

PHOTOGRAPHER JAMIES



ABOMADY



HERITAGE
SERIES

PHOTOGRAPHER JAMES ABOMADY

CONTRIBUTORS

State Library Victoria
National Library Australia
St. John's Anglican Church
Museum of Australian Democracy

Allan Layton
Kathie Maynes
Maurie & Marida Pawsey
David & Debbie Hibbert

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

TIMELINE

GALLERY

NEWSPAPERS

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

Name: James Abomady
Born: Unknown
Died: 1928
Buried: Alexandra Cemetery
Known for: Photographer

James Abomady was a businessman and managed the Alexandra Picture Theatre as well as trying his hand at photography and running a small photographic studio in the early 1900s.

Church Congregation circa 1916

Photographer James Abomady
Courtesy
St. John's
Anglican Church



Early life

Jamiel 'James' Abomady was the son of 'George' Said Abomady (also known as Charley or George Kamey). George, an Egyptian native, who married Badea (d1923 at her home in Hawthorn), and they had two children, Jamiel and Zarefa. In 1903 George opened a Jewelers and Watchmakers shop beside Wheelers Chemist in Grant Street, Alexandra, and it was reported that he had been a travelling salesman in the district for the twelve years prior. He then purchased the Taylor and draper business from Mr Angel in 1905 when his first advertisement appeared in the Alexandra Standard, using the surname 'Abommaday' and stating he was better known as Charlie Kamey.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

In April 1905 George ends advertising at Alexandra and advertising does not recommence until 16 April 1915. In 1912 we do however find George running a drapery shop in High Street Yea.

Then George re-appears in Alexandra in 1915, when he advertises in the Alexandra Standard on 16 April 1915 that Abomady of High Street Yea, has taken over the premises of the Central Stores at Alexandra. Again it is stated that he is better known as Charley Kamey, however Charley is spelt differently in this advertisement as previously in 1905 it was spelt 'Charlie'. Then in an advertisement in the Alexandra Standard on 18 June 1915, he is now referring to his business as the Abomady's Central Store and no longer referring to his name Charlie Kamey. Then in April 1916 Abomady was now advertising the business as being removed to Alexandra. (Yea Chronicle, Thursday 13 April 1916).

Son James the photographer

While his son James was at Yea, he became an active photographer. The Yea Chronicle reported on 23 October 1912 that James had taken good snapshots at the opening of the Bowls season and had taken a flashlight photo at the Tennis Club Ball. It was then reported in the Yea Chronicle on 4 December 1912 that James had taken some 'exceedingly fine views of the falls and the group picture of those present is very distinct and will form a nice memento of the occasion.

In June 1915 James was elected as a warden of the Anglesey Lodge I.O.O.F. and in September 1915 he was elected Secretary of the Yea Bowling Club. In February 1916 he was elected as Vice-Grand of the Anglesey Lodge I.O.O.F.

Also in February 1916, a photograph of the new Roll of Honour at Yea was publishing in the 10 February 1916 issue of the Yea Chronicle and James was described as the being the photographer, of High Street, Yea. However it should be noted that we have not been able to identify and advertisements in the Yea Chronicle for photography business under his name or of him soliciting photographic business. It is therefore likely he was acting as a dedicated amateur photographer. James later moved to Alexandra and it was here that we find he was a member of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows, was a contributor to the Alexandra Cottage Hospital, was on the committee of the Alexandra Athletic Club and was a Vestry member of St. John's Church.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

Driving charge

In May 1919 James was charged for driving a motor vehicle with no lights. Also charged for the same offence on the same court day were T Tossol, WG Robb, and Mr EN Stillman. Mr W S Newman was charged for not having a tail light, and J McGuigan was charged for not having lights on his car. The police were obviously making a big statement about lighting, even charging Mr James Baker for not having a light in front of his hotel on 27 March of that year. All of the above received fines.

James operated the Abomady Alexandra Café, later purchased by the Weinberg family and called the Weinberg Alexandra Café, which was located on the west side of Southern Grant Street.

He advertised and practiced as a photographer locally, and ran a small studio from his shop from 1917.

The Alexandra talkies

James was also involved in the motion picture movement at Alexandra from 1926. But we know that movies were shown at the Shire Hall on Monday nights from 1921 under the name 'Fowler's Pictures'.

The first advertised 'Fowler's' movie screening was 'Elsie Ferguson in The Witness for the Defence. and Robert Warwick in Mizzoura'. The following Monday was to see the screening of 'Why Change your Wife'. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 15 April 1921). The second 'Fowler's' movie screening advertised in the local newspaper was 'The Great Houdini in Terror Island' and 'Wallace Reid in The Dancin' Fool' (Alexandra Standard, Friday 15 July 1921). The following Monday was to see the screening of 'Old Wives for New'.

But James involvement saw the movies move to a new level at Alexandra. He managed the Alexandra Picture Theatre for a number of years from 1926, which was during the transitional period from silent to talking movies (talkies). In the *Alexandra Standard* on Friday 2 July 1926 he was described as being a proprietor, along with Mr McCashney. However as time went on, it becomes clear that Mr McCashney became less involved and Mr Abomady took a leading role in the operation of the theatre. The 1926 article informs the reader that the two men were able to keep costs to a minimum as the films



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

were obtained for free. Their only costs in these early days were the freight costs. They also did not charge for the use of their projector, and staff were volunteers, ensuring locals got cheap entertainment.

Sister Zarefa

James' only sister Zarefa, was a local school teacher at Alexandra. When she married Robert Allen Shepherd in 1926 at the Alexandra St. John's Church, the school parents and the St. John's Choir, both presented her with gifts for her excellent service. Her school children also performed a demonstration for the bride and Father Christmas gave her a special present at a pre-Christmas school event which Father Christmas attended. Zarefa and her husband settled in Quairading in Western Australia. While at Alexandra, she had been an organist at St. John's for a number of years.

James remarries

Also in 1926, James married Ida Catherine Collins. The Collins family were well established in Alexandra at that time and both of Ida's parents are buried in the Alexandra Cemetery. James and Ida had at least two children; Desmond Jamiel (born c1928) and James Collins (born c1933).

Today, photographs taken by James are extremely rare. One such photograph was of the members of St. John's Anglican Church at Alexandra believed to have been taken around 1916. James then placed the photograph on card with his logo visible on the bottom right. This photo appears in this factsheet and is one of only two known photos taken by James at Alexandra that we know to exist, and the only one to be published.

James operates men's apparel store

By 1936 James was operating a store specialising in men's apparel, located opposite the Alexandra Library in Grant Street. In that same year he took his family to Western Australia, where they lived in the vicinity of where his sister Zarefa and her husband Robert had settled.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

Death of James

In October 1948 Mrs J Abomady travelled from Perth to Alexandra for a holiday with her sister Mrs Harry Wood (nee Collins). Just over five years later, James died on 8 March 1954 at Perth, W.A. Newspaper entries call him a friend of the Western Australia film industry. One entry was from the President and members of the Motion Picture Exhibitors Association of Western Australia, and another from the Reelers' Fraternity.

While better known as a photographer in Yea, he also practiced in Alexandra where he operated a small studio. Although he was recognised as a photographer locally, his greatest contribution was to the motion picture industry as an early cinema operator in both Regional Victoria and Western Australia.

James, Ida and their two children, are all memorialised at the Karrakatta Cemetery in Perth, W.A. where also his sister Zarefa and her husband Robert are both memorialised.

TIMELINE

BASIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

1837c

George Abomady was born. George was the father of James Abomady, later to be known as a photographer.

6 March 1903

George Abomady advertises he is opening a Jeweller and watchmaker store beside Wheeler's Chemist. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 6 March 1903).

23 October 1903

It was reported that George Abomady (Mr Kamey) was been involved in a horse accident and that he had been removed to the Mansfield hospital. It was reported that the horse he was driving was a very spirited one, and that when negotiating the hill a short distance from Mr Merlo's farm, something happened, Mr Kamey jumped out and let the horse go on its wild career. When Mr Kamey was found, he was in a state of collapse, much bruised and cut about he head, face and body. It was stated that the horse was in a similar condition to Mr Kamey and the conveyance was smashed to atoms. Mr Kamey was found by Mr Merlo and Stone who took him to the hospital. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 23 October 1903).

Aril 1905

First mention of George Abomady in local newspapers. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 24 March 1905). In this article it is mentioned that he is better known as Charlie Kamey and his name Abomady is spelt Abommaday.

7 March 1912

Mr Abomady of High Street, Yea is mentioned in the Yea Chronicle in relation to a 'startling announcement' to be made in the next issue. (*Yea Chronicle*, Thursday 7 March, 1912).

9 May 1912

Abomady's Clothing Store is operating from High Street, Yea. (*Yea Chronicle*, Thursday 9 May 1912). A later advertisement places the business two doors down from the Caledonian Hotel.

23 October 1912

While James was at Yea, he became an active photographer.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

The Yea Chronicle reported on 23 October 1912 that he had taken good snapshots at the opening of the Bowls season and had taken a flashlight photo at the Tennis Club Ball.

4 December 1912

The Yea Chronicle reported that James had taken some 'exceedingly fine views of the falls and the group picture of those present is very distinct and will form a nice memento of the occasion. (Yea Chronicle, 4 December 1912).

16 April 1915

Abomad's of High Street, Yea have taken over the premises of the Central Stores at Grant Street, Alexandra. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 16 April 1915).

June 1915

James was elected as a warden of the Anglesey Lodge I.O.O.F. (Yea Chronicle, Thursday 3 June 1915).

18 June 1915

In an advertisement in the *Alexandra Standard* he now refers to his business as the 'Abomady's Central Store' and he no longer highlights his optional name Charlie Kamey. (Alexandra Standard, 18 June 1915).

16 July 1915

A Mr George Abomady, the father of James, is advertising his *Central Stores* business in Alexandra. He had moved into the premises adjoining the property previously occupied by 'Dihood and Son'. He stated he intends opening up a larger assortment of goods. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 16 July 1915). Dihood is only mentioned briefly in early local newspaper records in the period from September 1914 when he advertised he had returned to Alexandra, to mid 1915. He states that he is better known as Charley Kamey, however Charley is now spelt differently as previously in 1905 it was spelt 'Charlie'.

February 1916

James was elected as Vice-Grand of the Anglesey Lodge I.O.O.F. (Yea Chronicle, Thursday 3 February 1916).



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

10 February 1916

A photograph of the new Roll of Honour at Yea was publishing in the Yea Chronicle and James was described as the being the photographer, of High Street, Yea. However no evidence has been found to suggest James was operating a photographic business from High Street, Yea. It is likely he was simply acting as a dedicated amateur photographer. (Yea Chronicle, 10 February 1916).

13 April 1916

Abomady now advertising his business as being removed to Alexandra. (Yea Chronicle, Thursday 13 April 1916).

September 1915

James was elected Secretary of the Yea Bowling Club. (Yea Chronicle, Thursday 23 September 1915).

19 October 1917

James advertising his photographic business to mothers of children (specialising in children's portraiture).

9 March 1919

In a tongue-in-check piece in the *Alexandra Standard*, James is voted as the most obliging man in Alexandra. It is stated 'He always has a smile, and is only too willing to do anything to oblige, either with car or himself, especially anything for the pretty girls'. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 9 May 1919).

28 December 1923

Badea, wife of James, died at her home in Hawthorn.

17 December 1925

Zarefa, sister of James, received a gift from parents of the Alexandra State School during a Christmas event which saw Father Christmas also attended with gifts for the children. Her gift given during a presentation by Mrs Connell who spoke of the very high regard in which Miss Abomady was 'held by the parents and the care and affection she bestowed on the children'. This was prior to her being married and leaving for Western Australia early the following year. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 18 December 1925).



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

1926

James married Ida Catherine Collins.

17 February 1926

Mr Robert Allen Shepherd married Zarefa Abomady, the only daughter of George Abomady at St. John's Church in Alexandria. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 5 March 1926). An earlier article noted how her school children had given the bride a great demonstration outside the St. John's Church. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 19 February 1926).

19 July 1926

James, along with Mr McCashney, are described as proprietors of the Alexandra Pictures. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 2 July 1926)

20 August 1926

James is running the Alexandra Pictures. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 20 August 1926).

16 December 1927

James advertising his radio business and his wireless receiving sets. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 16 December 1927).

17 February 1928

George Abomady died aged 67 at Alexandra. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 17 February 1928).

25 August 1928

Film Corporation Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) brought their Trackless Train to Alexandra on 25 August as part of a World Tour. It stayed Saturday and Sunday, leaving Monday. While in Melbourne, the Shrine of Remembrance Committee used the train to raise money.

c1916

A photograph of the members of St. John's Anglican Church at Alexandra was taken by James Abomady. It was then placed on card with his logo on the bottom right. This photo appears in this factsheet and is one of only two known photos taken by James to exist and the only one to be freely



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

published.

c1936

Around 1936 we find James operating a store specialising in men's apparel opposite the Alexandra Library in Grant Street.

Late 1930s

Left Alexandra for Western Australia, near where his sister was living.

5 January 1937

James and two members of his family for Western Australia. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 8 January 1937).

1 October 1948

The Alexandra Standard reported that Mrs J Abomady or Perth W.A. was spending a holiday at Alexandra. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 1 October 1948).

8 March 1954

James Abomady died at Perth, W.A. He was said to have been a friend of the Western Australia film industry. (The West Australian, Thursday 11 March 1954). He was cremated and memorialised at the Karrakatta Cemetery.

16 April 1954

An entry in the local newspaper reported the death of James in Western Australia. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 16 April 1954).

1960

Robert Shepherd died in Perth aged 59. He was cremated at the Karrakatta Cemetery in Western Australia.

1983

Zarefa Shepherd (née) Abomady, died aged 91 and was cremated and memorialised at the Karrakatta cemetery in Western Australia.

14 March 2018

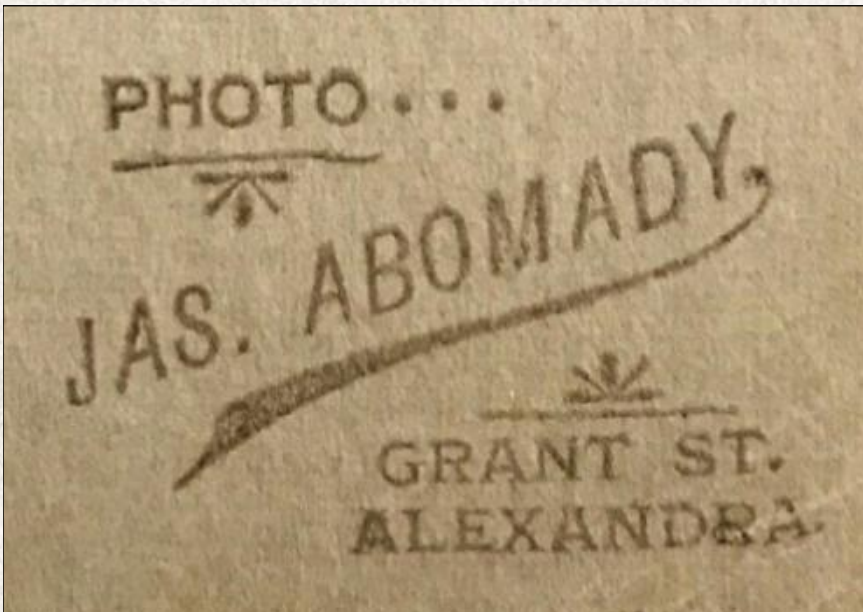
Artworkz commenced work on this factsheet.

GALLERY

RELATED IMAGERY

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



One of the few photographs known to exist and credited to James Abomady

Courtesy St. John's Anglican Church 2018

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Film Corporation Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) Trackless Train outside Parliament House on 1 January 1928. The trackless train also visited Alexandra on 25 August 1928 as a part of a World Tour. While in Melbourne, the Shrine of Remembrance Committee used the train to raise money.

Courtesy Museum of Australian Democracy

NEWSPAPERS

RELATED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEWSPAPERS

George Kamey,

BETTER KNOWN AS "CHARLIE,"

BEGS to inform the residents of Alexandria and district that he has secured the shop adjoining Mr Frederick Wheeler's Pharmacy, in Grant-street, Alexandria, which he has opened as a First-class

**JEWELLERS, WATCHMAKERS
AND REPAIRERS' SHOP.**

A First-class Melbourne Watchmaker and Jeweller has been Engaged and will be in attendance daily.

**ELECTRO PLATING DONE ON THE
PREMISES.**

**TWELVE MONTHS' GUARANTEE GIVEN.
GIVE HIM A CALL**

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 6 March 1903
Courtesy National Library Australia

First mention of George Abomady in business in Grant Street, Alexandria

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 6 March 1903
Courtesy National Library Australia

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEWSPAPERS

NOW OPEN. NOW OPEN

IN PREMISES LATELY OCCUPIED BY Mr ANGEL,
TAILOR, GRANT STREET, ALEXANDRA.

*** ***** ***

G. ABOMMADAY,

(WELL KNOWN AS CHARLIE KAMEY)

BEGS to inform the inhabitants of this district that he has secured through a Melbourne firm a large

Insolvent Stock of Drapery of all Kinds

LADIES' AND CHILDREN'S BLOUSES, SKIRTS & UNDERWEAR.
GENTS & BOY'S CLOTHING, SHIRTS & UNDERWEAR of all kinds

Boots & Shoes for Ladies, Gentlemen & Children

FANCY GOODS, HABERDASHERY, and the LATEST
DESIGNS IN JEWELLERY.

— NOTE THESE PRICES —

Men's Best Geelong Tweed Trousers,
4s. 6d.

Men's Dungarees (best) 2s 3d & 2s 6d.

Hugh Thompson's Water-tight Boots,
8s. pair.

Shirts and Under Flannels, all at low
prices.

Men's Suits from 15s. to £1, the best,
original price £2 10s.

Boy's Tweed Suits, from 3s. up to 5s.

Boots, all prices, from 1s. 6d. upwards.

Boy's Underclothing exceptionally
cheap.

Ladies' Umbrellas, 1s. 11d., worth 3s.

Ladies' Aprons, white or black, from
6d. upwards.

Ladies' Chemise, lace and insertion,
9d. to 1s., worth 2s. 6d.

Ladies' Knickers, 8d. to 1s., worth
2s. 6d.

Ladies' Boots and Shoes. A large
variety to choose from and cheap.

Towels, from 3d. up to 9d., good
quality.

Gent's Umbrellas, from 3s. to 5s.

Laces and Insertions almost given
away.

Corsets, 1s. 11d. up to 2s. 6d., ordinary
price 6s. 6d.

Calicoes, Sheetings, Flannels and
Nainsook at ridiculously low prices.

Children's Pinafores, from 6d. up to
2s. 6d., worth 3s. and 3s. 6d.

Ladies' Cashmere and Lustre Skirts,
in great variety, all best quality,
from 9s., usual price 17s. 6d.

A large variety Fancy Goods and
Haberdashery.

Alexandra & Yea Standard

Friday 24 March 1905

Courtesy National Library Australia

First mention of George Abomady the father of James at Alexandra.

Note the spelling of his surname which is different to later uses.

Alexandra & Yea Standard

Friday 23 March 1905

Courtesy National Library Australia



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEWSPAPERS

MOTHERS!

Have Your
Children Photographed

While they are Still Young

MANY a Mother and later, even the child itself, lives to regret that those early day smiles and expressions have not been permanently recorded in a portrait

Special attention and care given to
CHILDREN PORTRAITURE.

JAS. ABOMADY,
GRANT STREET, — ALEXANDRA.
'Phone No 23.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 19 October 1917
Courtesy National Library Australia

Advertisement for James Abomady in Grant Street at Alexandra in 1917

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 19 October 1917
Courtesy National Library Australia

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEWSPAPERS



**Tailoring
that meets with
Instant Approval**

Men of character naturally prefer clothes of character, therefore, the style and distinctiveness of our tailoring appeal to them immediately. Our tailored-to-measure Suits are pace-setters for the men of the district, yet at the same time all exaggerations of fashion are carefully avoided.

**Style and
Sterling Worth**

are gained by careful cutting and skilful needlework. Notice how accurately the linings are fitted, see also how beautifully the lapels are turned and finished. Lasting shape in coat fronts is assured by genuine hair-cloth linings.

In all our Suits you are assured that the masterly tailoring which you can see has been also applied to those parts of the garment which you cannot see.

We've now on hand a splendid assortment of newest weaves and shades in all-wool Tweeds and Serges. Come in and see them.

Abomady's.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 7 January 1921
Courtesy National Library Australia

One of the more fancy illustrated advertisements in the *Standard*, up to this time. The printing plate for the advertisement would have been supplied by the supplier and been a standardised plate for multiple retailers. It would have included a blank area for the individual retailer's name.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 7 January 1921
Courtesy National Library Australia



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEWSPAPERS

Wedding.

SHEPHERD—ABOMADY. — On the 17th February, 1926, at St. John's Church, Alexandra, by the Rev. S. H. Burridge, Robert Allen, elder son of William Shepherd, "Diaper Hill House," Waringstown, Co. Down, Ireland, to Zarefa, only daughter of George Abomady, of "Hawthorns," Alexandra.

Present Address— Manningham Grange, Quairading, Western Australia.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 5 March 1926
Courtesy National Library Australia

George's only daughter Zarefa married Robert Allen Shepherd at St. John's Anglican Church

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 5 March 1926
Courtesy National Library Australia



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEWSPAPERS

The Picture Night in aid of the special appeal of the Children's Hospital attracted a full house at the Shire Hall on Saturday last. An attractive programme was presented, and the special music supplied gratuitously by Mesdames Dick and Kerr (piano and violin) was an additional feature. Thanks to the efforts of the proprietors of the Alexandra Pictures (Messrs. Abomady and McCashney), the expenses were reduced to a minimum. The films screened were obtained by these gentlemen free of cost, except railway freight. They also gave the use their plant without charge, and the staff very willingly gave their services. Complete returns are not yet available (some tickets are still outstanding), but the Appeal will benefit to the extent of about £30 as a result of the effort.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 2 July 1926
Courtesy National Library Australia

James Abomady and Mr McCashney, proprietors of the Alexandra Pictures

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 2 July 1926
Courtesy National Library Australia

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEWSPAPERS

ELITE TALKIES.

(Reg.)

ALEXANDRA SHIRE HALL

Saturday, June 6.

A Big, New Idea in Melody-Drama!

M-G-M broke all the rules to bring you the year's biggest musical thrill! So did Naughty Marietta when she followed her heart to the end of the world!

JEANETTE MACDONALD NELSON EDDY
IN VICTOR HERBERT'S
Naughty MARIETTA
with FRANK MORGAN

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

Not Suitable for General Exhibition.

Also

Color Revue - "Star Night in Cocoanut Grove."

Color Travelogue - "Switzerland, the Beautiful."

Color Cartoon, "Calico Dragon."

Walt. Disney Color Cartoon, "Judgement Day."

Motor Cycle Cossacks. Australian News.

All short subjects for General Exhibition.

Back Seats 2s 2d. Front 1s 6d (Including tax).

Box Plan with C. Bulmer. Phone 92. No extra.

Coming - Saturday, June 13.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream."

"Murder in the Clouds."

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 6 June 1936
Courtesy National Library Australia

Alexandra Talkies advertisement in 1936

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 5 June 1936
Courtesy National Library Australia



Artworkz

Serving the Community