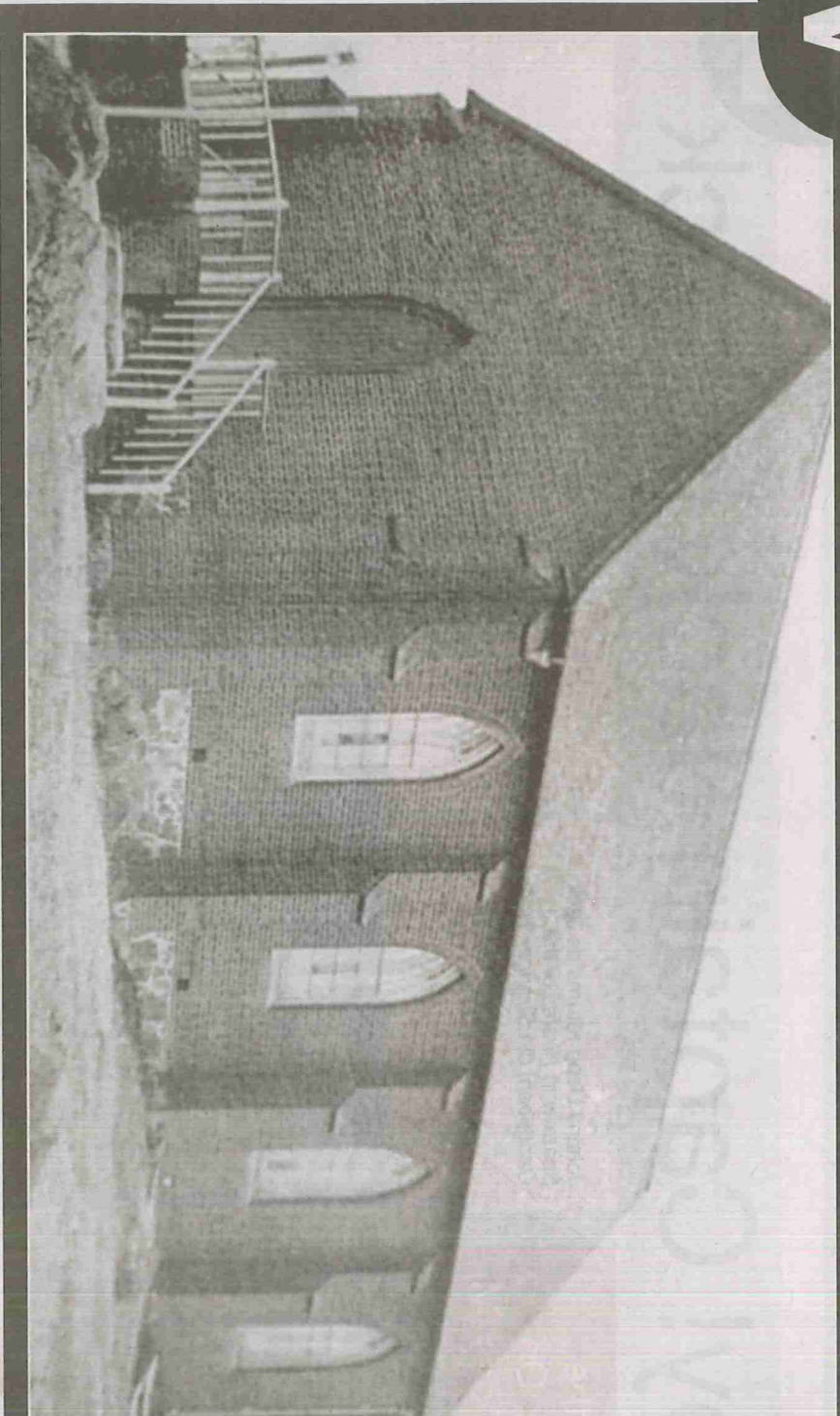


## Saturday opening

The CSU Regional Archives is currently extending its opening hours to include the first Saturday of every month. On these days, the archives will be open from 10am to 3pm. The next Saturday opening will be on June 4. This trial initiative has been put in place to cater for those researchers who are unable to visit the archives on weekdays during normal business hours. It is hoped that enough researchers and visitors will avail themselves of this service to warrant it becoming a permanent occurrence.



The original St John's Church on Church Hill. Photograph: courtesy of St John's Anglican Church Archives.

# Parish days

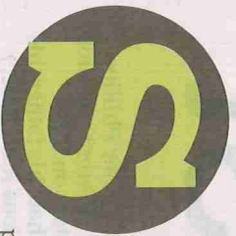
## As Wagga grew, so did St John's

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](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.



at the archives  
Wayne Doubleday



† John's Church of England community provided stability to the early pioneers. The church was, of course, a religious foundation, but was much more than that to the people of Wagga because it provided a centre for social interaction.

It is believed that Rev CF Brigstocke of Yass, may have visited Wagga as early as 1840 to administer the Eucharist by the Rites of the Church of England (now the Anglican Church of Australia).

From circa 1840 to 1854, the spiritual needs of the Wagga Church of England Parish were supplied by itinerate ministers including CF Brigstocke, W Lisle, TH Wilkinson, S Fox, John Davis Metewether and Henry Elliott who travelled the circuit of Yass, Tumut, Albury and surrounding districts.

The first Bishop of Australia, Bishop Broughton, held a well-attended service at the old Court House in Wagga, on February 9, 1850 – for this reason, the celebration of 150 years of the Anglican Parish of Wagga at St John's was held in 2010.

The first building of the parish was a parsonage for the use of clergymen and was erected adjacent to St John's; this was replaced by a large two-storey rectory in Baylis Street built in 1875, with a third rectory in Peter Street built in 1934.

The present rectory is adjacent to St John's overlooking the Murrumbidgee River and was built during the 1964 renovations project.

Rev RW Young was appointed as the first full-time rector in January 1858 and it was during his incumbency that the first purpose-built church was erected.

It was in this church that services were held for 16 years until it was demolished on account



The Venerable Archdeacon William Powell, appointed to the Wagga Parish from 1871 to 1894. Photograph: courtesy of St John's Anglican Church Archives.

of the crumbling state of the building.

After much debate, a decision was made to build a new church on the present flood free site on Church Hill instead of in Baylis Street, where many people thought would have been a more appropriate position. The original foundations were used for a new and more imposing church on the existing site.

The present St John's church was designed by Charles Nixon and erected by Charles Hardy around 1875 with the outside aisles, narthex, clergy vestry and bell tower being added to the original building by Messrs Hardy Bros from the design of WJ Monks in 1912.

A *Parochial Memoir* was written in St John's Service Register No.2 (1880 to 1889) by the rector, Rev Dean Powmall (1875 to 1894) which stated that during the rebuilding, services were held in the Masonic Hall from June 13, 1875 and, although the new church was far from complete, services in the new building commenced from May 14, 1876.

From 1858 to 1900, the clergymen who administered Wagga Parish were RW Young (1858 to 1862); S Fox (1862 to 1867); SS Harpur (1867 to

1870); WH Powmall (1871 to 1894) and GA Carver (1895 to 1902).

Well-known citizens of Wagga acted as churchwardens of St John's and included H Baylis, G Forsythe, AB Morgan, TA Thomson, C Hardy, WA Cotter, A Hooke, R Armstrong, HC Rose, HB Fitzharding, GW Commins.

There is an interesting notation made by Rev Powmall in the service register on April 1, 1883: "Fire in town. Congregation dismissed after prayers in confusion." Further research revealed that the fire was in Fitzmaurice Street in the premises of Mr John McGrath's Riverine Saddle Factory.

The fire started about 8pm and most people were either at their respective church services or out walking "in the stillness of the liquid balmy night". The major concern was that the new store of Copland and Co was "the spot where the lurid gleams issued". The recently opened Copland & Co had brought much cheaper living to the community and it was feared that this could be lost.

As the population of Wagga grew, the need for expansion to fill the needs of the church community was evident and Anglican churches and halls were built at other centres and outlying districts.

However, with social changes and the advent of modern transport the need for these churches diminished.

The Anglican Parish of Wagga now consists of St John's in Church Street; St Luke's, South Wagga; St Mary's, North Wagga; and St Saviour's, at Ladysmith.

Many of St John's furnishings and the beautiful stained glass windows are memorials from pioneers and their families and create a silent reminder to wonder if the passage of time has fulfilled their dreams and hopes for the parish.

St John's social and religious heritage and its historical continuity is assured with the extensive archives that are being collected, preserved and documented by Phyllis De Jersey, Leanne Diessel and Judy Buick.

References: *The Parish of Wagga Centenary Book* 1851 to 1951; St John's Wagga Service Register (No.2) 1880 to 1889; *Wagga Advertiser* April 7, 1883; photographs supplied by St John's Anglican Church Archives.

■ Compiled by: June Dietrich