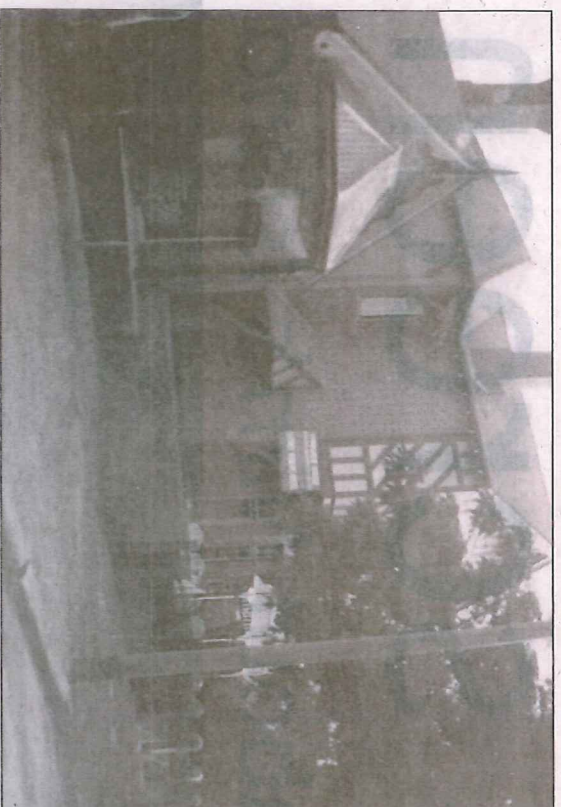


What you should know

■ 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 people 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.



These two photos are among those donated to the Regional Archives by Mrs Olive Jardine, a former guest of the hostel. The photograph on the left is of the hostel itself, taken from the Victory Memorial Gardens across the road. The one on the right is of Bess Duncanson, Dot Stebbing and dog Michael, a regular character in the photograph collection.

Service women looked after at hostel

Lent hands help

at the archives
Wayne Doubleday



The Wagga Wagga Service Women's Hostel was founded in 1943 to accommodate service women who had been training in the areas around Wagga during the course of World War II.

Situated on Morrow Street, the hostel operated originally under the guise of the YWCA leave house for young country girls.

To support the war effort, the NSW Regional Committee, with the aid of the Australian Comforts Fund and Wagga Mayor's Patriotic Fund, contributed to the refurbishment and staffing of the hostel to cater for service women and trainees at a cost of £2000.

Lady Gowrie, wife of the governor-general, who officiated at the opening on April 3, 1943, commented the service women were going "to feel like girls again", rather than return to their homes "hard-faced" after war training and service.

The hostel would accommodate up to 54 guests and included amenities for washing, ironing and entertaining.

Elizabeth "Bess" Duncanson was appointed matron of the hostel and was assisted by a Mrs Curtis, whose husband was in the army at the time.

Bess migrated to Australia from Scotland, aged 25. She initially worked as a housekeeper, and later owned a small mixed business in Botany.

After the death of her husband in 1931, Bess sought work in the canteen of "Snows", or

Snowball Bros, a large dress-manufacturing store in Sydney.

Bess's contribution to the hostel, where she remained the first and only matron, was recognised by the joint honorary secretary of the Wagga Wagga Mayor's Patriotic and War Fund at the cessation of her employment, where she had "received glowing tributes regarding her personality and capabilities".

She returned to Sydney after the war and was appointed matron at one of WD & HO Willis's leave houses for country girls at the Caxton Park Tempe Complex, until 1956, when she joined the Emergency Housekeeping Association.

She retired four years later and died on September 14, 1991.

At a time when emotions were strained, the hostel was a special place for many young women who, not only forged many enduring friendships, but also tasted a sense of independence for the first time.

At the conclusion of the war, the hostel was returned to the YWCA and catered for civilians passing through the Wagga area. In the early 1980s, the hostel was converted into The Manor restaurant.

■ **References:** *The Daily Advertiser*, 1943; *Service Women's Hostel papers*, RW1572, CSU Regional Archives collection

■ **LAST** month, the Wagga Wagga City Council (WWCC) minute books were transferred to the custody of the Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, as part of the distributed management agreement with State Records NSW and the archive's role as a regional repository.

This ensures that important local records of significance, like the WWCC minute books, remain in the area where they were created, and are accessible to the general public.

The series of minute books held at the Regional Archives begins with the first official

meeting of council, on March 15, 1870, and ends on October 26, 1976.

Minutes from November 1976 to the present remain in the custody of the Wagga Wagga City Council.

These minute books provide us with an invaluable record of the city's history and give an insight into early procedures and the many changes that have taken place in local government since 1870.

The Municipalities Act of 1867 allowed for the establishment of a municipality, on the provision that at least 50 residents, liable to be assessed for municipal taxes, could be found to sign a petition for such.

In June 1869, a petition of 104 residents, proposing that a municipality be established at Wagga Wagga, was forwarded to the Governor of New South Wales.

Subsequently on March 15, 1870, the "Borough of Wagga Wagga" was proclaimed.

The election of aldermen to the borough council was held on June 11, 1870.

Each ward elected three men as their representatives, with a resulting council of nine aldermen.

Of those nine, George Forsyth was elected as the first mayor.

The minute books of the Wagga Wagga City Council are available for research by request in our search room.

When researching the history of the Wagga area, it is important to remember that the Shire Councils of Kyamba and Mitchell amalgamated in 1981 to form the Wagga Wagga City Council.

We also hold a number of minute books from these two precursor councils dating from 1906.

■ **References:** *Wagga Wagga - A History* by Sherry Morris; *A History of Wagga Wagga*, Keith Swan; *NSW Government Gazette*, March 15, 1870; Wagga Wagga City Council minute books, NRS18297/1/1 and 29, CSU Regional Archives



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The Daily Advertiser is giving you the chance to win one of ten double passes to the HIA Sydney Home Show, 1-4 May, at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour.

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Conditions of entry: Staff of Riverina Media Group, the suppliers of the prize/giveaway and their immediate families are not eligible to enter. Prize is not redeemable for cash. Only entries on original entry form accepted. Judge's decision is final. Winners will be notified by phone and published in The Daily Advertiser. TPL 07/2005/1.