

THE CSU Regional Archives will be extending its opening hours to include the first Saturday of every month. On these days, the archives will be open from 10am to 3pm. The next Saturday opening will be March 5. This trial initiative has been put in place to cater for those researchers who are unable to visit the archives during normal business hours. It is hoped enough researchers and visitors will avail themselves of this service to warrant it becoming a permanent opening.



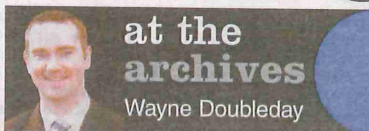
The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh walking around Robertson Oval (CSURA Collection RW43/39).

Children lift Queen's spirit during her Wagga visit

Our greatest day

what you need to know

The CSU Regional Archives are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building on South Campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue. Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with enquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straight-forward enquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour including copying and postage. For further information, phone 02 6925 3666, email archive@csu.edu.au, or visit our website at www.csu.edu.au/research/archives for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.



at the archives
Wayne Doubleday

One of the most fondly remembered highlights of the Royal Visit to Wagga on February 13, 1954, was the huge number of schoolchildren who were assembled to see the Queen and Duke. However, the event did not go completely as scheduled, with the high temperature causing problems. Understandably, many of the children, who had been lining up for hours, struggled with the heat.

The newspapers reported that, "The children began fainting by the score soon after they assembled. At one stage, stretcher bearers were carrying two and three on each stretcher."

The headline on the front page of the *Sunday Telegraph* the next day read "500 children collapse while awaiting the Queen."

After leaving the Wagga Showground, the royal procession moved to Bolton Park and Robertson Oval, where some 15,000 schoolchildren from 240 schools throughout the Riverina had assembled.

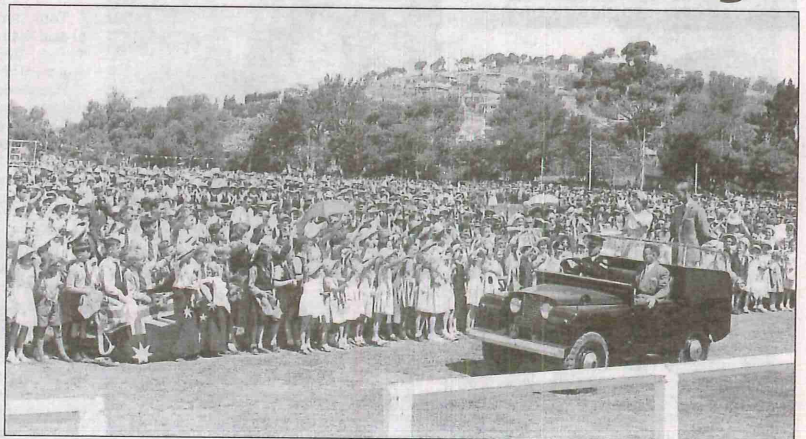
Some of the children had travelled up to 200 miles to see the Queen.

The children started cheering as soon as the Queen came within sight of the oval, and did not stop until she left (except for when the Queen addressed the children from the dais).

The 2100 schoolchildren from Wagga who were dressed in red, white and blue were moved into formation to form a huge Union Jack flag in the centre of the oval.

"As the Queen turned to face the children from the dais, the 'flag' children leapt to their feet, screaming their welcome and flourishing red, white and blue 'wavers' on their arms. The whole centre of the oval became a surging mass of waving, brilliant colour. The noise of the cheering was deafening... The Queen looked tired and drawn as she entered the ground. But she was visibly affected by the welcome and she smiled happily to the children."

After the Queen addressed the children and



The Queen and Duke are driven around Robertson Oval to meet the assembled children. (CSURA Collection RW43/39).

thanked them for their warm welcome, the children sang *Elizabeth of England*.

A leading radio commentator who had covered the entire royal tour throughout NSW, remarked that the song was the "... most moving moment of the tour".

In a wonderful gesture from the Queen, she ordered her driver to complete two laps around Robertson Oval instead of the scheduled one, so that more of the children would be able to see her.

The allotted time for the visit to Bolton Park was 12 minutes. However, the extra lap meant the couple was five minutes late leaving the oval.

Adults had been prohibited from entering the grounds of Bolton Park and Robertson Oval, however, several hundred who forced their way in were removed by police, so the royal car could exit the oval easily.

Others lined the fences and took up vantage posts in the bowling and croquet lawns, buildings and even on the diving boards at the city baths.

Police also found themselves busy long after the Queen and Duke had left Wagga, with large numbers of lost children being reported.

Officers were kept busy well into the evening entertaining and amusing lost children at the

station, while also answering numerous phone calls from concerned parents.

Not to mention the 20 minor car accidents which occurred in the heaviest traffic Wagga had ever seen.

This historic day was also one to remember for newspapers and communication in Australia.

A picture of the Timbery family presenting the Queen with a boomerang at the Wagga Showground was the first to be transmitted by radio inside Australia.

It was sent by short-wave radio on the *Sunday Telegraph's* portable picture transmitting unit direct from Wagga to the newspaper's office in Sydney.

The picture appeared on Page 8 of the *Sunday Telegraph* on February 14, 1954.

Special thanks to Chris Griffiths for supplying reference material.

References: *Riverina Royal Visit - Wagga Wagga* - February 13, 1954 brochure (CSU Wagga Campus Library - WS390/A1/2/pamphlet); *The Royal Tour of Australia and New Zealand, 1953-54; The Land*, February 19, 1954, p.2; *Sunday Telegraph*, February 14, 1954, pp. 1-8; *The Daily Advertiser*, February 14, 1954, pp. 1-10.