

What you should know

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■ 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.

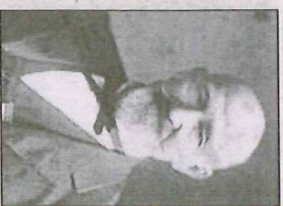
BAYLIS STREET

What's in a name?



at the archives
Wayne Doubleday

Wagga's main street, Baylis Street, which extends from the railway station to the Wollundry Lagoon Bridge, was named after one of Wagga's most prominent early citizens, Henry Baylis (1826-1905). Baylis was born in Edinburg, Scotland and arrived in Sydney with his family aboard the *Edinburgh Castle* in 1831. On January 1, 1856 he was appointed as the first police magistrate for the police district of Wagga.



Henry Baylis (1826-1905).
Image: Museum of the Riverina

There were two memorable events in Baylis's career. In August 1863, he was travelling to Urana when he was

accosted by the bushrangers, Daniel "Mad Dog" Morgan and his associate Clarke. When it was found that Baylis had very little of value, the bushrangers allowed him to continue, with the suggestion that he forget the incident. A few days later Baylis returned with police and found the bushrangers' camp, where shots were exchanged resulting in Clarke and Baylis both being injured. It appears Morgan was uninjured, while it is believed Clarke died of his wounds. Even though Baylis suffered the

rest of his life as a result of the shoulder injury that he sustained, he wore the actual bullet on his watch chain to remind him of his close encounter with the bushrangers.

This bullet, believed to have been made in a clay mould, can be viewed at the Museum of the Riverina, along with the medal Baylis received for his actions. (For a more detailed account of this incident please visit the Museum of the Riverina website: www.wagga.nsw.gov.au/wuw/html/741-museum-home.asp.)

The second incident occurred when William Halliday, owner of Brookong Station, asked Baylis to mediate between the Pastoralists and the Shearers' Unions in 1888. A large number of unionists tried to prevent William Halliday from hiring non-union shearers. Baylis read the "riot act" and the situation was diffused, with the conviction and imprisonment of several shearers.

Henry Baylis contributed an enormous amount of time and enthusiasm to the development of

Wagga. In 1856, he was instrumental in getting help from the National Board of Education for establishing a national school in Wagga. On June 21, 1859 he laid the foundation stone of St John's Church of England (now an Anglican church).

He was also a founder of the Murrumbidgee Turf Club and a member of the Murrumbidgee Pastoral Association. His civic pride and service to the people of Wagga ensured he was highly respected throughout the entire district.

After 38 years as police magistrate, Henry Baylis retired in July 1896 and went to reside in Sydney. He had reared a family of eight sons and one daughter in his family home known as "Goonguil", which is now the site of the Wagga RSL Club. Henry Baylis died on July 5, 1905 after he was accidentally hit by a train while walking across the railway tracks at Homebush. His wife, Sybella, predeceased him.

Modern mill puts Wagga on map

One of the most valuable and productive industries that contributed to the prosperity of Wagga and district was the Murrumbidgee Milling Co-operative Limited, also known as the Murrumbidgee Milling Company Limited.

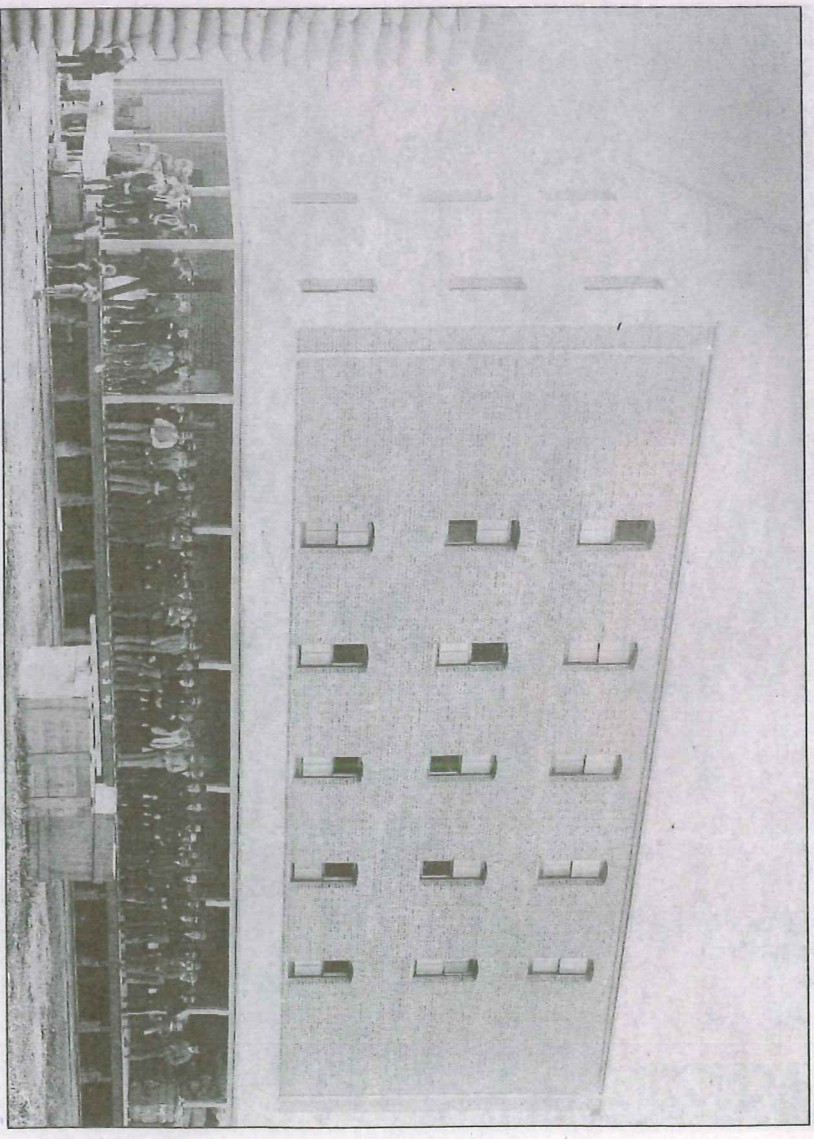
The country surrounding Wagga was used primarily for pastoral and grazing pursuits until the 1880s, when there was a considerable amount of land being selected for the production of wheat. Although flour had been milled in Wagga for more than 20 years, there was a need for a modern mill to be established. The object of its inception was to obtain a fair price for the farmers' wheat instead of prices being fixed by the store-keepers. The employment of the mill would provide was also of major importance to the growing township.

On February 16, 1889 a meeting was held at Monk's Pastoral Hotel which attracted a large number of interested people, with the farming community especially well represented. Mr AT Bolton was elected to chair the meeting, R Cox, AT Bolton, JD Norman, R McIntyre, A Smith and JJ Peadon were elected provisional directors. These directors only held office for the purpose of drawing up and advertising the prospectus, and to co-ordinate the allocation of shares.

A general meeting of the shareholders was held at the Oddfellows Hall on August 17, 1889, and a ballot resulted in the election of Messrs Cox, Peadon, Norman, Bolton, Smith and Davis as directors to manage the company. A suitable site was acquired near the railway line and advertisements for tenders for the erection of the mill were circulated in Sydney and Melbourne newspapers.

Consultation then took place with the well-known NSW Railway's Engineer, Mr Norman Selfe, resulting in Messrs Thomas Robinson & Son Ltd, of Sydney and Rochdale, England being chosen for the erection of plant and machinery. Mr Charles Hardy Senior was successful in his tender for the mill buildings, which were erected under the supervision of Mr Sheppard. The architect for the company's office was Mr WJ Monks.

Only 18 months after the initial meeting, the mill was in operation. The opening took place on June 28, 1890 with about 200 gentlemen assembled at the mill for an inspection of the premises. A week later the mill commenced



Murrumbidgee Milling Co-operative Limited circa 1890. (CSU Regional Archives collection RW1032).

functioning and was capable of producing 2160 bags of flour per week. It was considered to be as "complete as any in the world", and became one of the largest milling companies in provincial NSW.

The trade name "Wagga Lily Flour" was adopted and was soon sought after for household use and by the larger baking firms. Vast quantities of flour were exported to many countries including the European continent, South Africa and Egypt. The excellence and quality of the flour from the Wagga mill was soon widely recognised, and the company gained the gold medal diploma at the Franco-British Exhibition that was held in London in 1908. This was just one of its many achievements. In the 1890s, it was hoped the mill would be a

successful and enduring enterprise, although throughout the many years of operation there were times of financial hardship with high debt. These troubled times, especially in the 1930s during the Great Depression, were overcome with effective management. Unfortunately, like many other flour mills, the Murrumbidgee Milling Company fell to the industry problems of the 1980s and was taken over by Goodman Fielder in 1987.

Today, as we drive down Edward Street, we can see the remains of the Murrumbidgee Milling Company site being redeveloped. For readers interested in learning more about the day-to-day working of the mill, the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* May 23, 1893 and March 21, 1895 have descriptive articles relating to the operation of the mill.

References

- The Street Names of Wagga Wagga compiled by William R Ellis, 1990. A History of Wagga Wagga by Keith Swan, 1970. Wagga Wagga – A History by Sherry Morris, 1999. Australian Dictionary of Biography Vol.3, General Editor Douglas Pike, 1969; CSU Regional Archives Collection, RW1723 – David Denholm Papers) The Daily Advertiser, February 19, 1889, August 20, 1889 and July 1 1890. Back to Wagga souvenir booklet, 1927; CSU Regional Archives collection RW1032 – Murrumbidgee Milling Company Limited).