

The CSU Regional Archives is extending its opening hours to include the first Saturday of the 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 be on February 1 from 10am to 3pm.

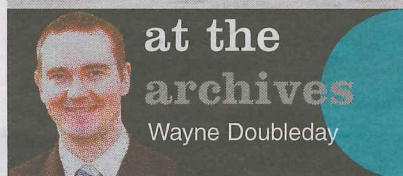
## what you need to know

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](mailto:archive@csu.edu.au), or visit our website at [www.csu.edu.au/research/archives](http://www.csu.edu.au/research/archives) for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.

# FESTIVE FANFARE FAVOURITES



**LET'S RACE (main):** At Lake Albert preparing for the Bathtub Derby is (from left) Geoff Way in "the-good-ship Rubber Ducky", Len Bale with "Miss Wagga", and Tom Wilms with "Back-Scrubber". [From *The Daily Advertiser* collection, RW17]



**at the archives**  
Wayne Doubleday

**a**ustralia Day is one of the major public holidays on the Australian calendar. Across the country, communities gather together for awards and naturalisation ceremonies and the day is filled with barbecues, parades, concerts, fireworks, and other community activities.

The anniversary of the First Fleet landing has long been a noted day across the country and has been marked by an official public holiday for more than 150 years in NSW, known as Anniversary Day.

## Rise Australia!

IN THE early years of the NSW colony, there was not much official recognition of January 26 being a celebrated anniversary. There are a few exceptions though; one being a dinner party held at the house of Isaac Nichols, the colony's postmaster, on January 27, 1817.

The 26th day of the month happened to fall on a Sunday, hence the selection of the 27th as the celebratory day. There were about 40 people in attendance at the party. Dinner was served at 5pm and afterwards, the company drank loyal toasts and sang a number of festive songs.

One of the stewards at the dinner wrote a "few appropriate verses for the occasion" and one of the gentlemen at the dinner sang these untitled verses to the tune of *Rule Britannia*.

The *Sydney Gazette* published the words in the February 1 issue that year: "When first Australia rose to fame, And Seamen brave explor'd her shore;

*Neptune with joy, with joy beheld their aim, And thus express'd the wish he bore: Rise, Australia! with peace and plenty crown'd Thy name shall one day be renown'd."*

The following year, 1818, Governor Macquarie ordered a 30-gun salute at 1pm in the afternoon from the Battery on Dawes Point on the anniversary, 30 being the number of years since the landing of the First Fleet. The governor also exempted all government employees from turning up to work on the day and gave each of them an extra allowance of one pound of meat.

## Anniversary Day

BY THE 1870s, the public holiday was fully established as an annual occasion. Shops and banks would close for the official public holiday in celebration of the anniversary of the landing.

The pubs would open for business and sports were the order of the day.

Horse racing seems to have been a popular choice for Anniversary Day. In 1869, the Mangoplah Annual Races were "held, as usual, at the Mangoplah Inn (Mrs Hyland's), on Anniversary Day".

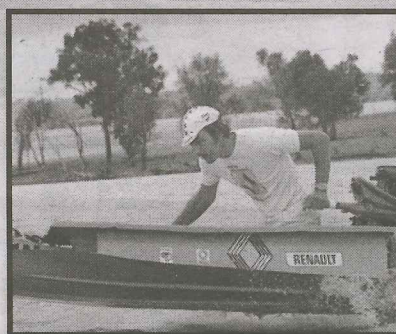
The Alfredtown Races provided a place for punters to try their luck on the holiday in 1870. In 1872, Junee and Mangoplah offered racing for the sporting citizens of the area.

The next year, a race meeting was held at Lower Tarcutta Inn, under the auspices of Mr Hassett, and in 1874, it was Forest Hill's turn.

Anniversary Day, 1873, was a particularly memorable one for Wagga residents.

A notice appeared in the *Wagga Advertiser* on Saturday, January 25, 1873, that certain storekeepers had agreed to close their places of business on Monday to celebrate the anniversary of the foundation of NSW. The notice was headed the "Early Closing Association" and was signed by eight leading businessmen.

The strange thing about this is it



**CHAMPION (inset):** One of the highlights of the 1976 Australia Day celebrations in Wagga was the Jaycees Bathtub Derby on Lake Albert. This photograph shows the 1975 champion, Greg Moore of Sydney, competing on the cold blustery day. [From *The Daily Advertiser* collection, RW17]

appears that the government had chosen Tuesday, January 28, as the public holiday – in choosing to close on Monday, Wagga's storekeepers had decided to give themselves an extra long weekend.

And all the shops, bar one or two, followed suit in closing their doors that day. The newspapers reported, "... the unhappy people, having really nothing to do by way of amusement, hung about the streets, and looked the picture of woe and wretchedness ...".

Tuesday was a little more organised. A cricket match was played between the single and married members of the Wagga Cricket Club.

The report of the match stated that the "play was tolerably good, but the single men ... achieved an easy victory over the Benedicts".

## The Wagga Australia Day Committee

FOR the next 100 years January 26 was, more or less, just another long

weekend – with a couple of exceptions, such as the Sesquicentenary (and Day of Mourning) in 1938. Every year, Wagga and the surrounding areas gave over their towns to sporting events.

One of the few visible concessions to the anniversary was the naturalisation ceremonies for the "New Australians".

But 1976 marked the beginning of a change in Wagga, when Australia Day started to become more like the celebratory event it is today.

The Wagga Australia Day Committee was formed to prepare and organise displays and events for the Australia Day long weekend.

A street fair kicked off proceedings at 10.30am on Saturday, January 24, followed by a model boat race on the Wollundry Lagoon and the Wagga Gun Club shoot.

An art and photographic exhibition was opened in the afternoon and a street parade began at 3pm, starting from the Woolworths car park and running all the way down to Hampden Bridge.

At 4pm the Bushwackers and Bullockies Band performed on the North Wagga flats.

Other parades, displays and events held over the three days included:

- The Pony Club gymkhana
- The Judo Club display
- The Wagga and District Car Club motorkhana
- The Wagga Gem Club sapphire panning display at Lake Albert (along with an agate throwing contest)
- The bathtub derby
- A vintage film festival
- A tennis tournament at the Wagga Lawn Courts
- The Bushwackers Ball
- The Wagga Model Aero Club pageant

Compiled by Jillian Kohlhausen

References: *The Sydney Gazette*, 1 Feb 1817, 24 Jan 1818; *The Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 20 Jan 1869, 22 Jan 1870, 20 Jan 1872, 25 Jan 1873, 29 Jan 1873, 24 Jan 1874; *The Daily Advertiser*, 24 Jan 1976, 26 Jan 1926.

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**The Daily Advertiser**

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