

RURAL FRINGE

Journal of the Hall district



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June 2026

Tony Morris OAM

by Jenny Whittaker

Congratulations to Tony Morris, who received the Medal of the Order of Australia from Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC at a recent ceremony at Government House.



When I caught up with Tony recently for this article, his first comment was that his wife, Margaret, was as worthy of the award as he was, and that without her, he couldn't have made the level of contribution he had. Anyone who knows Margaret would wholeheartedly agree!

Tony grew up in Canberra, living in Braddon and attending Ainslie Primary School and Telopea Park High School. His family had a history of being bootmakers, starting in Ginninderra in the mid 1800's, and his great-grandfather continued the bootmaking business in Hall Village. His bootmaking grandfather moved the business to the Canberra Centre, and while Tony's dad was also a bootmaker, he started a successful taxi business. Tony bucked the bootmaking trend and his first job was as a public servant in the Department of Treasury and then as a Survey Draughtsman and other ACT government roles, ending his career as the Manager of the Bruce Stadium.

Tony and Margaret married in 1965 and have two children. They have lived in Hall Village for over 60 years and it's safe to say that Tony knows where the skeletons are buried! An unidentified bunch of keys recently surfaced for the various buildings managed by the Progress Association with no-one knowing which keys were for what building. Of course Tony knew exactly!

... continues on page 3

The Order of Australia celebrates Australians who make an outstanding contribution to the community at the local, national, or international level. The Council for the Order of Australia decides who should be recommended based on a person's actions, achievements, and the difference they have made. People who are recognised go above and beyond what is reasonably expected (or could reasonably expect) to make life better for others.





Community Meeting
7pm Monday 15 June
Hall Pavilion

NBN Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP)

NBN FTTP is being installed in Hall Village. NBN Co representatives will provide information to Hall residents and businesses on the implementation of NBN FTTP, including the expected works to be undertaken, how properties will be connected and the anticipated time frames for connection.

All Hall Village residents and businesses are welcome.



Hall Oval in May. photo: Paul Porteous

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Tony Morris OAM ... continued from page 1

I was interested to read some newspaper clippings that Margaret has kept over the years, about the changes and challenges to the village during their time here. As part of the Hall Progress Association Tony has helped wrangle the government of the day on issues such as changing the house blocks from a 'rent' system, to a 99 year lease that all ACT residents are now familiar with. There was the building of the suburb of Gungahlin that was going to be as close as 100 metres from the village ovals. No-one doubted the need for the creation of the new town centre but the Progress Association lobbied for the creation of a larger buffer zone around the village to maintain its unique and rural nature as the oldest village in the ACT. And who could forget what the *Canberra Times* (4/5/1998) called a 'secret land deal' for the release of 250 hobby farm blocks to the northeast of Hall.



Tony with a letter from the Department of the Capital Territory regarding lease changes.

After retiring in 1997, Tony has continued to devote his time to volunteering for many community activities. He still finds time to go caravanning with Margaret, visiting family in Tasmania and the south coast, as well as venturing further afield to explore parts unknown.

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The following is an outline of Tony's contribution to the community over many, many years:

Village of Hall and District Progress Association

- Former Vice-President (40 years)
- Committee member since 1965

The Royal Canberra Show Society

- Steward – Jams, Spreads and Preserves, Horticultural Section, Royal Canberra Show, 37 years
- Volunteer since early 1970's

Agricultural organisations

- Volunteer, National Sheepdog Trials, since 1978
- Steward, Queanbeyan Show, since c2000

New South Wales Rural Youth Organisation

- President and Life Member, State Management Committee, 20 years
- Hall Club Advisor, State Management Committee, 37 years

Community

- ACT Justice of the Peace, since 1978
- Volunteer, Hartley Life Care, Life Member and markets volunteer, since 1987
- Volunteer, Hall Heritage Centre
- Volunteer Firefighter, Hall Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
- Convenor, Hall and District Collectors Club, since 2020
- Inaugural member Hall Men's Shed

Awards and Recognition include:

- Recognition of 20 years of volunteer service for the Coogee Island Challenge Event, Coogee Surf Life Saving Club, 2021
- Community Service Award, Rotary Club of Hall 2014
- Meritorious Certificate, Royal Canberra Show 2010
- Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, Paul Harris Fellow 2019

St Michael & All Angels Anglican Church

Corner Victoria and Loftus Streets, Hall

by Beryl Pedvin

It has been a busy year since the parishes of Ginninderra and Charnwood combined to become Hope Ginninderra Anglican Parish 12 months ago. Since then, we've farewelled Rev Ken Rampling and Rev Peter Malone into retirement, and now we look forward to a new season under the leadership of our new rector, Rev Dr Margaret Wesley. At the time of writing, we are looking forward to Thursday 11 June, when Rev Margaret will be formally inducted to the role by Bishop Mark Short at a service at St Barnabas Church in Charnwood.



Rev Margaret is moving from Brisbane to join our parish. She has family in the surrounding region and is a little familiar with the climate, but it's likely that the first winter will be something of a challenge.

Parish members are looking forward to getting to know Rev Margaret and to whatever new directions she will guide us in. I'm sure that Rev Margaret will be keen to get to know the communities that our churches are part of as well.

All parishioners have been extremely grateful for the guiding hand of Rev Helen Dean whilst we waited for the appointment of a new priest. Rev Helen has been Assistant Priest in the parish for many years, but the role of locum priest during this time has involved juggling multiple services each Sunday, handling all the pastoral and theological situations which arise, dealing with all the practicalities of two church buildings, preparing the rectory for our new priest, and anything else that happens. Many thanks indeed to Rev Helen!

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- individual and groups
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Reserve your spot

Phone: **0407 008 104**
 Email: **hallkiosk@hotmail.com**
 Limited places available – bookings are essential.

We look forward to helping you become more confident with technology!

HHH – Hall helping hands

Hall Happy Helpers is a group that has been formed as an initiative of the Village of Hall and District Progress Association. Its aim is to make small repairs and maintain the current infrastructure around Hall Village.

Our first job will be repairing the fence around the rugby field, installing hinges on the gates, and tidying up the dead timber on the eastern side of the rugby field.

We hope to meet regularly on the third Sunday of the month, and our first working day will be **Sunday 21 June** from **2pm** for approximately three hours, finishing with a cold drink. On that day we would need two 4WD vehicles, chainsaws, and mowers (not ride on).



We would love to have anyone who would like to lend a hand come along, give the benefit of their knowledge and equipment, or just give moral support.

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What amazing autumn weather we have been experiencing with mostly warm and sunny days, although the chilly mornings have begun to herald the start of winter.

Yet again I would like to give a big thank you to Dennis Greenwood and Bill Pearson for organising our community commemoration of ANZAC day at the Hall Village War Memorial. It has only been in the last few years after the COVID lockdown period that we have had this community commemoration of ANZAC Day in Hall Village and it has proven extremely popular, growing significantly every year. Such a community commemoration is very appropriate with five local men from Hall District aged between 18 and 37 having been killed at Gallipoli, in France and Belgium. This year, the commemoration was supported by the Gungahlin Naval Cadet Unit.

Relevant ACT Government approvals for the NBN Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) connections in Hall have taken somewhat longer than NBN Co initially anticipated but connections are still expected to be completed by the end of this year. NBN Co has asked the Progress Association Committee to host a Community Meeting for Hall Village residents and businesses about NBN FTTP and its implications. This will be held in the Hall Pavilion on Monday 15 June at 7:00pm. All residents and businesses are encouraged to come and discuss matters with the NBN Co representatives.

The Officer-in-Charge of Yass Sector of NSW Police, Inspector David Cowell, attended the Progress Association Committee meeting in April at the invitation of the committee. Inspector Cowell is eager to develop open communications between Police from Yass and local organisations within the Yass sector, including the Village of Hall and District Progress Association. Inspector Cowell shared information about recurring issues within the Yass sector, including domestic violence and largely opportunistic theft of property and motor vehicles. The Progress Association Committee shared concerns

expressed by Wallaroo, Spring Range and Nanima residents about illegal dumping of rubbish on the quiet rural roads, as well as unlawful entering and burglary of rural properties and increased antisocial and criminal driving behaviour, especially around holiday periods. Inspector Cowell encouraged those who have been victim of property theft to report it to police as Yass Police have a large number of recovered stolen items in store with no reported owners.

City Services Minister Tara Cheyne has recently informed the Progress Association Committee that design work on the Safe Cycle/Pedestrian Path between Hall Village and Clarrie Hermes Drive is progressing, with a Preliminary Sketch Plan now developed and circulated to relevant internal ACT Government stakeholders. Funding of almost \$3.5 million has been provided by the Australian Government to be matched by the ACT Government. All ACT Government commitments are made through the ACT annual budget process and have not been confirmed, which is why the Pedestrian/Cycle Path was one of the three items included in the Progress Association Submission to the ACT Budget.

Minister Cheyne has advised that following the development of construction-ready documentation, a construction tender is expected to be released in the third quarter of 2026, with construction to follow contract award. Minister Cheyne has also confirmed that the government is committed to community consultation and members of the Progress Association Committee will soon meet with iCBR (Infrastructure Canberra) staff to make arrangements for this consultation.

The Progress Association Committee has also been advised that iCBR anticipates that the required Development Applications for Stormwater Drainage Infrastructure will be submitted in the coming months, although ACT Government funding has not yet been committed. As with the Pedestrian/Cycle Path, the Stormwater Infrastructure was a focus of the Progress Association submission to the ACT FY 2027 Budget.

In the last edition of the *Rural Fringe*, there was an article about the idea of having a Blue Tree for mental health awareness in Hall Village. The Progress Association Committee is still eager to receive feedback on this possibility. Please send your comments on this proposed initiative by email to info@hall.act.au or by mail to **PO Box 43 Hall**.

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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As the colder weather has arrived across our region, now is the perfect time to check your smoke alarms and prepare your home for winter fire safety.

Check your bleeping smoke alarm

Did you know smoke alarms have a use-by date? Unlike a good local wine, smoke alarms do not improve with age.



Many modern alarms can last up to 10 years, particularly models with sealed long-life batteries, which can make it easy to forget how long they have been installed. Over time, smoke alarms can become less reliable due to dust, dirt, age and general wear.

The NSW RFS is reminding residents to:

- test smoke alarms regularly
- clean alarms to remove dust and cobwebs
- check the manufacture or expiry date
- replace alarms that are old, damaged or discoloured.

As we move into the colder months, fire agencies often see an increase in house fires as residents use fireplaces, electric blankets and heaters to stay warm. Remember – you won't smell smoke while you're asleep, but a working smoke alarm can provide the critical early warning needed to safely escape a fire.

Take a few minutes this weekend to check your alarms. It is one of the simplest things you can do to protect your family.

Brigade AGM and Executive Committee

The brigade recently held its Annual General Meeting and we thank all members who continue to contribute their time, skills and energy to supporting our community.

We welcome:

- Alistair Coe as Vice President
- Matt Cram as Equipment Officer

We also extend our sincere thanks to George Southwell for his many years of service on the Executive Committee. George's contribution to the brigade over many years has been greatly appreciated, and we know he will continue to be an active and valued member of the brigade.



The brigade leadership team for the coming year is:

- Rodney Tarlinton – Captain
- Tom Morrison – Senior Deputy Captain
- Jason Burgess – Deputy Captain
- Simon Connor – Deputy Captain
- Bec Morrison – President
- Alistair Coe – Vice President
- Louise Burgess – Secretary
- Wendy Craik – Treasurer
- Matt Cram – Trucks and Equipment Officer
- Ian Davies – Training
- Kieran Shaw – Health and Safety
- Anne Eshman – Community Engagement
- Marion Robinson – Fundraising

Thank you to everyone who volunteers their time behind the scenes and on the fireground to help keep our community safe.

Supporting your local brigade

Thank you to everyone in our community who continues to support the brigade throughout the year.

We especially appreciate our local businesses, including the Hall Post Office, for hosting one of our brigade donation boxes.

As we approach the end of the financial year, donations to the brigade are always welcome and help us purchase equipment and supplies to support our volunteers.

Donations can be made by bank transfer:
BSB: **325185** Account: **04099035**

As always, thank you for supporting your local brigade and helping us keep our community safe.

Stay warm, stay safe and remember to check your bleeping smoke alarm.



NSW RFS – Springfield Brigade

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Creating calm takes more than positive thinking

by **Robyn Monteleone**
clinical hypnotherapist



Most of us want to feel happier. We want more peace, more calm, more joy. We want to feel steady inside ourselves, even when life is busy, messy, demanding, or uncertain.

But happiness and calm do not usually just arrive one day and decide to stay.

They need to be created. Cultivated. Protected. Sometimes even managed.

And that is not always what people want to hear, because it means we have a part to play. It means we cannot just wait for life to get easier, everyone else to behave better, or all the problems to disappear before we allow ourselves to feel better.

At the same time, this is not about pretending everything is fine.

I am not a fan of 'just think positive' when there is real stress, grief, hurt, fear, or overwhelm sitting underneath the surface. That can easily become toxic positivity. And toxic positivity does not heal anything. It often just pushes the real feelings down further.

There is a big difference between forcing yourself to look on the bright side and genuinely learning how to shift your focus.

A healthy shift in focus happens on two levels.

The first level is conscious. We can choose to notice what is working. We can look for the small moments

of calm, connection, gratitude, laughter, beauty, or relief. We can remind ourselves that even when something is hard, it is not the whole story. That matters. But the second level matters too.

We also need to deal with the 'stuff' underneath. The old stress. The patterns we keep repeating. The emotions we have pushed aside because we were too busy, too tired, too overwhelmed, or simply did not know what to do with them.

That is where real change often begins.

Because calm is not created by ignoring what hurts. Peace is not created by pretending nothing bothers you. And joy is not created by putting a smile over the top of everything and hoping for the best. Happiness, peace and joy are not about having a perfect life. They are about learning how to come back to yourself, one honest, gentle step at a time.

Sometimes we need support to gently work with what is underneath the surface, so we can release some of what we have been carrying and create more space for calm, clarity and choice. Hypnotherapy can be one way to do that. If you're curious, you can download a hypnosis audio at: www.robym.com.au

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A visit from the Ambassador

gold creek station

by Hayden Starr

On a perfect Canberra autumn afternoon, Gold Creek Station was delighted to host the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency Mr Xiao Qian, to Australia together with members of the Embassy community.

The occasion was a day of celebration for the Embassy. A visit to Gold Creek Station offered a picturesque Australian backdrop for their event, along with a valuable opportunity for cultural exchange.



The delegation was welcomed by Ngunnawal Elder Aunty Josie, who shared her knowledge, stories, and artwork.

Hosts John and Craig Starr guided the delegation around Gold Creek Station, sharing a sheep dog mustering demonstration, a hands-on look at their merino stock, and insights from over 50 years of managing their farm.

There was much to discuss, including China's long-standing relationship as the number one importer of Australian wool, and various technological advancements in farming.

They were joined by Goulburn-based shearing champion Rocky Wegner and his family, who gave an up-close look at how to shear a sheep and class wool. And to round out the display, a professional woodchopping demonstration from Shaun O'Connor and his team at Capital Country Woodchopping.



John Starr with Mr Xiao Qian and Josie Reardon.



Demonstration by Capital Country Woodchopping.



The delegation also visited Hall Village and the Hall Heritage Museum, with Phil Robson and the team sharing some history and insight into how Canberra had evolved into the city we know today.

The Starr family of Gold Creek Station thanks His Excellency Mr Xiao Qian and the Chinese Embassy for their visit, and for the opportunity to share first-hand experiences of Australian life and culture.



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Howzat! Cricket ACT honours trailblazing sportswoman Nina Southwell

From an article in *About Regional* by Sally Hopman

In the history of Canberra district sport, legend has it that few stood as tall, yet humble, as Nina Southwell.

A girl in a family of five brothers at a time when women were expected to spend their days indoors, looking after everyone else, Nina was different.

Nina Sylvia Jean Southwell was, according to her family – and Canberra’s early sporting records – not only passionate about cricket, but also very good at it. So good that, almost 60 years after her death at age 58, she has just been inducted into Cricket ACT’s Hall of Fame.



Great-niece Melinda Sheffield, left, Ralph Southwell’s partner Anne Lomax, nephew Ralph Southwell with the award and Jane-Anne Southwell at the Cricket ACT Hall of Fame event honouring cricketer Nina Southwell. Photo: Cricket ACT.



Olive Southwell pictured with her daughter Nina Southwell. The photograph was taken in the mid-1960s. Photo: Supplied.

Members of her family, the region’s pioneering Southwells, were on hand in Canberra last week for the honour, including her nephew Ralph and her great niece Melinda Sheffield, whose middle name is Nina, a tribute to the sportswoman.

Honouring Nina Southwell as quite the force in the 1930s Hall village cricket side, Cricket ACT said she ‘confounded batters as one of cricket’s most successful wicket-takers in the FCT (Federal Cricket Territory) Women’s Cricket Association’.

‘Her reputation was built on a unique dual threat: as a bowler, she was renowned for her ‘flight and direction’, possessing the guile to deceive a batter in the air, yet when she stepped to the crease, she was a ‘vigorous, hard-hitting’ batter who looked to dominate the bowling from the first delivery.’

Born in 1910 on the family property on Spring Range Road, Hall, part of which still remains in family hands today, Nina grew up, according to the Cricket ACT tribute, ‘in a landscape that demanded resilience – a quality she brought to every innings she played’.

‘When women’s cricket was first finding its structure in the Federal Capital Territory, she was not just a participant, she was a pioneer of the women’s game in the Canberra region.’

‘Perhaps most inspiring was her enduring spirit,’ Cricket ACT said in the tribute.



The champion 1930s Hall Women’s Cricket Team featuring Nina Southwell, top row, far left. Photo: Hall Heritage Centre

‘In 1947, after a world war had paused much of civil life, she returned to lead the ACT side to Country Week as both captain and manager. At 50 years of age, she proved her class remained permanent. She was described as a player of great skill, unwavering dedication “and a pioneer who ensured that women’s cricket would always have a home in Canberra’.

For her nephew Ralph Southwell, 83, Nina’s induction into the Hall of Fame was well deserved. ‘She was quite

a stoic woman, someone who could turn her hand at anything. She could drench sheep, muster cattle but could also make jam. She loved to sing and had a nice voice and she was also a great horsewoman.’

Nina’s legend also lives on in the National Museum of Australia collection where some of her favourite cricket equipment, ranging from an autographed bat to a pair of white cricket stockings, were donated by the Southwell family.

Nina Southwell died on 9 March 1969. She was 58.

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Hall Village Reserve regeneration

Started in early 2023 as an initiative by the Hall Village and District Progress Association, there have been 10 working bees on the reserve to transform the area from being covered in untended scrub and weeds to an area with distinct garden beds with many hollow logs to provide habitat and sanctuary for animals and insects. Larger boulders and logs have been strategically placed to keep parking in distinct areas and to stop ad hoc driving on or through the reserve. In future tables and chairs from *Lids for Kids* will be strategically placed around the reserve, providing seating to watch the world go by.



While a lot has been achieved, there is always a need to replace trees that have died, weed removal, topping up of mulch, and removal of



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the plant guards, etc so there is always room for anyone who wants to come along and volunteer for the 'green gym', make a 'feel good' contribution to their neighbourhood and meet other like-minded people. Another working bee is planned for spring, so keep an eye out for the notice on the blackboard on the Rotary trailer on the entry to the village.

Thanks to Danny Clink for the use of his tipper truck, and to Brent Gillies from CBR trees who supplies and delivers the mulch at no charge.





Hall Veterinary Surgery

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Proudly supporting the Hall community

Palmerville 1826: A Bicentenary Exhibition



As described in the February *Rural Fringe*, 2026 is the bi-centennial year of European settlement of the Ginninderra district, starting with the establishment of *Palmer's Station-Palmerville* for George Thomas and Catherine Palmer by Overseer Duncan McFarlane and a team of 14 assigned convicts.

The Hall Heritage Centre is recognising this with an exhibition – *Palmerville 1826: A Bicentenary Exhibition*, which opened on 12 April as part of the ACT Heritage Festival. The site of the original *Palmer's Station* is commemorated by the Palmerville Heritage Park off Owen Dixon Drive, McKellar.

Our refreshed Ginninderra gallery tells the story of the growth of the district, including the Palmer, Davis, Crace and other families, the convict era and Ginninderra Village, supported by an impressive wall map showing the extent of the Palmerville holdings.

Allan Mawer has created a centrepiece display, remembering one of the earliest 'society' dinners held at Palmerville in 1848, attended by members of the Campbell family of *Duntroun*, Palmers of *Palmerville* and Murray-Bunn families of *Yarralumla* and *Woden*, the high society of the day. Extracts from the diary of young John William Bunn describe the conversations of the day.



Ken Heffernan has created an interesting display of items salvaged from *Palmerville*, *Crinigan's Hut* and *Butler's Malton* – thanks to Marilyn Folger for the loan of many of these items.



Allen also crafted an audio-visual display telling the story of the early years of Palmerville.



The opening was a great success, with the guests enjoying the usual sumptuous lunch put on by Mardie and the team.



The following weekend, the centre was visited by the Chinese ambassador and over 100 of his family and colleagues.

But what of the 1848 dinner guests? George Thomas Palmer had retired back to the UK in 1838, selling all his estates except for Jerrabomberra and Palmerville, leaving the next generation in charge. Unfortunately, George Thomas's sons had not proven as successful, with two being declared bankrupt and later his grandson George going rogue and being hung for gold robbery and murder in Queensland.

The succession then fell to George Thomas's two daughters. Catherine Palmer had married her cousin Charles Campbell in 1837, and although they managed and then tried to purchase Palmerville, they defaulted due to a severe rural recession and drought, so returned to Duntroun and prospered.

heritage happenings



by Peter Browning and Mardie Troth

Hall Heritage Centre

Soon after the dinner, William Davis Jnr was appointed as Manager of the estate. He helped consolidate the estate and in 1850 married the dinner's hostess, George Thomas's daughter, Susan Palmer. The couple proved to be the success that George Thomas had hoped, aided by William's brother Frederick, who later married George T's grand-daughter Minna Palmer. However, when he died in 1854, the shrewd George Thomas was very protective of the family inheritance and left the estate in trust to his daughter Susan, with her husband and two Campbell relatives as trustees.

'assigns upon trust for my said daughter, Susan Adriana Davis, during the term of her natural life, to be held enjoyed or disposed of by her for her own separate use independent of her said husband and so that the same shall not at any time be subject to his debts control or engagements'.

In 1862 William Jnr's mother Jane wrote to her brother in the UK and speaks openly of the mixed fortunes of her family:

'William is the great man of the family. He married a Miss Palmer and her father left them a fine estate and he is well off. They have no family nor are likely, so that they have nothing to do but amuse themselves.

He is a dear generous fellow, his great hobby is Cricket, which he has spared no expense to bring into fashion by challenging all the Districts round, so that we have some gay doings here sometimes when they play a match, the Cricket ground being on his own estate and which he takes care to keep in fine order; at these matches he contrives, if possible, to put a German band to play on the Ground and in the evening the young people have a dance.

This Colony is just now in a dreadful state, it is scarcely safe to travel any road, but particularly near any of the Goldfields. Bushrangers are out and stop every passenger, our Police are useless and how should it be different? such a set of Blackguards as we have in Parliament, and the magistrates are made without reference to character, so that we are just now in a nice position. It is enough to sicken any one of the country and we talk sometimes of quitting it altogether and coming back to Old England, but William {Snr} dislikes the sea so much I fear he would never consent.'

Susan and William each received 25% of the estate income and William went on to acquire land in his own name. They built Gungahleen (Gungahlin) homestead around 1863 and moved across from Palmerville, with Ginninderra village growing up nearby. However, George Thomas Palmer's plans went

awry when Susan had no children, but they adopted a nephew, Ernest Palmer. Sadly, Ernest died falling from a horse while competing at horse high jumping and the Davis's sold the estate to Edward and Kate (Mort) Crace in 1877.

Come out to the Hall Heritage Centre in the old Hall Primary School on a Sunday 12-4pm to view the Palmerville exhibition, and find out more of our fascinating history.



Ken and Alf.





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Capital Country Woodchopping



by Steph Radovanovic

Now is the time of year to start stockpiling some wood kindling in preparation for the winter months!

Come and collect cut wood yourself from our wood pile located just across from our training shed (for a donation please, payment details are on site), or scoot past Hall Farm Supplies and grab a bag of kindling. Bargain prices at just \$15 per bag. It is sourced from sustainable, non-commercial areas within the NSW State Forest. The wood consists primarily of straight-grain hardwood, with a selection of poplar softwood included to enhance its utility. The proceeds of our wood sales go toward promoting the visibility of our sport, with a particular focus on promoting participation by women and children, as well as facilitating the acquisition of wood, equipment and maintenance resources.

Okay, now that we are all toasty warm for winter, lets get down to business!

It has been an exceptionally busy past two months on the Wood Chopping Competition Calendar. The biggest woodchopping competition in the world, the 11-day Sydney Royal Easter Show Wood Chopping and Sawing Carnival has wrapped up for 2026. Huge congratulations to Austin, 1st place in the Open 275mm UH Final, and a bluey (1st place) to Evan in the Div 2 275mm Uh Handicap. Phenomenal results for both axemen at such a prestigious event! We also had our own CCW Team compete for the first time in the Inter-Association Relay Race at SRES. Congratulations to Shaun, Austin, Evan, Thomas, Frank, Sam, Brad and Chey on a solid performance and being part of CCW history for this event!

We also had a strong line up of axewomen at this year's SRES. Congratulations also goes out to Chey, Megan P, Meg K, Kylie, Phoebe and Julia, and to Robert, our junior competitor at Sydney. It was fabulous to see Kylie and Meg K representing their heritage at this world-wide event, with Kylie cutting for Ireland, and Meg cutting for Canada. What a diverse crew we are! This is the second year that Kylie has represented Ireland and she is still the first and only Irish axeman/woman to compete there! Go Kylie!

Photo credits:
HeadFirst Photography
and Cheyanne Girwan.



Our competitive axemen and axewomen have been travelling the state, competing at Newcastle, Tumut, Milton, Goulburn, Cooma, Walcha, Moss Vale, Yass, Hawkesbury, Gilgandra, Bathurst and Orange shows during March/April/May, all accumulating many podium placings and having loads of fun along the way.

Whilst many of our more experienced cutters have been busy competing, our newer members and juniors have been busy at training every Tuesday afternoon, honing their skills, knowledge and fitness. It is a wonderful, supportive group where everyone is quick to help each other and share their skills and knowledge with each other, especially our young ones as they learn the ropes.

Our club has also been busy with providing a recent wood chopping display to a group of distinguished Chinese travellers, and we have another paid demonstration lined up for later this month at the Wagga trots!



As the winter months move in the local competitions will go into hibernation, allowing us more time for maintenance and a tidy up and inventory of our equipment and club grounds, and to focus on training in preparation for the spring return of comp's. It's also a great time for us to focus on our axe repairs, upgrades, and maybe sourcing a new one or two! A quality racing axe costs between \$500 second hand and up to \$900 new. Not a cheap hobby, but a great one none the less. It is not uncommon for an experienced axeman to have 20-30 Elite Racing axes in their kit, all uniquely chosen, designed, angled, sized and tempered to suit a particular type of wood. This is why you will often see someone chopping in a race stop suddenly – even if they are winning. If they see a knot in their log mid-cut, they will not risk damaging their axe but continuing to chop into it and would rather forfeit the competition mid race and stop (or swap to a less precious

axe, often called a 'rigger') than damage a good axe. Definitely not your average Bunnings type axes in this sport!

We are all looking forward to another first for this sport – an Annual Awards night, brain-stormed, created and arranged by the NSW Axemen's Association, which is set for the first weekend in July, to be held over a full sit down dinner in the beautiful Hunter Valley. This will include all NSW Axemen's Associations: Central Coast, North Coast, South Coast and Tablelands, South East, Mid West, Metropolitan, and us! Should be a fabulous night.

We are still on the lookout for sponsors. Even small contributions of \$500 can make a big difference into how we can continue to grow as a club, support our members and promote the sport. We have many options available. Please contact Shaun O'Connor for further details.

If you haven't yet, it's definitely time to stock up on some snuggly CCW winter hoodies and beanies! Our line of CCW merchandise is available for purchase, for our members, supporters and the public. Orders generally take under a week to arrive. Check the website – there is a great selection of singlets, long sleeve and short sleeve training shirts, polos, hoodies, jackets, caps, hats, beanies and more, in junior, lady's and men's sizes. All the items are good quality material and cuts, and the winter apparel is fluffy, thick and excellent value for money. Check out the O'Neills Club Hub: www.oneills.com/au_en/shop-by-team/other/capital-country-woodchopping.html

As always, please drop us a line if you would like to know more or have a try!

email: info@capitalchopping.com.au

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Despite the cooler weather, the brigade has been busy over the last couple of months, including responding to structure and vehicles fires. Now is the time to think about reducing fire risk to both your home and your property. Homeowners should ensure they:

- have smoke alarms installed and test them every month
- keep furniture, curtains and clothes at least a metre from a heater
- clean out the lint filter in a clothes dryer after every use
- ready their open or slow combustion fire for use by ensuring the flue or chimney is clean.

We also encourage you to identify areas of your property that need upkeep or an uplift before the next fire season. When doing so, please be mindful that warm, dry autumn conditions are leading to increased fire risk even now in parts of southeastern Australia, including the Southern Tablelands Zone. It is important to prepare now as persistent dry conditions may result in a more dangerous fire season for 2026-27.

We continue to monitor local conditions to understand the fire risk to our community. If you have any questions or concerns, we are always happy to support you to assess your property for hazards and ways to make your property safer. Please reach out to one of our Executive or pop into training.

Like much of the state and the nation, we are doing what we can to prepare while the weather is mild. The brigade has participated in a number of hazard reduction burns around the state over recent weeks.

These burns are designed to reduce ground fuel loads. Our members also supported a cultural burning project in the box-gum grassy woodlands of Bowning. This was designed to help ANU researchers understand the ecological impacts.



We also continue to train across a variety of scenarios and conditions to ensure we are well prepared to respond to incidents. Our brigade trains on the first and third Wednesday of every month from 6:30pm, and some Sundays in winter. As we move into winter, our training focus is moving to more common winter incidents, such as structure fires and motor vehicle accidents, underpinned by foundational drills.



Our breathing apparatus (BA) capability also continues to be a valuable asset to the Southern Tablelands and the community. BA allows us to respond with reduced risk of respiratory damage, especially in hazardous situations such as house and vehicle fires. In recent weeks, Wallaroo has deployed its BA capability in support of other brigades at a range of incidents, including house fires at Murrumbateman and Towrang, and a collision resulting in a significant fire involving two semi-trailers on the Hume Highway near Manton.

We are continuing to plan and fundraise for essential shed upgrades that will support this breathing apparatus capability and ensure best-practice hazard-reduction measures for our members, their families, and our community. We are prioritising the creation of designated 'clean' and 'dirty' areas to minimise exposure to bushfire

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: Chris Ellison	0432 942 088	wallaroo.nswrfs@gmail.com
President: Amy Goldstraw	0410 763 936	amy.goldstraw@gmail.com
Secretary: Shona Jenkin	0400 902 408	wallaroo.nswrfs@gmail.com
Treasurer: Peter Vincent	0415 630 560	tyndarah@bigpond.net.au
Yass Fire Control Centre:	02 6266 3100	southerntablelandszone@rfs.nsw.gov.au

smoke and other contaminants. This includes installing showers and a laundry so volunteers can decontaminate at the station rather than bringing potential toxins into their homes. We are also proposing private changing facilities to better support the increasing number of women in our brigade.

To deliver these improvements, we aim to raise approximately \$400,000 through a combination of government assistance and grant programs, RFS funding, local fundraising, and community donations. We view these upgrades as a critical part of our duty of care – protecting the health and safety of our members remains our highest priority. These improvements will continue to be the focus of our fundraising efforts over the coming year.



It is always our pleasure to meet, or meet with, members of our community (both in Wallaroo and surrounding regions) through community engagement and fundraising activities. The Belconnen Bunnings Easter Family Night was an excellent opportunity to meet some prospective firefighters (maybe in 15 or so years!), and have some valuable chats about fire safety.

If you are interested in coming to say hello, we have a few outings planned for the rest of this year:

Bunnings BBQ	11 July
Wallaroo Community Dinner	TBC
Murrumbateman Field Day	17-18 October
Santa run	19 December

Our Facebook page (NSW RFS – Wallaroo Rural Fire Brigade) is also a great place to keep up to date with incidents, events and community announcements.

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Cabbage moths and aphids – the *Brassica Bandits*

by Lisa Walmsley

Cabbage moth (grubs) and cabbage aphids are the most destructive pests of brassicas causing massive leaf distortion and skeletal leaves.

Control of these critters is difficult and can involve covering the whole bed with nets, manual removal of grubs, eggs and aphids, encouraging beneficial insects, using organic sprays and even placing little 'fake' moths as decoys.



Cabbage moth larvae (caterpillars) spend their entire day chewing the leaves, creating enormous holes and even skeletonising the entire leaf. The caterpillar can also tunnel into the cabbage head, leaving behind endless amounts of excrement.

Control can be hit and miss. Nets over the whole bed are reasonably successful and worth a try. Allocate a brassica bed and install a permanent net cover to simplify your maintenance. The nets prevent moths access and stops them from laying eggs. However, this also prevents you from crop rotation which can disrupt the moths life cycle.

The chemical suggested for removing these bugs (if that's what you like to do, and I don't like to spray) is *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a naturally occurring soil bacterium that targets caterpillars and other insect larvae. However, most of us who grow our own vegetables don't want to spray with chemicals, soil dwelling or otherwise, as it defeats the purpose of homegrown.

My choice of removal is by hand – it is tedious and you must do it daily, but you can beat them with persistence.

And always companion plant through your vegetable garden with aromatic herbs as they can deter some pests. Growing garlic or nasturtiums near your cabbage can deter pests.

Cabbage aphids – adult and young aphids suck the sap from the leaves, leading to stunted, twisted and distorted leaves and reducing the plant growth. Contamination can be severe when harvesting.

Aphids are approximately 3mm long, grey green and soft bodied and covered in a powdery, waxy coating and they form dense colonies.

Control can again be disappointing but if you don't try something you are likely to lose your plants. Spraying the whole plant with water is somewhat effective; aphids fall off with water spray.

Neem oil is strongly suggested as a good option. I have not tried this but it might be worth a go if you are not averse to using chemicals.

Beneficial insects such as ladybeetles and lacewings are particularly fond of aphids, so as long as you don't spray, you are likely to attract these predators.

I tend to use the squish them on the plant method. Aphids do not like the smell of themselves dead – it works well as a deterrent (also on roses).

Determine which methods best suits your gardening style. Ideally implement a combination of practices for best results and be prepared to adapt your control strategy as required.

Both of these pests thrive on Brassica plants such as broccoli, kale and cabbage – it is essential to monitor these pests particularly in warm dry weather when they are most active.

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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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- 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

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

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