

FAMOUS DIGGERS

Initially comprising returned soldiers, The Famous Diggers (aka Pat Hanna's Diggers) toured Australia and New Zealand constantly between 1919 and the early 1930s, presenting variety entertainment that focused largely on themes relating to the Great War. For the first few years all female characters were played by males. While the troupe included a number of women from 1921 onwards, female impersonations were still presented. The Famous Diggers were also well-known for the comic sketches played out by the duos Chic and Bert (Pat Hanna and Will Crawford) and later, Chick and Joe (Hanna and Joe Valli).

The Famous Diggers (also known as Pat Hanna's Famous Diggers) was established in Cologne after the Armistice, when Pat Hanna was appointed as recreational and entertainment officer for the New Zealand army division serving in Germany as part of the occupying force. The troupe was actually a continuation of the Digger Pierrots company which had been formed on the Western Front in 1917 in order to entertain New Zealand soldiers. Under his leadership, the Diggers Concert Party performed at camps first in Germany, including a Royal Command performance for the Prince of Wales in Cologne, and later France, England, and North America, before making its way to New Zealand (1919) and Australia (1920). A report in the *Brisbane Courier's* 'Music and Drama' column records that 'The members of the Digger Pierrots comprise 20 performers [and orchestra] ... The clever company had the honour of giving a command performance before Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig. In London the Pierrots appeared at the Victoria Palace for four weeks, and at the Aldwych Theatre for three weeks, and they have just terminated a 12 months' tour of New Zealand' (3 Apr. 1920, 12).

Originally called The Famous Digger Pierrots, the troupe arrived in Australia on a twelve-week contract with J. C. Williamson's Ltd.¹ When the contract ended, Hanna took over the company's management himself, although often in association with established circuits run by theatrical entrepreneurs such as E. J. Carroll. Hanna (who billed himself as G. P. Hanna) initially focused much of the entertainment on war-related themes, describing the troupe in advertising as 'a talented band of clever warrior artists, picked from Australian and New Zealand forces'. The all-male ensemble concept had its limitations, however, and thus Hanna soon augmented it with female performers. The first of these are believed to have been Ethel Hartley and Clarice Norman. From 1922 onwards, the troupe included Hanna's wife Jessie (nee Meadows) and her sister Hilda Meadows, who presented a musical sister act. Hanna and Meadows married on 8 April 1922 in St Kilda, Melbourne. A number of other female performers were also engaged as performers in the troupe, notably Iza and Moya Crossley, Rozette Powell, and Floe Dean. Among the male members over the years were several high-profile performers, including Englishman Bert Gilbert, Joe Valli, and Les Coney.



Brisbane Courier 9 Apr. (1920), 2.



NZ Digger Pierrots and Orchestra, 1917

Photograph taken 25/08/1917 by Henry Armytage Sanders.
Courtesy of the National Library of New Zealand
Alexander Turnbull Library



NZ Digger Pierrots, 1917

Courtesy of the National Library of New Zealand
Alexander Turnbull Library

¹ See note at the end of this biography re: new information about the Famous Diggers ca. 1920-1921

With their shows invariably described along the lines of 'rollicking foolery, odd nonsense and novel interludes' (BC: 19 Apr. 1926, 10), the Famous Diggers essentially offered a theme-based vaudeville show. In addition to their featured soldier sketches, the troupe presented traditional variety entertainments such as songs, ballets, comedy routines, and specialty acts (including, for example, marionettes and Pat Hanna's lightening sketch drawing). Over the years, the troupe also presented a repertoire of music-based pieces ranging from society sketches (contemporary or old fashioned) to exotic scenas (Hawaiian or Maori, for example) and from burlesques to scenes from well-known operas. Among the troupe's repertoire in 1924, for example, were "Camouflage," in which "an ugly duckling by the aid of pretty things wins back a straying husband"; "A New War," with Hanna and Bert Gilbert having a fearful time after consuming too much crab; "A Woman's Trade" ("which proves to the hilt the superiority of the wit of the weaker sex over that of the dullard male"); and "In Vauxhill Gardens," a "tres chic" ballet described as an old-world interlude with crinolines and poke bonnets (TBRs: 14 Sept. 1924, 6).

Although the troupe's military sketches were usually the last item or items on the programme, Hanna occasionally presented them as the conclusion to the first part. During the week of 20-26 December 1923 (Cremorne Theatre, Brisbane), for example, the troupe closed the shows with scenes from Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. Dickensian character actor Clement May featured as Ebenezer Scrooge.

Dickensian sketches or scenas were a particular Diggers favourite. Such pieces included "Dan'l Peggotty," interpreted by Will Crawford (Nov. 1921), and "Fezziwig's Ball," narrated by Clifton Binks (Dec. 1921).

One of the troupe's repeatedly mentioned strengths was the ability of its singers to perform all genres of song, from contemporary popular and jazz numbers to classical and operatic arias. The *Brisbane Courier* records in 1926, for example: "An unusual feature of the Diggers company is the remarkably strong vocal talent that it possesses in Vera Carew [soprano], Iza Crossley, Hilda Meadows, Jim Foran [tenor] and Jock Thompson. One of the outstanding successes of the evening was Miss Carew's rendering of Gounod's 'Ave Maria'" (22 May 1926, 15). The troupe also sometimes featured musical numbers that were either traditional Maori songs or at least Maori-inspired. One such number was "Waiata Maori," possibly first staged in Australia at the Esplanade, Melbourne, on 24 November 1921.



Illustrated Tasmanian Mail 5 May (1921), 23.

Bulletin 17 Sept. (1925), 34.

SEE ALSO

- [Pat Hanna](#)
- [Chic and Bert](#)
- [Chic and Joe](#)
- [Jock Thompson](#)

HISTORICAL NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

1. The Pat Hanna Collection, held in the Victorian Performing Arts Centre Museum, Melbourne (PACM), contains a Memorandum of Agreement between J. C. Williamson's Ltd and The Digger Pierrots, guaranteeing each of the twenty-one members a total weekly salary of £27 for six nights per week work over twelve weeks beginning 3 April 1920, and with 'The Diggers to provide the entire entertainment complete in every detail.' All other running and travelling expenses, including steamer transport from Wellington to Sydney and back, were to be paid from receipts, while all profits after salaries and expenses were to be shared equally between both parties. The memorandum is signed by Bert Royle on behalf of J. C. Williamsons and Pat Hanna for The Digger Pierrots.
2. Pat Hanna's Diggers differed from most variety companies of that era in that it invariably changed each week's show on Thursdays: Saturdays were traditionally the 'change of programme' nights, although some companies, such as John N. McCallum's Cremorne Theatre, preferred Fridays.
3. "Me and My Shadow" (words: Billy Rose; music: Al Jolson and Dave Dreyer). Published by J. Albert and Son, ca. 1927. Caption title reads: "Specially featured by Ernest Kopke with Pat Hanna's 'Diggers' Brilliant Costume Comedy Co." Held in National Library of Australia: MUS N mba 783.2 J75.
4. In 1928, Hanna's agent contacts were c/- Meadows, 60 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne and c/- E. J. and Dan Carroll, Banking House, Sydney.
5. Several members of the Famous Diggers also appeared in two films in the 1930s – *Diggers* (1931, produced by Frank Thring's Efftee Film Productions) and *Diggers in Blighty* (1933, Pat Hanna Productions).
6. The 1922 Tasmanian tour did not include Will Crawford (sick), Syd Exton, Roy Simpson or Clifton Binks (HM: 4 Apr. 1922, 7).

PERSONNEL

All dates shown below are established years only. In some instances, people may have been associated with the company prior to or after the dates shown, but these years have not yet been identified.

Individuals who have been highlighted have individual entries in the AVTA

1. **Male artists** incl. Clifton Binks (1921), Ray Brimsden (1925-1926), Con Charlton (1922-1923), Les Coney (1924-1925), Private Will Crawford (1919-1923), Victor Cross (1921), Claude Dampier (1922, 1923, 1927), Gus Dawson (1919-1920), Sergeant Sydney Exton (tenor, 1919-1921)), Sergeant G. J. Fama (1919-1920), Lancelot Fairfax (1919-1921), Clyde Fields (1923-1925), Jim Foran (1926), Norman French (1919-1923, 1927), Bert Gilbert (1924-1926), G. P. Hanna (1919-1927), Walter Heaps (1923-1924), Chris Kilner (1921-1923, 1926-1927), Ern Kopke (1923-1925, 1927), Brian Lawrence (1922-1925), Private Stanley Lawson (1919-1920, 1923-1927), George Long (1921), Johnny Marks (1921-1923), Frank Moran (1926), Don Nicol (1927), Charles Nightingale (1922-1923), Bobby Pearce (1921-1923), Sergeant F. Perkins (1919-), Tom Preston (1923-1924), Private George Proctor (1919-1920), Private Roy Simpson (1919-1923), Charles Steward (1921), Jock Thompson (1923-1927), Joe Valli (1923-1927), Ed Warrington (1922-1923), G. Wright (ca. 1921).
2. **Female artists** incl. Cicely Audibert (1923-1924), Hilda Attenboro (1922), Vera Carew (1926), Billie Carlyle (1927), Madge Conaghan (1927), Iza Crossley (1924-1927), Moya Crossley (1922, 1927-1928), Rosa D'Arcy (1921), Flo Dean (1924-1925), Rita Fernley (1922-1923), Patricia Gillespie (1925), Ethel Hartley (1921), Irene Hill (1922-1923), Clarry Levy (1922-1923), Wallis Lloyd (1925), Winnie Macaboy (1922-1924), Hilda Meadows (1922-1926) Jessie Meadows (aka Jessie Hanna, 1922-1927), Louise Meadows (1926-1927), Clarice Norman (1921), Myrtle Phillips* (1926-1927), Thelma Pittard (1926-1927), Rosetta Powell (1924-1927), Ivy Ray (1924), Madeline Rossiter (1922-1923), Dorothy Stewart (1925).
3. **Musicians/music directors and other members of the production team** incl. Gloria Arundell (choreographer, 1924), W. C. Cade (orchestra leader, no date), Private B. Cottier (music director/conductor, 1919-1920), Doris Denne (music director, 1923), Grace Funston (cornet, xylophone, saxophone, 1926), Jack Haskell (producer, 1921), Mina Kopke* (musical director 1924-1927), Ted Lamacchia* (harp, 1923-1924), W. R. Lloyd (stage manager, 1924), George Powell (music director, 1921), Mena Raymond (music director, 1923-1924), David Richards (cornet/soloist, 1927), Gordon Rodda (piano, 1921), Hilary Salmon (1927), Charles Stewart (drums/percussion, 1923-1924).



Stan Lawson
Theatre June (1920), 20.

4. **Special guest or occasional artists** incl. Clement May (Brisbane, 1923/1924), Rosa D'Arcy (1921 - Vice Regal Concert, New Zealand), Georgie De Lara (1924), W. Finch (1924), Pearl Ford (1927), Beryl French (1927), Les Holmes (1922, with the Vogies), Tom Preston (Brisbane, no year), Robert Purdy (1924).

5. **Additional notes and/or historical clarification:**

- **Hilda Attenboro:** Her surname is also known to have been spelled Attenborough.
- **Clifton Binks:** [elocutionist] Identified as the narrator of the Dickensian sketch *Fezziwig's Ball* (3 Dec. 1921), also doubled as house/business manager ca. 1921.
- **Ray Brimsden** (1925) and Roy Brinsmead/Roy Brinsden (1926) were likely the same person (with the name misspelled). He also sometimes doubled as a drummer, xylophonist, and saxophonist.
- **Billy Carlyle:** Comedienne (often worked with Claude Dampier).
- **Con Charlton:** Basso/comedian.
- **Les Coney:** Comedian.
- **Will Crawford:** Monologist.
- **Iza Crossley:** Her Christian name is sometimes spelled Ida in reviews and advertising. The daughter of performers (her father was Frank Crossley), she performed swimming and diving demonstrations during her career and also appeared in *The Sentimental Bloke* (film) and J. C. Williamson's theatrical production of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (ca. 1927-1928).
- **Moya Crossley:** [sister of Iza] A singer/violinist with the Diggers, who also wrote the song 'A.U.S.S.I.E' for male impersonator Ella Shields.
- **Dampier, Claude:** Comedian.
- **Sydney Exton:** Tenor.
- **Lance Fairfax:** Baritone. Born and raised in Wellington, New Zealand (ctd. BC: 24 Nov. 1923, 19). Appeared in *The Desert Song*, as Pierre Birabeau (Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, ca. Dec. 1929).
- **G. J. Fama:** Comedian/ impersonator.
- **Rita Fernley:** Her surname is sometimes spelled Fernleight.
- **Clyde Fields:** Comedian.
- **Norman French:** Lyric tenor.
- **Bert Gilbert:** Comedian.
- **Jack Haskell:** Employed by J. C. Williamson's to produce the Diggers' debut Australian tour in 1921.
Ern Kopke: Tenor.
- **Mina Kopke:** Also known as Mina Raymond.
- **Ted Lamacchia:** Harpist. Made his reappearance with the troupe on 13 December 1923.
- **Brian Lawrence** (1922-1924): His surname is sometimes spelled Laurence. The *Argus records* in a 1925 review that he was a "light baritone" (7 Sept., 14), while the *Age* indicates that he was an "alto" (7 Sept., 12). Raised in Adelaide. Lead role in *Hop O My Thumb* (Cremorne Theatre, Bris; 1924).
- **Stanley Lawson:** Female impersonator.
- **Winnie Macaboy:** (soprano) Christian name is sometimes given as Wynne. She was also possibly known as Wynne Thomson (secretary, ca. 1927).
- **Clement May:** British-born variety artist who spent many years in Australia, May was best known for his portrayal of characters from Dickens's novels.
- **Hilda and Jessie Meadows:** Both played violin and piano and sang (often in duets together).
- **Louise Meadows:** Debuted with the troupe in Brisbane on 2 June 1926.
- **Charles Nightingale** (tenor)
- **F. Perkins:** Baritone.
- **Myrtle Phillips:** Also known as Mickie.
- **Rosette Powell:** Doubled as choreographer (1924-1927).
- **George Proctor:** Tenor.
- **Madeline Rossiter:** Left the Famous Diggers and Australia in January 1923.
- **Roy Simpson:** Basso.
- **Charles Steward:** Possibly Charles Stewart - "super-jazz drummer," Adelaide season (Aug. 1923).
- **Jock Thompson:** Baritone. A member of the Smart Set Diggers (ca. 1914), he served with the Australian Imperial Forces (A.I.F.) in the Coo-ees Entertainment Company.
- **Joe Valli:** Comedian.



From *Diggers in Blighty*
 Roy Simpson (standing), Joe Valli (centre), Pat Hanna (seated at rear with cigarette)
Age 19 July (1950), n. pag.

SKETCH REPERTOIRE

1. One of Hanna's principal contributors, John A. Marks (aka Johnny Marks), was a member of the troupe between ca. 1921 and 1923. The Pat Hanna Collection (PACM) contains a copyright agreement signed by Marks in Perth on 4 July 1923 allowing G. P. Hanna the rights to produce the following works: *The New War*, *History Repeats Itself*, *Quartermaster's Stores*, *Demobilisation*, *Leave Train*, *Leave Boat*, *Bombs*, *What Do We Say?*, *Rum Doings*, *Chic and Bert at the Party*, *The New C. O.*, *Wangles*, *Some System*, *The Treasure*, *Aeronautics*, *The Minced Spy*, *Business by Phone*, and *Two-Chinned Chow*.
2. Three letters from the Copyright Office (dated 8 Oct. 1925) indicate that Hanna was now the registered owner of *Bombs*, *Louis XI*, and *The Quartermaster's Stores* (Pat Hanna Collection, PACM).
3. A sketch entitled *Business is Business* and identified as the property of James B. Atholwood (His Majesty's Theatre, Melb) is held in the Pat Hanna Collection (PACM). Set in New York during a "baseball series," the sketch is written in an exercise book. It is unclear if Atholwood, a prominent and highly regarded Australian actor, is the author of this work and if it was ever staged by Hanna and/or the Famous Diggers.
4. One feature of the Famous Diggers entertainment was the topical marionette sketch, which for many years starred Pat Hanna and Bert Gilbert. A manuscript containing "Mr Gallagher and Mr Sheen" verses is held in the Pat Hanna Collection (PACM).
5. Clifton Binks claims in the 5 May 1921 edition of the *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail* that the company's repertoire comprised at least "27 complete changes of program" (n. pag.).
6. While in-depth coverage of the Diggers' performances during the company's decade or more of association with Australia is typically rare, some insight into the troupe's appeal can nevertheless be ascertained from some published reviews. Reporting on the 1920-21 Arcadia Theatre (St Kilda) season, a *Table Talk* critic writes, for example: "Why [do] the entertainments of the Famous Diggers draw such large and appreciative audiences. The answer is to be found in the fact that their programmes are a little bit out of the ordinary. That they are real returned soldiers is an attraction to most but apart from that each member of the company is, in his or her way, a capable artist and the programme is punctuated with novelties" (30 Dec. 1920, 32). Within three months of returning to the Melbourne beach-side suburb (Oct. 1921-Mar. 1922), Hanna announced that the troupe had played to some 42,000 people during that season alone (ARG: 14 Jan, 1922, 28).

During the troupe's eighteen-month season in Brisbane (1923-1925), one critic similarly reported: "There is never a flop in the high level of the Diggers' entertainment... something novel pops out of Pat Hanna's brain-box every week" (TBRS: 14 Sept. 1924, 6). The following year an *Argus* review of the troupe's Melbourne season noted: "It is nearly seven years since the last shot was fired in the war, but the same spirit pervades the company as formerly. To vary the lines of Henry Lawson, they are at their best in the jokes with which 'the diggers greeted diggers long ago'. Their best effort was their last - *Chic and Joe in Hospital*. It is a Blighty scene in which the spirit of the Aussie soldier permeates the whole atmosphere" (7 Sept. 1925, 14). Extracts from a selection of reviews published during the 1920s further record:

For three hours they occupied the boards, with merry jest, dance, pathetic song and scene, and a weird mixture of all at times. Opening with an orchestral barrage under the direction of Miss Mena Raymond the company went smoothly through over 20 items (BC: 17 Nov. 1923, 10).

The programme was opened by the full company refusing in concerted song to sing an "Opening Chorus" (BC: 1 Dec. 1923, 11).

7. The following sketches are known to have been staged by The Famous Diggers but have not yet been given an individual entry due to lack of information concerning storyline, subject matter, and/or authorship. The list is organised in alphabetical clusters and with dates entered by month and year only. Venue location can be ascertained by cross-referencing this data with the Engagements Chronology (below). Production dates cited from the *Argus* and *Age* (Melb), *Brisbane Courier* and *Truth* (Brisbane), and *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney). If authorship details have been established, this information is entered in {brackets} immediately after the title. Entries followed by an asterisk (*) have been identified in the Hanna Collection, Performing Arts Centre (Melbourne). No scripts or production/authorship details have yet been located, however.

Anno Domini 1957* (1927/1928)

Another Side of the Triangle* (1927/1928)

Araby [aka **Arabia***] (Mar. 1922) Possibly staged in Hobart as early as May 1921.

Areonautics* (ca. 1923) Possibly aka **Aeroplanes**.

Aspirant, The (1927/1928).

Battle of Too Soon* Possibly an American army sketch.

Bella Boola (Dec.1921) A "Mexican comedy scena."

Bobsy (Dec. 1923)

Buddha* (1921) Staged by the Vice Regals at the Theatre Royal, Timaru, NZ, Sept. 1921)

Business by Phone* (ca. 1921) Possibly aka **Business is Business**

Census, The* (1921) Possibly staged in Hobart as early as May 1921)

Chic and Joe and the Pie Stall (Oct. 1924)

Chic and Joe Change Units (Sept. 1924)

Chic and Joe Visit Mars (Sept. 1924)

Chic's Lecture (Feb. 1922)

Coolangatta (Dec. 1923)

Curate and the Salt* (Mar. 1922)

Day Trip, A (Jan. 1922)

Diamond Cut Diamond (Apr. 1922)

Dress Rehearsal, The (Apr. 1922)

Dumbell (Dec. 1923)

Engaging a Company (Dec. 1923) "How ancient comedy might be played by modern actors"

Fatal Hour, The {Bert Gilbert} (May 1926)

Fate (Dec. 1921; Dec 1923)

Faustine (Dec. 1921) Based on Swinbourne's poem.

Ferdie's Mother-in-Law* (ca. 1923)

Flats* (ca. 1923)

Fresh (H)air* (1927-28 Adelaide Garden season). Involves a mix-upover hair remover and hair restorer

Gas Alarm, The (Mar. 1922)

Gollywog (Dec. 1923)

The Gratuity* (ca. June-Oct. 1921).

Highwayman (Dec. 1923).

I'm Going Back (Dec. 1923)

An Impression of a Brisbane Cafe in 1943* (ca. 3 Jan. 1924)

In a Little Spanish Town (1927/1928).

Kerry Courting (Oct. 1921). "A musical story of Old Ireland."

Late Comers (1927/1928)

Let's All Go Raving Mad (Apr. 1920)

Luck* (ca. 1926).

Madame Malabrand* (Sept. 1924)

Major Returns, The (Apr. 1920).

Naples (Dec. 1923)

Night in Bohemia, A* (ca. April 1923).

Omar the Judge* (ca. June-Oct. 1921).

Picardy* (1921) Possibly staged in Hobart as early as May 1921)

Poppies (1927/1928).

Sahara Moon (Dec. 1921) A romance of the desert

Some System* (ca. 1923)

Story Book Ball (Dec. 1921) An early Victorian song scena



Brisbane Courier 4 Sept. (1924), 2.

Studio Scene, The (Dec. 1921) From Puccini's La Boheme.
Southern Moon (Feb. 1922) A Hawaiian fantasy scena
Sphinx and the Woman, The (Dec. 1923).
Tit Bit {Bert Gilbert} (June 1926)
Treasure, The* (ca. 1923).
Valentine [a soldier comedy] (Feb. 1922).
Wangled* (ca. 1923)
Wango Bay (Jan. 1922) A Chinese fantasy
Wickedest Woman; Or, The Man Who Could Not Be Tempted, The (May 1926)
Woman's Trade, A (Sept. 1924).

ENGAGEMENTS CHRONOLOGY

An asterisk (*) beside a date indicates that it is either approximate or has not yet been established

- 1919:** Hanna's military entertainment company played concerts in Belgium, France (Paris and Havre), London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and the USA (ctd. Pat Hanna Collection - Performing Arts Centre, Melbourne).
- 1920:** (New Zealand tour; ca. Jan. - Mar.* > as the Vice Regals) • (His Majesty's Th, Bris; 3-17 Apr.) • (Temp Hall, Hobart; 6 Sept. - 2 Oct. > as The Famous Digger Pierrots) • (Arcadia Th, St Kilda, Melb; 16 Oct. - 31 Dec.)
- 1921:** (Arcadia Th, St Kilda, Melb; 1 Jan. - 8 Apr. > 168 pfms) • (Melb TH, 9, 11-12 Apr.) • (Temp Hall, Hobart, Tasmania; 28 Apr. - *) • (New Zealand Dominion tour; ca. June-Oct.* > as The Vice Regals) • (Esplanade, St Kilda, Melb; 20 Oct. - 31 Dec. > possibly the Arcadia Theatre)
- NB:** New Zealand tour incl. (Opera House, Wanganui, 23 June - *) • (Hastings June-July* >2 nights) • (Auckland; July*) • (Te Aroha; 15 Aug.) • (Paerora; 16 Aug.) • (Thames; 17-18 Aug.) • (Waihi; 19 Aug.) • (Cambridge; 20 Aug.) • (Matamata; 22 Aug.) • (Hamilton; 23-24 Aug.) • (Rotorua; 25-26 Aug.) • (Taihape; 29 Aug.) • (Palmerston North; 30-31 Aug.)
- 1922:** (Esplanade, St Kilda, Melb; 1 Jan. - 19 Apr. > possibly the Arcadia Theatre) • (Temp Hall, Hobart; 28 Apr. -*) • (St Kilda, Melb; 25 Oct. - 31 Dec. > no details re: venue)
- 1923:** (St Kilda, Melb; 1 Jan. - Mar.* > no details re: venue; advertising ceases on 3 March with no mention of closing night) • (Queen's Hall, Perth ; 14 Apr. - ca. July *) • (P of W Th, Adel; ca. Aug.* > in association with Dix-Baker) • (Cremorne Th, Bris; 16 Nov. - 31 Dec.*)
- 1924:** (Cremorne Th, Bris; 1 Jan. - 31 Dec.)
- 1925:** (Cremorne Th, Bris; 1 Jan. - 22 Apr.) • (Queensland regional tour; Apr. - * > in association with Birch, Carroll and Coyle) • (Athenaeum Th, Melb; 5 Sept. - 2 Oct.) • (New Zealand Dominion tour; ca. Nov. - Dec.)
- NB 1:** Queensland regional tour itinerary incl. (Gympie; ca. Apr.*) • (Maryborough; ca Apr.) • (Bundaberg; ca. Apr. - 1 May*) • (Earl's Court, Rockhampton; 2-9 May) • (Mount Morgan; ca. May*) • (Mackay; 12 May -*) • (Townsville; ca. May*) • (Charters Towers; ca. May*) • (Mackay; June* > return season) • Rockhampton ca. June * > return season)
- NB 2:** New Zealand tour (as Pat Hanna's Diggers) incl. (International Exhibition, Dunedin; Nov.*).
- 1926:** (New Zealand Dominion tour; 1 Jan. - ca. Apr.) • (Toowoomba, Qld; ca. 19-23 Apr. > show week) • (Th Royal, Bris; 28 Apr. - 14 June) • (Queensland regional tour; 15 June - 6 Aug.) • (Th Royal, Bris; 7-24 Aug. > return season).
- NB:** Queensland regional tour dates were: (Ipswich; 15 June) • (Gympie, 16 June) • (Maryborough, 17 June) • (Rockhampton, 19 June > show week) • (Townsville > show week) • (Charters Towers > show week) • Ayr (show week).
- 1927:** (Eden Gardens, Manly, Syd; Mar. - Apr.*) • (Wintergarden, Bris; 13 Apr. > Pat Hanna only - Concert for Duke and Duchess of York) • (Melbourne TH; 25 Apr. > Pat Hanna only - Great Diggers' Night concert) • (Th Royal, Bris; 1-13 Aug.) • (Gardens Th, Adel; ca. Dec.*).
- 1928:** (Gardens Th, Adel; ca. Jan.*) • (West Australia; ca. Oct.* > no details, ctd. E: 17 Oct. 1928, 38)

FURTHER REFERENCE

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- [Manuscripts and Pictorial Collection.](#) Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand - online (sighted 5/03/2011)
- Stevens, Lyla. "[The Diggers Who Faced the Footlights.](#)" A: 19 July (1950), n. pag. – online (sighted 5/03/2011)

See also:

A: 7 Sept. (1925), 12 • 21 Sept. (1925), 11.
ARG: 18 Oct. (1920), 11 • 11 Apr. (1920), 8 • 21 Sept. (1925), 12.
B: 10 Sept. (1925), 35.
BC: 5 Apr. (1920), 8 • 17 Nov. (1923), 10 • 24 Nov. (1923), 17 • 1 Dec. (1923), 11 • 7 Dec. (1923), 11 • 14 Dec. (1923), 13 • 21 Dec. (1923), 8 • 28 Dec. (1923), 8 • 19 Apr. (1926), 10 • 29 Apr. (1926), 9 • 7 May (1926), 17 • 22 May (1926), 12 • 28 May (1926), 8 • 12 June (1926), 18 • 1 Aug. (1926), 21 •
HM: 4 Apr. (1922), 7
TBR: 14 Sept. (1924), 6.
TBT: 30 Dec. (1920), 32.



From *Diggers in Blighty*

L-R: Norman French, Lance Fairfax, Will Crawford, Tano Fama (as Ole Bill),
Syd Exton, Pat Hanna
Age 19 July (1950), n. pag.

Please Note:

New information has recently come to light which suggests that two affiliated troupes were operating simultaneously in Australia and New Zealand between ca. April 1920 and December 1921, and that various members from both companies eventually joined together to create the one Famous Diggers company (under Pat Hanna's direction).

Research into this period is currently being undertaken. An updated biography is planned for early January 2015

Clay Djubal 10/11/2014

Additional information in this biography has been sourced from research undertaken by Richard Fotheringham.

Last updated: 10/11/2014

Expanded and Updated from the 2006 AustLit entry

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