

# *Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.*

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## **Newsletter for April 2021**

The monthly meeting on **Tuesday, 20th April will be held at 5.30pm at Dumaresq Chambers**. This will be the first meeting for over a year that we have been able to hold in our own premises. **Jim Swales** will talk on his extensive collection of fund-raising badges which provides a unique history of organisations which have supported a variety of causes over the years.

### **Wartime and Fund-Raising Badges of Australia**

Badges are now rarely sold and we have lost another tangible aspect of history.

**Beardy Street Pop-Ups:** The Society has set up a display of '**Beardy Street Mall, Then and Now**' in the former Reader's Companion shop. Thank you, Sue Tanner, Alan Wilkinson, Colane Simmons, Nancy Bruyn and Debbie Stevenson. Our contribution forms part of an overall Council project in the Mall.

**Kathy King** is soon to leave Armidale and we wish her all good fortune in her new life as a Victorian. Having hailed from Queensland, she has sampled New South Wales and has family in Victoria. Kathy has been on the ADHS Committee and distributed the newsletter mailouts each month for some years. Thank you, Kathy.

**Death of Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh:** Another page has been turned in the history of the British Monarchy with the announcement on 7th April of 99 year old husband and Queen Elizabeth's consort for over 63 years.

**Dumaresq Chambers:** The new photocopier/printer showed its worth in preparing photographs for the 'pop-up' exhibits. We have received a hand-written copy of an 1895 Petition against a proposal to extend the Municipal boundary into land which subsequently became the Shire in 1906. Apparently the Petition was not submitted, but its existence and the list of concerned landholders of the time has caused much interest. ANZAC ceremonies will take place in town, Dangarsleigh and Hillgrove.

### **A Trip Down Memory Lane: Topics for April Meetings each decade.**

1961: Dr Russell Ward - Australian History Through Tradition

1971: Mr L.A. Gilbert - Strange Characters They Were: The cedar Cutters...

1981: Dr B.N. Mitchel - Origins of the University of New England

1991: Dr L. Gilbert- If It Doesn't Move, Chop It Down ...

2001: Mr M. Stevens - Armidaliens Who Served in RAAF 453 Squadron WWII

2011: Mr R. Woods: Saumarez House: The White Collection of Military Badges and Buttons

**Snippets of History:** Having to make a meal go round when unexpected visitors dropped in was an art in the old days. A story in the Blencowe family goes that a piece of shoe leather instead of meat could be covered with gravy on a family member's plate. Not a word would be said, but the look on the 'victim's face would say it all!

Our display is in the **former Reader's Companion** shop in '**Robertson House**'. The original 1882 '**Exchange Building**' on the west side of the Court House, as depicted in the 1884 map had the offices of **Gawthrop, Garvin and Crossman, auctioneers** and **J.A. McDonald, solicitor** facing Beardy Street. At the rear of the building were yards, allowing livestock sales to be conducted from what became Moore Street. The building was demolished, but more or less replicated as '**Robertson House**' with the two shop fronts, a stairway between, leading to upstairs rooms, but without an upstairs verandah. There has been a succession of tenants over the years in both the new and old buildings, but the original could have been lost in a fire reported in the *Armidale Express* 9th August 1946...

'A wood and iron storeroom at the rear of the premises at **145 - 149 Beardy Street** and electrical fittings owned by **Mr J.R. Spark**, valued at approximately 40 pounds, were destroyed by fire shortly after 7o'clock yesterday morning.

The fire also slightly damaged the rear of **Mr P. Love's Furniture Arcade** adjoining, but the fire brigade prevented it from enveloping that building.

The brigade was notified by a telephone call from the Armidale Exchange at 7.20am but, because of incomplete information and a confusion of names, Sub-station Officer **L. Rout** took the fire engine to **Nick's Café** (East Mall), whereas the fire was near the rear of the **Nectar Café** (main Mall).

This misunderstanding was soon rectified, however, and a hose from Beardy Street hydrant, manned by several members of the Brigade was soon checking the spread of the fire. The 14x14 foot wooden shed in which the fire commenced was completely destroyed, a wood and iron shed 30x20 feet adjoining, was only slightly damaged and **Love's Furniture Arcade** was also saved from serious damage.

The shed destroyed was owned by **Mr R.C. Simpson** of 'Pine Grove', Armidale, and, together with the building comprising 145, 147 and 149 Beardy street, was covered by insurance. The contents of this shed, however, were a complete loss to **Mr Spark**, who occupies 145 Beardy Street (later, in the new building, **Evan J. Lewis, jeweller** and now **Office Express**, with **Rice, More Gibson Solicitors** and **Georges Beauty Salon** upstairs). The larger, adjoining shed, which was only slightly damaged is used by **Mr H.J. Morse (stock and station Agent)**. Its contents were not damaged. Contents at the rear of Mr Love's furniture arcade were slightly damaged by smoke and water. Portion of the building, which is owned by **Mrs Phofe Tzannes (Nectar Cafe)**, was slightly charred and windows were broken.'