

# Wagga's big hit

## Saturday openings

The CSU Regional Archives is currently 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 August 3, 2013, 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.

## Residents swing into newest sporting craze in 1895

### at the archives

Wayne Doubleday



#### Wagga Wagga Country Club

**G**olf has been a popular sport in Wagga since the Wagga Golf Club commenced operations at the racecourse on July 5, 1895.

Residents took to the game with great enthusiasm – so much so that, by the mid 1920s, overcrowding had become a problem.

Unfortunately, the physical constraints of the racecourse links ensured that extension was not a viable option at that location.

#### New links

At a meeting, held at the Murrumbidgee Pastoral and Agricultural Association rooms on July 5, 1928, a group of about 60 enthusiasts – headed by solicitor James Sheekey – decided to construct a new club on the foreshore of Lake Albert.

Mr D G Soutar, the golf professional from the Moore Park course in Sydney, was engaged to lay out new links on the 100-acre property.

The total length of the course was to be about 6300 yards with a half-mile frontage to the lake.

It was estimated that the cost of building the new course would be approximately £5000.

This did not include extensions to the clubhouse, the laying down of lawn tennis courts and construction of a swimming pool, all of which were part of the committee's plans.

It was suggested that funding could be achieved by the issue of £50 debentures which would, in due course, be redeemed with the profits being reinvested into the club.

Plans for the clubhouse included a bar, kitchen, billiard room and members and associates locker rooms, while a verandah, to be constructed at the rear of the building, would be suitable for dancing or other social purposes.

Provision was made on the preliminary survey for the use of a triangular area in the centre of the property as a nine hole miniature course.

The links were officially opened on Saturday, May 3, 1930 by the mayor, Alderman Edward Collins, with approximately 400 people in attendance including visitors from Wagga, Henty, Coolamon, Junee,

Ganmain and other clubs.

During the afternoon, about 70 pairs took part in a mixed foursomes event while a very successful social evening was held at the club house later that night.

#### Doing it tough

CONDITIONS for members were vastly different during the club's early years than they are today.

Access to the clubhouse, which was lit by "Gloria" kerosene lamps, was via a very bumpy dirt track and sheep were still being agisted on the course.

The course was often closed from August until March each year, as dandelion infestation made play impossible.

The greens, fairways and bunkers were covered in the weed and many months of hard work was needed to restore the course to a playable condition.

Water was pumped from the lake and stored in a tank located close to the 10th tee.

This continued until after World War II, when town water was connected.

Like the rest of the local community, the Country Club did its best to support the war effort during World War II.

All servicemen from the district were given honorary membership for the period of their service.

The proceeds from raffles and social functions were donated to various fundraising organisations such as the Mayors' Patriotic Fund and the Spitfire Fund.

In 1942, the 12th and 13th greens were made available for vegetable growing and a roster of members was organised to tend the gardens.

A social evening saw more than £50 being raised to purchase cabbage and onion seeds, but unfortunately a combination of rabbits, hares and a poor growing season made for very meagre results.

Better conditions during the following year resulted in almost four tonnes of onions being harvested.

#### "Murder" on the golf course

WHILE pests such as dandelion, rabbits and hares may have made life difficult for greenkeepers and volunteer vegetable gardeners, crows were the most despised creatures at the Country Club in the



These ladies are obviously well-versed in the technique of retrieving golf balls from the creeks at the Wagga Country Club [from the Tom Lennon collection, RW1574/85/566].

early 1950s.

During the 1951 Country Club Open Championship men were hired to protect players from the wholesale theft of golf balls by a large gallery of crows.

*The Daily Advertiser* reported that the committee "wisely stationed a number of men armed with double-barrels at vantage-points on the course and a few well-directed shots hunted these menaces away.

As one player humorously remarked in the club house, "There seemed to be more gunmen on the course than in Chicago".

This tactic seemed to have only a

temporary effect, as a few weeks later it was reported that three Country Club members recovered 71 golf balls from tree stumps in paddocks adjoining the course.

Apparently members had tried dipping the golf balls in kerosene but the crows seemed to like it.

● Compiled by Paul O'Donnell  
References: CSURA Tom Lennon Collection, RW1574/85/566 and RW1574/8/253; *The Daily Advertiser*: 6/7/1928; 7/7/1928; 13/8/1928; 15/8/1928; 4/5/1930; 5/10/1950; 10/5/1951; 20/6/1951; 16/11/1952; 6/5/1980.

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The Daily Advertiser

Wagga Wagga City Council

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