

# RURAL FRINGE

*Journal of the Hall district*

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June 2022



## Mick and Evie De Britt

### A diamond couple

by **Kevin Stone**

There has been quite a bit written in the *Rural Fringe* over the years about Mick De Britt, a well-known personality in Hall since 1964 but I've never had the pleasure of meeting him or his wife Evelyn.

I recently found an article about their golden wedding anniversary in the June 2012 Fringe so I was interested in having a chat with them, and what a delightful time I had! I initially thought maybe an hour more or less, but after three and a half hours, a cuppa and cake, I came away with a broad smile and plenty of stories about their early lives and 60 diamond years of marriage.

One of the things I wrote down was 'Where do I start?', because Evie (as she is affectionately called) and Mick have done so much! Evie was a bit quiet in the beginning, but once we got into their life story, there was no stopping her. And so I thought I'd write something about this quite remarkable lady with a slightly mischievous but wonderful smile.



Evie was born in West Wyalong NSW and the oldest of nine children. But it wasn't an easy early life, because school days were quite harsh and much different than they are today.

She left home from Tumbarumba at 17 and travelled by train to work in Penrith and various other places in Sydney before returning home a couple of years later. Evie started her nursing career at the Inverell District Hospital, continuing it at Tumbarumba District Hospital and a nursing home in Sydney.

Mick and Evie were married at Ungarie, near West Wyalong, on 8 April 1962, but Evie also mentioned she knew she was going to marry Mick back in 1951! Why? Because in Evie's words she thought, 'De Britt!'

Now that sounds a nice name, I think I'll marry him'. So was it love at first sight I asked? That's when I noticed the smile!



... continues on page 3



Art work for Hall Park



Kristie Peters  
Photo: Canberra Weekly



Kristie Peters, a local Aboriginal indigenous artist, was engaged last year by Urban Parks and Places to paint the bus shelter, barbecues and toilet block at the park on Gladstone Street. It's looking good!



A diamond couple

Mick and Evie DeBritt

... continued from page 1

by Kevin Stone

When Evie and Mick came to the Hall district in 1964 they didn't immediately move to the Hall Village, but lived at Oakey Creek farm, where Mick continued his work as a shearer, wood chopper, truck owner/driver and casual farm hand. The word 'casual' was his word, because I'm sure Mick would have been a hard worker, and in some ways, still is. Anyone who can shear two sheep straight off when they turn 75 years old is quite amazing by any standard.

With all the time and work running the 1,700-acre property took up, Evie still managed to learn jazz ballet, Go Go dancing and judo, gaining her black belt and even appeared on television doing a judo demonstration. So we have another TV personality in our humble village!

Evie and Mick moved into Hall and bought their present house in 1966. Evie has been involved in a number of local community activities such as the church, tennis and the preschool. Mick and Evie have also had a great deal of involvement in the polocrosse and pony clubs, although these days Mick said his roles are more about administration and looking after the grounds, leaving the bulk of the work to the next generation who are doing a superb job. But being the humble man Mick is, in the past his involvement included things like moving sprinklers during the night, helping to cook breakfast, running errands, setting up the clubhouse and any number of other jobs that need doing or delegating to other volunteers. I'm sure his contribution these days would be more than appreciated, especially when it comes to cooking. It certainly was in November 2000, when he was awarded the Australian Sports Medal in recognition for his services to equestrian and his support services to the sport. But it went beyond that, with Hall Pony Club certificates of recognition for troop leader, instructor and his involvement with the various camps they ran. Mick also received a special award for volunteering and his valuable contribution made

at the Australian Masters Games, plus recognition from Pegasus, once again for giving so much to the community. Mick is taking it a bit easier now, but still keeps himself busy most days, generally looking after sheep and doing work around the place when he's not getting the grounds ready for the next club events.

Evie has always loved dancing and enjoyed learning and performing several different styles, anything from rock and roll, square, round and folk dancing, plus clogging, which is a dance where she would wear clogs to beat out a clattering rhythm on the floor. She has even danced on Stage 88 on several occasions, which would have been a treat to watch.

In between all this dancing, Evie advanced her nursing training at the Royal Canberra Hospital where she was interviewed for the TV news before the hospital was demolished in 1997. Her nursing career has spanned 30 years in a number of Canberra hospitals, nursing homes and hostels. But she didn't stop there, because Evie went on to study aromatherapy and after gaining her Diploma for Aromatherapy Massage undertook in excess of 2000 massages over many years.

As I mentioned at the start, I had an enjoyable time talking to Evie and Mick about what they've done and achieved over the years, but the last words should go to this wonderful couple when I asked for their thoughts on a long and successful marriage.

They both agreed that although they've done so many things together within the community and on properties, they've been able to enjoy separate interests – Evie with her dancing and sewing and Mick getting pleasure out of the Polocrosse Club and looking after his sheep. Evie said they couldn't do all these things if they'd married someone else because they'd always allowed each other to do the things that were important to them.

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# Hall and District Axemen's Club

The Hall Axemen have had an incredibly busy past few months - from local shows, to the biggest in world! It's now our off-season, but many of us will continue to train throughout winter in the lead up to the Royal Adelaide Show and the Melbourne Royal Show in September/October.

## Sydney Show recap

Congratulations to Austin, Chey, Mick, Pete, Shaun & Tarlo who all competed at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. All cutters have improved since last year with notable mentions going to:

- Austin: 2nd place in the Junior Development Series; 3rd U18 Underhand Handicap
- Chey: Annual Achievement Prize; 5th Ladies Underhand Championship
- Tarlo: 1st in the Junior Development Series

In addition to the above, over half a dozen finals were made and competed in!



## Women of Woodchopping

The WOW program has returned! Sessions will be running 19 June and 3 July at the Hall Showgrounds from 10am-12pm. If you know a woman who would like to give woodchopping a try, please get in touch!

## Want to try woodchopping?

As always, we're always accepting new members and happy to give a helping hand and guidance to those who want to learn. Get in touch via our social media pages or email us [hallaxemen@gmail.com](mailto:hallaxemen@gmail.com) to find out more information.



f i @hallaxemen

## Applications are now open for Local Heritage Grants



Applications for Yass Valley Council's 2022/2023 Local Heritage Grants Program are now open, with \$19,000 in funding available for heritage conservation projects.

Local Heritage Grants aim to contribute to the preservation of structures of historical value and to foster positive attitudes towards heritage and conservation.

In 2021, nine groups received Heritage Grants across the Yass Valley.

Binalong General Store owners Timothy Wild and Hon Hooi Lim used the funding to replace the leaking roof with a like-for-like replacement to maintain the original look and feel of the building.

'The grant has helped us to repair the leaking roof and prevent it from further deterioration. As an old heritage building, it constantly requires a close eye and ongoing maintenance,' said Mr Lim.

'The repair was more delicate and costly than any ordinary building, so every bit of the grant really helps us to keep it up.'

Mayor Allan McGrath said the Local Heritage Grants Program is a way for Council to provide financial assistance to enable maintenance projects to structures of significant historical value to ensure their conservation for future generations.

'It is so important for Council to provide its financial support in order to help preserve these valuable structures in our towns and villages,' Cr McGrath added.

Applications for the Local Heritage Grants Program close at 5pm on Thursday, 30 June 2022.

[www.yassvalley.nsw.gov.au/assets/Local-Heritage-Grants-Application-Form-2022-2023.pdf](http://www.yassvalley.nsw.gov.au/assets/Local-Heritage-Grants-Application-Form-2022-2023.pdf)



## Floriade comes to Hall again!

This year the ACT Government is planning to hold Floriade in Commonwealth Park, but also have community plantings across Canberra.

Hall Village has been allocated 1600 bulbs and 1600 annuals in assorted mixed colours.

Bring the family along to the community planting event on **Sunday 5 June at 12:30pm!**

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# Letters from Ukraine

This is the first in a series of 2017 emails written by local resident Olga Minion, all the more poignant to read given the current war.

*In 1922, my father Anton and in 1924, my mother Maria were born in different parts of country Ukraine.*

*In 1941, my mother at the age of 17 and my father aged 19, together with thousands of other young Ukrainians, were forcibly removed from their homes and sent to Germany as forced slave labourers.*

*In 1945, almost at the end of the war my parents met and were married in a group ceremony with hundreds of other couples.*

*The next four years saw them interred in a German Refugee camp where my sister and I were born.*

*In 1949 following five months on a crowded ship we all arrived in South Melbourne and then were forwarded on by train to Bandiana Migrant Camp.*

*Following my parents' deaths I decided to visit Russia, Ukraine and Poland. I did this in 2017 accompanied by my sister.*

*I am sharing the emails that I sent to friends and family from Ukraine during those visits with readers of the Rural Fringe.*

Holiday Odyssey 25 Sep 2017

Hi everyone,

Well we have arrived in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, the country of our forebears. We flew with Belavia Airlines, a company we had never heard of but the flights to Minsk in Belarus and then on the Kiev were excellent. However once we got to Kiev, we were required to get a visa at the airport. We had been sent forms which I had duly completed for both of us, including photos as had the 20 or so other tourists. However the one lonely official informed us that they required the visa applications

to be done on their computers in the airport. There were two computers. One group from India had eight people so we had to get in ahead of them.

As each individual application was completed and printed by us the official took each form into his office to process. After about two hours mine was done but when I had keyed Sophie's for some reason the airport name (which was pre populated) had come up wrong and I had to key it again. Talk about nearly crying. Anyway after about 3½ hours we were finished. So of course our booked driver had gone. Lucky we found a taxi and got to our hotel. Welcome to Kiev. We have been told that in high season it can take up to six hours.



Today we had a private guide and driver to take us around Kiev. A wonderful lady called Natalia. They took us absolutely everywhere. From 9am to 7pm. Kiev is a city of five million people and it is spread over 800 sq km. Our first stop was St Vladimir Cathedral, the mother Cathedral of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. As with all the churches we have seen it was magnificent. It was one of the few churches not destroyed by the communists as it was used as an anti-religion museum. As it was Sunday there was a church service in progress. The embalmed bodies of St Barbara and another saint whose name I missed are located in the church. People come up to kiss the glass coffins and make wishes. The church service with the singing of the priests and the church choir was amazing. How lucky we were to be there on a Sunday.

We visited the Golden Gate, which in the 17th Century when Kiev was surrounded by a wall, was destroyed by the grandson of Genghis Khan. We saw the old KGB building, which was huge but due to secrecy no one knew how many people worked there. Today it houses the Security Services of Ukraine.

We visited St Sophia's Church and contrary to Sophie's belief it was not named after her. The church is on the

UNESCO World Heritage listing and is one of the city's best known landmarks. Again it was just magnificent with paintings and 3000 sq m of frescos and even 18th century graffiti. The Oranta Virgin Mary is a sacred icon which is the guardian of the nation. It is said that as long as the Madonna is in this Cathedral in Kiev, Kiev will survive. Again much of it was destroyed and it was lucky to survive. We were not allowed to take photos inside. In ancient times it included a burial vault and also a number of sarcophagus. One marble one was opened in 1939 and was found to hold the 1000 year old bones of Yaroslavl the Wise and his wife. The next church was St Michael's which was destroyed in 1934 by the communists who said that 'religion was poison for working people'. It was restored and reopened in 2000. It is located on the Dniester River. Again, absolutely beautiful.

We visited a monument to St Olga who was ruler of Ukraine from 945 until 960. She was the first person to be baptized into Christianity and her grandson Vladimir converted the nation. She was said to be very educated, very beautiful and very loved. Went to a large market, which has been in the same location since the 15th Century. It was very interesting to see all the different types of food that the locals eat. Across the road was one of a chain of chocolate shops owned by the Ukrainian President Poroshenko. Next was the huge garden of remembrance. It houses the most amazing stainless steel statue of victory. It is 102 m in height and the 4th tallest in the world. It was erected in 1981 by Brezhnev who was a Ukrainian. 13½ million people from Ukraine were killed in WW2. Kiev went from one million people to 180,000. There is an eternal flame which is no longer eternal because of the cost of gas (they no longer buy it from Russia directly) and is only turned on for celebrations. We also visited the museum of the Holodomor which is in memory of the millions of people who died in the famines in Ukraine. The most famous of these is the one from 1932/33, when by a direct decree from Stalin food was withheld from the people of Ukraine. There are disputes as to the actual number of deaths but they range from 7 to 10 million people. There are 24 books with the names of people from 24 areas that starved to death. Because of Soviet secrecy it took 50 years for the world to learn of this atrocity and only because of the



▲ Kyiv Church outdoor service.

work of two UK journalists. One US journalist Walter Durante, a Soviet sympathizer who was aware of the horror, covered it up and most press looked the other way. It was only when the USSR was crumbling that the truth came out. The story is truly shocking.

One of the most interesting places was the Kiev Pecherskaya Lavra or the Kiev Monastery of the Caves. In the 11th Century monks lived underground in manmade catacombs. Two of the monks invented the Cyrillic alphabet which is used by most of the Baltic countries. The Lavra is set on 50 acres and encompasses 83 churches. We went down into the catacombs. You must wear a skirt and a head

scarf. The caves include the mummified bodies of 118 monks in glass cases, covered so you can't see them. Again these are revered as saints and people kiss and pray over them. The catacombs are dark so we each had to carry candles. The Lavra is still a monastery where hundreds of monks still train.

Some interesting info: Ukrainians hate Russia. They believe they are dangerous people who look you in the eye and lie. There are almost no tourists as visitors are frightened of the conflict with Russia. They call it a war and 11,000 Ukrainians have already died. All youth have to join the army for 18 months unless they go to university and then they must study military subjects. They hate their President (Poroshenko) who they say is very corrupt and bribed people to vote for him. Many young people go to Europe to work. It has one of the best metro systems in the world built in the 1970s. Trams lines have been removed as they are too slow in a big city. Replaced by taxi buses and the metro. The chestnut trees which are everywhere are a symbol of Kiev and the city looks beautiful when they flower in May.

Priests are also corrupt and are the richest people in society. Most people in the country are atheists. There are many victims of cancer because of Chernobyl. You can visit for a day but can't live there for 600 years. Lots of tourists go there. Because of corruption a bridge over the Dnieper River has taken 30 years to build and is still not finished. I can't believe how much we did today as I have not included everything. Tomorrow we are leaving for Lviv in Ukraine where our father was born.

Till then,  
Olga



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## President's page



As we move into winter, we generally anticipate the arrival of clear cold nights and days with only sporadic rainfall. However, our meteorologists seem to be suggesting that the La Niña weather pattern of the last two years may remain with us, at least until later in the year.

With continuing rainfall comes the continuing issues resulting from the lack of a storm water drainage system in Hall Village.

It was disappointing to be advised on 1 April by Transport and City Services Minister Chris Steel that the welcome filling and regrading of Bootmakers, Cricketers, One Tree and Saddlers Lanes represented the extent of the response by the ACT Government to the fundamental issues of storm water drainage. It is no surprise that the regrading is already being washed away and causing the same problems for residents.

We responded to Minister Steel reiterating the request to arrange for the relevant ACT government authority to work with the Progress Association on the assessment, design and completion of appropriate works on residential storm water drainage infrastructure. I also copied all Yerrabi MLAs on the letter to the Minister and requested their support.



In order to further highlight the need for ACT Government action, the Progress Association Committee sent a media release on 28 April and over the following days together with MLAs Leanne Castley and James Milligan, and Hall Traders' President Shaun O'Connor, we briefed various media including WIN TV News, RiotAct and ABC TV News. I also held interviews with ABC Canberra Radio Mornings, 2CC Radio Drive, CityNews and Canberra Weekly. The Committee then shared this media coverage with the other Yerrabi MLAs – Andrew Braddock, Suzanne Orr and Michael Pettersson. All three MLAs have responded advising of their advocacy on the storm water drainage issues with Minister Steel.

Although the cliché that a week is a long time in politics is true, it is also sadly true that government moves slowly.

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Hall Village is 140 years old, and the Hall Progress Association has been part of the community for more than 100 years, and will continue to work to have this fundamental need for basic infrastructure addressed in the same way that the Progress Association secured the reticulated water and the sewerage systems in Hall village in the 1960s and 1970s.

Following a request from Hall and Wallaroo residents to petition the ACT Government to extend the 80kph speed limit on the Barton Highway from the NSW border to Clarrie Hermes/ Kuringa Drive intersection, the Progress Association Committee wrote to the same Minister, Chris Steel, in December. At the end of March, Minister Steel advised that the specified section of the Barton Highway had only 19 midblock crashes including two casualty crashes during the period from 2012 to 2016 and, as such, its design and configuration complies with the current 100km/h speed limit and no action will be taken.



If you have any ideas or concerns for our community, please talk to me or any member of the Progress Association Committee, give me a call on **0407 012 160**, send me an email at **robert.yallop.care@gmail.com**, or send a message to **info@hall.act.au**.



**Robert Yallop** President

As this is a national highway, the Progress Association Committee has contacted Federal Member for Fenner, Dr Andrew Leigh, and the NRMA, to seek their assistance in addressing this road safety concern of Wallaroo and Hall residents. We are awaiting an outcome.

In the February edition of the *Rural Fringe*, I mentioned that the Progress Association Committee was considering the unkempt state of the Hall Reserve that has been a concern for a number of Hall residents for some time. Although the ACT Government mowing teams have kept the grass down over the last few months, dead foliage and undergrowth presents a somewhat neglected landscape in the heart of the village. In the coming months, the Progress Association Committee will be seeking your views on the reserve but, in the meantime we are planning to have an initial community workday on Sunday 19 June to remove the dead shrubs and bushes and generally clear up around the reserve. We hope that as a community together we can create a space that we will all enjoy.

I would like to thank Bill Pearson for organising the ANZAC Day commemoration at the War Memorial in Hall. This solemn occasion has quietly grown over the last six or so years and many Hall Village and district residents appreciated the opportunity to come together in remembrance.

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# livestock

## Highland cattle

by Rosie Barton

Jane MacCulloch knew she had the cutest cows on the lot but is still reeling from an unbelievable sale price for her prized highland cattle. 'Apparently highlands are the new diamonds in Australia,' she said. 'I had hoped for a high price but not that high.'

The long-horned Highland cattle breed is gaining popularity for their gentle nature and good quality meat. 'They are beautiful cows and they're also dairy cows as well, which people don't realise, they have a high butter fat content,' Jane added.

'For me it's more a win for the breed and raising their profile.' Two buyers purchased the nine head of cattle for \$104,800 averaging \$11,644.44 each, two to three times the price for an average cow.

Livestock Agent Paul Costigan from Ray White Rural Canberra/Yass says it's a strong showing of what the future potential holds for highland cattle in Australia.

'It's a real boutique market, they are a beautifully natured beast, they are mild and quiet.'

'One man bought some for his wife for Mother's Day and the other buyer purchased them to add to their herd, both buyers were from the central west of NSW.'



▲ Livestock Agent Paul Costigan with Jane MacCulloch and Highlanders.  
- photo supplied



▲ Nugget the bull. - photo supplied



▲ Mildred and her calf sold for \$15,550. - photo supplied

'People are buying them not only for their cute factor but they are also ideal for the small landholder, especially because of how easy they are to maintain.'

While the top price for cow and calf sold for \$15,550 it was Nugget the 570kg bull who sold for the incredible price of \$16,075.

'Nugget was fairly hot property, he had very good confirmation in his structure and all the good attributes highlands have, his horns and hair on his face.'

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## Not for the faint hearted

If anyone sees Alex Porteous hanging out of large trees in Gladstone Street, she is just practising her climbing techniques. Alex is a regular climber in Namadgi National Park.



← Alex climbing in Namadgi.

▲ Alex in Gladstone Street.

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## Hall Polocrosse Carnival

The very successful Hall Polocrosse Carnival was held over the Easter weekend and attracted 176 players, which resulted in 26 teams, plus junior and sub-juniors. Players came from all over the Southern Highlands and several other zones, which shows how popular the Hall event has become.

The weather throughout the weekend was very kind, with clear blue skies and not too cold, making it pleasant for competitors, horses and spectators. And there were plenty of polocrosse games to enjoy, all played in a competitive but friendly spirit. The carnival fielded six grades, A Grade, B Grade, C Grade, D Grade, Junior and Sub-Juniors.

The Hall club is fortunate and very grateful to have the support of local sponsors Hall Farm Supplies, The Shearing Shed Hair Salon and Crown



Asbestos Removals. Other sponsors included Willinga Park, Eagle Hawke Hotel, Hiscock's, Glen Mia Saddlery, A&J Power Engineering, Sutton Mobile Feed & Rural Supplies and Bungendore Horse Supplies. Our sponsors made it possible for the club to hold a fantastic carnival and would like to thank all sponsors for their support.

On Saturday evening we had a wonderful three-course dinner put on by our amazing group of volunteers who gather together each year to make it all happen. This was followed by some fabulous entertainment, with our regular Di Mason who had us all laughing and singing, plus getting the kids and adults to enthusiastically strut their stuff line dancing until late in the evening. It was a great night with everyone having a fun time.

## polocrosse

Kerrie De Britt club secretary

Sunday competition welcomed new spectators to the game who promised to come to the next carnival to watch this stimulating horse sport, because they were pleasantly surprised how exciting it is. A couple of other things that also stood out for them was the number of families involved in the sport and the friendly atmosphere it generates.



If you wish to enquire more about what is happening in relation to the sport of polocrosse, please feel free to contact me on **0410 711 507** or email: [hallpc.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:hallpc.secretary@gmail.com).

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## Home Sweet Home: a new interactive learning space at the Heritage Centre

Past visitors to the Hall School Museum & Heritage Centre may remember a much-loved space – Memory Lane. The room was full of memorabilia from times past and offered visitors an opportunity to reminisce about how people (including themselves) lived in a bygone era.

Over the past two years, especially with lockdowns and closures, the space became somewhat neglected and a major maintenance project was initiated. Many of the items had to be removed because of insect damage and some items were assessed as being no longer suitable for public display.

A proposal was agreed to transform the room into an interactive learning space for visiting students throughout the school year and for families during our Sunday openings. The centre has had a successful education program for several years now and this initiative will expand our package on offer.

The Australian curriculum posits local history within the Social Sciences and in Year 2 of primary school there is a focus on learning about how changes in technology have affected/influenced our lives. As part of this unit of work students aged 7-8 years use the context of local history to investigate, deliberate and hypothesise about how life has changed over time: in simple terms they research the THEN and NOW.

The centre is an ideal place for such a study. Students visit a school from the past and experience what it was like to sit on hard wooden planks, use slates, freeze in winter and boil in summer and how, if you brought a gun to school, you certainly got the cane! Our Hall Village classroom has been operational for some time and students have an opportunity to familiarise themselves with early farming tools and practices, what was on sale at the Southwell & Brown Premier Store and how much it cost to go to the pictures on a Saturday night.



Students can also investigate what might have been inside a Hall Village home before electricity came in 1948, because the centre volunteers have established scenes from a typical domestic setting. For example, the kitchen was often the largest, warmest and best lit room, while the sitting room or parlour was hardly used and off limits to kids. The dining room was a later addition to show off the family's wealth and a partial bedroom with inside ablutions hardware is also on show. There is a wonderful array of toys that children from that era would have played with and we anticipate this display will be of special interest to our young visitors.



One of the items retained from the original Memory Lane display is a beautiful 19th Century dressing table and mirror. It was in a sad state before the talented men's shedders took to it with their sandpaper and skill. They also brought back to life two Bentwood chairs, kindly offered to the centre by Cynthia and Kingsley Southwell.

Maren Innes, our part-time archivist, has also donated her time and expertise to re-invent an old kettle, originally painted white; a Bentwood chair that had 'been through the wars'; many of Kingsley's board games from when he was a child and old children's books from the era that need some TLC.

Visitors are encouraged to open drawers and doors, identify artefacts from the past and link them to modern day equivalents, answer questions about how some of the items function, observe changes in technology linked to common



domestic items such as radios, phones and irons and generally experience what it was like to live without electricity in a small rural village on the outskirts of the nation's capital.

Arrangements for local school excursions are becoming more flexible and we have four schools booked in for Term 2, with a total of almost 300 students due to visit. We would also encourage more families to visit the centre and participate in our education program – mums, dads and grandparents with children in tow so the whole family can experience school, home and village life from the past.



During the recent Heritage Festival, we trialled a Curio Treasure Hunt during the Kids Week activities. Despite early inclement weather we were pleased with the turn out and are now incorporating the treasure hunt activities into our Sunday opening offerings. The old school, the old home and the old village scenarios all feature in the treasure hunt clue sheets as does our main display area.

Encouraging our younger citizens to understand and enjoy their local history may boost future volunteer numbers – a necessity if establishments like ours are to remain vibrant and relevant.

## Facelift planned

Our grant application to the Australian Museums and Galleries Association, for funds to upgrade our entrance foyer, has been successful. We have been granted \$3,000, which we will use to smarten up the foyer with new carpet tiles.

We have also applied for a grant – this time from ACT Heritage – to improve disability access to our main building from Palmer Street. If this application succeeds there will eventually be a dedicated disability parking spot and a new concrete pathway direct to the doorway.

## Minister drops by

It was a pleasure to welcome Minister for Heritage Rebecca Vassarotti and the ACT Heritage Unit Director Edwina Jans to the centre during the Heritage Festival. They spent some time looking at a number of exhibitions – including those especially prepared for the festival.



Heritage Minister Rebecca Vassarotti (centre) with Heather Wilford and Margaret Morris.

These include 'The Brooklands Story', a display commemorating the end of three generations of Southwell ownership of 'Brooklands', the Wallaroo property selected in 1877 by Richard Southwell. We also mounted a special display of the George Westcott Collection in partnership with the National Sheepdog Trials Association. George Westcott was the founder of the National Sheep Dog Trial Association in 1943, and kept records and stories of the event's early years. We also contributed a treasure hunt to the inaugural Heritage 'Kids Week', based on our regular schools program for Year 2 students, and assisted the Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association with the loan of display cases for their Heritage Festival display – 'West of the Murrumbidgee'.

Government grants via ACT Heritage have been a vital source of funding for the Centre for more than 10 years.



# Goodbye leavesgardening

by **Lisa Walmsley**

My garden has defoliated leaving us totally exposed to the polar vortex slamming the east side of our great nation. Many of us reap the benefits of the brilliant seasonal changes our climate brings but that first exposure to winters harsh reality reminds us that our evergreens play a really big part in our gardens.

Now that most of the beautiful autumn foliage has dropped off, it becomes much more apparent where the gaps are in your garden. Choosing evergreen plants can be a little more tricky than selecting deciduous. These plants need to look good all year and some may require more maintenance than deciduous plants.

Evergreens contrast with the bare branches of deciduous trees and shrubs and they all have a place in your garden. Evergreen plants provide year round green and add shelter in summer and winter. Many of them will flower long into the winter and into spring as well.

A brilliant low growing perennial with winter flowers that grow happily under your deciduous trees is hellebores and once established will self seed making a carpet of colour in the winter.

Often, shrubs are used as formal or informal hedges to create boundaries and order within a garden.

Callistemon 'Slim' and Callistemon 'Endeavour' are glorious long flowering natives that hedge well but also sit well on their own and bring lots of happy little birds into your garden.

You can't look past *Prunus lusitanica* for a dark green hedge or *Viburnum odoratissimum* if you are looking for that thick green private wall.

For texture and colour *Teucrium fruticans* is a lovely grey foliated plant. Low maintenance, drought tolerant, frost tolerant and a blue wrens favourite spot to hang out. Buxus or box as you may know it is a brilliant evergreen plant and seriously tolerates our climatic extremes. Hedge it, ball it, really make this plant be what you want it to be.

I took a long time to enjoy our native grasses and experimented with a lot of them with varying degrees of success and failure but the one grass that is always fantastic is Lomandra 'Tanika'. This plant really never lets you down and mass planted it looks amazing. They really are a set and forget plant and continue to provide years of joy without any care.

I'm often asked to recommend a ground cover that hugs the ground enough that it prevents weed growing in between. Unfortunately an impossible request, but *Dichondra repens*, a native ground cover comes close. It has lovely small, dark green kidney shaped leaves and once established sneaks around the garden like a recalcitrant snail, but much more worthy. This plant is very easily divided, just by cutting a small piece off with roots and replanting in a new spot.

Evergreen trees are a little more tricky and the selection is much more narrow. Very few Eucalypts work in our gardens, unless of course you are lucky enough to have a large country garden but even then selection should be considered very carefully. Please be absolutely sure of a Eucalyptus full size before you plant one in your garden as removal is very disappointing and expensive.

There is a huge range of cypress type plants that can fit into most garden spaces. There is every kind of pencil pine, pointy and blunt, many may be hedged and they come in many shades of green to lime to grey.



Irish strawberry tree



Another really lovely evergreen tree is *Arbutus unedo* – Irish strawberry tree. Very slow growing, so not really ideal as a shade tree, but wonderful to block a low view you don't want to see or simply as a feature plant with its waxy bell shaped white/pink flowers followed by a mass of strawberry shaped fruit, which you can't eat but look wonderful on the tree.

Whether it's a brutal winter polar blast or a 100km/h 35 degrees summer wind, your garden is going to be much more resilient with some evergreen protection.

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# Emotional drinking

by **Robyn Monteleone** hypnotherapist

Have you or someone you know, become an emotional drinker?

The last two years have included bushfires, a pandemic with lockdowns and lifestyle restrictions, floods and at the time of writing, a war that is beyond comprehension for many. For some people, the last two years have simply compounded the stresses of everyday life more than ever. The stresses of working, family, paying off debts and simply getting through each day mean we need to find new ways to deal with that stress.



And the more we stayed at home, the more the Facebook memes increased regarding drinking beer and wine to get through the day. At the time, it seemed to be an inane way of relieving stress in one of the only ways we could. It was funny because so many people could relate to 'needing' that drink to get through the day.

According to Australian research, alcohol purchases increased by as much as 24% between May 2020 and February 2021. And according to the Australian Drug Foundation, 29% of parents increased their drinking.

The reasons for increased alcohol consumption during COVID included:

- Being at home
- Stress
- Boredom
- Job loss

For some people, the increase in drinking has carried on; from a glass or two on the weekends, to several glasses every night. It's become a habit that hasn't slowed down as we come out of COVID.

If you are wondering if alcohol consumption is impacting your health or someone else's, here are six questions from the Australian Drug Foundation to start with:

- Are you in the habit of thinking – 'I'll just have one more'?
- Is your alcohol consumption becoming more important than day-to-day life activities?
- Are you stressed and unhappy – are the four walls closing in?
- Are you having trouble sleeping? i.e. could this be from your alcohol consumption?
- Do you find yourself with relationship troubles?
- Is your alcohol tolerance creeping up and do you suffer withdrawals if you don't drink?

If you are drinking more than you used to or you can't have an alcohol free day, perhaps it's time to consider your drinking habit. If you would like to reduce your consumption but you're having trouble reducing it, hypnotherapy can help.

Recently, I've had several clients who wish to reduce their alcohol consumption, without giving it up entirely. Working together, we were able to reduce the need for the alcohol so their wine could go back to being a social drink, rather than an everyday stress reliever. Interestingly, weight loss is often a result of reducing alcohol consumption because less calories are being consumed.

If you'd like to chat about whether hypnotherapy can help you, start here: [www.robbynm.com.au](http://www.robbynm.com.au).



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# Springfield Rural Fire Service

It's been a very quiet bushfire season again this year, with the majority of callouts for motor vehicle accidents in our region. This has given us time to spend focusing on training and upgrading our equipment. We are thankful for the low level of activity but are ready to respond when needed.

## Intending to burn?

Bushfire danger period is officially over, however, if you do intend to burn, you are still required to notify the NSW RFS and your neighbours at least 24 hours before you light up. The simplest way to do this is by visiting [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/BFDP/burn-notifications](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/BFDP/burn-notifications) or calling your local fire control centre.



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## Congratulations

At our recent Annual General Meeting we were pleased to have Superintendent Peter Alley from the Southern Tablelands Zone present the National Emergency Medal to four members of the Springfield Brigade – Jason Burgess, Ian Davies, Rod Tarlinton and Ted Tarlinton. The National Emergency Medal is awarded to those whose service was in the protection of lives and property or in the service of interests that are not their own and who supported the emergency response for a minimum of five days between September 2019 and February 2020.

In addition to this, other members of the brigade were issued with the Commissioners Certificate of Service for the contribution to the 2019-20 bushfires. We are very proud of all our volunteers and the contribution and sacrifices that they make to keeping our community safe.



Superintendent Peter Alley and Captain Rod Tarlinton receiving his National Emergency Medal.

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Rebecca Morrison  
President



## Springfield Office Bearers

Congratulations to the following members who have been elected in to Operational and Support Roles with the Brigade:

Captain	Rod Tarlinton
President	Rebecca Morrison
Senior Deputy	Tom Morrison
Vice President	George Southwell
Deputies	Simon Connor Jason Burgess
Secretary	Karen Shaw
Training Co-ordinator	Ian Davies
Treasurer	Wendy Craik
Health and Safety	Jane Morrison
Fund Raising	Marion Robinson
Equipment	Jason Burgess
Communications	Louise Burgess
Catering Officers	Ted and Kaye Tarlinton

If you'd like to find out more about the NSW RFS, please get in contact with us. If you are new to the neighbourhood, get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

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Following on from the sheep dog trials and polocrosse carnival, both very successful events in Hall over the past few months, I started thinking about the variety of pets and animals in our lives. Of course there are many more animals than dogs and horses, as wonderful as they are. Our family has had our share of cats, dogs and a few other wonderful creatures, but more on that a bit later.

I was thinking more about what pets and animals mean to us. For example, they offer and give unconditional love and devotion. They are wonderful companions, especially when we may be feeling a bit lonely or sad. Let's face it, who hasn't at times called upon our pet to act as our confidant, where we can share a secret or private matter?

They seem to understand our emotions better than another human – when we're cheerful or sad, and it's well known that animals, regardless what type, have a positive effect on people with a disability, in hospital or aged care. Instant smiles and feelings of happiness are assured!

When I think about a pet, I remember sitting next to one of our grandsons watching his tropical fish gently swimming around in their aquarium. It wasn't hard to get a feeling of quiet serenity. Well, until he told me they were named after some of the Minions cartoon characters, one being Kevin, which I found a bit odd!

Not sure if I wanted a fish with my name!

When our other grandson was very young my darling wife Susan and I bought him a soft toy Basset Hound dog, which he instantly named 'Doggy'. It became one of his favourite and much-loved 'pets' and he carried it wherever he went. Maybe it was his imaginary friend, confidant, or sole mate. Whatever it was, it's still part of the family, even if it is safely put away and kept for the next generation to cuddle and love.

Pets and animals of course come in all shapes and sizes. But probably the more general ones are cats and dogs. However due to the number of restrictions and guidelines for keeping cats, I guess dogs are more common. There's certainly a number of people walking around my area with them, so it's a good way to get some exercise, and the dogs enjoy being out and meeting other people and dogs.

Owning an animal is especially good for families, because it teaches children responsibilities such as feeding, watering, exercising and cleaning up after the pet. But it's all worthwhile, because in spite of the mess and sometimes destruction a young puppy or kitten can cause (it's not always a good idea to leave good socks or shoes nearby), not many people can resist 'puppy eyes' or the cuteness of a gorgeous kitten. Or indeed the glorious chirping sounds and colours of birds.

I remember as a young lad sitting on a bale of hay in the chook house with my Dad watching the chickens scratch and peck at the straw on the ground looking for wheat and whatever else we fed them. It was such a special time because we would be quietly chatting away and although I never named the six or seven chickens, they were my first pets.

When Susan and I first married we had a golden Labrador named Honey. She was our beautiful baby and will always have a special place in our heart. But some pets are like that because they just give us so much and she certainly did. Since then, we've had a couple of cats, Meow Meow (it was noisy) and Fluffy (no prizes for guessing why); Huey, Dewey and Louie the goldfish; Turdy Bird, an injured magpie we cared for (again, no prizes); two more labbys plus a couple of other dogs. Oh, and I think we had a budgie at some stage! Another stunning cat, a Ragdoll named Precious was just that, because this breed is precious and shouldn't



Phoebe

Our latest dog is my best companion, Phoebe. She's a Mini Schnauzer and has become my constant shadow and everything I could possibly wish for in a pet. I don't have enough words to describe how much she means to me and what joy she has brought into my life.

So yes, no matter what shape or form they take, pets are so often a wonderful part of our lives. I'm not sure if we

always appreciate them, but I do know they can give unconditional love and welcome our attention, even if they're a foam filled toy Basset Hound or tropical fish swimming around in a tank.



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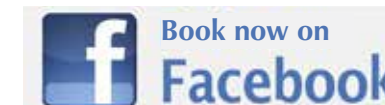
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## From the Editor

Huge congratulations to the great stalwarts of Hall Mick and Evie De Britt on their 60th wedding anniversary. We are blessed to have them in our community, actively engaged over so very many years.

I was also moved by Olga Minion's generosity in sharing emails from her 2017 visit to Ukraine, the original home of her parents. We plan to run these emails as a mini series over the next few editions of the *Rural Fringe*. They provide some timely insight into a country that is featuring so grimly in our daily news bulletins.

It is great to see news of a more normal Hall life. From the Hall Axemen and Women of Woodchopping, to Hall Polocrosse, to the Hall School Museum and Heritage Centre, things are buzzing. I'm looking forward to the Floriade bulb and annuals planting in Hall and the work day on the Village Reserve in June.



Shingle back blue tongue. Photo: Paul Porteous

I am just back from two months visiting my UK family, and took a break this morning from my raking/mowing the autumn leaves and editing the *Rural Fringe* to walk along the Centennial Trail up One Tree Hill. I haven't been there since the last stretch up the hill was upgraded and I'm happy to report it is beautiful. With a new and welcome bench at the top for a quick rest. It is a gorgeous walk that we are so lucky to have on our doorstep.

A special thanks to Fringe volunteers Gail, our layout artist, and Kevin for doing the majority of work on this edition again. And to the Men's Shed volunteers who have enthusiastically taken on the roadside deliveries.

Until next time,  
Jo Hall



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The *Rural Fringe* acknowledges the Ngunnawal people 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 Ngunnawal Nation past, present and future.

### The Rural Fringe – ISSN: 1329-3893

The *Rural Fringe* is a community newspaper published in 660 copies every second month by the Village of Hall and District Progress Association Inc (VHDPA) and distributed free to mailboxes of the 2618 postcode. It is also available online at [www.hall.act.au](http://www.hall.act.au). This publication is funded by the advertisements so readers are encouraged to support the businesses advertised.

#### 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](mailto:ruralfringe@hotmail.com)  
or: PO Box 43 Hall ACT 2618.

#### Advertising rates (per issue)

large (quarter page)	\$80	colour \$120
medium (eighth page)	\$40	colour \$60
small (three sixteenth page)	\$30	colour \$45

#### Other information

Editor: Jo Hall 0417 693 545

Proofreader: Kevin Stone

Email: [ruralfringe@hotmail.com](mailto:ruralfringe@hotmail.com)

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Dear Editor.

I live in South Australia and just finished reading the on-line version of the April Rural Fringe. Our very good friends in Canberra told us about your publication and I always look forward to reading it.

The edition was particularly good and I enjoyed it immensely, even re-read some articles I had read a few days ago. The articles were so informative and I loved that the winning dog at the sheep dog trials has its portrait done. The photos on the last page are stunning and I adored the painted bunnies.

It was an interesting item about the problem of town drainage, or more to the point, lack of, and it's always great to read about the history of Hall.

You're very fortunate to be a part of a fantastic community with all it has on offer. Whenever we visit Canberra, we always like to spend some time in Hall because it has a country feeling atmosphere while being so close to the national capital.

Thank you so much for all the work you obviously put in to producing this wonderful publication.

Yvonne  
Beachport

## Letters to the editor

Dear Editor.

I'm very disappointed and saddened to bring this to your attention, but the Hall Polocrosse Club, which is finding these times quite difficult along with everyone else, has had items stolen from the polocrosse grounds.

Recently an item of some value has gone missing, one which has been kept there for many years and used to maintain the grounds, particularly after the carnivals.

Then, while club members have been at the grounds doing voluntary maintenance and cleaning up someone has taken another item that was used.

The things that were taken are important to the club, particularly this time of year as it is our polocrosse season and they are needed for maintenance of the grounds and facilities.

It would be appreciated if the items could be returned and no questions will be asked.

Kerrie De Britt  
Secretary  
Hall Polocrosse Club  
0410 711 507  
[hallpc.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:hallpc.secretary@gmail.com)

## Letters to the editor . . . ... always welcome

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Hall Reserve, Victoria Street

Sunday 19 June 11:00 am to 3:00 pm

*Join your neighbours to clear dead shrubs, weeds and undergrowth, spread mulch on areas of the Hall Reserve and contribute to the amenity of Hall Village.*

*Sausage sizzle  
for all comers.*

Bring your gardening and weeding tools – shovel, hoe, rake, wheelbarrow, pruning shears or hedge trimmer and gloves. Wear high-visibility if you have any.

Come and share your thoughts about the future of the Hall Reserve – what should the Hall Reserve be used for? Should it have picnic tables for example? Other thoughts about the Hall Reserve?

For further information talk to any member of the Hall Progress Association Committee,  
email [info@hall.act.au](mailto:info@hall.act.au)  
or call **Olga Minion** on **0412 580 792**.

