

Saturday openings

The CSU Regional Archives is extending its opening hours to include the first Saturday of every month. This initiative has been put in place to cater for those researchers who are unable to visit the archives on weekdays during normal business hours.

The next Saturday opening will occur on September 1, from 10am to 3pm.



Robertson Oval under water during the 1956 flood. (Tom Lennon collection RW1574/10)

Home ground advantage

what you need to know

■ The CSU Regional Archives are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building on South Campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue. Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with inquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straight-forward inquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour including copying and postage. For further information, phone 6925 3666, email archive@csu.edu.au, or visit our website at www.csu.edu.au/research/archives for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.

at the archives

Wayne Doubleday



Robertson Oval has been in the news lately due to the somewhat contentious nature of its current redevelopment.

The oval, part of the larger Bolton Park complex, has been the stage of many sporting and cultural events across the decades, including international cricket and rugby league matches, the visit of Queen Elizabeth in 1954 and the Wagga Mardi Gras celebrations.

It is the main football/cricket oval on Bolton Park and the home ground of the Wagga Tigers Australian Football Club.

In May 1963 the No. 1 Oval at Bolton Park was re-named in honour of Cameron McLean Robertson (1898-1972) who operated the Kelso Bakery in Baylis Street.

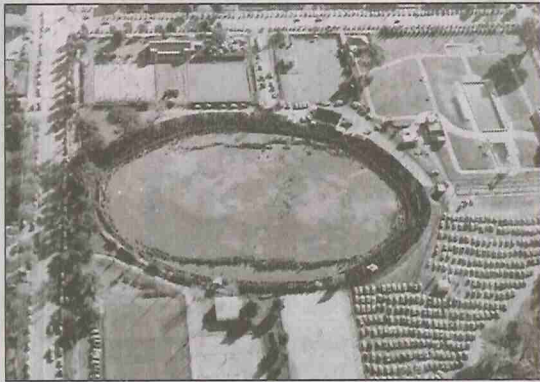
He was president of the Wagga and District Chamber of Commerce as well as being the chairman of the Community Advancement Fund during the 1940s and 1950s.

The grandstand at Robertson Oval was named after John Hamill (1900-1967) who was secretary of the Chamber of Commerce and the Community Advancement Fund for 16 years until his retirement in October 1961.

The Community Advancement Fund, which was formed in 1946, organised the Miss Wagga Wagga quest each year to raise funds for sporting, cultural, educational and social activities.

Grants, guarantees, loans and trophies were provided to organisations as varied as the Old Age Pensioners Association, Turvey Park School Piano Fund, Wagga Poultry Club and the 61st Battery Rifle Club.

It was during Robertson and Hamill's terms in office that the chamber, through the Community Advancement Fund, assisted the council with funding for the construction of the spectators' embankment surrounding Robertson Oval and other major improvements.



Aerial view of Robertson Oval during the 1960 rugby league match between Riverina and France. (Tom Lennon collection RW1574/203)

Rugby league

WHILE Robertson Oval is more commonly associated with Australian football than rugby league, it has been host to a number of international rugby league matches.

On one such occasion, May 25, 1960, an estimated 11,000 spectators packed the oval to witness France overcome a 6-2 half-time deficit to defeat a gallant Riverina side 25-14.

For Riverina, Ray Bevan (Tumut) and Bob Honeysett (Young) scored a try each, while John Jones (Tumut) kicked four goals.

Wagga High School defeated Christian Brothers 16-5 in a Scott Shield game, which was played as a curtain raiser.

The Daily Advertiser reported the French were treated to a mayoral reception hosted by Alderman Ivan Jack in the morning and after the game both teams and their supporters socialised at a buffet dinner in the Masonic Hall.

Cricket

MANY international cricket matches have also been held at Robertson Oval, including England versus Southern NSW in 1959 and 1971, New Zealand versus Southern NSW in 1980 and India versus NSW Country in 1991.

One interesting match was the World Series Cricket 50-over one-day game between the WSC World XI and WSC Cavaliers on the January 24, 1979.

Notable players included Denis Amiss (England), Zaheer Abbas (Pakistan), Mike Proctor (South Africa) and Tony Greig (England) for the World team, while Rohan Kanhai (West

Indies), Trevor Chappell, Rick McCosker and Max Walker (Australia) were some of the main players for the Cavaliers.

A good weekday crowd of 3200 was on hand to witness the Cavaliers easily account for the World XI team.

The match was a replacement game for the West Indies/World XI fixture, which was washed out in December.

The World XI batted first and were all out for 167 with only Haroon Rashid (51) and Tony Greig (31) offering any real resistance to the Cavaliers' attack led by Max Walker and Wayne Prior.

In reply, the Cavaliers reached the target of 168 runs without loss, with Rick McCosker (89) and Trevor Chappell (72) both remaining unbeaten.

While McCosker won the \$100 "man of the match" award, *The Daily Advertiser* reporter Peter Baker felt that Haroon's 51 runs in 68 minutes provided the "entertainment value" for the afternoon.

South African pace man Garth le Roux caused concern for the Cavaliers openers with his short-pitched deliveries and conceded only 19 runs from his 10 overs bowled.

Redevelopment

WHILE it remains to be seen just how the current redevelopment turns out, it is certain to be an improvement.

One recollection describes the oval, as it was in 1946, as: "An open paddock with four posts at each end. There are no lights for training, no clubrooms, no grandstand and no showers. All that stands beside this open paddock is a 10-foot by 20-foot timber shed for both clubs to get changed in. There is no soft green grassy playing surface. We have just come out of a hot summer and there is no watering system."

It was through the efforts of organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Community Development Fund that Robertson Oval is no longer just an open paddock, but a "Premier Sporting Venue".

Compiled by Paul O'Donnell
References: Morris, Sherry (1999) *Wagga Wagga - A History*; *The Daily Advertiser*, Wagga - 26/05/1960, 25/01/1979, 20/03/1986; *A Biographical Index of Wagga Wagga* by Sherry Morris; Wagga and District Chamber of Commerce, Register of Financial Assistance Authorised (CSURA-RW232/131); Wagga Tigers Football Club (CSURA-RW2887).