

RURAL FRINGE

Journal of the Hall district

VOLUME 24 ISSUE 6

December 2017



Dagmar Parer Watchful Eyes

Avid readers of the *Rural Fringe* will recall a series of articles over 2007 to 2009 under the by-line *Watchful Eyes*, designed to increase local popular appreciation of the range of flora and fauna of the Wallaroo area.

It turns out that *Watchful Eyes* was Dagmar Parer. She entitled the series '*Garden Visitors*', aiming to provide a light-hearted introduction to species that she had observed in or from the garden of the property in Wallaroo where she lived with her husband Eric Wainwright. Dagmar died tragically from mesothelioma in November 2014, at the age of sixty-six. Eric has pulled together the collection of twenty of her *Rural Fringe* articles into a book in memory of his beloved wife. This enchanting book is called *Visitors to an Australian Garden*.

Dagmar was trained as a biologist at the Australian National University in Canberra. The early arrival of her first daughter

precluded her dream of a career as a research scientist, but she then worked for some years in the Division of Wildlife Research at the CSIRO, and maintained a lifelong interest in the natural environment. Through her

mindfulness training over nearly 30 years before her death, she became particularly observant of the world around her, which she indulged in her daily walks around wherever she was living.

We are extremely lucky to have *Visitors to an Australian Garden* available to us all online on the Village of Hall and District Progress Association website at www.hall.act.au. I encourage you to have a look, it is a lovely piece of work. At the *Rural Fringe* we feel truly honoured to have provided a vehicle for Dagmar's work to reach the community of Hall and the district. We are delighted to bring you an extract from the book, *The Kookaburra and Killer Brown Snake*, on page 20 of this edition.



Out and about ... about



Remembrance Day in Hall



Steven raises the flag



Hall Street Party



George Southwell demonstrates wood chopping



Hercules makes appearance at Hall Street Party



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Wattle Park Church



Wattle Park Church will be holding a

Christmas Twilight Market

in the Church grounds

Saturday 16 December

6.00 – 9.00 pm

All welcome.

Great chance to get last minute things for Christmas:

Hand made arts and craft as well as scrumptious Christmas cakes and biscuits.

Christmas Services are :

Christmas Eve Sunday **10.30 am** only

Christmas Day Monday **10.00 am** only

Important to note that there will be NO evening service on **Sunday 24 December**



The ACT has a helpful website at Access Canberra where you can explain what needs fixing and someone will come and deal with it. It seems to work!

accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/forms/fixmystreet/



If it relates to an *urgent* safety issue, please ring Access Canberra on **13 22 81** (available 24/7).

St Michael & All Angels Anglican Church



Many of us roll our eyes at the early appearance of Christmas decorations in the shops – often soon after Fathers' Day in September. And then the hot cross buns and Easter Eggs are on display only a few days after Christmas! In the Church calendar, we have a much more gentle preparation for and longer lasting celebration of Christmas!

The four weeks leading up to Christmas are the season of *Advent*, and it is the beginning of the Church year. It is a time of expectation and anticipation, preparing for the coming of Jesus.

Christmas Day is of course a highlight in the celebration of this joyous time, but it is also the beginning of the Twelve Days of Christmas, which lasts from Christmas Eve until 6 January, which is called *Epiphany*, and marks the time when the Wise Men visited the baby Jesus, and also Jesus' baptism many years later.

Everyone is invited to enjoy the anticipation of this wonderful season, by sharing some or all of the parish events we are planning:

Service of Lessons and Carols

Sunday 3 December at 7.00 pm

The true story of Christmas is given in six short readings and favourite carols during this traditional, candle-lit service.

Join us afterwards for a cuppa – weather permitting

Carols at Charnwood

Saturday 9 December 7.00 – 8.30 pm

St Barnabas, Charnwood Place, Charnwood.
Carols in the carpark at the other church in our parish

Christmas Eve at 10.00 pm

Christmas Day at 10.00 am

Our regular services at 11.00 am each Sunday, with Starshine club Sunday School during school term time.

Corner of Loftus and Victoria Steets, Hall

For more information please contact Beryl **0408 488 526**

Remembrance Day in Hall

Remembrance Day Address 2017

by Phil Robson

On 11 November 1918 the guns were silenced and WWI was over leaving over 61 000 Australian men and women dead and 156 000 wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. On this day each year we remember all the Australians who sacrificed their lives in all conflicts.

Today I would like to talk about our community and the effect the war had on it. Hall District is typical of many of the small rural districts where men who volunteered came from. From this district there were 39 men who went off to war and 3 that did not return, Morley Brown, Clyde Hollingsworth and Malcolm (Mack) Southwell. The Memorial Grove here is a living memorial to these men and honour boards also hang in the old Hall School recording all their names.



I would like to also give recognition to those who were left behind particularly the women, the mothers, sisters and wives of the men who went to war.

Imagine for a moment how these women were living with the constant hope that their men were safe and they would not receive the dreaded telegram advising that they had been killed, missing or wounded. In their



absence, the women had to take on all the roles of the men including running the farms, managing the local businesses and teaching school children for example.

The churches also provided support to the local families where

each week they would join together praying for their safe return of their men and were also on hand to give comfort when needed.

There is a rich history in the village of the huge amount of work done by these women joining with the rest of the Hall community in carrying out work in support of the soldiers. Two Red Cross branches were set up to support the families, a Comfort Fund where fund raising activities were organised where money was raised to support the War effort and comfort packages were made up in the local Hall to send to the soldiers. Socks were knitted at a phenomenal rate to help the soldiers who were fighting trench warfare in miserable conditions to help those suffering trench feet. The children from Hall School under their teacher Charles Thompson also contributed to this effort.

At the end of the war, although the fighting had ceased, work continued in this community.



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photos supplied by 'The Wandering Goose'

The Hall Returned Soldiers Presentation Committee organised a memorial plaque that hangs in the school and raised funds to present each returned soldier with a gold chain and a medallion. These were presented at large Welcome Home events for the soldiers and the community showing openly their appreciation for their efforts in fighting for the allied cause.

In 1919 a special community event took place with the planting of this Memorial Grove. Also a Peace Tree was planted at the School by his Susannah Hollingsworth as a dedication to her Grandson Clyde Hollingsworth, one of the men who did not return. Also pine trees were planted around the school grounds for each of the Red Cross volunteers from the district. These trees remain today as a living reminder.

On their return many of these men were physically, mentally and emotionally broken. They had changed dramatically from the men that went away to war. They found it hard to return to a normal life having witnessed horrendous sights in the war that they couldn't share with their families.

So on this Remembrance Day we remember the men and women who fought and let's also remember the communities at home who supported their fine and courageous efforts.

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*Please slow down
on Victoria Street!*



There have been several reported incidents of vehicles exceeding the speed limits in the village, particularly up and down Victoria Street. Please could all of us be particularly careful in this regard?

As a related issue, any and all suggestions for enforcing adherence to the speed limits would be appreciated. Please send these suggestions to the Village of Hall and District Progress Association at info@hall.act.au

Children's bike track



As many people in the community would be aware, there has been a lot of discussion around the Children's Bike Track project. Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) recently conducted an online survey to obtain community views on the project. They have advised the following results:

68 responses were received, indicating:

- 92% of respondents support the idea of a trail;
- 84% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the proposed location; and
- 86% of respondents would not change the design.

In addition, TCCS received 31 written responses from the community in support of the concept and four written responses of non-support prior to and during the survey period.

We are grateful for the continued support of many people in the community and the Hall Rotary Club. We are confident it will be a wonderful amenity for all to enjoy for years to come.

Hall Ball Committee

(Trudy Mansfield, Angie Hazlehurst, Jenny Berron, Patrice Manson, Daniel Macpherson)



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Membership drive

Have you ever thought about how Hall village has come to be what it is today? Maybe you would like to get more involved in our little special part of the world? The



Village of Hall and District Progress Association is a volunteer organisation which aims to accommodate discussions on the future of Hall and allows a voice for our village and the wider community with government. VHDP is a fantastic way to keep informed and connected with the goings-on in Hall and the surrounding district. With membership only \$10 per year per person, why not support the local community and keep informed. If you would like to talk to someone about joining please get in contact with either myself or our secretary Bob Richardson. Otherwise please check out the website www.hall.act.au and follow the links to the Progress Association Page and a membership form is available there. We can be contacted via telephone or email.

With thanks,

George M Southwell,

VHDP Committee Member

George Southwell 0429 838 345

george.southwell@raywhite.com

Bob Richardson 0407 071 245

richwhite@bigpond.com



Did you know you can read the Rural Fringe online? Available in the documents section on the Village of Hall and District website at www.hall.act.au. It is a fabulous website with upcoming events, local news, photos, membership forms and nomination forms for the Village of Hall and District Progress Association and lots more ...



Beginner piano lessons!

Come and learn on a baby grand piano with a level 6 teacher → mature 15 year-old young lady, with a WWVP card. Lessons are offered for grades preliminary & 1 here in Hall Village.

If you're interested, please contact Angie – 0439 306 080



Bike Track Community Consultation

The Village of Hall and District Progress Association warmly invites interested members of the village of Hall and district community to participate in a community consultation about the proposed Children's Bike Track.

Wednesday 13 December

5.00 to 8.00pm

at the

Pavilion, Gladstone Street

feel free to come at any time between 5 and 8pm to have your say.

The consultation will be led by a professional facilitator Michael Pilbrow.

Please feel free to email Michael ahead of the consultation:

michael.pilbrow@strategicdevelopment.com.au

if you have background material that you think should be considered.



*Christmas is coming,
the geese are getting fat*

*Please put a penny
in the old man's hat*

*If you haven't got a penny,
a ha'penny will do*

*If you haven't got a ha'penny,
then God bless you!*

Hall Honeys

Leigh Crocker, of Hall Honeys, has designed and built a bespoke hive for his bees, which has perspex viewing sides.



Ken Spence, Bob Richardson and Dennis Greenwood plant trees at Hall show ground

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'A tale of two villages'

Museum volunteers are currently hard at work on a new display which will be launched during the 2018 ACT Heritage Festival in April next year. The aim is to tell the story of how Hall came to be, starting with Aboriginal inhabitation of this land. We have decided that visitors to the Hall museum and heritage centre ought to be able to get information and learn about the history of the village – so this will be a permanent display. The first European settlement at 'Palmerville' on Ginninderra Creek led to the growth of a little village at Ginninderra, which in turn was superseded by Hall following its proclamation in 1882. Please let us know if you think you have information or artefacts that might be included in this display. The display is being curated by Allen Mawer.

Pioneer family visitors

The centre continues to attract a significant number of pioneer family descendants. In recent weeks we have been pleased to welcome descendants of the Winter, Gozzard and Morris families whose forbears settled in the area north of Well Station. On 3 November Alastair Crombie visited the site of 'Rosewood' homestead, between Hall and Fraser on the CSIRO farm, with Helen and Marion Warman, descendants of William Hatch who farmed there for some 60 years until his land was resumed by the Commonwealth. The centre is gradually building a collection of material

relating to the district's pioneer families. If you think you may be able to help build this collection, please do let us know. We are able to copy and return print items and images promptly.



Pioneer descendants Margaret and Bill Morris, Marion and John Gozzard, niece Brianna were recent visitors to the centre.

Vision renewed

We have recently been through the exercise of reminding ourselves why we exist and what we are trying to achieve:

Vision The Hall School Museum and Heritage Centre will become widely recognised and respected as the leading centre for the collection, conservation,

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I Can Love Alone
by **Gregory Piko**

I can love the cold
stillness of that moment at dawn
when the day and I seep
into each other
like the painter's bamboo trailing
down to the distant stream.
I can love the warm
embrace of the sea's caring waves
as they break and foam
softly on the sand
like the scalloping of a shawl
drawn about my shoulder.
A breath of wind
can colour my silence.
I can love alone.

*First published in Shot Glass Journal #21,
January 2017*

*Gregory is a local Yass Valley resident
Please visit www.gregorypiko.com*

museum

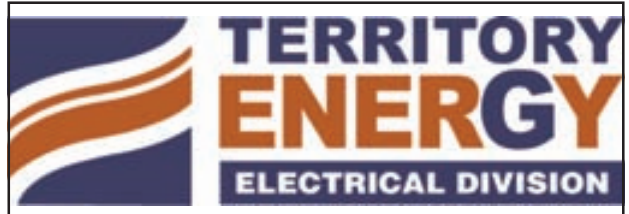
study and display of materials and stories concerning the history and development of the Hall – Ginninderra district, including early public schooling.



Mission

1. Maintain active custodianship of the 1911 school museum and its heritage setting, and develop a repository of information about early public schooling in the district.
2. Carry out systematic acquisition, conservation and management of materials, consultation and research, to describe and explain the Aboriginal, and later settlement history of the district.
3. Increase public awareness, knowledge and understanding of the history of the district through research and publication, displaying material from the collection, attracting visitors, educational programs and other forms of public access.

As 'Ginninderra' seems to stand for different things to different people, we have appended to this statement Lyall Gillespie's definition: 'At the time of settlement, Ginninderra district spread from the Murrumbidgee River on its western fringe eastwards beyond Mulligans Flat and from Upper Canberra on its southern boundary northwards to Bedellick on the Yass Road, encompassing the Parishes of Bedulluck, Canberra, Gorooyaroo and Weetangera' (Gillespie, L. L. 1992. *Ginninderra: Forerunner to Canberra*. The Wizard (Canberra local history series): Campbell, p.xxi).



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Out and about . . . about

Blessing of the animals at St Michael's fete in October



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I'd like to offer my thanks for those who have continued to visit Geranium House throughout 2017. It's been a great year and your support has allowed us to donate to charities including *Cure Brain Cancer*, *Breast*



Cancer Foundation and the Spring Range Fire Brigade fundraisers. We look forward to helping you get ready for a beautiful Christmas with specials for both face and body, both online and instore; if you are not sure of what to give, consider our beautifully packaged Gift Vouchers which can be redeemed on products and/or treatments.

For further assistance, please email or call. Warmest wishes for a safe and happy Christmas.

Sue Butt



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1882

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HALL



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OPENING SOON

New Hall Pub

Work is underway on a new Hall venue. *1882 Bar & Grill* will open its doors in the coming weeks, offering a new destination for locals and visitors alike.

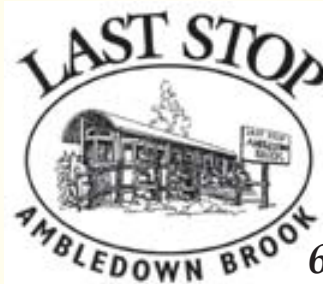
1882 is the brainchild of sisters Nikki and Cindy Goodwin. With young families themselves, they're looking to build a place they'd be happy to take their families for a Sunday lunch or midweek wood fired pizza. There will even be an App so you can order and pay for a takeaway pizza on the way home!

A nod to the year Hall was founded, *1882* aims to be a newfound favorite. A place where friends and family can meet and enjoy good food, great local wines and craft beer.

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Christmas Party
- all welcome
Sunday 17 December
4 pm
Pateman's Lane Fire Shed



The crowd at the inaugural Furies Fantastic Quiz Night – a night of community engagement and fun hosted by Springfield and Murrumbateman Brigades. (photo courtesy Murrumbateman RFS Facebook)

Springfield Brigade has been busy with our community engagement strategy. Following the great success of the Inaugural Furies Fantastic Quiz Night, where amongst the quiz questions and lucky door prizes we included information about fire preparedness and bushfire safety planning, we held a Shed Open Night as part of the RFS Get Ready Weekend.

Over 80 people attended our two Fire Sheds. We welcomed some new members and want to thank all the people who came along, asked questions and went home with a heap of bushfire preparation information. A big thank-you also to Jacko's Pizza for putting on the pizzas!

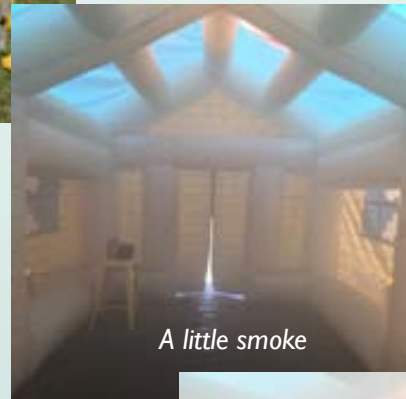


Shed open night



The Smoke House

Then in October, Springfield Brigade, along with many other Brigades, attended the Murrumbateman Field Days to help out. A highlight of our involvement this year was the RFS Smokehouse complete with smoke machine.



A little smoke



A lot of smoke

Just some of the 80 people who came to the Springfield Shed Open Night as part of the RFS Get Ready Weekend - a great turnout. Photo: Karen Shaw.

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The Smokehouse is a very colourful inflatable house. Once inside, children and adults gain a very realistic experience of what it might be like to find yourself in a house full of smoke.

Many of the children were initially quite nervous about entering – a sober reminder that fire and smoke can be very frightening. However with encouragement most were able to go through and after doing so once, most wanted to go again. Hopefully the children will never have occasion to recall the safety message of drop down low and go, go, go but if they do their time in the Smokehouse might just help them be a little less afraid and remember what to do.

Then in November Springfield Brigade hosted a visit from the Amaroo Scouts. Seven members of the group came along and as the photos show they were very interested in the Brigade activities and were keen to try out the fire hoses and learn more about the fire trucks and the equipment we use.



▲ Members of the Amaroo Scouts Group from left to right: Charles, Cade, Jaimie, Richelle, Isam, Aiden and Thomas



▲ Springfield Captain Rod Tarlinton supervising some basic training for Aiden on the fire hose



▲ The visit was organised by Richelle (R) pictured here with fellow scout Jaimie, in the Springfield Water tanker.

The RFS has been forecasting a long, hot summer ahead and we ask everyone to take the time to consider and review your Bushfire Survival Plan. Make sure you talk it through with everyone in your house. Be sure to talk it through with your kids because if they get home on the school bus before you get home from work, they might be at home alone and need to know what to do.

As we are now in the Bushfire Danger period you require a permit to light a fire. For permits in the Springfield area, please contact our Permit Officers **Rod Tarlinton** on **0418 444 325** or **Mark Thornthwaite** on **0428 487 179**. Please note that 5 days notice is needed.

I want to wish all a safe and restful summer and please feel do come along to our last community engagement event of the year – our Christmas party – the details are at the head of this article.

Help us help you to stay safe!

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Is acid eating you up?

All living things function best within a specific acid or alkaline range (or pH). A pH of 7 is neutral, 0 to 7 is acidic and 7 to 14 is alkaline (or base). Gardeners know that for plants to thrive they need to grow in soil that's their ideal pH, if the soil is too acidic or alkaline then the plant will never reach its potential and may even die. The same applies to our bodies.



We are acid producers. Our normal metabolic processes create acid. What's important is the degree of acid being produced and how much capacity we have to counteract it. Our modern lifestyle and diet tends to increase our acid load, which can cause chronic mild metabolic acidosis. This type of acidosis isn't immediately life threatening, blood tests are still in the normal range, and if there are any symptoms they may be vague (muscles fatigue easily, shortness of breath, headache, general weakness, reduced appetite, nausea, confusion). Unless you are vegan, you are at risk of developing health issues if acid balance isn't well controlled.

The pH of our blood is very tightly regulated, if it moves outside of 7.35 to 7.45 then you are can be in a world of trouble very quickly, to the point of it being life threatening at less than 6.8 or

more than 7.8. The body will do whatever it can to get the pH back to around 7.4. It will scavenge the bones and muscles for the minerals needed to counteract acidity.

We have chemical buffers in the fluids inside and outside body cells to quickly regulate acid balance, taking just seconds. The lungs and kidneys also regulate

our blood pH. When it is too acidic (eg when lactic acid is produced during exercise) the breathing rate increases to exhale more carbon dioxide, lowering acidity within minutes. The kidneys regulate the urinary excretion or retention of hydrogen ions (acid) and bicarbonate (alkaline), achieving balance can take several days. Bicarbonate is the main acid buffer in the blood.

Those with particular health conditions really need to be aware of, and take steps to resolve, their acid imbalance to prevent a decline in their health. Some conditions can cause imbalances or make existing imbalances worse. Those most at risk are/have:

- Smokers or a significant history of smoking
- Gout, uric acid kidney stone producers
- Osteoporosis or osteopenia
- High parathyroid hormone levels
- Panic attacks
- Excessive exercisers
- Diabetes/metabolic syndrome
- High blood pressure
- Chronic kidney disease
- Lung disease
- Inflammation



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What we eat is a major contributor to the acid balance in our body. Each food has its own acid/alkaline impact in the body. Essentially, high protein foods (meat, hard cheeses, egg yolks, grains) have an acidic effect on the body and vegetables and fruits have an alkalising effect, or negative acid load. Potential renal acid load (PRAL) food lists have been developed, listing the acid load of 100g of different foods.

Other factors that can increase our acid load are high intensity exercise, alcohol consumption, stress, ageing, compromised energy production (mitochondrial dysfunction), and low blood levels of bicarbonate. Low bicarbonate levels can occur with poorly controlled diabetes, starvation, diarrhoea, taking loop diuretics and some other medications, and in kidney disease and metabolic acidosis.

If you have osteoporosis/osteopenia, having lots of dairy foods for calcium may actually be making things worse! Dairy foods have an acidic effect on the body, potentially increasing bone loss and calcium loss into the urine. Dairy foods can still be part of the diet, how much and which type of dairy is what's important. Milk, yogurt and sour cream (with acid loads/PRAL of around 1) are far less acidifying



than hard cheeses (PRAL of 20-35), and softer cheeses like cottage cheese (PRAL of around 9). For comparison, the average PRAL of meats is 9.5. You can actually *improve* your bone mineral density by reducing your acid load.

Luckily, it's quite easy to test your acid balance. Standard blood chemistry tests tell us the levels of key minerals from which we can work out the acid load (anion gap), and acid buffering capacity (bicarbonate). Combining those results with the urinary pH, which reflects the acid load of your diet, and you get a good picture of someone's acid balance.

If acid levels are high, a good quality alkalising supplement will help bring levels down much faster than dietary changes alone can, but for long term control it is necessary to adjust the diet. Aim for vegetables to make up at least 70% of the food on your plate, reduce consumption of meats, dairy and grains to about 20% of the plate. Oils and sugars don't have much of an impact on acid balance but can take the place of the alkalising vegetables and fruits, so try to reduce sweets too, replacing with fruits.

Those with compromised kidney function (eGFR less than 40) or with a history of calcium phosphate kidney stones should see their doctor before considering any alkalising strategies.

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How do we combine dogs, gardeners and gardens? Some might say an impossible feat, but there are a few strategies to help your dog to be happy while you are away for the day.

Dogs often wear 'paths' in your beautiful lawn or straight through your new plants. To remove this problem, make their paths your path and always create a little tree guard for new plants. This will protect them while they are young and enhance growth (they are not pretty but do the job). Don't use artificial turf as a replacement, its very hot in summer and really cold in winter; your dogs will not like it.



Consider the plants you grow in the area dogs live. Some may be poisonous. In many cases symptoms are limited to vomiting or diarrhoea for a brief period of time. Research your plants so you don't have to deal with this.

If you have a small area of lawn for your pooch and you have dead circles from piddle and they really annoy you, water the patch straight afterwards and the problem will subside.

Supply toys. Dogs only do naughty things if they are lonely or bored and when you are not home. Bones are also a great distraction, to keep them amused for the day.

Shade in summer and sun in winter is critical, this will also prevent them from digging to find a cool or protective spot. And a pond for them to swim in can be a bonus on those really hot days.



Jobs to do in December

- Sow seeds of hearting lettuce, carrot, radish, beans, basil, parsley, rocket, coriander.
- Prune and tie up tomato plants. Also liquid feed.
- Well composted soil retains water and acts like a sponge to keep your plants moist through dry summer days.
- Top up mulch on your veggie patches, herb gardens and ornamental beds, to help keep the soil cool and moist. Especially important if you are heading off this holidays. Be careful not to lay down a thick layer of sawdust or lawn clippings that can pack down to form an impenetrable barrier to water.
- On days of extreme temperature your plants may need to be physically protected from the heat. This can be achieved by covering plants with shade cloth secured on a frame eg irrigation pipe bent over to form a tunnel.
- Give the gift that keeps on giving! A potted plant, perhaps chillies, chives, cherry tomatoes, citrus, or a mixed herb pot.



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Yass Valley and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional councils welcome changes to clean fill regulations



The NSW Government have made much needed changes to the State Environment Planning Policy regarding earthworks on properties, to help reduce environmental degradation as a result of the disposal of large amounts of soil and other natural materials. The key change to the Policy is in regards to the amount of virgin excavated natural material (clean fill) that can be brought onto a rural property without approval, which has been limited to 100 cubic metres in total.

‘As one of three councils that border the ACT we have seen large amounts of clean fill being disposed of in our rural areas, simply because it is easier and cheaper to do so’ said Yass Valley Mayor, Rowena Abbey. ‘These new regulations will allow our staff to better monitor the disposal of clean fill, ensuring that everyone complies with the regulations set by the State Government and to help to reduce environmental degradation.’

Mayor Tim Overall of the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council echoed Yass Valley’s concerns about illegal dumping saying new regulations would reduce the likelihood and could mean consequences to those doing the illegal dumping.

‘Dumping large amounts of clay, gravel, sand, soil or rock fines, and other materials in rural areas is impacting our natural environment,’ said Mayor Overall. ‘Applying limits, and requiring those undertaking the dumping to gain development consent, are two steps in the right direction to protect our environment.’

Where more than 100 cubic metres is to be brought onto a property a Development Application (DA) needs to be submitted to council for assessment before any material is brought to the site. This includes, but is not limited to, material for building pads, roadworks, gully filling or top dressing of paddocks.

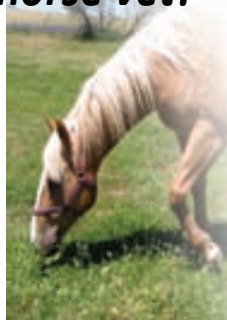
‘The previous limit before a DA was required was up to 600mm deep across an entire site and it was very difficult for our staff to regulate,’ said Yass Valley Environmental Services Coordinator, Mark Livermore. ‘This new limit will help staff from both councils to be able to work closely with residents and contractors to ensure people do the right thing and we are limiting the impact on the environment.’

100 cubic meters of clean fill equates to 5–10 dump trucks. If anyone sees what they suspect is illegal dumping they should report it to their local council or the EPA Environment Line (131 555) in NSW or Canberra Connect (13 22 81) in the ACT.

The more information people can give, such as vehicle registration numbers, locations and times, the easier it is to follow up the report.

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The Kookaburra and Killer Brown Snake

by **Dagmar Parer**

December 2007



We've had a Kookaburra family live in the paddocks around our house for a number of years, but recently they have come closer and moved into the house garden, chuckling and laughing whilst sitting on our pergola early in the morning. One cheeky young fellow admires himself in our verandah windows pecking away at the glass until I move him on. They are such an iconic Aussie bird, we all know them, but do we know why the Kookaburra laughs? One Aboriginal dreamtime story explains their laugh as follows:

For a long time there was no sun, only a moon and stars. That was before there were people on the earth, only birds and beasts.

One day Dinewan, the Emu, and Brolga were on a large plain near the Murrumbidgee. The two of them began quarrelling, shouting and hitting each other.

Brolga, in her rage, rushed to the nest of Dinewan and seized from it one of the huge eggs, which she threw with all her force up to the sky. There it broke on a heap of firewood, which burst into flame as the yellow yolk spilled all over it, and lit up the world below to the astonishment of every creature on it. They had been accustomed to the semi-darkness and were dazzled by such brightness.

A good Spirit who lived in the sky saw how bright and beautiful the earth looked when lit up by this blaze. The Spirit thought it would be a good thing to make a fire every day, and from that time since it has been done.

All night the Spirit, in the company of other Spirits, collects wood and heaps it up. When the heap is nearly big enough the morning star is sent out to warn those on earth that the fire will soon be lit.

The Spirits, however, found this warning was not sufficient, for many were sleeping when the morning star came along, and so didn't see it. So the Spirits thought someone should make some noise at dawn to herald the coming of the sun and waken the sleepers.

But for a long time they couldn't decide who should be the one to do it. At last one evening they heard the laughter of Googoorgaga, the kookaburra, ringing through the air. "There – that is the noise we want," said the Spirits.

Then they told Googoorgaga that, as the morning star faded and the day dawned, he was every morning to laugh his loudest, so that his laughter might awaken all sleepers before sunrise. If he wouldn't agree to do this, then no more would they light the sun-fire, but let the earth be dark again for always.

But Googoorgaga saved the light for the world. He agreed to laugh his loudest at every dawn of every day, and so he has done ever since, making the air ring with his loud cackling, "Googoor gaga, googoor gaga, googoor gaga."

The Wiradjuri people, whose country was bounded by the Lachlan, Macquarie and Murrumbidgee rivers, gave the Kookaburra that name as it replicated the laughing call the bird makes. It's an onomatopoeic word, that is, the word sounds like the action it describes, other onomatopoeic words being 'drip' and 'slurp'.

As well as appearing in Aboriginal dreamtime legends, the Kookaburra features in many other stories, poems and songs. We all know this one:

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*Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree,
Merry, merry king of the bush is he.
Laugh, Kookaburra, laugh, kookaburra,
Gay your life must be.*

Kookaburras (*Dacelo novaeguineae*) mate for life and raise their young with the help of the previous year's offspring who assist with the incubation, feeding and protection of the young. Young adults stay in the family group for up to four years and they live for around twenty years. I'm lucky they have taken up residence in our garden as they will clean up any snails, beetles, grasshoppers and snakes that come in.

I haven't seen a kookaburra kill a snake as yet but we know there is a small Eastern Brown Snake (*Pseudonaja textilis*), sometimes referred to as the Common Brown Snake, in the garden, because we uncovered it whilst shifting some rocks in our back yard. No doubt this little fellow will grow as big as the whopper of a snake we had around the house last summer, that is, unless the Kookaburras catch him first.



Still, snake lovers say that it not a bad idea to have a couple of brown snakes around the yard as they hunt and devour mice and rats. Their slender body enables them to actively chase quick moving prey such as lizards, other snakes and baby rabbits but they are also partial to slower moving critters such as frogs and bird nestlings when available.

They have highly developed eyesight, are diurnal and heliothermic (sun-basking) but can also be seen at night especially on warm humid evenings.



Though brown snakes are highly venomous and will attack people when cornered, they are highly nervous, so they usually avoid confrontation with home owners and quickly flee when seen or threatened. If they do attack, however, they will lunge repeatedly and inflict multiple bites in quick succession, so I have a healthy respect for them, keep my distance, and wear boots and trousers when outside in the garden or paddocks.

Eastern Brown Snakes mate during spring when males engage in 'ritual combat' with another male to dominate and displace the other's territory. The most dominant male will mate with females in the area, and each female will produce a clutch of 10-40 eggs in late spring or early summer.

Did you know that in Australia there are about one hundred and seventy snake species? Eighty of those are venomous. Only twelve are likely to inflict a wound that could kill you. Unfortunately the brown snake is one of them, but there is a suggestion that venomous snakes don't use their venom every time they bite. It's valuable stuff. They'd rather save it for tasty prey, as the purpose of the venom is to both immobilize the snake's prey and help start the digestion process. It's suggested that they only pump venom into prey that is intended as tucker. Still I'm not taking any chances. I'll continue to give them a wide berth and leave close encounters with snakes to the Kookaburras.

This article is an extract from the online book *Visitors to an Australian Garden* (available at www.hall.act.au) - a collection of articles originally published in the *Rural Fringe* from 2007 to 2009.

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From the editor

Launching *Visitors to an Australian Garden* through the pages of this edition is one of the highlights of my time as Editor of the *Rural Fringe*. We are grateful to Dagmar for writing the articles and to Eric for putting together such a beautiful book and generously sharing it with us. We chose *The Kookaburra and Killer Brown Snake* extract from the book in part because it is from the *Rural Fringe* exactly ten years ago and in part because I have noticed considerably more kookaburras this year.

This is also a special edition because we have four extra colour pages made possible by our wonderful advertisers! Thanks to them and our wonderful *Fringe* volunteers (Gail, Andrew, Kevin, Victoria and Bob) for bringing the *Rural Fringe* to you this past year.

The time of mercy, peace and joy is again with us. The season when we are thankful for the love of people around us. And feel bathed in the love of those who have left us. We at the *Rural Fringe* wish you peace and joy this Christmas season.

Until next time,
Jo Hall

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Contributions

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to contribute to this publication, particularly local community groups, however it is at the discretion of the Editor as to whether submitted articles are published or not. These deadlines ensure publication by the 10th of every second month.

February issue deadline is 10 January

April issue deadline is 10 March

June issue deadline is 10 May

August issue deadline is 10 July

October issue deadline is 10 September

December issue deadline is 10 November

It is the policy of the VHDPA that articles which are dominantly about the profit making activity of any group or individual can only be accepted for publication if the same issue carrying the article has a paying advertisement of similar size.

Contributions to ruralfringe@hotmail.com or PO Box 43 Hall ACT 2618.

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Other information

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Sub-editor: Bob Richardson 0407 071 245

The views expressed in this journal do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, the Sub-editor or the VHDPA.

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Letters to the editor

Dear Editor,

It is great that the Progress Association is arranging community consultation about the Hall bike track (Fringe, October 2017). While I think that a bike track will be an asset, and admire the efforts to fund its construction, I am concerned about the route and proposed location. I trust that the community can find a better spot.

The 2001 heritage registration of Hall identifies significant Aboriginal, ecological and historic sites in the village and surroundings. The current site chosen for the bike track is fully within the Zone of Aboriginal Sites – which occurs along both sides of Hall's Creek.

This is not surprising as water was the focus of Aboriginal use of Australia's landscape over tens of millennia. Evidence of Aboriginal occupation along Halls Creek includes an ancient eucalypt used to obtain bark, possibly for a shelter, and many stone artefacts. Today, erosion and disturbance – particularly around the market and showground areas, exposes stone tools, while others remain safely embedded in original topsoils within woodland, hidden by grass and leaves.

The surviving evidence of Hall's Aboriginal history is better conserved if areas of intact soil along the creek are not graded and landscaped for tracks. It is already accessible for unstructured recreation and appreciation of the Aboriginal cultural landscape.

A recent archaeological survey of the proposed area observed low ground visibility – meaning that its scientific significance couldn't be fully assessed from the surface – and concluded that track construction on the creek site would diminish the significance of any Aboriginal sites. Does this proposal really need to be in a sensitive heritage site? For some projects it is hard to find alternative places. Others, like a bike track, are surely adaptable to different areas.

City Services could have talked to the local community about site options at an early stage before choosing one and then running a one-option online survey. What information did the survey contain about the local environment and why wasn't it notified in our *Rural Fringe*?

Impacts to Aboriginal, historic and natural heritage accumulate over time. Many Hall heritage buildings have been sadly lost to fire, termites and asbestos, over which we have little control.

Thoughtful planning for conservation of sites in public spaces complements the efforts of private owners who already conserve, and give new leases of life to, the heritage places that remain in Hall and its district, and the efforts of those who volunteer to show these places to locals and visitors alike. The Hall Museum and Heritage Centre has been entrusted with the important Gillespie collection of Aboriginal artefacts from our region. These were collected in the 1960s when the importance of leaving Aboriginal sites undisturbed was not recognised in law.

Visit Hall's School Museum if you want to know more about stone artefacts and how they can tell us about past lifestyles. And keep an eye out for the planned 2018 exhibition – it will include the story of Aboriginal food plants in our local bush land, and the champion Aboriginal cricketers of Ginninderra.

Jan Klaver,

18 November 2017



Out and about **out** about



A Hall garden
photos: Paul Porteus

New signage for Hall on the Barton Highway; thanks to many hours of negotiation by Peter Howard of the VHDP.

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