

Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.

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Newsletter for March 2026

The next meeting of the Society will be at the **Royal Hotel**, cnr Marsh and Beardy sts.
on **Tuesday, 17th March**, 5.30 pm when the speaker will be

Dr John Atchison OAM

The Australian Agricultural Company and Northern New South Wales

John will outline the importance of the Australian Agricultural Company in the establishment of the wool, beef and coal industries and the major influence it has been in the development of Newcastle, the Hunter Valley, Liverpool Plains, the New England, Queensland and the Northern Territory since 1824.

All are welcome to attend and those wishing to stay on for dinner need to place their orders prior to the meeting.

CWA Centenary Celebration: Congratulations to the members of the Armidale Branch who organised the event held at 'Saumarez' Homestead on 21st February. The celebration attracted an enormous crowd and was a resounding success.

Dumaresq Chambers: The library, with its new bookshelves, has been expanded to be more user-friendly and less cluttered and volunteers continue to organize our ever-growing resources and undertake research projects. The popular 'Fashions' display is replaced by one featuring some of Armidale's interesting houses and their stories along with the origins of the street names where they are situated.

UNE Collections Gateway Launch: The launch and a **demonstration of the new system** of searching the contents of the UNE and Regional Archives, Library Special Collections, and Museum of Antiquities will be presented to the community on **Thursday 12th March, 10am to 12noon at NOVA** (122 Faulkner St, beside Dumaresq Chambers). Morning tea will be served. RSVP by 5th March.

Armidale Autumn Festival: An Early start on Saturday, 21st March with activities and **Breakfast with the Band**, the street parade, then continuing at **Curtis Park** with activities including market stalls, sheep dog trials. ADHS will add to the exhibits with a display relating to Lost Skills.

(We would appreciate assistance setting up and manning the Society display – contact Judith Grieve or Collane Simmons).

Snippets of History: Mallams 1870s building at 168-170 Beardy Street has recently (2025) been purchased and transformed into an **'Emporium' of Old Wares** and a **museum** featuring the **Mallam's Pharmacy and Stationary** era of its life and will have an official opening at 4pm on **Thursday, 20th March**.

Henry Guy Mallam, born 1820, was the sixth son of auctioneer **Thomas Mallam**, one-time mayor of Oxford, UK. Henry tired of studying medicine and became a chemist and after his marriage, migrated to New Zealand. His wife died soon after their arrival and he sailed to New South Wales. He became a dispenser for a **Dr McCarthy in West Maitland** prior to setting up business on his own. In 1855 he married **Johanna Wellington** and they moved to Armidale where on 20th August 1855 Mr John Smith sold a quarter acre block with a dwelling, store and sheds where Henry Mallam set up the **New Medical Centre** trading as chemist, druggist, dentist and stationer on the north side of Beardy St opposite the Wellington (Tatt's) Hotel.

On 23rd September 1870, the **Wellington Hotel** and the three adjoining shops on its East, (Section 5, lots 3,4,5 which were tenanted by the **Bank of NSW, Mr Geldard, tailor and draper**, and **Franklin Jackes, general merchant**) were put to auction in Sydney. Henry, either then or at a later date, purchased lots 3, 4, and 5 for a total of 1050 pounds in cash. The **Bank of NSW** purchased the North-East Beardy/Faulkner corner block from the Quinlin Estate in 1874 where, by 1878 it had built a grand Victorian bank; **Geldard** sold his stock and left town in February 1875 and **Franklin Jackes had his main premises West Armidale Stores in Jessie Street**. So the 'coast was clear' for Henry to work on his new **Medical Hall** and by October 1879 he moved his home and business across the road, added some class to Beardy Street with a refurbished building adorned with a handsome lamp made by the local tinsmith Mr Thurn. His new tenants were **Mr Proctor, solicitor, T. Stuart, jeweller**, and a **John Love, baker**. Meanwhile he was elected to the borough Council, sold his interest in the New England Flour Mill and had added seedsman to his list of services and could supply silver or gold 'stops' for teeth in his role as a dentist.

The **Mallams** lived on the premises at both Beardy Street locations with the residence above the second shop. By 1877 the family consisted of seven sons and two daughters. Henry retired from the business in 1885 and spent 15 months on a trip to the UK and he died in Armidale in 1903 aged 73. Two sons, both 'H.G. Mallams', **Henry Guy and Herbert Godwin** continued in the business after the death of their father and Herbert's son **Walter** became the third generation Mallam to run the pharmacy. Johanna died in 1897 (61), four years after suffering a paralyzing stroke.

Roy Stucley leased the separate newsagency, purchased in 1944 by **John Pidgeon senior**, his brother **Harry** and, in 1984, **John and Marilyn Pidgeon**. The pharmacy premises was sold to chemist **Peter Aggs** in 1979 and in 1993, to **John and Marilyn Pidgeon** who completely refurbished the shop to no longer house a pharmacy, but become a single large newsagency. Then followed **Carrs Newsagency** and this business has moved (2025) across the road to run the newsagency and stationary almost at the site of **Mallam's first Medical Hall**. The sale to **Wayne Boyle** to house the **'Emporium of Old Wares'** is the start of a new era for the 1870s building.

(There is a Mallam Street in West Maitland)

Have you heard about the Australian Century Farm & Station Awards?

I first heard about Century Farms on an ABC radio program in August 202 Then discovered our local FM radio station was advertising it too. I was intrigued by the Century Farms concept.

The **Australian Century Farm & Station Awards (ACFSA)** is a registered charity organisation. The ACFSA “celebrates our national agricultural heritage by capturing and preserving rural history which might otherwise be lost”. Through their annual awards program, they aim to keep these stories alive and celebrate this heritage.

The ACFSA extends an invitation to all Australian families farming and managing their land for 100 years or more, to apply for a Century Farm or Station award, or the Sesquicentennial award (150 years).

It is held on a yearly basis. Applications open 1 January & close 31 December.

All types of primary production including viticulture, horticulture, aquaculture and forestry are eligible. The awards are not tied to a specific amount of land although some of the original selection must remain in family ownership. Applications must submit verification of this, generally copies of deeds etc.



To me, ACFSA was the perfect match and segway for the ADHS project, **1840's Squatters Pastoral Runs** (marking out the property boundaries of approx. 135 stations) in the New England. Over the past three years, Sir Owen Croft (Salisbury

Court, Uralla), John Atchison OAM, Gordon Smith and Louise Brennan, have worked on mapping the property boundaries of these Squatters Pastoral Runs. Some of the western property boundaries are still being researched and refined. In 2024, I joined the Monday's ADHS crew, who have a keen passion for the history of agriculture in our local region. It is a privilege to share their journey, and it has awakened a new interest for me, in agriculture. It became obvious that potentially a number of these runs, and other well-known New England rural properties, would be eligible for the Australian Century Farm & Station Awards. These families and their properties have a fantastic history and story to share. For example, locally, the Yeomans family, who own Greenhill Orchards at Arding, have held their country for over 150 years. Not many families in Australia can attest to that! They are eligible for the Sesquicentennial award.

Owen Croft's family, who own Salisbury Court, Uralla, are another good example. Their forebears started off with 50,000+ acres of fine wool production and cattle. Today, the family have retained approx. 200ha. They focus on Landcare tree projects, a substantial area of fruit trees and a vegetable patch. The balance is leased to a third party for grazing livestock. That all counts.

Applicants are required to write a narrative of family history and, if possible, enclose photographs both historic and modern to illustrate that story. There is an Application Fee of \$250.00

All approved applications will receive a certificate of recognition, commemorating their 100th (or 150th) year milestone. In addition, Awardees may purchase a bronze plaque. The plaque is designed to be placed at the farm gate or hung on a building, "as a symbol of a family's perseverance and their ability to keep farming in the face of constant change. Above all else, it represents the hard work and desire to carry on, what was 100 years ago a dream, then a reality, and is now a family tradition." The Bronze Plaques are supplied by the Phoenix Foundry, Uralla.

All information, including photographs, will be deposited in the internationally recognized Noel Butlin Archive, Australian National University, Canberra where the collection will be available for study by, researchers, genealogists, climatologists, architects, social historians etc. and interested members of the public.

So, if you know someone on a property, who meets the criteria, it would be great if you could pass this information on. The ACFSA website is:

www.centuryfarms.org.au.

Article by Alex Hunter ADHS Volunteer (Mondays), Hunter Rural - Agricultural Marketing Consultant