

Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.

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Newsletter for February 2025

Best wishes to all for a happy, heathy and productive New Year

The first meeting of the Society in 2025 will be held **at the Royal Hotel, 5.30pm on Tuesday, 18th February**

The speaker will be **Graham Wilson** and his chosen topic is

The Rise and Fall of the Tupperware Company in America.

Question: How is this relevant to our understanding of local history in New England?

Answer: Increasingly there is a greater interest in social history, particularly after World War Two. Graham will show how the company was formed after the War, why was it accepted so widely in our society and why it was important to the finances for many housewives; what was the distinctive feature of the way it was marketed and what led to its demise?

We would welcome Tupperware items to display on the night as it is likely that very few households from the late 1900s would not still have (and use) some of the durable containers and gadgets. We also hope you will share Tupperware stories (parties?).

All are welcome and if you are taking up the option of dinner afterwards, please place your orders prior to the meeting.

Displays at Dumaresq Chambers: The collection of kitchen and laundry items of yesteryear show how far we have come since Monday wash day and Tuesday ironing day (all day!) and how labour intensive and time consuming these essential household chores were. The late 1800s 'compressed air' washing machine is a sight to behold!

Index to ADHS Journals 59 to 67: This is a much-needed volume to update the Index to Journals 1 to 58 as a companion book. Copies will be available at the meeting and at Dumaresq Chambers and will cost \$10.

A trip down Memory Lane: Topics for February meetings each decade since 2005: February meetings did not commence until 2003.

2005 Neville Crew - Soldier Settlement in New England

2015 Ian Stephenson - In War, Charity – The 'Booloominbah' Red Cross Home

Snippets of History: From the *Armidale Express* 6/9/ 1929: Age and youth met in the *Express* office on Monday. It was a happy meeting for the birth of the new *Express* (*the Express merged with the Armidale Chronicle in 1928*) and coincided with the 77th anniversary of Mr John Andrews, the representative of the past. Mr Andrews has called regularly at the office for the local paper for some years and was induced to yarn about old times on his last visit. He recalled many interesting incidents of the early days and impressed us with his uncanny memory.

Coming to Armidale in 1857 from Yarrowitch at the age of five years, Andrews has spent most of his life in the district. He went to school here under a Mr Brown and Dr Edward Baker. Then he spent some time at 'Tilbuster', 15 years at 'Eversleigh' with the late Mr A.H. Belfield, 17 years with Mr Jackes at 'Orchardfield' and 23 years at 'Saumarez' with Mr F.J. White. For the last 12 years he has lived in Armidale. He recalled the building of the Daniel O'Connell Inn in Beardy Street, the premises now occupied by Mr R. Kelly and Son, saddlers. He spoke of the great excitement caused by the Hart-Rusden election in 1859 and of the sensation during the same year when the Clerk of Petty Session of the time was transferred following a petition by the residents organised by Mr Foster, a local lawyer. The latter had left the Police Court protesting the administration of justice in Armidale and had refused to practice under the C.P.S. "he got up a petition straight away" said Mr Andrews "and Dinny Day, the Police Magistrate at Maitland was sent up to make an inquiry. When he sent in his report, the C.P.S. was shifted."

Mr Andrews went on to speak of the Rocky River diggings where, as a boy, he spent some time. "I can remember the time when they shot poor old Thunderbolt. I did not actually see him aim, but I remember many of his exploits quite well." (see below)

At the time of the Jubilee in 1923 it was said that there were 3 men hanged in this gaol. That is wrong. I can remember six hangings. I can remember another event in 1859 when a man called Armstrong was mobbed on the Armidale Racecourse. Only for the action of my father and three other men I believe the crowd would have killed him.

Races were held here then and the Wyndhams were always prominent. I recollect when their great vineyard at 'Bukkula' was laid down in 1867. My father was in 'Bukkula' at the time. They had a great stud there too, including 78 brood mares and good stallions. But they did not seem to do well at racing.

Asked about the first shows here he said that the earliest he could remember were held under the Presidency of H.A. Thomas who formerly occupied 'Saumarez'. They were good shows then, too, but of course the attendances were nothing like today. They used to hold shows on the racecourse and fairs on the site now occupied by the School of Arts. There was no high jumping in those days.

Mr Andrews recalled the advent of the first car in Armidale. it was a small car with no hood and weighed about 12 cwt (670kg), the late Mr A.H. Belfield brought it here in 1902. The second one was brought in 1903 by Mr Robert Pearson the West End miller, who now resides in Tamworth.

Speaking of Dumaresq Creek, Mr Andrews said, 'It is not the same creek at all. When I first knew it, it was a fine stream and had holes up to 15 and 16 feet deep (4-5 metres) near the gasworks.

- **A recent donation to the Society is a copy of the letter to Constable Walker, signed by a large number of Uralla and Armidale residents, thanking Constable Walker for shooting Thunderbolt.**