

# Ernest (Ernie) Edward Downes Lawley

06/11/1893 - 26/08/1964

**His Parents:** Edward and Elizabeth had four children. Ernest, Ethel, Elizabeth, Edgar and Norman. Edward brought his wife and baby (Ernest) by horse to live in Maleny in the 1890s. Elizabeth, (who was pregnant again) rode side-saddle for the first time to get to Maleny.

When he was 11yrs old, Ernest had a bad fall off his horse, landing on stones and injuring his hip. He was a patient at the General hospital in Brisbane for 12 months with his leg in plaster and because he was still a growing lad, one leg ended up about an inch and a half shorter than the other, leaving him with a limp. Ernest made himself very popular during his stay in hospital helping other children with their education. In 1905, when Ernest was 12, Elizabeth (his mother) died so Ernest left school to help his father on the farm and to look after the other children.

Ernest Edward Downes Lawley married Minnie Almira Catherine Clark on 04/07/1917. They moved to the 84 acres of scrub land at Reesville which they called "Arley", (named after the village which the Lawley's originally came from in Shropshire, England.) They cleared the scrub, built their home, dairy and farm buildings, and planted pasture and turned it into prime dairy farm land. Their Children; Evelyn, Alan and Val. Evelyn was born at home before Maleny had a hospital. Ernie possessed a natural talent for breeding dairy cattle.

In 1922, Ernie had high hopes for his favourite cow which he had bred, (Lorna of Arley) so he decided to walk her all the way to Landsborough railway siding, loaded with a couple of weeks provisions for them both. They had two train changes to Brisbane RNA Exhibition grounds, and Lorna won the prestigious prize of Champion Butterfat Cow of Queensland 1922, with such incredible production figures considering the ordeal she had gone through to get there. The milking record stood unbroken for over 40 years. That was his first "Lorna" and her bloodline is still being shown at agricultural shows around Australia even today. Amongst a collection of champion ribbons and trophy's he gathered over a forty year period is a Blue ribbon reading "Maleny 1922 Show", preserved and on display at Maleny Show 2022 along with other 1922 RNA memorabilia.

Ernie played a large part in the development of the State's Dairy Industry as stock from his stud have been used to help build up dairy herds in every corner of Queensland and Australia. Ernest also was recognised as one of the best Judges of his time for A.I.S. (Illawarra) cattle. Ernie and Alex Bryce along with another unknown put in 10 pound each to kick start the Maleny Agricultural show in 1922. His son, Alan, and then grandson, Edward, were very proud of his achievements, so of course, followed in his footsteps and also become heavily involved in the dairy section of their local show to carry on the family tradition with pride. Edward has been chief steward of the Maleny show dairy section since 1992.



### **Their Marriage and their family:**

Ernest was born in Brisbane 6<sup>th</sup> November 1893

Minnie was born at Berry NST 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1894

They married 4<sup>th</sup> July 1917 at Anne Street Presbyterian Church Brisbane.

When they were first married the property that is now "Arley" was 84 acres of standing scrub. Arley was named after a country/area in England of the same name. Ernest used to make tea by boiling the water on the primus, go into grandfather Lawley's (Edward) farm and milk then come home and work. He had a house cow with a bell around her neck but the bell used to get tangled up in the bushes, wouldn't ring and of course couldn't be found. Aplins were their closest neighbours then and the used to walk to see them.

The hospital had not been built when Evelyn was born, deliveries were at home and a nurse had been engaged but Evelyn decided to come early. Mother's neighbour Mrs King (presumably Johns Mother) who was also expecting at the time came and sat on the bed making paper sheets, newspapers sewn together, while she waited for the doctor. She helped with the delivery and there were no complications, but no anaesthetic or scales, and the doctor said the baby would have weighed about 7 pounds. She cried all night ` Grandfather Lawley said she had come early so would probably cry until she was due, or maybe she's like her father and doesn't like her mother's milk. The nurse arrived early the next morning. At the time there was a place n Brisbane, a "rest home for retired nurses" These nurses would come out into the country and look after the women when their babies were due. Sometimes the mother would engage the same nurse as each of their children came along, Mrs McLean was one. There was a doctor who stayed at the boarding house. Auntie Lizzie (Minnie's sister) was at home when Alan made his appearance about six weeks before he was due. The ladies had been busy picking up wood in the pig run, and brought it home to make

a fire. Mother woke in the middle of the night and realized things were not as they should be so Ernie had to get the horse, harness him up, get mother into the sulky and take her to the hospital in the very wee hours of a beautiful morning. The hospital had been opened 1920. Interesting to note that three generations of Lawley had been born at the old Maleny hospital, Alan in 1923, His son Edward in 1955, and Edwards's son Adam in 1978.

Val was also born at Maleny Hospital. When Val was born Mother, kept on saying "oh my back, my back". The nurse couldn't work out what was wrong, however she found out the next morning because mother had a burn on her back about the size of a twenty cent piece. The nurse had spilt some aesthetic and mother had lay in it. The nurse apologised.

## **THE LAWLEY FAMILY**

### **EDWARD LAWLEY 1862 – 1940**

Born 24/6/1862 in Hungerford, County of Shropshire, England, and son of Matthew Lawley.

When in his late teens, Edward Lawley came from Shropshire, England, to Buderim, where he bought 10 acres of land. He worked hard (growing bananas) and sold the land six or seven years later, when he had saved enough money to go back to England. There, on the 3/5/1892 he married Elizabeth DOWNES, (to whom he had been writing whilst working all this time) at St Michael's Church in Shrewsbury. (See her family history below)

They left England and went back to Brisbane to live, where the big flood 1893 hit them. It is thought that Edward was running a business for two Chinese ladies at the time, and the water destroyed most of the shop contents. Edward is known to have rowed a boat up Queen Street during the flood.

Always looking for work, Edward saw an advertisement in a paper he was reading, where T.C & J.C Dixon wanted workers in the Maleny area. He promptly came to Maleny, becoming Manager of their Dairy and Cheese Factory in Cedar Street and six months later brought his wife and baby (Ernest) to live. Edward led the horse that Elizabeth, (who was pregnant), rode side-saddle, for the first time, to get to Maleny.

They lived in a house which used to stand opposite the Maleny School Master's house in Cedar Street (the original site for the Maleny School, which is now the kindergarten). This was a collection point for mail to the district and also held and sold some food supplies.

A little later, they bought some land on what came to be known as Post Office Hill, (now known as Cloudwalk Estate) but was originally named Lawley Hill. Sam Sallaway built the cottage which was recently moved to the Historical Village. Bails were built and cattle were bought and the "Lawley" Dairy industry was under way!!

"The dairy industry of Maleny was said to have commenced in 1900-1901 along with early settlers Messrs, McCarthy, Simpson and Edward Lawley. Edward commenced butter making which was packed in kegs and taken to Landsborough on pack horse, to be railed to Brisbane. Two or three

years later the first cream separator was introduced into the district by Edward Lawley.” (Taken from: MALENY – Early Beginnings and Accomplishments. Printed around 1928? no date on publication)

On the 6th June 1903, the first Provisional Board of Directors of the Maleny butter Factory was appointed. Edward Lawley was one of those Director’s; the Butter Factory was registered later in the year as a Company and became “The Maleny Co-operative Dairy Association”.

Their children; Ernest (Ernie) Edward Downes, Ethel (Ettie) Mary Elizabeth, Edgar Walter Hill, and Norman Horace Edward, all of who weighed over 11lbs at birth!!

Edward also served as a councillor on the Landsborough Shire Council.

Edward continued to live on the farm with his son Edgar and wife Nellie and their family, until his death in 1940.

### **DOWNES FAMILY HISTORY**

Elizabeth DOWNES: Born 1865 in Shirlett, County Shropshire England to Valentine and Mary Downes. Died 13.8.1905 in Maleny Qld. Australia

1871 Census Information listed Household Members as:

Valentine Downes - Age 48

Ann Downes- Age 44

Agness Downes – Age 11

Ann Downes – Age 8

Emala Downes – Age 5

George Downes - Age 2

Fanny Downes – Age 4 months

Elizabeth Downes - Age 6 (her relationship is listed as Granddaughter but on Ancestry.com her parents are Valentine and Mary. )

Information found on Ancestry.com.