MUSEUM.

In December 1890 council requested the Minister of Public Instruction establish technological classes and a museum in Armidale. The mayor took action in January 1891 to call a public meeting to discuss technical classes. The Under Secretary of the Mines Department contacted Armidale in November in connection with the establishment of a School of Mines and asked council 'if a collection of minerals were forwarded to Armidale would the Council provide a room'.[1] Council agreed to the proposal and a list of minerals recently forwarded by the Department for exhibition was received by council in January 1892.

By early December 1909, a sub-committee of ladies and gentlemen was formed in Armidale to receive specimens for a Technological Museum. The group called for Natural History, Geology, Mining and Agricultural specimens and a meeting of those interested in the formation of a museum was held at the School of Arts on Wednesday 16 February 1910. A number of representatives of various organizations attended but the School of Arts was unable to finance the scheme for a permanent building. It was felt that the proper place for a museum was in a Technical School building and thus the following resolution was agreed to:

> That the representatives of the Shire Council, the technical school, the district association, and educational bodies, together with those interested in the proposed technological museum, ask the Mayor to inaugurate a deputation, through the State member, to wait upon the Premier with a view of obtaining a special grant for the erection of a building for technical classes and a museum.[2]

Despite the recommendations, such a museum was not formed. By September 1923 a committee consisting of the Mayor Ald. Morgan Stephens and Armidale residents had been formed to consider the purchase of a South Sea Island curio collection owned by P.T.W. Black. Mr A.H. Perrott of Chevy Chase hoped that the Black Collection 'would be for the foundation of a museum for New England'.[3] Despite the support, the mayor informed the meeting that it was not possible to purchase the collection.

Six years later, the *Armidale Express,* 4 November 1929 announced Ald. D.W. Oliver has instigated a move 'to establish a museum in Armidale'. Following a detailed report from W.E. Clark, science master at the Armidale High School on the value of the Pike collection of gems and minerals, council announced in June 1931 its intention to accept the offer of Mr Alfred Pike from Mittagong to accept his valuable collection of gems and minerals collection in return for 'suitable

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1   *Armidale Express*, 1 December 1891, p.4.

2   *Armidale Express*, 22 February 1910, p.4.

3   *Armidale Chronicle,* 15 September 1923, p.4.

living quarters and a small retainer'.[4]   Mr Pike was an early prospector on the Copeton diamond field and was well known in the district. The Hon D.H. Drummond offered one guinea as a donation and suggested the Teacher's College could hold the collection in trust until accommodation was available.

The *Armidale Express*, 5 June 1931 welcomed the announcement and commented 'from an educational viewpoint, the establishment of a museum in Armidale is long overdue'. But the correspondent also felt that the museum should not be confined to geological specimens and should be placed in a more central position than the considered Teacher's College. The *Express* launced an appeal for £50 on Friday 26 June to enable the council to purchase the collection for permanent collection in Armidale. The money was intended to house the exhibits, to provide glass cases, to provide living room and furniture for the 75 year old Mr Pike and to pay him 10s a week as wages for him to become a curator and attendant. A week later the paper again asked the public to contribute 'to enable the Armidale City Council to obtain for permanent exhibition ... the splendid collection of gems and minerals'.[5]

Following the securing of the mineral and gemstone collection, Alfred Pike arrived by train on Saturday 5 September. The museum was opened on Saturday 26 September 1931 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. to display both Pike's collection and other exhibits belonging to H. Court, an Armidale businessman. It was housed temporarily in Beardy Street premises formerly occupied by W.L. Elliott.

In February 1932, council considered 'the erection of a museum and art gallery on the allotment adjoining the Town Hall, at a cost of about £500'.[6] At that stage council had entered into a contract with Mr Pike to house the collection which had been housed in a building provided by Curtis Ltd. But the collection had to be removed because these premises were required for other puposes. In September, A.R. Pike's gift was valued at £5000.

Initially grant money of £1500 was made available in June 1932 by the Unemployment Relief Council to improve Dumaresq Creek. Following expressions of concern by council, the Armidale Chamber of Commerce and the *Armidale Express*, approval was granted for £750 to be spent on the forming of footpaths and £600 for the construction of a museum. The latter sum was 'to be in the form of a subsidised loan at 4% for four years'.[7] The Armidale builder, Frank Nott advised council the building could be completed for £1000 and he was prepared to supervise construction of the building without charge to the ratepayers.

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4   *Armidale Express*, 3 June 1931, p.8.

5   *Armidale Express*, 1 July 1931, p.4.

6 *Armidale Express*, 24 February 1932, p.7.

7   *Armidale Express*, 22 June 1932, p.4.

The application form with details of council's financial position concerning the proposed museum loan of £600 was returned to the Commonwealth Bank, Sydney in August 1932. Two weeks later, council obtained Treasury approval to build the museum and in September, council announced plans for the construction of a museum building alongside the fire station. The chairman of the works committee, Ald. M.H. O'Connor was to supervise the day labour as a relief job.

Despite protracted negotiations with the Unemployment Relief Council for some six months, council received word in December 1932 that a grant for the construction of a museum was not approved. Consequently, council advertised its intention that month under section 181 of the Local Government Act 1919 to borrow £600 from the Commonwealth Bank for the purpose of constructing a brick museum and art gallery adjoining the town hall.

Council received news of a government loan of £600 for the Armidale museum and art gallery in March 1933. The approval was issued on the understanding that the work would be built on council land to the Government Architect's plans and specifications. Work commenced that month under the supervision of the Mayor, Ald. M.H. O'Connor who acted as an unpaid clerk of works. The brick building was situated on the allotment adjoining the fire station in Rusden Street and it consisted of 'the main hall 40 ft. by 26 ft. clear, two offices each 15 ft. by 15 ft. and an entrance hall 15 ft. by 6 ft.'[8] There were no windows and the building was lit by skylights. The last payment for the museum loan of £600 was met in March 1938.

News was received by council in May 1933 that A.R. Pike, the donor of the mineral collection had died. That same month, a personal representation was made to the Minister for Mines, R.S. Vincent by Mr Drummond MLA on behalf of council in May 1933 for an expert to visit Armidale 'for the purpose of exhibition of the geological, specimens, gem stones'.[9] H. Whitworth of the Mines Department spent several weeks in Armidale in July and September classifying and displaying the gemstones of the late A.R. Pike's collection and the silver and lead ores from Broken Hill lent to the museum by J.W. Salter, Inspector of Mines in Armidale. In May 1936 the former inspector at Armidale advised council that he had sold the mineral collection to the Armidale publican H.J. Robinson.

Mr Drummond, the Minister for Education arranged the donation of another collection of gemstones from Percy Marks, a jeweller of Hunter Street, Sydney in August 1933. The *Armidale Express,* 30 August reported 'its value must run into hundreds of pounds, and many of the fine stones are magnificent specimen of the Australian opal, judged by connoisseurs as the best in the world'. The stones were displayed in stepped showcases at an angle of about forty degrees. Mayor Ald. M.H. O'Connor also presented timber specimens from Western Australia. The items in the museum were further increased in October when Drummond

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8   *Armidale Express*, 22 March 1933, p.4.

9   *Armidale Express*, 24 May 1933, p.4.

negotiated for fifty samples of Australian commercial timbers from the Technological Museum in Sydney.

The director of the Sydney Art Museum visited Armidale in October 1933 and promised a number of pictures to the museum. He was impressed by the natural lighting in the museum and wanted to ensure that the paintings were displayed for appreciation by the public.

A pensioner was recruited to be an attendant at the museum at a salary of 10s per week in September 1933. Harry J. Court, who donated a collection of minerals and corals and A.H. Perrott accepted the position as honorary curators of the museum.

The Armidale museum, designed by government architect A. Smith was officially opened by the Hon. David Henry Drummond on Saturday 16 December 1933. At the official opening the Mayor, Ald. M.H. O'Connor stated that the function was unique 'as it was the opening of the first municipally controlled Museum in New South Wales'.[10] By the time of the opening, the collection included not only minerals but also war trophies from the returned soldiers of the Armidale district and a varied collection of timbers from the Forestry Department.

In January 1934 Ald. Rowe asked for seats to be provided for patrons at the museum. The mayor said he would give the matter consideration. Council requested a donation from the Carnegie Corporation for the museum but was informed that as a small sum had been set aside for museum education in Australia, 'a committee would be set up later to allocate the money'.[11] The *Armidale Express* , 29 June 1934 appealed to council to create the museum as 'an organisation of great educational value'. A meeting convened by Mayor O'Connor was held in the council chambers in July. The Hon. D.H. Drummond M.L.A. praised the public spirited citizens and council but commented:

> if the Armidale museum, which is the only municipally owned insitution of its kind, is to develop along right lines and prove of benefit to the community, it must not be allowed to become a mausoleum or a dumping ground for curios.[12]

A number of sub-committees were formed at the meeting to undertake the organization of various sections of the museum. A sub-committee museum meeting held in September, discussed the need for additional space. A.H. Perrott, the honorary curator mentioned the need for a large space for 'one collection of

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10 *Armidale Express*, 18 December 1933, p.4.

11 *Armidale Express*, 2 May 1934, p.3.

12 *Armidale Express*, 23 July 1934, p.4.

bird's eggs' and 'for aboriginal relics the walls of the present building could be covered'.[13]

Follwing negotiations with the Hon. D.H. Drummond, the trustees of Booloomimbah estate presented to the Armidale museum 'the very fine collection of island trophies' formerly housed in Booloominbah. Initially it was housed in the Armidale Teacher's College and after classification by an officer from the National Museum, the collection was placed in the museum in November 1934. The saddle said to be used by the bushranger Thunderbolt was presented to the Museum by Geoffrey Forster of 'Abington' in September 1935. The Hon. D.H. Drummond forwarded a specimen of sea urchin (Laganum depressum) found by him during a visit to Green Island near Cairns 'to be placed in the shell collection in the Museum'[14] in October.

William Dixson, the Sydney benefactor who had presented £2500 to the New England University Council to establish a library forwarded to council 'the original petition to the Governor of the day (Sir John Young) praying that Armidale should be proclaimed a municipality'.[15] Aldermen felt the document should be framed and preserved in the museum. A Bible more than 300 years old was donated to the City Council in August 1938 by the Rev. J.A.R. Perkins, former minister in charge of the Armidale Presbyterian Church. The Mayor, Ald. McBean announced 'it will be placed in the City Council's Museum'.[16]

Will Aston, director of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales advised council in April 1939 'that all pictures owned by the Gallery on loan in country centres were being recalled'.[17] That December, he could not advise council when it would be possible to arrange for a collection of pictures to replace those removed recently because of cuts in the department's vote.

The Armidale museum was closed for the duration of the war in January 1942. It became the office of the Chief Warden, Ald. W.H. McBean and his deputy W.S. Gerken. In January 1943, F. Woodcock was referred to as the late caretaker of the museum. On 31 July 1944 workmen, acting on council instructions, removed 'stoutly timbered and sandbagged reinforcements' and 'stretchers, medical supplies and telephones from the museum room'[18] acting as the Armidale warden's post. At that stage, thick dust covered the museum relics.

The museum was used for an exhibition by the National Art Gallery and Department of Education in March 1945. The Hon. D.H. Drummond M.L.A.

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13 *Armidale Express*, 3 September 1934, p.4

14 *Armidale Express*, 16 October 1935, p.7.

15 *Armidale Express*, 10 June 1938, p.9.

16 *Armidale Express*, 2 September 1938, p.4.

17 *Armidale Express*, 26 April 1939, p.7.

18 *Armidale Express*, 2 August 1944, p.6.

opened a travelling art exhibition in September 1946, housed in the museum. Accompanied by the artist Arthur Murch, the exhibition contained fifty watercolour paintings from 1836 to 1946. In his address, Drummond commented 'the value of the Hinton collection would be greatly increased by the erection of a separate gallery on the east side of the college'.[19]

In September 1948 a small section of the museum was set aside as an office for the county clerk. Council received information in June 1949 that the Government had plans for a building a wireless station at Armidale and the Postmaster-General's Department 'accepted council's offer of space in the museum as a temporary office for a district radio inspector'.[20]

THe decision to establish offices in the former museum led to criticism. The *Sydney Sun* published an article on neglected country museums in July 1950 and condemned council for building offices in the museum. Harry J. Court, protested to council in September 1952 over the proposed use of the former museum building for clerical purposes. He commented:

> the valuable collections of minerals given to the City Council by the late Alfred Pike and the late J. Salter were intended to form the basis of an exhibition ... to arouse widespread interest in New England minerals' but now they have been pushed into the background.[21]

Because of the planned move by the New England County Council, council decided to re-open the museum at the earliest opportunity.

In March 1955 council took action to acquire the Literary Institute. Following a visit to Europe assessing the local museums in Britain and in the Northern European countries, E.W. Dunlop a lecturer at the Armidale Teacher's College addressed council in September on the cultural and educational advantages of a folk museum for Armidale or the New England district. Following the address, the aldermen accepted the proposal to establish the first folk museum in Australia and set out to establish a committee. Supportive of the move, the *Armidale Express* , 7 October 1955 commented: 'the City Council in naming a committee to launch the folk museum has selected men who are fully capable of sound planning and wise development'. That November the committee announced its intention to hold a small exhibition illustrating their objectives in the Literary Institute early in December. At that stage, the committee had geological specimens, derelict chairs from the town hall and other items.

The folk museum committee asked council to consider the formation of an open air museum somewhere in Armidale; that is, to purchase land 'with the possibility

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[19] *Armidale Express*, 18 September 1946, p.12.

[20] *Armidale Express*, 8 June 1949, p.12.

[21] *Armidale Express*, 5 September 1952, p.6.

of re-siting some of the local historical buildings'.[22] A temporary museum was arranged by the committee within the Literary Institute as part of the Centenary of Responsible Government in May 1956. In a letter to the editor, A.R. Crane expressed the need for a permanent exhibition and commented 'here is an opportunity for the council itself to make a real contribution to the educational life of the city'.[23] In November, Harry Court protested against the proposal of council to transfer contents of the museum from its present accommodation to the Literary Institute. The Postal Department gave notice in February 1957 that the rooms in the council offices will shortly be given up. There was now the

> possibility of the Council re-establishing the City Museum in these rooms, and alternatively of continuing with the proposal to merge the present museum collection with the folk museum collection.[24]

Early in 1957, two previous members of the now defunct museum committee, the Hon. D.H. Drummond M.H.R. and Harry J. Court, formerly honorary curator met the folk museum committee. With council support, the decision was taken to house the museum collection temporarily 'in the Literary Institute, with the folk museum committee assuming responsibility for the display, care and control'[25] of exhibits. The section of the institute formerly used for the children's library was to be devoted to the museum display and storeage with £150 to be spent in preparing for the display. The committee was to be widened to include residents with a special knowledge of the Pike display and the best methods of display.

The first exhibition of objects and photographs relating to the social and economic history of Armidale was opened in the old Literary Institute building and some exhibits from the pre-war Armidale Museum were included. The museum was officially opened on 20 November 1958 by the Hon. David Henry Drummond. He had opened the former municipal museum in a room of the council chambers in December 1933.

Geoffrey Forster (1896-1976) of Abington offered to donate a fine collection of eleven vehicles to the museum provided adequate accommodation could be found for them. They ranged from a light sulky to a huge bullock waggon and a great drag or coach made in London and brought to Armidale by the late R.R. White of Booloominbah. At that stage the museum was about to extend into the former billiard room painted throughout by the Apex Club. Council agreed to let the committee have the old Literary Institute Hall on the Rusden Street side of the building in September 1960. Following two gifts, the committee announced in November 1960 a steam engine and bullock wagon are to be housed in the

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[22] *Armidale Express*, 6 April 1956, p.8.

[23] *Armidale Express*, 28 May 1956, p.6.

[24] *Armidale Express*, 20 February 1957, p.3.

[25] *Armidale Express*, 20 March 1957, p.16.

museum with doors to be fixed to the new entrance at a cost of £100. This nine foot doorway meant the vehicles from Mr Forster could be placed in the museum.

'In view of the expansion of the Folk Museum'[26] the Literary Institute called a tender for the sale of surplus billiard tables in September 1959. By March 1961 two murals by Armidale artist F. Roberts were being prepared for placement in the museum.

The folk museum committee recommended to council in December 1961 that the Pike collection of gems be given to the University of New England. 'Council agreed to ask the University to name the collection the "Pike Collection" if it was accepted'.[27] Arrangements were obviously not made as a number of valuable gems including irreplaceable gems from the defunct De Milhous tin lode and a rare blue zircon from Madagascar, were reported missing from the Pike collection at the museum in February 1963. One week later the gems re-appeared, wrapped in crumpled brown paper within the building. Then in May 1971 uncut diamonds and emeralds, part of the Pike Collection, were stolen from the museum. The emeralds were set in a matrix from the Milhous tin mine near Emmaville which closed some fifty years ago. The four small uncut diamonds were originally found in the Copeton area.

The founder of the museum Eric Dunlop, now Assistant Director of Teacher Training in Sydney, was honoured at a ceremony at the museum on Wednesday 24 October 1962 attended by Mayor Carey and representatives of the Folk Museum and Historical Society. To mark the occasion, a large framed photograph of Mr Dunlop was hung in one of the main galleries.

Council decided in December 1962 to take steps to acquire the Olympic Hall for the display of transport items in the folk museum. The Olympic Hall had been built in 1891 as the Protestant Hall and it served as the centre for technical education from 1909 to 1962.

The recommendation from the committee that admission charges be applied to the museum were rejected by council in December 1962.

In early February 1963 the vice-chairman of the folk museum committee, L.A. Gilbert announced plans to mark the centenary of the city. Plans which included the expansion of displays and the opening up of two rooms at the back. To prepare for this, a working bee was held on Saturday 9 February. In his appeal for voluntary workers, the chairman commented: 'From the historic viewpoint, it is immaterial whether those who come are fond of history, or are frustrated artists,

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26 *Armidale Express*, 15 September 1959, p.8.

27 *Armidale Express*, 8 December 1961, p.13.

or budding interior-decorators- no questions will be asked'.[28] By October more rooms in the former literary institute were included within the museum.

Mr Dunlop was transferred to Sydney in 1962 and Dr. Lionel Gilbert, lecturer in history at the Teacher's College became honorary curator until 1982. In that year Michael van Leeuwen, B.A., Dip. Museum Studies, was appointed professional curator to the museums at Armidale and Uralla. This was one of the first such appointments to be made in the State. His appointment was shared between the Armidale City Council, Uralla Municipal Council and Uralla Historical Society and thus his responsibilities included the Armidale folk museum, Hillgrove museum, the Uralla mill museum and the Bundarra court house project.

In October 1963 it was reported 'more rooms in the former Literary Insitute are being included in the museum'[29] and the museum's display was completed for Armidale's centenary week. The highlight was 'the pioneer's "flat" - a suite of three room comprising parlour, kitchen and bedroom furnished and equipped in Victorian style'.[30] The furniture mainly came from the homestead 'Roumalla' whilst the main hall was given over to agriculture. The museum now occupied the whole of the former School of Arts and Literary Institue building.

Aware of the importance of the railway to the history of Armidale, the committe attempted to obtain a 12 class locomotive but this request was turned down by the Commissioner of Railways in June 1963. In August 1964, the committee again 'attempted to persuade the Commissioner for Railways to let them have one of the locomotives which drew the first railway train into Armidale on February 5, 1883'[31] but the request was unsuccessful.

Architectural plans presented to council in May 1965 for a new Civic Centre recommended the demolition of a number of buildings including the museum. At that stage, council was to 'approach the New England County Council to see if it could acquire the ... work's depot on the Allingham and Rusden streets intersection for a folk museum site'.[32] A motion from the museum committee advised council in May 1966 the committee views with the greatest concern any proposal to move the museum from its present site. The tourist bureau and concerned citizens also spoke against the demolition of the museum and in June council decided not to demolish the museum.

In December 1966 council set aside $6000 for the renovations to the roof ceiling and floor of the museum. There was a total allocation of $7818 for 'wages, a

28 *Armidale Express*, 6 February 1963, p.8.

29 *Armidale Express*, 23 October 1963, p.1.

30 *Armidale Express*, 13 November 1963, p.8.

31 *Armidale Express*, 26 August 1964, p.2.

32 *Armidale Express*, 4 June 1965, p.15.

brochure, new lighting and other running expenses'.[33] The six chimneys of the museum were removed with the re-roofing of the museum which began in May 1967. The tender of £4590 was awarded to G.W. Roach.

In November 1967 an Armidale resident A. Monley wrote a letter to the editor of the *Armidale Express*, 22 November 1967. He supported the proposal to demolish the former School of Arts building and stated: 'I am sure many people in Armidale ... would be pleased to see (museum items) displayed in a building a little more modern, and better suited for the purpose'. He suggested the council chambers as a venue.

Armidale's Junior Council raised money in 1972 to have a steam engine transported for Bundarra to the council's works depot. In December council announced it would probably be installed in Macdonald Park. The steam engine had been imported by the late Robert Ferris from England in 1917 as a power unit for Strathmore station.

Further expansion occurred when the Museum of Rural Life and Industry was established in the former Hillgrove Public School building as an annex of the Armidale Folk Museum. The *Government Gazette*, 15 October 1976 revoked a major part (1.08 hectares) of the dedicated site for public school purposes and reserved it for a museum as reserve No. 89957. The first stage of the museum was opened on 16 April 1977 by Dr D.S. Leitch, Member for Armidale and the second stage was opened on 7 October 1990 by Ald. Rosemary Leitch, Mayor of Armidale.

By October 1974 negotiations had begun between the City Council and the Department of Education to gain possession of the former Hillgrove school building. Refurbishing of the buildings commenced in 1975 and was effected by council using a Regional Employment Development (RED) grant of $15 000 to paint the building, to carry out minor repairs and construct the out-building. Mr Tony Deakin, an architect, deputy-mayor of Armidale and member of the commmittee designed the outbuilding. Assistance was provided from the Cultural Grants Commission to purchase materials to display and enlargen photographs.

The museum was opened in six sections on 16 April 1977 as an annex of the Folk Museum. The first three sections included three main rooms of the former school room devoted to mining activities at Hillgrove; social and commercial life at Hillgrove and pastoral and agricultural activities in New England. The fourth section was the enclosed verandah of the school with miner and quarry man's tools and samples donated by Vic Melvaine of Uralla. The fifth section was the shed which housed agricultural implements and farm vehicle. The sixth section was the outdoor reconstruction of mine workings undertaken by the men of the New England Antimony Mining Company.

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[33] *Armidale Express*, 4 June 1965, p.15.

The Division of Cultural Activities informed the committee that the premier had approved grants for the two museums. A grant of $2500 was awarded to the Hillgrove Museum of Rural Life and Industry for the restoration of a cart $1500 and a display on historic Hillgrove $1000. The Armidale Folk Museum received $4500 for a domestic life display $3500 and a kitchen display $1000.

When Michael van Leeuwen resigned as curator in 1984 to take up a position at Moonta, South Australia he was replaced by Ms Tania Konecny, the New England Regional Curator but she in turn resigned in December 1985. Susan rogers was employed in 1986 as the curator for the Armidale folk museum, Hillgrove museum and Uralla historical museum. Her employment was partly funded by the State Government Grant (Cultural Affairs).

The N.S.W. Bicentennial Council provided funds to finance construction of a shed to house the display of a wool wagon in Macdonald Park and the construction of a large machinery shed at Hillgrove's Rural Life and Industry Museum to house relics and machinery. The projects were completed at a cost of $48 000 funded by the N.S.W. Bicentennial Council ($30 000) and the City Council ($18 000).

The official opening of the wool waggon shelter in Macdonald Park was held on Saturday 13 August 1988. At the official opening, the chairman of the Folk Committee, Dr Lionel Gilbert outlined the history of the wool waggon donated by Geoffrey Forster. The waggon was purchased about 1927 second hand and used on Murgo Station near Croppa Creek by Thomas Richard Forster. Once the property was sold early in 1938 the waggon was moved from Murgo to Abington and after renovation it was presented to the Folk Museum in August 1962.

Completion of the second storage barn designed by Armidale architect Tony Deakin meant that large items of agriculture and rural machinery were now under cover. The work was completed by Armidale City Council with the assistance of a NSW Bicentennial grant.   These additions were opened by Mayor Ald. Rosemary Leitch on Sunday 30 October 1988.

LIBRARY.

The School of Arts or Mechanic's Institute was established in 1859 and the foundation stone of the new hall was laid by Lewis Markham, Vice President on Tuesday 17 February 1863. The building was officially opened on 2 November 1863 and at a meeting on 5 February 1866 the name of the Institute was simplified to the Armidale School of Arts.[34] It was this building which housed the original library.

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34 *Armidale Express*, 10 February 1866, p.2-3.

The Municipal Act 1867 gave councils the right to establish a municipal library assisted by government subsidy. If a library could boast 1000 readers a subsidy of £200 was made available for reference books.

In 1871 problems emerged in the School of Arts committee and in August it was suggested that the committee should be taken over by council. The *Armidale Telegraph* summarised the desperate situation and commented 'the Municipal Council is not only better entitled, but better qualified to govern the Institution (the School of Arts) than committees of young clerks'[35]. Then a correspondent claimed in the *Armidale Express*, 7 October 1871, that the management of the School of Arts had been a farce for the past two or three years. It was finally recommended at a public meeting that the institution should be transferred to council to establish a free public library as permitted under the 1867 Municipalities Act.

In November 1871 the Municipal Council assumed responsibility for the Institute and in 1872 added a library and council offices. The transfer of deeds from the School of Arts led to the temporary closure of the circulating library in May 1872. Ratepayers expressed chagrin and council asked the Colonial Secretary to expedite the transfer.

At the council meeting on 18 June 1872 it was stated 'the main reason for the transfer of the School of Arts was to establish a free library'. A committee was to be appointed to frame by-laws and to form a commmittee of management. The town clerk was instructed to apply to the government for a sum of £200 available as an endowment for a Free Library for a population of 1000 people. The *Armidale Express*, 29 June congratulated council: 'we are glad to notice that the Borough Council are losing no time in re-opening the literary departments oft he late School of Arts.

By November the Colonial Secretary had notified council that the free Library was endowed with £200. The chairman of the library committee recommended the 'clerk write to ascertain the best terms on which order for books could be expected'.[36] J. Harper's tender for making two cedar bookcases for £16 was accepted by council two weeks later on 26 November 1872. At this meeting, a draft code of by-laws for the free library was approved and sent to the Colonial Secretary for his approval. The by-laws for the regulation of the 'Armidale Free Library and Reading Room' were published in accordance with the requirements of the 1867 Municipalities Act in the *Government Gazette*, 10 January 1873. In February 1874 council rescinded No. 1 of the by-laws and placed the following times in operation:

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35 *Armidale Telegraph* quoted in the *Armidale Express*, 19 August 1871.

36 Armidale City Council minutes, 5 November 1872.

Library and Reading Room to be opened from 2 pm to 6 pm and from 7 pm yo 9.30 pm excepteing Sundays, Good Friday and Xmas. All other public holidays open from 7 pm to 9.30 pm.[37]

Because of improvements and purchases council took action in February 1873 to insure the building, furniture and books of the library for £1000 rather than the present £400.

At the council meeting on 1 September 1874, council received a donation of £50 from Henry A. Thomas of Saumarez for the library. By January 1875 journals ordered for the reading rooms included the *European Mail*, *Empire*, *Young Ladies Journal* and *Chamber's Journal*. Council approved £25 for library books in March 1875 and recommended that every quarter £5 worth of books be sent direct from London publishers. At that stage, Johnston Norris was caretaker receiving a salary of £8.

Council ruled in May 1876 that the library was not to be used for balls and was to be closed at normal times. In November 1877 there was a criticism of non-subscribers using papers in the reading room. A report from a special library committee concerning borrowing rights, rules, hours of opening, list of papers to be received and augmented was presented to council in March 1878. The report also recommended an additional room and the provision of suitable rooms for a reading room. Two months later the library committee recommended extensive improvements to the building in April 1878 to cost £75 including shutters for all windows; plastering of the hall and painting; three and half dozen cedar chairs; more lights; screening of stage; furniture for dressing room and £25 for new books.

C. Wilson tendered a letter of resignation as librarian in May 1878 and council took action to call tenders for the combined offices of librarian and custodian of the town hall.

Council was informed in August 1881 that a catalogue of books in the library was being prepared to ascertain property of library and for the efficient management of same. Monthly tickets of 1s were allowed for subscribers to use reading room and a sum of £25 was allocated for new books. Council determined in May 1882 that in future all books borrowed are to be properly recorded and a proper catalogue of books was to be prepared and printed. Opening hours were determined: 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.. The reading room was open from 10 a.m. to 9.30 p.m.

In March 1883 J.B. Fitzgerald resigned his position as librarian. That month a comprehensive library report was presented to council and council determined to call applications for a new librarian at £70 per annum. Hours for all days except Sunday were determined: 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.; 7 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. and reading

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37 Armidale City Council minutes, 3 February 1874.

room 10 a.m. Council also determined that the librarian's salary will be raised from £90 to £100 from 1 September 1884 and a motion was passed in April 1889 to combine the positions of town clerk and librarian.

In July 1890 council determined that all money received from the government that year should be spent on books and the *European Mail* was to be discontinued to be replaced by the *Daily Telegraph*, one of the Newcastle newspapers and the *Hillgrove Guardian. and New England Mining Gazette*. The town clerk was instructed in April 1891 to order one of the principal daily papers from Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide and was also empowered to buy suitable books as published. The library report was tabled in December 1891 and at that time periodicals purchased were *Harpers*, *Centennial*, *Scribners* and *Harpers Weekly* for the reading room. Other publications added were the *Scientific American* and *Argosy*.

The plan of additions and alterations to the library and reading room were tabled in June 1891 and the city engineer was asked to prepare specifications. The tender of W. Cunningham for £3045 15s was awarded in August. Council also allocated money for lights for the vestibule and reading room in July 1892.

The gasworks manager, Mr Rutter was asked to furnish designs for the gas lighting of the library and reading rooms in December 1891. Council also decided to call for applications from youths willing to act as assistant librarian for £25 annum and to purchase two or three sets of chess and draughts. The salary of the assistant librarian was increased to £30 in February 1894.

A special committee appointed to inquire into the finances of council presented its report in July 1893. In the report it was shown that many of the council functions reported a loss including the library and reading room with a loss of £190 10 11. By April 1895, concern was expressed over the role of council in managing the library and reading rooms. The point was well made by the *Armidale Chronicle*, 24 April which wrote:

> after trying experiment for a good many years, several prominent members of the Armidale Borough Council appear to have come to the conclusion that managing a library and reading room is not the council's strong point.

> Negotiations were current to transfer the management of this 'nondescript institution' to a citizens' committee. The reason given for this transfer was that operating a library was not a council function. It was a charge on the rates, and forced the clerk to work long hours. Though the library contained a 'very valuable collection' of books, lack of a system of classification and cataloguing severely restricted their use.

> Perhaps council interest could have been stimulated had there been a more concerned public. Unfortunately the apathy of the citizens permeated this, as other aspects of local government ...

A deputation from the School of Arts library committee was received by council in June 1895 and an agreement reached for council to relinquish control. The library was to be handed over to the School of Arts Committee who were to pay a rent of £1 per year and council was to give the committee £25. The School of Arts was granted permission by council to erect 'a billiard room at the rear and adjoining the library'[38] in April 1897.

In November 1897 an application was received from the Undersecretary of Lands for the surrender of the deed of grant to council for the free library so that the property could be vested in the School of Arts. The council clerk was instructed to forward the document.[39]

The council meeting of 8 July 1902 received a letter from J.A. Glass, secretary of the School of Arts concerning books of the free library. It was moved that council take over books of the library and the School of Arts committee be requested to allow the bookcase containing the books to be removed at the same time. This action was confirmed in August and it was decided to remove the books to the council chambers. The books of the free library were stored in the School of Arts by July 1904. The books belonged to council and because of the shortage of shelving accommodation it was decided that the books be taken over by council.

At the council meeting on 14 November 1905, a letter was received by council from the honorary secretary of the School of Arts asking council 'to hand over the valuable books of reference, forming the nucleus of a free library'.[40] The matter was referred to Mayor Glass and Ald. Higinbotham to investigate. Two months later in January 1906, a report of the special committee recommended that the books be handed over subject to council's right to recall them at any time. The committee also requested the School of Arts take proper care and provide accommodation giving public access at all reasonable hours, free of charge. Books were to be placed in position to the satisfaction of council; they were not to be removed without consent of council and an inventory was to be taken.

The 1906 Act gave local authorities the power to establish municipal libraries unless a poll of voters decided otherwise. 'The 1919 act added the power to

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38 *Armidale Express*, 2 April 1897, p.4.

39 *Armidale Express*, 26 November 1897, p.5.

40 *Armidale Express*, 17 November 1905, p.3

subsidize library institutes providing library services and later to assume their control'.[41]

The unified front facade, with its fine cast-iron balustrade and frieze-work was built in 1915, when the School of Arts was re-organised as the Armidale Literary Institute. From that time the building housed the Municipal Library until the construction of the Memorial Library next door in 1954.[42]

In 1933 Ralph Munn of the Pittsburgh Carnegie Library and Ernest Pitt, Chief Librarian of the Victorian Public Library undertook the first survey of Australian libraries. The Munn-Pitt survey advocated the need for the establishment of free public libraries supported by rates. E.C. Sommerlad, M.L.C. proposed in the Legislative Council the establishment of libraries by the Public Library in strategic country areas in July 1934. The position was supported by the editor of the *Armidale Express*:, 9 July 1934: 'The project ... is one which should find favour ... and Armidale uniquely situated educationally, should be in the van in submitting a proposal which would convert a mere suggestion into an achievement'.

A proposal from the Carnegie Corporation to establish a new system of providing books for the reading public was placed before council in October 1937. It was intended to establish headquarters and several sub-centres throughout the State and Armidale was to become one of those centres. Although not a government scheme, the State Government lent its support but by November 'no determination had been made in the matter'.[43]

Despite opposition from some aldermen, council agreed to donate £25 to a central library scheme to be developed by the Department of Education. With support from the Parents and Citizen's Assocation, the department planned to appoint a teacher at a central school in Armidale and boxes of books were to be sent to district schools 'to promote recreational reading'.   The *Armidale Express*, 31 August 1938 supported the decision and commented: 'this gesture ... indicates an appreciation by the council of the cultural needs and demands of the people, and should inspire other citizens to finacially support the movement'.

Arising out of the report was the establishment of a Libraries Advisory Committee to inquire into the adequacy of public library services. The measure drafted by the committee became the 1939 Library Act. The Act provided for the creation of a library board of twelve appointed members for a period of four years and the Act could be adopted by resolution or a poll of electors. 'Subject to the

41   F.A. Larcombe, *The Advancement of Local Government in New South Wales 1906 to the Present. A History of Local Government in New South Wales Volume 3*, Sydney University Press in association with the Local Government Association of N.S.W. and Shires Association of N.S.W., Sydney, 1978, pp.423-424.

42   Museum Pamphlet, Folk Museum.

43   *Armidale Express*, 24 November 1937, p.8.

library by-laws any person could borrow books for reference on the premises and any resident or ratepayer for external use, without charge those classified by the librarian as being of literary, informative or educational value'.[44] Two or more councils were empowered to act jointly but the outbreak of War meant that the Act was not proclaimed until 1944.

The Armidale and District Progress Association urged the City Council in February 1944 to adopt the new Public Libraries Act, which provided a subsidy for local government bodies to establish libraries. Ninety one people associated with Armidale educational institutions signed a petition presented to council in April to establish a public library and council formed a sub-committee to investigate the matter. An invitation was extended in July to the Director of Education to attend a meeting in Armidale to discuss question of establishing a free library. Then in August the N.S.W. Library Board informed council it was not in a position to provide finance towards the capital cost of a library building.

A public meeting convened by Mayor D.D.H. Fayle in June 1945 passed a resolution 'urging the Armidale City Council to adopt ... the Libraries Act, 1939 and to immediately take ... steps to establish a free public library'.[45] That month, the committee of the Armidale Literary Institute decided to recommend to the trustees that the block of land between the Institute and the Dumaresq Shire office should be handed over to the City Council for the erection of the War Memorial Library. The Armidale sub-branch of the R.S.S. and A.I.L.A. supported the move in July. That month, council decided to adopt the provisions of the libraries Act 1939 and appointed five delegates to meet with the Literary Institute, R.S.S. and A.I.L.A. and Dumaresq Shire Council.

Representatives of Armidale City Council, Dumaresq Shire, Armidale Literary Institute and the Armidale sub-branch of the R.S.S. and A.I.L.A. met in September 1945 to discussion the erection of a free library as a war memorial. At that stage council had adopted the Library Act and the shire was sympathetic towards a library but could forsee some difficulty if the Shire was expected to strike a special rate. R.B. Gillespie of the sub-branch informed the meeting that the League had drawn up a panel of architects prepared to prepare preliminary plans. The meeting resolved to ask council to approach D.H. Drummond to arrange a visit and an architect to prepare plans to be presented to a public meeting. Greatly concerned about the contribution required of £329 and the government subsidy, shire councillors felt 'that ratepayers of the shire would turn down any proposal to contribute to a municipal library'.[46]   Althought the shire was still keen to support the movement in December it sought information on its representation and voting power if it gave no financial or limited support.

44   Larcombe, op. cit., p.425.
45   *Armidale Express*, 8 June 1945, p.4.
46   *Armidale Express*, 17 September 1945, p.4.

The Chief Librarian J. Metcalfe informed council in October 1945 he was willing to visit Armidale with an architect and suggested that a move be made to establish the library before waiting for a war memorial building. Accompanied by an architect, the Chief Librarian Mr J. Metcalfe visited Armidale on 3 May 1946 to establish the war memorial library.

Council arranged in March 1946 'for an architect from a panel of returned soldier architects to visit Armidale and proper sketch plans and estimates'.[47] The Public Librarian Mr Metcalfe and architect J.C. Fowell met representatives of the City Council, Dumaresq Shire, Literary Institute and the Armidale sub-branch of the R.S.S. and A.I.L.A. in May 1946. Mayor D.D.H. Fayle was committed to a public library and 'the principal librarian wanted to set up a free library in the Literary Institute premises'.[48] The Literary Institute was not prepared to forego its building but was prepared to donate land for the memorial library.

Plans for the Memorial Library, estimated to cost £8750 were delivered in September 1946 to the town clerk by J.C. Fowell on behalf of the panel of architects. The plans provided for the complete rebuilding on the site occupied by the town hall, council offices, museum and literary institute. The first stage involved the building of a new supper room, kitchen and change rooms on the north-western corner of the town hall as well as minor changes to the town hall entrance. He recommended demolition of the literary institute to make way for the library and construction of a two storey buuilding for social activities to the north of the site.

A public meeting was held on 28 November 1946 to consider ways and means of raising £20 000 for the war memorial library and recreation block. Representatives from 21 Armidale organisations attended and approved the plans as suggested by the architects; approved launching of the scheme and appointed a general committee. The name, Armidale and Dumaresq Shire War Memorial was selected and D.H. Drummond was elected patron of the movement. The £20 000 library appeal opened on 21 February 1947. It was launched from Station 2AD by the mayor Ald. D.D.H. Fayle, the Hon. D.H. Drummond M.L.A., the Dumaresq Shire President Cnr. R.H. Williams and the chairman of the citizens committee, W.S. Forsyth.

In September 1947 the building, health and general purposes committee announced that a defintite recommendation on the question of preparing an honour roll 'is deferred for the time being' because 'a great deal of work and research is involved'.[49] However the committee pointed out the need for a paid secretary to ensure that the roll contained the names of all enlisted male and female personnel.

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[47]   *Armidale Express*, 29 March 1946, p.10.

[48]   *Armidale Express*, 6 May 1946, p.10.

[49]   *Armidale Express*, 1 October 1947, p.5.

Following a meeting of representatives of the Armidale Literary Institute, War Memorial Committee and the council's building, health and general urposes committee a detailed plan was presented to council on Monday 7 June 1948. The literary institute committee was prepared to make land available adjoining the institute for the erection of the library; fiction books would be handed over when the library was completed and they were prepared to modernise the building to harmonise with the new building.

By August 1948 a Sydney firm of chartered accountants had completed work on the proposed War Memorial Library and Civic Centre. The account was passed to the Armidale and Dumaresq Public War Memorial Fund for payment but this committee was of the opinion that the Armidale Council was responsible for payment of such accounts.[50]   Consequently the committte was asked to meet with council.

Council decided in September 1948 to adopt the Library Act, to take steps to levy a rate next year sufficient to produce £390 and to invite the Central Library to state what practical assistance would be offered once the scheme commenced. Council also decided to meet a delegation for the war Memorial Library Fund committee to discuss the matter of the architect's fees.[51]   R. McGreal, acting secretary for the Library Board of New South Wales congratulated council on the adoption of the Library Act. In October he offered to come to Armidale and help implement the Act. McGreal met council aldermen in November and a detailed report was tabled at the council meeting on Monday 6 December 1948.

Two weeks later a tentative agreement was reached between the City Council and the Literary Institute with the institute to : transfer its entire library of about 9 000 volumes as a free gift; provide temporary accommodation at an arranged rental; transfer vacant land for the War Memorial Library and transfer the present librarian to Council's staff. Council adopted the offer from the Literary Institute and formed a committee 'to deal with the establishment of a public library in Armidale'.[52]

Nearly £4000 had been raised by February 1949 but the chairman of the fund, W.S. Forsyth expressed 'disappointment in the committee's failure to maintain public interest during the year'.[53] The annual meeting adopted a suggestion that: the library be restricted to the vacant land offered by the literary institute and the recreation centre be deferred in view of the the offer by the institute to provide such a centre. Finally the council be asked to take over the fund appeal.

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[50]   *Armidale Express*, 15 September 1948, p.12.

[51]   *Armidale Express*, 29 September 1948, p.12.

[52]   *Armidale Express*, 22 December 1948, p.3.

[53]   *Armidale Express*, 21 February 1949, p.6.

Council took over the literary institute library and opened a free public library on 1 April 1949. Librarians from the New England University College, Armidale Teachers' College and Armidale Demonstration School were asked to assist in an advisory capacity. Although sympathetic, Dumaresq Shire rejected council's approach in April to join in the free library scheme. But in January 1950 the shire clerk 'forwarded a draft copy of a suggested agreement in connection with the free public library'.[54]

Following negotiations with the Literary Institute, council took over the Institute library by oral lease from 1 January 1950 for a period of two years. The library was closed for two weeks because of the amount of work entailed in renovating the interior of the building. That month part of the Institute's ceiling collapsed and council closed the hall whilst the rest of the ceilng was pulled down.

Mrs M. Forysth, formerly librarian for the Institute accepted the position of librarian with council. The Institute was now only to offer recreational facilities to its members and general public. The amount of work involved in renovating the interior of the building meant that the public library was not officially opened until Wednesday 1 February .

In May 1950 the secretary to the Public Library Board, R. McGreal announced during a visit to Armidale 'Armidale's public library, now a going concern with nearly 400 members and a wide selection of books compares more than favourably with other libraries in the state'.[55] The library planned to open a children's library on 1 October and also establish book deposit stations at the Wollomombi store, the Ebor store and the Hillgrove post office. Council spent more than £1000 in the library's operation by July; the library trust money was invested in war loans and handed over intrsuteeship to council [56] and membership had grown to nearly 5000.

In August council called for all names to be placed in the Honour Roll of all those who served their country in the last world war to be given to council by 30 September 1950. In April 1951 council shelved the war memorial library project because although £4000 was held in trust, the estimated costs of the building had increased from £12 000 to £18 000. In June the Armidale sub-branch called for a public meeting to discuss the situation. It was then determined that the library was to be known as the Armidale and Dumaresq Shire War Memorial Library.

The chairman of the library committee, Ald. Carey outlined to council a proposal in March 1953 to erect a War Memorial library building. He spoke of a building to cost £10 000 to allow for extensions and the expenditure of some £4000 held in trust by council. Council accepted an offer by the Government Insurance Office

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54 *Armidale Express*, 18 January 1950, p.5.

55 *Armidale Express*, 24 May 1950, p.8.

56 *Armidale Express*, 14 July 1950, p.8.

in June of a ten year loan of £6600 for construction of the war memorial library. That month the shire fully endorsed the proposal 'for payment by the Shire Council of £200 a year for 10 years towards loan repayment'.[57] Plans, drawn up by city engineer L. Brown were presented to Dumaresq Shire in February 1954. The shire disappproved of the proposed site and stated further negotiations should be made 'with the Literary Institute trustees, or the Chief Secretary to establish the library on the corner of Faulkner or Rusden Streets'.[58] Shire President W.B. Fooks believed the Literary Institute would remain as an 'eye-sore' after the new building was erected. Such action meant that the vice-chairman of the library committee, Ald. C. Carey and Councillor Fooks sought a meeting with the Literary Institute and was told the building could be obtained 'but only under conditions which could not at present be fulfilled'.[59]

Council decided to call tenders for the new public library building on Monday 17 May 1954 with the building to be financed by £6000 loan money with approximately £4000 raised for the erection of a war memorial. L. Brown, the building inspector prepared the plans to be erected on land between the Literary Institute and the Dumaresq Shire Council Chambers. The building was to be known as the Armidale and Dumaresq Shire War Memorial Library. Dumaresq Shire reluctantly approved the site but felt 'it still thought the site on the Literary Institute corner would have been more suitable'.[60]

Council was informed in June 1954 that the Chief Librarian, Mr Metcalfe was coming to Armidale at the invitation of the Vice Chancellor of the University of New England, Dr R.B. Madgwick. He offered to inspect the Armidale library and meet members of the library committee. That month, secretary of the Library Board, R. McGreal stated the Libary Board of N.S.W. proposes to give Armidale Public Library a permanent loan of 500 new books'.[61]

Twenty five year old camphor laurel trees were removed between the Literary Institute and Dumaresq Shire council chambers to make way for construction of the library in June 1954. C.F. Nott and Son was awarded the tender for construction of the library for £10 452 10s in July 1954.

Mayor Davis Hughes and Councillor W.B. Fooks called a public meeting on 12 August to re-form the Public Library War Memorial Committee. W.S. Forsyth, a former president of the committee informed the meeting that about £4500, proceeds of an earlier appeal was held in trust by Armidale City Council for the library building.

57 *Armidale Express*, 22 June 1953, p.3.
58 *Armidale Express*, 15 February 1954, p.6.
59 *Armidale Express*, 15 March 1954, p.4.
60 *Armidale Express*, 19 May 1954, p.4.
61 *Armidale Express*, 23 June 1954, p.6.

The State- Governor, Lieut- General Sir John Northcott laid the memorial stone of the library on 25 November. The memorial stone was made of Brisbane red granite engraved with "Lest We Forget" and the dates 1914-1918 and 1939-1945. A £10 000 appeal for the library was also launched on that date.

In February 1955 Alderman W.O. French, war compensation officer of the Armidale Sub-branch of the Returned Soldier's League called for a complete list of the Fallen. The definition of Fallen meant one who had died in action; one who had died of wounds or one who died on active service in a theatre of war overseas.[62] In conjunction with the Armidale sub-branch of the R.S.S. and A.I.L. of A. Council prepared a list of names who served in the 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 wars. The list formed the basis of the 'Book of Remberance' which was finally placed in the foyer of the Armidale and City Dumaresq Shire Memorial Library.

At the winding-up of the Library Appeal Committee in March 1955, it was revealed the committee aimed at raising £10 000 but their appeal only raised £1002. Consequently the costs of the library were now to be borne by the Armidale City Council and the Dumaresq Shire.

In January 1956 council informed the public that the list to form a "Book of Remembrance" was available for public viewing and called for any corrections and amendments. Major General Ivan Dougherty officially opened the library and unveiled the Roll of Honour on Saturday 5 May 1956. The occasion was attended by over 200 citizens, mainly relatives of the deceased, ex-servicemen and public personalities. J. McGreal, secretary of the New South Wales Library Board said the library 'was one of very few new public libraries to be built since the passing of the Libraries Act (Cootamundra and Orange were the others) and it was one of the very few rare examples of two councils coming together to run a joint library service'.[63]

Once the library was moved from the Literary Institute building to the premises alongside, the Handicapped Children's Association moved in. At the end of May 1956, Deputy Mayor, Ald. Ken Jones presented a special report to council on the purchase of the premises in Rusden Street for £2500 as a centre for the association. He commented, 'he made this report ... since the Association was formed as a result of the public meeting sponsored by the Council'.[64]

The vacating of the building raised the question of the building's future. The Institute committee transferred the building to council but according to the *Armidale Express*, 30 May 1956, 'The Armidale Sub-branch of the Returned Soldier's League has claim to the Soldier's Room'.

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[62] *Armidale Express*, 23 February 1955, p.3.

[63] *Armidale Express*, 7 May 1956, p.4.

[64] *Armidale Express*, 30 May 1956, p.8.

Miss V. McClymont was appointed as librarian-in-charge of the library in November 1958 and commenced duties in January 1959. She remained in that position until June 1961 when she was in turn replaced by Miss Enid Isaacs. Enid Isaacs retired in August 1984 after 23 years as Chief Librarian. The position was then taken by Jean McBride.

Preliminary work to establish a Regional Library Service commenced in 1961. In April 1962 the Library Board of N.S.W. made available information on the establishment of a Regional Library service on the New England Tablelands. At that stage, the total population assessed by the Board was 42 239 and the area was 9581 square miles. The Board recommended Armidale City Council contribute 12s a head and the other councils 6s. Thus suggested contributions by Armidale would be £7730 8s for a population of 12 884.[65] At the end of 1980 a Northern Tablelands Co-operative Scheme was established.

The first major extension of the library which occured in 1970 was made possible by grants from the Captain Cook Bicentenary project. The $24 000 contract for building of the two storey extension was awarded to Burton and Cashman in March 1970. Total cost including fittings and furnishings was estimated at $32 000. At that stage the State Government had provided a special grant of $5000, Dumaresq Shire $2000 and the R.S.L. $1000. The City Council was providing $25 000 from its loan program. The foundation stone was unveiled by the Deputy Premier and Minster for Eduaction, Mr C.B. Cutler on Wednesday 8 April. This extension designed by the city surveyor Don Crawford and named the Captain Cook Memorial Wing, was opened on 1 October. The extensions meant the demolition of the small hall for the use of the Retuned Services League.

Depot Libraries began in the early 1950s and were located in schools, post offices or residences. Because of the increased mining activities at Hillgrove during 1970 and the demand for books by construction workers and miners, a deposit station was established at Hillgrove. This later closed when the resident moved to Armidale and the mining declined. A mobile library began in 1972.

Council agreed to proposals to make alterations to the front and rear of the library in September 1976. Two weeks later, council decided to borrow $64 000 for extensions and renovations to the library. The tender was awarded to Babington and Son. Further extensions commenced in August 1977 because of overcrowding. These were completed in 1978 and included a new work room on the second floor and a new adult fiction section. In 1981 the International Year of the Disabled ramps were constructed to provide access to the disabled.

Early in the 1990s council purchased the old State Office Block in Faulkner Street adjoining its current building. This meant increased space for the workroom and to release space for Local History, Australiana and microfilm collections.

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65   *Armidale Express*, 19 April 1962, p.5.