

# *Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.*

'Dumaresq Chambers', Corner Faulkner St and Cinders Lane, Armidale  
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## **Newsletter for March 2023**

The next meeting of the Society will be held on **Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> March, 5.30pm at the Imperial Hotel**. The speaker will be **Ron Vickress**, whose multifaceted career has included being a submariner in the Royal Australian Navy, enlisting at the age of 17 and serving on the corvette HMAS 'Pirie' for the duration of WWII. A teacher, author, playwright, who has written, directed and performed in many productions, he is the recipient of the 2023 Senior/Elder Armidale Citizen of the Year.

**Sale of Books:** David Betts brings a small selection of surplus books to the meetings at the Imperial Hotel. These can be perused and purchased and as very few of these are readily available and most are out of print, they are often greatly appreciated.

**Dumaresq Chambers:** We continue to have visitors to our two excellent exhibitions and requests for information and use of materials at the Chambers. We are also the recipients of some new furnishings for the Centre. A few journals (no. 65) remain to be picked up.

**Museum of Education:** The buildings have been painted and the transformation is quite dramatic. The veranda on the former High School building requires replacement and it is hoped that appropriate materials can be readily obtained for this work.

**UNE Heritage Centre:** There is still no firm date for opening.

**Armidale Folk Museum:** The Museum is open 7 days a week from 11am to 2pm, currently with an excellent exhibition, 'Wedding Belles', featuring wedding dresses of known and unknown origins, displaying a wide diversity of designs. It is well worth a visit.

**A Trip Down Memory Lane:** Talks given at the March meetings each decade. Many of these can be accessed in the ADHS Journal of the appropriate year.

## **Vale Ross Lamont.**

**1963:** R.B. Walker – Discovery and Settlement of New England to 1848

**1973:** E.S. Elphick – The Origins of Armidale Teachers' College

**1983:** J.S. Ryan – Educational and Philosophical Experiences of R.B. Madgwick prior to 1947

**1993:** G.J. Wilson – History of the Armidale Brewery 1882-1917

**2003:** M. Jordan – Bastard Hybrids: The Foundation and Development of the Faculties of Rural Science and Agricultural Economics at UNE 1954-1975

**2013:** Jillian Oppenheimer OAM – The White Family ('Booloominbah')

**Snippets of History: ROBERT FURNIFULL (1823-1878), Armidale's first chemist.**

Robert experienced three major events in 1848. In February, as a druggist of Lower George Street, Sydney he was declared insolvent (debts 167 pounds, assets 67 pounds); he married Mary Ann Griffin in Sydney; they ended up in Armidale where Robert opened a chemist shop in Beardy St Section 1, Lot 3, (also selling books, stationary, violins, music boxes and Clapshaws cricket bats), roughly where Bing Lee is today.

During the 1850s while trading as R. Furnifull, Chemist and Druggist he was involved in local affairs and successfully applied for an Auctioneer's Licence (1854), joined forces with James Hamilton to form Hamilton and Furnifull, Auctioneers. He was a member of the committee and strong campaigner for a local newspaper, which activities culminated in Craigie and Hipgrave publishing the first edition of *The Armidale Express* in April 1856. He was secretary of a group working for a short route to the coast; involved in the foundation of Armidale Lodge of Unity no. 865; supported the election of Hargreave as candidate for the New England and Mcleay District (MM 1/2/1856), until switching his allegiance to Rusden (*Empire* 6/8/1857) and was against the annexation of any part of New England to the Moreton Bay District.

In May 1857, the auctioneering partnership was dissolved and in September James Hamilton died, leaving a wife and seven children. A fund was set up to liquidate the small amounts owing and to enable Mrs Hamilton to buy land, fence it, build a hut and sow a crop to provide for her family. The fund provided her with four- roomed hut at Kelly's Plains. At this time Furnifull advertised the sale of his shop and household goods with no reserve as he was leaving the district after nine years in business as a chemist. W.H. Mutlow took over the pharmacy and, until early 1858 was in partnership with Furnifull, but Dr West moved into Furnifull's house at the rear of the shop.

By December 1857, Furnifull was the proprietor of the Union Inn on Sydney Flat at the Rocky River goldfields but by July is again insolvent. At a debtors meeting (AE 9/10/1858) Furnifull was allowed to retain only clothing and bedding. A fund was set up for the Furnifulls in 1859 with the proviso that they leave Armidale to prevent a repetition of 'the call'. They were to move to Maitland, but an Armidale man apparently received a letter from a Maitland connection of Mrs Furnifull's that this was, for some reason, inadvisable. They indicated they could buy a house on land at Bendemeer with the seventeen pounds and eleven shillings which had been collected.

AE 30/6/1860 - Mr and Mrs Furnifull had looked after a Mr Lisle with a broken leg and in AE 28/3/1863 was a letter of thanks to Mr and Mrs Furnifull from James Andrews for their care of his mother over the three months she was in hospital. 11/7/1863 it was reported that they were leaving the Armidale and New England Hospital, (which was then in Donnelly St). In June 1863 an advertisement for a married wardsman, possibly for their replacement. Insolvent again in December 1864, the Furnifulls next appear in Walcha, Robert as Poundkeeper (1868, 1874), Church Warden, chemist (1870), JP, auctioneer, on the Public School Board, and in 1875 was Coroner. He died in 1878 aged 58.

Of their seven children, Marianne married Robert Craigie and Benjamin became licensee of the Walcha Road Hotel. Four of Benjamin and Annie Farrell's daughters became nurses, two serving overseas in WWI and Jane became the first Matron of the Armidale Teachers' College Girls Hostel at 'Girrahween', (renamed 'Smith House') and in 1933 was appointed first Matron of 'Coventry Home' for orphaned and destitute children on Kelly's Plains Road, Armidale.