aka Snug Balnaves

(1903-1957) Banker, theatre director, writer (radio/theatre), songwriter.

The son of Peter Balnaves (1868-) and Elizabeth Jane Balnaves (1866- nee Black, Albert Edward Balnaves was born in Penola, South Australia. After leaving school he pursued a career in the banking industry, initially as a teller with the Commercial Banking Company of Australasian. One of his earliest known branches was at Tailem Bend. He later went on special service in Central Australia before being transferred to Yorketown in 1929.

After arriving in Yorketown Balnaves joined the Musical and Dramatic Society and quickly established himself as one of the town's leading amateurs. His musical comedy The Singing Girl was staged at the Town Hall over five nights in 1930 by the Yorketown Comedy Company, followed by The Revue Star (1931) and Hello Princess (1932). The latter work was given a three night season in Yorketown and soon afterwards presented in Warooka, Minlaton and Maitland.

In addition to his musicals Balnaves also wrote a number of one act plays which were also staged in the region. These included Several, Sacrifice and Mrs 'Arris and Son. The first two plays were also broadcast on radio though 5CL. The Pioneer newspaper further records in 1932 that he was responsible for designing the scenery, costumes, stage settings and programs. Combined, these productions raised more than $1,000 for local charities.

Over the next few years Balnaves was transferred by the Commercial Bank to Port Lincoln (1932) and Port Wakefield (1933), before settling for a time in Adelaide. He initially worked at the Norwood branch. In 1942 he was briefly acting-manager of the Bordertown branch, suggesting that he had by then moved away from the position of teller.

In 1937 Balnaves married Mary Jeannette Reid (1911-2000) at St John's Church, Terowie. The couple had at least three children - two girls born in 1938 and 1942, and a son in 1943. The second daughter, Christine, died in mid-1942 aged four months. By 1946 he had been transferred once again, however, this time to Mount Gambier, serving possibly as the branch manager. It is also believed to have been his last position with the bank before turning to writing as a full-time career.

Little is known about Balnaves theatrical activities during the 14 years that elapsed after he left Yorketown in 1932. Indeed, his only recorded appearance on the stage was in Port Lincoln in July 1933 when he gave a talk on John Galsworthy's play Strife for the Literary and Arts Club. In September 1946, however, he had a comedy sketch on Lord Nelson broadcast nationally from Adelaide by the popular comedy team of Iris Hart, Robert Fricker and Donnell Downey.

The following year Balnaves contributed the dialogue to the Penola Younger Set revue, Follies on Broadway. Before it was produced in August, however, he resigned from the Commercial Bank to take up a scriptwriting position in Sydney with Colgate-Palmolive. The News (Adelaide) records that he had been specifically targeted by the company to write Dorothy Foster's Ada and Elsie comedy series. The offer from Colgate-Palmolive suggests that Balnaves had been involved in writing for radio for some time and that he by then established a reasonable reputation within the industry (despite the lack of public recognition).

By 1950 Balnaves had returned to live in Adelaide while continuing to write the Ada and Elsie scripts. He also appears to have been involved in local theatre during the 1950s, appearing as an actor, for example, in the St Jude's Players version of The Ghost Train (1955). For that production he was billed as "Snug" Balnaves. The nickname, which likely originated during his youth, first appears in print in 1926 when he was listed among the attendees at a dance at the Rivoli Theatre, Burnside.

1 He had four siblings: John Murray Balnaves and three others (as yet unidentified).
2 'Farewell to Mr A. E. Balnaves,' Pioneer 29 July 1932, 3.
Balnaves died in 1957, aged 53, and is buried in the Saint Jude Cemetery, Brighton South Australia. He was survived by his wife and remaining children.

**ADA AND ELSIE**

Series: 239882
Summary: Radio comedy series.
Contributors: A. E. ‘Snug’ Balnaves (SCR).
Cast: Dorothy Foster (Ada), Rita Pauncefort (Elsie).
Episode duration: 30 mins
Episodes produced: 46
Broadcast details: 1940s-1950s ; 2GB

*Australian Radio Series (1930s - 1970s)*
National Film and Sound Archive

*Courier Mail (Brisbane)*
7 June 1950, 10.
1932

YORKETOWN TOWN HALL
TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 1932
At 8 p.m. Sharp

Yorketown Comedy Company
present
‘HELLO, PRINCESS’
The Spectacular 3-Act Comedy with a Laugh a Minute!
With a Company of 50 Artists
Headed by
AUDREY FRIEBE
Full Ballet and Chorus

YOU MUST NOT MISS THIS GORGEOUS PRODUCTION!!

SEE

The Beautiful Scenic and Lighting Effects
The Spectacular Opening Scene on board the s.s. Valida
The Bewitching Black-and-White Ballet
The Parade of Mannequins
The Old-Fashioned Wives
The Knickerbocker Ballet
The Parade of the Guards

The Beautiful Wedding Finale.

BOX-PLANS
Box-Plan Opens at Eridge’s on SATURDAY, APRIL 9, at 9 a.m.

Prices: Adults 3s., Children 1s.

Please Bookings will be received after 8 o’clock, and receive more priority at those booked at the Booking Office.

As the Action of the Play commences from the Start of the Curtain, people are asked to be seated at 8 p.m. Sharp.

Proceeds to be devoted to Local Charities.

HORACE JORDAN, L.A.B., Pianist.
F. E. LLOYD, Hon. Secretary
A. E. BALNAVES, Producer.

Thanks to the Comedy Company

At the final meeting of the Yorketown Corporation it was resolved on the motion of Cr. R. E. Murdock, seconded by Cr. S. G. Goldsworthy, that a minute be recorded of the very excellent financial assistance rendered to the Council funds and local charities, by the members of the Yorketown Comedy Company and the Choral and Dramatic Society.

And to Mr. A. E. Balnaves,

At a previous meeting a minute was recorded thanking Mr. A. E. Balnaves for his excellent efforts in aid of local charities. It will be remembered that Mr. Balnaves has written and successfully produced three musical comedies in aid charitable objects, during his residence at Yorketown. At this meeting, the Clerk of the Corporation was instructed to appeal to the Commercial Bank authorities to leave Mr. Balnaves at Yorketown, if not detrimental to his future advancement.

Pioneer (Yorketown, SA) 1 Apr. 1932, 4.


Pioneer (Yorketown, SA) 27 May 1932, 3.
Farewell to Mr. A. E. Balnaves.

The people of Southern Yorke Peninsula will regret to hear that Mr. A. E. Balnaves will be leaving Yorke-town on Sunday next. He has been notified of his transfer from the local branch of the Commercial Bank, but having been granted his annual leave before taking up his new appointment, he will come back to Yorke-town next week, when a farewell complimentary social will be tendered to him. The departure of Mr. Balnaves from our midst will be a great loss to Yorke-town and district. In three short years his name has become a household word throughout the town and district. It is safe to say we have not had anyone with like ability in our midst. During his residence he has produced and successfully staged three musical comedies and raised nearly £1,000 for deserving objects and institutions. He was born at Penola in 1903. Prior to coming to Yorke-town he was the teller in the Bank at Taelm Bend, but later went on special service to Central Australia. He came to Yorke-town in July 1929, and it was not long before he discovered a large amount of latent musical talent in the young people of the town. With the aid of the Yorke-town Musical and Dramatic Society he soon had a well organised band of young people, capable of putting on any play he could produce. In March 1930, after weeks of hard work his first composition “The Singing Girl” was produced in the Yorke-town Town Hall by the Yorke-town Comedy Company. Five times the play was given; on each occasion to large and enthusiastic audiences. Then in 1931 with old and new players came “The Revue Star.” This also was an outstanding success, but in 1932 his latest and last production “Hello Princess” eclipsed all previous plays. This was given three times at Yorke-town, and once each at Waroona, Minlaton and Maitland. In addition to the larger productions Mr. Balnaves composed a number of one act plays such as “Seasides,” “Sacrifice” and “Mrs. Arris and Son.” All were given at Yorke-town and Minlaton, but the former two were also broadcast through 5CL. Not only did Mr. Balnaves write the plays, but he also personally attended to every detail of their production. The designing of the scenery, the dresses, costumes, staged setting and programme, all came from his fertile brain. It is with a pang of regret we record his departure from the town. We hope that in his new sphere he will find for his wonderful ability as a producer and organiser. The farewell social gathering has been arranged for Friday, August 5, in the Yorke-town Town Hall.


Mr. A. E. Balnaves, recently of the Commercial Bank at Yorke-town, has been appointed teller of the Bank at Port Lincoln.

**YORKETOWN**

The Events of the Year.

April 19.—First performance of “Hello Princess.” Mr. A. E. Balnaves, author and producer. This original musical comedy had a wonderful run and was staged in several Peninsula towns.

_Pioneer_ (Yorketown, SA) 6 Jan. 1933, 2.

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**Study of Drama**

_ARTS CLUB MEETING_

The first dramatic study for the season, under the auspices of the Port Lincoln Literary and Arts Club, will be held in the supper room at the Soldiers’ Memorial Hall on Monday evening. Mr. A. E. Balnaves will discuss the late John Galsworthy’s play “Strife.”

_Port Lincoln Times_ (SA) 7 July 1933, 1.
http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article96630126
Mr. A. E. Balnaves (teller at the Port Lincoln branch of the Commercial Bank) has been advised of a transfer to Port Wakefield. He will probably leave next week. Mr. S. Kerr, who will succeed Mr. Balnaves, was at one time a member of the Port Lincoln branch of the bank.

Port Lincoln Times (SA) 29 June 1934, 1.

Mr. A. E. Balnaves, of the Commercial Bank at Port Wakefield, has received notice of his transfer to the Norwood branch.


BALNAVES.—On the 24th of August, to Jeannette, wife of A. E. Balnaves, of Brighton—a daughter.

Advertiser (Adelaide) 26 Aug. 1938, 16.
Mr. A. E. Balmaves on a Visit to S.Y.P.

Mr. "Snug" Balmaves was present at the Community Concert at Yorketown on Wednesday night. He was welcomed by Mr. B. E. Lloyd, the organiser of the concerts. In response to Mr. Lloyd's request, Mr. Balmaves mounted the stage and conducted, with all his old-time vim, one of the community songs. For those new to Yorketown it is necessary to mention that during Mr. Balmaves' residence here from 1930 to 1932 he was the author and producer of three outstanding plays: "The Singing Girl," "The Revue Star," and "Hello, Princess." These plays were locally produced, and raised large sums for local charities. The final play, "Hello, Princess," was staged at Yorketown, Minlaton, Maitland and Warooka, and over £300 was raised. Mr. Balmaves was a great acquisition to Yorketown, and we were sorry to part with him. We hope he will enjoy his holidays in our midst. Some enlarged photographs, coloured by Miss Florrie Oldland, of the players in "Hello, Princess" are on view in the "Pioneer" Office window.

_Pioneer (Yorketown, SA) 2 Aug. 1940, 5._
1942

**Advertiser** (Adelaide) 1 July 1942, 10.

**Border Chronicle** (Bordertown, SA) 21 Aug. 1942, 1.

**Advertiser** (Adelaide) 2 Nov. 1942, 6.

1943

**Chronicle** (Adelaide) 21 Oct. 1943, 10.
To-day’s Highlights
On National Radio

“SPOTLIGHT.”

Adelaide's leading flautist, Constance Pether, will be featured in the next edition of “Spotlight.” She will play “Valse Poetique,” by de Jong.

Joan Brown, soprano, who has just returned from an interstate theatre tour, will return to the microphone in this programme. Among her songs she will include the finale arrangement from the musical comedy “On Your Toes.” She will also sing “The Hat Shop” by the South Australian composer, Tom King.

A comedy sketch, written by A. E. Balnaves, on Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton will be presented by that popular team, Iris Hart, Robert Fricker and Donnell Downey. The broadcast will end with a choral arrangement of the “Donkey Serenade,” sung by the Adelaide Singers.—7.15 p.m. (Int.).
**To-day’s Highlights On National Radio**

**GOOD COMEDY IN “TAKE IT EASY.”**

One of the brightest spots in a bright show is the regular comedy interlude, written by the Adelaide scripter, A. E. Balmaves, for “Take It Easy” the light variety presentation. Tonight the characters taking part will be the well-known radio actress, Iris Hart and the comedian, Audrey Parsons. They will play Fanny Tattle and Audrey Berserk, respectively. 7.15 p.m.

Interstate.

10.20 (I): Women’s Session.
12.15 (I): Country Hour.
12.44 (I): Weather Reports.
12.49 (I): Rural Talk.
1.00 (I): “The Lawsons.”
1.50 (I): Weather Reports.
5.20 (I): Children’s Session.
6.15 (N): Market Reports.
6.30 (I): Gilligan’s Cricket Cables.
6.35 (I): Sportcast.
6.45 (I): Serial, “As Ye Sow.”
7.15 (I): “Take It Easy.”
8.00 (N): Two Plays, by Guy De Maupasant.

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**BANK TELLER TO SCRIPT WRITER**

Mr. A. E. (“Snug”) Balmaves has forsaken his job as bank teller for that of script writing, says a paragraph in the “Radio Call.”

Snug, who was teller at the Commercial Bank at Yorketown about 15 years ago, will be remembered in connection with three plays he wrote and produced in Yorketown at that time. The plays, “The Singing Girl,” “Hello, Princess” and “S.S. Valida” in which local talent had full scope were most successful and repeat performances were given of each.

Mr. Balmaves is now on full-time work with Colgate-Palmolive, Sydney, and resides at Mosman.

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**Going Up**

**WITHIN two months of his appointment as chief clerk of the Commercial Bank’s Adelaide office, Mr. John McDonald, of Kingswood, has been promoted again. He’s the new sub-accountant.**

Mr. McDonald has had quite a bit of country experience during his 22 years in the bank, was in charge of the British and foreign department for a time, and has served as Adelaide relieving manager.

He still plays tennis and golf, but hasn’t risen to the sporting heights of his brother Bill, former State swimming champion.

Mr. M. E. Balmaves, of Glenelg, succeeds Mr. McDonald as chief clerk. He is a cousin of Mr. A. E. Balmaves, who left the bank recently to take a Sydney job as script writer for the “Ada and Elsie” radio shows.

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Daily Examiner (Grafton, NSW) 17 June 1947, 4.

Pioneer (Yorketown, SA) 20 June 1947, 1.

News (Adelaide) 11 July 1947, 2.
Brilliant Presentation of Penola Revue

Music, laughter, song and dance were admirably blended in the Penola revue, "Follies On Broadway," presented by Penola Younger Set, which played to packed houses to the local Institute on Thursday and Friday nights of last week and last night (Wednesday).

Lavish costumes worn in the numerous ballet numbers were highlights of the production and the precision and artistry of ballet members reflected credit to their instructor, Mrs. Dorothy Cameron. Mrs. Cameron also designed their wardrobe, the work being executed by ballet members comprising Tony Fowler, Marj Hodge, Fay McAdam, Elvin Miller, Janet Campbell, Elsie Bawden, Isabel Balmave, Janet McAdam, Sue Leech, Rosemary Leech, Colleen Allen and Molly Simmonds.

Costuming was not only elaborate and varied, but outstandingly appropriate to the items in which the ballet was either featured or acted as an ensemble.

Dorothy Cameron herself made only two appearances but the audiences were immediately impressed with her finished work. Of two entirely opposite characters, it is difficult to say which delighted her audience the more; in the operatic ballet, "Les Sylphides," or in the Military Toe movement in the grand finale. Both were superb and provided the answer to the standard attained by the previously inexperienced ballet personnel who had been in her charge for only a comparatively short time.

Produced by Mr. Robert Atkinson, stars in the show in addition to Dorothy Cameron were Alan Lindsay, Edgina Flegenieu, Janet McAdam, and Gene Raymond (the magic genius). The dialogue adaption was by A. E. Balmave with decorations by Penola Younger Set.

Mr. Atkinson deserves every commendation for the smooth production of the show. It was of non-stop character, with never a dull moment, and portrayed such a wide variety of talent that interwoven, no opportunity for monotony was possible.

Many other Penola artists were also in the large company, including Irene Ey, Betty Flint, Daphne Pounsett, Isabel Rentrey, Jean Ey, Noel Crisp, Alan Sanderson, Murray Mooney, Roc Lynn, Bob Marcus, David Carthew, Mick Walker, Jimmy Jones, Dick Marcus and Jim Bilton.

There was music all the time. Jim O'Dwyer and his Rhythmics Orchestra not only provided accompaniment for all ensemble numbers but their bright playing during the brief interludes between scenes left not a moment for the audiences to fidget. Jim O'Dwyer (sax.) was supported by Paddy Mooney (piano), Elva McPestead (violin) and Buzz Bawden (drums). Mrs. Mooney also acted as accompanist for vocal solo items, with Mrs. J. Schults accompanying for Alan Lindsay's bracket in the first half of the programme.

To do justice to each scene in a list of 20 would be impossible, nor would it be polite to single out a particular scene or scenes as being more outstanding than others. Each had its own distinctive appeal; each was in itself a high-class performance of entertainment above the average; and the secret of the revue's success lay, because of that, in the gathering of individual brilliance into a great brilliant whole that sent highly pleased audiences home with the feeling that it was a great show.

Each and every one of us has his or her own particular likes and dislikes and, though in reviewing the production I am compelled to say that this or that item appealed more than another, the unanimous reaction of all was that as a whole they had seen little if anything to better it.

The programme included an overture and entr'acte by the orchestra; vocal solos by Noel Crisp, Alan Lindsay, and David Carthew; song and dance by Janet McAdam; songs, with ensemble, Betty Flint, Bob Marcus and Daphne Pounsett, and Jean Ey; comedy vocal, Edgina Flegenieu; sketches and dialogue, all in humorous vein, Alan Sanderson, Murray Mooney, Roc Lynn, Isobel Rentrey, Jean Ey, Elsie Flegenieu and Alan Lindsay; instrumental, Irene Ey (piano accordion), Mick Walker (steel guitar), Jimmy Jones (banjo) with three Gauchois (Murray Mooney, Roc Lynn, Bob Marcus) and ensemble; male ballet (Dainty Revels) with Alan Sanderson, Roc Lynn, Murray Mooney, and Bob Marcus; song and dance duet, Rosemary and Susan Leech; shadow play, Dick Marcus and Jim Bilton; Gene Raymond mystified with his Magic Act, and the ballet ensemble appeared in eight numbers with a change of costume for each.

The grand finale was divided into four parts; army representation being led by Alan Lindsay; navy by Jean Ey, Daphne Pounsett and Betty Flint; and force by David Carthew; and military toe, with solo dance by Dorothy Cameron. The ballet was divided for the first three parts, appropriately costumed; and all joined with the fourth movement for the complete ensemble. A grand finish to a grand show.

The full company returned to the stage for Au Revoi in which they recited to their opening theme song, "The Like the Kettle and Sing."

Floral and presentation tributes to the cast on the opening night were many. Producer, ballet-instructor, all ladies in the production and several male members being honored.

At the close of the second night a special presentation was made to Dorothy Cameron by Mr. Atkinson, in appreciation of the time and energy which she had put into the show, which had contributed so much to its success.

So much interest and enthusiasm was aroused in the production that all seats for both nights were booked out, with the result that many would-be patrons were unable to gain admission. So that they might not be disappointed and also to afford opportunity for many others who had expressed the desire to see the revue for a second time, the organisers made a snap decision for a repeat show which was staged last night and again drew a crowded house. Proceeds are to aid the Penola Memorial Hospital in conjunction with the R.N.I. fund.

Plans to take the company to neighbouring towns and districts include presentation at Kalangadoo next Wednesday, September 3rd.

Donation of Appreciation

Mr. C. Reilly, of the Prince of Wales Hotel, has donated £1 to the fund for which proceeds of "Follies On Broadway" is being devoted as a token of his appreciation of the show. He considers it the best of its kind seen during the 60 years he has been in Penola.

Pennant (Penola, SA) 28 Aug. 1947, 1.

http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article209482882
1950

Dorothy Foster (Ada, of Ada and Elsie) paid a flying visit to Adelaide the other day to confer with A. E. (Snug) Bainaves, who writes the comedy duo’s scripts.

Sun (Sydney) 28 Mar. 1950, 25.

1955

The Ghost Train

Saint Jude’s Hall, Brighton, SA
12 July 1955
12 July 1955
16 July 1955
No
Amateur
No
Theatre - Spoken Word
St Jude’s Players, Production Company, Performance Group

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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Snug Bainaves</td>
<td>Actor</td>
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<td>Frank Burton</td>
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<td>John Dick</td>
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<td>Ralph Binns</td>
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Australian Variety Theatre Archive: Research Notes
Published by Clay Djubal: 28/04/2018

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