

# *Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.*

'Dumaresq Chambers', Corner Faulkner St and Cinders Lane, Armidale  
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## **Newsletter March 2021**

The next meeting of the Society will be held on **Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 5.30pm.** It will be held at the **Dangarsleigh Hall**, just over 8kms along the Dangarsleigh Road. The speaker will be **Sue Tanner**, who has researched and prepared a talk on '**A Mystery Bushranger**' the New England, which will be a fascinating insight into the bushranging days and one of the wily men involved.

**'Pop-Up' Exhibition in Beardy Street Mall:** The Society has applied to participate in this Council-sponsored March display with '**Beardy Street Mall, Then and Now**' in photographs. Anyone wishing to assist in the preparation please contact Sue Tanner 0434240348 or Judith Grieve 67751205. We have a grant of \$200 to assist with costs.

**Dumaresq Chambers:** The Services NSW Covid Safe Plan has been implemented with both phone and sign-in facilities. We have taken delivery of an up-to date HP printer /scanner with numerous as -yet untried functions. Accession and organisation of our many books continues and we have a steady number of visitors each day. Volunteers are welcomed.

**Museum of Education:** Grant funds have allowed Stage I refurbishment to be addressed and with the assistance of Antony Deakin, plans are well under way to reverse the many years of neglect of the three school buildings in Kentucky Street. Fire safety and security, along with mowing and general maintenance have been a priority and in the near future the power will be restored.

**Heritage Centre:** The sub-group is liaising with UNE and the Regional Council and the UNE has advertised a position. Phillip Ward, the last of the 'old team' will be leaving in the near future and new staff will have the steep learning curve of becoming familiar with the huge collection of regional history held in the Centre.

**A Trip Down Memory Lane:** Topics for March meetings each decade.

1961 **Excursion** to 'Ollera' Station

1991 **Mr G. Wilson** – The Life and Work of George Frederick Nott, Armidale builder

2001 **Dr L. Gilbert** – A Stonemason without a Memorial

2011 **Mr G. Greaves** – The Circus Comes to Town

**Snippets of History:** In Beardy Street, a number of the original 'turn of the century and before' buildings remain, albeit with alterations and new façades. However many, sometimes substantial buildings have been confined to history. An example is the **corner of Beardy and Jessie Sts (Lot 1 Section 1)** where, in 1967, the Dumaresq Shire built the two storey building which now houses Insurance and other offices. Original owners of Lot 1 and adjoining Lot 15, (the Jessie Street frontage) were **Michael Redmond** and **John Mather**. Redmond had an accommodation house on the corner, first listed (*Express* 25/6/1864) as a Mortgagee Sale. The house was described as a comfortable and substantial residence of 9 rooms, stable, barn, garden and an excellent well. After the death of **Mrs Redmond** in 1869, the house (14 rooms) was To Let and then on the market. **Markham**, and **E.M. Butler** were subsequent owners and Butler, by 1881, had added a shop and 3 extra rooms to the house. From 1881 to 1886 it was for sale and it became part of Butler's Estate. **P. Stewart** purchased the 'small weatherboard store and old accommodation house' in February 1886 and re-sold to **Mr McKellar** in February 1887. Then (*AE* 7/8/1891), in a report that **Mr Kelk** would conduct his first auction of produce, stock, poultry etc in his fine new mart on the corner, it was said that there had previously been a blacksmith on the site. 'Some pillars of the smithy were retained, a splendid floor had been laid down on a solid foundation and the sides of the mart were snugly weatherboarded.' It was 'well-lit' by skylights and windows with a Beardy St entrance seven feet (2.1 metres) between two shops. The 50 ft (9 metres) building was proportionately broad, roofed with iron, over shingles. 'There was a fine side delivery entry in Jessie Street while at the rear were piggeries, fowl coops etc with ample convenience for carts and horses.'

Success was assured; weekly Saturday sales had every imaginable item on offer with intervening business activities. However, in 1908 the **Kelk** family left for Sydney with sale of their home and associated goods at the corner of Jessie and Mossman Street. First mention of **Kelk** was in March 1889 when he took over **T.J. Wilkinson's** General Store in Beardy Street West and, as a member of the Armidale Monthly Holiday Association, promoted closure of businesses on the first Wednesday of each month. In March 1891, his 16 year-old daughter died after a prolonged illness and by April he had sold his Store to **H.W. Lane**. In July he successfully applied for an Auctioneer's Licence and then opened his Auction Mart in August.

**Piddington's** opened a toy shop and Undertakers in Beardy Street in 1899 and by 1909 were possibly in one of the Kelk shops, described being 'in the vicinity of the corner office block and the Mandarin Restaurant of today.' (ADHSJ 60). The **Empire Hotel** (opposite) was demolished to make way for **Woolworths** in the 1960s. By then, 'Kelk's corner' was empty and **Humphrey's**, then **Hardman's** Used Car yard of the 1950s, were no longer there. The time had long gone from the Saturday morning noisy, hustle and bustle crowded atmosphere of Sale Day, the busy guest house, the clang of the blacksmith's shop and the allure of vehicles on display to hopeful car owners.