

Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.

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Newsletter for July 2026

The next meeting of the Society will be the **AGM followed by the General monthly meeting**. It will be held on **Tuesday 21st July , 5.30pm at the Royal Hotel**. The speaker will be **Dr Margaret Small** who has been researching '**Tilbuster**' station, taken up by **Captain William Dumaresq** in the 1830s. William's elder brother, Colonel Henry Dumaresq settled on 'Saumarez' Station, but as William and his wife never lived on 'Tilbuster', it has not received the attention afforded to 'Saumarez'. **Don't forget (i) Membership is due and (ii) to order meals prior to the meeting.**

Armidale Folk Museum is now open: At a small ceremony held on 29 June, the Folk Museum re- opened. The entrance is now transferred to its original 1863 position in Rusden Street and, on walking in, all memory of the layout of the Folk Museum as we knew it – is gone. With thanks to the ARC successfully gaining a substantial grant it is now a well-lit, spacious area, with each room flowing to the next with exhibits which are both familiar and new. It has moved into the 21st century in one leap, with disabled access, running water and toilets! The founder, Eric Dunlop, lecturer at the Armidale Teachers' College aimed to display life as it was lived by the 'working class' over the years. He and his team of ATC helpers and collectors would be amazed to see the transformation. **The opening hours are 11am to 2pm daily Wednesday to Monday** (closed Tuesdays) and it is well worth visiting this 163year old building and its displays, of which Armidale can be rightly proud.

ARC draft Armidale City Centre Vitality Plan: This 108page plan, envisaged by a Sydney firm of consultants is to be on display at Council for a short period and should be carefully examined by those interested in the Armidale of the future. 'Out with the old' is not necessarily a way forward as historians are already aware and the Bowling Club has already indicated its displeasure. The arcades and subsequent invasion of chain stores changed Armidale dramatically and the long-term effects of all proposals of change need to be taken very seriously as change is irreversible.

Microfiche reader: Dumaresq Chambers has all the *Armidale Express* newspapers on microfilm and information published after 1953 is available on our microfilm reader if we do not have copies of the paper.

Snippets of History: The cul-de sac **St Cuthbert's Avenue** between Jessie and Dangar Streets, opposite the Teachers' College was once a through road with the home '**Clemoyne**' on the South and '**St Cuthberts**' on the North, both facing Dangar Street opposite the **gaol (1863-1920)**. The gaol was demolished to be rebuilt as the **Armidale Teachers' College (1928-1988)**, '**Clemoyne**' was purchased from the Blaxland family for the **War Memorial Girls' Hostel (1921-1971)** and then demolished to make way for the '**Regency Motel**' (now '**All Seasons Motel**').

In 1880 the second **Anglican Bishop of Grafton and Armidale, James Francis Turner (1829-1893)** and his adopted daughter, **Emily Perrott-Turner** returned from a visit England where the Bishop's wife had died. For a short time they lived in their previous home '**Bishopsthorpe**' cnr Mann and Canambe Sts (later '**Meadowfield**' which was still later purchased for and demolished by TAS in the 1980s). The Church had been having difficulty collecting parish rents for accommodation for their clergy, and when Bishop Turner moved into the house on Dangar Street, he called it '**St Cuthberts**' and at some time, purchased the rambling timber dwelling.

Cuthbert (634-687) was a monk, became a **Bishop** and was revered for his good works in the Northumbrian region in northern England. After time, with permission from the Church, he was allowed to become a hermit on the isolated Inner Farne island where he died. His coffin was taken to the Abbey at Lindisfarne for burial, but when it was opened 11 years later it was found that miraculously, the body had not decayed. later became **Durham Cathedral** where Bishop Turner had fond memories of **St Cuthbert's Chapel** from his time spent at **Durham University**.

The Bishop added a Chapel and library to his St Cuthbert's home where Emily 'kept house' and assisted him in his episcopal role. In early 1893, he and Emily departed for England, but disembarked to spend some time in warmer Naples. The Bishop's failing health resulted in his death in Italy in April. He was buried in Rome. Emily returned to St Cuthbert's which she inherited and later rented it out and lived in an old cottage '**The Hermitage**' which was nearby and set back from Dangar Street.

In 1926, Emily put St Cuthbert's on the market prior to her leaving for England with her one of her sisters, **Ellen ('Nell') Perrott**. Their brother Edward provided the funds for an extended trip to 'the home country'. Meanwhile the '**Bishop's Estate**' was marketed by **Thomas Jones, Auctioneer**, (AE 6/1/1926) as being in a prime position and near the old gaol which, it was rumoured would likely become a Technical College. The house was on Lot 9 of the 3 acres, which could be subdivided into lots 8 (with a small cottage) and 9 all facing Dangar Street and lots 10 to 13 which faced Mossman Street. The house, adjoining cottage block and four of the other allotments were sold to **N.W. Chapman** for 2,055 pounds. In 1929 **C.A and W.S Wilson** are recorded as building a dwelling for 625 pounds on one of the subdivided blocks. St Cuthberts and adjoining buildings were demolished in the 1970s to make way for **Hanna's** to build the large block of flats which fills the Dangar Street frontage today.

Main Reference: Jean Newell, Emily Harriett Perrott-Turner ADHS Journal 45

