

What you should know

■ The CSU Regional Archives is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building at the South Campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue.

■ Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with enquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straightforward enquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour, including copying and postage.

■ For further information, phone 6925 3666, email archive@csu.edu.au or visit the website at www.csu.edu.au/research/archives for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.



Xmas revisited

A look at Christmas past in Wagga

at the archives
Wayne Doubleday

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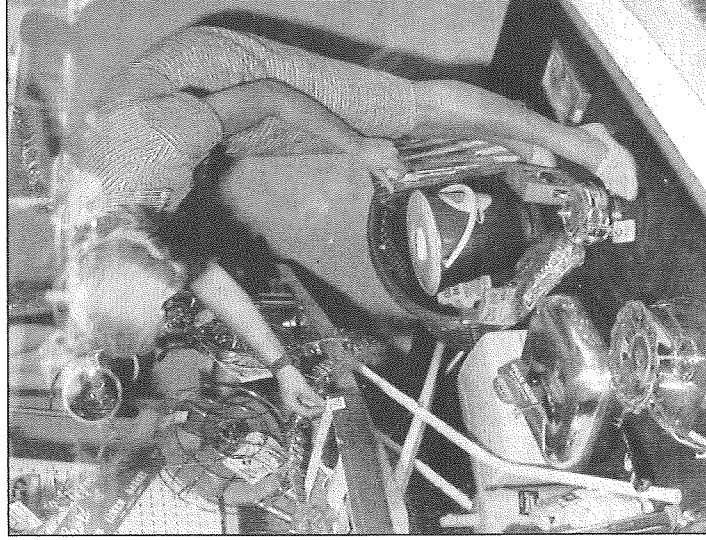
hen you think of Christmas' of the past, what do you think of? Do you think of hot days spent with your family decorating trees, wrapping and unwrapping presents, and singing Christmas carols?

Perhaps you become a little nostalgic when you reflect on the good old days when the Christmas season was a time concerned only with celebration and spreading cheer and goodwill?

You might feel a certain regret because Christmas has just become another opportunity for retailers to make more money.

If you take a look at the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* in December 1908 – 100 years ago – Wagga was very much aware of the commercial advantages to the Christmas season.

The classifieds are full of advertisements, such as:
"A. Morgans: A Choice Selection of Christmas Presents. Call and Inspect Morgan's High-Class Stock of Christmas Novelties."
"Have you got your Christmas Poultry? If not, take a drive to C. Annison's; he can supply you."
"Order your suit early for Christmas, and save disappointment. Large Stock just arrived. H. Oats, Tailor, Gurwood Street."
Some of the larger stores such as David



Jones and Hunters' on the Hill bought immense spaces on the page to wish their patrons a Merry Christmas and to encourage them to visit.

Fifty years on, Christmas 1958, the holiday season was in full swing.

The newspapers are full of businesses vying for the public's attention and declaring the attractiveness of their wares as Christmas presents.

David Jones "the store of the Christmas spirit", had glamorous sheer nylons, special Hollandia denim slippers, fine grass linen

handkerchiefs and lint-free tea towels "in many gay designs for Christmas giving" for her.

For him, they had:
"Rhodia ties, handmade in Italy, in many really handsome designs."
"St. James stretchy nylon socks, rib knit in the patterns men like."

"My Fair Lady 12? Coronet Record, The Original Broadway Cast, this is something any man would like."
"50 Craven A cigarettes, Christmas pack, sure to be welcomed."

M Rava and Co., the electrical appliance specialists, advertised their Kelvinator fridges, their Pope washers "in glorious pastel colours" and the "Sunbeam automatic toaster – toast without waiting" as "gifts that last".

The front page of *The Daily Advertiser* on December 23, 1958, announced there were only two shopping days until Christmas. The headline exclaimed, "Tempo of Christmas Shopping Quickens as 'C' Day Draws Near".

"The Christmas shopping spree in Wagga reached its highest peak to date on Saturday when hundreds of people crowded city stores in the biggest Christmas rush for many years."

One of the front page articles of the Christmas Eve edition declared, "Church Leaders Urge that Purpose of Christmas be Realised."

The article stated: "Wagga church leaders yesterday appealed to the public through their Christmas messages to put realisation back into Christmas, and to investigate and appreciate fully the title of the festive period." How much has Christmas really changed over the last 100 years?

■ **References:** *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* 22/12/1908, 22/12/1958, 23/12/1958, 24/12/1958; photos from Tom Lennon collection (RW1574).

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