

# The Armidale Express

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## Queen Elizabeth visited Armidale 50 years ago in 1970

• [Laurie Bullock](#)



From the Armidale Express archives

This week marks 50 years since the Queen visited Armidale.

Steve Aitkin was only five years old when the plane carrying Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip and Princess Anne landed at Armidale's airport. But he remembers it vividly.

"The amount of people there was huge," he recalled.

As he stood with his mother and sister (he said his father, a stock and station agent, would have been working), near where Sumarez Road is now, he saw the monarch's arrival in the Northern Tablelands.

Also in the crowd was Greg Dawson, who now works in advertising at *The Armidale Express*.

"The crowd was 10 deep, it was amazing," he recalled.

"The Queen was a lot younger then and so was Philip. He managed to walk down the gangplank quite sprightly. He charged down the stairs behind Liz, and Anne was there."

Looking back on the time half a century ago, Greg said society was very different then.

"It was an era of good manners," is how Greg described it.

"I was standing behind a chain wire fence. That fence was only about three and a half foot high, and that was security for the Queen's visit.

"Police were out on the tarmac, but no one tried to jump the fence, everyone waved their flags, and she waved back. Like I said, it was an era of good manners.

"From memory there might have been 10 cops on the runway, and that was it, and it would have been a crowd of a thousand to 1500 people there. And everyone was very, very respectful."

Steve, who sold his taxi business in Armidale and moved to Port Macquarie about 20 years ago, remembered the event after seeing the photographs *The Armidale Express* posted on Facebook this week. He said it was the photo from the airport which really jogged his memory.

"There were a good 1500 people waiting to see the motorcade go through," he said.

"She went down the highway (into Armidale). They went around town and stopped off at the teachers' college on the way through, and I believe they visited UNE as well."

They did.

Heading to the university, the Royals took the street now known as Queen Elizabeth Drive.

Banks of spectator seats had been erected beside the road so that veterans of both World Wars, as well as school children and the elderly could watch the vehicles with the waving Royals go past.

At the university the Queen, Philip and Anne visited Robb College where students from all over the campus packed every vantage point to see the regal visitors.

The Queen took a souvenir from the uni. A hand, fitted with a white chamois leather glove, was offered to her by a group of students at the entrance to the college.

Later it was back to the airport, where there were more people lining the route, and the Queen, Prince Philip and Princess Anne departed the city to continue their tour of the country.

## Students in Armidale answer royal command for "hand"

From Armidale Express archives



**GIVING ROYALS THE HAND:** Creators Graeme Hardley (Economics III), Melbourne, Ronald Morre (Arts III), Brisbane, and Anthoy Willsallen (AG. Es. II), Harden

*Armidale Express, Friday May 1, 1970*

The Queen asked for "The Hand" offered her at the Robb College reception on Tuesday as a souvenir of her visit to the University.

At her request, it was sent to Sydney by air yesterday for delivery to the R.Y Britannia.

"The Hand", fitted with a white chamois leather glove, was offered to her by a group of students at the entrance to the college. It was their silent comment on the ordeal that Royal visitors undergo everywhere in shaking hands with hundreds of people. "The Queen smiled at us and asked us to put it in her car," Graeme Hardley (Economics III ) told the Express. "Prince Philip shook 'the hand' and Princess Anne asked if we had borrowed one of her gloves," he added.

But the chauffeur would not let the students put "The Hand" in the Queen's Rolls Royce

# Not invasion of Cambodia-Nixon

WASHINGTON, Friday: United States and South Vietnamese troops have launched a combined attack in Cambodia against the headquarters controlling the entire communist military operation in South Vietnam, President Nixon told the American people last night (today A.E.S.T.).

The President, under heavy fire in Congress for the involvement of the U.S. in the Cambodian situation, said in a nationwide television address that the combined attack— which begins late last night A.E.S.T.— was not an invasion of Cambodia.

The troops involved would withdraw once communist forces were driven out of their sanctuaries and their military supplies were destroyed, the President added.

The Presidential report came as Saigon dispatches said that 200,000 South Vietnamese troops—recently estimated at between 800 and 15,000—were reported to be moving only about 100 miles today as it drove 25 miles into Cambodia.

**More Americans**  
In his prepared remarks, Mr. Nixon said that U.S. and South Vietnamese units "will attack the communist headquarters."  
White House officials said, however, that the operation had started at

about 7 p.m. (11 p.m. A.E.S.T.) last night. These officials said that the Allied target was about 20 miles inside Cambodia, in the so-called "fish bone" area adjoining the South Vietnamese province of Tay Ninh.

President Nixon gave no details of the combined attack, but officials here said that "several" thousand troops were involved—and that the force was composed of 80,000 South Vietnamese and 10,000 American troops.

President Nixon said that the attack he had authorized last night was "indispensable" for the continuing success of his program for withdrawing American troops from Vietnam.

Mr. Nixon said he had taken this action not for the purpose of extending the war into Cambodia, but to end the war in Vietnam and to win a just peace.

would do its best to provide small arms and other equipment which the Cambodian Army needed and could use for its defense.

### Millions of dollars

The new Cambodian regime, headed by General Lon Nol, had asked the U.S. to supply arms, reported to include anti-aircraft and planes worth a total of hundreds of millions of dollars.

President Nixon told his people last night (today A.E.S.T.) that massive amounts of military assistance could not be effectively used by the small Cambodian Army against the Indonesian threat posed by communist forces.

The aid to be provided by the U.S., he said, would be limited to the purpose of reaching Cambodia to defend its neutrality, and not to make the country an active battleground on one side or the other.

(A.A.P.)

# THE MEMORY LINGERS ON



The Queen, Princess Anne and Prince Philip pause on the gangway for a final farewell wave to the people of Armidale before their plane left for Sydney. On the right, seeing them off, is President of Damareq Shire, Cr. D. Cameron.

"And then the police came up and stopped us."

"And under the circumstances that wasn't surprising," Mr Sinclair-Wilson, the Master of Robb, commented laughing.

The Queen also asked for a letter from the students who brought "the Hand" to the reception giving their identity.

The letter, written by Graeme Hardley, reads:

*May it please Your Majesty.*

*I am greatly honoured by Your Majesty's request for the artificial hand which attracted some attention at the Royal Reception at Robb College yesterday.*

*It might please Your Majesty to learn that this "hand" was featured recently in a student display known as "Prosh" for the purpose of collecting funds towards sponsorship of Aboriginal Scholarships for tertiary education, a cause for which many Australian students feel much enthusiasm. On that occasion the "hand" was made by and was used by two of my*

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"Prince Philip shook the hand" and Princess Anne asked if we had borrowed use of her gloves", he added.

But the chauffeur would not let the students put "The Hand" in the Queen's South Korean.

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It might please Your Majesty to learn that this "hand" was featured recently in a student display known as "Prosh" for the purpose of collecting funds towards sponsorship of Aboriginal Scholarships for tertiary education, a cause for which many Australian students feel much enthusiasm.

On that occasion the "hand" was made by and was used by two of my contemporary students of Robb College, Messrs Ronald Moore and Anthony Willsallen.

I offer my most humble apologies for any unintended disrespect in the manner in which the Royal progress was impeded by the "hand" at yesterday's reception.

We members of Robb were all greatly honoured by Your Majesty's visit and interest and we are overwhelmed by the fact that our "hand" should be honoured as a Royal souvenir.



most, who collected the message and sent it on to the Royal yacht.

Featured are the members of "The Hand", Graeme Hardley (Economics III), Melbourne, Ronald Moore (Arts III) Brisbane, and Anthony Willsallen (Ag. Ed. III) of Brisbane.

**FORECASTS**

Forecasts for the 24 hours from 2 p.m. today are:

New South Wales: Dry and warmer; east coast of the State, a few showers along the North Coast, with moderate south-east winds; light variable winds elsewhere over the eastern half; low to moderate swell.

Northern Tablelands: Shower or two in east with cool south-east winds, but mostly dry; sunny and mild in west after early frost.

WATER	Sea	Min	Max
Wed.	6.5	27	31
Thurs.	6.4	25	30
Friday	6.4	24	28

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