

Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.

'Dumaresq Chambers', Corner Faulkner St and Cinders Lane, Armidale

PO Box 692, Armidale, NSW, 2350

website: adhs.org.au

e-mail: contact@adhs.org.au

President	Judith Grieve 6775 1205	Newsletter Editors	*Judith Grieve
Secretary	Robyn Curry 6772 4700		Ruth Thomas
Treasurer	John Burrell 0438187848		

Newsletter for February 2020

The hot, fire devastated countryside has finally been given a reprieve with recent rains – may rain continue to the rescue the water-deprived environment and restore the untold damage inflicted by drought. It is certainly a better outlook for 2020.

The January joint meeting with the Garden History Group hosting Linden Ashcroft was a most informative but sobering experience re climate facts. There is a huge responsibility on us all to understand the environment and treat it with respect.

The first regular meeting will be held on **Tuesday 18th February at 7.30pm** at 'Dumaresq Chambers when Matthew Tierney will present **Armidale Railway Station Open for Business**, outlining how public expression of the people from 1870 to 2004 brought mainline trains to the Northern Tablelands and kept them running.

We will instigate a \$1a ticket monthly raffle to be drawn at each meeting.

Dumaresq Chambers: It is imperative that we honour the opening hours of 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday. We have a wonderful small band of volunteers who reliably 'man' the Chambers but all roster periods are not filled. The 3 hour basic roster shifts seem little to ask of our local members. A volunteer needs to be a good listener and able to note information regarding visitors, their requests and their information. Basic friendly customer service. And enjoyable. Please consider.

A Trip Down Memory Lane: Topics for meetings each decade. The only February meeting prior to 2002 was the inaugural Society meeting held at the Teachers' College on 15 February 1960.

1960: A.V. Cane – 'Ollera' Pioneers

1970 – 2000 - No February meetings

2010: Peter McCarthy - The Greeks in Armidale

Projects for 2020: Publication of a booklet expanding information on the buildings on the Armidale Heritage Walk, House Histories, Trades and Professions, the History of Beardy Street, Wells and Water, Notable Armidalians.

Why not join in on some aspect of the research?? Your Society needs you!

Snippets of History: With current plans to look at House Histories, Brendan O'Keefe's paper, *Archaeology of a Country Newspaper*, published in ADHS Journal 26 (1982) includes 136 Faulkner Street (currently for sale), when it was not only a dwelling but also a school and later a printing office.

When Edward Baker owned the house at 136 Faulkner Street he is believed to have conducted his Church of England schoolhouse there in the 1850s to 1859/60 when he moved the school to Rusden Street. In 1865 he rented it to newly-arrived newspaper proprietor Frank Newton for the printing office of the *Armidale Telegraph* newspaper. Newton came from Grafton where he founded the *Grafton Herald* and two of his workers Frank and Henry Vincent came with him to set up the new Armidale weekly paper. This would compete with the *Armidale Express* (established 1856).

The political scene at the time was marked by the 'squatters' and the 'liberals' (small landowners and businessmen), the latter seen to be promoted by the *Express*. T. G Rusden, (squatter) had been repeatedly defeated from 1858 to 1864 and in 1865 Theophilus Cooper, squatter from Bundarra was to contest the election. Although Newton claimed his paper would be 'strictly impartial and politically and socially independent', evidence apparently shows that Cooper and his supporters instigated the establishment of the *Telegraph*. Cooper defeated the liberal incumbent, solicitor Robert Forster at the 1865 election.

The only known vestiges of the *Telegraph* were discovered in 1980 when renovations revealed some pages of the 8th February 1868 edition of the newspaper stuck to the floorboards in the attic of the house. The paper continued to be printed until 1872. Its viability seemed to have been ensured when in 1866 Newton took out a mortgage with the Armidale Building Society to purchase the house, but in 1868 it was resumed by the Building Society and leased back to Newton for 40 pounds p/a. In 1871 it was sold to Sydney Blythe, the Clerk of Petty Session at Armidale Court House. Newton continued printing the paper from the premises until he announced on 31 August 1872 that he was moving to Inverell to set up a new paper. Chronic ill-health was given as a reason, but his former employees Frank and Henry Vincent had started in competition, printing the weekly *Armidale Chronicle* which came out on Thursdays (*Express* and *Chronicle* were published on Saturdays), cost twopence less, offered cheaper subscriptions and advertising and the political scene had altered with Newton losing the support of the squatters. Frank Newton continued to publish the *Inverell Dispatch and Central New England Advertiser* until his death in Inverell in 1878, aged 63 with no recorded relatives, unmarried, no known will and no headstone.

