

RURAL FRINGE

Journal of the Hall district



VOLUME 32 ISSUE 2

April 2025

Canberra Gold Award recipient John Starr

John Starr was presented with the Canberra Gold Award at the Albert Hall on 11 March, having dedicated over 50 years to enriching the Canberra community. His contributions span rural advocacy, education, tourism and the preservation of Canberra's unique 'Bush Capital' identity.

Rural Advocacy and Land Management

John's lifelong connection to the land began in Grenfell as a third generation farmer and continued when he started managing Gold Creek Station in 1970 for the Bruce family. At that time, the farm was more than 1600 hectares and comprised all of what is now the Canberra suburbs of Taylor, Casey, Ngunnawal, two-thirds of Moncrieff and the northern third of Nicholls.

Facing the challenges of farming within a rapidly expanding city, John adeptly managed the property, adapting to suburban development pressures and advocating for rural leaseholders. John and Beverley later purchased Gold Creek Station, further cementing their commitment to the land.

The devastating 1979 fire at Gold Creek Station catalysed John's increased involvement in land management and community safety. He became a vocal advocate for longer leases and improved fire prevention measures, recognising the crucial role of active land management. His commitment to sustainable agriculture is evident in his involvement with Landcare, including the Olympic Landcare Project and the Sustainable Agriculture program. His recognition with the 2015 ACT Landcare Award for Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices underscores his dedication to preserving and



Andrew Barr presents the award to John Starr.

enhancing the land for future generations. Furthermore, his active participation in bushfire brigades, bushfire committees and the Rural Leaseholders Association demonstrates his commitment to community safety and the rights of rural residents.

Serving Hall Village and District

For more than 20 years, John has been an integral part of the Village of Hall and District Progress Association. John has spent many years as a member of the Committee of the Hall Progress Association, including six years as Treasurer. His practical experience, wisdom and integrity were highly valued and John's financial

acuity was a huge asset to the association during his terms as Treasurer.

John's membership of the National Sheepdog Trials Committee, LandCare and various ACT advisory groups also provided very valuable links to the efforts of the Village of Hall and District Progress Association in protecting the environment and heritage of Hall and enhancing its amenity.

A place to raise a family

John and Beverley chose the Canberra region as the ideal place to raise their three children, Karen, Craig, and Kim. They valued the strong sense of community and access to quality education. Their children attended local schools in Hall, the then new Kaleen High and Dickson College. John actively participated in the school community, serving as President of the P&C and on the school board.

... continues on page 3



photo: Facebook

As you may have seen on social media recently *Canberra Brass* is having an instrument drive as we are growing fast and only have a small holding of instruments. We rely heavily on people having their own instruments. In particular, *Newbery Brass* is a training band that is named in honour of Brent Newbery and its members range from seven to 70 years old. Most players are new to music or brass playing so are looking to try it out playing before the expense of buying an instrument. *Newbery Brass* is also in an exciting position with Gypsy Cook directing the band and Veronica Boulton providing individual tuition to the beginner players. Both are highly accomplished brass players and professional music teachers. Their drive and passion to introduce new players to the world of brass bands is seeing rapid growth not only in *Newbery Brass* but also in *Canberra Brass* and *Victoria Street Brass*. This year we have also started a fourth band for up-and-coming youth players. In this exciting time for our organisation we are trying to keep ahead of the demand and either raise funds for instruments or seek the donation of suitable instruments.

So our plan for this year is to fit out *Newbery Brass* with a full complement of instruments. This is an ambitious task and I have divided it up into small achievable steps.

First, we need to fit out the cornet section with 10 cornets. We currently have one cornet and a trumpet, not strictly a brass band instrument but better than nothing. The cost of a student cornet is about \$500 so we are looking to raise \$5,000. This is a ball park figure as our preference would be to buy better quality instruments second hand, but this relies on availability.

Second, would be to fit out the tenor horn section. These instruments are brass band specific so we

especially need to provide them. We do have two, so would be looking for two more. The cost of a student horn is about \$1,000 and like the cornets we would prefer to buy better quality second hand instruments.

Third is the baritone and euphonium section. We have two baritones but no euphoniums. A student euphonium costs about \$2,500.

Fourth is the trombone section. Again we have two trombones but they are of very poor quality so we would be looking to replace them with a full set of three trombones. These cost about \$1,500 each.

Finally, we need a full set of basses, two Eb and two Bb. These cost between \$5,000 and \$6,000 for a student instrument.

In summary, below is the approximate cost of our project to kit out *Newbery Brass*.

- Cornets \$5,000
- Tenor horns \$2,000
- Euphoniums \$5,000
- Trombones \$4,500
- Basses \$20,000
- Total cost \$36,500**

This of course is a long term project and as mentioned the first step is to fund a cornet section as the cornet is also a very good entry instrument for new players until their preferred instrument becomes available.

We are seeking any level of funding that may be on offer and really appreciate you reaching out.

Please contact Sue Wilmington, Property Officer, Canberra Brass:

sue.wilmington@webone.com.au
0408 228 494

One accomplishment at Kaleen High was the introduction of vocational pathways for students. This commitment to his family and their education highlights John's dedication to building a strong foundation for future generations.

Tourism and Canberra's 'Bush Capital' identity

John's vision extended beyond traditional farming. In 1984, he transformed Gold Creek Station into a thriving tourism venture, showcasing the authentic rural lifestyle to thousands of visitors annually. His captivating shearing demonstrations, featuring his skilled kelpie dogs Slim, Dusty, Ned and Lass, attracted approximately 7,000 tourists each year from around the globe.



These shows, along with ecological and wool industry tours, provided invaluable educational experiences, informing international tour groups, visiting dignitaries and the public about sheep and cattle farming and the Australian wool industry. John's collaboration with the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) and his work with numerous tour operators highlight his dedication to promoting rural tourism and establishing Canberra as a destination that embraces its rural heritage. Beverley's contributions to the tourism venture, particularly her renowned country cooking and hospitality, were integral to its success.

Gold Creek Station has a long history of welcoming international tour groups, which continued regularly until the 2019 bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. The partnership with AAT Kings, which began in 1984 and remains strong today, has been a highlight of this endeavour. This family-focused venture has endured over the decades, with John and Beverley's children and grandchildren learning and sharing their skills



and providing a personal touch that delights all visitors.

John has always been passionate about showcasing rural tourism through an educational lens and has fulfilled many unique requests over the years. His shearing demonstrations have delighted VIP delegations in some unexpected settings, including the Albert Hall, Thoroughbred Park, the University of Canberra and on location at Gold Creek Station.

John's expertise and storytelling ability have been enjoyed by international groups such as:

- Inter-Parliamentarian Delegation from China and the Chief Minister Rosemary Follett
- the Mayor of Nara, Japan and Chief Minister Kate Carnell
- the American Ambassador and entourage
- the French Air Force

- Bridgewater College, USA
- Michigan State College USA
- Trade Delegations from DFAT
- ANUTECH Pty Ltd in conjunction with the ANU
- People to People Student Ambassador program from the USA, and
- international students and special interest groups, too many to mention.

Today, Gold Creek Station is proudly managed by John's son Craig, assisted by his daughter Karen, continuing the family tradition. Through his tourism initiatives, John has played a significant role in shaping Canberra's identity as the 'Bush Capital', showcasing its unique blend of urban and rural life.

John Starr's contributions to the Canberra community over the past 50 years are truly remarkable. His dedication to rural advocacy, sustainable land management, the promotion of rural tourism and his commitment to his family and community have enriched the lives of countless Canberrans and visitors alike.

For his outstanding contributions, John Starr is a deserving recipient of the Canberra Gold Award.

'The Grove' Art Show

Saturday 17 May 2025

9am - 3pm

1 Monty Place, Ngunnawal ACT 2913

The Grove Retirement Village is again exhibiting and selling some wonderful paintings by our Friday Art Group. This year we have also included some very creative local Canberra artists and interstate artists.

Our Photography Club will also display some of their wonderful work.

Our Social Committee will be providing tea/coffee and cake throughout the day for \$5.

Lucky door prizes will be drawn at 11am and 1pm followed by some entertainment.

Entry is a gold coin donation, so come along and join us, enjoy a cuppa, as well as the beautiful paintings and photos.

Anyone wishing to display their work please call:

Stella 0408 302 767 or **Noeleen 0424 263 540**
before 7 April

as we have a limited number of tables for displays.

Space for Caravan Storage

Do you have a secure space to store our small van?

Either a parking space, carport, shed or garage.

Preferably long-term, except when we are touring for 2-3 months.

Our caravan size is:

- 5.2 metres long (including drawbar)
- 2.2 metres wide
- 2.3 metres high

Access to 240v power to charge batteries once a month would be a bonus, but is not essential.

Contact:

Doug Crawford . . . **0413 796 466**
(Men's Shed Thursday mornings)

Christine . . . **0412 592 799**
cdroaming@bigpond.com

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Wild About Hall

by Anna Cowan

A meeting arranged by ACT Parks and Conservation Services (PCS) in October 2024 made it clear that volunteering in land managed by PCS had to be formalised through the formation of a ParkCare group. For this reason, a ParkCare Group has been established, made up of the *Wild About Hall* team. This arrangement formalises our maintenance and weeding work, gives us access to support and infrastructure, promoting better coordination and communication between the local volunteers and the rangers/PCS. The interaction has already resulted in some notable improvements on the ground: after the first meeting, the rangers returned and over several days slashed some large blackberry infestations in Mrs Reynold's Paddock (opposite Hall Street) and adjacent areas. We are following up to ensure these infestations remain better controlled.

If you would like to hear more about what we are doing or join the growing number of volunteers either on a casual or regular basis, please contact the conveners Anna Cowan or Christian Stricker at WildAboutHall@gmail.com. General information about ParkCare volunteering can be found at:

www.parks.act.gov.au/get-involved/parkcare-volunteering

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St Michael & All Angels Anglican Church

Corner Victoria and Loftus Streets, Hall

by Beryl Pedvin

This year, Easter celebrations in Hall will start on **Good Friday 18 April**. All are welcome to join parishioners from St Michael's and the other churches of Hall to walk the length of Victoria Street, marking the Stations of the Cross. The walk will start at **11am** at the northern end of Victoria Street (the carpark at the intersection with Barton Highway) and finish in the Remembrance Grove on the corner of Victoria and Gladstone Streets.

On **Easter Day 20 April** we will hold services at **8am** and **11am** at St Michael's. Residents and visitors are invited to join us at either of these services on Easter Day, and for morning tea in the garden at St Michael's after the 11am service.

Over the last few months, our parish has grown markedly through merging with the former parish of St Paul's, Ginninderra. Hall residents might have noticed the extra ringing of our bell for the new 8am service each Sunday.



Other parish activities have increased at St Barnabas in Charnwood as well, with craft groups now meeting weekly on Thursday afternoons and fortnightly on Saturday afternoons, and *Mainly Music* for toddlers and carers each Wednesday morning, as well as our regular Men's Group (first Monday of each month), Friendship Group (third Sunday of each month)

and of course Barney's Boutique Op Shop open each Thursday and Friday (10am-5pm) and Saturday (10am-1pm). All are welcome to join any of these activities.

For more details, please ring **Beryl** on **0408 488 526**.

All are welcome to join us at our regular services St Michael's each **Sunday** at **8am** or **11am**, or to join the 11am service via Zoom using Meeting ID and password **9551044551**.

James McDonald's Volume III of the history of Canberra is published

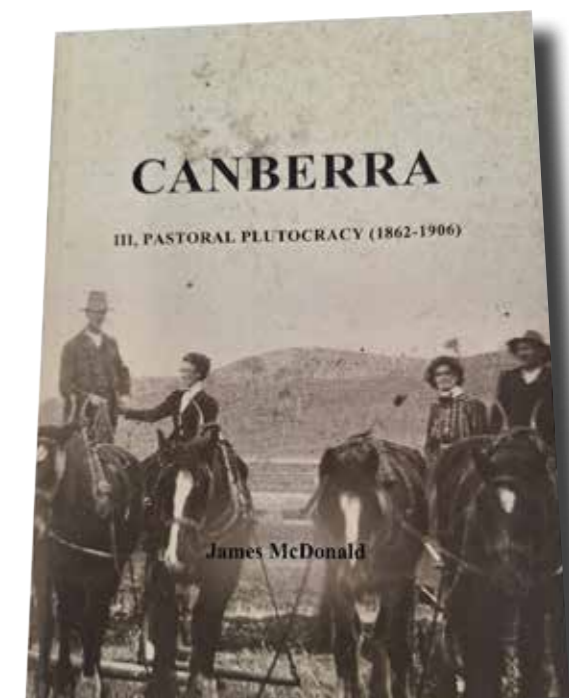
James McDonald has been working on his five-volume history of Canberra for the past decade.



Volume I *From Antiquity to Invasion* and **Volume II** *Colonization (1824-61)* have been published and are available at the centre for viewing and/or purchase.

Volume III *Pastoral Plutocracy (1862-1906)* has been recently published. This volume commences with the free selection revolution of 1862. McDonald explains how land reform was bitterly opposed by most squires, who bullied small farmers, used 'dummy' selections to grab land themselves, closed public roads and used fraud and litigation to get their way. But it also shows how resilient the free selectors were and how they organised to defend themselves. McDonald brings the farming communities back to life, block by block.

Before moving to Victoria, James was a resident of Canberra, with close ties to the Ginninderra district where his maternal and paternal grandparents settled into rural life. His book titled *Three Henry Currans* tells a wonderful story about three generations of early Australian settler families.



This new volume is \$45 and can be purchased from the Hall Heritage Centre during opening hours.



March in Hall saw two events that are a very real reminder of the heritage of our village as a rural community service centre: the National Sheepdog Trial Championships and the Polocrosse Competition, including the Fifty-Year celebration of Hall Polocrosse Club.

Hall Village is always pleased to host the National Sheepdog Trial Championships and the opportunity to welcome competitors, spectators and visitors to Hall. In addition to several Hall locals on the committee, members of the Hall Men's Shed and Hall Collectors' Club and their partners provide really important support to the Sheepdog Trials. This includes the annual Dogs' Dinner, bringing human competitors and Hall residents together.

Police patrols in Nanima, Spring Range and Wallaroo

In December 2024, the Progress Association Committee requested that the Yass Valley Council Mayor and the Commander of Hume Police District arrange for Yass Police undertake regular and frequent police patrols throughout the Hall District communities of Nanima, Spring Range and Wallaroo during December and January to help prevent antisocial and criminal driving behaviour, illegal dumping of rubbish and unlawful entering and burglary of rural properties.

While residents reported an increase in police presence on the Barton Highway during this period, no increase in police patrols was evident in Wallaroo, Spring Range or Nanima. The Progress Association Committee has consequently requested that the Yass Valley Mayor and the Hume Police District Commander provide information on what increase in patrols by Yass Police were undertaken during the December and January period.

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Robert Yallop President

NBN upgrade in Hall Village

In mid-January, Prime Minister Albanese and Minister for Communications Rowland announced that the Australian Government will fund the upgrade of Australia's as yet to be connected fibre-to-the premises network through an injection of up to \$3 billion. The Progress Association Committee contacted Senator Gallagher and Fenner MP Leigh to confirm that Hall Village and surrounding Nanima, Spring Range and Wallaroo are included in the upgrade. They both confirmed to the Progress Association Committee that while Hall Village is included in the fibre-to-the-premises network upgrade, Nanima, Spring Range and Wallaroo will not be included because they are currently served by a satellite internet service.

Paved path between Hall Village and Clarrie Hermes Drive



The current pedestrian and cycle path through Hall Village.

For the last three years the Progress Association Committee has been engaged in ongoing advocacy to the ACT Government to establish a paved pedestrian and cycle path between Hall Village and Clarrie Hermes Drive. The committee has been supported by Yerrabi MLAs Andrew Braddock, Leanne Castley, James Milligan, Michael Pettersson and Pedal Power ACT.

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On 6 March, the ACT Government announced joint funding with the Commonwealth of the Hall Village to Clarrie Hermes and Nicholls fully paved pedestrian and cycle path. The ACT Government has named the path the 'Hall Village Main Route' and it will be about 2.3kms long and 3m wide. Infrastructure Canberra has confirmed they will present proposals for the path for feedback to Hall residents, businesses and stakeholders before the plans are finalised.

Progress towards storm water drainage in Hall Village

Although the wheels of government continue to move slowly, the Progress Association Committee is very pleased that, after three years of advocacy and planning discussions, progress is continuing towards the establishment of comprehensive storm water drainage infrastructure in Hall Village. Following the site investigations (survey, potholing, heritage, tree assessment) in Hall last November, the consultants are finalising the Preliminary Sketch Plan that will be shared with residents, businesses and other stakeholders in a public session prior to the submission of the Development Application for major infrastructure works.

ACT Government Budget Submission

The Progress Association Committee was invited by ACT Treasury to make a submission for the FY 2025-2026 ACT Budget. The submission by the

Progress Association Committee requests that sufficient funding be allocated in the FY 2025-2026 Budget for full implementation of Storm Water Drainage Infrastructure, the Cycle and Pedestrian Path from Hall to Clarrie Hermes

Drive and also for an Assessment of the Safety of the Intersection of the Barton Highway with Gladstone Street and Wallaroo Road. Concerns over the safety of this intersection have been raised by residents over a number of years.

Hall Community Precinct

Following the closure in 2006 of the Hall Primary School, the Progress Association became the custodians of the site now known as the Hall Community Precinct, including most of the former primary school buildings, the original 1911 school building and museum and the former headmaster's Cottage. Committee Member Peter Toet coordinates maintenance and other requirements for the site with the ACT Government Property Group. Hall Community Precinct continues as a hive of activity, hosting the Progress Association sub-groups of the award-winning Hall Heritage Centre and the Hall Men's Shed with over 75 members, as well as regular use of the cottage by local groups and activities.

The Progress Association Committee generally meets each month. If you have any ideas or concerns for our Hall Village and District community, please talk to me or any member of your Progress Association Committee or email info@hall.act.au.



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Capital Country Woodchopping



by Steph Radovanovic

We are currently nearing the tail end of a very busy few months, with the 2025 ACT/NSW agricultural shows in full swing.

For the first time ever, and under our new CCW name, logo, committee, club colours and uniform and also a much larger trailer, we have run woodchopping competitions at Gundagai Show, Gunning Show, Tumut Show and Yass Show. All four competitions were a sell-out and a huge success, with many Junior, Novice and Open Axemen and Sawyers attending from near and far. Each show had consistently high numbers of spectators of all ages that were keen to watch the sport of competitive woodchopping that has been a crowd favourite at shows since its inception in 1890.

We are very proud to have been able to facilitate the first woodchopping competitions at both Gundagai and Gunning shows in nearly 40 years, providing both shows with a full day of woodchopping and sawing events which also drew plenty of keen crowds, happy to withstand the hot summer sun to watch and cheer on the axemen.

The 2025 Woodchopping and Sawing Carnivals program has also seen many of our axemen and axewomen compete at Kiama Show, Jamison Hotel, Berry Show, Nowra Show, Cobargo Show, Crookwell Show, Royal Canberra Show, Dalgety Show, Goulburn Show, Cooma Show and Milton Show in the last two months, with many of the CCW crew picking up some podium finishes along the way.

Our club location is at the back of the Hall Showground in conjunction with *The Collectors Club* and the *Hall Pony Club* premises. Our training day is every Tuesday from 4-6pm.

We have a woodpile of cut wood to the side of our clubhouse. This wood is available to be taken in exchange for a donation towards the Club. Please feel free to help yourself and use the bank details below to transfer an amount that you think is acceptable for the amount you take. Every little bit helps our local community club!

Account name: **Hall and District Axemen's Club**
 BSB: **082 902** Account number: **7224 6997 8**
 reference: **Wood Donation**

Thank you for your support!



Along with individual and family membership options, we are also offering a 'Supporters' membership for the first time this year, which enables those who do not wish to train or compete but still wish to be part of our club a membership at a reduced rate. This is proving popular with partners and family members of our axemen and axewomen. Get in touch with us if you are interested – the supporter's membership will be \$60 per annum and comes with an awesome Supporters Pack of goodies!

We are still looking for new sponsors! We are a very small club with some very big plans and would love to hear from you if you or your business may like to jump on board with us for 2025. Please contact Shaun for information on our sponsorship packages.

We are also fast approaching the most exciting event of the year, the Sydney Royal Easter Show, often referred to as the 'Wimbledon of Woodchopping' as it is the biggest woodchopping event in the world. It hosts multiple World Champion titles and attracts competitors from around the globe. It will run for 12 days through mid April, and we have eight of our axemen competing there, five of them women!

Upcoming shows at which our axemen plan to compete are Mossvale Show, Camden Show, Royal Bathurst Show, Hawkesbury Show, Orange Show and Dubbo Show, so if you're in the area come and say hi!

If you would like to learn more or have a try, please reach out to our friendly crew. We are always looking to share our love of cutting and welcome new members.

Congratulations to all our axemen, axewomen and club members on a fantastic start to the year!

email: info@capitalchopping.com.au

Facebook: [@CapitalCountryWoodchopping](https://www.facebook.com/CapitalCountryWoodchopping)

Bicentennial Trail horse riders

by Jack McGrath


I met Nickki Thompsett and Simon Burtenshaw from Murwillumbah, northern NSW on 1 February. They and their horses were staying in the precinct of the Hall Axemen's work-out shed. They had trucked their six horses to Healesville in Victoria and left there on 7 November to walk and ride to the Queensland border along the Bicentennial Trail, with an expected finish date of 29 June 2025.

Their horses are four Clydesdales, one stock horse and a brumby. Their accommodation is minimal, and they travel three days and have three days rest. After each re-supply they weigh all the items to manage the load on horses. They have three horses each which they rotate between riding, leading and the third horse on the day is the load bearer, and they change duties every day.



The group averages 20-25km per day and a long day is 30km. They were leaving Hall on 2 February and their next destination was Gundaroo then Crookwell. I asked them why they have decided to do this and the answer was 'for the adventure and the ride through iconic towns and countryside'. This has been a six year dream of Nickki's, and Simon is tagging along providing support. They wanted me to thank the Hall Community and Graham Bryce for their help and support.

I contacted them on 18 February and they were in the Blue Mountains. You can follow them and their travels on Facebook – 'Away Awhile' horse trekking Australia.



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Wallaroo Rural Fire Brigade *Volunteering for the Community* by **Shona Boyle**

We are pleased to return to the *Rural Fringe* after an unusually quiet 2024-25 fire season. After a couple of early grass fires, Wallaroo RFS has been predominantly occupied outside the Southern Tablelands since Christmas. It has been our privilege to support fire services in Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland, as well as our New South Wales RFS colleagues, responding to emergencies across the country. Our members are well qualified and prepared to respond to diverse and complex incidents, and we are proud to be able to share this experience and expertise when it is needed.



our area. We are pleased to have trained with both Murrumbateman and Hall RFS brigades in recent months, and look forward to another opportunity to continue to familiarise ourselves with our neighbouring Molonglo ACT RFS brigade. Our Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA) pilot program is ongoing, and we are focussed on ensuring we can deliver an efficient and effective CABA response independently and in concert with partner services.

We use our regular training program to maintain our skills and knowledge, as well as work with other brigades in



Brigade contacts

If you have any questions about fire safety, preparedness, RFS membership or Wallaroo Brigade activities, please feel free to reach out to our Brigade Executive or the Southern Tablelands Zone.

Captain: Neil Shepherd	0418 628 095	nshepherd@shepelectrical.com.au
Senior Deputy Captain: Geoff Morris	0407 188 192	geoffmor@hotmail.com
President: Amy Goldstraw	0410 763 936	amy.goldstraw@gmail.com
Secretary: Mike Textor	0408 825 281	twa43887@bigpond.net.au
Treasurer: Peter Vincent	0415 630 560	tyndarah@bigpond.net.au
Yass Fire Control Centre:	02 6266 3100	southerntablelandszone@rfs.nsw.gov.au

To ensure we are able to respond quickly to incidents in our area, we ask that residents think about how we will access your property in the event of an emergency. If you have an electric gate or electronic lock, please consider leaving it open on *Extreme* or *Catastrophic* fire danger days, and if you can, please open it if you have called 000. Our fire trucks require 4 metres by 4 metres clearance to comfortably access your property, as well as somewhere to easily turn around near your home. Please consider any vegetation or other obstacles that may prevent quick and easy access to your property.

Days, we are pleased to be hosting the **Wallaroo Community Dinner** again on **25 October**. We are also planning an opportunity to connect with our community on Bushfire risk and preparation prior to the 2025-26 fire season. Our Facebook page is a great place to keep up-to-date with incidents, events and community announcements!

If you would like some support with assessing your property for fire hazards and access, or for any questions about fire safety, preparedness, RFS membership or brigade activities, please contact our Brigade Executive or the Southern Tablelands Zone.



We were thrilled to spend time with the Wallaroo community as we accompanied Santa on his rounds in December and look forward to seeing more of you in 2025. In addition to our fundraising activities at Bunnings and the Murrumbateman Field

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men's shed

Hall Men's Shed

One of the Hall Men's Shed members, Kim Parker, saw that the Gold Creek Park sign in Ngunnawal had deteriorated. He consulted the membership and the ACT Parks to discuss its replacement. The sign is around two metres long and sits within two brick columns around one metre in height.



Recycled hardwood materials were sourced and over a number of months the basic structure to duplicate the sign was constructed and painted by several members. Jonathan Palmer used his own computerised routing machine and was able to generate the sign content so that it is very similar to the original. ACT Parks supplied the paint to complete the routed lettering and the leaf motif.

men's shed

by Kim Parker and Doug Anstess



The Hall Men's Shed is proud to have contributed towards the renewal of the park in Ngunnawal.

Shown is a picture of the old sign, the new sign being installed by Kim Parker and Graham Smith in February 2025 and the new sign in place with Kim, Graham and Doug Anstess. The lady across the road from the park, Margaret Cockburn, who is in the last picture along with Kim has been lobbying the ACT Government for years to have the sign replaced. Margaret is thrilled with the result of our labours.



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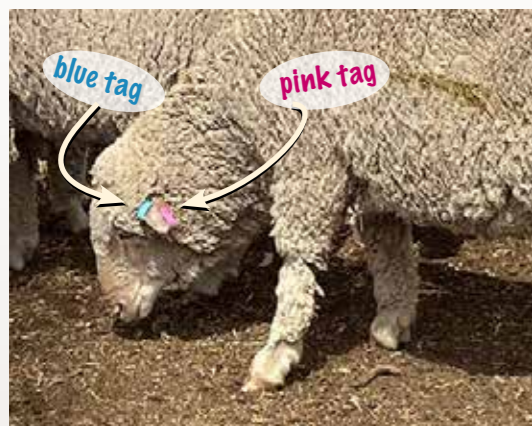
The National Sheepdog Trials, better than ever!

The sheep

What's a sheepdog trial without sheep? Not just any sheep will do! The sheep used during the March national championships are superfine Merinos and their wool is of such high quality it is shipped to fashion houses in Italy! I don't think the dogs pay too much attention to the length or quality of microns of the wool, it's all about eyeballing and intimidating those woolly bundles over the bridge, through the race and into the pen as fast as possible.

About 100 of these sheep a day are trucked in from Neil Carey and Vicky Bailey's property 'Kashmir' at Wee Jasper to be hounded and rounded by the best working dogs around.

The sheep's ear tags don't actually denote ownership but show the year of birth (this year's sheep were born in 2023) and the other coloured tag denotes the wool quality.



Apparently Australian sheep are easier to herd than their meatier overseas cousins, so a light touch by the dog is needed. It's rare for the sheep to argue with a dog and there are few head butts, nips and 'set to's'.

The volunteers

What's a sheepdog trial without volunteers? Not just any volunteers will do! This year's crew, led by Jonathan Palmer, was a well dressed group, easily identified by their royal blue shirts and bucket hats. The Hall Men's Shed was tasked with assisting on



the entry gates and Amanda was in charge of the catering crew. There are also the 'Dogs Dinner' co-ordinators who give up their Saturday night to ensure that the catered function for the competitors runs smoothly. Others emptied bins, ran supplies, released the sheep onto the oval, judged the competitors, called the entrants, commented and generally kept the show going. One volunteer, Julia, signed up to the role after seeing the sign advertising the trials as she was returning to her home town of Young after camping in Victoria.

The head chef Vicky Bailey (yes, the Vicky who owns the sheep used in the trials) does a wonderful job starting early and finishing late, keeping the bbqs and kitchen under control. Food consumed included 70kg bacon, 100kg sausages, 30kg chicken, 600 steaks, 200 loaves of bread and 85 hamburger rolls. Local café, *Kynefyn*, supplies 1700 scones for the week. One coffee van ran low on milk so ordered more to be delivered by an Uber. People just have to have their coffee!

Lee-ann Brodrick attended the 'Dogs Dinner' on Saturday night representing the Hall Progress Association. Lee-ann gave a welcome speech to the 90 plus guests from the National Sheepdog Trial Committee, sheep dog handlers, Hall residents and Hall Progress Association members. Among the awards Marion Banyard and Margaret Morris each received a certificate of recognition for their contribution to the Sheep Dog Trial and Dogs Dinner. Margaret is in her 47th year at the dogs.



Downtime between competitions

sheep dogs

by Jenny Whittaker



Marion, Tony and Margaret.

The competitors

Being the national championship many competitors came from far and wide. Vickie Priestley is a frequent attendee, coming from north west of Sydney. Vickie is president of the *Sydney Sheepdog Club* at the Hawkesbury Showground, works teaching agility to working dogs and has owned collies for 30 years. She brings four dogs of which three compete, entering dogs as young as two years old and as old as 11 but doesn't stress too much about results. Like a lot of the other competitors Vickie will head off to Molong for the NSW State Championships next week, having worked over Christmas with a very short break to enable her to take the time off for these two weeks.

Mick Hudson, from *Muster Dogs* TV show fame competed and one of his dogs scored 99 out of a possible 100, so he must know a thing or two about herding sheep!



Greg Prince's name appears on the winners' shields multiple times over the 22 years that he competed at the trials. Part of the top prize of the trials, the National Open Champion, is the Greg Prince memorial watch awarded in his memory.

... continues on page 17

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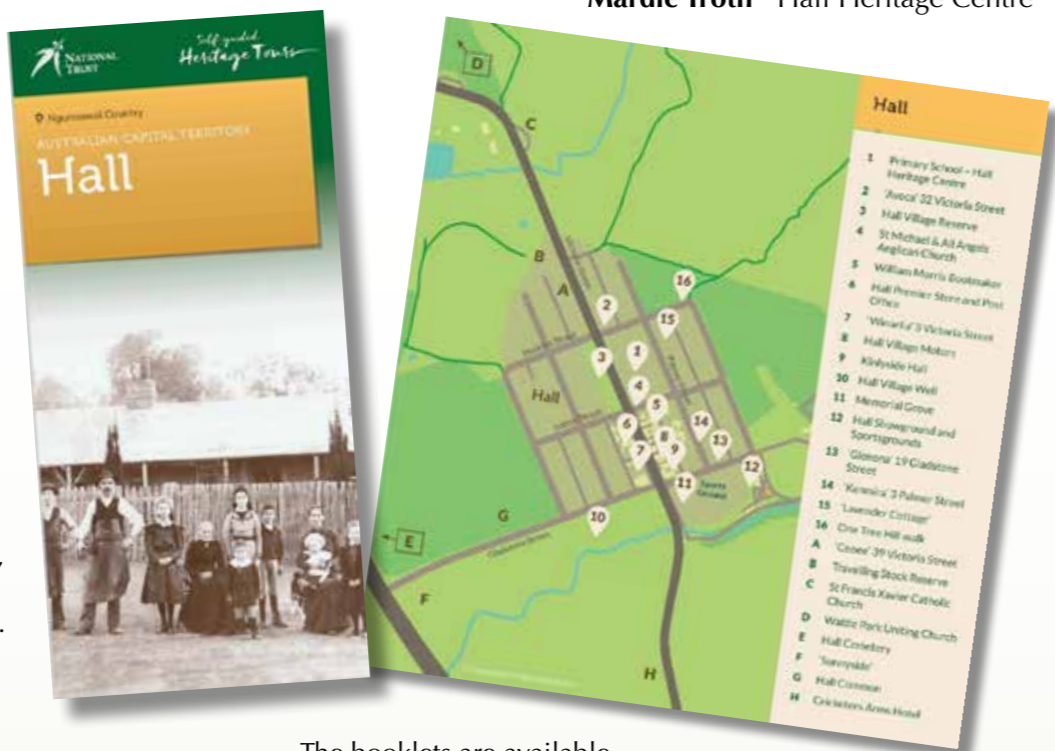
A Heritage Trust walk around Hall Village

Mardie Troth Hall Heritage Centre

In July last year the then ACT Minister for Heritage, Rebecca Vassarotti, launched the latest in a series of Heritage Tour booklets funded by the ACT Government and produced by the National Trust (ACT) – *Heritage Tour of Hall*.

The Hall booklet was largely researched and written by volunteers at the Hall Heritage Centre. An article about Sunnyside, one of the locations listed in the booklet, was featured in the August 2024 issue of the *Rural Fringe*.

On Sunday 23 February a large group of walkers was hosted by volunteers from the Hall Heritage Centre to a tour of the village, visiting many of the places identified on the map included in the booklet.



The booklets are available from the centre and the walk is a wonderful way of introducing family members and visitors to details of village life from the past.



Hall Village walk morning tea.

National Sheepdog Trials

... continued from page 15



2025 winners.

photo: nationalsheepdogtrials.org.au

It's said that Greg designed a paddock as an exact replica of the Hall Showground ring and trained his dogs on this ensuring that they were so familiar with it they had a 'home ground' advantage away from home. Clever that!

A bit of history

The trials began in Canberra in 1942 at Manuka Oval as a fundraiser for the war effort. They continued to run after the war was over to encourage soldier settlers to train dogs to assist on their farms.

In 1977 Tony Morris, Vice President of the Hall Village Progress Association, was approached with the view to using the Hall Showground as the new trials ground as Manuka was becoming

too expensive. John Starr, John Southwell and Tony worked together to bring the trials to Hall and they have been held here since 1977.

Morris Bros Mechanical and Marine were the original sponsors and then the organising was handed on to the local fire brigade, who were paid to run the trials as a fundraiser.

This year's crowd attendance, helped by a week of dry weather, was 6500 over the seven days, up from 5300 last year. It was an extremely well organised event with a great vibe and well behaved crowds who were very engaged with the competition.



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An Anzac Tale

by Aaron Whittaker

Some years ago I was given a silver pocket watch by my mother, Joy Whittaker, which had belonged to my maternal grandfather, Charlie Sigvart. The watch didn't work and had a cracked face and after a few years languishing in a drawer I decided to have it repaired. The repairing jeweller noted he had seen some inscriptions inside the watch dating from World War I and some dates from World War II. This piqued my curiosity and I asked my mother about Charlie's army service.



Charlie was one of 10 children, a carpenter by trade and father of one son. He enlisted for army service in Rockhampton, Queensland as a 21 year old on 16 September 1914, only a month after war was declared on 5 August 1914. He was an early enlistee as borne out by his regimental number 192.

He embarked from Melbourne on 22 December 1914 bound for Egypt and after training and acclimatisation his battalion landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 late in the afternoon, the first day of this campaign (an original ANZAC).



After four hard months with his battalion, establishing and defending the front line of the ANZAC beach head, Charlie was transferred injured (myalgia lumbar, kidneys and teeth) to an Australian army hospital in Mudros, Greece, in August 1915, then Malta, then the County of London War Hospital in Surrey and finally recuperation in Weymouth, UK, a total of nearly seven months recovering from his injuries and illness.

After recuperating he was sent back to Egypt to rejoin the fighting, this time as a gunner and was trained to use the Medium Trench Mortar. In June 1916 he was sent to the Western Front where his battalion was heavily involved in operations against the German army until 1918, with Charlie spending a short stint in a Belgium hospital in July 1917 ('sick from field').

Charlie did manage to have some good times and in June 1916 he was found to be 'drunk on town' and in January 1918 he and his army mates found a stock of good French wine, over imbibed, were caught and served 60 days punishment and forfeited three month's pay.

He spent a total of four and a half years away before returning to Australia in October 1918 with the war ending on the 11 November. He married his fiancé, and with their son, moved to Sydney where they had another son and eventually moved to Batemans Bay (where my mum was born), from the 1930's to his death in 1956.

While Charlie's service was long, spanning all but a few weeks of the entire war, and one of his injuries severe, his service was like most men who enlisted – full of deprivation and fought in atrocious conditions which resulted in physical injuries, and for many, in psychological damage. It was unremarkable service in that so many went through the same type of ordeal. A staggering statistic – 50 per cent of the men who returned from the World War I were dead from multiple causes within 20 years, probably exacerbated by the onset of the Great Depression.



Charlie Sigvart

Like many others who served, life back in Australia changed in the years that he was away. Charlie returned home after four and a half years overseas to find that his fiancée had a two year old daughter fathered by one of Charlie's brothers! It's thought that this was the reason that the family moved away from Queensland, but without the child, and severed all ties. My mum, born in 1937 never really knew her older brothers as she was so much younger than them, and they had left home while she was still very young. Her mum died when she was only 15 and Charlie remarried when mum was 17. Mum, not welcome at home any more and with no other family at all in Batemans Bay, moved

to Canberra at 18 years of age, living in Havelock and Gorman House, like so many young women at the time. Mum only found out that she had a sister when she was about 60 years old, and they looked so alike, two peas in a pod!

To honour his service and in memory of Charlie, and his good 'luck' surviving all those years away fighting in terrible conditions, I take his fob watch with me on Anzac Day to the dawn service when I can attend, and to a game or so of two-up.

Further information and a more detailed service record and description of the battalions' war service can be viewed at the pop up display currently at the Hall Heritage Centre commemorating Anzac Day.



'Greetings from the trenches.'



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For those living on rural properties, winter is also an ideal time to prepare for next summer's fire season. Use this period to clear debris, maintain firebreaks, check pumps, hoses, and emergency supplies.



Preparing for winter: fire safety beyond the fire danger period

As we reach the end of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) Fire Danger Period, many local residents are turning their attention to cooler months ahead. While the immediate risk of bush and grass fires may ease, fire safety remains a year-round responsibility, particularly as wood heaters and indoor heating become a daily necessity.

If you rely on a wood heater to keep your home warm, now is the time to ensure it's safe and ready for use. A poorly maintained fireplace can pose a serious fire risk, with chimney fires and indoor smoke hazards being common issues. To reduce the risk:

- **Have your chimney cleaned and inspected** – a build-up of creosote can ignite and cause a dangerous fire.
- **Use dry, seasoned wood** – to minimise excessive smoke and soot.
- **Ensure the area around your heater is clear** of flammable items such as furniture, curtains and kindling.
- **Dispose of ashes safely** – place them in a metal container away from buildings, as they can retain heat for days.
- **Check your smoke alarms** – they should be in good working order with fresh batteries installed.



Springfield Brigade AGM – Monday 12 May

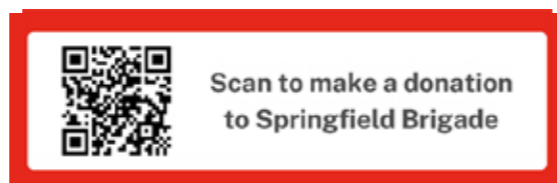
The Springfield Brigade Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on **Monday 12 May at 7pm** at the **Rex Connor Shed, Patemans Lane**. We encourage all members to attend as we review the past year and plan for the future. Nominations are open for all committee positions and we welcome members who would like to take on a role and support our brigade's ongoing operations.

For more fire safety advice or information about our brigade, visit rfs.nsw.gov.au or contact us directly.

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The right tree for the right spot

A question I am often asked is 'will that tree's roots, grow into my services?'

When planting a tree, you must always consider every aspect. Is it the right size, is it culturally correct for its location, can it grow under your climatic conditions, is the soil appropriate for this tree, does it have invasive roots, is it evergreen or deciduous, how much water does it require, how big does it get? You get the idea: there is a lot to ask and it's easy to get it wrong.

The problem with getting the wrong tree in the wrong place is that it can suffer ill thrift, too much water, not enough water, too much wind etc. Worst of all, you can spend five years nurturing a tree, only to find it is too big, blocks a view or is just not right, then you have to try to transplant it, which comes with a whole list of other potential problems, or you simply remove it and then lose the benefit and maturity of a grown tree.

The simple answer to the above question is: it's a living plant, it has a will of its own and of course it could send its roots in any direction it so desires. So choose wisely and be selective – carefully select trees to be planted in areas where underground services are present.

Also, walk around your neighbourhood and see what grows in your neck of the woods, don't rely on the internet – plant descriptions are often wrong.

Trees without invasive roots:

- **Japanese maples** (*Acer palmatum*)
This gorgeous small tree has delicate, classic maple leaves and grows in a variety of shapes and forms. It makes its biggest statement in autumn, with sensational red, orange, yellow and pink foliage. Along with its captivating foliage, this tree is compact and has shallow, non invasive roots. This tree is best planted out of the wind and somewhere that it gets a little extra water during dry times to be its best.
- **Ornamental peach** (*Prunus persica*)
This is a fantastic tree, spring flowering, dense green summer foliage, glorious mixed autumnal foliage tones and deciduous in winter. Drought tolerant once established, it is tolerant of most soil types and does well in either full sun or part shade. Makes a lovely feature tree or focal point and has shallow roots so can be planted close to your house or structures.
- **Dogwood** (*Cornus florida*)
It seems once you have met this tree, everyone wants one. Their short lived, stunning flowers are lovely enough to ignore the swiftness of their demise. These trees prefer a sheltered spot from wind and sun. In fact, this tree will grow in complete shade.
- **Flowering Cherry** (*Prunus serrulata*)

Folk flock to Japan to see this tree in flower in the spring – it never ceases to impress. Blossoms range from white to every shade of pink in clusters creating a stunning visual spectacle with a subtle but lovely scent. Its autumn foliage is also worthy of admiration with vibrant shades of orange, red and bronze.

- **Eastern Redbud** (*Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy')
This tree should have a place in every garden, either as a feature tree or incorporated into garden beds. Bold pink flowers wake it up in spring followed by love-heart shaped, glossy, cab sav coloured leaves against near black bark.
- **Crabapple** (*Malus spp.*)
This tree comes in many different varieties, and all of them are fantastic. Drought tolerant, low maintenance and showy, it ticks a lot of boxes. Blossoms in all the shades of pink, red and white. Some fruit for making crabapple jelly. Most trees are small (but not all) so ideal for any small space.
- **Crepe Myrtle** (*Lagerstroemia indica*)
In February this is everyone's favourite. When the garden is looking tired and fed up with the long hot summer, this tree bursts into flower. Pink, mauve, blush, red, white and purple are a few of the colours. This tree also has a black leaf variety – *Diamonds in the Dark* – with the full range of flower colours. Stunning bark in the winter adds another level to this gorgeous tree.
- **Star Magnolia** (*Magnolia Stellata*)
This small tree/large shrub compliments any garden, early spring flowers are one of the first to light up a winter garden. Beautiful star shaped, fragrant, white to light pink flowers cover the branches.
- **Lilac** (*Syringa vulgaris*)
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out & about



Hall Rangers on Hall Oval on 8 March.



photos: Paul Porteous

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Bower bird.

photo: Paul Porteous

The *Rural Fringe* acknowledges the Ngunnawal, Ngunawal and Ngambri peoples who are the traditional custodians of the land of Hall Village and District and acknowledges their continuing relation to their ancestral lands. We pay our respect to the Elders of the First Nations past, present and future.

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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.

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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.

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