

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 July 7, from 10am to 3pm.



Above: Wagga City Council Chambers decorated and ready for the February 1954 arrival of Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh (RW1574/49/488). Below: The 1951 newspaper headline announcing the imminent visit of the then Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh to Wagga in 1952.

'Greatest day' recalled

Memories sparked by jubilee

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



The recent royal jubilee celebrations have brought back memories of Wagga's "greatest day" when Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh visited the city on February 13, 1954. But while planning had swung into action six months before, it was not the first time in the late 1940s to early 1950s that arrangements had been made for a royal visit to the city. Indeed, three British royal tours that never were made headlines in that period. Twice announcements were made of a visit to Australia by King George VI, Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret and one of a planned Australia-New Zealand visit by the then Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh. In August 1948, Wagga's mayor, alderman Les Barrand, told the city council it appeared the royal family would visit Wagga on April 9, 1949. Immediately steps were taken to begin construction of buildings at Bolton Park, to paint the city council chambers and purchase flags and bunting. Ensuing meetings of council continued to confirm arrangements and, by October 1948 a route of the royal procession and order of proceedings for their welcome were outlined in

PRINCESS AND DUKE TO VISIT WAGGA ON APRIL 9 NEXT

Full details not available

The Minister for Agriculture (Mr. E. H. Graham) has been advised that Wagga is to be included in the itinerary of the Royal tour by Her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh next year.

The date of the visit to Wagga will be April 9, 1952. Mr. Graham states that full details of the arrangements will be announced later.

"I am sure that the people of Wagga, surrounding towns and district will welcome this opportunity to express their loyalty, and I am particularly glad that our Royal visitors will have this opportunity of visiting our city and the rural area of the Riverina," he said.

LAST ROYAL VISIT TO WAGGA ONLY 6 YEARS AGO

The news that Wagga has been included in the N.S.W. itinerary of Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh recalls the last occasion a member of the Royal family visited this city.

It was on November 5, 1945, and it began with his arrival when the then Governor-General of Australia, the Duke of Gloucester, accepted the invitation of the Wagga Gymkhana and Sports Club to attend the Riverina championship rodeo and horse show.

Second visit His Royal Highness was paying his second visit to Wagga—he first came here in 1944 during his tour of Australia.

A tightly-packed programme had been arranged for the Duke's visit in 1945. The showground was crowded when a military guard of honor from Kanooka

council's minutes.

Then, in November 1948 came news of the cancellation of the tour due to the illness of King George VI.

Through 1949 and early 1950, reports from time to time suggested the King, Queen and Princess Margaret would resume their visit as the King's health improved until, in September 1950, prime minister RG Menzies announced there was "every hope" of their visit taking place early in 1952.

It was noted, however, that the 1952 tour would feature a less strenuous itinerary.

Government officials remained optimistic in 1951 that the King's visit would go ahead, but on June 6, 1951, a metropolitan newspaper carried a cautious report that if the King's doctors advised against his Australia-New Zealand tour, the governments might issue an invitation to Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh.

On November 27, 1951, *The Daily Advertiser* carried a front-page story hailing the visit by the Princess and Duke to Wagga on April 9, the following year.

Wagga City Council again swung into action, confirming the tour and setting aside a budget of £2540 (more than \$5000) for decorations and entertainments.

Council also took steps for the gazettal of a public holiday in Wagga on April 9, 1952, to mark the visit.

Once again, this royal tour was not to be. Early in February 1952, while Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh were in Kenya on their way to their Australian tour, King George VI died.

The new Queen Elizabeth II cancelled the tour and returned to Britain.

In Wagga, as Britain prepared for the coronation of its new queen, hopes were high that the city would be included in her planned 1954 visit to Australia.

And so, in February 1954, the decorations came out, the procession followed a planned route and thousands cheered as the long-awaited royal visitors finally came to Wagga.

Compiled by Nancy Blacklow

References: RW2608/32-34, Minutes of Wagga City Council meetings - August 27, October 6, October 29, 1948, November 30, December 21, 1951; *The Daily Advertiser*, Wagga Wagga - August 28, November 24, 1948, November 27, 1951, February 7, 1952, January 17, February 7, February 21, 1953; *The Sydney Morning Herald* - September 6, 1950; *Sunday Herald*, Sydney - December 24, 1950; *The Argus*, Melbourne - June 6, 1951.