

# *Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.*

'Dumaresq Chambers', Corner Faulkner St and Cinders Lane, Armidale

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## **Newsletter for July 2023**

The next meeting of the Society will be at the **Imperial Hotel, 5.30pm on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> July.**

The speaker will be **Peter Hoare**, to share his research on John Trim, a man who was influential in the development of Armidale - an ex-convict, early Armidale businessman, and an Alderman of the Council from its inception in 1863 until his death in 1892.

### **John Trim – Convict, Entrepreneur, Politician and Pioneer of Armidale**

This meeting will be the **Annual General Meeting** and it would be great to welcome new faces onto the committee. All financial members are eligible to vote and hold office and membership can be paid to the Treasurer on the night.

**Dumaresq Chambers** continues to be a busy place, with work for the Society and assisting visitors with their enquiries. This is invariably 'two- way traffic' as those enquiries are often from people with a close knowledge and/or personal experience of Armidale and its past and have stories to tell.

Two new exhibitions have been set up – one depicting the role of the town' **Blacksmiths, Farriers and Coachmakers**', who were vital to transport until the petrol engine became available. The second display, '**Convicts**' is based on Peter Hoare's research into the life of John Trim which has revealed more convicts working in the New England area than had been anticipated. Perhaps you can add further information?

**148 O'Dell Street:** Hoping that you have been following progress of the great restoration of this cottage by its new owner. The house was built in 1882 and has had a series of owners and renters over the years and was in a very dilapidated state when purchased in 2020. It is now almost finished and from the outside has been faithfully restored to its former classical (and classy) appearance of 140 years ago.

**A Trip down Memory Lane:** Topics for July meetings each decade.

**1963: Miss Isabel McBride** – Aboriginal Art in New England

**1973: Mrs J. Newall** – History of St Peters Armidale

**1983: Mrs J. Oppenheimer** – Petticoats and Pianos – Women in New England

**1993: Graydon Henning, Arnold Goode, Robert Luxton** -the Centenary of 100 Years of The Armidale Wesley Uniting Church

**2003: Tom Campbell** – Patrick Joseph O'Connor 1848-1932, Bishop and Builder

**2013: Judith Grieve OAM** – 'Gainsborough' - The Story of a Paddock 1862 - 2013

### **Snippets of History - Armidale in 1923**

Through digitisation of the *Armidale Express* and *Armidale Chronicle* newspapers we have access to information regarding the lifestyle and events as reported by newspaper journalists. I doubt that twenty-first century local history will be so readily available to later researchers.

By 1923 the immediate effects of the Great War such as food rationing were no longer obvious (meat was no longer rationed after 1919, butter by May 1920 and sugar by the end of 1920), and although unemployment was rising, country towns were relatively self-sufficient. A source of rural employment was rabbiting as skin prices were high, and rabbits were in plague proportions. The Rabbit Inspector reported that **H.H. Cordingly** was employing eight men to dig out the warrens and others to trap and poison. Electricity and garbage collection were becoming available in the town.

The Armidale Branch of the CWA was formed on 28<sup>th</sup> of July and continues to be a strong influence in lobbying for changes to improve the quality of country life.

Armidale's population was around 5,500 and for the first half of 1923 there were 47 marriages, 148 births and 50 deaths registered. Armidale High School opened at the beginning of the year, (students needing to qualify for the privilege of having secondary school training) and there were already murmurings of a University and of a New State. New England Business College in Faulkner Street was offering bookkeeping, shorthand and typing with day and night classes. Advertisements for spring carts and buggies were interspersed with those for motor vehicles (new and second hand). 'Rendez-vous' tea and dance rooms were situated in the Commercial Buildings (still in the Mall) it was three pence per couple per dance, and Burlings Restaurant and Refreshment Rooms were trading beside Solomons Photographic Studio. Chemists were agents for Kodak and had developing and printing services and the City Band held regular concerts on Sundays.

On the surface there was optimism, but the Great Depression loomed large by the late 1920s. In September 1923 **F. J. Huxham** of Newton Boyd proposed a happy optimistic and patriotic **Armidale Song** for the coming Jubilee celebrations.

O, Armidale's a sylvan scene, with zephyrs wafting forth,  
New England's brightest beauty spot, Queen City of the North.  
She's crowned with prime prosperity, plenty and peace prevail.  
There is no place more picturesque, than pretty Armidale.

**Chorus: O, Armidale, Fair Armidale Where friendships never fail,  
The sweetest spot neath Southern Skies, Is sunny Armidale.**

Her sturdy stalwart sons are strong, and never known to yield.

They play a manly noble part on sport or battlefield.

Her darling daughters' dimpled smiles, all hearts with joy regale.

They are endowed with every charm - sweet girls of Armidale. **Chorus**

She's famed for glorious loveliness, yet all admire more,

The patriotism she displayed throughout the worldwide War,

For when the bugles blared the call, and battle flags unfurled,

Battalions of her sterling sons soon crossed the war-warped world. **Chorus**