

Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.

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Newsletter for April 2023

**The next meeting of the Society will be held at
the Imperial Hotel on Tuesday 18th April at 5.30pm**

The speaker will be **Barry Dawson**, President of the Armidale and District National Service Association Sub Branch, who compiled the recently-published book *Nashos - in War and Peace*. This book documents the lives of men from the New England who, at 20 years of age were required to register for National Service and were conscripted to serve for 5 years in the Regular Army by means of 'Birthday Ballot'. They became known as 'Nashos' and served both at home and abroad and in the Vietnam War. This form of conscription ceased in 1972 after the Vietnam War.

Trove Re-funded: Trove is a collaboration between the National Library of Australia and hundreds of institutions contributing Australian digital records to provide the public with an accessible portal of historic data. This incredibly important and on-going resource was under financial threat, with funding only to June 2023. The Federal government has now promised support in the May budget for the NLA in the form of \$33million over the next four years plus \$9.2million earmarked for Trove.

Launch of Armidale Family History Group Armidale Cemetery Register: This well-presented and painstakingly-researched book records the details, in alphabetical order, of all Armidale Cemetery burials, including lawn cemetery and unmarked graves. It will be launched at the **Catholic Mortuary Chapel at the Armidale Cemetery on Saturday, 15th April at 10.30am**. Graham Wilson OAM will give a short presentation and the book will be for sale for \$70 or on a USB for \$60.

NOVA: 'Nova', at 122 Faulkner St is in the former City library. Armidale City Council made the building available to UNE Smart Region Incubator to run programmes which support and explore opportunities for regional businesses. Many small businesses are developing and continuing to develop and Nova runs a free regular Monday lunchtime programme 'Background to Innovation' featuring such businesses, many of which people are unaware.

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

1963: Mr David Dufty and a group of Folk Singers- Songs of two Frontiers

1973: Mr W. Allan Wood – Early History of the Hunter Valley

1983: Mr W.P. Driscoll – Reconstructing Armidale 1883

1993: Bruce Cady – Alexandra Park: The site of the Armidale Plumpton

2003: Dr Lionel Gilbert – Glimpses of the Life and Aspirations of the Auchinleck- Ross Family

2013: Col. Rod Davis OAM (ret.) – The Charge of Beersheba and the Making of a Myth

Snippets of History: Among the early jewellers and watchmakers in Armidale were **F. Barr** in Marsh St (1856) followed by **M. Moran** in 1858 and **Mr Eberlin** (1861) was on the south side of Beardy St. **Modrzynsky** (1863) set up next to the Court house, and was joined by **James Barnet** and **E. Gay and Co** (1863) who set up on the south side, and **Gay** partnered with **E. Fairman and Co** in 1864. But by 1870 these early businesses had disappeared from newspaper advertisements. **Michael Mandel** (late George St Sydney) opened a business next to the New England Hotel in August 1870, a **Mr Rosenthal** had a shop opposite Mandel and **E. Lewis**, watchmaker and jeweller left Armidale that year. **Mandel** traded until 1878 when he moved back to Sydney and Swiss-born **Michael Guigni** moved from Orange to trade in Mandel's small shop beside the 'Newie'. Guigni invested successfully in the Isabella mining group and when he sold out to **S.H. Cohen** in 1892, he lent the Council 8,000 pounds for 10 years at 6% interest. Meanwhile in the 1870s, **S.T. Hedger**, **Joseph Page**, **J.W. Carroll**, **T. Stuart** (next to the Imperial Hotel) and **Jules Anthony de Moulin** set up businesses and both **A.C. Haynes** and **de Moulin** became insolvent. In the 1880s, when Hillgrove was beginning to provide riches in the form of gold and antimony, **de Moulin** recommenced business next to the 'Express' office as a watch repairer and **Stuart** moved into de Moulin's old premises next to the Post Office. **Dominic J. Trim** set up in the business vacated by **E. Lewis** beside the Imperial Hotel and in 1888 a **George McKeon** entered the scene opposite Tatts Hotel.

Jewellers often donated handsome trophies for sporting events, undertook electroplating and repairs, and offered sight tests for the supply of glasses. Watches and jewellery were both prized possessions and a form of investment.

In 1898 **Hermann Morlock** opened his shop next to the Imperial Hotel, but his New England Watch Company was sold up in 1902. **L.P. Miller** (who may have been the son of **William Miller** who built and owned the Imperial and its adjoining five shops) bought the 'Assigned stock' and, after clearing the stock, **Himmelhoch Brothers** moved into the premises to trade as jewellers in 1904. In 1924 the Sydney firm of **Harvey Brothers** took over their business, advertising until 1944 and **A.B. Burnell** followed. Later, and up to the present, **June Dangar** has occupied the shop, (at one time known as Goldsmith's Hall) trading as a jewellery, gem and gift store.

Alleine Fletcher, jeweller and optometrist followed **Cohen** beside the New England Hotel, after a fire in Cohen's shop. Prompt action by **Charles John Castles**, town bellman and billposter saved the shop. By 1897 **Fletcher** had built new premises beside the City Bank (Boobooks), which became Jury's menswear shop and jeweller **L.H. Mathias** took over Fletcher's old shop beside the New England Hotel. Later this was the first premises for **Evan J. Lewis** before he moved into Sparks' premises beside the Court House (now Office Express). Other smaller businesses came and went during the boom times, but the 'musical chairs' of jeweller and watchmaker businesses has provided an interesting, if tangled, succession of traders over the years. Today, the emphasis on fine jewellery and watches has declined and technology has largely overtaken time-keeping, but Armidale is fortunate to have **June's Jewellery and Gems** in Beardy St and a **Prouds (Sydney)** franchise in Central Arcade.