



Hall Heritage Centre is a Special Interest Group
in the Village of Hall and District Progress Association Inc

ANNUAL REPORT 2022 – 2023

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*We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people.
We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution
they make to the life of this city and this region.*

Introduction - What's in a name?

The 'Hall Heritage Centre', as we have now become, began life as the 'Hall School Museum', housed in the original Hall Public School - a one-room, one-teacher 'bush school' which opened in 1911. After new classrooms were added in 1960 and the original school building no longer required as a classroom, principal Laurie Copping established a school museum in it, which was given official recognition by the ACT Schools Authority in 1984.

When Hall school was closed in 2006 and the museum was orphaned, the Village of Hall and District Progress Association took over, subsequently establishing the Friends of the Museum as a special interest group of the Association. As interests and activities expanded well beyond the old school museum we changed our name to 'Hall School Museum and Heritage Centre'. Now we have changed our name again, becoming simply '**Hall Heritage Centre**' (HHC) in August 2022. As well as being briefer, this signifies that we now claim a broad interest in the history and heritage of the Ginninderra district, from 'deep time' to World War II; a heritage centre incorporating a school museum, which remains however the 'anchor' to our enterprise.

Highlights

The year had a number of highlights. We again partnered with the **Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material** (AICCM) and **Family History ACT** in the conduct of a Conservation Clinic – 'Taking care of your treasures (13th November). Experts from the National Film and Sound Archive (Monica Connors), The Museum of Australia Democracy (Natalie Ison), Gerald Preiss (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies), joined Ian Batterham (AICCM President and University of Canberra (UC)) to give expert conservation advice to some very appreciative customers. HHC collection management worker Maren Innes, a UC conservation studies graduate, also assisted.

Our annual address was given on 27 October by **Eric Martin AM**, principal of Eric Martin and Associates. In drawing attention to a range of big picture issues in the preservation of heritage values his address was informative and stimulating, provoking discussion of the possible roles for our Centre in public debate and action on heritage issues. He also officially announced our change of name.

Our annual '**Brass on the Grass**' concert with 'Canberra Brass' remains a keystone fund-raiser event, but for various reasons was moved from March to a Spring date for 2023. An excellent result from providing refreshments at the '**Yellow Box**' **Open Garden** on Spring Range Road made up that income gap. In addition to the Open Garden event (\$1,300), income was earned from our trading table and book sales (\$1,180), donations (\$883), and the Schools program's small per capita charge (\$2,326). This kind of self-help takes commitment and effort. We are proud of the fact, and very thankful that we have maintained our volunteer force through some challenging times [list of Volunteers at Appendix B].

Dr Anne Edmundson, **Centre for Museum and Heritage Studies ANU**, and her class of postgraduate students partnered with us to give the students practical experience in display and promotional design, and left us with a lot to think about! Information sharing with **Canberra Region Heritage Researchers** continues to be mutually beneficial, and we again contributed to the **Canberra and Region Heritage Festival** (April 2023). During the year we also had visits from members of the **Australian Museums and Galleries Association** (AMaGA) and the **Canberra Museum and Gallery** (CMAG), strengthening our relations with these valued kindred groups. Locally it has been pleasing to work with the **National Sheep Dog Trials Association**, **St Michael and All Angels**, and even closer to home the **Hall Men's Shed**. Having the 'Shedders' next door, willing and able to help with making and mending has been a wonderful asset.

Towards years end we became beneficiaries of the wind-up of the **Southwell Family Society** which for more than thirty years has recorded the family genealogy, published books, and created a large collection of photographs and documents relating to the family. The work of the Society is being incorporated into the Centre and it is planned to establish a curator and small steering group to sustain that effort.

1. PUBLIC ACCESS

Visitors

We recorded nearly 500 individual visitors during the year – a year still characterised by ‘COVID recovery’. In addition to individuals arriving during our opening hours, 242 more visitors were participants in group visits, while 580 pupils, teachers and parent visited as participants in our schools program. Total visitations was around 1,300 [Appendix B]. This stands in some contrast to our website which had 12,055 ‘visits’ in the sample month of June 2023, an average of 400 visits per day. For June the site delivered 2,359,161 Kb of data.

Exhibitions

Exhibitions continue to be our major public face, although our on-line offerings through our website took on a greater importance during COVID shut-downs. Work will continue on the renewal of our enduring flagship exhibition ‘Ginin-ginin-derry to Hall’ and the entrance foyer display.

Our two education program rooms have been refreshed and a small ‘Family Selections’ display was put up at short notice to celebrate **National Family History Month**, replacing our ‘Ginninderra Blacksmith’ display.

Our most recent exhibition – ‘**Selected Southwell Stories**’ includes a number of never previously displayed items sourced from family descendants. Two smaller displays celebrated significant anniversaries - the 75th anniversary of St Michael and All Angels Anglican Church, Hall and the 80th anniversary of the National Sheepdog Championships. A model of the historic **St Francis Church**, Ginninderra was prepared by volunteers and is now on display. It joins our models of three other Ginninderra structures.

Our ‘hallway’ exhibitions at the premises of Family History ACT in Cook continued with an exhibition from our archive - ‘**On Our Selections**’.

Education program

The lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on school excursions during terms 3 and 4 of the 2022 school year can be seen in the reduced numbers of students attending our on-campus program. Interest from teachers began to increase but several schools were forced to cancel.

During Term 1 of the 2023 school year the education program was suspended because of the absence of the program’s co-ordinator. Volunteers identified that the administration requirements were too specialised for the program to continue without the co-ordinator. This is one of the main dilemmas for volunteers. The program is very popular and highly regarded, but maintaining volunteer numbers, especially during terms 2 and 3 of the school year (our most popular booking period) is problematic.

Our ‘Heritage in a Suitcase’ program, involving the delivery of ten old suitcases full of artefacts and paraphernalia to schools for their use in-situ, continues to be popular. To meet the increasing demand volunteers have sourced appropriate artefacts to create a second set of suitcases, which can be hired by teachers for a nominal sum.

The new child-centred education space, endearingly called *Home Sweet Home*, has proven to be a highlight for visiting students and teachers. Visitors are encouraged to touch and ask and investigate how a typical family might have lived before electricity arrived in the village of Hall (1948). Teachers are encouraged to take photographs of our wonderful collection of domestic objects to encourage further discussion back in their classrooms.

Our second education space – telling the story of the early development of the Hall village – is also of great interest to students as they investigate the passing of time and the impact of changes in technology on how people lived. This space has been identified as needing an upgrade and during the December/January school holidays a start will be made on revamping the displays. A grant application for block-out blinds to protect the items on permanent display in these two spaces has been submitted to ACT Heritage.

Family and Local History Program

The Family and Local History Program (FLHP) continues to respond to requests from personal and on-line visitors. Family researchers and fellow organisations continue to benefit in particular from our extensive photograph gallery and our Gillespie records. Our ongoing aim is to foster awareness and understanding of the history of the district and its people and to provide visitors with better access to our digital resources. Volunteers will always be greeted with open arms.

Robin Astbury's project to document all the residents of the Hall Cemetery in a Directory is continuing. Any assistance to help complete some missing family stories would be appreciated.

The Centre's website information on Ginninderra People and Places continues to grow and will be the focus of renewed effort in the coming year. We continue to examine our historical documents to see how they may best be catalogued and made more accessible in the future to on-site visitors through some form of pioneer database, and possibly inter-active digital displays.

Co-operation with other organisations continues to be beneficial. For example we are assisting the **National Trust (ACT)** to update their *Tours of Hall Village* brochures, and helped St Michael and All Saints Church to put on an exhibition for their 75th Anniversary. We also have an ongoing partnership with Family History ACT, which included displaying 'On Our Selections' at Cook.

The 'Selected Southwell Stories' exhibition required a large amount of work by the FLHP, but a lot of new information was located including material from the Thelma MacKinnon Papers, and these will be incorporated into our collection.

2. COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

During the year the Collection Management team focused on improving the quality of our datasets. This included detailed and labour intensive work to further identify errors in the data, identify and remove duplicates, add better descriptions, and work to improve searchability for users.

The team also continued to improve the storage and condition of many of the objects and documents in the collections and rehoused many items in archival quality document wallets and archive boxes.

This work was supported by an ACT Heritage grant [\$10,000] for the project 'Museum on-line: Completion and documentation of the collection management system'. Graham Wilson, a volunteer and leader of the Collection Management team was contracted to complete and document the architecture of the Centre's collection management system. That project was completed in October 2022. An application has since been lodged with ACT Heritage for 2023-2024 for a 'conservation management project' which includes conservation training of volunteers, appropriate conservation and storage materials and shelving to house archive boxes and artefacts.

Our Cataloguer/Archivist, Maren Innes, continued her work on the project during the year, which was jointly funded by HHC and the Southwell Family Society (now dissolved). In the first half of 2023 another University graduate, Lexie Sheard, came on board, as a volunteer, to assist Maren.

Margaret Foley took on the task of scanning all pre-digital back issues of Rural Fringe and Village Voice. These were then added to the catalogue and work will continue on the indexing and searchability of these and other publications in the collection.

Some of our other regular volunteers, including Kingsley Southwell, Jan Peelgrane, Ralph Southwell, Anne Lomax and Jan Dunnett assisted with many of the mundane, but important, scanning and data entry tasks.

In the first half of 2023, following the upgrade of the HHC computer systems, we were able to deploy the Collection Management System and photographic databases more widely throughout the Centre and raise awareness of the systems to more of our volunteers and visitors. Now that the improved computers are in place we intend to also run more advanced information and training sessions for users.

In the near future we expect that a large amount of material from the Southwell Family Society will come into the Centre and with the systems and procedures we now have in place we expect that it will be much easier to incorporate this collection, and others, into our management systems.

Gillespie Collection

Gillespie Room volunteers have continued to refine the collection catalogue. The detailed inventory of all geological items was finalised during the year, and a more detailed catalogue of Lyall's news clipping collection is underway. The tagging of objects is continually reviewed and improved where necessary.

A major shift in the work programme is commencing, building upon the federally-funded 'Significance' and 'Preservation needs assessments' of previous years. Founded upon the national value of the Gillespie collection, and the work of volunteers in building a sound application, the Centre was awarded a third Community Heritage Grant by the National Library of Australia in October 2022. This will fund urgent conservation work as clearly identified in the Preservation Needs Assessment.

The first task under the grant was to replace old blinds on the western side of the building with new block-out blinds, to reduce the impact of light and heat upon items in the collection. The second task was to purchase a range of conservation materials that volunteers could use to better house and conserve objects. Work undertaken so far with the materials includes rehousing key items in the numismatic collection in mylar holders, and rehousing the very important Gillespie historical card index into lined archival boxes, thus reducing the impact of the undersized metal drawers upon their long-term survival. Many tasks remain to be done with the materials in the coming year, along with training sessions by Kim Morris of *Art & Archival*, and some specialised housing work by his team on several artefacts of high conservation priority and significance.

It was an honour on 2 March 2023 to welcome Centre friend and Ngambri-Ngunnawal-Wiradjuri elder **Dr Matilda House**, NAIDOC 2023 Woman Elder of the Year, **Dr Duncan Wright** and a large group of undergraduate archaeology students from the ANU to the Centre. They visited the Gillespie Room 'Stones that Speak' exhibition, and the 'Ten Thousand Years on Halls Creek' display. Dr House, a founding force for the Tjabal Centre at ANU, has brought students to the Centre on many occasions to learn about the story of her ancestors, their lifestyle and material culture as well her people's continuing connection to the land. She is a powerful teacher of the importance of the deep local cultural history in a place where it can often be obscured by a grand national overlay.

At meetings in February, March and April during the first semester of 2023, the 'Ten Thousand Years on Halls Creek' exhibition was chosen by museums students at ANU, under the guidance of Dr Anna Edmundson, to explore and provide ideas for improvement. The Centre has now received suggestions that it can use in future redesign of its displays.

Two new PCs have recently been installed in the Gillespie Room which, along with the digital catalogue facilitated by the Centre's IT-savvy volunteers, enhances its use for visitors and volunteers alike.

The Gillespie Room holdings have recently been researched by volunteers to identify material that relates to the story of bush schools, an interest of Lyall Gillespie and one of the Centre's areas of particular strength.

3. MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION-BUILDING

Information Technology

It has been an exciting year on the information technology front. It was becoming increasingly apparent at the beginning of the reporting period that the ageing computers at the Centre were well past their useful life and not able to handle effectively the tasks being demanded of them. Response times on the older machines were slow and this was becoming a real impediment to data entry efficiency and to our volunteers and visitors wishing to access the databases.

In October the management group became aware of an ACT Government Community Grant opportunity which appeared to be aimed at community groups who wished to upgrade their Information Technology systems to current standards. The grant criteria seemed to match our requirement perfectly and the decision was taken to submit an application.

A costed list of equipment required for the upgrade was prepared and an application was submitted on 15 November 2022. We were delighted to learn on 2 March this year that our application had been successful and we received a grant of \$9,928 as a contribution towards the upgrade.

Most of the equipment required has now been purchased and installed. This includes three WiFi access points, five all-in-one computers, two tower computers, each of which has two monitors for data entry, a widescreen monitor for one of the 'old' computers which is being retained and an A3 printer/scanner. All of the new computers have Microsoft Windows 11 operating systems and each has a free-standing version of Microsoft Office Professional 2021. The new computers have been positioned at various locations around the complex. Each connects wirelessly to the Centre's network which means that they can all be used to access the data on the existing Network Accessible Storage server.

The installation of the new Windows 11 computers overcomes the impending problem of the expected withdrawal of Microsoft support for their Windows 10 operating system in October 2025. As a result the alternate possibility of moving towards a Linux open source operating system reported last year has been dropped.

All of the equipment made redundant by the upgrade, most of which is in working order, will be offered firstly to our volunteers followed by members of the Men's Shed. It is intended that any remaining items will be offered to the Tech Shed in Charnwood for recycling.

The next stage under consideration is the extension of the network to the old headmaster's cottage on the site and investigations on how this may be achieved are in progress. The distance is too great for an ethernet cable connection so various options for a radio link are being considered.

The Network Accessible Storage (NAS) server installed three years ago continues to be very reliable and work is continuing on uploading data to this centralised and secure storage device. The nightly backups to the commercially operated cloud server are also operating smoothly.

In February this year internet access at the Centre was suddenly interrupted during a thunderstorm that passed through Hall. Following an investigation by the internet service provider (TPG), it was concluded that terminal damage to the Centre's modem router was consistent with a lightning strike in the local vicinity which had induced an electrical surge in the incoming phone line. The phone line itself was not damaged and normal service was resumed following the purchase and installation of a replacement modem router. The new device is described as being more resistant to electrical surges of the type experienced.

Grant income

Our financial statements for the year are at Appendix E. We have again been successful in gaining grants to help fund the infrastructure and core activities of the Center; four grants from three different sources [Appendix D].

As reported above our work as custodians of the Gillespie Collection was supported by a third grant from the Community Heritage Program of the National Library – this time to undertake priority preservation work on the collection (\$10,619). A grant from ACT Heritage will enable us to create a good quality disability access path to our main entrance, with associated parking and signage. This project has matching funding from ACT Government (ie \$10,000 plus \$10,000). As well as assisting people with a disability the new path will make it easier for us to move bulky items in and out of the Centre.

A second grant from ACT Heritage is to enable us to fully catalogue, conserve, and present our collection of material relating to the bush schools of the Capital Region (\$7,192). These projects are due for completion by the end of 2023. A fourth grant (\$9,928) has enabled us to upgrade the Centre's IT network to a high standard, through acquisition of seven new computers, correlated peripherals and new software. This grant was from the Community Services Directorate of the ACT Government's Technology Upgrade Fund Grants Program. Including the matching funding from ACT Property Group our total grant income for the year is \$47,739.

It should be noted that while each of the thirty grants received over the past twelve years has been a 'one-off', clear direction and sound planning have enabled us to deploy grant funding to build collections and capabilities over time. For example, three grants from the National Library over four years have enabled us to invest just over \$20,000 in collection management and conservation of the Gillespie Collection. Similarly, Investment in the old Hall bush school and in work on the bush schools of the district has been sustained since a grant-funded significance assessment in 2013. Over \$57,000 (eight grants) has been applied to restoration of the old school and

growing our capacity to tell the story of the district’s bush schools. There is a similar story in relation to our collection management system with an investment of just over \$25,000 in three grants.

APPENDICES

Appendix A : Visitors

Group	Date of visit	Number
Hall Men’s Shed	14/7/2022	21
Goodwin Day Club	25/7/2022	13
Women’s International Club	26/8/2022	11
Goodwin Day Club	31/8/2022	14
Yass Men’s Shed & ANU representatives	6/10/2022	12
Morris Minor Club	23/10/2022	9
Annual Meeting, guest speaker & others	27/10 2022	15
Conservation Clinic	13/11/2022	40
U3A members	17/11/2022	16
Communities at Work seniors group	21/11/2022	9
Archaeology students	2/3/2023	50
ANU graduate students	9/3/2023	18
ANU students	27/4/2023	12
CMAG	1/6/2023	2
	TOTAL	

Education Program – school visits

Date	School	Students	Teachers/parents
July 2022	St Matthews Primary Page		
August	Holy Family School Gowrie		
September	Namadgi Primary		
Bookings were cancelled/postponed because of Department of Education restrictions and/or requirements			
Date	School	Students	Teachers/parents
14 th September	Weetangera Primary	58	4
25 th October	Canberra Christian School	56	4
1 st November	Macgregor Primary	41	3
2 nd November	Macgregor Primary	43	3
16 th November	Kingsford Smith Primary	45	4
2 nd May 2023	St John the Apostle Holt	40	3
16 th May	Gowrie Primary	28	3
23 rd May	Gold Creek Primary	41	3
24 th May	Gold Creek Primary	37	3
7 th June	Kingsford Smith Primary	47	4
9 th June	St Matthews Page	48	3
21 st June	St Vincents Aranda	55	4
TOTAL:		539	41

'Heritage in a Suitcase' resources – loans

Date	School	Students (approx.)
18 – 29 July 2022	North Ainslie Primary (Yrs 1 & 2)	160
1 -12 August	Farrer Primary	75
15-19 August	Holy Family Gowrie	60
22 August – 2 September	North Ainslie Primary (Yr 2)	80
5-24 September	TAQWA School	45
27 March – 6 April 2023	TAQWA School	45
22 May – 2 June	St Matthews Page	55
TOTAL:		520

Appendix B: VOLUNTEERS during 2022-2023

Robin Astbury	Council to Nov 2022)	Jan Peelgrane
Marion Banyard	Jenny Holcombe	Alison Reynolds
Rosemary Blemings	Paul Howarth (Deputy HC)	Judy Roberts
Judy Brooks	Anne Lomax	Phil Robson
Peter Browning (Deputy HC)	Allen Mawer (President CDHS; ACT	Jane Southwell
Joan Christie	Place Names C'ttee)	Kingsley Southwell
Alastair Crombie (Honorary Curator)	(Rev) Peter Malone	Ralph Southwell
Jan Dunnett	Olga Minion	Peter & Ann Toet
Margaret Foley (Treasurer)	Karen Moore	Mardie Troth (Deputy HC)
Marilyn Folger	Tony Morris	Alf Wilford
Jillian Haggan	Margaret Morris	Heather Wilford
Ken Heffernan (Chair, ACT Heritage	Caroline O'Clery	Graham Wilson

Appendix C: MANAGING GROUP AND GENERAL MEETINGS

Management Group Meetings	General meetings
5 th July 2022	28 th July 2022
4 th August	25 th August
16 th August	29 th September
23 rd August	24 th November
6 th September	26 th January 2023
27 th September	23 rd February
15 th November	30 th March
19 th January 2023	27 th April
24 th January	25 th May
2 nd February	29 th June
13 th April	
25 th April	
18 th May	
20 th June	

Appendix D : Grants under management 2023- 2024

Projects completed:

2021-22: Museum on-line : Completion & Documentation of the Collection Management System - \$10,000

2021-22 : Canberra Tracks Interpretative Sign - Dellwood-Morris Tanning Pit - \$4,500

Projects commenced:

2022-23 - Hall Heritage Centre IT Upgrade Project - \$9928

2022-23 : Priority conservation measures for the Gillespie Collection - \$10,619

2022-23 : 'Bush schools of the Capital Region - curation' - \$7192

2022-23 : 'Disability Access: Hall School Museum and Heritage Centre'- \$10,000 (plus matching contribution from ACT Property Group)

Applications submitted for 2023-2024 (both successful)

2023-24: Education Display Spaces – block-out blinds. \$4,200 requested

2023-24 : Conservation Management Project. \$9,800 requested

Appendix E Financial Statement 2022-2023
Balance Sheet 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023

		\$
ASSETS	Bank accounts: CBA Society Cheque Account 062915 10177845	1,252.37
	CBA Online Saver 062915 10215688	81,953.66
	ACT Heritage Grants x 2 – funds on grant acquittal 2023/24	<u>3,438.00</u>
		<u>86,644.03</u>
LIABILITIES	Membership fees in advance 2023/4	460.00
	2022/23 Grants x 4 – expenses carry-over to 2023/24	<u>19,417.02</u>
		<u>19,877.02</u>
	<i>@ 30 June 2023</i>	<u>66,767.01</u>

Statement of Cash Flow and Bank Reconciliation

			\$
Cheque Account	Balance reported at 1 July 2022		389.35
Online Saver	Balance reported at 1 July 2022		<u>39,798.02</u>
			40,187.37
	Plus income - administration	(1)	7,712.43
	- grants/project	(2)	<u>63,954.49</u>
			<u>111,854.29</u>
	Less expenditure - administration	(3)	4,920.78
	- grants/projects	(4)	<u>23,727.48</u>
			<u>28,648.26</u>
	<i>Balance as per cash book 30/6/2023</i>		<u>83,206.03</u>
	<i>Society Account Balance as per bank statement 30/6/2023</i>		1,252.37
	<i>Online Saver Balance as per bank statement 30/6/2023</i>		<u>81,953.66</u>
	<i>Total as per bank statements 30/6/2023</i>		<u>83,206.03</u>

Statement of Income and Expenditure

Administration		\$	\$
Income	Interest	455.64	
	Memberships 2022/23	582.00	
	Memberships in advance 2023/24	460.00	
	Donations	883.27	
	Sales (trading table, recycling, books net)	1,179.16	
	Fund-raising events	1,826.36	
	Education Program	2,326.00	7,712.43 (1)
Expenditure	Stationery supplies	652.05	
	Information technology	305.58	
	Kitchen, catering, cleaning	1,760.62	
	Centre promotion, printing	490.73	
	Repairs and maintenance	428.60	
	Furniture, equipment, display boards	1,212.98	
	Centre exhibitions	<u>70.22</u>	4,920.78 (3)
Grants, Projects			
Income	ACT Heritage – Tanning Pit sign on acquittal	500.00	
	ACT Heritage –Collection Management on acquittal	2,000.00	
	ACT Heritage Grant – Bush Schools of the Capital	5,754.00	
	ACT Heritage Grant – Disability Access Path	8,000.00	
	NLA Community Heritage Grant- Priority Conservation	10,619.00	
	ACT Community Services grant – IT upgrade	9,928.00	
	Transfer from aligned society on closure	<u>27,153.49</u>	63,954.49 (2)
Expenditure	ACT Heritage –Collection Management current year	5,000.00	
	NLA Community Heritage Grant - Priority Conservation	4,619.35	
	ACT Heritage – Bush Schools of the Capital	77.14	
	ACT Heritage – Disability Access Path	0.00	
	ACT Community Services grant – IT upgrade	9,653.99	
	Cataloguing/Archivist current year expenses	<u>4,377.00</u>	23,727.48 (4)