

Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.

'Dumaresq Chambers', Corner Faulkner St and Cinders Lane, Armidale
PO Box 692, Armidale, NSW, 2350
Website: <http://adhs.org.au>
E-mail – contact@adhs.org.au

President.....	Judy Grieve	6775 1205	Newsletter Editors *Judy Grieve
Secretary.....	Robyn Curry	6772 4700	Mick Reed
Treasurer.....	John Burrell		Ruth Thomas

Newsletter for October 2019

And so we come to the final meeting for 2019 on **Tuesday, 15th October, 7.30pm at 'Dumaresq Chambers'**. The Society came into being in November 1959 and, as we always endeavour to have something special for our 'end of year' meeting. This meeting will celebrate the Society's 60th birthday with

'How things were in the late 1950s'.

This includes a short production, a fashion parade, music of the 50s, and a slide display of of Armidale as it was then. Members are welcome to come in 50s styles and add to the memories. A 50s style supper and a Birthday Cake to follow.

Excursion: Revised date for the bus excursion to visit Hillgrove and Metz is **Saturday, 30th November**

Bus departs the Visitors Centre at 8.30am headed for Hillgrove to visit the village. For morning tea we will have the use of the facilities at the Hillgrove Hall, then visit the Museum and Cemetery. Chinaman's Gully Road to Echidna Gully for lunch, then on to Metz. Here the Hanlon brothers, Dick and Peter will give us an insight into the village as they knew it. Ros Townsend and the late Pat O'Connor's history, photos and records of Metz will be available. **Cost is \$40 (bus and refreshments)**. Book at the October meeting, e-mail or 6775 1205.

Lamb and Beef Taste Testing: Please put your name forward (**e-mail, phone or call in**) to participate in this project at UNE for an hour between 2.30 and 5.30 on **Friday, 29th November**. The Society gains \$1000 if we provide 60 participants (over 18 years of age) that afternoon – the tasting is conducted in groups of 20 from 2.30pm, each group required for one hour

A Trip Down Memory Lane: Topics for October Meetings each decade.

1969: Dr K. Pinson – An illustrated talk and display of Clocks.

1979: Professors J. Belshaw and P. Barratt – Reminiscences of the History of the University of New England (held at 'Booluminbah').

1989: Stephen Gow, Antony Deakin, Dr Lionel Gilbert – The Changing Face of Armidale's Historical Landscape.

1999: Mrs Anne Harris – Old Stations on the Gwydir

2009: Jillian Oppenheimer – The Early Settlement of 'Saumarez'

Snippets of History: With a very early fire season upon us this year, bushfires have become a major risk. Armidale and most country towns experienced serious fires in home and main business centres in past years, when most buildings were weatherboard, often lined with calico and fire used for heating, lighting and cooking. Water was not under mains pressure and the efficiency of fire fighting services poorly developed. There have been three major fires in the Armidale CBD – 1887, 1889 and the Braund Store fire in 1932.

On 14th March 1887, a small fire was accidentally started in the bedroom at the rear of Mr and Mrs Arthur Dusautoy's fruit shop. It was extinguished and the ceiling and shingles later checked and further water applied. The inmates then slept in the front shop until disturbed by calls of 'fire' and the town clock bell ringing. The fire had rekindled and with an easterly wind blowing, threatened the entire northern block between the Court House and Commercial Bank on Dangar street corner. Damaged and/or destroyed were Mrs King's shop and residence to the East and on the West, William Drew's saddlery, Thomas Taylor's tobacco and fancy goods shop, an empty house recently vacated by Mrs King and an empty shop once Kessler's Hardware. Mrs Clarke's millinery and dressmaking was in a brick building which broke the force of the fire, minimising the damage to Friedmann's tobacconist shop, Mr Poole's tailoring business, Mrs Rose's millinery and dressmaker establishment, Trim's saddlery, Love's Bakery, Gawthrop and Bradley's Auctioneer and Stock and Station offices and the Armidale Express Office. A Committee was formed to investigate the best means for providing water for firefighting and a petition put forward to form a fire brigade. A local Fire Brigade Board was formed.

At 3.20am on 11 February 1889 the bell sent out an alarm for a fire which destroyed the Court House Hotel on the SE corner of Faulkner and Beardy Street (replaced by the Imperial Hotel), the adjoining Gray's tailor, Claverie's bootshop, Singer Sewing Machine shop and Corpse's Boarding House. This time positive action was instigated and a Volunteer Fire Brigade was set up, a move made to apply for Government funding, have a fire engine and to use the well at the gas works for firefighting and equip it with a steam pump and piping to service street hydrants. The enthusiasm of the second Fire Captain John Thomas Augustus Webb who took up office in 1890 resulted in training programmes for schools and the first Australian Women's Fire Brigade, under the captaincy of his daughter, Minnie. The first fire engine named 'Jersey' was put into use in February 1891 and in August of that year a display and parade of firefighting skills and equipment was staged. The gas works was Fire Headquarters until 1922 when a two-storey Fire Station in Rusden Street was established until the present Station in Barney Street was built in 1974. The 1932 fire at Braund's on the corner of Beardy and Dangar streets, involved explosives stored behind the main building and the loss of two gallant Firemen, John Robinson and Berry Jones. This horrendous fire has been described in detail in Peter Chambers' article in ADHS Journal 55.