Mr. G. H. BIRCH
Sub lessee Messrs. LAWSON AND BRANDON.
Treasurer ........... Mr. Percy LAWSON
GRAND ENGLISH COMEDY SEASON.

COMMENCING FRIDAY, JULY 17th.
First Appearance in Rockhampton of
The Lawson-Brandon Company

MISS MINNIE BRANDON,
Supported by a Company of Comedians from the Principal Southern Theatres,
presenting for the First Time, the Great London Success.

OUR FLAT.
By Special Arrangements with
MR. J. C. WILLIAMSON.
The Funniest Farcical Comedy ever seen,
ROARS! SCREAMS! NIGHTLY!

A PERFEKT CYCLONE OF LAUGHTER.

The whole forming a most Complete and Artistic Presentation.
PRICES, 3s., 2s., and 1s.
Box Office, MUNRO AND CO.
SORRELL.
Business Manager.

NEW MANAGEMENT.

THE CRITERION HOTEL, ROCKHAMPTON.
(Under Vice-Regal Patronage.)

Acknowledged to be the best-appointed and most comfortable hotel in Queensland.

The BILLIARD ROOM has just been fitted with a new Alcock's Exhibition Table, and is in charge of an efficient and civil marker.

GEO. H. BIRCH, PROPRIETOR.

UNION HOTEL AND THEATRE ROYAL,
GEO. H. BIRCH, MANAGER.

Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld) 1 Jan. 1904, 1.
THE CRITERION HOTEL.

To the artistic eye the photographic presentation of the exterior of this handsome structure is conclusive evidence of refinement, and this would include the “within” as well as the “without” of this representation. Its happily chosen and easily accessible position at the southern end of the Fitzroy Bridge; its towering height, which commands a splendid panorama of the winding Fitzroy River and surrounding country; and the past, as well as the living, associations of the Criterion Hotel, hoary in the annals of the Central District of Queensland—those and other well-known characteristics have combined to make it the Mecca of travellers, as well as the pride of Rockhampton. But it is ancient only in name and associations, for the present is a new, quite up-to-date structure of masonry substituting the old rendezvous, buried in the ashes of the past, yet inheritors of its historic traditions. So much for the outside. As for the inside let it be stated that it nobly conforms to the external appearance. A mere glance at the ground floor reveals an undefinable something suggestive of refinement combined with ease—an adixture of the palatial with the homely, the luxurious with the simple, the whole qualified with cleanliness and unpassed ventilation. In the latter respect the Criterion is without a peer amongst kindred establishments, and this is one of the reasons why families and travellers in search of health invariably make for the Criterion on arrival at Rockhampton. It goes without the saying that the dietary comforts of guests is as well catered for here as are their other comforts. There never was a guest at the Criterion who gave it credit for indigestion. The cuisine has ever been known to satisfy the palate of the most exacting gourmet. He who has concluded a meal in the Criterion may well exclaim, with Sydney Smith—“Faté cannot harm me, I have dined to-day!” Again does it go without saying that the management of so huge a concern as the Criterion is no small affair, needing much tact, resourcefulness, and business acumen. The combination in one person of these characteristics is rare, and consequently when found is highly valued. This explains the popularity of Mr. G. H. Birch, who, with his charming wife, controls the destinies of this establishment. In a former position Mr. Birch travelled much through the Central district, and he is a mine of information on that subject, and able to relieve an inquirer of a great deal of trouble and unnecessary expense. In the course of his management of the Criterion, Mr. Birch has entertained most of the old world celebrities who have visited Rockhampton, and public men and others who are victims of fame know the Criterion as they do their alphabet. And this category includes Australian public men, lecturers, and others who have stayed at the Criterion. Even so unparagoned a critic as the late Max O’Reilly had a capital word for the Criterion, which he left on record. A man, then, with the experience Mr. Birch has gathered in an interesting career, cannot fail to have made a name for himself, and hence it comes about that the Criterion and its proprietor are so familiar to the travelling public on the Australian coast that, as Milton once it: “Not to know them argues one’s self unknown; the lowest of your throng.”
The Rockhampton Agricultural Society's Sports
And the Naval and Military Tournament Combined,
To be held in Show Grounds,
On Saturday next, 20th June,
Starting at 1 p.m.
Grand Military Events.
Jump for Ponies.
Hunters' Plate and High Jumping Contest.
Trotting Race in Harness, and Buckjumping Competition.
Entries, which were to be received at post at either Sports, still open until time of starting.
Grand Procession to Grounds.
Full Brass Band in Attendance.
Entrance, 1s.; Grand Stand, 1s.; Members, Free.
Further particulars later.
Saturday Night.
Grand Concert and Musical Treat, Theatre Royal (through the kindness of the Lessee, Mr. G. H. Birch), at 8 p.m.
Prices: 3s., 2s., and 1s.
Box Plan at Munro and Co.'s, East-street.

A. C. Lyons,
Secretary.

Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld) 27 June 1907, 1.
Notwithstanding a number of counter attractions, the British Biograph Company, which is under the management of Mr. G. H. Birch, lessee of the Theatre Royal, was accorded most gratifying patronage on Saturday night on the occasion of its opening entertainment, and the hearty manner in which the pictures were received showed that this form of amusement has still great attractions for the people of Rockhampton. Nevertheless cinematography, like human nature, rebels somewhat under the trying weather conditions now being experienced. The spoils presented are mentioned as being direct from the Lyceum Theatre, Sydney, but the imprimatur of the famous Parisian house of Pathé Frères on many of the pictures shown afforded sufficient indication of their characteristics to amuse and interest. It is unnecessary to enter into a detailed description of the films presented; living pictures vividly depict their own story. The repertoire included both dramatic, pathetic, and comic films, the comic if anything, predominating. The opening spool, designated “Under a crocodile skin,” was ludicrous, and each peregrination caused roars of laughter until the “man behind,” or, strictly speaking, “under,” emerges as a plunderer of the pieces of family plate. “Wanted a maid,” concluding with the acquisition of “a grin,” was certainly worth seeing. Others, which included “A fire” and “Stickfast,” prove exquisitely funny. Perhaps one of the best pictures shown was that entitled “Cupid’s pranks.” This had the merit, too, of being new to a Rockhampton audience. Another exceptionally beautiful piece of coloured pantomime work was that shown under the title of “The Blue Bird,” who turns out to be the real Prince Charmant effecting the tragic release of Florine and the subsequent apotheosis. Another film that certainly merits special remark was “The pioneers crossing the plains in 1849,” to which is attached a thrilling love story, the scene depicting a family setting out in the states for a new country. Its members are attacked and most of them brutally murdered by a band of ferocious Indians. The hero and heroine emerges at a later stage triumphantly, and “all ends well.” “The old shepherd,” with his splendid flock of sheep grazing on the mountains, is another beautiful film. Many other views were also shown, and all certainly well worth seeing. The pictures are large in size and were shown without flicker. Another exhibition will be given to-night.
OLD PROGRAMMES

EARL’S COURT OF 1909

Goodson’s Concert Grounds

THEATRICAL RECORDS—No. 122

(By “ATROG.”)

The year 1909 is a memorable year in Rockhampton’s theatrical history. It was chiefly distinguished by the visit of Madame Malher, but it also saw the establishment of motion picture entertainment, today’s most popular pleasure, as a domestic enterprise. Earl’s Court, as we now know it, was opened at Goodson’s Promenade Concert Grounds, on Saturday night, February 4, 1909.

From the beginning of 1909 the Theatre Royal was converted into almost a regular picture theatre, the British Bioscope Company being established there, and taking the hall on every free night, offering weekly changes of programme. This naturally excited local enterprise, and early February brought an announcement that Messrs H. and B. Goodson had secured a lease for two years of a vacant block of ground at Denham and Alma Streets, and proposed to provide the people of Rockhampton with nightly entertainments.

cont...

Central Queensland Herald (Rockhampton, Qld) 23 Jan. 1936, 14.
LAST TWO NIGHTS.
THEATRE ROYAL.
Direction ............... Mr. G. H. BIRCH
BRITISH BIOSCOPE CO.
AND ORCHESTRA.
WE LEAD, OTHERS FOLLOW.
WE PLACE THE WORLD BEFORE YOU.

The Management beg to announce that they have secured, at great expense, Gaumont’s Greatest Invention.

THE CHRONOMEGAPHONE.
Introducing Britain’s Great Comic Scot.
HARRY LAUDER.
In his Popular Songs.
“I LOVE A LASSIE,”
“FAR TOO EARLY IN THE MORNING.”
HARRY LAUDER commands a salary of £1000 per week, being the highest paid comic artist in the world.

Also,
ALBERT WHEELAN.
“Have a Drop of Gin, Old Dear,”
And
Miss STEVENSON and Mr. MCDONAGH.
“Oh, That We Two Were Maving.”

AN ENTIRELY NEW PROGRAMME,
Including Messrs. Pathe Freres and Cie Magnificent Art Creation, essayed by M. Charley and Co., Theatre Antoine, Paris,
AN ABSOLUTE TRIUMPH IN GENIUS,
being the greatest historical lesson ever shown, embracing incidents in the life of
NAPOLEON.
November, 1793, up to his death, 1821.
The Gloriously Delightful Scenic Picture
NIAGARA IN WINTER.

THE CANALS OF SCENIC SWEDEN.
Showing some Lovely Panoramic Views of the Queen City of the North.

WILBUR WRIGHT’S AEROPLANE.
The Great Wonder of the Century.
Manoeuvring in mid-air and in full flight after having been started by
His Majesty the King of Italy,
Who is seen taking photographs of the machine and setting the propellers in motion.

NEW SUBJECTS EVERY WEEK.
FULL ORCHESTRA AND EFFECTS.

PRICES.—Sixpence, 1s., and 2s. (reserved 2s. 6d.)
I. S. PHILLIPS, Manager.

PREFOCIOUS PICTURES.

In the following month—August—occurred an unrivalled instance of an industry running before it could walk. On Saturday, August 7, 1909, the first talking picture was shown by the British Bioscope Company at the Theatre Royal—an event which was scarcely less sensational than M. Bleriot’s first flight across the English Channel a fortnight before, when he averaged the hurtling speed of 40 miles an hour.

This first Theatre Royal talkie was really a singing picture, for the artists were Harry Lauder, singing “Tobermory” and “The Safest of the Family,” William Murray, singing “Waltz Me Round Again, Wilma,” and Will Evans, singing “The Invasion of 1910.”

The Chronomegaphone—an instrument compounded of the cyclophone (or gramophone sound-reproducing apparatus) and the kinematograph—was the instrument, and, considering its precocious arrival, it gave a remarkable impression of reality. The sound came from a pair of trumpets operated on the gramophone system, and the method of working was described as follows:

“The entire machine is controlled from the back of the stage, but an operator is also stationed at the kinematograph. The two men can communicate with each other by means of telephones. When the operator at the back of the screen receives the signal that his colleague is ready, he switches on the current, which sets the motors of both sections of the apparatus in motion. At a certain point the record gives him warning that the song is about to commence and he presses a button. This works a clutch on the kinematograph and automatically starts the spool unwinding.

“The first few glimpses show the man at the switchboard whether he has pressed the button at just the right moment. If there has been any mistake he has at his command a switch which enables him to retard or accelerate the action of the kinematograph so that the picture and the song are in perfect union. Once this has been attained there can be no deviation from it.”

This allowed for a little carefree juggling that must have delighted the operator. There may have been an intriguing doubt which would finish first, the film or the record, but there is no doubt whatsoever that these first talkies were thoroughly enjoyed. Mr. G. H. Birch was their Rockhampton sponsor.
Licensing Authority.

The annual sitting of the Rockhampton Licensing Authority was held yesterday. There were present:—Messrs. H. L. Archdall (Chairman), J. W. O'Shaunessy, and E. E. Graham. The Licensing Inspector (Senior-sergeant J. Harlan) was also in attendance.

Renewal of Hotel Licenses.
The following applications for the renewal of hotel licenses were granted:—
Mary Jane Barry, Royal Oak Hotel, Yaamba-road.
Rose Isabella Bartholomew, Duaringa Hotel, Duaringa.
David John Bowes, Alton Downs Hotel, Alton Downs.
George Henry Birch, Criterion Hotel, corner of Fitzroy and Quay streets, Rockhampton.

Theatre Royal.

Hangoo.

In the Theatre Royal last night Mr. F. Carroll, in conjunction with Mr. G. H. Birch, presented one of the best programmes as has been seen in Rockhampton for a long time past. The principal attraction was the appearance of Hangoo, the handcuff king. When it is said that the programme would have stood on its merits without his inclusion, the nature of the performance, apart from the sensational turn, may be readily grasped.

Hangoo's display has been so frequently described that it is hardly necessary to refer to it now except to convey the assurance that what was promised was done.

The delightful attraction programme presented at the Theatre Royal, under the management of Mr. Edward Carroll, in conjunction with Mr. G. H. Birch, drew another very fine audience last night. In fact, the building was crowded in every part. Many of the items were identical with those given at the opening performance; but they were received with equal appreciation to that shown on Monday night, the artists in some cases being recalled again and again.
ENTertainments.

The British Bioscope, the locally-owned provider of the most continuous entertainment Rockhampton has had the opportunity of patronising, is no longer to have the immunity from opposition it has enjoyed since Ben Goodson's promenade concert grounds were closed down. A second proprietary, to be known as the Globe Pictures, will inaugurate its existence at Mount Morgan on Thursday next, and appear in Rockhampton on Saturday.

As intimated last week, Rockhampton and Mt. Morgan are in future to be catered for by two bioscope companies, one having its headquarters in each of their respective towns. In addition Mr. Birch, of the British Bioscope Company, contemplates re-opening the concert grounds formerly controlled by the Goodson brothers.

EARL'S COURT.

Mr. G. H. Birch, who recently acquired the enclosure at the corner of Denham and Alma streets known as Goodson's Promenade Concert Grounds, has made considerable improvements to the property and will to-morrow night open it under the title of Earl's Court. A full programme of bioscope films and brass band music will be given.

1911
PERSONAL NEWS.

Very sincere regret was expressed in town on Saturday when news was received from Sydney that Mr. G. H. Birch had passed away to his long rest. Under medical advice, Mr. Birch, accompanied by his wife, some months ago went to Sydney, hoping to recover from an illness from which he suffered. For some time there was no change for the better, but latterly information was received that he was improving and was looking forward to returning to Rockhampton. The deceased, who was born in Hull, England, in 1842, migrated to Queensland over thirty years ago. He came to Rockhampton as an officer of the Customs Department, but subsequently retired from the service and married Miss Canning, soon after becoming proprietor of the Grand Hotel, Emu Park. Returning to town a few years later, he became the landlord of the Union Hotel and the Theatre Royal, which he kept for a long period until the license of the hotel was transferred to his sister-in-law, Miss C. Canning. Meanwhile Mr. Birch had acquired the Criterion Hotel, with which his name has been favourably identified for so many years. Mr. Birch was one of the first to recognise the possibilities of the moving picture entertainment, and for some years he gave exhibitions in the Theatre Royal. Subsequently he acquired from Mr. B. Goodson his interest in Earl's Court. Later Mr. Birch entered into partnership with Mr. E. J. Carroll, of Sydney, and Earl's Court was enlarged and improved. At a later date, in conjunction with Mr. Carroll, he acquired the Olympia Air-dome Theatre, combining vaudeville with the moving picture entertainments previously given there. With Mr. Carroll he was interested in moving picture and vaudeville theatres in most of the largest towns.

Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld) 20 Aug. 1917, 10.

AMUSEMENTS.

In consequence of the death of Mr. G. H. Birch the entertainments arranged to be given at the Olympia Air-dome Theatre and Earl's Court on Saturday night were cancelled. Both theatres, however, will be open to-night and at each a new programme of which details are printed in our advertising columns, will be presented. There was a packed house at the Arcadia Open-air Picture Theatre, North Rockhampton, on Saturday night. Owing to the fact that the cont...

Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld) 20 Aug. 1917, 10.

PERSONAL

Advice has been received that Mr. G. H. Birch, of the well-known theatrical firm of Birch, Carroll and T. V. Coyle, died at Sydney on Friday night.

Northern Miner (Charters Towers, Qld) 21 Aug. 1917, 2.

Mr. T. V. Coyle, Townsville, has been advised that Mr. G. H. Birch, of the well-known theatrical firm of Birch, Carroll and Coyle, passed away in Sydney on Friday night. Mr. Birch was well-known and highly respected.

Many Westerners will regret to hear that Mr. George H. Birch, proprietor of the Criterion Hotel, Rockhampton, has passed away after a painful illness. Mr. Birch was born in Hull, England, 1862, and came to Queensland over 30 years ago. He was first of all a Customs officer at Rockhampton, but relinquishing that took the Grand Hotel at Emu Park; afterwards the Union Hotel and Theatre at Rockhampton, and later again the Criterion Hotel. Later on Mr. Birch much identified himself with the Picture Show business, and took a lively interest in everything appertaining to the town and district. He left a wife and two daughters, for whom much sympathy is felt.

IN THE SUPREME COURT, OF QUEENSLAND, ROCKHAMPTON.

In the Will of GEORGE HENRY BIRCH, late of Rockhampton, in the State of Queensland, Licensed Victualler, deceased.

NOTICE is hereby given that after the expiration of fourteen days from the date of the publication hereof an application will be made to this Honourable Court that probate of the Will of the abovesaid GEORGE HENRY BIRCH, deceased, may be granted to Mary Ann Agnes Birch, of Rockhampton, Widow, Queensland Trustees Limited, and FREDERICK WILLIAM HICKLIN, of Toowoomba, Mercantile Manager, the Executors named in the said Will.

Any person interested in any proceeds claimed under the said Will is requested to give immediate notice to the Executors, the Solicitor for the said MARY ANN AGNES BIRCH, Queensland Trustees Limited, and FREDERICK WILLIAM HICKLIN, at the Rockhampton Office of Queensland Trustees Limited.

Dated this seventh day of September, 1917.

J. C. TAYLOR,
Solicitor for the said MARY ANN AGNES BIRCH, Queensland Trustees Limited, and FREDERICK WILLIAM HICKLIN.

OFF TO THE DIGGINGS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—The 18th of October, 1867, was a red letter day in the history of Queensland, for on that date, James Nash, the prospector, struck gold in a gully amongst the hills on the upper reaches of the Mary River. A period of acute depression existed, industry was at a standstill, and when everything appeared to be on the verge of collapse the discovery of such a rich alluvial field saved the colony from something little short of bankruptcy. Large numbers of unemployed had made their way to Brisbane and other towns demanding relief from the Government. Bread riots were not unheard of. The scene was changed in an incredibly short space of time. The unemployed rushed for the new diggings, and the merchants—big and little—soon found business booming.

Large quantities of goods of all descriptions were despatched to the field, where from bark huts and tents the commodities were converted into cash, and “repeat orders” sent to Brisbane. The few buildings in course of erection in the city were left in an unfinished state, as the workmen had joined in the rush to Nash’s Gully. Many old residents will remember the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel, Albert-street, owned and occupied by George Birch. It was being built at the time, but the carpenter left it unfinished, and as the owner could find no other tradesmen he had to finish the building himself.

Western Champion and General Advertiser for the Central-Western Districts (Barcaldine, Qld) 25 Aug. 1917, 12.


“Our Neighbours.” Queenslander (Brisbane) 1 Sept. 1917, 16.


Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld) 8 Sept. 1917, 1.


cont...
The somewhat unexpected death last week of Mr. Christopher Cusack, at the early age of 29 years (writes a Rockhampton correspondent), has caused deep regret among a wide circle of friends and acquaintances. The deceased was the only son of the late Mr. and Mrs. M. Cusack, very old residents of Rockhampton. He was educated at the Christian Brothers' School, and before he took up the more serious duties of life was an ardent footballer and cricketer, and keen on all games of an athletic character. For some years he was the manager at Townsville for Birch and Carroll's theatrical enterprises. He was then transferred by that firm to their business in Brisbane, where he became very popular. Owing to the ill-health of his uncle, Mr. G. H. Birch, who some months ago had to go South for advice, Mr. Cusack came to Rockhampton to look after the firm's interest there. A few weeks ago he was taken ill, and removed to a private hospital, and appeared to be making good improvement, but died unexpectedly from heart failure. The deceased was unmarried, but leaves two step-sisters and other relatives to regret his untimely death.