

# Armidale and District Historical Society Inc.

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## Newsletter for July 2024

The next meeting of the Society will be held on **Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> of July at the Royal Hotel and will incorporate the 2024 AGM.** Elections will be held and nominations for executive and committee members will be welcomed.

The speaker will be **Pearl Moffat** whose interesting life has included experiences of the early days of commercial flights with East-West airlines. Her talk is :

### **Changes in our time and Fairy Tales we have seen Come True**

Visitors are welcome and, if staying for dinner, order your meal prior to the meeting.

**Historical Relics Competition:** Entry forms will be available at the meeting and at Dumaresq Chambers. Completed information and photographs of items will be accepted from Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July until 20th August.

**AGM:** Membership renewal forms for 2024/5 were sent out with the last newsletter and will be available at the July meeting and at Dumaresq Chambers. Thank you to all who have renewed and/or joined. We value the support, friendship and the wealth of historical that can be gained from members of the Society.

**Closure of the Wicklow Hotel:** The surprise sprung on Armidale of the possible closure of the Belgrave Theatre is followed by the closure of the Wicklow Hotel. Hopefully the hard-won Belgrave with new ownership will continue to serve Armidale with films - but the Wicklow? In past time pubs, were well set up for accommodation and often became boarding houses. At the entrance to Armidale the Wicklow is an important part of the streetscape. Meanwhile, the Imperial Hotel remains 'closed for refurbishment' and the Catholic Cathedral is closed and completely enveloped in spectacular scaffolding awaiting its repairs.

**A Trip Down Memory Lane:** Topics for July meetings each decade:

1964: Mr L. Gilbert – From Cabbagetreepalm to Cast Iron Lace

1974: Dr L.A. Gilbert – Some Aspects of the Life and Work of the late Eric Dunlop

1984: Mr David Kent – Remounts for the Light Horse

1994: Carl Bridge – Manning Clark, Friend or Historian

2004: Hugh Connock – Charles Ralph Blaxland of 'Sturry' Armidale

2014: Robert Moen and David Moen – Two Stories about 'Tilbuster' in the 1850s

**Snippets of History:** The **WICKLOW HOTEL**. There has been a pub on the NE corner of Marsh and Beardy Streets since at least the 1870s when it was the **Harp of Erin**, with **George Quinlin** the owner and licensee **John Murray**, then **John McGoldrick**. **Matthew Butler** took charge in 1880 and it (diplomatically) became the **Shamrock Rose and Thistle**. In 1884 **James Nairn**, purchased the hotel for 1020 pounds from Quinlin, ran it with his wife, **Roseanna** and they re-named it the **Albion Hotel**. Albion ('white', which apparently signified Great Britain, possibly as it was identifiable from afar as the white cliffs of Dover). James was Mine Host until his death in 1896 and it was not until 1951 that a new licensee decided on the next name change – the **Wicklow**. In earlier days when the Wicklow was colourfully painted, it was widely known as '**The Pink Pub**.'

The first-known owner, **George Quinlin** was son of English-born **Michael Quinlin and Margaret**, sister of Armidale businessman **James Starr**. In the 1850s, having purchased considerable amounts of land, Michael and his mother and brother erected buildings and set up businesses. Michael's mother and brother died intestate and he inherited the considerable Quinlin estate. When Michael died intestate in 1855, his oldest son, four-year old **George** inherited and his mother Margaret was legally prevented from managing the businesses. She remarried. In 1870 there is a record of **George Quinlin** being a teacher at the Armidale Public School – he would then have been 21 and at last able to accept his considerable inheritance. In the 1880s he sold a large area of frontage to Beardy Street (north side of the East Mall near the Faulkner Street corner), cottages in Beardy Street near the racecourse and an acre of land adjoining Nairn's **Albion Hotel**. He had a real estate business in Faulkner Street and is next found as the well-respected Assistant Council Clerk, a position he held for nine years until resigning in 1909 due to failing eyesight. He died in Sydney in 1918 after a 'prolonged illness' and is buried with his wife (d.1908) in Armidale Cemetery.

**James Nairn** ran a coach between Armidale Walcha and Uralla with 4-5 horses in the 1870s, but was declared insolvent and sold the business in 1880. By July 1882 he successfully applied for a Colonial Wine Licence for a house in Beardy Street opposite Tatts Hotel and by March 1883 had a new coach licence. In November 1883, C.A. McKosker transferred the licence of the **Shamrock Rose and Thistle** to James, who gave up the Beardy Street house licence and sold the shop and all the stock therein. A small hiccup saw James and his wife in court in December 1883 for selling liquor on a Sunday night to non-travellers or lodgers, but he survived this charge and purchased the pub, now the **Albion** in 1884. Once the railway reached town in 1883, James met every train with his coach. L. Gream ran livery stables beside the hotel and sales were held in the adjoining yards. The business was going well until in May 1887 when James suffered a stroke when alighting from his coach and a series of strokes thereafter. He died in January 1896. Roseanna ran the hotel until in 1910 **Richard Andrew** took over the licence and after a series of licensees (including **H.W. Fittler** 1912-19 and 1936-7), it was Edward Flood who changed the name to the **Wicklow** in 1951 and he died soon after.

The hotel has had numerous licensees since it became the **Wicklow**. The awnings were removed, along with those of many Armidale buildings (including the **Minto**, once the **Central Hotel**). This totally altered its appearance and following its pink era, it was extensively renovated in the late 1900s. The doors have closed on at least 154 years and four different names of the Wicklow Hotel's recorded history.