

What you should know

■ The CSU Regional Archives is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore building at the 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 enquiries. For those unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straightforward enquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour, including copying and postage.

■ For further information, phone 6925 3666, email archive@csu.edu.au or visit the website at www.csu.edu.au/research/archives for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.

Delivery days

A look back at the time it came to the door



at the archives
Wayne Doubleday

While milk continues to be delivered to houses and businesses today, it is the way it was supplied that strikes the most interest. Bulk milk that had been measured in half pint, pint and quart sizes was poured into billy-cans and placed in a special area on the veranda or in a side wall of the house. Often money was left under the billy-can for the vendor to collect.

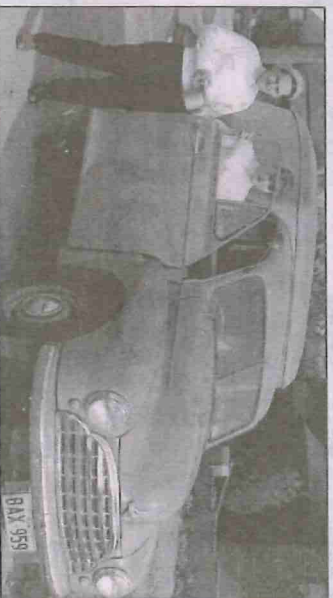
Prior to the development of suburban areas and their subsequent shopping villages, such as the Koorringal Mall, Turvey Tops and the Lake Village, many Wagga residents relied on the special delivery of staple household items such as milk and bread. It seems that as the town continued to develop, alternative ways of delivering basic provisions were also needed.

In the early 1960s, strict health regulations began to be enforced, which meant any retail milk had to be sold in "sealed" containers. One local newspaper in August 1960 reported that the selling of bulk milk over the counter in cafes and milk bars would be banned due to the high risk of contamination.

It was only permissible for milk bars and the like to sell unsealed milk in the form of milkshakes and so on. This command also prevented shops from gaining an unfair advantage over milk vendors, because bulk milk was



Tom Lennon's photos from collection RW1574 give us a glimpse of the days of home delivery.



much cheaper than that which was sold in sealed containers.

Similarly various local bakeries continue to deliver bread to locations around town, but quintessentially the most obvious change has been the mode of transportation used in such delivery services.

On August 5, 1964 the use of the horse-drawn cart for a local bakery came to a necessary and yet nostalgic end. Horses "Nigger" and "Toby", who between them had clocked up 40 years of service with the Kelso Bakery were replaced by motorised vehicles, thus signalling an end of an era. It was reported the decision to change was primarily based on economics. The two delivery men for the bakery were forced to obtain driver's licences upon which one of them remarked: "You can't whistle up a horse, but you can't whistle up a van."

The ice-man is a great example of how the absolute call for a particular service can change with the advent of modern technology.

Before refrigerators were a commonplace appliance, it was necessary to devise ways of keeping perishable foods cold, particularly in the summer months.

The ice-man would deliver to homes and businesses, slabs of cut ice which were placed in an ice chest. The ice would be delivered every couple of days and often created a lot of interest to the local children, who would anticipate a piece to be broken off for them.

In the summer of 1960, it was acknowledged that this "ice-age" would soon liquefy. It was reported in February of 1960 in the *Riverina Express* that only 280 blocks were sold each week.

compared to 400 blocks the same time the previous year, and that only 80 houses were still requiring a regular delivery of ice.

With more people acquiring refrigerators, it was evident that in the near future it would not be worthwhile to continue delivering ice. Some might also remember past occupations such as the "bottle-o", the "chimney sweep" or the "clothes prop" vendor. While these activities may seem a little peculiar to younger generations, the notable feature of all of them would be the level of personalised service.

Now with the introduction of self-service checkouts, it just goes to show that the way services are delivered will surely continue to change.

■ References: *Riverina Express* 15/2/1960, 26/8/1960 and *The Daily Advertiser* 6/8/1964

Paper preservation

The collections the archive receives arrive in varying states of deterioration. It is interesting to note that the age of the paper doesn't always determine its condition. There are many factors that can contribute to the deterioration of paper records. Some are immediately visible; some are not.

First and foremost, paper itself is a major culprit in its own destruction, due to its acidic nature. The acidity is from two sources – the wood fibres that make up the physical base of the paper and the chemical additives used to enhance the paper's whiteness and durability.

All organic materials break down when they are exposed to the energy contained in ultraviolet wavelengths of light. The organic components of paper are no exception. Storing records out of direct sunlight will prevent discolouration and fading.

The regulation of temperature and humidity are very important for archives. Being made of wood fibres, paper will expand and contract in the same manner as wood itself, when the temperature and humidity rises and falls.

making it weak and brittle.

Certain climatic conditions are also extremely conducive to certain bacteria, fungi and pests such as silverfish, cockroaches, white ants and booklice. They all love paper, high temperatures and humidity. Most archives keep their temperature and humidity at about 20C and 50 per cent relative humidity.

The ways people choose to arrange their records can also have a detrimental effect on the longevity of paper.

Plastic sleeves are commonly used to keep similar records together. However, there are certain types of plastic that are not such a good idea. Polypropylene plastic is archivally sound – it does not contain the harmful gases that Poly Vinyl Acetate (PVA) does.

PVA plastics release gases when they come into direct contact with photocopied and laser printed paper.

This type of plastic is easily recognised when we find paper has stuck to a plastic folder or sleeve. When they are pulled apart, the words or image on the paper have been

transferred to the plastic.

It is well-known that metal corrodes. And yet many people insist on using metal fasteners, paper clips, and staples to hold their records together. When the metal corrodes, it begins to eat into the paper, tearing it and leaving rust marks.

When paper has been torn, a common repair method is to use sticky tape. It looks fine for a few years, but the tape soon turns yellow and falls off. The yellow remains behind on the paper, leaving a stain. If the aim is for longevity, it is better to leave the paper with the tear as it is.

Things to remember to improve the longevity of paper records:

- Use good quality paper
- Use non-acidic storage containers that block out light
- A good storage environment is kept at 20C and 50 per cent relative humidity
- Use polypropylene plastics
- Do not use metals or sticky-tape to hold papers together