

# THE BEND



## An Historical Perspective

**Front Cover:** A bend in the Murrumbidgee River, to the east of Tarcutta Street, and encompassing Church Street. Courtesy KI Studio.

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# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

With stage 2 of the Wagga Wagga City Council’s Strategic Master Plan underway it is an appropriate time to record the numerous historical features of the area defined herein, many of which no longer exist. The new developments will further obscure the past history of this precinct.

While endeavouring to record the various historical features, a number of the existing features are not explored in this article. Most notably, the Wagga Wagga Beach, and the various entities associated with the beach, are not included in this story. The entities referred to would include the Life Saving Club, the Boat Club, and various swimming groups. The beach, of course, has its own history. All of this will require a separate story.

Another prominent feature not included, is the caravan park.

This article covers a larger area than that designated in the council’s strategic plan, and importantly includes the historic buildings along Church Street.



**Above:** Concept plan for stage 2 of the Wagga wagga City Council Riverside Strategic Plan. Courtesy Wagga Wagga City Council.

# The Bend.

The Bend is an area defined by a bend in the river starting from a point to the south east of St John's and extending to a point at the end of Sturt Street, opposite the eastern end of the Riverine Club, and being the area to the east of that line.



**Above:** The Bend region – all that area to the right or east of the red line. Courtesy Google Earth.

Prominent features within the bend area included the following items,

1. Wagga Wagga's first pound – that general area east of Church Street (approximately).
2. Wagga Wagga's first cemetery (C)
3. The Churches – St John's, St Michael's, St Andrew's.
4. Wagga Wagga Bowling Club (A)
5. Dixieland (D)
6. Jubilee Drive (B)
7. The American Engineers tent camp and the pontoon bridges.
8. A tree at the end of Sturt Street to which a river height gauge had been attached. The roadway at that time (1915) ran all the way to the river bank.<sup>1</sup> (E) Also the location of the levee bank commemorative tablet.

<sup>1</sup> Daily Advertiser. 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1915, p2.

9. Sturt Memorial. In October 1929 as part of the celebrations to commemorate Sturt's expedition down the Murrumbidgee River, the council resolved to erect a monument in Little Gurwood Street. The council agreed to spend £50 on the monument and Mr JD Morrow offered his services in the form of a design, plans and a plasticine model.<sup>2</sup> The obelisk was unveiled on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1929, by the mayor, Alderman EE Collins, with an ensemble of school children to witness the event.<sup>3</sup> The obelisk consisted of a cement block with a bronze plaque.
10. River Excursion Launching Site. In May 1907 the citizens of Wagga Wagga could take a cruise on the river in a launch capable of holding sixteen passengers comfortably, for the sum of 1s return. The service was provided by Harold Thorn and the trip extended five miles upstream. Harold also catered for Moonlight Parties, and carried fishing parties etc to the site of their choice. The launch was moored at the end of Little Gurwood Street.<sup>4</sup>
11. The Rocks – This is an area that has significance to Wiradjuri women. Also an area for swimming events. Hardy & Co. constructed some cement or brick pylons, in this area, to hold timber platforms from which swimmers would take off in swimming competitions. The pylons are still evident in the river, just downstream from The Rocks.<sup>5</sup>
12. The Beach
  - a. Lifesaving Club
  - b. Boat/Rowing Club
13. Caravan Park

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<sup>2</sup> Daily Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1929, p3.

<sup>3</sup> Daily Advertiser. 5<sup>th</sup> December 1929, p7.

<sup>4</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 9<sup>th</sup> May 1907, p1.

<sup>5</sup> John Winterbottom. 2020.

## The Pound

On the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1848, notice was given that Edmund Henry Seppings had been appointed to the position of pound keeper, at Wagga Wagga, by order of the Acting Clerk of Petty Sessions, Michael Norton, effective from the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1848.<sup>6</sup> Seppings was the first pound keeper at Wagga Wagga and by the 20<sup>th</sup> September had impounded some twenty seven head of cattle found running on the property of George MacLeay, Esquire, JP. Seppings gave notice that if not released or claimed by the 19<sup>th</sup> October the cattle would be sold at the pound.<sup>7</sup>

Seppings utilised the natural bend in the river to advantage, erecting a fence across to establish a secure holding area for impounded stock. According to James Gormly the fence ran from, “*river bank to river bank, parallel with Tarcutta Street.*”<sup>8</sup> Seppings erected a residence within the compound, located in the middle of what we now call Church Street. Seppings also conducted business as an auctioneer, in the early days of the town.<sup>9</sup>



**Above:** Extract from Crown Plan W.34.1345 showing Sepping's residence (in the middle of what became Church Street) and the old pound yard. Courtesy NSW Land Registry Services.

<sup>6</sup> Government Gazette. 1848, p1058.

<sup>7</sup> Government Gazette. 1848, p1410.

<sup>8</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> June 1904, p3.

<sup>9</sup> Keith Swan. *A History of Wagga Wagga*. 1970, p49. [Wagga Wagga District Directory: 1848-1851]

Much of this original pound area was subject to flooding and when the big flood came in 1852, Seppings' residence and its contents were washed away.<sup>10</sup> No doubt the flood caused the authorities to rethink the location of the pound, which was later moved – to several locations over time. In 1857 the pound was situated on allotment no.11 of section 2, in Kincaid Street.<sup>11</sup> In 2019 this latter site would consist of house numbers 66, 68 & 70, along Kincaid Street, at the south east corner of the intersection of Kincaid and Simmons Streets.

### **Edmund Henry Seppings**

Edmund Henry Seppings was a midshipman in the British Navy. He was the pound keeper at Wagga Wagga from 1848 until December 1856, when he was replaced by John Davenish Mears.<sup>12</sup> He obtained an auctioneer's licence in 1849 (WWBB); and a slaughtering licence for his yards at South Wagga Wagga on March 10, 1851 (WWBB).<sup>13</sup> He was appointed bailiff of the court at Wagga Wagga in August 1850.<sup>14</sup>

In 1852 he married Hannah Ann Collis (nee Staines), at Wagga Wagga,<sup>15</sup> and the couple had five children before Edmund passed away in 1858.<sup>16</sup> Hannah remarried (her third marriage) following his death, to James Holloway in 1861, at Wagga Wagga.<sup>17</sup> Hannah Holloway passed away at Wagga Wagga on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1915, at her home in Thorne Street, aged 85.

Hannah's first husband was Henry Collis, Wagga Wagga's first licensed publican [the Wagga Wagga Inn in 1847]. It is believed that Henry Collis died in 1852, at the relatively young age of 28.<sup>18</sup> Hannah was survived by six sons and two daughters; 43 grandchildren; and 45 great grandchildren.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Goulburn Herald. 17<sup>th</sup> July 1852, p4.

<sup>11</sup> Government Gazette. 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1857, p2081.

<sup>12</sup> Empire. 20<sup>th</sup> December 1856, p4.

<sup>13</sup> Sherry Morris. Biographical Listings. Edmund Henry Seppings.

<sup>14</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 10<sup>th</sup> August 1850.

<sup>15</sup> NSW BDM's. Marriage registration # 560/1852 V1852560 80.

<sup>16</sup> NSW BDM's. Death registration # 5556.

<sup>17</sup> NSW BDM's. Marriage registration # 2967.

<sup>18</sup> NSW BDM's. Death registration # 691/1852 V1852691 38B

<sup>19</sup> Daily Advertiser. 16<sup>th</sup> August 1915, p3.



## The Cemetery

Wagga Wagga's first cemetery was located on allotment one, section 43, town and parish of South Wagga Wagga.

This cemetery, on Church Hill, was closed in December 1856 and a new cemetery [Koorinal Road] was opened in 1857.<sup>20</sup>

At the time the old cemetery was closed it contained about one hundred bodies. In 1898 only three of the bodies could be identified [in the old cemetery]. Two by headstones – John Wright, who died in December 1856, and William Sharp, who died in November 1853. A wooden cross with a metal plate identified the third body, that of Annie Elizabeth Monaghan. Many of the early pioneers were buried in this cemetery, including Tinker Brown.

In April 1891 a former resident visited Wagga Wagga and was dismayed to find cattle and horses grazing on the site of the old cemetery, at the rear of St John's Church and the old Catholic Church. He wrote a letter to the editor of the local paper asking why this situation was allowed to exist and suggested a fence be erected to prevent stock straying onto the site.<sup>21</sup>

In November 1898 two bodies were removed from the old cemetery and relocated to the Koorinal Road Monumental Cemetery.<sup>22</sup> They were the parents of Charles Nixon, late of Gregadoo, but now of Collins Street, Newtown<sup>23</sup> – John Brunner Nixon (died 5<sup>th</sup> October 1854) and Mary Swan Nixon (died 4<sup>th</sup> July 1851). Mr Nixon had to get permission from the Minister for Justice to exhume the bodies.

In November 1920 a grave was reopened [in the old cemetery], and the body re-interred in the Catholic section of the Monumental Cemetery. It was that of John Wright who died 27<sup>th</sup> December 1856. A report in the local press declared that this was the last body left in the old cemetery, and that following the closure of the old cemetery, a number of bodies had been moved to the Monumental Cemetery over a period of time. The most recent removal, prior to that of John Wright, had taken place about seventeen years earlier (1903).<sup>24</sup> It is quite possible that a number of bodies still remain buried in the old cemetery, and perhaps even in the grounds surrounding the old churches.

In July 1934 workers on the river reserve at the back of Church Hill, unearthed a bone, which, given that it was located in the area of the old cemetery, may have been a human bone.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 29<sup>th</sup> November 1898, p2.

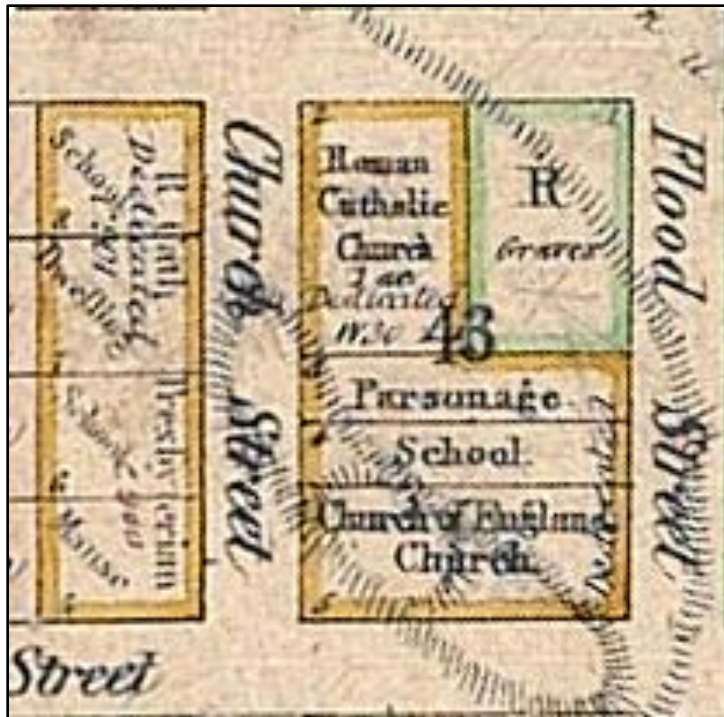
<sup>21</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 9<sup>th</sup> April 1891, p3.

<sup>22</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 29<sup>th</sup> November 1898, p2. / 1<sup>st</sup> December 1898, p2.

<sup>23</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 29<sup>th</sup> November 1989, p3.

<sup>24</sup> Daily Advertiser. 20<sup>th</sup> November 1920, p4.

<sup>25</sup> Daily Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1934, p2.



**Left:** Extract from 1865 map of Wagga Wagga showing the land set aside for the cemetery, the Catholic Church, the Church of England, and the Presbyterian Church. Courtesy State Records [SR.6030].

The parsonage and school blocks on the eastern side of Church Street both belonged to the Church of England, being allotments 3, 4 and 5 of section 43, town & parish of South Wagga Wagga.

On the western side of Church Street, allotments 5 & 6 were reserved for the Presbyterian Church, while allotments 7 & 8 were reserved for the Catholic Church.

The area marked R (Graves) was supposedly divided into three sections of approximately equal size – Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian.

It should be remembered that this first cemetery was closed before there was either a church building or a permanent minister based in Wagga Wagga.

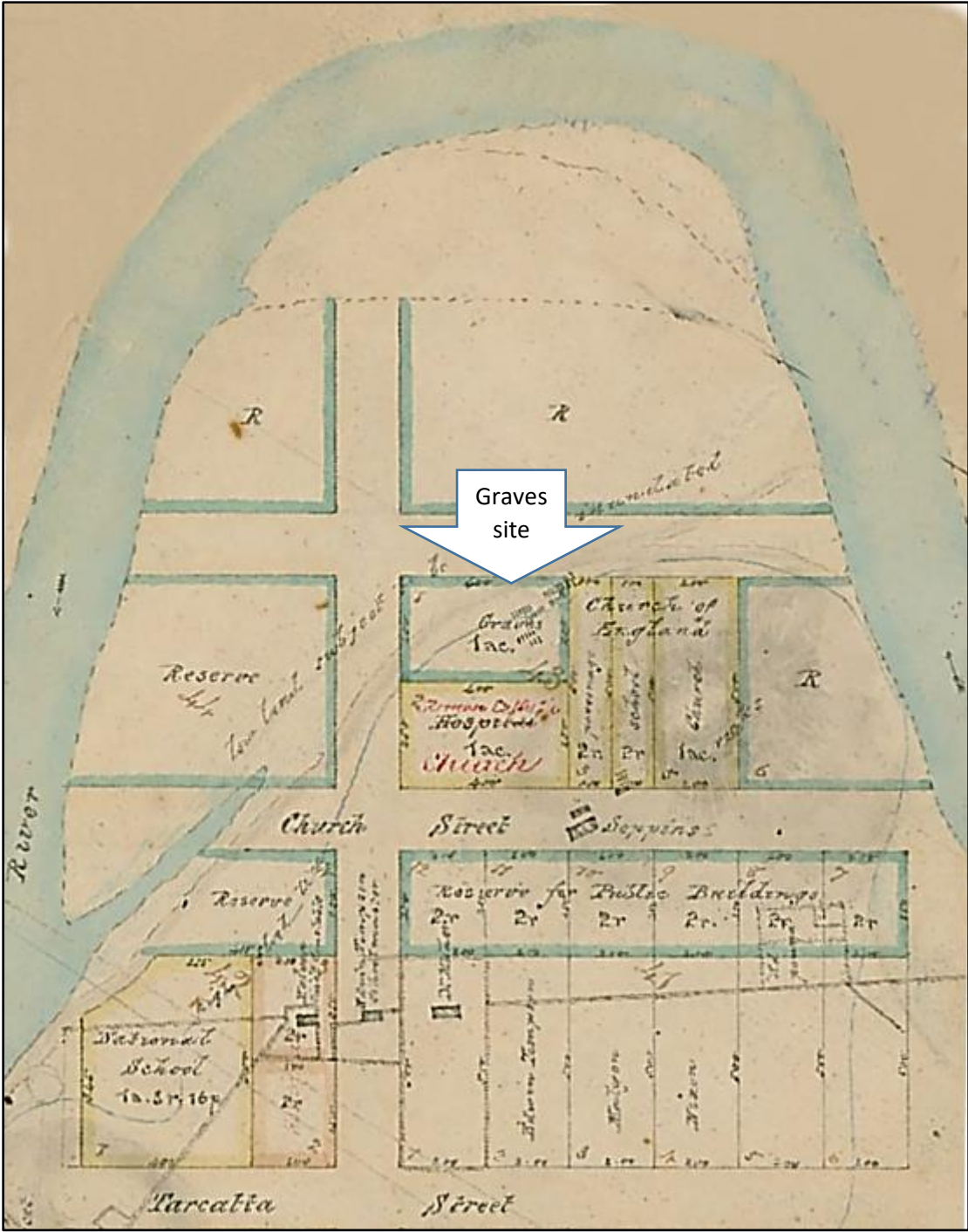
There are several references to what is presumably the newer cemetery in 1858 and 1859. The first, in November 1858, notes that subscriptions had been opened for, “*completing the fencing of the burial ground in connection with the Church of England, Roman Catholic, and other churches in this neighbourhood.*” Monies were to be paid to George Forsyth, the treasurer of the relevant committee.<sup>26</sup>

In February 1859 a fund raising event secured funds of £14, which was originally intended to go to the Church of England building fund, but the manager of the event, Mr Douglass, instead diverted the monies to the burial ground fund.<sup>27</sup> It was in this same month that a Church of England committee, chaired by the Rev. Young, resolved to engage Mr Mumford to construct the first church at Wagga Wagga.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 6<sup>th</sup> November 1858, p2.

<sup>27</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 19<sup>th</sup> February 1859, p2.

<sup>28</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 19<sup>th</sup> February 1859, p2.



**Above:** Extract from Edward Fisher’s December 1857 Plan [W.34.1345] showing the area marked as “Graves”, with a number of short lines in one corner suggesting this was where the majority of bodies had been buried. The map does not identify separate sections for the three different religions. Courtesy NSW Land Registry Services.

## The Levee Bank Commemorative Plaque

The city of Wagga Wagga Flood Protection and Mitigation Scheme [the levee bank] was completed by September 1960, and a commemorative plaque, set in a brick memorial, was officially unveiled on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 1960. This edifice is located just to the west of the tree with the river height gauge, both of which are situated at the end of Sturt Street.



**Above:** The brick edifice with tablet to commemorate the completion of the levee bank in 1960, with the gum tree and river gauge to the right. Both items located at the end of Sturt Street in July 2019. Taken during the upgrading of the levee bank [2019].



**Above:** Temporary levee bank works in 1950. Courtesy Museum of the Riverina. [BGS.2004/268bc]



**Above:** Work on the permanent levee bank in 1960. Courtesy Museum of the Riverina. {RIV.2009/1160a}



**Above and Below:** Work on the permanent levee bank in 1960. Courtesy Museum of the Riverina.  
{RIV.2009/1160b & 1160c}



## River Gauge Tree

This tree features a river height gauge that has been partly engulfed by the tree's bark covering. It dates back to July 1911, or perhaps just a little earlier. It superseded an older gauge which consisted of a tree stump set into the bank, but which only read up to eighteen feet, and by 1911 the markings on the stump were obscure. The base of the new gauge was level with the top of the old stump.<sup>29</sup> The old stump dated back to at least 1901, and probably earlier.<sup>30</sup>



**Above:** The butt of the tree displaying the old river gauge, now partly consumed by the tree [July 2019]. In 2019 the tree was located at the end of Sturt Street.

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<sup>29</sup> Daily Advertiser. 24<sup>th</sup> July 1911, p2.

<sup>30</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 29<sup>th</sup> August 1901, p2.

There was a temporary gauge fixed to a tree at the end of Little Gurwood Street during the 1891 floods, but that was a different gauge to the one that still stands.<sup>31</sup> A press report noted how difficult it was to read the official gauge on the bridge, due to the wave like nature of the water, creating a crest and a valley, with some people reading the crest and others reading the bottom of the valley. By comparison, the water at the end of Little Gurwood Street was much calmer, allowing more accurate readings to be taken. The article implored the Water Conservation Department to affix a permanent gauge at this latter location [Little Gurwood Street], in place of the temporary item.<sup>32</sup> It seems the Department took the advice as when a flood followed in March 1894 the new gauge at the end of Little Gurwood Street was reading as high as twenty seven feet.<sup>33</sup> In 1894, there was also a gauge on the Wollundry Lagoon bridge, in the main Street. In 1901, the gauge in Little Gurwood Street started at seventeen feet.<sup>34</sup>

By the 1920's the official gauge was located at the Hampden Bridge, but the Little Gurwood Street gauge was still a popular reference point. In July 1922, the council erected a gas lamp close to the tree (Little Gurwood Street) in order that citizens could read the gauge at night. This was not possible at the Hampden Bridge gauge, nor was the latter as convenient, in terms of its location.<sup>35</sup> In the flood of August 1920 the gauge at the end of Little Gurwood Street, near the bowling green, had a reading of twenty one feet eleven inches on the 13<sup>th</sup> of that month.<sup>36</sup>

A comparison of the two gauges in July 1922 revealed the Little Gurwood Street gauge was reading nine inches higher than the Hampden Bridge gauge. It was hoped the council would adjust the former in order to correct the discrepancy.<sup>37</sup>

The local press always quoted the readings from the official gauges on the Hampden Bridge, but often included readings from Little Gurwood Street gauge as well. In 1925 there were concerns regarding the latter gauge. According to a press report this gauge was attached to a "*growing tree*," and was in such a position as to make it difficult to determine an accurate reading. The report called on the council to erect a new gauge at this site, "*attached to some permanent structure, set in concrete*."<sup>38</sup>

During the flood in June 1952, a comparison was made between the readings at the Hampden Bridge gauge and the gauge at the end of Sturt Street. The small difference - less than an inch - proved the accuracy of the latter gauge.<sup>39</sup>

Since the construction of the levee bank in 1960 flood waters have never flowed into the town [on the southern side of the river] and the gauge at the end of Sturt Street is now just an historic relic.

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<sup>31</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 31<sup>st</sup> March 1892, p2.

<sup>32</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 31<sup>st</sup> March 1892, p2. [see articles in the WWE in 1891 & 1892 re location of gauges on the bridge]

<sup>33</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 29<sup>th</sup> March 1894, p2.

<sup>34</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 29<sup>th</sup> August 1901, p2.

<sup>35</sup> Daily Advertiser. 29<sup>th</sup> July 1922, p4.

<sup>36</sup> Daily Advertiser. 14<sup>th</sup> August 1920, p4.

<sup>37</sup> Daily Advertiser. 31<sup>st</sup> July 1922, p2.

<sup>38</sup> Daily Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> May 1925, p4.

<sup>39</sup> Daily Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> June 1952, p2.



## The Sturt Memorial

In October 1929, alderman Lusher noted that public subscriptions had been called for to fund the Sturt Memorial, but that it was necessary for works to begin immediately. He moved that the engineer draw up a sketch plan of the site [Little Gurwood Street] and that council call for tenders to carry out the works. The motion was seconded by alderman Giltinan and carried.<sup>40</sup>

The centenary of Sturt's passing of Wagga Wagga was celebrated on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1929. Most of Wagga Wagga's school children attended the event and at around 3pm they were all marshalled together around the site, at the end of Little Gurwood Street. A report on the ceremony read, in part, as follows,

*"As well as could be arranged the majority of the children were placed in the shade of the trees near which also the Wagga Brass Band assembled. The surroundings had been liberally decorated with flags and bunting. Flags decorated the platform which had been erected for the speakers, a huge Union Jack was suspended from the high pole upon which Amplion loud speakers had been fixed in readiness for the Wagga Wireless Distributors' service. The national flag covered the tablet on the monument close to which the platform had been erected. The scouts looked well in their uniforms as, their duty done, they formed a guard round the platform and monument, carrying their totem poles and three of their number occupying a position in front of the obelisk and holding the flags of Britain, of Australia, and of the scouts."*



**Above:** The unveiling of the Sturt Memorial in 1929. Courtesy Sherry Morris.

It should be noted that Charles Sturt travelled along the northern side of the river and it was somewhat misleading to place a memorial on the southern side of the river, although it must be

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<sup>40</sup> Daily Express. 25<sup>th</sup> October 1929, p2.

recognised that the area in which Sturt camped is subject to extensive flooding, and that the exact location was unknown.

It was in consequence of the centenary that Little Gurwood Street was renamed Sturt Street, in December 1929, to honour the first white man to pass through what became the site of North Wagga Wagga.

Back in the 1930's and 1940's Sturt Street continued on into the bathing beach area and was regularly used by motor vehicles.

In 1930 it was noted that the fence around the memorial, which at that time consisted of a few pieces of old wood and a single wire, was a poor reflection on the town, and it was suggested council should consider the matter.<sup>41</sup> In the following month the head gardener, Mr Campbell, erected a light fence to protect the memorial, but declared it was not successful due to it being knocked down by cars.<sup>42</sup>

During the floods in June 1931, sight seers used the site to view the flood waters and in doing so trampled the surrounding area into a mud heap, much to the frustration of Mr Campbell, who asked council to consider the matter of a fence again.<sup>43</sup>

In April 1937 Tom Woods, then a curator, advised that he was in the process of removing the privet bushes and acacia trees from behind the memorial and replacing them with shrubs and flowering trees, extending back to the corner of the river bank, towards the bowling green.<sup>44</sup>

An article in the local press, in March 1945, lamented the deterioration of the site, noting,<sup>45</sup>

*“Some 12 months ago attention was directed in these columns to the unattractive appearance of some of the front doors to Wagga and its attractions. Particular mention was made of the dilapidated state of the garden plot in Sturt-street in which stands the obelisk to the explorer, Captain Charles Sturt, who discovered this district on his expedition down the Murrumbidgee River on December 5, 1829. This plot is at the end of Sturt-street and when first established, provided quite a pleasing sight to all pedestrians and motorists as they entered the bathing beach area. As one-way traffic regulations provide that entry can only be gained to the area via Sturt-street it means that every person entering the area must pass to the right or left of this plot. What was originally a delightful little plot, and a fitting setting for this monument to an explorer whose name is so directly connected with the beginning of the town's history, is now apparently wholly abandoned. Nice privet shrubs have become tall trees and acacia suckers have completely taken charge of the background. Shrubs within the plot have died off and the small lawn has ceased to exist as such. The stone monument until recently retained its dignity in the midst of this neglect but vandals have now covered its faces with chalk markings. Children are, no doubt, responsible for these disfigurements, but unfortunately the slovenly appearance of the surroundings would do little to suggest to them that the monument was entitled to their respect.”*

In 1940 there were two seats in Sturt Street, adjacent to the memorial, although they were, by this stage, in a poor condition.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Daily Advertiser. 26<sup>th</sup> February 1930, p2.

<sup>42</sup> Daily Advertiser. 14<sup>th</sup> March 1930, p5.

<sup>43</sup> Daily Advertiser. 27<sup>th</sup> June 1931, p5.

<sup>44</sup> Daily Advertiser. 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1937, p5.

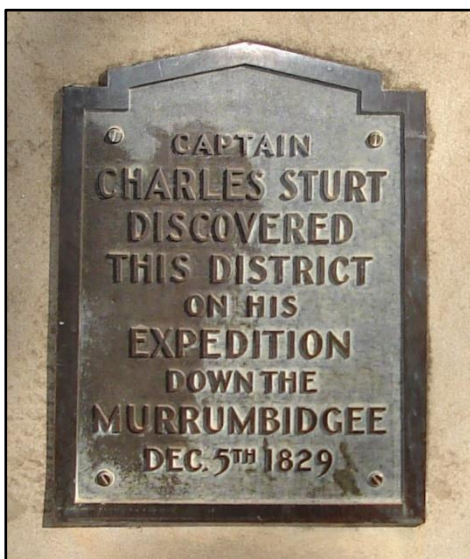
<sup>45</sup> Daily Advertiser. 9<sup>th</sup> March 1945, p2.

<sup>46</sup> Daily Advertiser. 26<sup>th</sup> January 1940, p4.

In March 1954, some miscreant unscrewed the plaque from the memorial and threw it into the front yard of a Tarcutta Street residence.<sup>47</sup>



**Above:** The Sturt Memorial in July 2019. Located at the Wagga Wagga Beach, in front of the toilet block.



**Left:** The inscription on the memorial.

The levee bank was officially completed by the 9<sup>th</sup> September 1960. It was assumed, by me that the memorial was relocated from Sturt Street during the construction of the levee bank, and before the official opening, but Geoff Haddon claims the memorial was still located at the end of Sturt Street in 2017, when Peter Cox included it as part of his “*Weird Wagga*” walk.

<sup>47</sup> Daily Advertiser. 15<sup>th</sup> March 1954, p2.

## Jubilee Drive

By April 1935, in commemoration of the Silver Jubilee of King George V, the establishment of a roadway from Sturt Street, leading to the Wagga Wagga Beach and then extending to Cross Street, was well under way. As part of the celebrations it was arranged that the Mayor, Alderman H McDonough, and the deputy mayor, Alderman WJ Stevenson, would each plant a tree on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> May, and that a selection of children from the various schools would plant the remainder on Empire Day (the 24<sup>th</sup> May). The new roadway was to be named Jubilee Drive.<sup>48</sup>

A description of the works was reported as follows,<sup>49</sup>

*“The work on Jubilee Drive has been in progress for some months under the unemployment relief, and the reserve near the river has been reclaimed by the filling in of lagoons and water washed holes. Trees have been planted and sucker gums thinned out, and [it] is hoped that with the assistance of flood debris this area will be filled in and provide a fine parking and sports area. In constructing Jubilee Drive [a] portion of the granite hill has been cut away, and granite boulders blasted out along the back of the Christian Bros school ground, St. John’s Church, and near the Gasworks. The filling from this has been used on the reserve and is also now being used to build up the parking area and approaches at the bathing beach. Hundreds of loads of decomposed granite has also been carted and used on footpaths and roadways in the Municipality. When completed Jubilee Drive will join Cross Street at the foot of the hill in front of the Presbyterian Church and continue along the river bank to the bathing beach.”*



The Silver Jubilee of King George V was celebrated on the 6<sup>th</sup> May when some three thousand children marched from the Town Hall to the showground, where they were joined by another seven thousand spectators.<sup>50</sup>

The trees planted along Jubilee Drive were all poplars (*Populus Dilatata*). Six children from each of nine schools were chosen to plant a tree on Empire Day - a total of fifty four trees planted by the children and two by the aldermen, making a grand total of fifty six poplars.<sup>51</sup>

In preparation for the day, council’s head gardener, Mr Tom Woods, assisted by eight men, had prepared a hole for each tree and placed the poplars alongside , ready for the children to plant. A report on the day’s events listed fifty eight children who planted a tree, making a total of sixty poplars along Jubilee Drive.<sup>52</sup>

**Above:** King George V.

<sup>48</sup> Daily Advertiser. 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1935, p7. / Wagga Wagga Express. 20<sup>th</sup> April 1935, p4.

<sup>49</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 20<sup>th</sup> April 1935, p1.

<sup>50</sup> Daily Advertiser. 7<sup>th</sup> May 1935, p2.

<sup>51</sup> Daily Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1935, p4.

<sup>52</sup> Daily Advertiser. 25<sup>th</sup> May 1935, p8.

## Dixieland

Dixieland was an open-air dance floor on the bank of the Murrumbidgee River that proved immensely popular during the 1920's and the first half of the 1930's.

In the early 1920's a fascination with jazz and dancing saw the establishment of venues specifically for this purpose. The phenomenon first gave rise in the cities, but soon spread to regional areas. *Dixieland* was a common name for such venues, reflecting the style of music then so popular.<sup>53</sup>

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1921, Dixieland staged its first event.<sup>54</sup> The Wagga City Concert Band provided an introduction to the Beach Carnival, which featured the new Dixieland dance floor. The band marched from Newtown, down the main street to Kincaid Street, then back along Little Gurwood Street to the ground.

Other attractions on the night included a variety of stalls and a chocolate wheel, along with "*Joe Swanney's Cock-eyed Rooster*" side show, under the charge of Messrs W Cantwell, D Sullivan, C Pratt, and R Smith.

The stall holders were as follows,

1. Refreshments – Mesdames T Ryan, Jones and Williams
2. Ice cream – Mesdames Rake & Mobey, and the Misses Dalla, Shadel, and Rake
3. Fruit and lollies – Misses E & A Ryan and Armstrong
4. Hoop-la and confetti – Mesdames Brentnall and W Hopkins
5. Fat lamb guessing competition – Master Robinson

The dance floor itself was set into a high bank on the river, sheltered by the willows along the bank, behind the Commercial hotel, at the end of Little Gurwood Street near the bowling green. The edifice had been constructed a week earlier, by a group of bandsmen and their supporters.<sup>55</sup>

A report in the local press gave the following description of the location,<sup>56</sup>

*"A flat ledge on the river bank, surrounded by giant willows, with their green sprays hanging down all over the place, and decorated with various colored buntings and Chinese lanterns, and brilliantly illuminated with electric light, the scene presented an enchanting spectacle last night."*

Mr J Sheehan was in charge of the dance floor during the carnival, assisted by Messrs P Raleigh and T Ryan. The music was provided by the Band Jazz group. The weather was not ideal but some £12 was donated at the entry gate. The dance floor, and the surrounding grounds were brightly lit by electric power provided by, "*a portable engine and dynamo.*"<sup>57</sup>

The carnival continued every evening, from 8pm, for the next three days (finishing on the Saturday night), with The Farm Jazz Band providing the music for Dixieland on the Thursday night.

Dixieland was an immediate success, drawing large crowds and providing a source of funds for many community groups. The Christian Brothers' High School promptly organised a "*grand café chantant,*"

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<sup>53</sup> Daily Express. 27<sup>th</sup> October 1920, p4.

<sup>54</sup> Daily Express. 24<sup>th</sup> November 1921, p2.

<sup>55</sup> Daily Advertiser. 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1921, p4.

<sup>56</sup> Daily Advertiser. 24<sup>th</sup> November 1921, p2.

<sup>57</sup> Daily Express. 24<sup>th</sup> November 1921, p2.

on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> December, to raise funds for the school.<sup>58</sup> For this event, in addition to dancing, a stadium was erected to host a series of boxing bouts, for both adult and junior participants.

Early in the New Year, a new innovation was added to the occasion, in the form of boat trips out to the island in the middle of the river.<sup>59</sup>

The complex closed down during the winter months, but reopened as the weather warmed up. In 1922 the reopening occurred on the 9<sup>th</sup> December and was described as, “*an open air dancing palais and café,*” and said to be under new management. The entry fee was unchanged, being the donation of a silver coin.<sup>60</sup>

When the venue reopened in December 1923, the dance floor received some much needed revitalisation from an army of youthful volunteers, ready for the new season. A new lightings scheme was installed, and the orchestra platform was raised and enclosed.<sup>61</sup>

The venue opening was tentatively scheduled to open slightly earlier in 1924, on the 24<sup>th</sup> November, but a rise in the river delayed the opening until early December.<sup>62</sup> The dance floor had been enlarged and was now eighty feet long and thirty four feet wide (previously sixty feet by twenty eight feet). The entrance had also been enlarged providing easier access. Seating could now accommodate several hundred people.<sup>63</sup> The Lyric Orchestra was the regular band for the dances. Typically, Dixieland would be open on several nights during the week and on Saturday nights.

Floods in May 1925 caused extensive damage (the floor was described as a wreck),<sup>64</sup> but the venue was repaired and reopened in November of that year. The Melody Makers were now providing the music.

The venue reopened early in 1927, on the 17<sup>th</sup> October, as part of the Back to Wagga celebrations.<sup>65</sup> A new dance floor had been constructed during the off season.<sup>66</sup> Twelve hundred people attended the opening night.<sup>67</sup>

In preparation for the opening in November 1928, a number of works were under way. The orchestra pit had been remodelled and raised; the old steps leading down from Little Gurwood Street had been replaced with new concrete steps accompanied by a solid concrete wall on either side of the steps, which were to be further enhanced by the addition of substantial rails; the old seating was to be demolished and replaced with seating of a larger capacity. Additional willows had been planted closer to the river in order that the dancing floor might be extended out towards the river in future years. The pay box, then located on the footpath (in Little Gurwood Street), was to be reconstructed inside the entrance.<sup>68</sup> The venue reopened on the 7<sup>th</sup> November with music,

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<sup>58</sup> Daily Advertiser. 29<sup>th</sup> November 1921, p2.

<sup>59</sup> Daily Advertiser. 26<sup>th</sup> January 1922, p2.

<sup>60</sup> Daily Advertiser. 7<sup>th</sup> December 1922, p2.

<sup>61</sup> Daily Advertiser. 5<sup>th</sup> December 1923, p2.

<sup>62</sup> Daily Advertiser. 20<sup>th</sup> November 1924, p2.

<sup>63</sup> Daily Advertiser. 10<sup>th</sup> November 1924, p2. / 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1924, p3.

<sup>64</sup> Daily Express. 18<sup>th</sup> November 1925, p2.

<sup>65</sup> Daily Advertiser. 13<sup>th</sup> October 1927, p3.

<sup>66</sup> Daily Advertiser. 13<sup>th</sup> October 1927, p2.

<sup>67</sup> Daily Advertiser. 18<sup>th</sup> October 1927, p12.

<sup>68</sup> Daily Advertiser. 25<sup>th</sup> October 1928, p4.

consisting of jazz and old time numbers, provided by the seven members of the Wagga Melody Masters.<sup>69</sup>

In October 1930 competition, in the form of the New Moon Palais, eventuated. This venue, also an open air edifice, was located in the Southern Cross Gardens, in the centre of the town, surrounded by spacious lawns, and plenty of comfortable seating.<sup>70</sup>

Dixieland had always faced competition from several enclosed premises, which featured regular dancing events during the 1920's and the 1930's. Wonderland Gardens initially hosted boxing matches but by 1925 was holding regular dance events. The indoor venues such as Wonderland and the Masonic Hall were the most popular with dancers during the winter months when Dixieland was closed.

The floods in 1931 caused substantial damage to the floor [Dixieland], which was exacerbated with the onset of warmer weather in December, at which time the timbers shrank resulting in a very uneven floor surface. A team of carpenters was engaged to plane the timbers and to repolish the floor. The Wagga Melody Masters were still providing the music.<sup>71</sup>

When the venue reopened on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 1932, it was under the management of the Capital Theatre, who had spent some three hundred pounds on improvements, which included a new floor new lighting, and a new band.<sup>72</sup>

In 1933 a public meeting revealed that the Wagga Brass Band had in the early days done very well out of Dixieland, securing considerable funds, but that in the past season Dixieland ran at a loss and the Wonderland Palais had run the band into debt.<sup>73</sup> The writing was on the wall for Dixieland.

The flood, in October 1934, lifted the dance floor off the concrete box, on which it sat, and caused it to float around in the muddy waters.<sup>74</sup>

Dixieland appears to have ceased being a venue for dancing, or any other activities, around March 1935. The floods later on in that year may well have contributed to its demise.

According to Alf Carpenter<sup>75</sup> the Dixieland dance floor was located at the end of Sturt Street. He explained, "*You went down some steps to the level of the dance floor and the orchestra played in like a rotunda on the river side of the dance floor.*" He described the dance floor as being about one hundred metres long and twenty five metres wide. The floor was decorated with a string of electric lights around the edges and featured seating as well. The willow trees stood between the river and Dixieland. According to Alf the music was always played by Billy Hill's Dance Orchestra.

In times of flood the floor would be covered in water. When the floor dried out it would require a new paint job and repairs to the flooring timbers. The 1925 floods caused considerable damage and the floor had to be rebuilt.<sup>76</sup>

Dixieland, known as the '*summer dancing resort of Wagga*' was one of the most popular night spots in the 1920s and '30s.

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<sup>69</sup> Daily Advertiser. 7<sup>th</sup> November 1928, p3.

<sup>70</sup> Daily Advertiser. 25<sup>th</sup> October 1930, p2.

<sup>71</sup> Daily Advertiser. 24<sup>th</sup> December 1931, p6.

<sup>72</sup> Daily Advertiser. 12<sup>th</sup> November 1932, p6.

<sup>72</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 25<sup>th</sup> November 1933, p13.

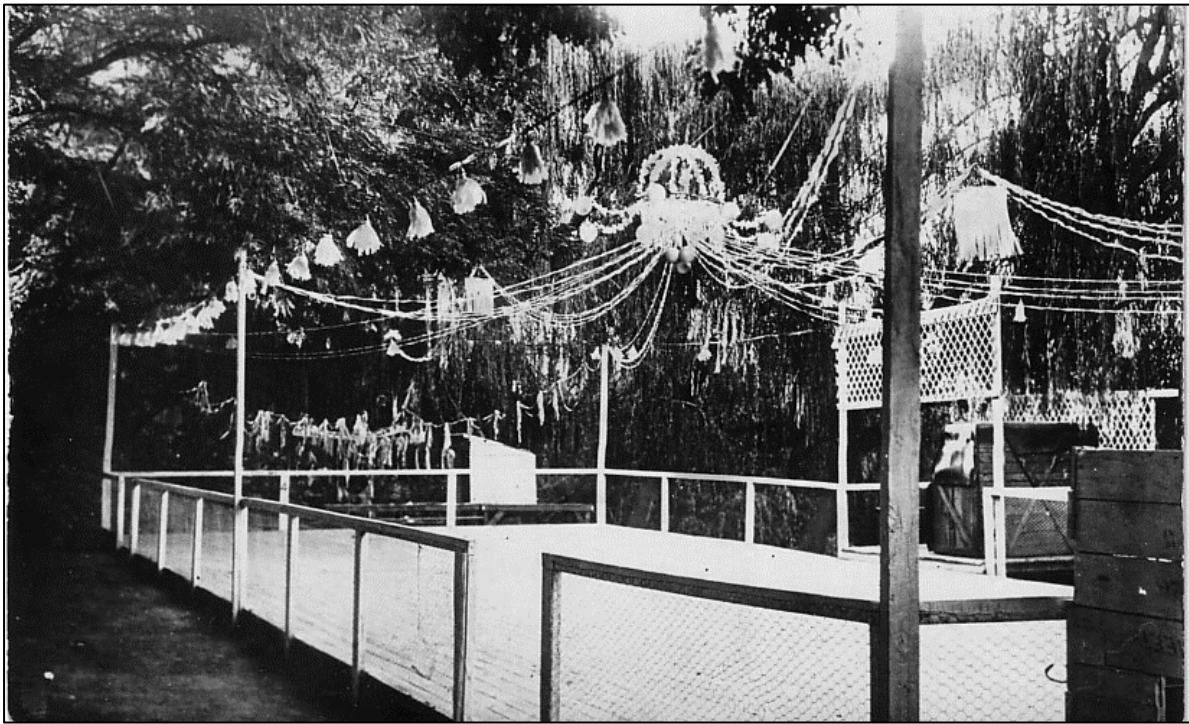
<sup>74</sup> Daily Advertiser. 27<sup>th</sup> October 1934, p4.

<sup>75</sup> Danielle Gamble. Interview with Alf Carpenter.

<sup>76</sup> Danielle Gamble. Interview with Alf Carpenter.

Dixieland was located on the eastern extremity of FA Tompson's allotment, 1, section 45A. The southern border of this allotment originally extended along the northern edge of Little Gurwood Street [later Sturt Street], from the Fitzmaurice Street corner then in a straight line until it struck the Murrumbidgee River. In the 1920's and the 1930's the land where Kilnacrott now stands and the land to the east of that complex, was owned by the Commercial Hotel syndicate.<sup>77</sup>

At some time the Wagga Wagga City Council has resumed the land where Dixieland once stood and the old site would now be between the levee bank and the river bank.



**Above:** The Dixieland dance floor in 1925.

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<sup>77</sup> Geoff Burch. Waterview. A History of Allotment 1, Section 45A.(unpublished)





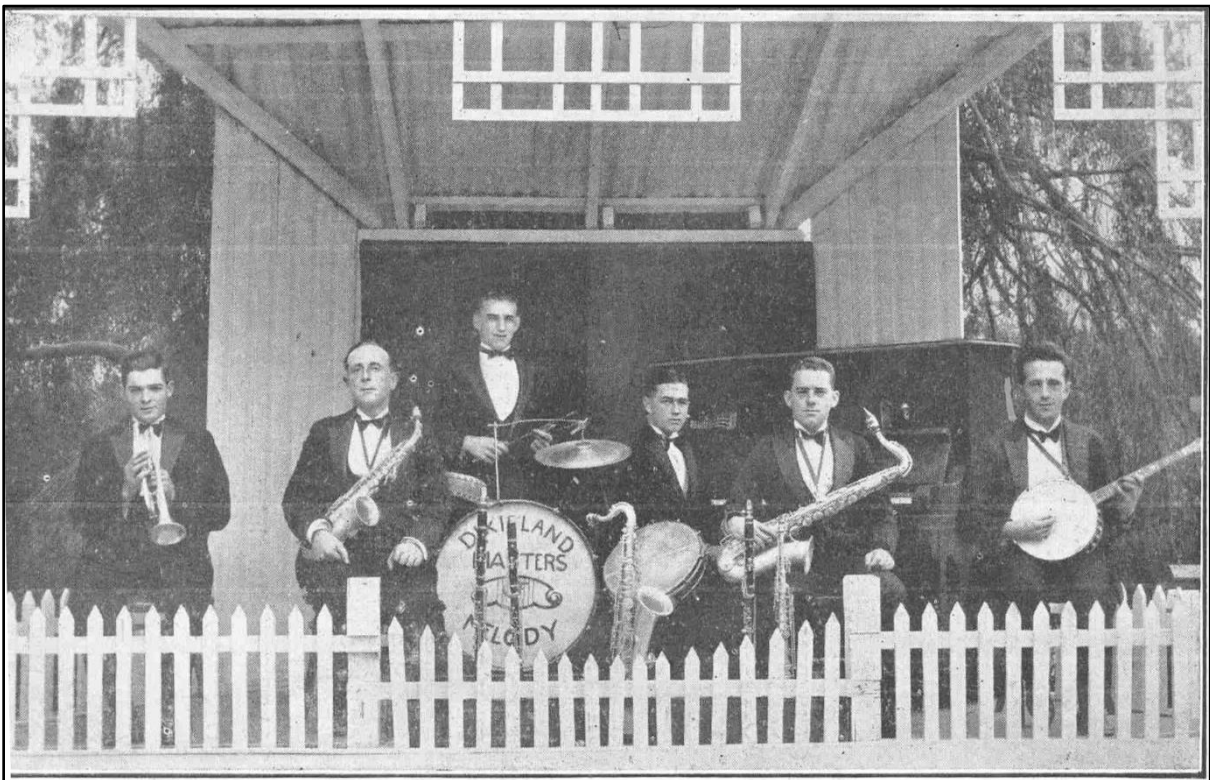
**Above:** Dancers on the Dixieland dance floor.



**Above:** Another shot of the dance floor.



**Above:** Dixieland in flood period. Courtesy Wagga Wagga Local History.



**Above:** Dixieland Melody Masters 1927.



**Above:** The entry to Dixieland, at the end of Sturt Street. Courtesy CSU Regional Archives.



**Above:** The Dixieland dance floor. Courtesy the Museum of the Riverina.

## The Wagga Wagga Bowling Club

The establishment of the first bowling club in Wagga Wagga commenced back in 1910 when the then manager of the Union Bank, Mr Allen, called a public meeting with the view to form a club, and it was he who secured an option over a block of ground at the rear of the Riverine Club. Nothing permanent eventuated and when Mr Allen moved from Wagga Wagga progress was stalled until 1911 when Mr C. M. Davidson and Mr E. W. Booty (of the Bank of NSW) rekindled the push for a club. A meeting was called at that time, and the Wagga Wagga Bowling Club was duly formed.

The first president was Mr J. J. Scott, with Mr E. W. Booty as Hon. Secretary, and Mr C. M. Davidson as Hon. Treasurer.

Messrs G. P. Wilson, Alick Smith, F. Lugsdin, H. T. Davidson, C. M. Davidson, A. A. Meurant, J. J. Scott, and J. K. O'Reilly were all signatories to a guarantee in order to secure a bank overdraft of £500. This was later increased to £900 at 6% interest.

Purchase of the site was delayed due to issues with the title, but this was eventually resolved by Mr W. M. J. Walsh who completed the necessary legal work for a minimal charge.

Several years later Mr Booty managed to secure debentures to the value of £820 in order that the original guarantors could be released from their liability<sup>78</sup>.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1912, the Wagga Bowling Club's Green, located at the rear of the Riverine Club, was officially opened by the president of the club, Mr J. J. Scott, who spoke from a temporarily platform, erected for the purpose. Scott attributed the excellent condition of the green to the industry of the secretary, Mr Booty, and to the ability of the architect, Mr Giles.

The turf area was 120 feet square, and was said to be as large, if not larger, than that of any other green in a country town. It contained six rinks, allowing up to forty eight bowlers to play at any one time.



**Above:** Wagga Bowling Club green, c.1914. From "Progress of Wagga Wagga. 1914. "

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<sup>78</sup>Back to Wagga. Souvenir. 1927, pp90-91.

The following brief description was given of the area:

*“Apart from the bowling rinks are also a beautifully kept lawn and along the fence a broad border of shrubs and flowering plants bearing pretty blooms.”*

It had taken seven months to transform what was originally *“a rough untidy paddock”*, meaning work had commenced in June 1911.

Mr Dobney, the mayor, also spoke at the opening and he expressed the desire that a croquet green might follow, for the ladies. In addition he noted that the committee planned to shortly illuminate the ground for night play.

Mrs Booty, wife of the secretary, was then invited *“to declare the green open by bowling the first ball”*, following which she was presented with *“a beautiful gold bangle”*.

Mr Booty gave the following explanation on the preparation of the ground:

*“The whole surface of the original paddock had been dug out to a depth of 18in. and the soil banked up: at one side. The bottom was then levelled and 2400 1(?)ft. drain pipes were laid down leading into a main drain. On top of these were placed 229 cartloads of broken brick, a similar quantity of ashes on top of these and then all the earth that had been removed was replaced with an additional 120 loads. Couch grass was then planted and the green had since been regularly and frequently rolled and watered and continually attended to.”*

Mr Booty was then presented with an order for a set of silver mounted bowls, in appreciation of his efforts.

Following afternoon tea, members and visitors played some impromptu games.

The president’s team – Messrs Hunter, Du Rieu, Foote, and Giles (Capt.) defeated the mayor’s team – Messrs Wensch, Howe, Cunningham, Lansden (Capt.) – by eighteen points to four<sup>79</sup>.

Approximately one year later in February 1913, the committee met in the club’s pavilion. The president, Mr J. J. Scott was in attendance, as was the secretary, Mr Booty, along with Messrs W. M. J. Walsh, J. Cunningham, A. L. Meurant, E. E. Giles, and Alick Smith. At this meeting the committee resolved to make the club colours blue and gold<sup>80</sup>.

The second AGM of the club eventuated on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1913, and the newly elected committee consisted of the following gentlemen<sup>81</sup>:

President: Mr G. P. Wilson

Vice-Presidents: Messrs A. V. Booth and W. M. J. Walsh

Hon. Secretary: Mr F. W. Booty

Hon. Treasurer: Mr C. M. Davidson

Hon. Auditor: Mr H. T. Davidson

Committee Members: Messrs Meurant, Giles, O’Reilly, Sullivan, Oates, and Cunningham.

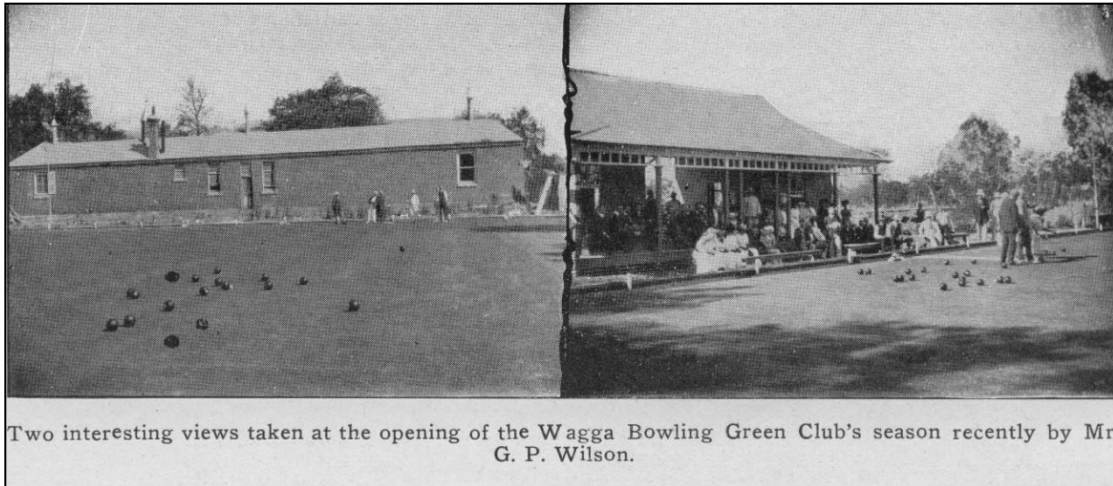
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<sup>79</sup> Daily Advertiser. 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011, p4c6-7.

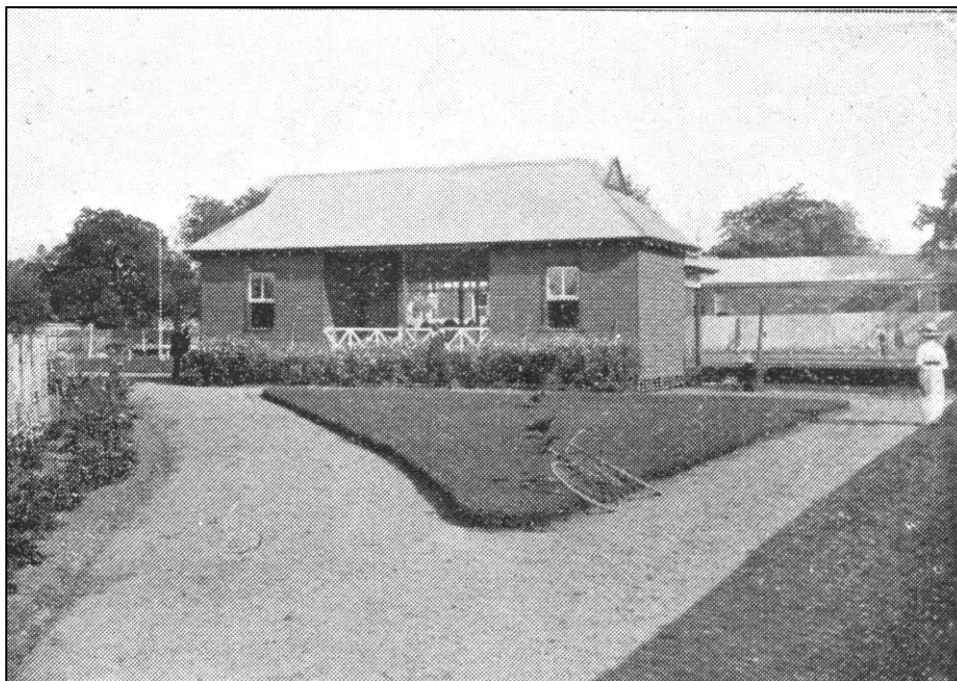
<sup>80</sup> Daily Advertiser. 12<sup>th</sup> February 1913, p2c3.

<sup>81</sup> Daily Advertiser. 27<sup>th</sup> October 1913, p2c2.

The greens must have been closed during the winter, as it was announced that the club's greens would be "*officially opened for the season*" on Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup> November, by the president's wife, Mrs G. P. Wilson<sup>82</sup>. On the day Mrs Wilson was "*slightly indisposed*", and the duty of opening the greens for the season fell to the mayoress, Mrs E. E. Collins. Amongst those thanked during the ceremonies was Mr Joseph, the green-keeper<sup>83</sup>.



**Above:** From "Progress of Wagga Wagga. 1914." The left hand side shows the northern wing of the old hospital, which was later taken over by the Bowling Club and converted into a new club house. On the right hand side is the old, original, club house, at the opposite end of the green.



**Above:** Another photo taken from "Progress of Wagga Wagga. 1914."

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<sup>82</sup> Daily Advertiser. 18<sup>th</sup> November 1913, p2c3.

<sup>83</sup> Daily Advertiser. 20<sup>th</sup> November 1913, p2c3.



**Left:** Bowlers on the green, c.1915. Photo courtesy National Library of Australia.

In 1915, the footpath in front of the Riverine Club was asphalted, providing a clean entry to the bowling club.<sup>84</sup>

In 1924 the club became a limited company with a nominal capital of £2,500. The directors then purchased the long brick building on the old hospital site, which they subsequently extended and renovated, for use as a club house. They also put down a croquet lawn, which along with two rooms, was rented by the Wagga Wagga Croquet Club<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>84</sup> Daily Advertiser. 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1915, p2.

<sup>85</sup> Back to Wagga. Souvenir. 1927, pp90-91.



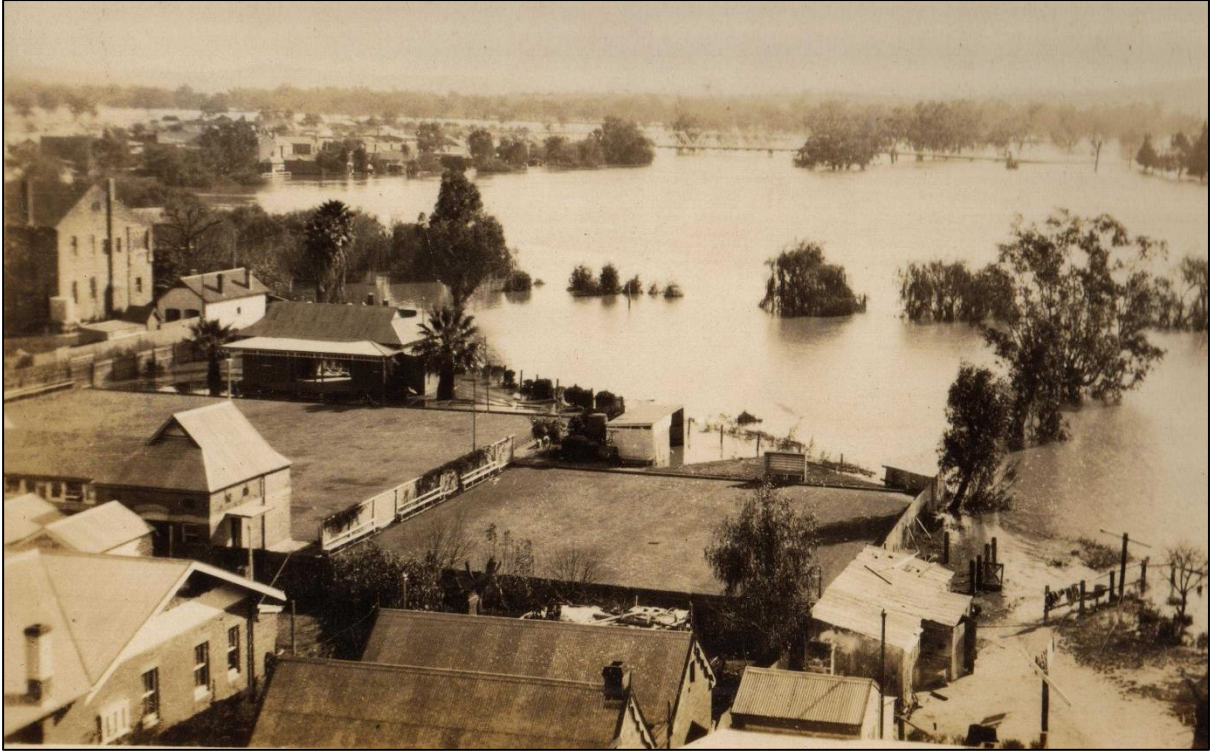


**COMMITTEE WAGGA WAGGA BOWLING CLUB, 1927.**

Back row: H. Oates, R. Emblen, R. J. Cunningham, C. Moss, E. E. Collins.

Front row: F. Lugsdin, T. Dobney, H. E. Mitchelmore (President), W. M. Tonkin (Secretary), J. Anderson, A. R. Raleigh.

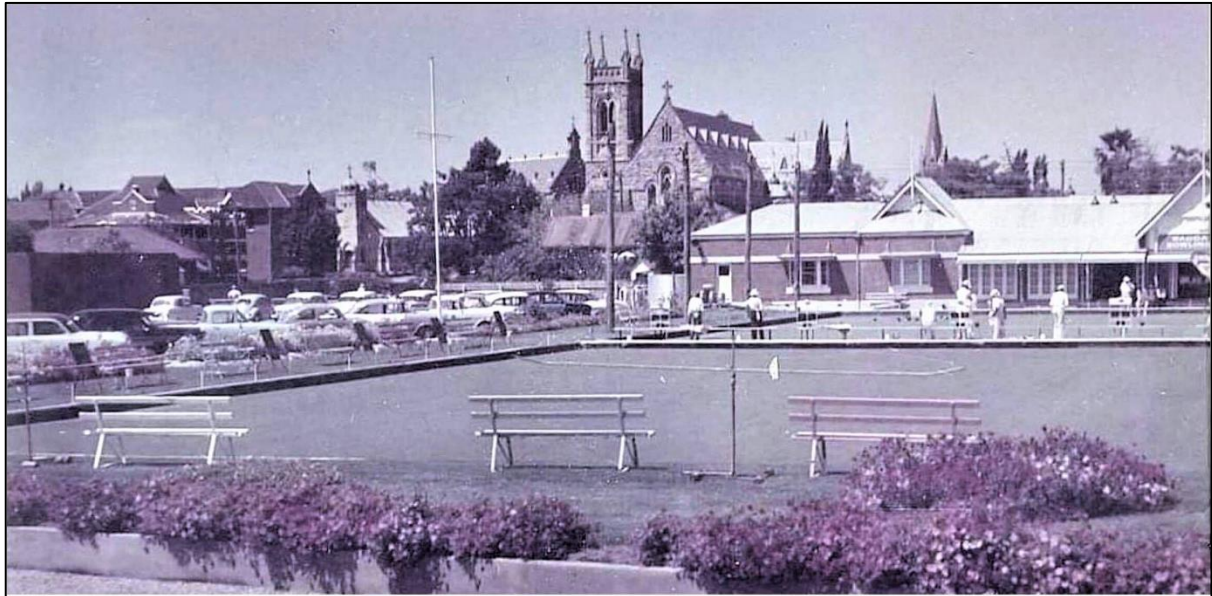
**Above:** 1927 Committee. From "Back to Wagga Souvenir. 1927."



**Above:** A flood scene showing the bowling green (centre left), with the original club house at the northern end of the green, and the northern wing of the old hospital at the southern end. The tall building on the left border of the photo is the eastern end of the Riverine Club. Dixieland would be under water, to the north of the old club house.



**Above:** A 1971 aerial view of the bowling greens area. Courtesy Wagga Wagga City Council. Intramaps.



**Above:** More contemporary views of the greens and the club house. St Michael's Church can be seen in the background and the Riverine Club would lay to the right of the greens, bottom screen.

## The Rocks Area

Aside from the white European history attached to this feature, it is also an area of significance to the local Wiradjuri women. It is hoped that the nation's first inhabitants will record their stories about items of significance in this bend in the Murrumbidgee River.



**Above:** The Rocks area platforms constructed by Charles Hardy & Co, with swimmers ready to launch themselves from the timber walkway. Courtesy Museum of the Riverina. [BGS2008-214ay].

The Rocks area was also a part of the river used by the Australian and American engineers.



**Above:** A photo of the Rocks area with platform visible in the background. Courtesy Tom Lennon Collection. CSU Regional Archives.



**Above:** A contemporary colour photo of the Rocks area. Courtesy Sherry Morris.

## The Royal Australian Engineers Camp and the Pontoon Bridges

During the Second World War, the Commonwealth Government took over the Wagga Wagga Beach area and part of Lot 1, section 43, for the purpose of a training facility for the Royal Australian Engineers [in January 1944]. Soldiers were taught how to construct temporary pontoon bridges and suspended bridges. The Engineers had been on site for some months prior to this.

When the Commonwealth vacated the site [in June 1948] it agreed to hand over a number of items to council. These included two steel cables strung across the river, some river dolphins, and a number of structures. The council paid the Commonwealth the sum of £500, in return for these items.<sup>86</sup>

<u>Western side of River -</u>		
Building No. 1	16'	x 12'
" No. 2	2 - 16'	x 12'
" No. 3	10'	x 12'
" No. 4	45'	x 18'
" No. 5	36'	x 18'
" No. 6	60'	x 20'
" No. 7	6'	x 10'
" No. 8	17'	x 10'
" No. 9	16'	x 12'
" No. 10	16'	x 12'
" No. 12	60'	x 20'
" No. 13	60'	x 18'
" No. 14	60'	x 20'
" No. 15	60'	x 18'
" No. 16	16'	x 12'
" No. 18	15'	x 12'
" No. 19	10'	x 8'
" No. 20	20'	x 15'
" No. 21	56'	x 16'
" No. 22	48'	x 9'
" No. 23	32'	x 12'
Arc mesh and wire around tennis courts		
" "	fence 200'	x 6'
" "	" 100'	x 6'
<u>Eastern side of River -</u>		
Building No. 1	16'	x 12'
" No. 2	16'	x 12'
" No. 3	Contents only No. 8 Metters Stove, racks & benches.	
" No. 4	10'	x 5'
" No. 5	10'	x 5'
" No. 6	20'	x 20'
" No. 7	30'	x 15'
" No. 8	105'	x 15'
Electrical installations comprising all cable poles, cables and fittings		

**Above:** The list of buildings, which the Council paid £500 for.

The buildings were mostly wood or concrete and included toilets, a kitchen and accommodation – on both sides of the river. There were also tennis courts on the western side.

<sup>86</sup> National Archives of Australia. Royal Australian Engineers Camp at Wagga Wagga, WW2. [SP857-6 PH.1219].

The Commonwealth also cleaned up the sites, which included the removal of 1,357 square yards of concrete floors on the western side of the river, and 133 square yards on the eastern side. The council had removed most of the buildings, to allow for the concrete floors to be removed.

<u>No. on Plan</u>	
1.	Guard House
2.	O.C.'s Quarters
3.	Officers' Latrine
4.	Officers' Mess
5.	Kitchen
6.	N.C.O.s' Mess
7.	N.C.O.s' Latrine
8.	Store
9.	Dental Hut
10.	Orderly Room
11.	T.P.T. Officer
12.	No. 1 Men's Mess
13.	Kitchen
14.	No. 2 Mens' Mess
15.	Q.M. Store
16.	Diving School
17.	Salvation Army Hut
18.	K.I.'s Hut
19.)	Sewerage Pump Houses
20.)	
21.)	
22.	Ablutions
23.	Latrines
24.	Canteen
	Technical Store.

**Above:** A list providing a description of the various structures.

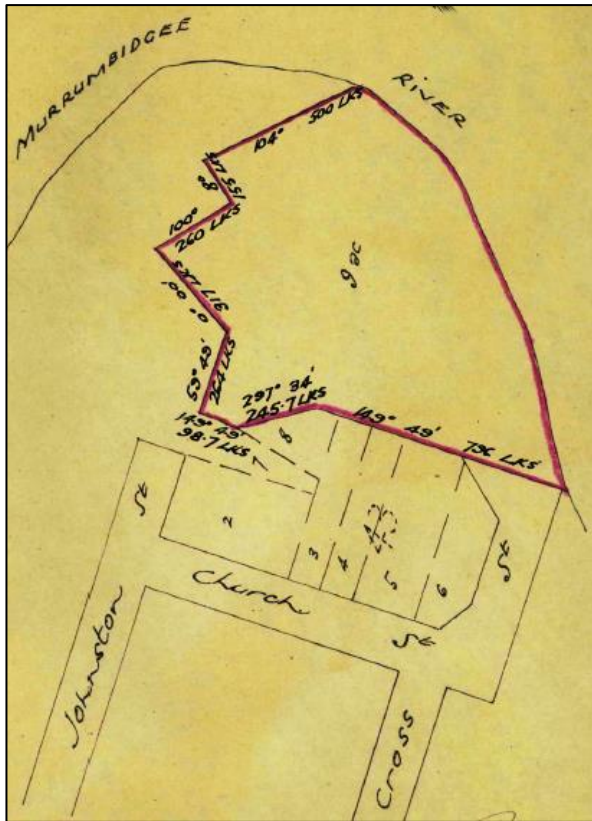
The Royal Australian Engineers training was not limited to the Wagga Beach reserve. Kapooka was also an important site for training – basic infantry training, demolition work and other relevant subjects. The Engineers' training centre was said to be the largest of its kind in the Empire, and had been set up at a cost of some £250,000.<sup>87</sup>

By June 1943, US Army authorities had made a request for their personnel to train at the centre. The RAAF already had men in training at the facility.<sup>88</sup> A large number of American soldiers trained at the facility and the higher ranking officers stayed at the Riverine Club, where they were known for drinking all of the available whisky. The US Army personnel would invite their fellow Americans, based at Tocumwal, up for a drink, to help with consuming the alcohol.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 10<sup>th</sup> November 1942, p4. / 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1943, p2.

<sup>88</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1943, p6.

<sup>89</sup> John Winterbottom. 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019.



**Above Left:** A plan showing the area taken over by the Commonwealth.

**Above Right:** A suspended bridge, constructed by the Royal Australian Engineers.



**Above:** Using a pile driver to construct a jetty at Wagga Wagga. Courtesy Australian War Memorial. [052556].





**Above:** An aerial view of the Wagga Wagga Beach area in 1944, showing the main camp and the pontoon bridges. Courtesy Wagga Wagga City Council. Intramaps.



**Above:** Steel hooks set into stone at The Rocks area [in 2020], believed to have been used by the engineers, in the 1940's, to secure the cables across the river.



**Above:** One of the pontoon bridges constructed by the Royal Australian Engineers during WW2.



**Above:** Construction of a pontoon bridge in 1943. Courtesy Australian War Memorial. [052551].



**Above & Below:** More photos of the pontoon bridges built by the Royal Australian Engineers.



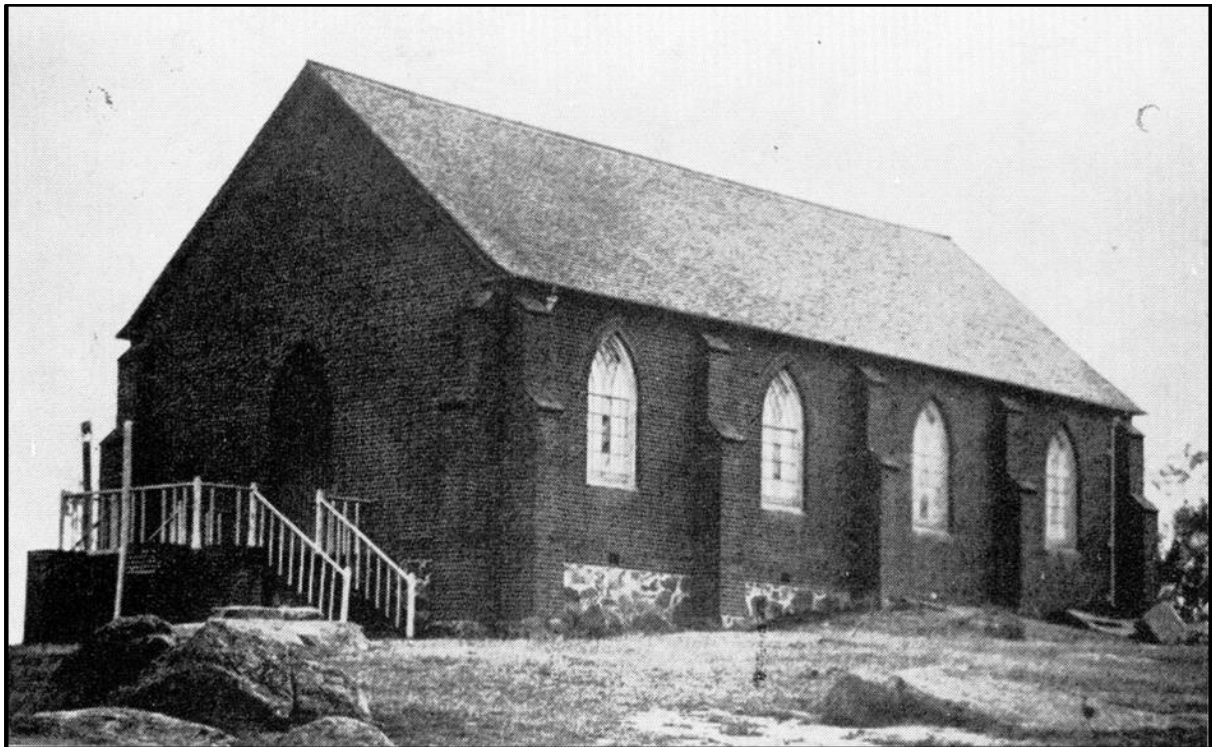
# The Churches

## The Church of England

### St John's Church

In November 1858, FA Tompson placed an advertisement in the local Wagga Wagga press inviting tenders for the erection of a new Anglican church at Wagga Wagga. The advertisement stipulated stone footings and brick walls. Plans and specifications could be viewed at the offices of Messrs Weaver & Kent, architects of Sydney.<sup>90</sup>

In February 1859 a committee representing the Church of England, in Wagga Wagga, met and considered the offer of Mr Mumford of Camden, to carry out the works, at the rate of £6 per rod for brickwork, and 10s per perch for stone work. FA Tompson proposed that the committee accept the offer, and agree to pay Mumford's expenses in getting to Wagga Wagga. This was seconded by George Forsyth, and agreed to by the committee. Mr Nixon was asked to make the necessary arrangements.<sup>91</sup>



**Above:** St John's Church as constructed in 1859.<sup>92</sup>

The first Anglican Church at Wagga Wagga church was built in 1859, during the incumbency of the Rev. RW Young.<sup>93</sup> The contractor was J Mumford of Picton, at a cost of some £1,600. Henry Baylis

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<sup>90</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 13<sup>th</sup> November 1858, p3.

<sup>91</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 19<sup>th</sup> February 1859, pp2-3.

<sup>92</sup> Kathleen Higgins. *This Goodly Heritage*. 1855-1965.

<sup>93</sup> The Parish of Wagga Wagga. Centenary Book 1851-1951.

laid the foundation stone on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1859.<sup>94</sup> A later source stated that the builders were John McIntosh and Charles Hodson [this is possibly Thomas Hodson].<sup>95</sup>

By August 1859 the roof for the new church was being put in place and it was hoped that services would soon be able to be held inside.<sup>96</sup>

St John's Church was officially opened on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1860,<sup>97</sup> some six months after the opening of the Catholic Church. The first service in the church was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1860. The building was sixty feet long by thirty feet wide, with walls fifteen feet high.<sup>98</sup>

The church bell was purchased in 1872 from Messrs Blow and Sons of Birmingham, England, but did not arrive in Wagga Wagga until February 1874.<sup>99</sup> The bell weighed 6 cwt and had cost £60.

By June 1873 the local church committee were considering spending some £450 to improve the existing church, by lifting the roof and making other alterations. Some considered this a poor option, believing that nothing could make the "old barn like temple" more ecclesiastical,<sup>100</sup> and the committee subsequently decided to build a new church. A national advertising campaign saw plans submitted by fourteen of the colonies best architects. The committee, in its wisdom, chose to return all designs, and instead to commission a local architect to design a less ambitious building. The architect was Frank Nixon – one of the fourteen architects to submit a design. Nixon was constrained in his design options, by an instruction that the old building was now to be incorporated in to the new church.<sup>101</sup> The idea of a new building had been abandoned. [See Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 7<sup>th</sup> February 1874, p2, for a more detailed account of the machinations behind the final decision.]

The contract for the first stage of the works was let to Charles Hardy by August 1874, with work to commence shortly thereafter.

A description of the proposed design went as follows,<sup>102</sup>

*"The Church will be cruciform, the eastern transept being lengthened 15 feet, and the nave, with porches, extending about 91 feet north, and south. The walls will be raised 6 feet above the present height, and handsome lancet double windows will be inserted between the buttresses, which latter are also to be re-formed and suitably ornamented. The tower which is the chief feature of the design, is massive and lofty, the height from the ground to the top of the finial on the spire being about 166 feet. The chief characteristic of the western front - that is to say the front facing the road - is an elaborate window with stone mullions and tracery, hereafter to be filled in with memorial windows of stained glass. The Chancel is spacious, and the Communion, which is pentangular, is furnished with an enriched window, and tablets for the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Commandments; enclosed with an ornamental rail and raised about 1 foot 6 inches from the floor line of the main building. The Organ loft will be situated in the first story of the tower, with arched openings into the Church to the west and north. The roof will be sustained on sills of handsome principals, which will be grooved at the intersection of the nave and transept. It is specified that the entire structure shall be stuccoed externally and painted."*

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<sup>94</sup> Phyllis De Jersey, Dorothy Fellowes and Tom Frame. *Where the Rivers Run. A History of the Anglican Parish of St John's Wagga Wagga*. 1995. / Sydney Morning Herald. 29<sup>th</sup> May 1860, p5.

<sup>95</sup> Daily Express. 21<sup>st</sup> October 1929, p2.

<sup>96</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 20<sup>th</sup> August 1859, p2.

<sup>97</sup> Kathleen Higgins. *This Goodly Heritage*. 1855-1965.

<sup>98</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 26<sup>th</sup> September 1874, p28.

<sup>99</sup> The Parish of Wagga Wagga. Centenary Book 1851-1951.

<sup>100</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 11<sup>th</sup> June 1873, p2.

<sup>101</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 26<sup>th</sup> September 1874.

<sup>102</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 15<sup>th</sup> August 1874, p2.

Additional details were provided in another report,<sup>103</sup>

*“The nave will be increased to an extent which together with the chancel and communion will give the internal length as 136 feet. The walls will be raised 6 feet to the plate, and for the present side windows, double lancets will be substituted. In the western front will be found a handsome window, with florid tracery and filled in with stained glass pictures. A transept 73 feet in length will be added and the whole covered with a roof of ornamental but substantial character, the sheathing being pierced at intervals for dormer ventilators. The tower, which is decidedly the most attractive feature of the design will be 18 feet square at the base, and when surmounted by the steeple will measure to the top of the finial 166 feet, a height rendered all the more imposing from the fact that the church stands upon a hill, which commands the whole of the town. The tower is not intended for ornament only as it will serve for organ-loft belfry, and clock-room. The first floor will be opened into church on two sides with handsome arches, and it is thought that from this point the tones of the instrument will be equally distributed. Speaking of the roof it ought to have been mentioned that the entire height of the church from floor line to ridge will be 43 feet 6 inches.”*



**Above:** An 1874 sketch depicting one of the designs for the proposed new St John’s Church.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 26<sup>th</sup> September 1874, p28.

<sup>104</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 26<sup>th</sup> September 1874, p28.

As already stated, in July 1875, St John's Church Committee "*suspended*" Frank Nixon, and appointed Mr J Gordon as superintendent of the construction project. Gordon was the architect for the Convent at Mount Erin, which was, then, currently under construction. Nixon took offence that the committee had not notified him personally – he learnt of the decision from a newspaper report.<sup>105</sup> It is clear that the relationship between Nixon and the committee was strained.



**Above:** St John's Church post 1875. Courtesy Sherry Morris.

The original church building was knocked down in 1875 and a new church erected on the same site, using some of the original foundations. As already alluded to, Mr J Gordon, the architect responsible for overseeing the construction of the Mount Erin Convent, consented, in July 1875,<sup>106</sup> to oversee the building of the new St John's church building.<sup>107</sup> According to Frank Nixon, the original concept for a new building had been abandoned by the Church Committee, and he had subsequently, in conjunction with this committee, developed plans for alterations and extensions to the existing building, which met with the approval of said committee, including the then archdeacon.<sup>108</sup> It would have been Gordon who drew up the detailed plans required for the construction of the building, but these, presumably, complied with Nixon's basic design.

Some services were held in the Masonic Hall during the period of reconstruction.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 24<sup>th</sup> July 1875, p10.

<sup>106</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 10<sup>th</sup> July 1875, p2.

<sup>107</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 13<sup>th</sup> December 1876, p3.

<sup>108</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 14<sup>th</sup> July 1875, p2.

<sup>109</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1875, p3.

Charles Hardy was the contractor who carried out the works, and it was a man named Simpson who was responsible for the beautiful timber work inside the new church building.<sup>110</sup>

Works had progressed sufficiently by May 1876 that services could be held inside the new building, although the project was not yet completed.<sup>111</sup> The local press inspected the building in the week preceding, and made the following comments,<sup>112</sup>

*“The building was certainly roofed, and partially floored, but four out of nine window openings had not been filled in. The eastern end of the Church at the time of our visit was in a perfect state of confusion, one workman being industriously employed in laying joists. From the general open state of the building, judging from our examination, it appears to us that it was a most ill-advised course to attempt making any arrangements for the reception of the Bishop in the new building on Sunday next. The Bishop in coming here has to do with some more important matters even than the progress of the new church building. The warm hearts of his people could find means of expressing their satisfaction at his government - their pleasure at his return - quite as well in the Masonic Hall, which has served their purpose for months for worship.”*

No references could be found to an official opening of the new church building, but by the latter half of 1876 the church appears to have been used for normal services, although there were references to the amount of debt associated with the building project [some £1,500],<sup>113</sup> which was holding up completion of the project.



**Left:** The Rev. William Henry Pownall, one of the earliest rectors at St John’s. [Photo possibly 1860’s]. Courtesy the Museum of the Riverina [BGS.2007\_34/600].

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<sup>110</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 20<sup>th</sup> May 1876, p2.

<sup>111</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 17<sup>th</sup> May 1876, p2.

<sup>112</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 10<sup>th</sup> May 1876, p2.

<sup>113</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 7<sup>th</sup> June 1876, p2.





**Above:** St John's in the 1890's.

Mr L Bullen, of Melbourne, and Mr AB Svensson, also of Melbourne, were the designer and builder, who installed the high altar and east end panelling of St John's Church.<sup>114</sup>

In 1905 the church was reroofed with slate.<sup>115</sup> From as early as April 1899, the roof had allowed rain to penetrate into the church, causing the then Rector, the Rev. GA Carver, to call for funds to be raised in order that the roof might be repaired.<sup>116</sup> The church was always short of funds, and it was this factor that delayed repairs of the roof up until late in 1904. In December 1904 the church accepted the quote of Mantova & Hand, of Sydney, to repair the roof of St John's Church, for the sum of £156.<sup>117</sup> Additional works – alterations and renovations – to the value of £150, were carried out at the same time. The works, which included a new slate roof, improved ventilation [the installation of several Jordan exhaust cowls, as designated by the architect, WJ Monks], and a "*thorough renovation of the interior,*" by Charles Hardy & Co., were completed by the end of March 1905,<sup>118</sup> and the re-opening services were conducted by the then local Rector, the Rev. AC Mosley.<sup>119</sup> A choir vestry had also been added, to the rear of the church.

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<sup>114</sup> The Parish of Wagga Wagga. Centenary Book 1851-1951.

<sup>115</sup> Kathleen Higgins. *This Goodly Heritage*. 1855-1965.

<sup>116</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 8<sup>th</sup> April 1899, p2.

<sup>117</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 15<sup>th</sup> December 1904, p2. / Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 15<sup>th</sup> December 1904, p2.

<sup>118</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1905, p2.

<sup>119</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1905, p2.

St John's was closed for a period, whilst the works were carried out and services were held in St John's Hall for the duration of the closure. St John's Church was re-opened for services on Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> March 1905.<sup>120</sup>

In November 1909 the then Rector, Canon Carver, gave a presentation to his parishioners outlining proposed extensions to St John's. Carver explained that the original church had been opened in 1860, but that this was pulled down fifteen years later [June 1875], and that 1910 would be the golden jubilee year [50 years] for St John's. The new extensions were designed to double the holding capacity of the church and were estimated to cost in the vicinity of £1,700. The extensions consisted of additional aisles with pillars to support the roof.<sup>121</sup> The contract for these works was eventually awarded to Charles Hardy & Co., in October 1910, at a cost of £2,050. Additional pews were the subject of a separate tender.<sup>122</sup> The last services in the 1875 building were held on Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> December 1910, after which, much, but not all of the old building was demolished.<sup>123</sup> It was necessary, as part of the works, for Charles Hardy & Co., to seek permission from council to use explosives in order to blast some granite boulders on the site.<sup>124</sup>

It was also in the year 1909 that a new organ was ordered for the church. It was to be supplied and installed by Richardson & Sons, of Sydney.<sup>125</sup> It was July 1910 before the organ was installed and ready to play. It was a difficult task to fit such a large instrument into the church without impacting on the normal practices of the ministry. The organ weighed several tons, and consisted of 714 pipes – 510 metal pipes and 204 wooden pipes – ranging in length from less than an inch up to sixteen feet. The whole unit was encased in beautiful cedar timber.<sup>126</sup> Total cost of the organ was £650.<sup>127</sup>

Work on the new church was underway before the end of December 1910, with the blasting of the granite boulders taken place around this time.<sup>128</sup> By mid February the Anglicans were able to give notice that the new St John's Church would be officially opened on Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup> April [1911], by Bishop Barlow.<sup>129</sup> The new church wasn't quite finished on that date, but was sufficiently completed such as to allow the official opening to go ahead, on that predetermined date. Bishop Barlow, from Goulburn, performed the ceremony, and then, on the same day, officially opened the new church at Lake Albert - St Peter's.

A press report on the occasion, gave the following account of the new building,<sup>130</sup>

*“Inside it is very near completion and it looks very nice indeed. Two wide wings, one on each side of the main original building, have been erected, bringing the church to a seating capacity of 500 people, or an increase of 220 on the old building. It was, in the vernacular of the trade, a patchwork job and therefore, to a great extent a dangerous undertaking so far as appearances were concerned. But the contractors, Messrs. C. Hardy and Co., effected the alterations and additions in such an excellent manner that the church has gained rather than lost in the quality of architectural beauty. The old walls on either side of the church have been wholly removed and in their places, as supports*

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<sup>120</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 28<sup>th</sup> March 1905, p2.

<sup>121</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 4<sup>th</sup> November 1909, p3.

<sup>122</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 1<sup>st</sup> October 1910, p2.

<sup>123</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1910, p3.

<sup>124</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 31<sup>st</sup> December 1910, p6.

<sup>125</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 14<sup>th</sup> December 1909, p2.

<sup>126</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 16<sup>th</sup> July 1910, p2.

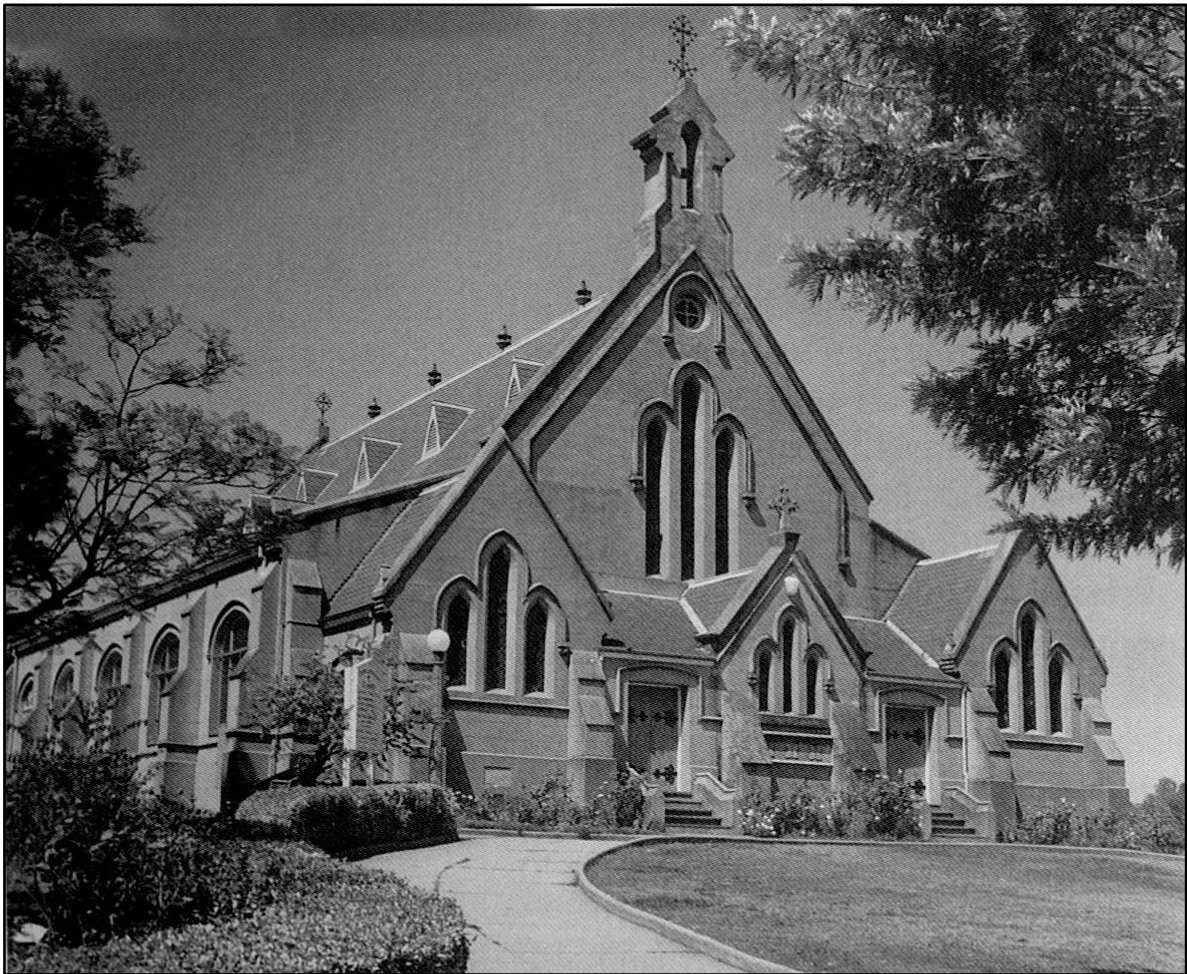
<sup>127</sup> Daily Advertiser. 25<sup>th</sup> September 1911, p2.

<sup>128</sup> Daily Advertiser. 10<sup>th</sup> January 1911, p2.

<sup>129</sup> Daily Advertiser. 18<sup>th</sup> February 1911, p4.

<sup>130</sup> Daily Advertiser. 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1911, p2.

to the roof, are series of plain but beautifully designed columns. The entrance porch extends along the full frontage and is about three times the size of the old porch — a spacious alley, therefore, which could be used for a bible or similar class on a Sunday afternoon. The improvement to the interior of the church is particularly marked in respect to the new pipe organ. In the original building it had the appearance of being stowed away in a corner; now it is well out towards the centre of the sacred edifice and looks a much more conspicuous and handsome object. Also, the increased volume of space gives better vent to the rich tones of the new instrument, which must be a source of great satisfaction to the congregation and especially to Mr. W. J. Collins, the organist.”



**Above:** St John's Church post 1911.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Phyllis De Jersey, Dorothy Fellowes and Tom Frame. *Where the Rivers Run. A History of the Anglican Parish of St John's Wagga Wagga.* 1995.



**Above:** Inside St John's Church.<sup>132</sup>

Major renovations took place in the period 1964-1965. Changes to St John's church were mostly internal, but the works included a new rectory [to the north], and a new bell tower and spire on the rear, southern section, of the church.

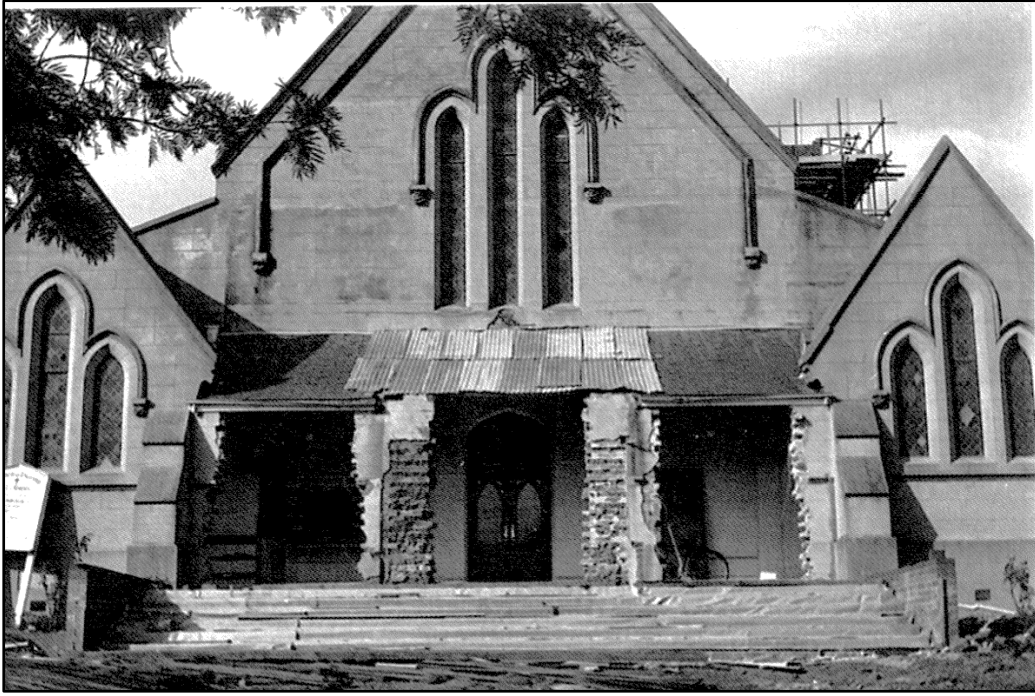


**Above:** Construction of the new bell tower and spire in 1964-1965.<sup>133</sup>

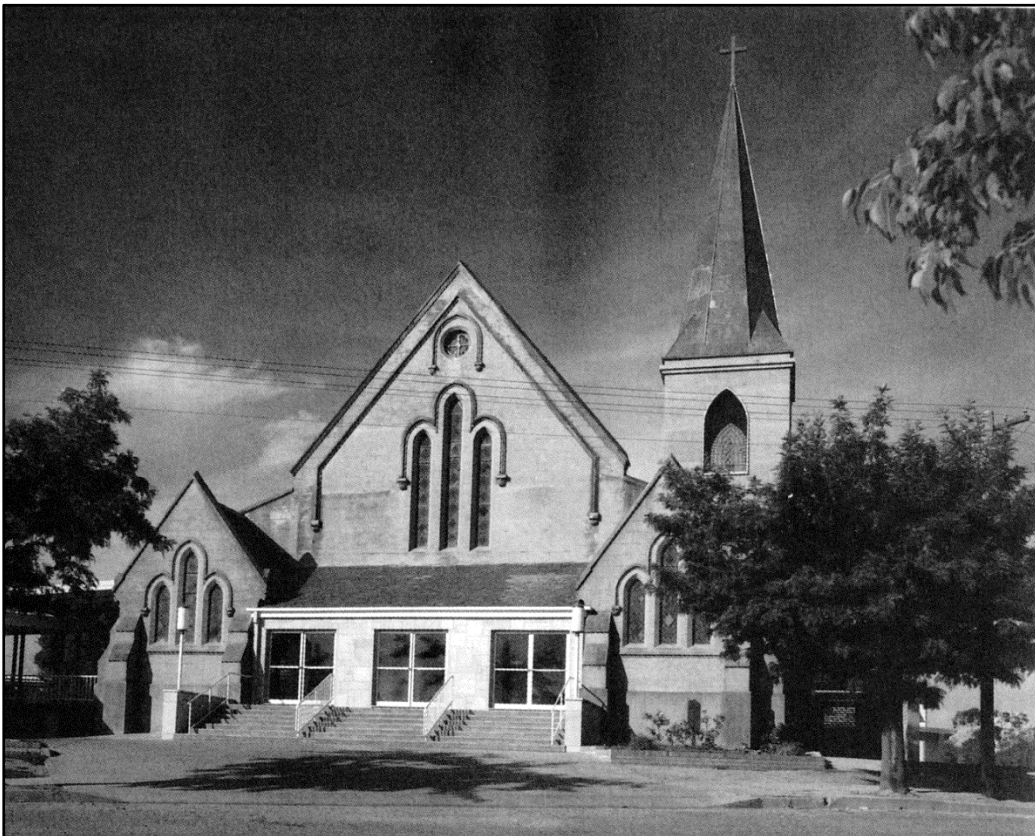
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<sup>132</sup> Kathleen Higgins. *This Goodly Heritage*. 1855-1965.

<sup>133</sup> Phyllis De Jersey, Dorothy Fellowes and Tom Frame. *Where the Rivers Run. A History of the Anglican Parish of St John's Wagga Wagga*. 1995.



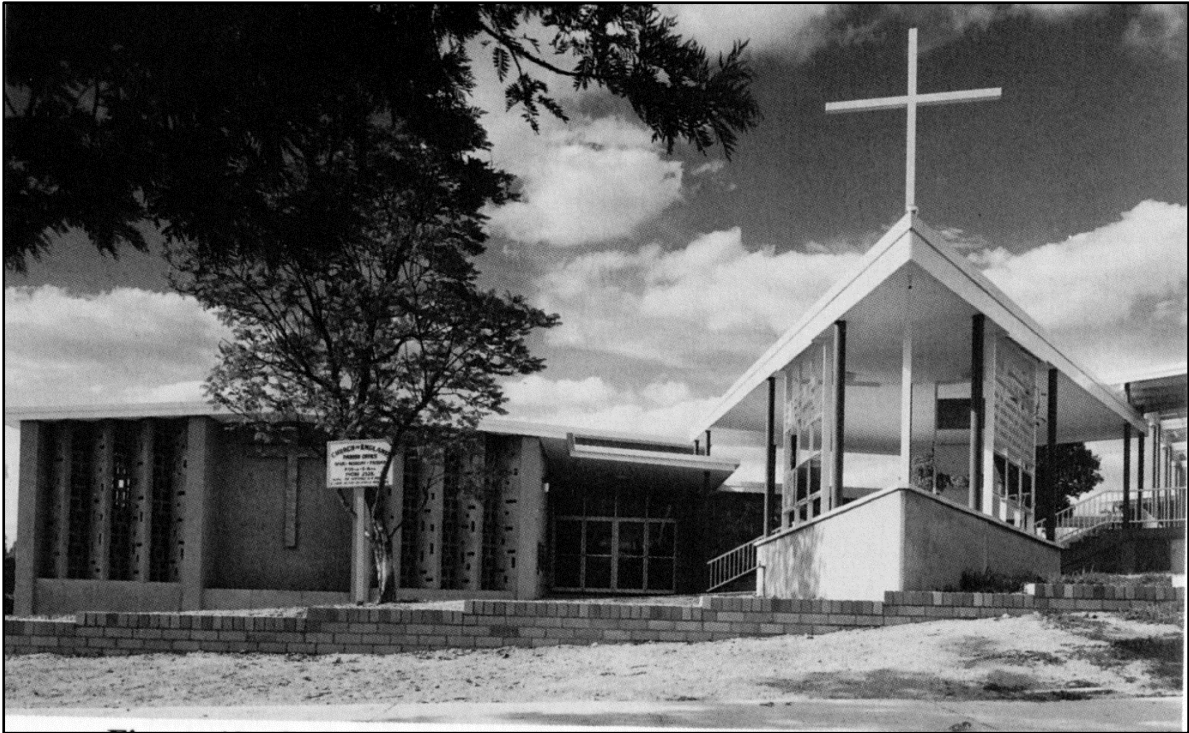
**Above:** Modifications to the front entry in 1964-1965.



**Above:** St John's Church after the 1964-1965 remodelling.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Phyllis De Jersey, Dorothy Fellowes and Tom Frame. *Where the Rivers Run. A History of the Anglican Parish of St John's Wagga Wagga.* 1995.



**Above:** St John's Parish complex to the north or left of St John's Church, post 1965.<sup>135</sup>



**Above:** St John's Church in 2019, with the hall complex to the left. Courtesy Google Earth.

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<sup>135</sup> Phyllis De Jersey, Dorothy Fellowes and Tom Frame. *Where the Rivers Run. A History of the Anglican Parish of St John's Wagga Wagga*. 1995.

## St John's Hall

St John's Hall is not within the boundaries of The Bend – it was, in fact, located in Baylis Street [just south of the Exchange hotel]. The foundation stone was laid on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1888,<sup>136</sup> and the new hall was officially opened on the 11<sup>th</sup> July in that same year. Part of the purpose of the new hall was to provide a venue for Sunday School classes.

In the 1920's St John's Hall was the primary venue for weddings and church services, in preference to St John's Church. This anomaly arose out of a division within the Anglican community as to where the church should be located. About 50% of the community favoured moving the church to Baylis Street, while the other 50% believed it should remain in its original location.<sup>137</sup> A church commission, consisting of the diocesan Bishop, Sir Charles Rosenthal, Mr JL Sands of Gunning, and the diocesan registrar, Mr RT Wyatt, handed down a report, in December 1923, recommending that the church's properties in Church Street, including St John's church, be sold off, and that St John's Hall become the temporary parish church pending the construction of a new church, at the corner of Peter and Tompson Streets. The report further proposed that a new rectory be built in Peter Street, that the existing rectory be renovated and let out, and that the Baylis Street frontage of the churches holdings be extended by constructing four new shops, which would also be leased out.<sup>138</sup> It was not until the latter half of 1935 that these four shops were constructed.<sup>139</sup>

A chapel and kindergarten hall were erected next to St John's Hall in 1933. The building was designed by Mr C Jeffs, and the contractor was Mr HC Buckman.<sup>140</sup>

The alter, therein, was designed by Mr L Bullen, of Melbourne, and the craftsman was Mr AB Svensson, also of Melbourne. The seating in the chapel was the work of Mr TH Jenkins, of Tarcutta Street, Wagga Wagga.<sup>141</sup>

In 1964, the hall was demolished and the original foundation stone from St John's Hall was removed and used in the new parish centre adjoining St John's Church.<sup>142</sup> The church sold the Baylis Street property to Woolworths, who built a store on the site.

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<sup>136</sup> The Parish of Wagga Wagga. Centenary Book 1851-1951.

<sup>137</sup> Archdeacon KA Osborne. The Way an Eagle Flew. WWDHS Journal no.4. 1980, p13.

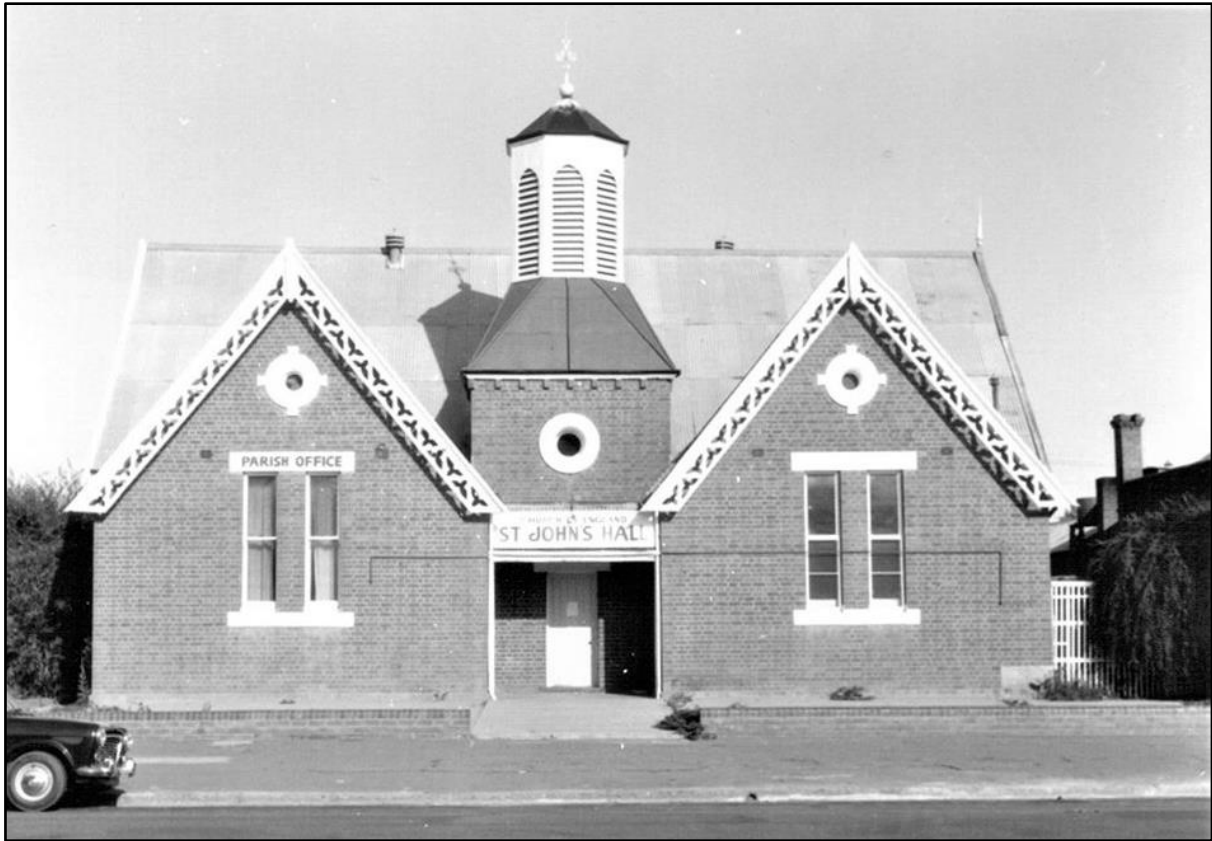
<sup>138</sup> Daily Advertiser. 10<sup>th</sup> December 1923, p3.

<sup>139</sup> Daily Advertiser. 12<sup>th</sup> July 1935, p4.

<sup>140</sup> Daily Advertiser. 17<sup>th</sup> July 1933, p2.

<sup>141</sup> The Parish of Wagga Wagga. Centenary Book 1851-1951. / Daily Advertiser. 17<sup>th</sup> July 1933, p2.

<sup>142</sup> Kathleen Higgins. *This Goodly Heritage*. 1855-1965.



**Above:** St John's Hall in Baylis Street. Courtesy CSURA.



**Above:** 204 Baylis Street in 2019. Site of the old St John's Hall, but now occupied by Target, to the south of the old John MacArthur Tavern (later Cache et al). Courtesy Google Earth.



## The Rectories

One source states that a rectory once stood in Church Street, before St John's Church was constructed. This rectory was built in 1858, and was located to the north of the St John's Church site. The Rector at that time was the Rev. Samuel Fox [1857-1862].<sup>143</sup> The building was, apparently, a weatherboard cottage.

In 1865 a new rectory was built in Baylis Street.<sup>144</sup> This beautiful building was knocked down in 1935 and in the following year, 1936, several new shops were erected on the site.<sup>145</sup>



**Above:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> Rectory in Baylis Street.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> The Parish of Wagga Wagga. Centenary Book 1851-1951. / Daily Express. 21<sup>st</sup> October 1929, p2.

<sup>144</sup> Daily Express. 21<sup>st</sup> October 1929, p2.

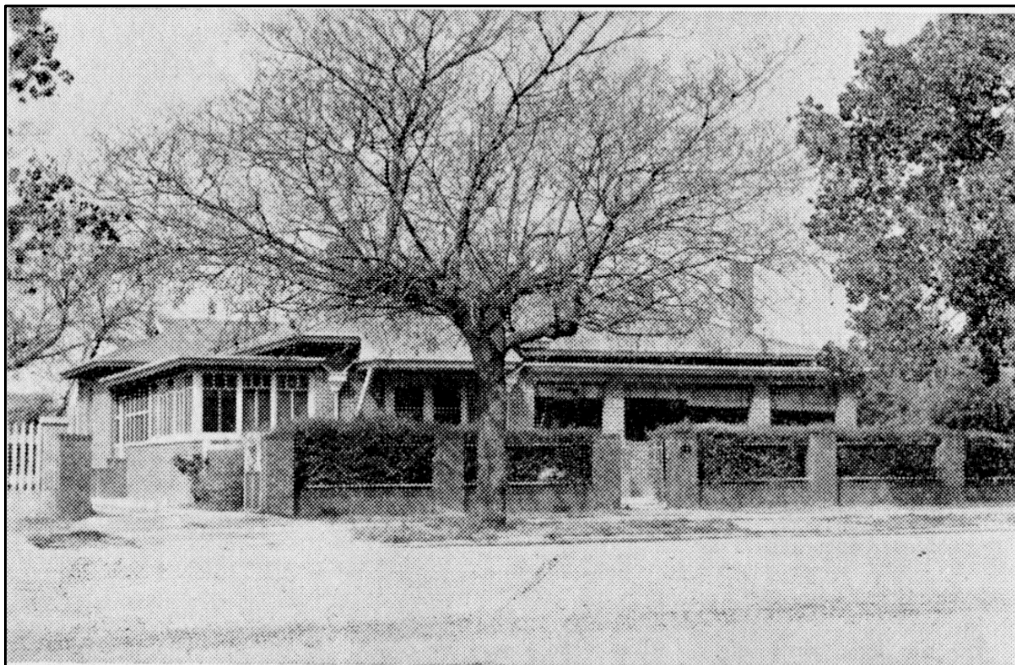
<sup>145</sup> The Parish of Wagga Wagga. Centenary Book 1851-1951.

<sup>146</sup> Phyllis De Jersey, Dorothy Fellowes and Tom Frame. *Where the Rivers Run. A History of the Anglican Parish of St John's Wagga Wagga.* 1995.



**Above:** Another photo of the Rectory in Baylis Street early 1900's. Courtesy Sherry Morris.

In October 1933 work commenced on the third rectory in Peter Street, behind St John's Hall.<sup>147</sup> The architects were Messrs WJ Monks and Jeffs, and the builder was HC Buckman, of Wagga Wagga.<sup>148</sup> Buckman's quote for the works totalled £2,325.<sup>149</sup> The new rectory was officially dedicated by the Venerable Archdeacon Pike on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1934.<sup>150</sup>



**Above:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Rectory in Peter Street.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>147</sup> The Parish of Wagga Wagga. Centenary Book 1851-1951. / Daily Advertiser. 8<sup>th</sup> November 1933, p3.

<sup>148</sup> Daily Advertiser. 7<sup>th</sup> October 1933, p3.

<sup>149</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 24<sup>th</sup> March 1934, p4.

<sup>150</sup> Daily Advertiser. 19<sup>th</sup> April 1934, p2.

<sup>151</sup> The Parish of Wagga Wagga. Centenary Book 1851-1951.

## The Catholic Church

### St Michael's Church

The first church to be officially opened in Wagga Wagga was St Michael's Catholic Church. The foundation stone for St Michael's was laid on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 1858,<sup>152</sup> by the Rev. Fathers McAlroy and Birmingham.

The collection of subscriptions for the construction of the church had begun back in February 1858, when a meeting at Byrnes' Hope Inn, under the chairmanship of Patrick Fennell, quickly raised the sum of £414. At the time the Catholics had been unable to secure a suitable block of land, and it required some strong community agitation for their needs to be met,<sup>153</sup> against substantial opposition from some quarters.<sup>154</sup>

There was another meeting in August 1858, chaired by James Walsh. By now the Catholics had secured a one acre allotment, at the corner of Church and Johnson Streets and the meeting appointed four of those present to a Building Committee, with the authority to erect, "*a good two rail fence, preparatory to paling in.*"<sup>155</sup>

In November 1858, Patrick Fennell sought tenders for the erection of the new church at Wagga Wagga, with the contractor to supply all materials. In the same issue of the local paper, FA Tompson sought tenders for the erection of an Anglican church at Wagga Wagga.<sup>156</sup>

Tenders were still being invited in January 1859, and advertisements confirmed that the church was to be built of brick, with stone foundations.<sup>157</sup>

Construction had started by March 1859, and one of the workers was John Wilson, who was living with his wife in a tent on the church grounds.<sup>158</sup> Wilson was a bricklayer and plasterer. Other tradesmen were D Howell (carpenter), and J Houghton (the cedar paneller).<sup>159</sup>

Construction continued throughout 1859, and was well underway by October of that year.<sup>160</sup> The new church was officially opened on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 1859,<sup>161</sup> with three clergymen present – Fathers McElroy and Birmingham from Yass, and Father Twomey from Albury.<sup>162</sup>

It was a brick building, fifty feet long and twenty two feet wide, featuring a prominent steeple, all built at an estimated cost of £900. At the time it was the only church between Yass and Albury.<sup>163</sup> A more detailed description appeared in a pamphlet printed by the Wagga Wagga Express office, which read, in part, as follows,<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Freeman's Journal. 18<sup>th</sup> September 1858, p1. / 13<sup>th</sup> October 1858, p2. [Note. One source states the event took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> November, another says the 26<sup>th</sup>, and a third says the 27<sup>th</sup>?]

<sup>153</sup> Freeman's Journal. 6<sup>th</sup> February 1858, p2.

<sup>154</sup> Freeman's Journal. 13<sup>th</sup> October 1858, p2. / 24<sup>th</sup> December 1859, p2.

<sup>155</sup> Freeman's Journal. 25<sup>th</sup> August 1858, p3.

<sup>156</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 13<sup>th</sup> November 1858, p3.

<sup>157</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 1<sup>st</sup> January 1859, p4.

<sup>158</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1859, p2.

<sup>159</sup> Sylvia Walsh. In a Bend of the Murrumbidgee. The Foundation of the Catholic Church. WWDHS Journal.No.4 1980, p36.

<sup>160</sup> Freeman's Journal. 1<sup>st</sup> October 1859, p2.

<sup>161</sup> Freeman's Journal. 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1859, p7. / 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1859, p2. / 17<sup>th</sup> December 1859, p2.

<sup>162</sup> Goulburn Herald. 17<sup>th</sup> December 1859, p4. / Wagga Wagga Express. 15<sup>th</sup> October 1859, p2.

<sup>163</sup> Freeman's Journal. 13<sup>th</sup> October 1858, p2.

<sup>164</sup> Empire. 27<sup>th</sup> December 1859, p4.

*“The extreme length of the main aisle of the Church of St. Michael’s is 65 feet, from out to out, in builders’ phraseology, .i.e. including both walls. The greatest width, measured like manner, is 26 feet. The Sanctuary is 19 feet by 17 feet, and the Vestry is 14 feet by 12 feet. The height of the main building is 13 feet from the base to the wall plate, and the Gothic roof is supported by collar-ties and relieving rafters closely fitted and pinned together. The sheathing of the roof is of pine boards 4 inches by 8 inches, and the rafters; collar-ties, &s., are of hardwood. The whole of these materials, as indeed of all that have been used in the work, being of the best-kind and description procurable. The building, we should add, is supported by sixteen brickwork buttresses, each of which is 2 feet 6 inches by 18 inches.”*

The community had a new church, but no resident minister, there being no one available to fill the position, despite the fact that the locals were prepared to guarantee an income of £500 per annum, and to provide a house.<sup>165</sup>

By September 1861, Father Twomey had ordered a bell for St Michael’s, but as the church tower was yet to be completed, a decision was made to hang the bell in a temporary structure. It was in this month that a subscription was commenced, to fund the construction of a presbytery, with the hope that this would lead to the appointment of a resident clergyman.<sup>166</sup>

On the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1874 five nuns, of the Presentation Order arrived in Wagga Wagga to establish a convent and a school. The nuns were initially accommodated in the Presbytery. John Donnelly had donated land for a convent,<sup>167</sup> which became known as Mount Erin. Progress was quick and on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 1874 the laying of the foundation stone for the Catholic Convent, by the Bishop of Goulburn, took place.<sup>168</sup>

An extension wing was added to the original St Michael’s building in 1875, which was to serve as a boys’ school, where the Presentation Sisters taught. The new St Michael’s Boys School was officially opened by the Rev. Dr McAlroy, Father Kelly of Tumut, and Dr Bermingham, on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 1875.<sup>169</sup> Dr’s Bermingham and McAlroy, had both been present when the original St Michael’s Church was officially opened on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 1859. Works had also been carried out on the church at the same time [1875]. It had been painted throughout, and the additions meant that an additional one hundred and twenty people could now be accommodated in the church.<sup>170</sup>

The official opening of the Sacred Heart Presentation Convent took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 1876.<sup>171</sup>

In 1885 St Joseph’s School was erected on the same site as where it still stood in 1965. St Joseph’s was now the boys’ school while St Michaels’ served as the girls’ school. This arrangement was reversed in 1889 when the Patrician Brothers came to Wagga Wagga and took over the teaching of the boys. The latter continued to teach the boys up until 1898, when the Presentation Sisters took over once more. Further changes continued with the teaching arrangements, and in later years the school building was used as a technical school, and at one time was also the assembly hall and tuckshop.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Goulburn Herald. 17<sup>th</sup> December 1859, p4.

<sup>166</sup> Freeman’s Journal. 18<sup>th</sup> September 1861, p6.

<sup>167</sup> Sydney Morning Herald. 31<sup>st</sup> July 1874, p6.

<sup>168</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 28<sup>th</sup> November 1874, p33.

<sup>169</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 13<sup>th</sup> November 1875, p2.

<sup>170</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 6<sup>th</sup> November 1875, p2. / 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1875, p2.

<sup>171</sup> Australian Town & Country Journal. 16<sup>th</sup> December 1876, p11.

<sup>172</sup> Daily Advertiser. 8<sup>th</sup> February 1965, p3.

With the opening of the new St Michael's church, in 1887, the first St Michael's church was incorporated into the then functioning school.



**Above:** The original St Michael's church building with the 1875 additions [at rear].



**Above:** Extract from crown plan W.2.2054, showing location of the original St John’s Church, the First Roman Catholic Church and parsonage, and the Presbyterian Church, c1871. Courtesy NSW Land & Property Information.

### **The Second St Michael’s Church.**

Tenders for the foundations of the second St Michael’s Church were sought in February 1885.<sup>173</sup> The initial round of tenders closed on the 21<sup>st</sup> February, and these were for stone foundations. All of the initial tenders were rejected and new tenders sought - for foundations of brick set in concrete. The cost of the granite stone was considered too expensive.<sup>174</sup>

The architects for the new church building were Messrs Taffin, Gilbert & Deneihy, of Melbourne. The church walls were to be constructed of, “*bluestone, with freestone dressings.*” The laying of the corner stone took place on Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> April, with same being blessed by the Bishop of Goulburn, the Rev. Dr Lanigan. A bottle containing a copy of the Wagga Wagga Advertiser, some coins of the realm, and a document written in Latin, was buried beneath the stone.<sup>175</sup> One report suggested the bluestone for the “*base course coignes*” would come from Gerogery, while the bluestone for the bulk of the walls would come from Bethungra. The ornamentation stone was to come from Pymont.<sup>176</sup>

The bluestone from Gerogery was eventually chosen for the foundations of the church, in preference to the cheaper brick and concrete option.<sup>177</sup>

<sup>173</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 10<sup>th</sup> February 1885, pp2-3.

<sup>174</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 24<sup>th</sup> February 1885, p2. / 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1885, p2.

<sup>175</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 28<sup>th</sup> April 1885, p2.

<sup>176</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 16<sup>th</sup> May 1885, p2.

<sup>177</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1885, p2.



**Above:** St Michael's Church. Courtesy NSW State Library. Grant Ellmers Collection [PIC box P1444]

By October 1885, tenders were being sought for the roofing and the flooring of the new church.<sup>178</sup> The construction of the new church was a drawn out process, and it was not until April 1887 that tenders for the fixing of glass, in the windows, were sought.<sup>179</sup>

The new building was to be completed in stages, the first of which was to be utilised for church services. An inspection of the site in August 1887 revealed that progress of the first stage was well under way. The following details of the building were provided,<sup>180</sup>

*“The church stands in Johnston-street, and is situated immediately on the corner of the street leading to Church Hill. The building is of various stone. The main work being of Gerogery stone - the tracery of white Oamaru N.Z. stone, and the buttresses of Bundaboon stone. Inside the lofty arches which span the roof are upheld by very handsome stone pillars, and these present a most pleasing and light appearance. Through the stained windows pours a soft mellow light which makes one feel he is on holy ground. But to a more detailed description of the building, we will, for a time defer our readers, first however giving them some idea of the grand size of the structure. Its inside measurements are 106 feet long by 50 feet wideband with a, height of 52 feet. The roof is of Oregon pine principals and rafters, while the ceiling is of stained and varnished colonial pine.*”

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<sup>178</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 17<sup>th</sup> October 1885, p2.

<sup>179</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> April 1887, p3.

<sup>180</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> August 1887, p2.

*The principal features of the church are its magnificent pictorial windows. None finer or more artistically beautiful are to be seen in the colonies, and the magnificence of the donors will stand recorded for generations.*

*The three chancel windows are the gifts of Mrs. Cox, of Mangoplah, and Mrs. Donnelly senr. Two have been presented by Mrs. Cox, one in memory of her husband and the other in memory of the Rev. Dr. Bermingham. Mrs. Donnelly's window is in memory of her husband. The figures in the centre window, which is considered by connoisseurs a very beautiful work of art, represent the Sacred Heart of our Lord, and the Immaculate heart of Mary, his mother. The window on the Gospel side has the figures of St. Patrick and St. Michael, the patron Saint of the Church. On the Epistle Side is Mrs. Donnelly's window with the figures of St. Joseph and St John the Evangelist. Turning around you see a magnificent window in the northern gable, the design being that of the Crucifixion, with the Virgin on the right side, and St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord on the left side, the Magdalene at the foot of the Cross, and the eclipse of the sun, and the great temple of Jerusalem in the distance. These are well and faithfully represented. This window, the gift of £ Messrs. Cox Bros, is considered also a very fine specimen of the art of stained glass painting. The whole of the windows were manufactured by Mr W Montgomery, of 67 Flinders-street, East Melbourne, and are a credit to his taste and skill in his profession, and no doubt they will make a reputation for him. The aisle windows will be in their places in a week or two. No. 1, on the gospel side, is the gift of the Society of the Children of Mary, and the figures will be a representation of the Guardian Angel in one light, and St. Agatha in the other. No. 2, on the same side, is the gift of the grandchildren of the late Mrs Peters, of Broadmeadows, and it will have the figures of the Immaculate Conception and St. Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin. No. 1, on the Epistle side, is the gift of Mrs. Donnelly, of Junee, in memory of her late husband, and will represent St. John of God, and St. Bridget, an Irish Saint. No. 2, on same side, is the gift of Mr. L. Ryan, of Wallendoon, in memory of his daughter who was accidentally killed at the Show ground last year. The Saints represented on this window will be St Elizabeth and St. Angela. No. 3 window on same side, one light, will be the gift of Mrs. Montgomery, a votive offering, and the other is in memory of Thomas John McAlister. Miss Jones has also engaged a window in memory of her father, and the other two aisle windows are also engaged, but may not be ready for some mouths yet.*

*The organ will be erected immediately under the window in the northern end, and Between the two entrances from Johnston-street. We have been favoured by Mr. Broadhurst with the following description of it. It was built by Mr. George Fincham, Bridge Road, Richmond (Vic), for the Catholic Church of St. Michael, Wagga Wagga."*

Installation of the organ was to commence within the next fortnight, with the whole [the organ] to be encased within a solid oak cloak.

An update, in December 1885, provided some slightly different details,<sup>181</sup>

*"The building of St. Michael's new Catholic Church at Wagga is making rapid progress under the management of Mr. Gibbs, the clerk of works. When completed there will not be many fairer or more imposing structure outside Sydney or Melbourne, The site on which the new church is being erected (at the corner of Johnstone and Church streets) is bad, but there was no other available, and therefore there was no alternative but to build on the present site. Twenty three men and the manager are engaged on the works at present, and the wages alone are about £80 per week. The plan of the church comprises nave, aisles, chancel, side chapels, sacristies (one for priest and one for altar boys), and two porches The clear length inside is 115 feet; width of nave, 25ft.; aisles, 12ft. 6in.; chancel 25ft. x28ft; transepts, 25ft. x 21ft. The stones used in the building are of three varieties — Gerogery stone is used for the rubble work, Bundanoon stone for base course and buttresses, and Oamaru (New Zealand) stone for string courses, doors, and tracery of windows. The Gerogery stone*

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<sup>181</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 15<sup>th</sup> December 1885, p2.



*has to be carried by train over 60 miles, the Bundanoon stone over 200 miles, and the Oamaru over 1200 miles by sea and by land. The Catholics of Wagga deserve great praise for the energy and spirit they have displayed in undertaking such a heavy responsibility in bad times and disastrous seasons. However, under the guidance of their veteran chief, the Very Rev. P. Dunne, there is little fear but that they will carry out the undertaking to a successful issue. As some of the large subscriptions which were promised in the beginning have not come in as freely as was expected, Father Dunne very prudently is building only the nave, aisles, and chancel for the present. As the nave and chancel can be roofed independently of the transepts, there is no difficulty in carrying out this portion of the work, and when the transept and arches are boarded up the church will be so far complete, and the transepts, side chapels, and sacristies can be built at any time without interfering with the service in the part of the church now being built. The whole of the foundations, of best cement concrete and Bethungra stone, have been carried up to the base course, so there will be no danger or difficulty in completing the remainder of the building at any future time. The expenditure up to the present has been over £3000, and it will require over £3000 more to complete the work now in hand.”*

The official opening of the new St Michael's church extended over the weekend of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1887. As previously stated Messrs Tuppin, Gilbert & Deneihey, were the architects. A Mr Gibbs was the contractor for the stoneworks, and Charles Hardy & Co., carried out the carpentry works. The following description of the new edifice was recorded,<sup>182</sup>

*“The exterior is built, and is to be finished, of Gerogery stone, with Oamaru, N.Z., free stone facings, and in style is modern Gothic, with samples of Early English, the decorated, and geometrical. On the right side of the northern face is a double door, with Gothic head, with heavy and pandrail filled in with sunk geometric facings, the opening being surrounded with moulded labels stopped by bosses at the intersection of a nicely moulded string course, the bosses being well and elaborately carved. The door under the tower is in many respects similar to the one on the west corner of the church, but made to resemble in aspect, the porch. It is surmounted by steep pitched labels moulded with a cross at the apex and geometrical planes. The north end of the transept is lighted behind with three low pitched Gothic arches, the main window being triplets, with geometric tracery and boldly carved label moulds. The tower is situated at the north-east corner of the building, but so far is only completed up to the eave of the nave, and is lighted by lancet and low pitched Gothic openings, the lower opening on the eastern side having neatly and beautifully sunk parsed panels. The aisles are lighted by double lancets, filled in with cathedral glass. The clerestory windows are triplet Jancet in design, and elaborately finished with label moulds and bosses. The same description applies to the western side of the church. The roof is covered with slate, and the monotony of the flat surface is relieved by steep lenon openings for ventilation. The nave is completed with the sanctuary, as also the side aisles up to the transept and tower, up to the level of the eaves. The transept openings are at present filled in with well finished and painted weather boards, down to the level of the aisle and roof. The additional unfinished work being the chapels and two sacristies. The south end of the sanctuary is formed by an apse, having three two double light windows, provided with chamfered mullions and neat ornamental tracery. The style is Gothic and the windows are of artistic coloured glass. The exterior proportions of the new church are very ambitious, and the architect has succeeded in elaborating the design with much skill. When the tower and southern wings are erected, the .building will have a grand und commanding appearance. A neat fence is now erected around the edifice, and as the grounds are to be ornamentally laid out and planted with flowers, evergreens, and shade trees, they must yet become a source of great attraction and gratification.*

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<sup>182</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 4<sup>th</sup> October 1887, p3.

#### FORM AND DIMENSIONS.

*The church is in the form of a cross, with a tower in the north-east corner, with which the transepts, etc., are not yet erected. The length of the church is 128 feet, it is 50 feet broad in the aisle and nave, and 80 feet broad at the transepts. The other dimensions of the new church, when completed will be. The chancel 12 x 17 feet; the left side chapel 12 feet 6 inches x 12 feet 8 inches; and the right side chapel 10 feet 9½ inches x 11 feet 8 inches; the priest's sacristy will measure 24 feet x 11 feet 8 inches; and the altar boys sacristy will be the same size as the adjoining chapel. The two transepts will be 25 feet x 21 feet 6 inches. The nave is 87 feet x 25 feet, and the aisles about 50 feet x 12 feet 6 inches. The tower will be about 125 feet high when finished.*

#### INTERIOR

*The interior is even more striking than the exterior. Viewed from the end of the building's interior the whole appearance is on a scale of the greatest magnificence and one cannot help being struck with admiration at the architectural style and proportions, with the harmonising aspect of the stained windows, altar, organ, nave, aisle and roof, thus showing the indomitable perseverance and devotedness of the Vicar General and his congregation in erecting so splendid an ecclesiastical building for the glory of God. The roof is opened timbered, lined diagonally with sound Murray pine boards, the principals being exceedingly neat and strong, the ribs are heavily carved, the collar and ties and hammer beams are of a light description. The thrust of the roof is connected to neatly moulded columns supported by corbels. The whole inside is plaster work, and the cloistery walls are supported by round freestone columns, and having moulded caps and bases. The arches between them moulded and finished off with moulds and enriched bosses. The sanctuary is completed both in and outside, the roof being returned around the octagonal end of the apse, and from the inside the windows with their white facings and stained coloured glass add to the beauty of the interior. The altar space has been left of great dimensions, shadowing forth the great religious ceremonies therein yet to take place. The altar furniture has been removed from the old church opposite, and is being artistically renovated by Mr. Gore. The tabernacle possesses much artistic merit in mounting, finish, and construction, especially the reredos, and the parts made in Rome, inlaid with various coloured emblems or symbols of the Irish Catholic faith, such as the fleur de lys representing the Trinity, the three leaved shamrock, denoting the love of Ireland to the faith, are great works of art. The style is also Gothic, painted in subdued tints, relieved in white and gold, and massive gilding. The cupola of the tabernacle was made by the ladies of the Convent, and is a very delicate piece of work. The altar in front is also supported by four columns, representing the green marble of Egypt. The carpet is of a thick deep red texture, covered over, or interwoven with black fleur de lys. The altar rails are made fine cedar with cast balusters, painted in [?] and gold gilding, and were re-erected [?] J. Dawson. The church will be seat and accommodate a thousand persons.*

#### THE WINDOWS.

*The stained windows in the church add a pleasing and cathedral aspect to the interior. All the windows have been presented to the church by the kindness and liberality of wealthy members of the congregation, either in memoriam of domestic affection or of those who were devoted to the best interests of the Catholic Church in Wagga. The windows are of Victorian manufacture, and their workmanship reflects the greatest credit upon the artist, Mr. W. Montgomery, of 67 Flinders-street, East Melbourne. This talented gentleman was formerly employed by the world renowned providers of monumental windows, Messrs. Clayton and Bell, of London, and also was for some considerable time with Messrs Meyer and Co., of Munich. This artist has succeeded in producing the subjects in a highly satisfactory manner, the drawings are bold and appropriate, the figures and drapery chaste, the colouring wonderfully bright, yet softly subdued in tone, whilst the monograms and border groupings are arranged in the best cathedral taste and artistic finish. The chancel windows are valued in Melbourne at £110 each, and will add considerably to the internal decoration and religious tone of the church.*

The triplet chancel windows now erected are presented by members of the church. The centre window is presented by Mrs. John Cox, o£ Mangoplah, in memory of the Rev. Dr. Bermingham. The left subject is the Sacred Heart of Our Lord and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, his mother, and that on the right of the central subject is erected by Mrs. John Donnelly, sen., and contains life sized representations of St. John and St. Joseph. The figure of St. John is rich in conception, and is engaged writing the Gospel with a scroll, whilst the eagle at the feet denotes the eagle glance with which he soared so high in the church. The left window is erected to the memory of Mr. John Cox, and contains symbolic figures of St. Patrick and St. Michael. St. Patrick is clothed in robes of green and gold, with the crozier, bishop's head-piece, and carrying in his arms a model of the Armagh Church, the first, erected in Ireland. St. Michael's emblematic of the Christian soldier, with the sword of faith and armour of righteousness, and holds his foot upon the slain dragon. These windows are very beautiful, and they were much admired in the artist's studio, in Melbourne, by Sir Henry and Lady Loch. The whole of the series of windows over the organ of the church are erected by Messrs. Cox Brothers in token of their affection, and veneration for their esteemed mother. The subjects are very imposing and impressive, and throw a solemn light over the aisle and body of the church. The central window will be composed of "The Crucifixion," with the supporting figures of the Virgin Mary on the left side, and St. John on the other side. The windows underneath will be filled in with coloured cathedral glass in keeping harmony with all the small windows. The first two stained windows on the gospel side of the church have been donated by the children of Mary at the Convent. The subjects are, the Guardian Angel, and St. Agnes with the olive leaf and lamb; and the second window, are the Immaculate Conception, and St. Anne, with the Gospel. The figure of the Immaculate Conception is a copy of the celebrated statue in the Piazza Pepulo, near the Propogando, Rome, and erected by the late Pope Pias the 9<sup>th</sup>. They are erected to the memory of Mrs. Peters by her granddaughters, Mrs. H. Welman and Miss Bourke. These windows are very appropriate in design, colour and effect. The third pair of windows are the gift of several friends of the Vicar-General, the Rev. P. Dunne, in a memorial in token of his valuable labours in connection with St Michael's parish, and his special zeal in the work of church erection. In one compartment there is a full figure of St. Patrick in canonicals, in the act of expelling the serpents from the Isle. Underneath there is a medallion containing, an extremely good portrait of Father Dunne in glass painting, surrounded by the following inscription:-"To the Very Rev. Patrick Dunne, V.G., in memory of his zeal and labours in erecting this Church, by his grateful congregation." On the other side is a figure of Our Lady of the Rosary (the festival of the day). It represents in very good style indeed Our Lady bearing the Infant Jesus in her arms, while He holds the Rosary beads in His hand. Underneath are white, red, and yellow roses, representing the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries of the Rosary. Beneath this compartment there is also a medallion, with a lily in bloom in the centre, surrounded by the following verse: "Oh Lord, how loved the beauty of Thy House, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth." The fourth window is the gift of Mrs. King, of The Rock, in memory of her late parents. The subjects selected are St. Mary of Pazzi. Turning to the right side, facing the altar, is the first window, the gift of Mrs. Donnelly, of North Junee, in memory of her late husband, Mr. J. J. Donnelly. The subject is St. Bridget, in dark robes, writing the scroll, and St. John of God, founder of the Order of Charity, in brown garments - the drawings and drapery in this subject are very artistic and emblematic. St. Bridget is the patroness saint of Ireland. The second window is the gift of Mr. L Ryan, Wallendool, in memory of his daughter, Elizabeth Angela Ryan, who was killed on the Wagga Show Grounds, 1886. The subjects represented are St. Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, which is beautifully draped and stained, and the other is St. Angels, a nun of the Third order of St. Francis. The next is the gift of Mr. P. J. M'Alister, in memory of his son Thomas John, and the subject is St Thomas Aquinas. The second window of the pair is the voto offering of Mrs. Wm. Montgomery, the wife of the artist of the windows in the new church, the subject being St. Antony of Padua, a most reflective [?] picture. The first section of the front window, at the right hand door, is the gift of Miss Jones, in memory of her father Mr Thomas Jones, and the subject is a splendid figure of St. Thomas the Apostle, and the second the figure of St. Francis Xavier, the gift of Mrs Cox, in memory of her father, Mr [?] J. Jones. The other windows not yet filled in with stained glass are filled in with plain cathedral green glass."

Towards the end of 1917 it became known that Wagga Wagga was about to become a new diocese. This involved the appointment of a bishop, and, in addition, St Michael's church would henceforth be known as a "cathedral."<sup>183</sup>

The next major additions to the church commenced in 1922, and were completed in 1925.<sup>184</sup> The foundation stone for the new works was laid on Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> May, by the first Bishop of Wagga Wagga, the Right Rev. Joseph W. Dwyer, assisted by the Most Rev. Dr Mannix, the Archbishop of Melbourne. Some ten thousand people attended the ceremony.<sup>185</sup>

Reports on the progress of the works are scarce, but in August 1924 it was reported that,<sup>186</sup>

*"A staff of highly skilled tradesmen is now putting the finishing touches to the interior embellishments of St. Michael's Cathedral at Wagga, for which Messrs C. Hardy and Co. hold the contract. A number of magnificent stained glass windows have been placed in position, and claim the admiring attention of everyone who has been them. The group of windows in the east and west aspects of the buildings particularly have received favorable notice. The representations of the angelic choir, both in figuring and symbolic design, are exquisitely beautiful. Other attractive features are three windows containing the crests and arms of the three bishops who have been associated, with the Wagga parish, the late Dr. William Lannigan, Bishop of Goulburn, the late Dr. Gallagher, Bishop of Goulburn, and Dr. Joseph Dwyer, Bishop of Wagga. To-day an interesting work will be carried out. The large bell, which is the tenor of a peal to be installed later, is ready to be hoisted into position. It stands 3ft 8in. high, with a diameter of over 3ft, and the tongue has a length of about 3ft. The weight of the whole exceeds a ton. It was presented to the cathedral by His Lordship, Dr. Dwyer, and bears the following inscription: 'St. Michael's, presented by the first Bishop of Wagga, the Most Rev. Joseph W. Dwyer, A.D., 1924.' It is proposed to lift the bell by means of the heavy crane and gantry used for the masonry work over the top of the tower, and to lower it into position to-day."*

The official opening of these works took place on Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1925, and the best description of the new works read as follows,<sup>187</sup>

*"The foundation stone of the first portion of the Cathedral was laid on April 25, 1885, by his Lordship Dr. Wm. Lannigan, Bishop of Goulburn. At that time the late Father Patrick Dunne was rector at the Wagga District which had not been erected to a parish. It required a good deal of courage to set about so ambitious a scheme, but with the energy for which he was remarkable, Father Dunne applied himself zealously to the colossal task. After much research he adopted plans submitted in Early Gothic Style, and the central portion of the building was erected by day labor, the roof being constructed under a contract which was in the hands of Messrs. Chas. Hardy and Co. For the walls Pyrmont freestone was largely used, whilst the columns are in New Zealand hard stone. Originally these columns were in freestone blocks, but before the roof was commenced a weakness displayed itself and the removal of the freestone columns was decided upon. This difficult work was successfully carried out and the New Zealand stone put into position. The transepts were not erected at the time, and throughout the intervening years have remained boarded up, whilst a wooden building did duty for a sacristy. In July, 1922, a contract was let to Messrs. C. Hardy and Co. for the completion of the Cathedral, Messrs. W. J. Monks, Jeffs and Shaw, architects, of Wagga, having been called in to design and supervise the erection of this latter portion. The work in the 1922 contract provided for two transepts each 24ft x 21ft 3in., two chapels each 12ft 9in x 24ft, the Nuns' Chapel 13ft 3in x 24ft, and a Priests' Sacristy 13ft 3in x 24ft. The plans also provided for an alteration in the front portion of the*

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<sup>183</sup> Daily Advertiser. 1<sup>st</sup> October 1917, p3.

<sup>184</sup> Daily Advertiser. 10<sup>th</sup> October 1928, p6.

<sup>185</sup> Daily Advertiser. 8<sup>th</sup> May 1922, p2.

<sup>186</sup> Daily Advertiser. 21<sup>st</sup> August 1924, p2.

<sup>187</sup> Daily Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1925, p4.

building to provide for a main entrance porch and additions were made to the tower which now rises to a height of 80 feet. In order to harmonise with the earlier structure the architects determined to employ English Gothic throughout. In the walls and tower Bundanoon freestone was used almost exclusively, and this work was in the hands of Messrs. Garnett and Whiteoak, of Sydney, who sent their foreman, Mr. Jeffries, to Wagga to superintend the cutting and carving of the stone on the site. Messrs. Hardy and, Co.'s contract was £18,750. Particulars as to the cost of the early portions commenced in 1885 are not available, but it is estimated the cost of the work previous to 1922 was very little less than for the completing contract, and if this is approximately correct the total cost of erecting the Cathedral is in the vicinity of £36,000. To this of course is to be added the cost of the beautiful windows, and the whole of the internal fittings, altars, floors and bell, it is fair to estimate the total cost of the building and furnishings of the Cathedral at not much less than £42,000.

The lighting of the Cathedral has been carried out in the best method. First of all the glass of the old portion on the ground floor was all taken out of the solid wall and reset in steel frames which pivot above and below so that the whole opening is available for ventilation. The wonderful difference to the comfort of the congregation was duly appreciated on one of the hot Sundays of summer months. The lower windows of the old portion of the Cathedral contained figured leadlights made in Australia. The new portion is completely furnished with leadlights of a far superior quality both as to make and design. They were imported from Munich in Bavaria by the firm of Messrs. Cradginton and Co., Melbourne. They are most artistic; and both in figure and coloring would be difficult to surpass. The eastern gable contains a triple light window figuring the Angelic Choir, which are excellent copies of Fra Angelico's Angel Choir with the colorings altered to suit the glass work. The faces and tinting of the glass is beautifully done and the whole is very devotional. This triple window was given by the Bishop. On the opposite gable is a similar triple window in which the remainder of Fra Angelico's Angels are painted. This is the gift of Mr. Dan Byrnes of the Australian Hotel. Near the gables on the north side of the east and west gables are two windows, one representing St. Peter and the other St. Paul, both very choicely colored. The former is the gift of Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Tietyens of Albury, and the latter was presented by the family of the late James and Mrs. James Donnelly. On the aisles, the new double light windows contain very true pictures of various saints, all graceful in figure, and draping and soft in coloring. These windows were presented by the following donors: St. Stanislaus and Aloysius by Hon. J. F. O'Regan, M.L.C., and his brothers in memory of their parents; Sts Ignatius and Vincent de Paul by the Bishop and priests of the Wagga Diocese, as a tribute of respect and gratitude to the late Dr. W. Leahy; St. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Margaret Mary are on the windows near St. Joseph's Altar and these with the rose window overhead containing the heraldic arms of Pope Pius XI were donated by Mr. John Daly, of Albury, and lately of Mullengandra, opposite to this group is a double window depicting the Lord Jesus as a boy in the Temple, and in the Garden of Gethsemane, these are copies from works by Hoffman. These windows are the gift of Miss Gibson, of Burrumbuttock, in memory of her saintly mother; over these is a rose window containing the arms of Bishop Dwyer; the next pair on the western side are St. Dominic and St. Francis of Assisi and are the gift of Mr John Parnell, of Cookardina in' memory of his deceased wife. The next pair show St Benedict and St. Columbia, two monastic patriarchs. These were the gift of Mr H. McDonough and brothers in memory of their mother. In the baptistry are two lights representing St. John Baptist and Blessed Peter Chanel, the latter being the first martyr of Oceanica. This window was given by the late Mrs Coyne, in memory of her children. Beside these there are six small tricuspid windows, four of which show the symbols of the four Evangelists St. Mathew (the angel), Mark (the lion), Luke (the ox), and John (the eagle), and two symbolising the hearts of Jesus and His Mother Mary. These six windows were given by Mrs C. Clegg. Mrs J. Whalan, Misses Gorman, Mrs. Colleen Hogan, of Wallandool, Mr J. B. Coughlan of Oaklands, and the late Mr and Mrs P. J. Quirk. In the vestries are two rose windows showing the arms of Bishop Lanigan and Bishop Gallagher, both of whom were Bishops of Goulburn when Wagga was part of that diocese.

THE ALTARS. The high altar is one of the finest pieces of marble work in Australia. It was imported from Carrara in Italy. The main color is white, beautifully carved in mouldings, panels, columns, pinnacles and the fine central canopy. The centre and side panels of the table are of exquisite red

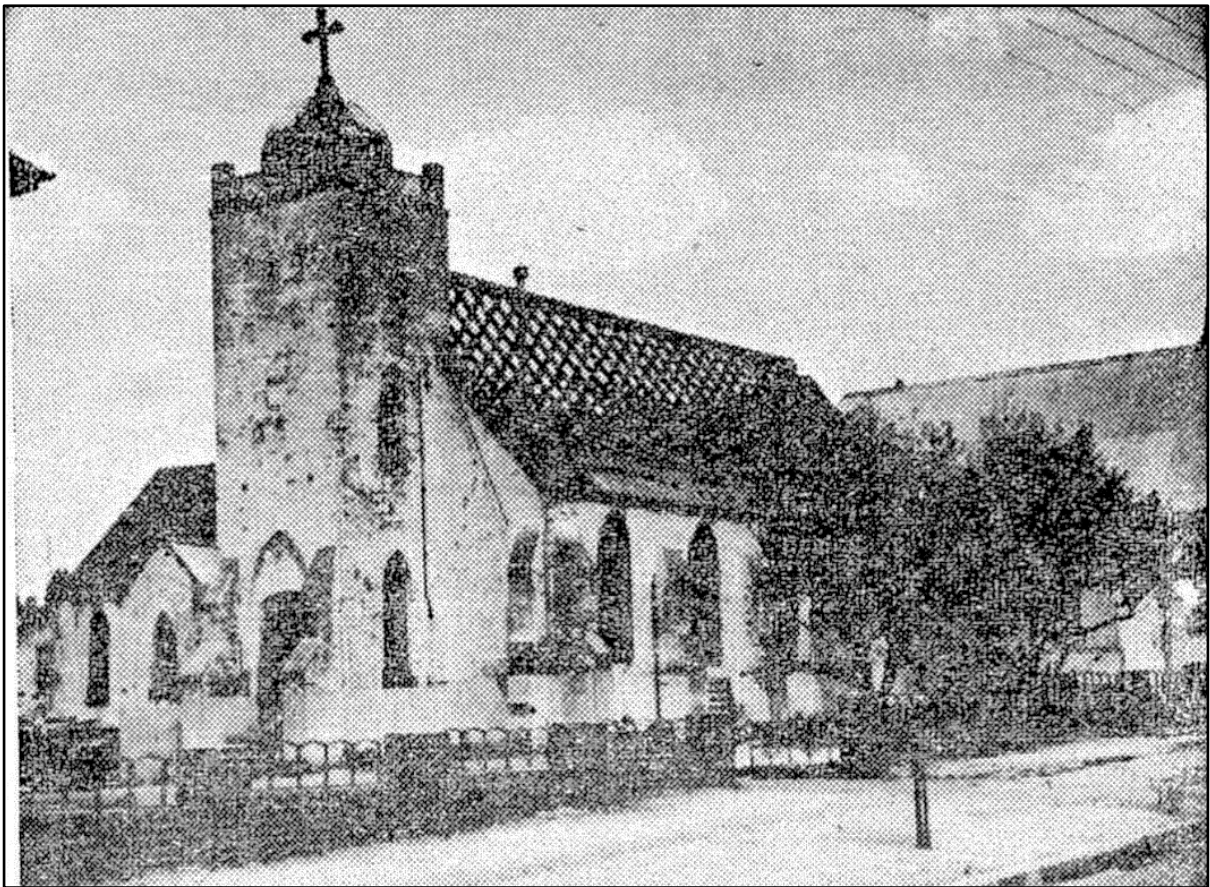
agate and could hardly be surpassed. The columns under the table arc of Pavonnazo (peacock eyes) marble with bases and capitals of gold bronze. Two other panels of breccia, four of veronese marble and four of pavonazzo, while the columns of the canopy are of yellow siena marble. The door of the tabernacle is of gold bronze. There are many, small cuspid panels of venetian gold mosaic which is most costly. The whole altar stands above three sets of steps of white carrara marble, while the walls of the cathedral apse at the sides are panelled with slabs of Calenla marble (from near Orange) and Italian green marble. The whole of this altar apart from the walls, cost over £1700 and was presented by Mrs P. Moran and her family in memory of Patrick and Gertie Moran. It is to be regretted that Mrs and the Misses Moran could not be at the opening of the cathedral, as they sailed for Europe last month. The smaller altars are dainty and beautiful. They have similar colourings to that of the high altar and are set in nice decorated niches, two at each side of the sanctuary proper. The statues they contain are lovely works of art and fit in with their surroundings. Two of these altars are the gift of Mr. W. J. Monks (architect of the cathedral additions) and his sisters, St. Joseph's altar is the gift of Mr] and Mrs P. J. Mahon, and the altar of St. Michael is the gift of Father Ryan, Adm. The statue on this is only a temporary one as another is coming from Italy to replace it.

*THE SANCTUARY FLOOR.* One of the choicest pieces of mosaic in Australia was the verdict of Messrs Melocco Bros, who laid down the exquisite marble mosaic floor of the sanctuary. It is composed of small squares of colored marbles imbedded in cement showing a varied and lovely series of celtic designs while in the middle is worked the coat of arms of the diocese of Wagga, consisting of the stars of the southern cross, halved with the three crows representing Wagga itself. It may not be general known that the words Wagga Wagga are the aboriginal name for our town which to them was the "place of the crows." The motto under the shield is in Latin, and taken from St Luke's Gospel, "Considerate corvos; deus pascit illos" (consider the crows; God feeds them).

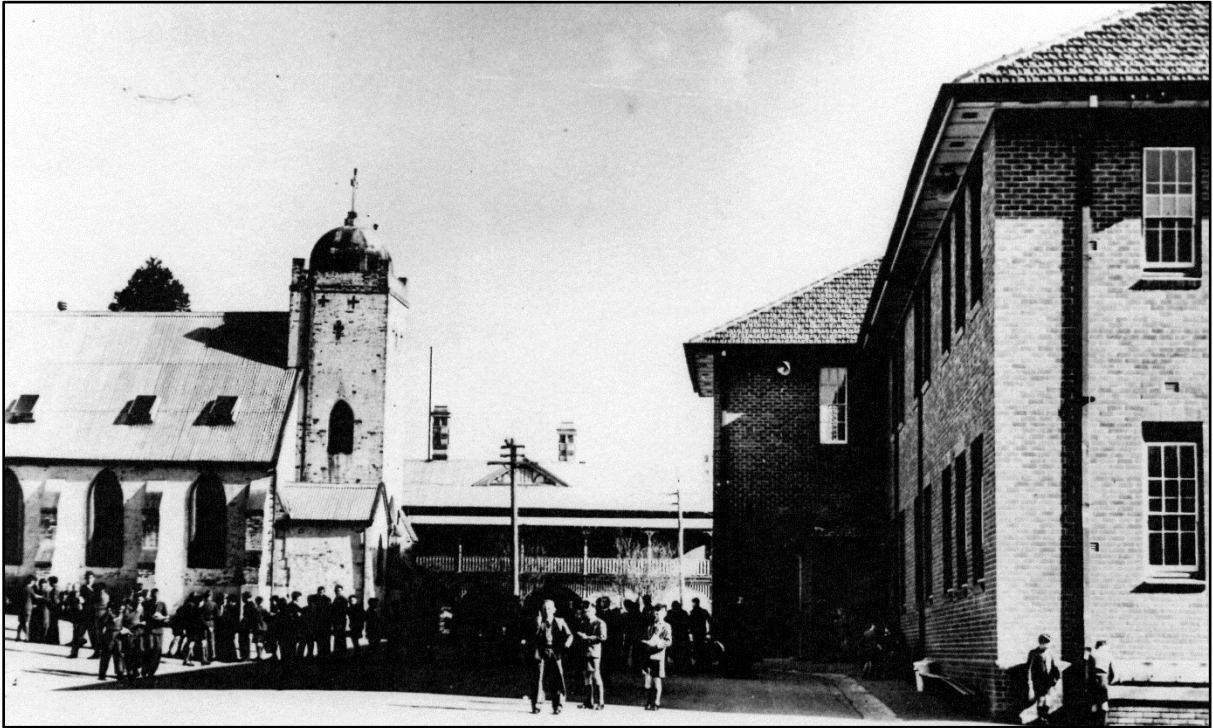
*Other Fittings.* The oxidised silver Sanctuary Railings, Pulpit and Credence Tables were made by Messrs. J. Castle and Sons, of Sydney. The Communion Railing and new seats, which are executed in Queensland maple, were made by Mr. Gust, of Temora, and Mr. W. Lowe of Wagga. The large bell, which has been installed in the tower and which weighs about 24 cwt., was made by Mr. Matthew O'Byrne, of Dublin, Ireland, and is a gift, from Dr. Dwyer to the Cathedral."



**Above:** The Roman Catholic Church at Wagga Wagga c.1878.



**Left:** Another photo of the first St Michael's Church.



**Above:** The original St Michael's Church on the left, with the Catholic Presbytery in the background (on the other side of Church Street). This first St Michael's stood to the north of St John's Church on the southern boundary of allotment 2, section 43.

The total cost of the 1922-1925 works was some £35,000.<sup>188</sup>

In the early part of 1965 the original church was demolished,<sup>189</sup> and was replaced by a new wing of the Christian Brothers' College. The demolition process commenced on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 1965.<sup>190</sup>

By June 1965 the original church had been replaced with a block of school rooms [Wagga Christian Brothers' High School] and the students moved into the new building in the first week of this month.<sup>191</sup>

Around 2009 new home units were erected on the site.

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<sup>188</sup> Daily Advertiser. 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1925, p6.

<sup>189</sup> Daily Advertiser. 12<sup>th</sup> February 1965.

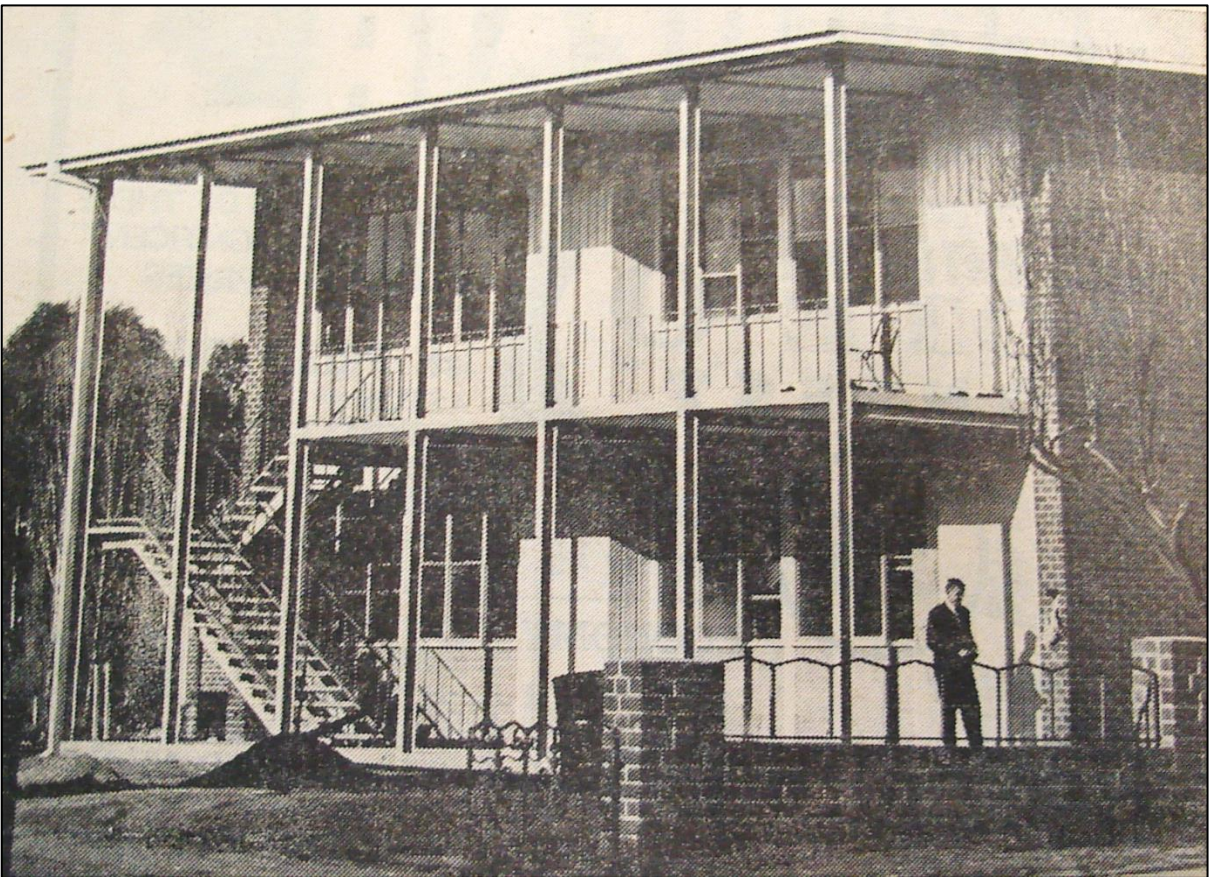
<sup>190</sup> Daily Advertiser. 8<sup>th</sup> February 1965, p3.

<sup>191</sup> Daily Advertiser. 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1965, p3.

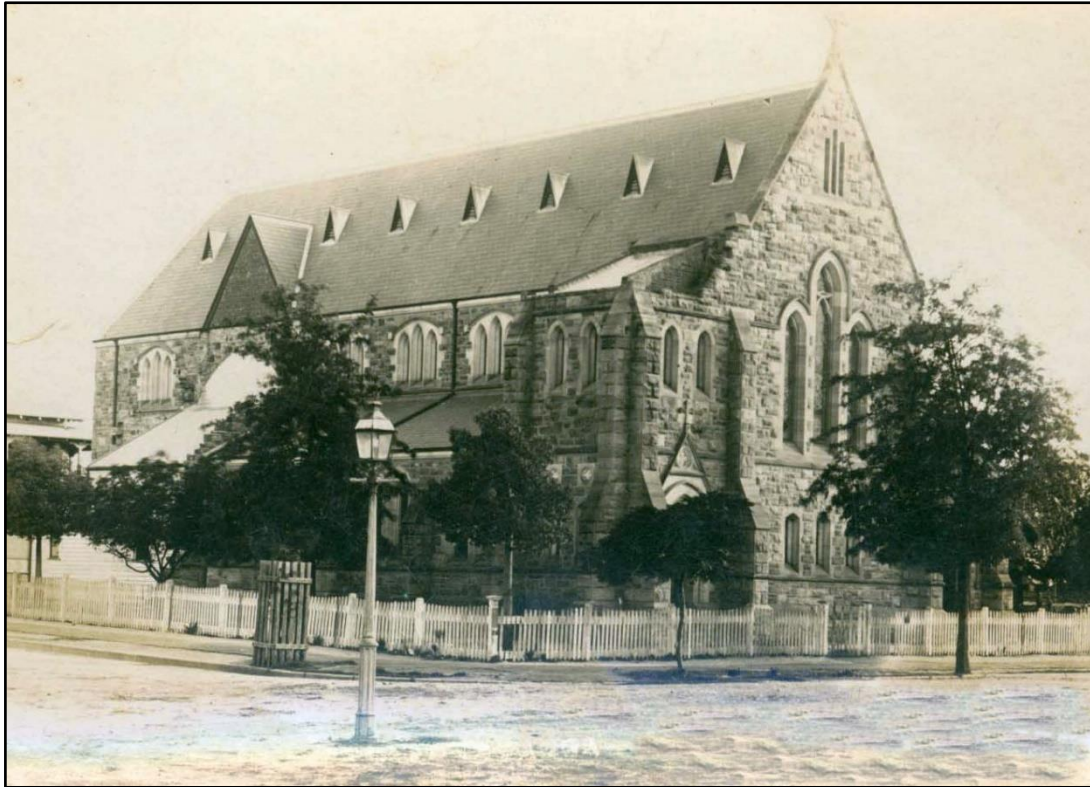




**Above:** The original St Michael's Church in the 1960's – centre, with St John's in the background at right. Courtesy John Hannan (Lost Wagga Wagga)



**Above:** The new school building that stood on the site of the original St Michael's Church



**Above:** An early photo of St Michaels Church with street lamp in foreground. Courtesy the Museum of the Riverina [BGS2007-252/2].



**Above:** St Michaels Church c.1930's. Courtesy Museum of the Riverina. [BGS.2002-446f]



**Above:** St Michael's Church c.1936, viewed from the west, with the monastery in the background, on the left. Courtesy Museum of the Riverina. [BGS.2003-9j]



**Above:** St Michael's Church in the 1990's. Courtesy Museum of the Riverina. [BGS.2008-1442]

## The Monastery



**Above:** The Roman Catholic Monastery [as originally constructed] at the corner of Church and Johnston Streets, on allotment 2, section 43. Courtesy Museum of the Riverina. [BGS.2009-672].

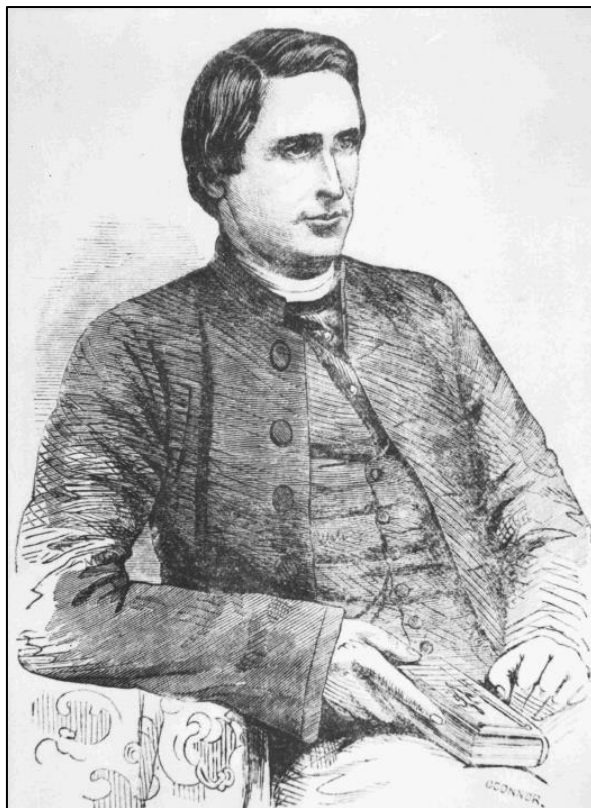


**Above:** The Monastery in 2019 – now part of the Baptist Care Watermark retirement village at 14-20 Church Street.

Construction of the Roman Catholic Monastery, at the corner of Church & Johnston Streets commenced in May 1913, with the laying of a foundation stone, by Bishop Gallagher. The monastery was built in order to house the Christian Brothers who were about to take charge of the Catholic Boys school, in 1914. The rector at that time was Monsignor Buckley. The two storey building was estimated to cost some £3,000.<sup>192</sup>

The brick building was designed by WJ Monks, and the contractor was Charles Hardy & Co., who had quoted £2,616 for their works.<sup>193</sup>

The Christian Brothers were able to move into the new building in January 1914, ready for the commencement of the new school year, but the building was not yet fully completed.<sup>194</sup> The official opening of the monastery took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1914, by the Bishop of Goulburn, the Right Rev. Dr Gallagher. Total expenditure on the new complex had, at this stage, reached £4,520.



**Above Left:** The Rev. Dr Patrick Bermingham.

**Above Right:** The Rev. Michael McAlroy

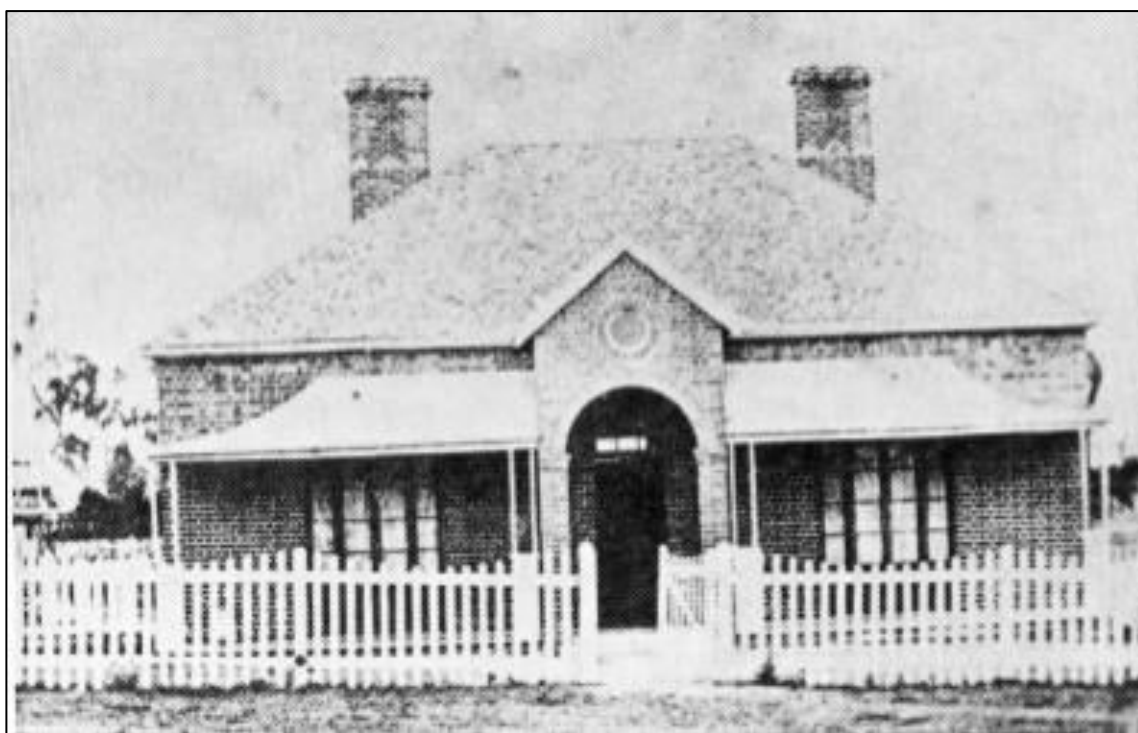
Both sketches by Dr Morgan O'Connor. Courtesy "Memories of Yass Mission. Sesquicentenary 1838-1988." Rev. Brian Maher.

<sup>192</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 13<sup>th</sup> May 1913, p2..

<sup>193</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 13<sup>th</sup> September 1913, p2.

<sup>194</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 20<sup>th</sup> January 1914, p2.

## The Presbytery



**Above:** The Roman Catholic Presbytery c.1871.<sup>195</sup>

The first Catholic Presbytery was constructed in 1866. In February of that year tenders were sought for the construction of a four roomed cottage, with separate kitchen and servant's room. The advertisement was placed by Bobby Higgins [licensee of the Australian hotel] and John Cox. Plans and specifications could be inspected at the Australian hotel.<sup>196</sup> Construction was well underway by May [1866].<sup>197</sup> No further references could be found regarding the completion of the building, but it is assumed the Presbytery was completed in either 1866 or 1867. In 1872 tenders were sought for the erection of a stable and a coach house at the Catholic Presbytery.<sup>198</sup>

In November 1875 there was a Presbytery at Newtown, where members of St Michael's congregation made a presentation to the Rev. Dr Bermingham.<sup>199</sup> The premises were too small for the sixty people that turned up, and they were compelled to relocate to a room in the Royal hotel.

In 1900 plans were formulated for construction of a new Presbytery. The initial concept was for the building to be erected at the corner of Johnston and Church Streets [opposite St Michael's church], next to what was then St Michael's school,<sup>200</sup> but in October 1900 the committee overseeing the project asked the architect, WJ Monks, to advise if it would be possible to add a second storey to the existing building. Monks confirmed that the foundations would support a 2<sup>nd</sup> storey, and the

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<sup>195</sup> See Daily Advertiser. 12<sup>th</sup> October 1938, p12.

<sup>196</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 10<sup>th</sup> February 1866, p3.

<sup>197</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 12<sup>th</sup> May 1866, p1.

<sup>198</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1872, p2.

<sup>199</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 6<sup>th</sup> November 1875, p2.

<sup>200</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 18<sup>th</sup> August 1900, p2.

committee immediately resolved to adopt this option, and to also add a new wing to the existing structure.<sup>201</sup> Costs appears to have been the main influence on the committee's decision.

A description of the proposed new structure read as follows,<sup>202</sup>

*"The present building will remain as far as the rooms are concerned, but the roof will be taken off and another story added. On the ground floor on the side farthest away from the church, there will be a new entrance hall six feet wide leading into a new dining and drawing room with a bay window, and through to the new kitchens and pantries at the back. The dining and drawing room will be divided by a moveable screen, so that if required they can be made into one large room about 30 feet by 17 feet. At the back there will be new pantries, kitchen, scullery and servants' bedroom. On the first floor there will be a library and four additional bedrooms, also a bath room and linen cupboard. A verandah will run all round the present house 10ft. wide, with a balcony over at the level of the first floor. The appearance of the house when finished will be very pleasing. The old part, after being raised by the story, will be roofed similarly to the present building, with the verandah and balcony all round. The addition will be carried up and finished with a timber framed gable and pitched roof, which, together with the bay window, makes a very artistic feature. The architect for the works is Mr. W. J. Monks, of Wagga."*

The foundation stone was laid, on Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup> November [1900], by the Rev. Dr Gallagher.<sup>203</sup> The location of this foundation stone was on the corner, nearest to St Michael's church, of the new verandah running around the old Presbytery.<sup>204</sup>

During the construction of the new Presbytery the Rev. Father Slattery, and his colleagues, were able to stay in the old Presbyterian Manse.<sup>205</sup>

Progress was slow, on this occasion, and it was September 1901 before the tender of Mr J Spies was accepted, for construction of the new Presbytery. Spies quote was for £1,790.<sup>206</sup> Work had commenced by November [1901],<sup>207</sup> but despite a time frame being set of five months, the project was still just short of completion in September 1902. The local press provided the following description of the building at this latter time,<sup>208</sup>

*"The building is situated between St. Michael's Church and the Presbyterian manse, and although it still requires the finishing touches, it has the appearance of being a pretentious residence of modern pattern, and of ample dimensions. The roofs are constructed on the latest principle, being what are known in the trade as "overhanging," and the white faces of the rafters show out particularly well against the background of red brick, the front elevation being very striking because of the intelligent harmony of the whole of the architectural design. The main entrance of the new building opens upon a 6ft. corridor, and to the right the latter communicates with a reception room 15ft. by 15ft., with steel ceilings, nicely colored, the walls being of plaster under paper. On the renovated portion of the original structure a hall divides the rooms on either side, and here, as in the other corridor mentioned, lead lights lend a very pleasing effect to the interior. On this floor there are the following rooms: Front bedroom, 15ft. x 14ft., and back bedroom, 15ft. x 14ft. In the new building, also on the*

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<sup>201</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 18<sup>th</sup> October 1900, p2.

<sup>202</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 1<sup>st</sup> November 1900, p2.

<sup>203</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 13<sup>th</sup> November 1900, p3.

<sup>204</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 10<sup>th</sup> November 1900, p2.

<sup>205</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 27<sup>th</sup> September 1900, p2.

<sup>206</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 24<sup>th</sup> September 1901, p2.

<sup>207</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> November 1901, p2.

<sup>208</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 18<sup>th</sup> September 1902, p2.

ground floor, a beautifully finished dining-room commands the front position, being 29ft. x 16ft., containing two fireplaces with marble mantelpieces. The corridor at the rear opens upon a porch, and from the dining room on either side is a pantry of ample dimensions and of undoubted convenience. The kitchen is likewise well furnished, fitted with the latest improvements in the way of a range and all accessories, the room itself being of the respectable size of 14ft. x 12ft, and off this is a pantry 5ft. x 7ft., further on being a wash-house 12ft. x 10ft., which adjoins the servants' room of similar dimensions. At the rear of the bedroom in the old Presbytery is a storeroom, 10ft. x 10ft. A fine staircase leads to an equally fine landing on the upper floor, the corridor to which is intercepted by a Gothic arch. In the old, but now practically new, portion of the building upstairs, the front bedroom, 15ft. x 21ft. 6in., is fitted with two folding doors of glass; at the rear of it is another bedroom 15ft. x 11ft., and on the same floor is yet another bedroom 15ft. x 15ft. There is here, too, a corridor dividing the two buildings, 6ft wide, with a Gothic arch in the centre, from which a lobby leads to the bathroom. This is furnished with a white enamel bath and basin, and splendidly fitted up. The bedrooms which have been added comprise two 16ft. x 16ft. 4½in; the front one with a bay window. The height of the ceilings on the first floor is 12ft.; and those beneath 12ft. 3in. With one or two exceptions, marble mantelpieces have been placed in the rooms, and the ceilings of the principal rooms are of steel, but the bedroom ceilings are constructed of polished kauri and redwood, and look very artistic. All skirtings, doors and architraves are of oak grained, and with the exception of the corridors, which are tinted grey, the plastered work is colored pink, the walls in the old buildings being, as previously stated, papered. The roofs of the gable and porch are covered with fish scale



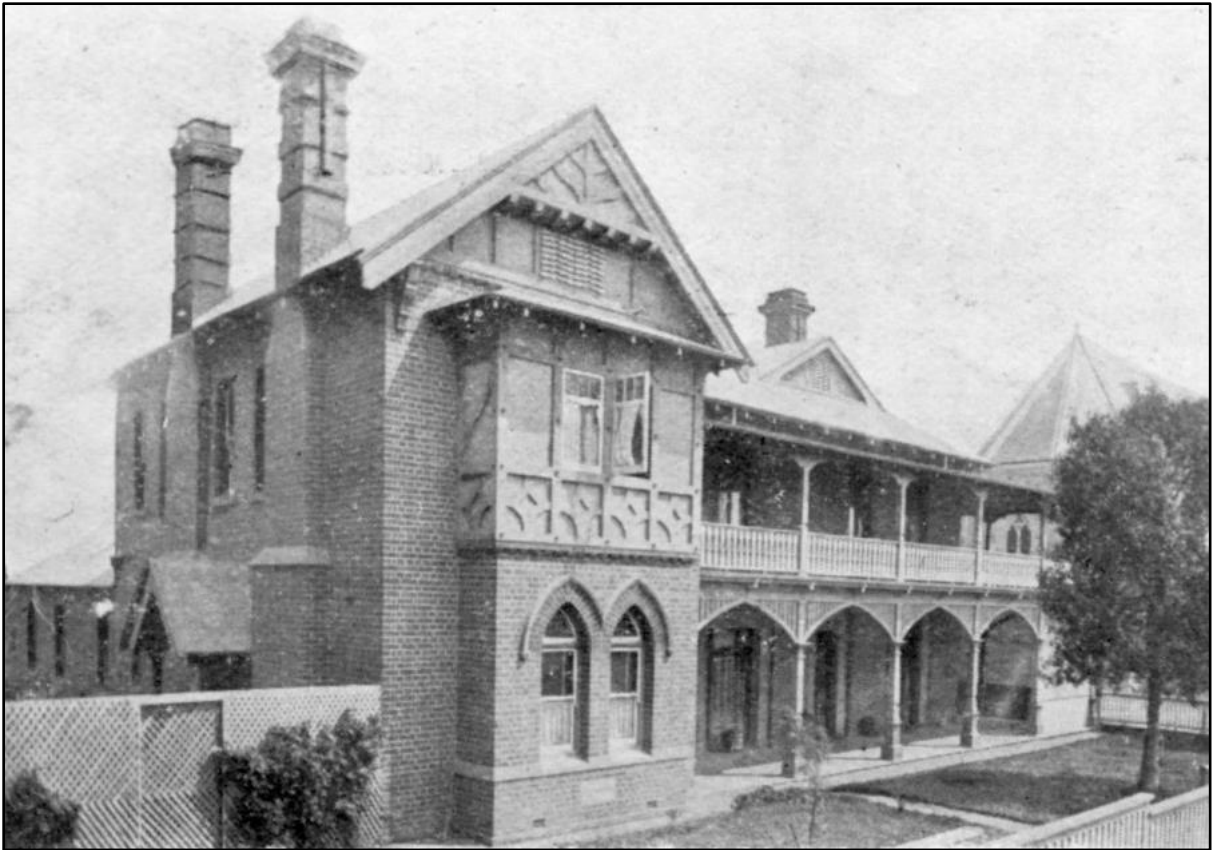
tiles, and on the face of the building some artistic plaster work has been put in, which adds materially to its commanding elevation. A ten-foot balcony and verandah run round three sides of the whole structure. The presbytery will be lighted throughout with gas. The work reflects the highest credit upon the contractor and the architect (Mr. W. J. Monks), and will be sufficiently finished, as far as the interior is concerned to admit of the official opening on the 28th instant; although some of the outside work, it is probable, will still remain unfinished."

The new Presbytery was officially opened on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 1902, by the Right Rev. Dr Gallagher. The final cost of the new Presbytery was in the order of some £2,000.<sup>209</sup>

**Left:** Bishop John Gallagher. Courtesy "Memories of Yass Mission. Sesquicentenary 1838-1988." Rev. Brian Maher.

<sup>209</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> September 1902, p2.





**Above:** The Roman Catholic Presbytery in the early 1900's.

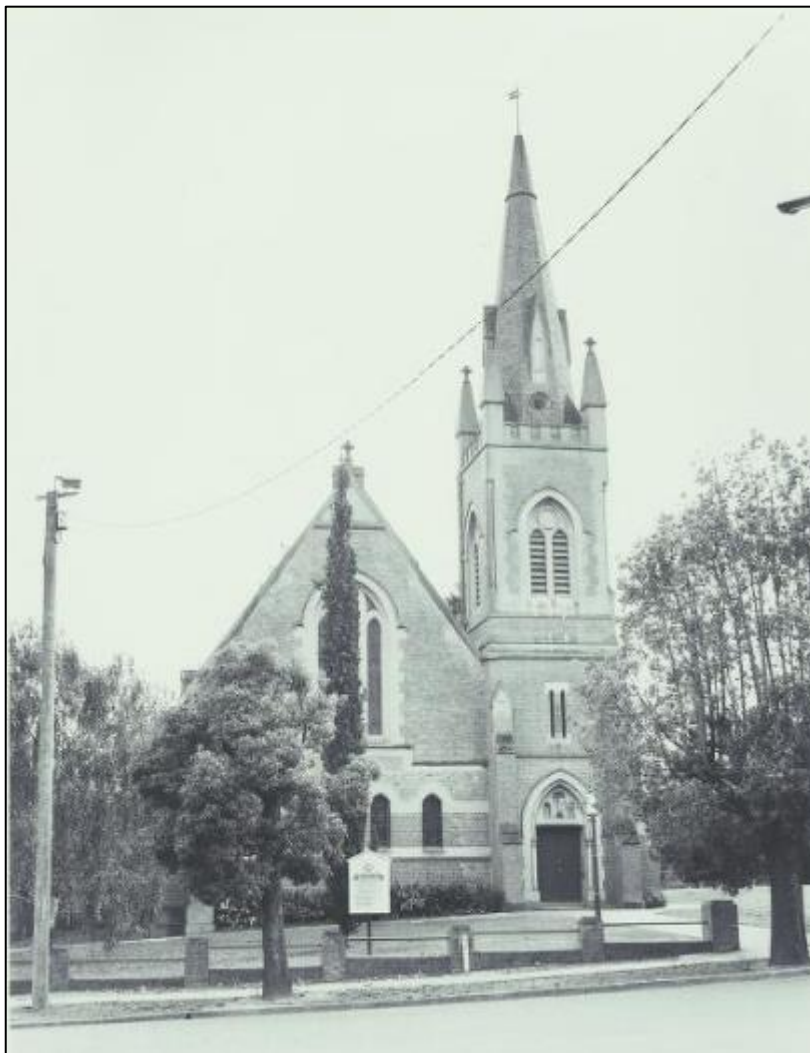


**Above:** The Catholic Presbytery in 2019. Courtesy Google Earth.

## Presbyterian Church – St Andrew’s

St Andrew’s Church is located at the north west corner of Church & Cross Streets. As early as March 1869 the local Presbyterians were considering plans and specifications provided by Mr Paterson, the Inspector of Public Buildings.<sup>210</sup> Tenders were called for towards the end of May 1869.<sup>211</sup> The tenders of John McIntosh and Thomas Hodson, totalling an amount of £1,140 were accepted in September 1869.<sup>212</sup> The foundation stone was laid on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 1869, by the Chief Justice of NSW, Sir Alfred Stephen, who was presented with an engraved silver trowel and mallet, by the then minister, the Rev. Thomas Craig, to commemorate the occasion.<sup>213</sup>

No progress reports on the construction of the church could be found until October 1870, when it was reported that the new church was almost completed, and it was expected to be opened on the 13<sup>th</sup> November.<sup>214</sup> In the years preceding this, services were commonly held in the court house. The



opening was delayed for several weeks, but was, finally, officially opened on Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1870, by the Rev. Falconer. The interior of the church was not quite finished.<sup>215</sup>

One source claims the church was officially opened by the Rev. Dunmore Lang in 1872,<sup>216</sup> but no reference could be found to such an event, and it appears to be a false claim. Lang visited Wagga Wagga, in 1873, and gave several sermons in St Andrew’s, and gave an account of his visit,<sup>217</sup> in which he made no reference to having opened the church.

**Left:** St Andrew’s Church. Courtesy NSW State Library. Grant Ellmers Collection [PIC box P1444]

<sup>210</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 6<sup>th</sup> March 1869, p2.

<sup>211</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 26<sup>th</sup> June 1869, p2. / 30<sup>th</sup> June 1869, p4.

<sup>212</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 8<sup>th</sup> September 1869, p2.

<sup>213</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 9<sup>th</sup> October 1869, p2.

<sup>214</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 15<sup>th</sup> October 1870, p2.

<sup>215</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 30<sup>th</sup> November 1870, p2.

<sup>216</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1938, p5.

<sup>217</sup> Burrangong Argus. 21<sup>st</sup> February 1874, p4.



**Above & Below:** St Andrew's church before the addition of the tower and spire.



In September 1914 plans were finalised for additions and renovations to St Andrews. A brief description read as follows,<sup>218</sup>

*“The intended alterations show a new transept facing the east, a church tower and spire in front, and new windows and ventilators. The interior improvements include extra seating space, new choir and pulpit accommodation, and a new vestry. A Church Hall is also to be built, the main room to be 56ft by 29ft. This will be subdivided into class rooms. A porch and cloak room will be the front portion, and at the rear kitchen requirements will be allotted special space. The estimated cost of these improvements is about £3,000.”*

The foundation stone for the new hall was laid on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1915. It was located at the front of the hall, and the ceremony was performed by Mrs Alexander McVean, of Koorungal. A description of the hall read as follows,<sup>219</sup>

*“The hall is being built by Messrs. C. Hardy and Co., under the architectural direction of Mr. E. Giles. The building is of brick, with iron roof, and includes a main hall 55 feet long by 29 feet wide, with a platform 14 feet by 15 feet, and. class rooms on either side 10ft. by 14ft. A library room 12ft. by 13ft. is to be erected in front of the hall, with a porch 10ft. by 4ft on each side. The present contract docs not provide for the front portion of the building, but it is agreed by the contractors that it may be added to the main work before its completion, at an extra cost of approximately £225, if the church committee can see their way clear to finance it. The hall contract is for £1259. Seating accommodation will be provided for about 400 people. The hall is to be well ventilated, with vents in the ceiling, and windows in each side wall, to open outward.”*

It is believed that the modifications to St Andrew’s were completed by August 1916, at which time the church was officially reopened by the Moderator of the State Assembly, the Rev. James Goudie, of Boorawa [sic], on Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> of August.<sup>220</sup>

A contemporary description of the church provides the following details,

*“St Andrew's Presbyterian Church was constructed in about 1890 and is designed in Victorian Academic Gothic style and is built of brick and sandstone. The Original Foundation stone was laid on 6 October 1869 by Sir Alfred Steven Chief Justice of New South Wales. The steep, gabled roof is clad with slate. St Andrew's has a landmark tower with an octagonal spire and smaller spires on the corners of the top of the tower; a castellated parapet runs between these spires, and lower down the tower columns are set into the tower's corners. Windows are of the pointed arch type and have label moulds. The end walls of the nave are of parapetted gable form, and in at least one of these there is a triple window with stained glass. The entrance in the base of the tower is of pointed arch form and there are columns set into the sides of the arch. In keeping with the Gothic style, the church has buttresses. First organ was built in 1908 by George Smith, while the present organ was built in 1961 by George. Fincham & Sons incorporating some pipework from the previous organ.”*

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<sup>218</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 1<sup>st</sup> October 1914, p2.

<sup>219</sup> Daily Advertiser. 4<sup>th</sup> March 1915, p3.

<sup>220</sup> Daily Advertiser. 19<sup>th</sup> August 1916, p5.



**Above:** St Andrew's Church. Courtesy John Fowler [Flicker].



**Above:** An early photo of the interior of St Andrew's church.

## Presbyterian Manse

Fundraising for the manse commenced in the 1880's, but it was August 1890 before architects had been appointed, and same sought tenders for the construction of the manse. The architects were Barlow & Chandler, of Melbourne.<sup>221</sup> The contractor was Charles Hardy & Co., and the works were to be supervised by local architect, George Sheppard. The following brief details of the building were provided,<sup>222</sup>

*“Provision has been made in the plans of the building for the following accommodation on the ground floor — dining room, drawing-room, study, kitchen, servant's room, and lavatory; on the first floor four bedrooms and a bathroom. The Manse will be fitted with electric bells and Venetian blinds. On the brick work a new feature will be introduced, as the walls will be constructed on the hollow wall principle.”*

The laying of the foundation [corner] stone took place on Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1890. The manse, a two storey brick building, was to be located immediately to the rear of St Andrew's, facing onto Church Street. The contractor's quote was for the sum of £1,025. A bottle containing some coins and several newspapers, was placed under the stone, which was laid by Mrs Henry Baylis. The latter was presented with a silver trowel and mallet, in recognition of the event.<sup>223</sup> The incumbent minister was the Rev. J McIntyre, and he was subsequently the first minister to inhabit the manse.

A more detailed account of the manse building appeared in the local press, in November 1890,<sup>224</sup>

*“The building, which will be of two stories, will have a frontage of 41ft to Church-street, with a projecting gable on the left side containing two lights on each floor. The right hand portion will contain a verandah with balcony overhead. The ground floor will consist of drawing-room 13ft 6in by 17ft 6in; hall, 5ft 6in wide; dining-room, 14ft by 16ft 6in; study at the rear of drawing-room, 13ft by 13ft 6in; stairway hall, 10ft 6in by 13ft 6in, with pantry and stores at rear of dining room. The back portion consists of kitchen 14ft 3in by 12ft, fitted with modern appliances; servant's room, wash-house, and steps leading to the rear from the passage. Under the staircase is a convenient cellaret. On the upper floor, over the drawing-room is a bedroom of the same as the last named, viz, 13ft 6in by 17ft 6in; a bedroom over the dining-room 12ft by 14ft 3in, a bath room with French windows opening to the balcony. No. 3 bedroom over the study 13ft by 13ft, and No. 4 bedroom 14ft 3in by 9ft. The windows of the rooms leading to the verandah and balcony, with the exception of the bath room, will reach nearly to the floor. The front of the premises will be finished with neat cement dressing, and produce a good effect when compared with the red brickwork. The gable end has heavy projections, and will form quite a feature of the building. The kitchen offices will be of weatherboard. The construction of the building is novel to Wagga, the outer walls being hollow. These will be constructed of two thicknesses of brickwork, with a space of two inches between, bound together by galvanised iron ties. This arrangement will keep the building cool and free from damp. The contractors, Messrs. C. Hardy and Co., expect to have the building, which will be fitted with the latest appliances, ready for occupation in about seven months.”*

No reference could be found to an official opening of the manse, or to its completion, but the Rev. McIntyre was living in the manse by July 1891,<sup>225</sup> and it is assumed the building was completed in May or June of that year.

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<sup>221</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 28<sup>th</sup> August 1890, p3.

<sup>222</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 28<sup>th</sup> October 1890, p2.

<sup>223</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1890, p2.

<sup>224</sup> Wagga Wagga Express. 25<sup>th</sup> November 1890, p2.

<sup>225</sup> Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 25<sup>th</sup> July 1891, p2.



**Above:** St Andrew's Presbyterian Manse. Courtesy NSW State Library. Grant Ellmers Collection [PIC box P1444]



**Above:** The Presbyterian Manse in 2019. Courtesy Google Earth.







Townsend's December 1859 plan of the area designated The Bend.