

# *Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.*

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## **Newsletter for September 2022**

The next meeting of the Society will be held on **Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> September 5.30pm at the Imperial Hotel**. The speaker will be **Councillor Sam Coupland, Mayor of Armidale Regional Council**. We look forward to hearing his ideas and ideals for the Armidale Regional Council, current and future plans.

**Vale Queen Elizabeth II after a remarkable, dignified and responsible reign of 70 years.**

**Annual General Meeting:** At the AGM on 16th August, following the elections, conducted by our Patron, William Oates, all previous office bearers were re-elected, with additions of Wayne Hoppe, as second vice-president and Anthony Hardwick elected to the Committee.

**Vale John de Veau:** The large attendance to farewell 96 year old John de Veau at St Peter's Cathedral on 31<sup>st</sup> August was a testament to the widespread respect and admiration engendered by John's friendship. ADHS is privileged to have articles written by him in Journals 51 and 58, outlining some of his life experiences and his inbuilt optimism.

**Dangarsleigh Hall Centenary and 125 year Celebrations:** The double birthday event attracted a large crowd to enjoy the history of the hall and displays which included vintage and veteran cars, antique and horse-drawn equipment photographs and Bob Taber's steam engine. Novelty games were for all comers, Armidale Pipe Band played, Kelly's Plains School choir sang, NECOM Canitilena Singers presented the Luke Byrne composition 'Gostwyck' and after presentations of the history of the Hall, a noticeboard outlining the history of the Hall at Hillgove and then at Dangarsleigh was unveiled. The day was topped off with a birthday cake and High Tea with delicious homemade cakes and scones. The photographic display has been transferred to Dumaresq Chambers for further viewing.

**A Trip Down Memory Lane:** Topics at September meetings each decade.

**1962:** J. Warburton and W.G. Hoddinott – The Aborigines in New England

**1972:** Ass. Professor R.S. Neale – The Buildings and Building of Bath 1700-1800

**1982:** E.S. Elphick – The Armidale Heritage Study

**1992:** Jim Miller – Australian History since 1788 through Koori Eyes

**2002:** Dr Rob Robertson-Cunninghame – Random Recollections of Growing up in New England 1920-1940s

**2022:** Mick Reed – The Journeys of William Henry Mutlow, Apothecary

**Snippets of History:** The main access to the north of Armidale is **Stephens Bridge**, opened in December 1927, to replace an older Marsh Street bridge. The ribbon was cut by the Mayoress, **Mrs Margaret Morgan Stephens, wife of Alderman Edward Morgan Stephens**, five times elected Mayor of Armidale City Council from 1923 to 1927. The name for the bridge was almost unanimously agreed upon by the Council, the one dissenting Alderman saying that it should (and would!) continue to be known as the 'Marsh Street bridge'. Morgan Stephens was a popular and effective Mayor, with the installation of electric street lighting and regular household garbage collection among the many improvements achieved during his time of leadership. He was described as a man of 'inveterate good cheer and kindliness'. Morgan Stephens was born in 1867 at Beaconsfield, South Australia, his father reported to be a school teacher, but Stephens recalled, on a visit to Launceston, that he had printed the first copy of the *Launceston Daily Telegraph* in 1883 when his father was Editor of the paper. Following his arrival in Hillgrove around 1890, Morgan Stephens set up business in Bracken Street as a newsagent and in 1891 married **Margaret Anne Sims**. There are reports of their participation in the 'Bohemian Amateur Dramatic Club', and in one performance, in aid of the Hillgrove Cottage Hospital, Morgan Stephens is said to have 'surpassed himself' in the role of "Dick Dugs" to have the audience 'simmering with mirth' throughout the event. Their three children were born in Hillgrove, where he was an active participant in almost every facet of life, Council member, Mayor (1912), popular personality, magistrate, recruiting officer, proprietor of the Newsagency, printer, stationer, auctioneer, on numerous committees, a prominent Oddfellow, gaining high seniority in the Manchester Unity Institute of Oddfellows (M.U.I.O.O.F), was a long term member of the Hillgrove Masonic Lodge and later of the Armidale Masons. In 1906 he published a booklet of '*Views of Hillgrove*', copies of which may still be in existence.

He sold his Hillgrove newsagency to **W.J. Prisk** in 1918 and with his wife and daughter moved to Armidale where he set up as a printer in Faulkner Street, with their home address '**Walteela**', **73 Beardy Street**. Their two sons, William H.M. and Edward R., known as Harold and Roy, had served in and survived World War One, left the district soon after their return. Harold had graduated from Hillgrove Technical College as an electrician and worked for the Adelaide Tramway Trust Electrical Department. Their sister Lilian, who had played the organ at the Hillgrove Anglican Church, married Albert Watson Miller in St Peters' Cathedral Armidale in 1921, and they lived in his home town of Young.

Morgan Stephens was elected to Armidale Council in 1920, was as active as ever in Armidale civic affairs, the M.U.I.O.O.F., masons, and was a keen bowler, becoming President of the Armidale Bowling Club. 'Rheumatic Gout' had plagued him since Hillgrove days and in 1912, he was presented with a gold-mounted walking stick at a gathering of a number of Friendly Societies.

In June 1939, Morgan Stevens died in Armidale aged 72 and his wife subsequently died in Young in 1947 where she was living with her daughter.

