

Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.

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Newsletter for September 2020

....and still meetings are not possible. **BUT** the **Museum of Education** (the three school buildings in Kentucky Street) has been entrusted to a Community Trust group. Historical Society members who are interested, can meet there at **2pm on Tuesday, 15th September** to look through the buildings (under Covid 19 compliant conditions), see them in their dilapidated state and hear plans to restore them to the historic attractions they once were. Weather permitting we can add a cup of tea. (Trustees, A. Hardaker, S. Tanner, W. Oates, K. Mill, G. Wilson, P. Pickett, W. Hoppe)

Sad News: Vic Andersen was tragically killed in a motor bike accident.

No More Armidale Express: The last edition of the recently re-started printed newspaper was on Friday, 14th August. Armidale no longer has a newspaper. We have lost the 'glue' which keeps us informed and together and creates a community. **What are we to do???** We must have a locally produced means of communication which is available to all.

Congratulations to Bronwyn Parry, Ruby award winner for the romantic historic novel of the year for *The Clothier's Daughter*, (available from Readers Companion).

Displays at Dumaresq Chambers: Two new displays have been set up, Food and Eating in photographs and a display of enamelware. Memories are kindled seeing some old favourite Armidale shops like Permewans and Nicks café. The enamel utensils indicate its pre-plastic importance in daily life, its only shortcoming was that it chipped easily. We need it back! Enamelling process is also most interesting.

A Trip Down memory Lane: Topics for September Meetings each decade.

1960: Mr R. Duncan – The Development of Armidale to 1870

1970: Mr I. Campbell – Social background and relations with the Aborigines

1980: Professor R. Neale – Life and Death in Hillgrove 1870 – 1914

Spring walk in Central Armidale as part of the Armidale Arts Festival conducted by Mrs J. Mitchell and Dr J. Atchison.

1990: P. Chambers – Development of the Steam Railway

2000: Dr L. Gilbert – J.H. Maiden's Voyage from Port Macquarie to Walcha in 1897

2010: B. Thorn – Licit and Illicit Printing

Snippets of History: An excerpt from a delightful book in our collection *In Old Australia, Records and Reminiscences from 1794* by Rev. James Hassal (1902) – The book was donated by the Estate of the late Mrs Jean Newall.

... in Parramatta. On the bank nearby stood an ugly gaol, with the stocks outside, in which drunkards and other offenders, had their feet placed, and a low wooden seat on which they were obliged to sit all day, in the heat of the summer sun or the cold winds of winter....Very few houses had been built on the north side of the river. The grounds of the present King's School formed a well-kept Government garden – I suppose for the use of the Governor. Beyond was the Female Factory, where were lodged a large number of convict women.

In those days, a man could apply for a wife from the factory. I remember a man applying for one to my grandfather Marsden, who was a magistrate.. My grandfather told him to go to the factory and he would meet him there, and he drove me with him in his gig.

The women were all drawn up in a row, and the man passed along from one to another until he found one who was to his liking and was willing to marry him. As soon as her consent was given, the man took his bride to the church, where Mr Marsden met them and married them and then they set off for their farm or homestead. Such marriages were not unusual.

There was a story told, and well known to be a fact, that Mr Marsden once called at a farm on the Hawkesbury River, and enquired how the wife, whom he had married to her husband out of the factory, was getting on. The poor husband said she was "no good," would not work or do anything for him; whereupon Mr Marsden took his gig whip and laid it about her shoulders, and told her that, if she did not behave better, when he next came that way he would have her returned to the factory. Months after, when he called again, the man told him that his wife had turned over a new leaf, and that there could not be a better wife ever since the day Mr Marsden gave her a thrashing. So much for the manners and customs of those early days in New South Wales.

In *Old New England* by R.B. Walker (from the Society's founding committee), he notes that 'On the 7th of October 1839 at Salisbury Station, Jane, the wife of Robert Murray, the manager, gave birth to a daughter, Mary, who was apparently the first white child born in New England. In 1838 Jane, with infant son Andrew (b.1837) in her arms had made their way up the rough slopes and precipitous ridges to the tablelands from the Macleay River Valley. It is said that a strong dog had been trained to assist Mrs Murray who held onto and was pulled by its lead.' Later Robert managed 'Kentucky' station before establishing himself on a small run, at Haning, near Bendemeer.

And 'Romance no longer barred from this grim male preserve, darted in light of step and on 22 April 1844 the first recorded local wedding took place. It was an affair of Scots, Andrew Wauchope of 'Moredun' station taking the hand of Anne Boyd of 'Stonehenge'.' She brought him a dowry of 3,000pounds

The Story Behind War Memorials

A contribution from Graham Wilson OAM

For some years I have been researching war memorials for the NSW War Memorial Register conducted by the Mitchell Library. In Guyra I found a Memorial Park which was dedicated but the name has been lost over time. In Armidale I have found that the Armidale Sportsground was dedicated but although memorial gates have survived the name of the sportground as a memorial has been lost.

Guyra Memorial Park

On Saturday 25 August 1951 Guyra celebrated a special Jubilee Arbor Day. Trees were planted throughout the town including:

- The President, Mr T.A. Everett who planted a tree at the showground;
- In Dutton Parade Mesdames T.S. Eggleston, P.R. Stevenson, B. Smith and F.H.R. Curtis, members of the Horticultural Society who each planted a tree;
- In Lackey Street members of the horticultural society who planted a further four trees;
- President of the Bowling Club, Mr. L.P. Archibald planted a tree at the club.

From there, the proceedings moved to the park located opposite the Guyra Shire Chambers where the Guyra Brass Band made a re-appearance after several months of inactivity and played several items.

At 3.15 pm the dedication service attended by members of the public and Guyra soldiers attended the park service. In his address, Reverend C.G. Mathieson said:

Today, we dedicate this park to the memory of those who gave their lives in the service of their country. We will also plant trees in their memory. These are memorials – symbols of our gratitude and they will stand as a reminder of our promise to remember them until ‘The going down of the sun’.

At the service, the following planted trees: Mr W, Brodie (R.S.L.), Mr R. Hudson (Chamber of Commerce), Mr. B. Smith (Rotary), Mrs B. Smith (Hospital), Mrs F.H.B. Curtis (Horticultural Society) and Mrs Parsons (C.W.A.)

It was in July 1951 that several meetings were held in Guyra to consider tree plantings and the most suitable trees for Guyra. Mrs F.H.B. Curtis, president of the Horticultural Society chaired a meeting held in the Shire Council Chambers. Organisations who expressed support for the project included the Guyra Shire Council, the Showground Committee, the Hospital Board, C.W.A. Younger Set, Rotary and the R.S.L. Reverend Mathieson suggested that the Shire Council be asked to dedicate land in Bradley Street, near the Bowling Club and opposite the Bowling Club as a memorial park.

A month later the *Guyra Argus*, 23 August 1951 reported that the Shire Council, owner of the land in Bradley Street decided to dedicate the land as the Guyra Memorial Park in memory of Guyra’s War dead. It was planned to plant a tree in the park for every fallen soldier from Guyra.

Did anyone attend the service as a child? Is anyone aware of photographs taken on the occasion?

Sadly, the name Memorial Park has disappeared.

The Armidale Sportsground

Towards the end of World War One many communities discussed the need for a civic war memorial. One memorial was the construction of a memorial fountain in Central Park in the 1920s with the names to be engraved on the stonework. Not all members of the community were pleased with the fountain and a move for an alternative memorial developed. Many Armidale residents felt that a memorial should have a practical purpose and a sportsground was the answer.

By March 1921 a Sportsground War Memorial Committee had been formed and appealed to members of the public to assist in the White City Carnival designed to raise money for the committee and the band. The carnival was presented for a week in the market square (Faulkner Street entrance) during the show week. Once finance was available the secretary of the sportsground committee J. Laurence, approached the Jockey Club for the possible sale of the leger grandstand. Initially the club rejected the approach in March but later the decision was reversed and the foundation of the grandstand, purchased from the Armidale Jockey Club was constructed in June 1921. Bricks for the grandstand were donated by Armidale builder G.F. Nott and labour was provided free by S. Burton, H. Dixon, J. Turner and R. Clutterbuck. By the end of July the grandstand was nearing completion; a tender had been let to J. Dento for new fencing. The *Armidale Express*, 22 July 1921 announced at the end of the football season, 'the grounds will be levelled, while further ornamental trees will be planted'.

On Sunday 29 April 1962, an army truck bound for the showground pulled into the area by mistake and demolished the Memorial Gates. That May the fence along Dumaresq Street was removed but no further action was taken concerning the gates. Because 1963 was Armidale's centenary year, the local branch of the Returned Soldier's League approached council in March concerning the damaged memorial gates. Council promised to take up the matter again with the Department of Army. In September it was announced the Armidale City Council and Armidale R.S.L. are to meet 'to design and cost of the new gates'.¹

It was not until February 1966 that work commenced on the new memorial gates on a new site. The R.S.L. was to make £116 available to meet the balance of the cost and council agreed to complete kerbing, guttering and road-works. Although it was hoped to have the gates finished by Anzac Day, they were not dedicated until Saturday 17 December by the State President, Sir William Yeo. 1966 was a significant year because it was the 50th anniversary of the R.S.L. The flanking walls were built of Gosford sandstone and built by voluntary labour and the gates were designed by local R.S.L. officials and made by Mr W. Bartimote.

In time, approaches will be made to the Armidale Regional Council to re-install the name 'Memorial Park' in Guyra as well as the 'Memorial Sportsground' in Armidale.

¹ *Armidale Express*, 25 September 1963, p.8.