

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 April 6, 2013, from 10am to 3pm.



The cabstand in Little Gurwood Street (now Sturt Street) outside the Wagga Court House, before 1911. If you look very closely, you can see the sign saying "cab stand" attached to the tree in front of the horse [from The Keating Album, courtesy of the Wagga City Library].

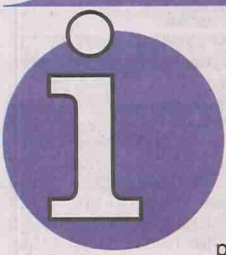
Wagga's horse and cart history

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 02 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



It is not known when the horse-drawn cabs started business in Wagga, but it is estimated to be circa 1890.

They operated continuously until perhaps around 1918 when motorised cars became much more popular.

It was at this time, too, that the mail and other deliveries were transferred to motorised transport from Wagga to Tumbarumba.

Early cab and hackney carriage ranks in the main part of Wagga were to be found on the north-eastern side of Fitzmaurice Street, the south-eastern side of Gurwood Street, and outside the Court House in Little Gurwood Street.

THE WRONG WAY

BY OCTOBER 1914, the flow of traffic had increased and the cab and car stand in Gurwood Street became an issue to be discussed by the Wagga council, which was fairly evenly divided on the question.

It was recommended by council that Inspector Palmer be instructed to enforce the by-law in connection with the Gurwood Street cabs facing the wrong way. At the time, contrary to traffic regulations, the cab drivers had to travel on the wrong side of the street to reach the stand. It was eventually decided that the stand would remain, but cabs must face the west.

This was a most unfortunate decision for the horses because of the glare of the setting sun and

the whirling dust constantly blowing from the west was considered to be cruel to the horses.

It would appear that the cab stand was later changed to the northern side of Gurwood Street.

Wagga cabmen were, without exception, known to be very competent and careful drivers, therefore accidents did not occur very often.

The by-law relating to driving on the left side of the street was the only argument for changing the position of the horses and the transfer of the cab stand.

It was natural that the cabmen wanted to be facing Fitzmaurice Street, so that they could go forward for the turn into the main street.

The horses were affected by the intense heat of the summer and it was essential that their comfort be considered.

There was one occasion when a cab horse dropped dead in front of the Carrington Hotel when Kenyon's bus was being driven to the railway station.

The horse was in good condition and it was thought that the death was probably due to heat apoplexy.

THE SALVOS AND CABSTANDS

IN NOVEMBER 1914, the corner of Fitzmaurice and Gurwood Streets on Saturday nights had become very congested due to the presence of both the large cab stand and the Salvation Army.

Wagga council advised the Salvation Army to conduct their charitable fund-raising on the southern side of Little Gurwood Street instead of behind the cab stand, in order to help reduce the congestion.

The Salvation Army asked council to reconsider their decision in shifting them and Alderman Dobney moved that they be allowed to stay and that on Saturday nights the cabstand be limited to three cabs. This motion was carried.

Owing to the depression in 1914-15, licensed cab owners submitted a petition to the Wagga council asking that license fees for public vehicles be reduced. The cabmen were fortunate in so much that it was decided that fees for licenses and for transfers of licenses for vehicles and drivers be reduced.

Fees were: four-wheeled vehicles £1 (one pound); two-wheeled vehicles 10/- (ten shillings); driver's license 5/- (five shillings); for each transfer of vehicle licence 2/6d (two shillings and sixpence).

ACCIDENTS

STREET accidents were well reported in the *Wagga Advertiser/Daily Advertiser*. As with motor vehicles today, some were badly smashed and others escaped with very little damage. The following are just a few examples of traffic mishaps in Wagga:

● *The Daily Advertiser*, April 9, 1892

"A horse attached to a buggy the property of MC Lyne, stock inspector, bolted from Mr Rudd's saddler establishment, and careered madly down Fitzmaurice thence along Kincaid, Trail and Gurwood streets and then on to the Albury road. After travelling a couple of miles, the buggy came in contact with a stump and was reduced to general smash. Fortunately at the time of the occurrence, there was very little traffic in the street and beyond the damage to the vehicle no other injury was sustained."

● *The Daily Advertiser*, February 6, 1914

"BOLTING HORSES - When Wm Moffatt, cabdriver, was about to get into his cab near the railway station at 5.45 yesterday afternoon the pair of horses attached to the vehicle took fright and ran off. Moffatt was knocked down and his arm injured. The horses bolted down Baylis and Fitzmaurice streets to the imminent risk of a large number of persons and vehicular traffic which was about at the time, and eventually were brought to a standstill on the bank of the Parken Pagan Lagoon in North Wagga. The vehicle struck a tree after the horses left the roadway on the north side of Hampden Bridge and the cab was considerably damaged. W McGrath exhibited good horsemanship in catching the runaways."

■ References: *Wagga Wagga, A History* Sherry Morris; *Wagga Council Minutes*: Oct 29, 1914, Dec 10, 1914, Dec 23, 1914; *The Daily Advertiser* Oct 30, 1914; Jan 1, 1915; Jan 8, 1915; ■ Compiled by June Dietrich