

# *Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.*

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## **Newsletter for August 2025**

The next monthly meeting of the Society will be on **Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 5.30pm at the Royal Hotel, Beardy Street, Armidale. The guest speaker will be**

**Max Tavener OAM**

### **The History of Legacy in the Armidale District**

Max served with the Royal Australian Navy and has been assisting war widows and their families in the Tableland area in the post war years. The role of Legacy has been changing over this time, which Max will share.

**80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of World War II:** The Society has organised a display to commemorate this occasion on the day of the signing of the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay on August 15<sup>th</sup> 1945.

**The exhibition will be launched by WWII Navy veteran Ron Vickress who, as a young naval submariner was on board the escort HMAS Pirie in Tokyo Bay on the occasion. All are welcome to attend the opening of the exhibition at 'Dumaresq Chambers' on 5.30 on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August. Light refreshments will be served.**

**Opening of the Albion Park Suspension Bridge and Extensions to the Curtis Park playground:** On a windy wet Monday the opening of these two projects attracted a small audience. The stately new bridge is a replica standing taller than the older version and the imaginative playground has added more attractions based on natural materials to the highly popular Curtis Park play equipment.

### **Trip Down Memory Lane:**

1965: Mr L. Gilbert – History Through Monuments

1975: Miss J. Birmingham – Industrial Archaeology

1985: Mrs Anne Philp – Caroline Thomas, Wife of Henry Arding Thomas

1995: Jean Newall – Home from Home- Hostels for School Students

2005: John Farrel – The Centenary of the Arrival of the De Lasa Salle Brothers

2015: Greta Williamson – Mary White's Travels

### **Snippets of History: The Australian Flag** (from internet sources)

A request to the members of the Dangarsleigh Monument committee for the loan of an Australian flag to display at the ADHS WWII exhibit has resulted in the delivery of a Red Ensign Australian flag – not a blue background as expected.

In 1901 a competition to design a National Flag was run by the newly formed Federal Government. Prime Minister Edmund Barton's launch of the competition resulted in

32,823 entries. From these five almost identical designs were chosen and the joint winners shared the 200 pounds prize money. The composite flag was flown for the first time on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1901 at the Exhibition Building in Melbourne. September 3<sup>rd</sup> is designated Australia National Flag Day. Entrants had been asked to design two flags, one for government use, and one for the Merchant Navy, resulting in the Blue Ensign and the Red Ensign (registered in the 1981 Shipping Registration Act).

Winners for the design included Annie Dorrington, (artist, Perth), Ivor Evans (14 years old from Melbourne), Leslie John Hawkins (teenager from Sydney), Egbert John Nuttal (Melbourne architect), William Stevens (ship's officer from New Zealand).

In 1908 the 6-pointed Commonwealth Star gained a seventh point to represent the various Commonwealth territories in addition to the 6 states and it was in 1909 that the flag was approved by King Edward VII. The Red Ensign was used on land and sea and Australians fought under the British Union flag and both the red and blue ensigns in the two World Wars. In 1941 Prime Minister Robert Menzies emphasised that 'blue was on land and red was at sea', but this was not officially gazetted until 1953. The Red Ensign is the official flag of the Merchant Navy but can be flown by government ships, fishing vessels, pleasure crafts, but not on the same craft alongside the Blue Ensign. The Royal Australian Navy, formed in 1911 has the White Ensign. The RAAF flag was adopted in May 1982 using the basic design on a sky blue background and tilting the Southern Cross to allow the RAAF rondel to occupy the lower fly quadrant and the red kangaroo was added officially to the rondel in 1982.

The Australian flag was flown for the first medal won for Australia in the Olympic Games in 1908 and hoisted by Mawson in Queen Mary Land in Antarctica on the 1912 expedition. Captain Strawbridge MBE raised a homemade Australian flag at Changi POW camp on the day of formal liberation in September 1945

So the flag the Society has borrowed from the Dangarsleigh Monument collection is a Red Ensign with 6 pointed Commonwealth star and thus was made between 1901 and 1909.