

BELMORE HOUSE

Featuring

GEORGE AUBER JONES

&

THE HOUSTON



Co-authored - Geoff Burch & Sherry Morris. © March 2018



Introduction.

Belmore House is one of the premier historic houses of Wagga Wagga, dating back to the 19th century, and the earliest history of Wagga Wagga.

Many of Wagga Wagga's finest historic homes have been lost, over time. Houses such as Goonigal and Westhoe have been incorporated into modern complexes – in these two instances, the RSL Club and the Edel Quinn Centre.

It is hoped that this is the first of a series of publications on historic homes of Wagga Wagga, in an effort to record their details for posterity.

Because of their size and quality, such homes have had interesting histories, serving as private hospitals, schools, boarding houses and other purposes. Belmore House is the perfect example of such a varied history, the details of which are captured in this publication.

Acknowledgements.

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The contribution of the staff at CSU Regional Archives is also recognised – to Paul, Gillian, June and Wayne we extend our sincere thanks.

The Property - Allotment 8, Section 2, parish South Wagga Wagga.

Belmore House is situated at 44-46 Kincaid Street, on the south west corner of the intersection of Kincaid and Trail streets. Along with homes like Foxborough Hall, Westhoe, Goonigal, et al, it was one of the most significant homes ever built in Wagga Wagga.

The house is located on what was originally allotment 8 of section 2, parish of South Wagga Wagga, and more specifically occupies the south west corner at the intersection of Trail and Kincaid Streets. The original owner of this land was George Forsyth, who purchased the same on the 15th October 1856. Forsyth also purchased allotments 9 and 10, to the west of allotment 8, at the same time. Allotment 8 had an area of two roods.



Above: Map ex Google maps showing details of the original allotments of section 2, parish of South Wagga Wagga. Allotment 7, to the south of allotment 8, was originally purchased by Thomas Fox.

In the latter part of 1860 George Forsyth transferred the property to Thomas Darlow¹ and in May 1868 Darlow transferred the title back to Forsyth. The latter testified that he had purchased the land from Darlow, on behalf of Hannah Maria Jones, for the sum of £575. About a decade later, in October or November of 1871, Darlow had transferred an interest in the property to Auber George Jones.²

In January 1877 Auber George, acting as administrator in the estate of his wife, Hannah Maria Jones, transferred the property to Henry Edward Russell, a bank manager, in return for a payment of £2,000.³ Russell was manager of the Australian Joint Stock Bank, Wagga Wagga, from 1876, succeeding W.A. Cottee. He was described as *a gentleman deservedly very popular with residents*. He was a member of the Wagga Wagga Hospital Committee from 1877 until 1880. Prior to moving to Wagga Wagga, he had been manager of the Australian Joint Stock Bank at Rockhampton, Queensland. He retired from the Bank in the early 1880s and commenced business in Sydney as an accountant and financial agent in Martin Place. Russell retired from active business in 1914 and left

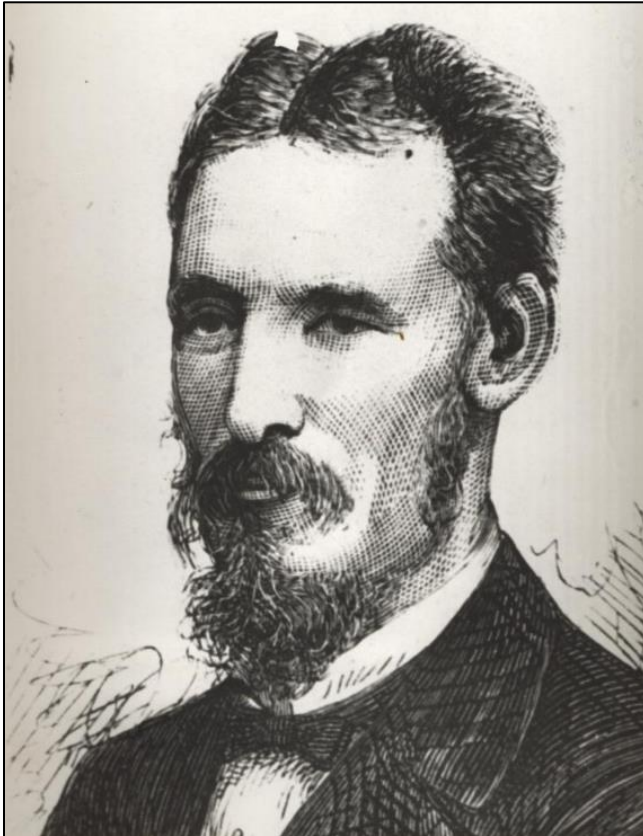
¹ Land & Property Information, Title deed, book # 70, vol.708.

² Land & Property Information, Title deed, book # 127, vol.261.

³ Land & Property Information, Title deed. Vol.375, fol.57.

Australia on a tour abroad. He spent twenty years as chairman of directors of the Sydney Ferries Company and also on the directories of Messrs Tooth and Co, the Burwood Coal Company and several other companies. His wife died in 1899, whilst he died at the residence of his daughter, Mrs Richard Moser, at Gezireh, Egypt, in about 1917 at the age of eighty-one.⁴ In September 1878 Russell transferred the property to Auber George Jones.

Auber George Jones



Right: A. G. Jones, businessman, pastoralist and founder of the Wagga Wagga Advertiser

Auber George Jones was born at Jericho in Tasmania in 1832. He was raised in Tasmania, and in 1854 married Hannah Maria Moore, whose father owned the Hobart Town Guardian newspaper. When the first issue of the Hobart Mercury was issued it was *printed and published* by Auber George Jones and John Davies, but some two months later Davies was the sole proprietor.⁵

AG's father was Robert Jones, a well known breeder of Leicester sheep and a licenses publican at one time. Robert passed away in February 1873. AG's mother, Harriet, had passed away some three years earlier in March 1870.⁶

Jones also held an auctioneers license in 1855, when he advertised that he would conduct monthly sales, "*of all properties, stock (fat & store), horses, farming implements, etc.*" at Ross [Tasmania]. His yards were to be known as the Midland Sale Yards, and were, in 1855, under construction on the premises of John Bacon of the Macquarie Hotel. His first sale was to take place on the 25 July 1855.⁷ In September 1855 three men were charged with stealing a horse, the property of George Auber Jones, of Kirklands, Macquarie River (Tasmania).⁸ The thefts occurred whilst Jones was in Sydney – from mid-August to early September.⁹

Jones subsequently moved to Melbourne and studied for the Anglican priesthood, but found that "*other pursuits were more congenial to his tastes and suited to his natural abilities.*" In March 1859 Auber Jones gave notice that he was about to open a labour agency, situated in Castlereagh Street,

⁴ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 3 May 1876, p2; Sherry Morris Biographical Index of Wagga Wagga, digital resource available at Charles Sturt University Regional archives, Wagga Wagga City Council Library and on the Wagga Wagga Historical Society website.

⁵ *Hobart Town Guardian*, 8 May 1854, p2; *The Mercury* (Hobart), 5 July 1904, 5 July 1944, p8.

⁶ Correspondence. Chief Archivist, State Library of Tasmania to Keith Swan.11th November 1968.

⁷ *Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston), 14 July 1855, p2c3.

⁸ *Hobart Mercury*, 26 September 1855, p3; *Colonial Times* (Hobart), 28 September 1855, p2.

⁹ *Tasmanian Daily News*, 1 October 1855, p1; *Courier* (Hobart), 10 August 1855, p4.

four doors south from King Street, almost directly opposite Mr Lenehan's establishment, with the following explanation of his intentions:

*... to facilitate the engagement of servants of all classes, for the town and country. A. J. begs to direct the attention of squatters and country residents to the fact that, having resided for many years in the country as superintendent of stations, both in this and the adjoining colonies, he is well acquainted with the requirements of country employers, orders from whom it will be his peculiar pleasure to execute promptly and satisfactorily.*¹⁰

In May and June 1859, Auber Jones was carrying on business as an agent in Castlereagh Street, Sydney, trading in labour and property.¹¹ In the early 1860s Jones moved to Wagga Wagga to manage Gobbagumbalin station for Mr Ralph Mayer Robey. He was certainly there in 1862 when he was appointed as a magistrate of the colony, for Wagga Wagga¹², and when his first son, Robert, was born¹³. He remained at Gobbagumbalin until Robey sold out to Messrs Booth and Holloway. He then moved to Sydney for a time (he was living at Blenheim House, Randwick in 1866¹⁴), before returning to Wagga Wagga, and residing at Foxborough Hall. In February 1870, he was appointed a magistrate of the colony and his address was listed as Wagga Wagga.¹⁵

Property Speculator.

In the 1860s and 1870s he speculated in pastoral properties, and proved to be very successful in these endeavours, accruing significant wealth. Properties he owned or leased included, Marrar, Buddigower, Mittagong and Woolongough.

Some of the other properties he traded were:

- Ballandry (Lachlan district) which was transferred in 1863 by George Hebden to Jones who in turn transferred to Angus, John, Ronald, and George Rankin in the same year.¹⁶
- Tubbeta was also transferred to the latter group by Jones in 1863.
- Bingar no.1, North Tubbeta, Cocoparra, and Caragabal (Lachlan district) were transferred to George Forsyth in the same very busy year.¹⁷
- Barmedman was transferred from William Simons to Jones in 1866. It was then transferred by Jones to Alexander Heywood Richardson in 1867, although Jones was still listed as the claimant in a dispute between himself and Edward Woodhouse over the boundaries of their adjoining runs, Barmedman and Marule Baale Creek, in 1869. It was transferred from the London and Australian Agency Corporation (Ltd) to Jones in 1869. In 1871, when the lease for Barmedman was extended, Jones was listed as the lessee.¹⁸
- Crown Camp (Lachlan district) was leased to Jones in 1874 when the rent for the following year was appraised at £29 per annum.¹⁹
- Glenariff: When the survey of Glenariff and other Warrego district properties was proposed in 1878, Jones was listed as the lessee of Glenariff, blocks D, E, F, G and H. Interestingly John Cox was lessee of blocks A and B, with John King as lessee of block C.²⁰

¹⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 March 1855, p2.

¹¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 June 1859, p6, 4 May 1859, p8.

¹² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 February 1862, p4; *NSW Government Gazette*, 1862, p420.

¹³ New South Wales, Births, Deaths and Marriages.

¹⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February 1866, p8.

¹⁵ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1870, p383.

¹⁶ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1864, pp. 165, 166.

¹⁷ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1864, p166.

¹⁸ *NSW Government Gazettes*, 1867, p330; 1868, p524; 1869, p.2270; 1870, p1321; 1871, p.81.

¹⁹ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1874, p3281.

- Jumble Plains – block 2 (Wellington district) was leased by Jones in 1875 when rent for following year was appraised at £10 per annum.²¹
- North Burra Burra (Wellington district) was transferred from B Buchanan and H Mort to Jones in 1874. In 1876 his rental for this property (for the following year) was appraised at £45 per annum.²²
- North Kockibitoo (leased by 1873)²³ had been purchased from George Forsyth (agent) in October 1872.²⁴
- South Boorooambil (leased by 1873)²⁵
- South Merrowee (Lachlan district) was transferred to Jones in 1874 from John Taylor.²⁶
- Stoney Hills (Murrumbidgee district) was transferred to Jones from Elizabeth Vincent in 1868, and then from Jones to EB Firebrace, Ronald McLachlan and RT Firebrace in the same year.²⁷
- Wongajong was transferred from the late Charles Booth to Jones in 1868.²⁸

He also acquired numerous business properties in the town of Wagga Wagga, including the sites of the Australian Hotel and the Union Bank. When the Australian Hotel was auctioned in November 1885, it was passed in at £7,000.

Newspaper Proprietor.



Jones was a highly accomplished literary man, intelligent and versatile, and, with Thomas Darlow, founded the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, Wagga's second newspaper. When the first edition, a four-page broadsheet rolled off the presses on 10 October 1868, the co-founders had little idea that they had begun what is now an institution in the Australian newspaper industry. The two wealthy pastoralists showed that they were also men of ambition, vision and destiny. The partnership was terminated in October 1871, with Jones retaining ownership and employing Mr EG Wilton who had trained in London as manager. The brilliant and cultured Frank Hutchinson, an Oxford University graduate, had been employed as the first editor.²⁹

Above: Notice of dissolution of partnership, *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 25 October 1871.

In 1883, Jones disposed of his interest to Stephen Sullivan, the first printer, and Sullivan's father-in-law, J Mackay. New premises were constructed at its present site in Trail Street and the paper was turned into a daily on 31 December 1910. After his death in 1933 the newspaper, by then named *The Daily Advertiser*, passed to his daughters, Alice and Forbie.³⁰

²⁰ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1878, p197.

²¹ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1875, p3988.

²² *NSW Government Gazettes*, 1875, p2119; 1876, p4403.

²³ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1873, p3034.

²⁴ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 2 November 1872, p10.

²⁵ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1873, p3034.

²⁶ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1875, p2116.

²⁷ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1869, p1049.

²⁸ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1869, p1047.

²⁹ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1871, p2416; *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 25 October 1871, p3c4.

³⁰ Keith Swan, 'Auber George Jones (1832-1887)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 4, 1972.

Belmore House

Belmore House was built for Auber George Jones in 1868 by John McIntosh, a prominent builder in Wagga Wagga.³¹ McIntosh had already built the first public school in Wagga Wagga in 1859, the Presbyterian Church with Thomas Hodson in 1869, and several other public and private buildings.³²

The *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* reported in December 1868 that *the two wings of the private residence being erected for Mr. A.G. Jones Esq., at the corner of Kincaid and Traill (sic) streets are now completed, and tenders will shortly be called for the main building and out offices.*³³

When the *Advertiser* reported on Jones' death on 31 December 1887, it claimed that Jones had built the house before he established the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*.³⁴

The house was named Belmore House, no doubt in honour of the new Governor of New South Wales, the Earl of Belmore.



Above: Belmore House as it sits in 2017 (DP124501). The *Daily Advertiser* building and the old *Daily Advertiser*' offices are located to the south of allotment 8 on what would have been allotment 7 (DP871069). Courtesy SIX maps.

³¹ Sherry Morris, 'Wagga Builders 1850s-1870s', From Our Past, *Daily Advertiser*, 24 August 1996, p45.

³² *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 7 May 1907: Obituary of John McIntosh.

³³ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 12 December 1868, p2.

³⁴ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 31 December 1887, p2.



Left: *The Earl of Belmore, Governor of New South Wales, 1868-1872*

The Earl of Belmore (Somerset Richard Lowry-Corry) became Governor of New South Wales on 8 January 1868.³⁵

The Governor and his wife visited Wagga Wagga in July 1868. It was a spectacular occasion. A troop of local light horse men mounted on some beautiful locally-bred horses met them on the Gundagai Road.

They then escorted them to the Royal Hotel in Newtown (Baylis Street) in Wagga Wagga where they were to attend a dejeuner (lunch) in their honour.

On their entry into town a salute of eighteen guns was fired. Having no real guns, one of the local blacksmiths filled eighteen cart-wheel boxes with powder, attached a fuse to each, and buried them in the ground. It was a great success.

The great day was marred by a clash between two parties (the 'Old Wagga' and the 'New Wagga') over who should act as the chairman at the dejeuner. The 'Old Wagga' party was headed by FA Tompson, described as *a fine old English gentleman* (although Tompson was the son of a convict and born in New South Wales!) and one of the oldest and most respected residents of Wagga Wagga. The 'New Wagga' party was headed by William Willans, a young solicitor.

When a vote was taken and FA Tompson chosen as the chairman, the latter party decided to have another dejeuner in opposition in the same venue. On the following day, the *Wagga Wagga Express* published a scathing article detrimental to FA Tompson. It was probably written by Willans but it was the editor Samuel Hawkins who was horse-whipped by Tompson as a consequence.

According to the *Albury Banner*, 21 May 1915, it was this affair that led to the establishment of the new newspaper, the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*.³⁶

A correspondent of the *Town and Country Journal* visited Wagga Wagga in March 1872 and described Belmore House as one of *the most elegant structures in the colony out of Sydney*.³⁷

³⁵ Bede Nairn, 'Belmore, fourth Earl of (1835-1913)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 3, 1969 and online edition; *Yass Courier*, 15 July 1868, p3.

³⁶ 'Memories: Earl Belmore's visit to Wagga', *Albury Banner*, 21 May 1915.

³⁷ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 13 July 1872, p48; *Yass Courier*, 15 July 1868, p3.

It declared that, *the rooms are lofty, commodious, and well arranged, the up-stairs drawing room being the length of the whole house and the finest and largest room in the town. The house cost Mr Jones £3,760.*³⁸

It was noted that during the disastrous flood in May 1870, Jones' new house was out of reach of the flood waters and was one of the main points of refuge where over thirty people were accommodated.³⁹

The Jones family lived comfortably in Belmore House in the early 1870s. It employed various servants including a general servant, a groom/coachman, a cook/housemaid and a housemaid/laundress.⁴⁰ However goats were a problem. In January 1877 Jones advertised that henceforth, *ALL GOATS found TRESPASSING, after this date, on the grounds at Belmore House or Westoe House will be SHOT. This notice has special reference to the seven animals which continually infest the streets, and are a nuisance to the whole neighbourhood.*⁴¹

Aubur George Jones' wife, Hanna Maria, died suddenly on the 25 May 1874, aged 42, at Belmore House,⁴² It was some four years before he was remarried in 1878 to Mary Milford. By this time the Jones family had left Belmore House.

AG Jones' success continued. In 1876 he, along with James Smith Lavender, Alexander Thorley Bolton, James Robert Garland, and Henry Berkley Fitzhardinge, was appointed a trustee of the Church of England Cemetery at Wagga Wagga, by the Governor. Jones served as the member for Murrumbidgee from 1882 to 1885, and moved to Grenfell in 1883, which became his permanent home. He may have actually lived at Grenfell earlier, as when he applied for a brand registration in 1877, his address was listed as Wheogo, Grenfell. It was also in 1883 that he sold the Wagga Wagga Advertiser to Stephen Sullivan, the paper's first printer⁴³.

Whilst Jones was very successful, there must still have been issues. In November 1885, a number of properties, including Belmore House, were put up for sale, on instruction from the mortgagees, the Australian Joint Stock Bank. The results were reported as follows:

*The lighthouse and Granville paddocks, comprising 1633 acres, situated three miles from Harefield station and 13 miles from Wagga Wagga, indebted to the Government to the amount of 15s per acre, were bought by Mr Robert McIntyre for 11s per acre. The Australian Hotel, having a frontage of 127 feet to Fitzmaurice street, the main street of the town, was passed in at a bid of £7000, as also was Belmore House Mr A G Jones's former residence, at £900. The premises occupied by the Wagga Wagga Advertiser, with a quarter of an acre of land, were purchased by the proprietors of the paper, Messrs Sullivan and Mackay, for £640.*⁴⁴

He left an estate valued at £162,418, and expressly excluded his second wife from any benefit,⁴⁵ in the following terms:

³⁸ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 20 July 1872, p8.

³⁹ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 4 May 1870.

⁴⁰ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 10 January 1872, 12 October 1872, 26 March 1873, 24 October 1874.

⁴¹ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 3 February 1877, p3.

⁴² *Wagga Wagga Express*, 27 May 1874, p2; *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 27 May 1874, p2.

⁴³ *NSW Government Gazette*, 1877, p3452; *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 6 November 1881.

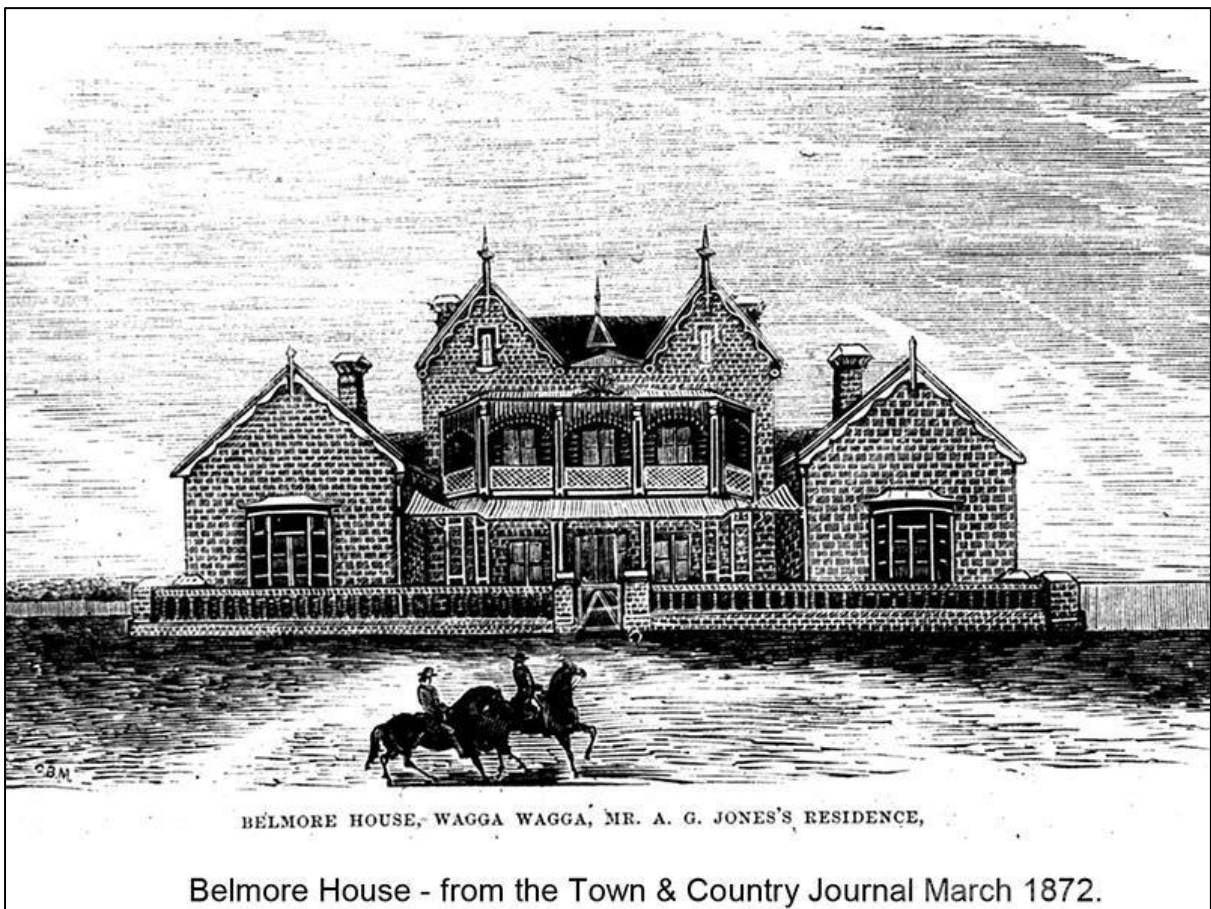
⁴⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 November 1885, p8.

⁴⁵ *Australian Dictionary of Biography – Online Edition*; www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/members.nsf; *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 31 December, 1887, p2.

*Expressly directs that wife Mary J--- shall in no manner whatsoever derive any benefit direct or indirect in my property or under my will & the allowance or sum now allowed to her by me for her maintenance shall immediately cease at my death. I also wish it to be distinctly understood that she shall not have the slightest control or authority over any of my children.*⁴⁶

His will was made on the 2 November 1882.

Belmore House had been advertised *To Let* from October 1876. Jones notified that it was available to let for two to three months,⁴⁷ whilst in January 1879, he advertised the house, to let, for one year if furnished, or two years of unfurnished.⁴⁸ Late in October 1879 he ran the same advertisement again.⁴⁹



Above: Belmore House, Source: Town and Country Journal, 13 July 1872.

⁴⁶ Hand written notes on probate document.

⁴⁷ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 28 October 1876, p3.

⁴⁸ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 5 February 1879, p3.

⁴⁹ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 25 October 1879, p4.

Tenants of the house could have included WB Loughran, who in October 1879, offered a reward for the return of a number of canaries that had been lost from the aviary at Belmore House.⁵⁰ Reverend Thomas and Mary Watson may have been residing at Belmore when their nine-month-old daughter, Violet Florence Watson, died there on 11 April 1880.⁵¹

By 1884 the house had been thoroughly renovated and again advertised for leasing.⁵² Then, in November 1885, Belmore House was auctioned, by order of the mortgagees, together with the Australian Hotel and property at Wallacetown but it was passed in at £900. The sale also offered *Belmore Cottage*, described as, *containing six rooms, with kitchen, pantry, stabling, etc., situated in Traill Street.*⁵³

At the time of Jones' death in December 1887, it was recorded that H Hayes (probably Henry Hayes, the flour miller at North Wagga) was living at Belmore. Hayes and his wife continued to live there until 1889. The Hayes family employed a cook, maid, laundress and a boy as a *general useful*. In March 1890 Hayes advertised for sale by auction, his household furniture, at his residence, Belmore House, including *valuable oil paintings by best masters.*⁵⁴



By 1890, the house was occupied by George Coleman, a solicitor and alderman and later a Mayor of the Wagga Wagga Municipal Council. In that year a Drawing Room Entertainment was held at the house in aid of the Murrumbidgee Turf Club Bazaar Fund. During the flood in 1891 Coleman accommodated people less fortunate and the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* reported that *the house was crowded, at every nook and corner*. According to stock returns in January 1891 he had five horses on two acres of land. His lease expired at the end of 1891. The house was advertised to let from the 1 January 1892.⁵⁵

In December 1892, WW Anderson resided at Belmore House, when he advertised for a lost cocker spaniel.⁵⁶

Left: *George Coleman*

In the following years the building served as a grammar school, then functioned as a private hospital, whilst in 1928 it was converted to flats.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 22 October 1879, p3.

⁵¹ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 13 April 1880, p2.

⁵² *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 24 July 1884.

⁵³ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 20, 24 October 1885, p3.

⁵⁴ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 31 December 1887, 7 April 1888, 1, 5 October 1889, 4 March 1890, p3.

⁵⁵ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 5 July 1890, 31 January 1891, 22, 31 December 1891.

⁵⁶ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 15 December 1892, p3.

⁵⁷ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 28 December 1893, p2; National Trust, Wagga Wagga Heritage Walking Tour.

Wagga Wagga Grammar School

From 1894 until 1904 Belmore House was used a school known as the Wagga Wagga Grammar School.

As early as February 1870 there had been calls for the establishment of a Grammar School at Wagga Wagga. A letter to the editor in that month noted that the proprietor of such an enterprise would have to *find a school house and grounds, Master's residence, etc., fix the fees, and otherwise determine all matters relating to the government of the school.*⁵⁸

The Wagga Wagga Grammar School was not opened for another fourteen years, around September 1884. Although it was hoped to use Belmore House as its location, negotiations with the proprietor fell through. It opened instead in the Temperance Hall. It was reported to parents and friends that the Hall had been rented and the Trustees had been kind enough to make the necessary alterations. It was also reported that:

The building has proved very suitable as a schoolroom. It is large, lofty, well ventilated, and remarkably cool on the hottest days. There are two private sitting-rooms and other requirements for young ladies attending the classes, a comfortable shed for wet weather, and plenty of open ground round the building to make play healthy and enjoyable.

*The school opened with 17 pupils, but that number increased to 29, which includes 22 boys, 5 young ladies, and 2 lads in the afternoon for matriculation class. The course of instruction adopted is for the most part such as is followed in the best schools in Sydney or Melbourne, and is intended to give to pupils a sound English education, and to prepare them for business or the University examinations. In the case of every scholar, a thorough English education is first aimed at. Even the sons of gentlemen need such humble acquirements as fluent reading, correct spelling, neat writing, and ready arithmetic, grammar, geography, and history follow; and languages and mathematics receive their due share of attention. Two lessons a week are given in some branch of natural science (for the coming year, physics), and drawing and book-keeping are also included in the curriculum.*⁵⁹

The school remained in the Temperance Hall until July 1893.⁶⁰ Then it moved to premises in Tarcutta Street, next to the Riverine Club. The move was explained as follows:

*We are desired to draw attention to the advertisement in another column regarding the resumption of studies at the Wagga Grammar School. The private residence has been removed from Fox-street, Newtown, to Tarcutta-street. The new premises contain a commodious apartment, which will be utilised as a school room in lieu of the Temperance Hall. We are informed that the Very Rev. the Dean of Goulburn has consented to act as patron to the establishment, and the gentlemen who are named on the new prospectus as referees are sufficient indication of the character of the school.*⁶¹

The move may have been influenced by the death of Mr H Gibson-Wylie who, until April 1893, had conducted the school. Following his death his wife, Mrs HG Wylie, and a Mr A Kilkenny took charge of the school, with Mrs Wylie retaining management of the school and responsibility for all domestic

⁵⁸ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 2 February 1870, p2.

⁵⁹ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 24 December 1884, p2.

⁶⁰ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 15 January 1885, p2, 8 January 1887, p3, 22 December 1891 p.2.

⁶¹ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*. 6th July 1893, p2.

matters.⁶² It was not long before Mr WJ Young took over the management of the school, with Mrs Gibson-Wylie in charge of domestic affairs.

By the end of 1893 the grammar school was moving from Tarcutta Street to Belmore House where it operated until 1904. There were five different principals during that time, three in the first year it operated. The first Principal at Belmore House was Steffan Jules BA Bsc who advertised that the “*Belmore Boarding and Day School for Boys*” would be open on 18 January 1894 and that he would be at the school from 5 January to interview parents and guardians of intending pupils. The object of the school, he said, was to afford a sound education which would fit boys for either professional or commercial life. The boys were prepared for civil service, junior, senior, matriculation and law examinations. There were special classes for young boys. Mrs Hugh Gibson-Wylie continued to supervise the domestic arrangements.⁶³

Jules was considered ‘an illustrious master’. According to several newspapers, Steffan Jules was a Russian Prince – Prince Czelwerlinski – who was born near Warsaw, the capital of the Polish territories subject to the Emperor of Russia. It was claimed that he was educated by Jesuits in Poland and earned his degree in the arts and in science in Paris and then served in the Prussian army with the rank of Captain in a cavalry regiment. During the Turkey-Russian war, he volunteered to join the Turkish military forces and served on the staff of Osman Pacha. He was decorated by the Sultan of Turkey with the order of the Medjidio. After spending some time in Java he returned to Europe and subsequently, in 1870, he travelled in the barque *Scottish Lassio* from Glasgow, Scotland, to Rockhampton, Queensland. For a while he tutored in various private families and at leading colleges included St Ignatius’ College, Riverview, in Sydney. Jules was an accomplished linguist and spoke six languages. He was a good chess player and a member of the local Chess Club, representing Wagga Wagga on numerous occasions including games by telegram. According to the *Wagga Wagga Express no more dashing player ever contended for Wagga*. He was a good friend of LS Crakanthorp, also a champion chess player.⁶⁴

By June 1894 Jules had severed his connections with the Belmore Grammar School and opened the Queen’s College boarding school in Newtown (Baylis Street area, between Tompson and Forsyth streets). He was to be assisted by Mr. L. T. Broinowski. Jules became severely ill in 1895 and died as a result of inflammation of the lungs by December that year. He was buried in Wagga Wagga and several of his pupils followed the hearse to the grave. He left a mother living in Krakow in Austria.⁶⁵

Jules was replaced by S. H. Walker BA of the University of Sydney. The *Wagga Wagga Express* expressed its hope that the grammar school’s high standard of teaching would be maintained so that parents would not have to send their sons far afield in pursuit of a high-class education.⁶⁶ However, Walker left within four months.

On 1 October 1894, W. J. Young MA TCD took over the school’s ‘scholastic management’. Young had obtained his Master of Arts with Mathematical Honours at the University of Dublin and a second

⁶² *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 2 May 1893, p3.

⁶³ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 6 April 1893, 30 December 1893; *Wagga Wagga Express*, 11 January 1894, 3 February 1894, 26 May 1894, 21 January 1913.

⁶⁴ *Evening News* (Sydney), 24 December 1895; *Singleton Argus*, 28 December 1895; *Wagga Wagga Express*, 21 January 1913.

⁶⁵ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 22 September 1894, p2; *Singleton Argus*, 28 December 1895.

⁶⁶ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 2 June 1894.



Above: The old stables in 1998.



Above: The remodelled stables in 2018 – now guest accommodation.

degree at the University of Adelaide in South Australia in December 1883. He had been the mathematical and drawing master at Horton College, Tasmania, then headmaster at the Hindmarsh Model School in South Australia. He was then promoted to Grote Street Model School in Adelaide and then taught at a Grammar School in Broken Hill in New South Wales. Mrs Gibson-Wylie retained the management of domestic arrangements.⁶⁷

According to the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*:

*The new principal is an educationalist of long experience and acknowledged standing, and should be able to give a high status to the school. Mr. Young, in addition to his university degree, is a mathematical honorman, and has also had the advantage of a thorough training as a teacher. His original intention was to secure an appointment as Inspector of Schools in the Mother Country, but being offered an appointment under the South Australian Government he accepted it, and laboured with success in the colony for some years. He afterwards established a first class grammar school at Broken Hill, which during the prosperous era of that centre attained very large dimensions. Favourable reports of the Wagga climate induced Mr. Young to take advantage of the opening existing here, and his intention is if accorded sufficient support to establish a scholastic institution, that will supply the higher educational wants of the district. In point of teaching ability Mr. Young's record is beyond question, and it is to be hoped in the interests of the town that his expectations will not fail to be realised.*⁶⁸

In 1895, the school became co-educational with separate boys' and girls' departments. Calisthenics, musical drill, kindergarten drawing and painting was included in the curriculum for girls. Both departments were under the immediate personal supervision of Young himself.⁶⁹

Young left in January 1899 to become headmaster at Windsor Grammar School near Sydney. He disposed of the school to the Reverend CS Hawken from Young who then sold it to Reverend FW Clarke of St Paul's College, Sydney who had been the assistant master at Kings School in Parramatta, Sydney. He opened in January 1899. His assistant master was Horace De Lissa who was replaced by WJ Leacock seven months later. Mrs Clarke had the responsibility of the girls' department. By August 1899 Miss Alice Bennett, daughter of well-known local, Basil Barnet Bennett, was teaching Pianoforte at the school (as well as at the Bennett residence, 'Mill Cottage'). The Reverend GA Carver was the patron of the school.⁷⁰

Within twelve months it was notified that Mr D Keage, a former principal of St John's Grammar School, Parramatta, and subsequently a teacher at the King's School, had replaced Clarke at Wagga Wagga.⁷¹ He was the Principal from 1900 to 1901. The headmistress was Miss L Palmer and the Preparatory School was in charge of Amy McGrath. By the end of 1901 Amy had been replaced by Miss Heydon.⁷²

⁶⁷ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 11, 13 September 1894; *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 22 September 1894.

⁶⁸ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 22 September 1894.

⁶⁹ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 21 December 1895.

⁷⁰ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 2 November 1893, 28 December 1893, 22 September 1894, 24 January 1895, 29, 31 December 1898, 24 January 1899, 5 September 1899; *Wagga Wagga Express*, 23, 30 January 1894, 22 January 1895, 14 January 1899, 18 February 1899, 20 July 1899, 5 August 1899.

⁷¹ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 27 January 1900, p2.

⁷² *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 21 April 1900, 13 April 1901; *Wagga Wagga Express*, 3 November 1901.

The *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* reported:

*It will be learned with much regret that Mr. A. B. Keage, principal of the Wagga Grammar School, has decided to sever his connection with the town. During the two years Mr. Keage has had charge of the school, he has proved himself an educationalist of a very high standard, and at the same time thrown his soul into the work in which he was engaged. The attendance since Mr. Keage assumed control has averaged between 40 and 50 pupils, and the efforts made by him to secure good results have secured him the lasting esteem of those interested in the progress of education. Commencing with purely raw material, Mr. Keage succeeded within his two years stay in passing two boys in six subjects for the Junior University examination, while a third passed in three mathematical subjects. One pupil also passed with credit, the Chamber of Commerce examination in Sydney, and three others passed the Bankers' Institute examination.*⁷³

In January 1902, G. Eddington Clarke, a Worcester man, and his talented wife, both university graduates and experienced teachers according to the Daily Advertiser, took charge of Wagga Grammar School. Eddington Clark was one of first members of the Senate of the University of Tasmania and for thirteen years Master at the Hobart Friends' High School (Quakers). His wife had an Honours Degree from Melbourne and had the reputation for careful and thorough piano tuition and training in theory for the Sydney College of Music and Associated Board Exams. Their daughter, Isabel, a talented musician with a degree in Licentiate of Royal College and Royal Academy of Music (England), also assisted. Miss Ireland, late of Scotch College taught painting in oils and water colour.⁷⁴ The Clarkes' son died as a result of rheumatic fever at Belmore House in September 1902.⁷⁵

The Clarkes also established adult evening classes in shorthand, typing and bookkeeping.⁷⁶ Success in examinations for the University of Sydney, Sydney College of Music, Bankers Institute, Public Service and Department of Education exams as well as prizes at shows for paintings, drawing, penmanship and needlework followed. An extra teacher, PM Waterhouse, was appointed. In 1903, the Clarkes remained the Principals and the staff included M Arnold (Drawing, singing, elocution, piano and banjo), Miss Hunter (plain and fancy needlework) and Miss M Shaw (painting in oils from nature). There were evening classes for adults and private tuition for exams.⁷⁷

Eddington Clarke invited parents and friends to view the work of the scholars, initially in April 1902 and then at the end of each year. There were decorated displays of fancy work and needlework and displays of the students' drawing and painting in oils. In the afternoon, the students sang songs and recited poems and the parents were given a conducted tour of the building and then entertained to afternoon tea.⁷⁸ Eddington Clarke was involved in many local activities including the Methodist Institute (a Vice President) and St Andrew's Literary Society. He participated in debates and gave lectures, for example, to the Young Men's Improvement Social.

⁷³ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 3 December 1901, p2.

⁷⁴ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 21 January 1913.

⁷⁵ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 16 September 1902.

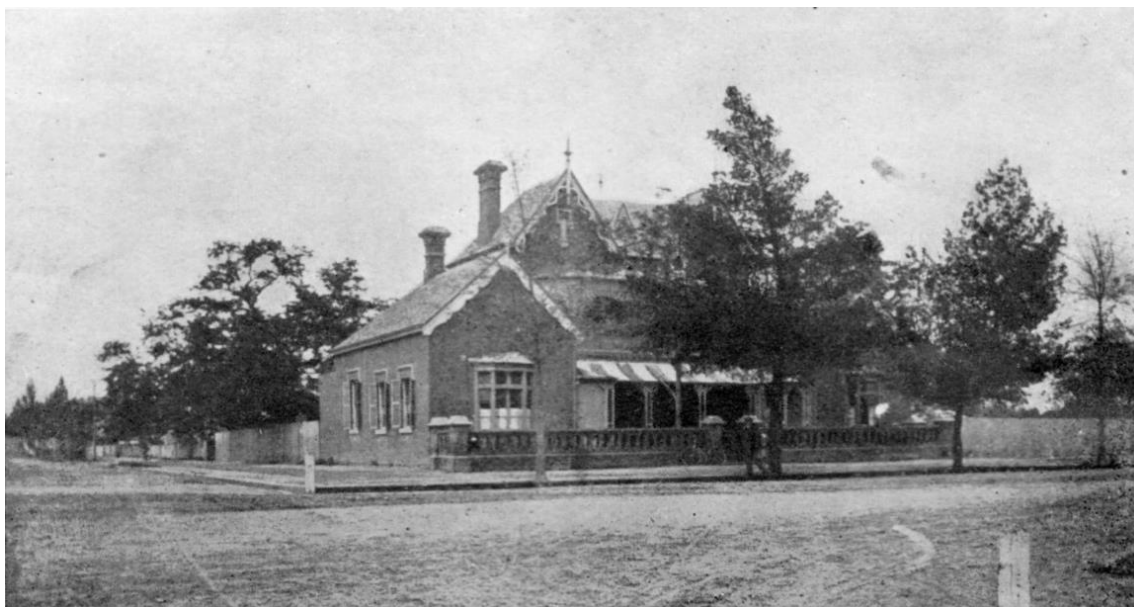
⁷⁶ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 4 January 1902, 1 February 1902, 21 June 1902, 28 January 1902.

⁷⁷ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 13 July 1903.

⁷⁸ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 8 April 1902.

Mr GE Clarke, BA, remained headmaster of the school up until December 1914,⁷⁹ although the school was not located in Belmore House from 1904. According to the *Daily Advertiser*, G. Eddington Clarke had *kept the flag flying for eleven years and turned out many a Wagga youth and maiden furnished with an education sufficient to enable them to hold their own in whatever sphere their future lot is cast.*⁸⁰

In 1904, the Grammar School had moved to 'Stradbroke' in Gurwood Street, Wagga Wagga.⁸¹



Above: Belmore House in the early 1900s

Belmore Private Hospital

In February 1904 Belmore House (formerly Wagga Grammar School) was advertised as *a large two storied brick villa residence*. It was claimed that it was well and substantially built with nine rooms, kitchen, servant's room, bathroom, outhouses and a good yard. It also had a detached schoolroom which would be suitable as a dwelling.⁸² It is assumed that the detached school room lay to the rear of the main building and probably in the spot now occupied by the guest accommodation.

In April 1905, Miss Ward, a certified nurse, and late matron of Bowral and Yass hospitals, gave notice that she had opened a first-class private hospital, to be called the Wagga Nursing Home, in Belmore House. It was noted that she was supported by a staff of competent nurses.⁸³ In January 1906 Miss Ward accepted a position as matron of the Penrith Hospital. Miss Ward expected that her sister, Miss Ward, would take over the running of the hospital, aided by Nurse Wilson.⁸⁴

Elizabeth Lucy Bradford (Bessie) was the next manager of the Belmore Private Hospital, from 1906 onwards, purchasing the building from the Australian Joint Stock Bank, which held a mortgage over

⁷⁹ *Daily Advertiser*, 15 December 1914, p3.

⁸⁰ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 21 January 1913, p2.

⁸¹ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 2, 6 February 1904.

⁸² *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 9 February 1904, p3.

⁸³ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 29 April 1905, p4.

⁸⁴ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 6 January 1906, p2.

the property, in May 1908.⁸⁵ She had previously been the matron of the Bathurst Hospital for some four and a half years.⁸⁶ Bradford was still running Belmore Hospital in November 1908.⁸⁷

The patients were mostly well-to-do, upper middle class, many of whom died in hospital including farmers such as Daniel McNickle, son of an Irish immigrant also named Daniel, who had 4000 acres at Harefield near Wagga Wagga, Louis Burrett, Manager of Mangoplah station aged 43 in December 1907 and Thomas Strout, farmer at Brucedale, in February 1913; schoolmasters included the former headmaster of Gurwood Public School, James John Fryer and David Thompson schoolmaster at Uranquinty in 1908 and hotelkeepers such as John Pigott (Federal Hotel and later Alfredtown Hotel). Others included the well-known and highly respected William Wild who had worked for Messrs Copland and Co for twenty years and then resigned to become a poultry breeder at 'Airlie' in Lake Albert who died after being admitted for influenza and pneumonia; and Henry Gaffney, a popular sporting man and bookmaker who died of heart failure in 1906.⁸⁸

Many patients were admitted with anthrax or typhoid fever and died in the early 1900s including the aforementioned David Thompson and G Taber (both from Uranquinty) in 1908, a daughter of JG Fletcher of Walteela and CC Rossiter, ledger keeper at the Wagga branch of the Union Bank in 1909. Some died after operations including Matilda Mary McNickle of Downside aged 33 and Charles M Crouch aged only 17 after an appendicitis operation. Others died from accidents including Charles Hulme who developed tetanus after breaking his leg in a serious buggy accident. There were many deaths associated with giving birth including Margaret Jowett aged 25 and her infant a few hours after birth. The two were interred in the same coffin. She left a widower and a young child.⁸⁹

In August 1905, the death occurred of Mrs Catherine Medd at the age of thirty-six. She was the wife of Frank Edward Medd, chemist, of Fitzmaurice Street. She had been admitted to the Belmore Private Hospital on a Saturday and Dr Stoker operated to remove a tumour on the Sunday. She passed away on that same day, 30 July. The funeral that followed left from the Belmore Nursing Home in Kincaid Street.⁹⁰ It appears that the terms Belmore Private Hospital and Belmore Nursing Home applied to the same premises.⁹¹

In January 1909, Council's Health Committee recommended that the Belmore Private Hospital be instructed to have the drain leading into the well put in proper repair, and to have the well ventilated.⁹² No doubt it was a source of infection and odours.

Then, in May 1909, on the recommendation of J Miller, the sanitary inspector, the Municipal Council voted to order the Belmore private hospital to erect a mortuary detached from the main building (and if it defaulted the council would condemn the property for hospital purposes). The main

⁸⁵ Land and Property Information, Title deed, Vol.375, fol.57.

⁸⁶ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 31 May 1906, p2; *Wagga Wagga Express*, 26 April 1906, p2.

⁸⁷ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 3 November 1908, p3.

⁸⁸ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 4 September 1906, 12 November 1907, 6 March 1908, 27 October 1908; *Daily Advertiser*, 27 February 1913; 23, 24, 25 March 1920, 21 April 1920; *Wagga Wagga Express*, 21 December 1907.

⁸⁹ *Cootamundra Herald*, 4 May 1909; *Daily Advertiser*, 6 March 1908, 11 December 1908, 29 December 1917; *Wagga Wagga Express*, 2 November 1907, 14 January 1909, 29 June 1912, 29 December 1917; *Albury Banner*, 2 September 1921.

⁹⁰ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 8 August 1905, p2.

⁹¹ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 10 August 1905, p2. See also 8 August 1905, p2.

⁹² *Wagga Wagga Express*, 16 January 1909, p4.

concern was the number of deaths and the fact that coffins were put in a small room adjoining the main building. The proposal generated considerable discussion as the following report in the *Wagga Wagga Express* recorded:

Ald Dobney as chairman of the Health Committee, said he would move 'That, in view of the sanitary inspector's report, the owner be instructed to provide a mortuary, the same to be detached from the main buildings.'

Ald. Warren said he would oppose the resolution, which he trusted would not be carried, unfortunately, it was true that deaths occurred at this hospital, the same as at any other, but a mortuary was not required. It was no secret said the speaker that the sanitary inspector had been continuously at this hospital ever since his appointment, and had taken a delight in putting every obstacle he could in its way. He had also written a number of letters to the matron, which he (the speaker) had seen, and he was convinced there was more behind it than was at present known.

The Mayor: The same may he said of all his reports and recommendations.

Ald. Oates: Well, Mr Mayor, a few minutes ago, when you said the inspector was a failure, Ald. Warren immediately took you up, and now he is practically saying the same thing or worse. It is no use blowing up the sanitary inspector and at the same time throwing out all his suggestions. The hospital is in the centre of the town, and needs a mortuary. It does not seem quite right or fair that the rooms which are afterwards used for patients should be utilised as a mortuary and it is very necessary that one should be built.

Ald. O'Regan said that it stood to reason that such a place should have a mortuary. The District Hospital was forced to have one, so why should not the private hospital.

Ald. Warren: Are you going to apply that to every nursing home in Wagga.

Ald. Smith: Ald. Warren is out of order. We are not discussing any other nursing home or hospital.

Ald. Hurst: Well, I've been in the Belmore Hospital, and have been treated tip-top: still, I must say if it is necessary for the main hospital to have a mortuary, so should the Belmore, for it is possible for them to have as many fatal cases there as at the general, and it seems to me to be a necessity.

Ald. Dobney said he did not think it necessary to reply to Ald. Warren, as the thing spoke for itself. The Health Committee had gone into the matter very carefully, and decided that it was absolutely necessary.

The motion was then put and carried, Aldermen Cameron and Warren voting against it.⁹³

In April 1920, the management of the Belmore Private Hospital was assumed by Sisters Coleman, and Hutchin, formerly nurses at the Wagga Wagga District Hospital. The *Daily Advertiser* advised the public:

The two sisters are thoroughly qualified by examination and nursing practice for the management of the hospital. Sister Hutchin is the daughter of a popular resident of Manly. She had her initial training at the Coast Hospital and her nursing experiences and those of her associate, Sister Coleman, have been of a character that eminently fit them for their new duties.⁹⁴

On 3 May 1922, it was reported that Belmore Private Hospital had closed. According to the *Daily Advertiser*:

⁹³ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 8 May 1909, p2.

⁹⁴ *Daily Advertiser*, 1 April 1920, p2; Sherry Morris, *A Delicate Balance*, p.164.

*Belmore private hospital was formally closed yesterday, when the last of the patients were permitted to leave. For some months past the number of patients in that institution has been gradually reduced, and when, the building was submitted to auction sale, on Saturday afternoon last, only three inmates remained. Nurses Hutchin and Coleman, it is stated, are to remain in Wagga, but up to the present there has been no definite indication that another private hospital will be opened.*⁹⁵

Bessie Bradford had already transferred the western section of the property to a Robert Clout in May 1920, but had retained the main area, including the house, for herself.⁹⁶ Lucy's portion then consisted of an area of 1 rood plus sixteen and a half perches. In July 1922 Lucy transferred the house and property to Isaac Cullen, a commission agent of Wagga Wagga. The sale price was £2,050.⁹⁷

Belmore Flats

The new owner, Isaac Cullen, worked as a stock and station agent with Cullen and Wheatley in Fitzmaurice Street in 1914⁹⁸ and later on his own account as I Cullen and Company. When his business was purchased by Dalgety and Co in 1924, Cullen was retained as an auctioneer. The civic minded Isaac Cullen was an alderman for many years (1914-1928) and was the Mayor from 1920 to 1921. He was also the inaugural president of the Wagga Wagga branch of the New State Movement in 1921 and the Wagga Wagga delegate to the Riverina New State League conference in 1922. He was also a member of Wagga Wagga District Hospital Committee 1914-1915 and 1923-1927.⁹⁹ Isaac's older daughter, born in 1905, was the first librarian at the Wagga Wagga Municipal Council, appointed in February 1946. She had studied a course in libraryship at Sydney and had worked at the Grafton Library.¹⁰⁰

When the property was purchased by Cullen it was described as a:

*well-constructed double storied brick building known as Belmore, situated on land having a frontage of about 115 feet to Kincaid Street, by 132 feet depth along Trail Street. The building contains fourteen rooms, also kitchen, bathroom, pantry, etc. The premises are so situated that a very valuable vacant block of land is available for building on.*¹⁰¹

By 1923 the former hospital had been converted into self-contained furnished flats and single rooms.¹⁰² The Cullen family, Isaac and his wife, Annie Rose, and children, Lorna and Isa, moved into one of the flats. The remaining flats and single rooms (with breakfast optional) were advertised as suitable for business ladies or gents.¹⁰³

The residents included Herbert Ernest McGarry who conducted the Central Butchery with his brother, Frederick, in Baylis Street, Wagga Wagga, from about 1908. They were the sons of Michael

⁹⁵ *Daily Advertiser*, 1 June 1922, p2.

⁹⁶ Land and Property Information, Title deed, Vol.3069, fol.129.

⁹⁷ *Daily Advertiser*, 29 May 1922, p2.

⁹⁸ JR Robertson, *Progress of Wagga Wagga and District*, 1914.

⁹⁹ Sherry Morris, Biographical Index of Wagga Wagga; *Daily Advertiser*, 9 July 1921, 17, 18 May 1922.

¹⁰⁰ *Daily Advertiser*, 18 August 1937, 22 March 1938, 4 September 1943, 23 February 1946, 31 January 1947.

¹⁰¹ *Daily Advertiser*, 13 May 1922, p3.

¹⁰² *Daily Advertiser*, 9 June 1923, 17 October 1923, 3 November 1923, 15 December 1923, 13 December 1924, 5 August 1925.

¹⁰³ *Daily Advertiser*, 22 March 1926, 7 August 1926, 18 November 1926.



Above: The rear of the premises in 1896.



Above: The rear of the premises in 1998.

McGarry who had established the butchery about 1879.¹⁰⁴ Mrs E Birch was teaching piano and theory in another.

The block of eight flats were auctioned by Hore and Docker and Dalgety and Co. at the Australian Hotel on 30 October 1948. There were six flats in the main building and two in the detached building. Four of the flats in the main building contained two bedrooms (including an upstairs flat). The remainder had one bedroom each. All had a lounge room, a kitchen and a bathroom. There were sleepouts in seven flats. Cullen's own flat had two bedrooms, a lounge room, sleepout, dining room, kitchen, bathroom and a laundry. There was a laundry in one of the rooms in the detached building plus a large common laundry. There were gas and sewerage services to every flat. There were also three garages and a brick incinerator.¹⁰⁵

On the 26 October 1948, the sale of Belmore House flats was reported, as follows:

*A RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT In recent years Investors have found it very difficult to find sound Investments and even today those desirous of putting their money into City property have few opportunities to invest in attractive propositions. Messrs. Dalgety & Coy. Ltd. and Hore & Docker, the Conjunction Agents handling the auction of 'Belmore' Flats, recommend with every confidence this property, which is a going concern and a proposition that merits attention. Situated on a picked position only a block from our main street, 'Belmore' is offered not only as a good investment but also the means of securing for purchaser vacant possession of a home — a modern flat — In 'Belmore.' The vendor of 'Belmore' Flats, Mr. I. Cullen, is, for health reasons, leaving Wagga Wagga and only on this account is 'Belmore' for sale. There are eight flats in 'Belmore' and seven flats (without owner's) return £557/14/ annual rent and add to this (value of the largest and best flat at £2/10/ weekly) makes a total of £687/14/ annually. The position is so good that these flats are always occupied. 'Belmore' Flats are for sale by auction at 11 a.m. on Saturday morning next at the Australian Hotel and any likely buyer desirous of inspecting is requested to contact the selling agents. Dalgety & Coy. Ltd. or Hore & Docker, who faithfully recommend the proposition.*¹⁰⁶

The block of flats was purchased by Martin James Hardiman of Uranquinty for seven thousand, one hundred pounds in June 1949.¹⁰⁷

In 1978 the building was described as follows:

- *A large symmetrically designed brick residence..... now in use as flats. Comprising:*
- *a central two-storey building with twin gables each having a small double hung window with drip moulds*
- *Two thick brick pillars support the verandah and balcony, the latter completely enclosed*
- *Original fine French doors with margin bars.*
- *An identical single gabled ground floor wing on each side of the central building*
- *Windows which are Edwardian in character with bracketed awnings*
- *Fascia board, once decorative, now plain.*
- *Original brick fence with attractive open pattern resembling a balustrade.*¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ *Daily Advertiser*, 15 June 1912, 22 December 1959; and JR Robertson, *Progress of Wagga Wagga and District*, 1914.

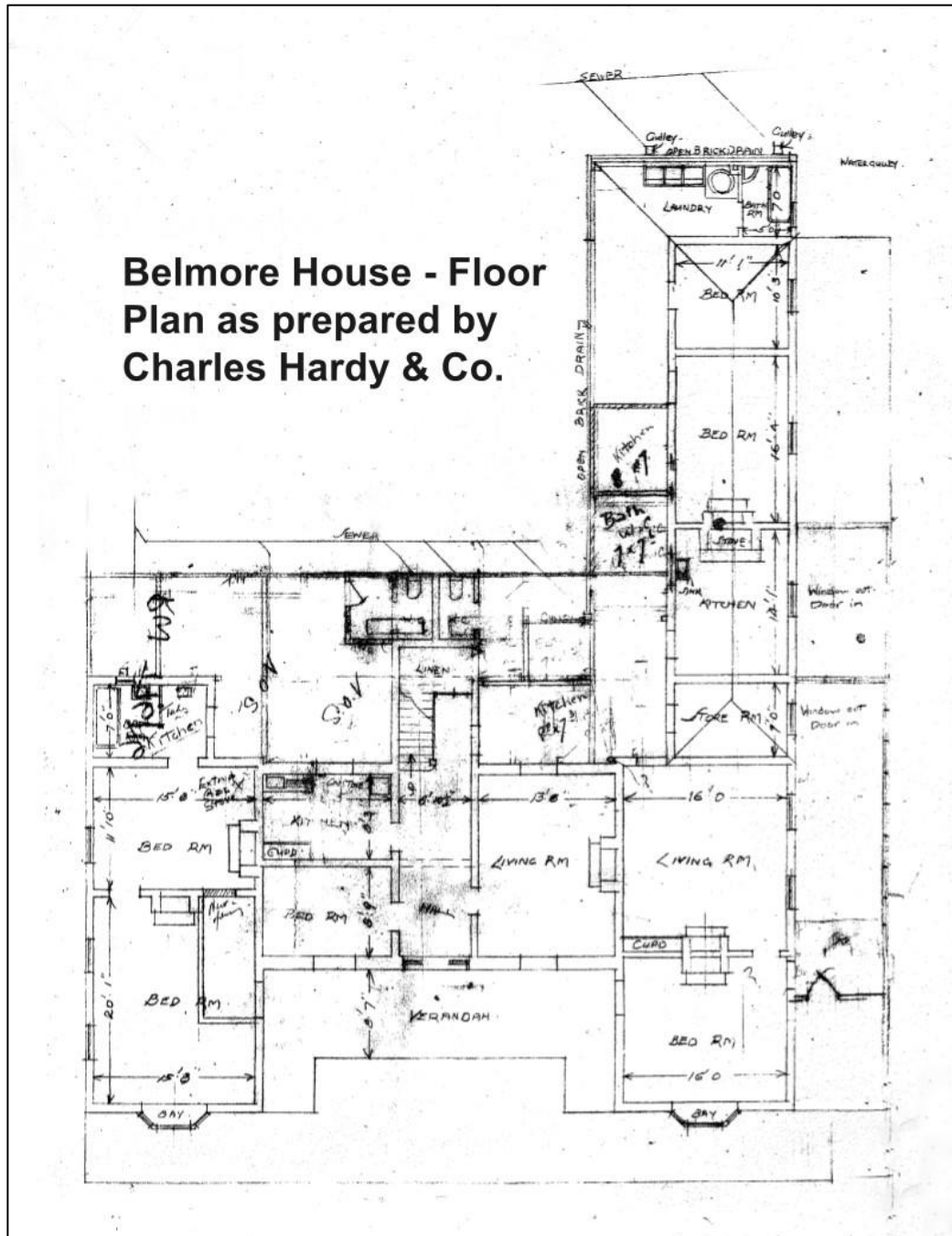
¹⁰⁵ *Daily Advertiser*, 12, 16, 26, 27, 28 October 1948.

¹⁰⁶ *Daily Advertiser*. 26 October 1948, p3.

¹⁰⁷ *Daily Advertiser*, 1 November 1948; Land and Property Information, Title deed, Vol.3069, fol.129.

¹⁰⁸ National Trust document – Proposal to Classify Belmore House, 1978. Jill Morrow, W. R. Dobie.

At some time, Charles Hardy and Co., prepared plans for remodelling the property and these plans appear hereunder.



Belmore House - Floor Plan as prepared by Charles Hardy & Co.

Above: Remodelling plans as prepared by Charles Hardy & Co. These would be ground floor plans. Courtesy CSU Regional Archives.



Above: Front entry and hallway (2018).



Above: One of the numerous bedrooms (2018).



Above: A section of the gardens (2018).



Above: More of the gardens (2018).

By November 1980, Raymond James Hardiman, of Uranquinty, and Eric William Kolhagen, of The Rock, both farmers, were the registered owners of the property.¹⁰⁹ Future owners included Eileen Myra Kolhagen (registered March 1982), David Graham Turner and Wendy Margaret Turner (October 1982) and Davydnew Pty Ltd (August 1991).¹¹⁰

The building was classified by the National Trust in 1989, and has been listed by Wagga Wagga City Council as an item of 'heritage significance' since 1985.¹¹¹ In the year 2000 a number of articles appeared in the *Daily Advertiser* raising concerns about the state of the premises, and in March Council resolved to issue an order under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.¹¹² In May of that same year the owner was forced to erect a fence around the property to prevent vandals and squatters damaging the property. Apart from the squatters, the property had been vacant for the previous twelve months.¹¹³

By November a council officer was recommending that they take legal action to force the owners to make repairs. An order had been served on the owners in August, but the report to Council stated that aside from putting up a 1.8 metre chain fence around the site, the owner had otherwise not complied with the order¹¹⁴



Above: A fence around the derelict site

¹⁰⁹ Land and Property Information, Title deed. Vol.3069, fol.129.

¹¹⁰ Land and Property Information, Title deed. Vol.3069, fol.129.

¹¹¹ *Daily Advertiser*, 28 March 2000, p4.

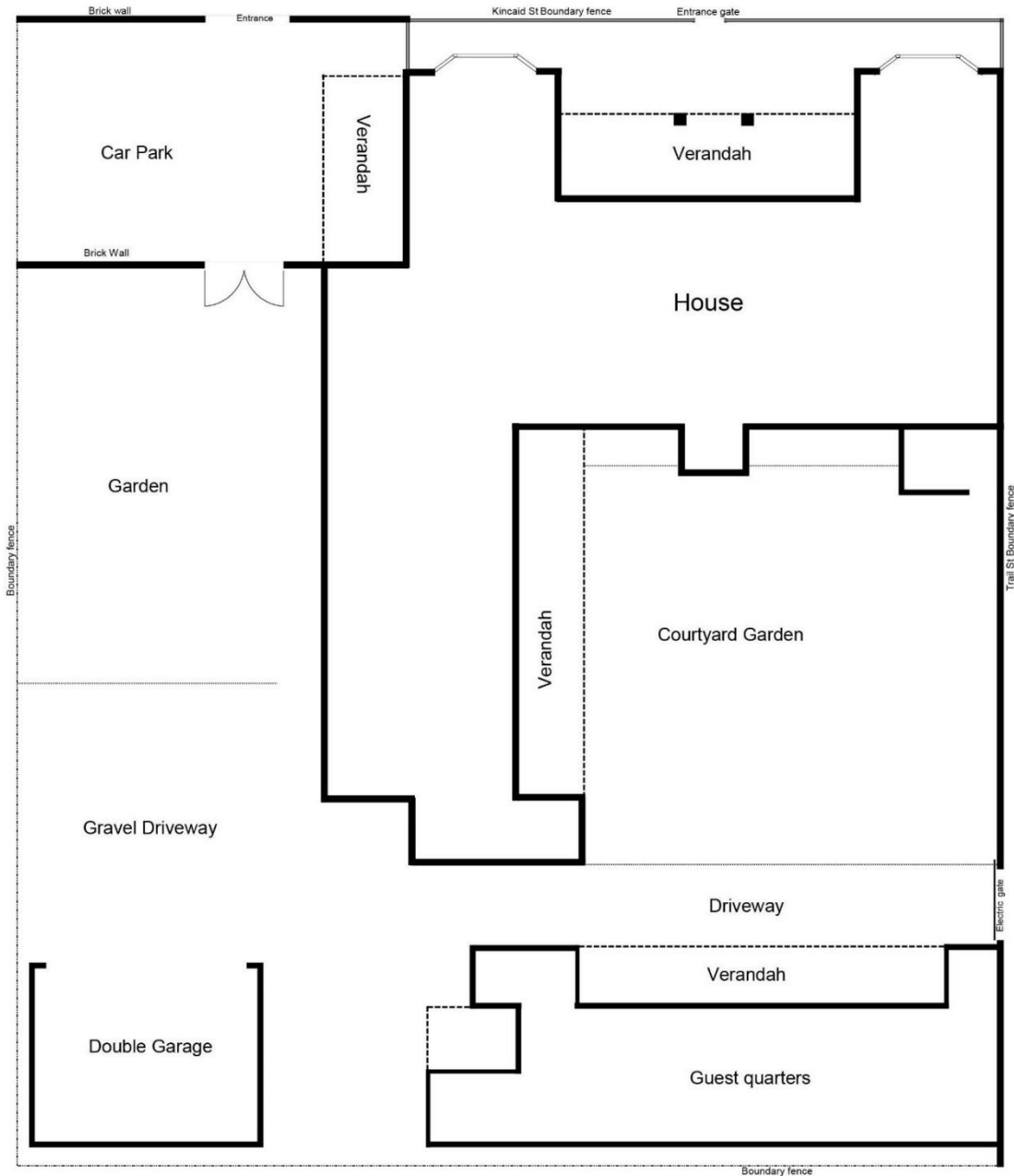
¹¹² *Daily Advertiser*, 28 March 2000, p4

¹¹³ *Daily Advertiser*, 24 May 2000, p5.

¹¹⁴ *Daily Advertiser*, 21 November 2000, p8.

In June 2001, it was reported that the property was on the market, and there was an interested buyer.¹¹⁵ A buyer did eventuate and the property was sold and subsequently restored to much of its former glory.¹¹⁶

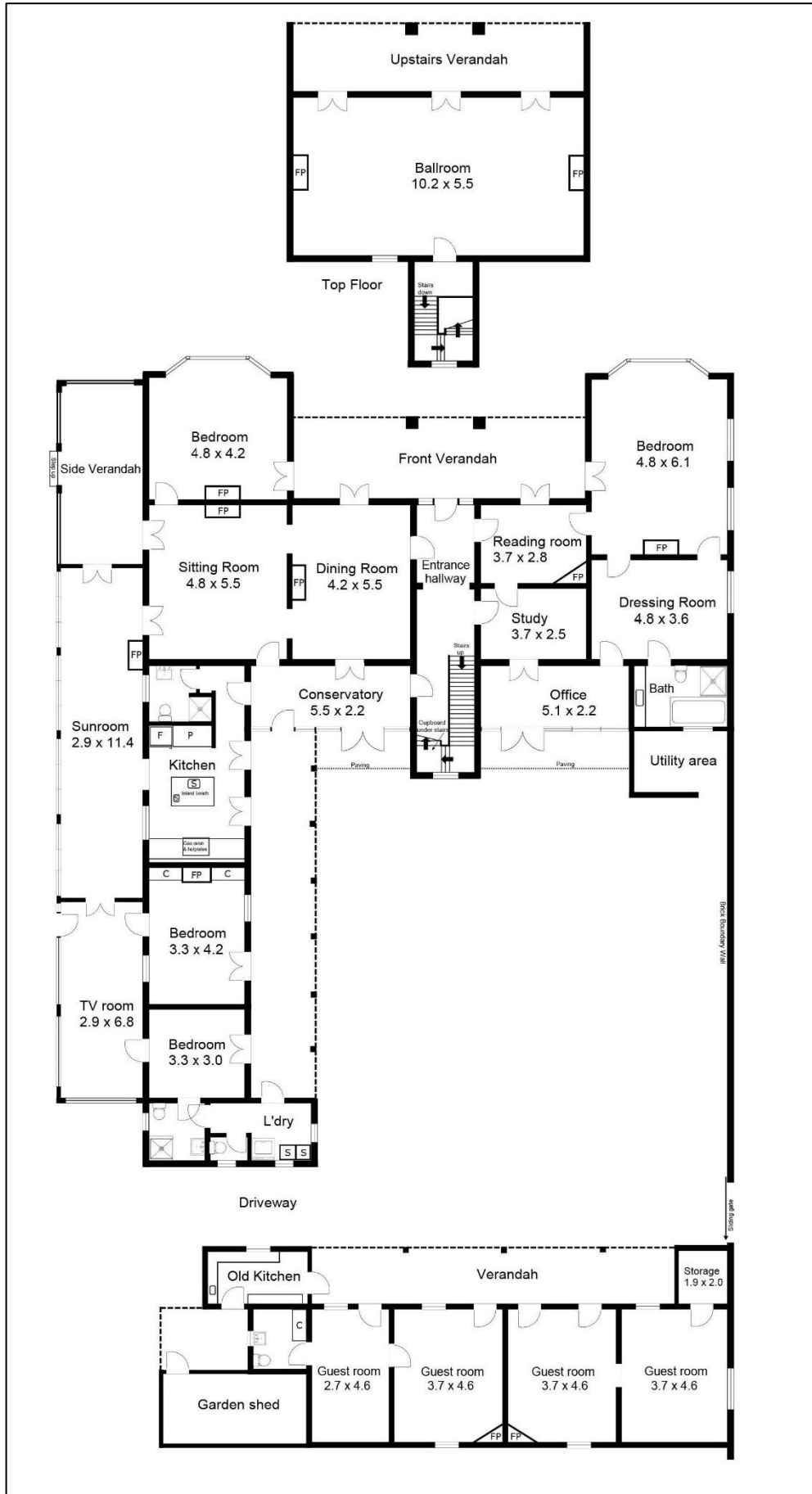
The 2016 floorplans, displayed hereunder, demonstrate the layout of the internal rooms and the external buildings.



Above: Plan showing location of guest quarters et al

¹¹⁵ *Daily Advertiser*, 22 June 2001, p5.

¹¹⁶ Wagga Wagga Heritage Walking Tour – National Trust records



Left: Plans of the internal layout.

A New Life.



Above: John & Jenny Cummins who purchased the property in a seriously run-down condition at the end of 1999 and set about restoring it to its former grandeur inside and out.

Restoration

Thanks to the vision of John and Jenny Cummins the building was restored to its former glory. Features included an upstairs grand ballroom, pressed metal ceilings, timber flooring, open fireplaces, two offices separate from the house and a 1429 square metre block.

"We enjoy renovating homes and needed a challenge, and for us it was certainly a challenge," Mr Cummins said. "The house has great street appeal and we were both just attracted to the place. We could see with good restoration it could once again emulate what it had been earlier."

Mrs Cummins said: "The 'bones' were good, it was solid, it was just neglected. I loved the two storeys, the roof line, everything; you could see it could be a beautiful home. It's so nice to see something that was so neglected finish up alive. That is what I get out of renovations, to bring it to life."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Ken Grimson, *Daily Advertiser*, 11 August 2014.

The Houston – a conversion

In November 2014 it was noted that, “Wagga’s rare and striking Belmore House is slated to be transformed into "The Houston" - a ten-bedroom boutique hotel in the heart of the city.

Its new owners, Orange-based hoteliers Mark and Lisa Madigan, had lodged a development application with council to "judiciously" retrofit the site on Kincaid Street in keeping with its historical significance. The proposed \$250,000 project was to involve a conversion of existing living spaces inside the house, catering for eight suites in the main building and two suites in the rear stable. According to the development application, construction workers would need to remove a row of ornamental pear trees and hedging in the backyard to make way for a circular driveway - opening onto both Kincaid and Trail streets.

The residence sits within the boundaries of the Wagga Conservation Area and is a heritage-listed home with the National Trust of Australia. While the price the Madigans paid for the house has not been disclosed, the real estate agent that sold the property believed it set the benchmark for the highest price paid for a Wagga house. It was on the market for \$1.75 million and its sale was negotiated.¹¹⁸

Its transformation into a hotel added to the multitude of uses the site has had over its 146-year history.

According to Mark, the hotel’s name, The Houston, “was derived from New York inspiration. While I was conceptualising the design I drew on my recent trip to Manhattan and the energy of Lower Manhattan, the So-Ho (derived from South of Houston Street) area was right up my alley so calling the property after that inspiration seemed apt. The design became a mix of Old School Manhattan sprinkled with Urban Downtown Loft.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Brodie Owen, *Daily Advertiser*, 18 November 2014.

¹¹⁹ Mark Madigan. 27th September 2018.



Above: A contemporary photo of the main building.



Above: Mark Madigan in front of The Houston.

APPENDIX A

The Daily Advertiser

When, in 1868, the first edition of the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser and Riverine Reporter* rolled off the presses, its co-founders had little idea they had begun what is now an institution in the Australian newspaper industry. The co-founders, wealthy pastoralists, Thomas Darlow and Auber George Jones, were men of ambition, vision and destiny. Yet they could not have envisaged the impact their four-page broadsheet, which sold for sixpence, would have on the town it served.

The *Advertiser*, like *Wagga Wagga*, had moved with the times and was a household name in the community. In many respects, the first issue of the paper on 21 October 1868 was unique in the country journalism of that era. Firstly, the mechanical qualities were distinctive and attractive. The paper was clearly printed on fine white paper of a costly character. This made instant appeal to a public which had been more or less accustomed to an ill-printed newspaper on inferior paper. The paper also boasted a highly credible literary section. The editorial content included topical news from around the region as well as articles from Sydney and Melbourne written by well-known and respected journalists.

Although the news sent by telegraph in those days was necessarily brief, it was, from the beginning, the considered policy of the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* to give its readers all available particulars of events which were of public interest. It was the first newspaper in this part of the world to subscribe to Reuters Newsagency service, which was a new thing in Australia. As the paper grew, its cable and telegraphic service was extended to meet the needs of the public.

The *Advertiser's* first editor was Frank Hutchinson, an Oxford University graduate who was soon recognised as one of the most brilliant and cultured of Australian journalists. The initial manager was EG Wilton, who had been trained in London.

From the start the *Advertiser* was a bi-weekly, coming out on Wednesdays and Saturdays. For the first fifteen years, it was owned by Mr Jones and broadly speaking, the policy which he followed was continued after he had disposed of his interest to Stephen Sullivan and J Mackay. Mr Sullivan was only 21 years old when he was hired as the paper's first printer. He produced the first issue with his own labour on a simple mangle-style hand printing press. He became something of a legend at the *Advertiser*, his association with the paper spanning more than sixty years.

From the early 1870s, the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* was printed on an Eagle double demy hand press which Mr Sullivan had brought from Sydney to Wagga Wagga by bullock dray, a journey that took two months. The Eaglehand press had no rubber rollers on it, so Mr Sullivan, known for his innovation, made some out of treacle and glue! The press is now on display at the Wagga and District Historical Society Museum on Willans Hill and, remarkably, is still in working order.

The *Advertiser* became a tri-weekly in 1880, being published each Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Mr Sullivan and his father-in-law, Mr Mackay, bought the paper from Auber Jones in 1883. A progressive thinker, Mr Sullivan turned the paper into a daily on 31 December 1910. At the same time, he built new offices, at the present site in Trail Street, and installed the most modern machinery then available.

The offices were located on allotment seven of section two, town and parish of South Wagga Wagga. The original symmetrical single story building was replaced by the current two story structure.



Above: The original (pre 1910) offices of the Wagga Wagga Advertiser. The structure to the right of frame would be one of the outbuildings belonging to Belmore House.

Below: A later shot of the offices features George Auber Jones (4th from left), front.



Below: The current two story offices of the Daily Advertiser, which once housed the printing press and associated production facilities.



According to the Wagga Wagga Rate Books there was a weatherboard cottage on allotment six, and in 1871 the cottage was occupied by Frank Hutchinson, the first editor. This information appears to contradict details in the photo below, which clearly shows a brick cottage to the south of the Advertiser' Offices.



Above: The brick cottage to the south of the Advertiser' offices in Trail Street.

Mr Sullivan retired from the business when he went blind and handed over the management to Bob Johnston. He died in Sydney in 1933, leaving the *Advertiser* to his daughters, Alice and Forbie.

Alice and Forbie sold the *Advertiser* in the early 1950s to a company which kept the trading name of A and F Sullivan. The new management turned *The Daily Advertiser* from a broadsheet into a tabloid on 23 July 1962. Another major change came in January 1975 when the paper moved into the field of computer typeset systems combined with web-fed offset printing, replacing the traditional hot metal composition and web rotary letterpress print.

Taffy Davies was editor from 1962 to 1963 with Jack Dennis taking over the role from 1964 to 1978. When Mr Dennis retired, he had given half a century in years of service to *The Daily Advertiser*. Greg Walker became editor on the retirement of Mr Dennis and he was succeeded by Mr Graham Gorrel on 17 September 1979. On 1 March 1992 Michael McCormack was appointed editor and was subsequently followed by the current editor Paul McLoughlin on 15 July 2002.

John Charles Jackson was Group General Manager from October 1961 until his retirement in February 1992. Mr Jackson also served as chairman of Australian United Press from 1974 to 1992. He died in 1994. He was succeeded by Graham Gorrel who served as Group Managing Director until March 2000 when he became a Director of the Company. He retired as a Director in June 2003. Wayne Geale was appointed as Group General Manager of the Riverina Media Group on 1 April 2000 and as Chief Executive Officer in February 2004.

The company trades under the name of The Wagga Daily Advertiser Pty Ltd. The Henderson family had owned the Company for over sixty years when it was purchased by Mr and Mrs RA Henderson and subsequently run by their daughter Mrs Margaret Jarrett. After Mrs Jarrett's death in early 2002 her daughter Ms Alicia Jarrett assumed ownership. Rural Press bought Riverina, five weeks before Rural Press merged into Fairfax Media.



Above: Wagga Wagga Advertiser staff c.1897

APPENDIX B

In June 2017, there was a notice in the local press asking for information on an unidentified headstone/monument at the Wagga Wagga Monumental Cemetery. Vandals had removed all identification some time ago and there were no local records that could identify the monument. This was the monument of Auber George Jones first wife, Hannah Maria Moore.

The Wagga Wagga Monumental Cemetery.

In May 1873 the local member advised that the government would not proceed with constructing the planned road to the cemetery until the local council commenced work on the portion within the municipal boundaries.¹²⁰ In the same month the local Road Superintendent, Percy Scarr, was giving notice that tenders for the work, which was the formation of the road from the municipal boundary through to the cemetery, were now open.¹²¹ The superintendent sought tenders again in September 1873, "*for completion of works on McGarry's contract, Cemetery Road.*"¹²²

In June 1876, the following gentlemen were appointed trustees of the Wagga Cemetery: Messrs. JS Lavender, AG Jones, AT Bolton, JR Garland, and HB Fitzhardinge.¹²³

In June 1879, J Hanson, of Sydney, gave notice that as he was, *being about to erect a large monument at the Wagga Wagga Cemetery, any orders entrusted to me could be conveniently erected at the same time.*¹²⁴

In August 1879, a report on the cemetery read as follows:

A VISIT TO THE WAGGA WAGGA CEMETERY

After a drive of three miles or thereabouts the resting-place for the dead is reached. The situation is at the foot of a range, the monuments in which can be seen at a distance of half a mile, and the observer, from their appearance, would be led to believe that the place was really in splendid condition, and where one could enjoy an hour's ramble; but no sooner is the first section reached than this idea is entirely dispelled. The whole area - about six acres we should say - is enclosed with a rough paling fence, and is occupied by, first, the Chinese, then the Wesleyans; the Presbyterians follow next; beside them are the Roman Catholics, and these are separated from the Church of England by a wire fence, of no other service but to show the division. Between the Roman Catholics and Presbyterians there is no division noticeable except a couple of wooden pegs; while the Wesleyans are entirely fenced in, as is the Chinese section. The enclosures are almost knee deep in grass and weeds, and one cannot walk without being in danger of treading on a snake, of which the whole place abounds, owing to the cover for them and the rocky hill immediately at the rear; in fact, at the time of our visit we saw one of these reptiles, which we quickly despatched. We walked over the Wesleyan ground - where comparatively few interments have taken place - with the hope of finding a clue to the design in which it was laid out, but failed to find any such. Then going over the

¹²⁰ Wagga Wagga Advertiser, 7 May 1873, p2.

¹²¹ Wagga Wagga Advertiser, 31 May 1873, p3.

¹²² Wagga Wagga Express, 17 September 1873, p3.

¹²³ Wagga Wagga Advertiser, 21 June 1876, p2.

¹²⁴ Wagga Wagga Advertiser, 18 June 1879, p4.

Presbyterian ground the same result was found; not even a straight walk, or signs of one, could we find. Surely these bodies are not being buried at random, without due regard to sectional position of the graves; or are graves dug anywhere, without taking the lines of others into consideration? In the Roman Catholic portion, which is about equal to the Episcopalian, there are several walks, though covered with weeds to the height of a couple of feet. In this part, the finest monument of the Cemetery is erected over the remains of the late Mr. Cox. This is the main object of attraction to visitors. A number of costly monuments and tombstones are in this ground, but their beauty is altogether put in the shade by the disgraceful state of the whole land. If a little more systematic plan of burials carried on in this section, and one can trace the lines of the graves if the grass, weeds, and rubbish were cleared away. We now pass on to the Episcopalian, where we find Mr Oram. and his men working away in laying out walks at right angles where there has, as yet, been no interments. A better term, perhaps, would be laying out "new ground" in sections, each of which will take three graves in width and hold forty graves, with a path between each line. We notice also that a number of *pinus insignis* have been planted at about forty feet apart to form avenues all around this section, and Mr Oram informs us that he will, he expects, plant a plane or white cedar tree between each of these next winter, it being too late for the present season. Besides these walks that Mr. Oram is forming, there are two roads ten feet wide, and running longitudinally and parallel with the ground on each side of these. Trees have also been planted within the last few weeks. The walks and roads were marked out some years ago, but the weeds have obliterated them. As Mr. Oram's contract is to clean the whole of this portion up, by Sunday next, it will bear wonderful contrast to the sections beside it. In this section there are some hundreds of interments, and some of the finest monuments we have seen in a country cemetery. **The most prominent in point of height is that which marks the spot where the remains of the late Mrs. A. G. Jones lies.** There are some graves that are kept in order in a creditable manner; but where there is one that this applies to, there are twenty the reverse all over the Cemetery, which we consider a disgrace to the district. We have never in any part of the country seen such a weedy or irregular place for the dead, which would, at a small outlay, not more than two-thirds of the revenue (if we can judge from the number of graves which must be paid for), be kept in good order, properly laid out, groups of trees planted, and so become a favourite place of resort, not only for the friends of those who "sleep" there, but the general public. We would like to know what is done with the fees of the internments, if they are at all collected. There must be sufficient in hand to thoroughly put the place in order. We offer a simple suggestion. Let a competent caretaker be given the entire charge of the whole Cemetery, and let each denomination pay their share pro ratio, and let this sexton or caretaker have the entire control of digging graves, keeping the place in order, and collecting the fees of all; let him be paid reasonably and hold him responsible. Then by adopting regulations and getting them approved of by the Governor-in-Council, the friends of the dead would see that they had certain rules to go by, and would feel more satisfied. Let a board with these regulations printed thereon be placed at the various entrances, and there would not be the same complaints that are often made to us, "that our graves have boon robbed of their flowers." In conclusion, we must pass a favourable remark to the Episcopalian for their work, which was not done a moment too soon; and if the hint we have given is taken by the other denominations, the whole place can be got under control, and so afford a pleasant place to resort to by the general public, besides the friends of the dead that rest there."¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Wagga Wagga Advertiser, 27 August 1879, p4.

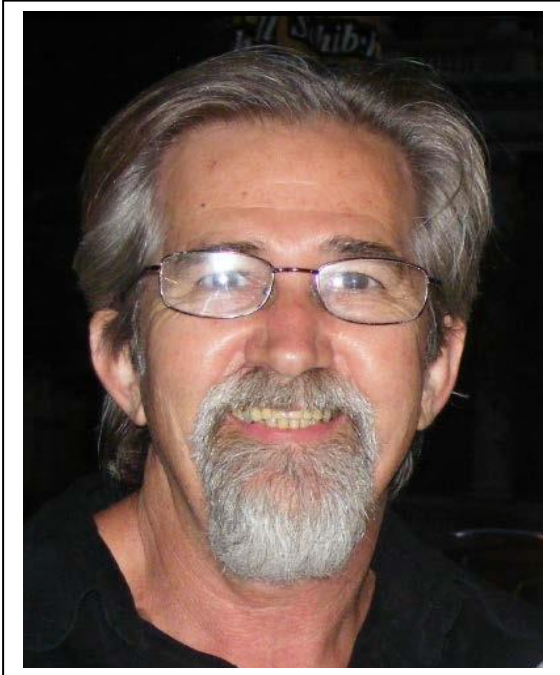
In March 1880, a local press report noted that the “*general cemetery*” is outside the municipal boundaries and therefore not subject to municipal control.¹²⁶



Above: The damaged monument of Mrs AG Jones. There can be no doubt that the unidentified monument was that of the wife of Auber George Jones.

¹²⁶ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 11 March 1880, p2.

A Collaborative Project



Geoff Burch

Local historian and prolific author, Sherry Morris, along with Wagga Wagga amateur historian Geoff Burch have worked together to produce this book on the history of Belmore House.

Sherry is well known locally for her many published books. Since childhood Sherry has been fascinated by Australian history, particularly community, local and regional history. She has written over thirty books and numerous articles for journals and newspapers, thematic histories and heritage studies.

In November 2000, she was awarded the NSW Premier's Regional and Community History prize for her excellence in historical research, writing and presentation of *Wagga Wagga: A History*.

In 2017 she was awarded an OAM for services to local history.

Geoff is a former president of the Wagga Wagga & District Historical Society and a well-known local historian whose primary interest is in hotels and towns throughout the Riverina region. This is his fifth publication, earlier books having been written about Ardlethan, Pomingalarna, the North Wagga Wagga Public Hall, and The Rock's Avenue of Honour.



Sherry Morris