

TONY MORRIS

It's the first of July 2014. This is the next in a series of interviews with local members of the Hall District; as part of the Hall – Voices of Hall District project. Today I'm speaking with Mr Tony Morris, and we'll be discussing the history of the Morris Family who were a significant family. And their descendants of course, and their associated relatives in the Hall/Ginninderra District. Good Morning Tony.

Good morning Phil.

My first piece of research recorded that Henry Morris was the first member of the Morris family to come to the district and he settled in Ginninderra.

That's correct Phil. He came as a convict on the 'Andromeda' with a privileged passage because he was a cobbler/bootmaker and he looked after the sailors' and military men's boots on the way out. He was allowed to travel to Cobbitty, near Campbelltown in Sydney; where he spent a small amount of time there. He married Hannah Cook and they moved directly to Ginninderra Village and established a bootmaking business and a tannery kit to tan their own hides and leathers. They had eleven children, one of whom was William, or Billy Morris, who worked – learned the trade from his father, with his father and mother, and moved to Hall when the village was declared a village. And he bought a block, built the bootmakers shop in Hall. And he was known as Four B's Billy – the bootmaker, barber, bicycle-maker and banker. And his daughters also ran a dressmaking and a lolly shop as well for a period of time. One of his children, William and his wife, took on Louisa Gozzard – took in orphan children or children in difficulties and they were also trained in bootmaking. And all of the family – families -right through were competent bootmakers and particularly surgical bootmakers. That line carried on through to William Henry Morris who was known as Harry and ran a boot... He moved to Canberra, in the early days of Canberra, and opened a bootmakers shop opposite the Jolimont Centre, and eventually moved it around opposite, in the centre of the Melbourne Building facing Northbourne Avenue where he worked until he was retired. My father learnt the bootmaking trade but he, and William also, went into the taxi and hire car business. And my father eventually moved into that business. And that was the family business that I was raised in Canberra, over a period of time. Things were pretty tough and tight during that time. I was born in 1942, around about the beginning of the Second World War. Clothing was rationed, food was rationed, petrol was rationed so... And my father wasn't allowed... was kept at home as an essential service because he was a bootmaker and a taxi driver/carrier. So, we had a great life as young kids, very few toys. What we owned was very precious. I can remember having flour-bag pockets and liners in our trousers. And the family was only entitled to a certain metre-age, or in those days yardage, of fabric to make our clothing et cetera. ... But we had a great life.

My grandfather donated my first bike at thirteen years of age, then I was mobile. And I enjoyed life after that.

What was your father's name?

Rex.

I've asked each of the interviewees I've spoken to, I know we're going back a fair way, but did you know any stories of the original Morrisises that came to Ginninderra? Henry and Hannah? Were there any stories that were passed down the line?

Henry and Hannah... not a lot was mentioned about Henry. I think one of the sad things at one stage was that he was arrested in Queanbeyan at a ripe old age for being of unsound mind. And it was explained – he went to court and it was explained to the judge by his son William that he'd had some brandy to steady himself and was afraid the doctors were going to bleed him again. Because he'd been bled a few weeks before and he felt quite unwell after that. And he'd noticed a policeman outside and ran out and said "Save me! Save me!" and the policeman thought he was out of his mind. But he was just very anxious. But that's, that's about the only thing I can remember about Henry himself.

Back in those days, Ginninderra was a small, as they call it, unofficial village. It perhaps had the store. The school hadn't been, I don't think, built in that early stage. The post office would have come a bit later I'd imagine. So it would have been quite a Spartan life there.

It was yes. They built a small cottage and they ran the bootmaking business out of that. Yeah and as the village grew – Ginninderra school was built. And some of the Morrisises, or some of the William Morrisises that were in Hall had to go to Ginninderra school until the Hall school was built in 1910.

We've heard some interesting stories about William. I mean, as you mentioned, he was the Four Bs. The bootmaker, bicycle-repairer, banker and barber. But he was also quite a talented musician.

He was and he played the violin. It was nothing unusual for him to knock off work in the afternoon, pedal his bike to Queanbeyan for a ball in the evening, then pedal back home for work next morning. And he wrote the Canberra Waltz. Or he played the Canberra Waltz for years, or a waltz tune that he made popular. Then eventually his daughter who studied music as well, she transposed it for publication. William insisted that all the family learnt music, and all the family learnt violin. And Kathleen his daughter, had had polio as a young child and he had her taught piano to free up her hands. And that

became her profession for many years. She taught music both at Hall and in Canberra as well. And so it was a – made a very good life, good livelihood out of it, out of music.

The earlier twentieth century must have been a busy time in Hall because we did have the bootmakers shop of course. We had George Kinlyside with his blacksmithing and carriage building. We had the saddler. We had the little shop – the store over the road. So it would have been quite a nice little community back then.

It was a very nice community I believe. And everybody looked out for everybody else. Because of the way things were, each person didn't always have work. So William would get some people to help him occasionally in the shop or he'd go off and help others. The saddler and people like that used to work around the village doing other things until they picked up work. And so everybody helped each other and they worked with the community to enjoy life.

There was also the story that... was it his daughter Zillah that used to bring his lunch to him every day at the shop?

Yes. William all his life had a hot meal at lunchtime, which was carried... He had built a house for he and his wife on the edge of the Yass Road. Or the Barton Highway as it is now. Which was about a mile and a half from the village. And the daughter Zillah used to pedal each day with a hot meal wrapped in a tea towel hanging on the handlebars down and deliver the lunch. She claims she only ever fell off once and she still didn't spill the lunch.

What about William's... well I suppose generally the women of the family? Stories of the wives? William's wife Louisa and their association with the community and the village?

Yes well Louisa was a skilled shoemaker as well. They all were. But she - whenever there was somebody, a family in difficulty, she would help. She would take in the children, raise the children in her house. And she did a lot of work around the village, and helped down at the Ginninderra school and that sort of thing. And so the Morris family were certainly involved in the day-to-day living.

Did you meet your Grandmother and Grandfather? Were they still around?

They were my great Grandparents.

Great grand – oh sorry yeah.

No I didn't. No. But most of the stories I hear are related to me by their children. And they ended up having a couple of children, or one daughter Zillah, who married late.

Married her partner when he was sixty years of age. And they had thirty years of marriage life, which was pretty good.

Amazing... There's also the story, just reflecting back on William's life as a bootmaker, of the large pair of boots. Which we're fortunate enough to have a picture of in the museum.

That's right. He – he made them... there was a Welshman who lived around who was a massive man and we had, we believe, about size sixteen feet. And William would make him a pair of boots occasionally. And they were massive compared to the ordinary men's size. And he had two ha'pennies nailed to the counter of the boot shop to signify the length of the boot. And it was said that you could put a small child in one of the boots, a baby in one of the boots, they were so big.

Your grandfather, Harry, he took over the business. But you said he relocated to Canberra.

That's right. When the military college opened in Duntroon, Harry used to go to the military college and pick up the army boots and also sell produce, chickens and eggs, to the families at Duntroon. And eventually that became a pretty big job. So they decided they'd open a shop in Civic because that was closer and easier to access Duntroon and those areas. Duntroon and Acton of course. The Acton cottages of course were where the workers were working that were developing the ACT.

Yeah that would have been an interesting time. Do you have memories of that time with your grandfather?

Later times in the boot shop yes... used to visit the boot shop when it was opposite the Jolimont Centre which at that stage contained the police station. So it was always great to go to the boot shop and see what the police were up to. Then around the, watching the buses come in around Northbourne Avenue when the shop moved around there.

Did your grandfather tell you any stories about, you know, any incidents that happened with him?

No. He – he was always busy. The bootmakers, they work from dark in the morning until dark at night. And he established a house in Farrer Street in Braddon and he used to ride his bike down to the bootmakers shop every morning and ride home late in the evening. And he just worked. And when he retired he had a little boot repair workshop at the back of his garage. That was his total life, was working in the shop. And my father took over the taxi business.

Your father wasn't focussed on the bootmaking side of things? More on the –

He learnt the trade, but the taxi business grew, particularly after the war, and so he bought out that part of Henry's business and took that over. And that's what he ran as a family business. That money helped us. Raised us.

So you grew up in Canberra?

That's right.

And you used to spend school holidays...?

That's right. Every opportunity we had we'd come out to Hall, from a very young age. I think I was about four when I first visited the family farm at Wattle Park, which was on my mother's side. Which was the Thomas Southwell line. Down through Samson Southwell, and then Samson James Southwell. And they were all farmers and carriers in the area as well. That line came down through to, through into my family line and yes we visited the farm frequently, my brothers and sisters and cousins. And over the period, the years we also had friends from the local families in Hall come and stay with us over the holiday period. It was a great time. It was a rambling big old house, with plenty of bedrooms and verandahs that you could sleep on when it was hot in the summer. And my aunt was a great cook and she kept us sustained on Anzac biscuits and porridge and eggs and all the good things.

What farm was that? What was that one called?

That was Wattle Park.

Wattle Park. Up behind the Wattle Park church.

On Spring Range Road. It was originally taken up by Samson Southwell and his brother took up land next door and they built the two homesteads so as they would have a window visible from either homestead. And they would leave a light in overnight and they knew if they got up in the night and the light was out, then they knew they had to go and check on the other household to make sure everything was right. Because that was them signalling a message that something was wrong.

It's a great community connection isn't it.

Yes.

During that time, you're growing up, did you spend a bit of time coming into the village for entertainment and meeting friends?

Yeah. That was – we generally played around on the farm all week. But Saturday was the special day. And my Uncle Alan was a bachelor who worked on the farm and on

Saturdays he, he'd save all his pennies, and on Saturdays he'd divide the pennies up amongst the cousins and whoever was there and we'd jump in the old family Dodge – which was a six cylinder Dodge with a fabric hood. And we'd all – we'd load the egg boxes onto the carrier at the back, and we'd bring the eggs into town because they raised a bit of money selling eggs to the local storekeeper at the store, which was run by the Browns. And we'd bring the eggs in. Our aunt Jean Southwell worked in the shop so we'd pound through the shop and eye off all the lollies and sort out what we were going to buy later. Then we'd unload the eggs, trundle across – leave the grocery list – trundle across to Jimmy Rochford's Ampol garage it was at that... no I think it was Plume. Vacuum and Plume at that stage. And he had a hand bowser. We'd fill up the old Dodge and he'd let us pull the lever to let the petrol run down out of the globe at the top of the bowser once it had been pumped up there by hand.

And I can remember Jim's shop as the old shed. With some of the old Kinlyside yards around it so that was very early in the piece. Then we'd trundle around – and everybody played tennis on the Hall tennis court and that was a great social afternoon. If you didn't play tennis you sat and yarned. Then when it was time you'd slip back to the shop, pick up the groceries, we'd drive home, have tea. And then every fortnight we'd come back to the movies at night. And that was fascinating at the movies at night. It was a great experience. For all of us.

I've heard some interesting stories about the movies. Colin Southwell was, I believe, the main projectionist there and would get movies in and would have a forty-four gallon drum of coals to heat up the room. Is that right?

That's correct and all the youngsters had blankets and they'd – there was quite a bit of open space around the drum of coke and so we'd all get down on blankets on the floor there and watch the movies from there. Often we didn't see the end of the movies but it was great fun and the locals would sit around with bare knees if they were close to the coke drum and rugs over their knees if they were up the back.

And what happened during a break in the film?

We'd all... the lights would come on and Mr Brown would go over and open his store. And those who wanted icecreams or chocolates or lollies would go over there. Those who wanted a tippie would go to their cars and have a little drink. And many years later my aunt Jean who lived in 'Winarlia' for a long time, had a hedge and I decided I'd clean out behind the hedge and I found bottles of many ages that had been left there.

I understand that at the Kinlyside, or Rochford, hall, there was a lot of dances and balls and fundraising activities.

There was, and they were fabulous. We'd come in as youngsters, the whole group of us, and there'd be massive suppers and we'd... there'd be dance music. I can remember Oz Southwell and Case Kruithoff from the – Oz Southwell on the squeeze-box, Case Kruithoff on the drums – and they'd play dance music for hours and we'd dance and dance. Then the suppers would come out with great big aluminium pots of tea and coffee, and the girls would come around with sugar and milk. We had a wonderful time at those dances and really enjoyed them.

Were they a church organised event?

They were mainly fundraisers or just general community dances. The church itself, because it was a Methodist church, didn't believe in dancing. So it was a – for a long time the Methodists didn't participate but eventually a lot of the young ones broke away and they would enjoy the dancing and enjoy the fun. So that was interesting.

That would be the Wattle Park church that you're talking about. The Methodist church?

Yes, yes.

Characters in the village around that time... Were there any, sort of, real characters? I know of the people that operated the business and they used to have, what they called I think the poem ??? is I think what they called the parliament at Hall. Where you had the George Kinlysides and the... your grandfather, or great-grandfather William Morris, all getting together on an afternoon to discuss events.

Yeah, yeah they'd get in together and discuss the goings on and happenings inside the village and take action if it was necessary but they generally enjoyed life, and exchanged points of view, and debated the various things that were happening around the world or wherever, because communication was fairly poor in those days and you often didn't get newspapers for weeks after they'd been printed.

The main street of Hall - Victoria Street, of course - is the main road between Queanbeyan and Yass, or Canberra and Yass.

That's right.

In your early days, what was that like? Was it busy with vehicular traffic or was it still transitioning?

In the early days it was very slow. You know, there were a few vehicles through, but there weren't a lot of vehicles when I was a youngster. I can remember it had very rough bitumen on it. One of the things that would happen in the summertime, you'd have sandals on and you'd run across the road and catch your big toe and take the top off it,

because the gravel was so coarse in the road. Yeah, it took a long time before the main street was actually properly sealed and developed.

What are your memories of walking up the main street? You've mentioned the shop and Jim Rochford's garage, what else was in the village back in those days?

It was pretty sparse. The... from the bottom end, I can just remember the old slab boarding house, at the corner of Victoria Street as you came in. It was always whitewashed and clean. And it was later demolished and a small shop built there. There was Kinlyside hall, the blacksmith's shop, then there was what had been the dressmaker's and saddler's shop that ended up as, in my later years, ended up as a place called 'Inda Nusa', where they'd sell Indonesian artefacts and trinkets out of. Then there was the old boot maker's shop and then a small, little office for the stock and station agent, it was just an office.

Then, there was Coulton's house; he was the stock and station agent who had moved from the top end of Victoria Street. The church - the Church of England church - I can remember being partially built, because the war slowed it down, but then it was completed later on. There was the school, there was 'Cooee', and then up further was the Southwell's house on the corner, which is now the vets and the Murphy's house and 'Cooee'. On the other side was 'Avoca'. On the other side was Oldfield's cottage, which was a combination of slabs and packing cases. Then there was the house that the Coulton's had had on the top of the hill and then the Bolton house at the top of the hill and then on to the Catholic Church. So, most of the other houses came later, a lot of the other houses came later. It was a pretty vacant main street.

On the other side, you would have had 'Winarlia', the shop and 'Banksia'.

That's right. 'Winarlia', the shop, then 'Banksia' and then Butler's house on the corner where the aged people's units are now and nothing in between. So they were all vacant blocks and that enabled the Brown boys to race around and drive their old vehicles and whatever as they matured and grew up.

Oh, I see. Growing up, you went to school in Canberra, or Civic.

I went to Ainslie, the infants school, and the Ainslie Primary School, which was only a short walk, we lived in Limestone Avenue and it was only a five minute walk to school. Then, when I reached secondary school age, it was fairly selective and although people won't admit it, it seemed to be that public servants children went to Canberra High and the rest went to Telopea Park.

My first year in Telopea was the first year it had been declared a full high school, there was only an intermediate high school before that. That was probably interesting because my mother and an aunt all went to Telopea Park to intermediate level, which

was the highest level you could attain at that stage.

I went to Telopea, which was a half hour bus trip to and from each day. Sometimes I'd ride my bike as I was older and we'd ride down across, what is now, the lakebed, across Coppins Crossing and up through Telopea Park to the school. They were interesting years, because the migrants had started to come, so we had to deal with people who couldn't speak English and that sort of thing. We became quite a cosmopolitan school, as most schools did in those days.

When you finished school, did you have any idea what you wanted to do with your life?

I'd started wanting to be a motor mechanic, but the first jobs I got were sweeping the floor and getting the morning teas and the guys always tried to diddle me and I thought, "No, this is not for me, I'm a bit smarter than that." So, I decided at the end of high school that I wanted to be a draughtsman.

Jobs were easy to get, I went to the Public Service Board and they said, "We'll put you in Treasury," which I probably should have stayed, but I didn't like working in an office so much and dealing with finance, so I got a transfer, eventually, after about nine or ten months into the drawing office, which was at old Acton, where most of the hospital was eventually built. We had weatherboard offices over there and that was where the motor registry and all the government offices were, when I started working.

So, Canberra was pretty small, or just growing then, too, wasn't it?

It was. You would go to, say, Civic on a Saturday and you knew everybody there, you knew all the people, because that's how small Canberra was. The Sydney Buildings, one side of the road was the shops, the other side of the roads was a big hedge and you went down an embankment towards the old railway line, which had been decommissioned by then.

There were no shops across the road. The only buildings further along that street, which was Mort Street, was the YWCA building and a building that became 2CA, the radio station and then the Civic Theatre beside that.

Of course, there was no lake in those days.

No. I watched the development of the lake. Before that, we used to go, sneak down and play along the river, which was taboo in my family, but I managed to get away occasionally. Then we watched the development of the lake as it came up and the building of the bridges on dry land, before the lake filled.

We used to get to look at the building of the lake wall and that sort of thing. And then we knew, basically, what it would look like, because we'd had some massive floods through that filled out the area, pretty much like the lake is now.

Just going back to your father, with his taxi business and Canberra, of course, being the centre of the Federal Government, was he employed to drive politicians around, or parliamentarians?

Yes, certainly. His task was, I mean, he used to get up and meet the 5 o'clock train in the morning and there was an evening train, also. That went on for quite a while and then after the war era, aircraft were used much more and a lot of the politicians used to fly in by then, but previous to that he'd be picking up the politicians and taking them to parliament and that sort of thing.

The pressure on people in those days was pretty massive. He would start at four in the morning to get to the railway station by five. He often didn't go to bed until after midnight if there was something on. That's only a few hours sleep.

Also, I can still remember petrol rationing. We had a collection of hand-made funnels hanging in the shed, all made appropriate to the vehicle that was running as a taxi at that stage, so that you could pour petrol out of drums into the taxi, because you couldn't always get it out of the ground from bowsers or anything.

You mentioned the war. What impact did the war have? I'm particularly interested in Hall, I know you were a youngster then, but were you aware of it affecting people in Hall at that time?

No, not really, because a lot of things that were rationed say, in Canberra, were available from the farm. I remember we had butter and flour and sugar and those things. I mean, sugar was rationed, but they got a fair supply and that sort of thing.

The effect was that there were a lot of single people around, it left a lot of single ladies around. A lot of men, I can remember men with limbs missing and things like that that you don't see nowadays. That was very much more common then.

I think a lot more people with strange attitudes, too, because they'd been through tough times and a lot of them were either recluses or didn't want to be part of the community that much. It had a massive effect on people over a period of time.

Just getting back to Hall, you live in Hall now; you obviously have a passion or an attraction for it. When did you take the opportunity to move to Hall?

1965, Margaret and I were married and we were looking for accommodation and all the families went to Wattle Park for Christmas and they happened to mention over Christmas dinner that Ross Brown had a flat vacant. We called in on Christmas afternoon and said we were looking for accommodation, which was two rooms at the back of 'Winarlia'. He said, "Oh yes, you can have it." So, we lived there for nine or ten months and then our house came up for sale and we bought that. It's been an interesting place, I spent a whole day pulling nails out of the wall when I first got there, out of the kitchen wall, that were put in to hang things on. I thought I'd got them all and

that night we were going out and I walked past and tore my shirt on the nail I'd missed.

We've been in that house in Hall ever since. It's been a wonderful place to live. Our children, Heather and Craig, loved it because they had the freedom of the village, they could race billy-carts down through the timber at the back of the house, or they could go down to the creek and play, they could do whatever they liked. They were free. There were a lot of young children around at that time, they all joined up in bands and played together and had a great time.

In the '60s, I suppose, that was a time when Hall was a small village outside the big metropolis of Canberra and still maintained the typical village community ideals.

It certainly did and we quickly got involved in the community, because it was small and the headmaster called a public meeting and when we got to it, there was only Margaret and I and an officer who was promoting Rural Youth, or Junior Famers at that stage, so we got involved in a Junior Famer, Rural Youth group early in the piece.

And also, there were two very prominent ladies in the village. There was Betty Raskar and Nicky Duggan, who loved dancing and they wanted to get a permanent place for dancing, because Kinlyside Hall was being used for other things, particularly pictures at that stage. I got involved with them, because I was a young person, working to gain the Pavilion for community use. That involved inviting some important public servants out to dances. The Pavilion at that stage was unlined, with wire netting as windows and they chose midwinter to do this. We very quickly got some action and in those days, it was easy to get the government maintenance workshops to come out. They did the first maintenance on the Pavilion and lined it and put cupboards and things and put a small kitchen in it. Then, later on, we worked towards getting toilets and verandahs as an extension on it. They were designed, at that stage, a local architect, who lived in the village.

It was all village-orientated and I can remember at a function, at the opening of the Pavilion, once it had been renovated that a local fellow, called Curtis Moore, who was regarded as a prominent person, because he was a prominent grazier in the village. He spoke at the opening and he talked about, "Them over the hill," and that was Canberra. We were, we were separate.

You mentioned Rural Youth. I know your association, together with Margaret's association with Rural Youth was for a very long time. How many years were you involved?

Thirty-eight years we ran it, and we were involved with local district and state. It was a very worthwhile organisation. It originated from a joining of Department of Education and

Department of Agriculture, wanting to educate soldier settlers after the war, because they were having hard times and weren't very good agriculturalists. So the organisation was set up to teach the children about growing vegetables and fruit and raising animals. And that sort of worked. Those children became very skilled farmers and also, because of the style of the organisation, it taught them how to become community leaders and active in their communities. It was a great organisation.

Very worthwhile, by the sound of it.

Yes, it was sad it folded in the end, but both education and agriculture realised that it had worked so well that the schools had taken on a lot of those projects and other organisations had taken on the projects, so they withdrew their support. It became almost impossible to run without good support.

You came to the village in 1965. When did you start your association with the Progress Association?

Well, at that time. We decided that we'd better be part of the village and joined up and have been part of the Progress Association ever since and been Vice President many times and now I'm actually at the moment I'm Vice President and trying to mentor others about some of the unwritten rules of the village, or the way the village runs and how the community works.

And, that would have changed somewhat over the years you've been here though?

It has. Some of the things you'll notice is when we were here and for many years everybody just had a netting fence that was only a metre high and you could wander round and you knew who was where and what was where. You weren't sticky beaks, but you kept an eye out and if you noticed somebody hadn't been out of the house for a few days or something was going on, you just went and checked and made sure that their welfare was okay and they did the same with you. But that's all changed now. You walk around the village and there are two metre high fences, blocking off all the houses and people, although the community spirit is still great, it's not quite the same as it used to be. It's lost a lot of that real closeness.

One of the main features of the village was the Hall Show. What was yours and Margaret's association with the Hall Show?

Well, not really much, because it moved out in the '60s. But we... my aunt (Bessie Bardwell), who had been a cake steward – the Hall Show became the Canberra Show – she'd been a cake steward for 40 years and she said, "Well, it's time I trained somebody." So, she invited Margaret. Margaret took on the task. When we started Rural Youth, we also ran what we called a Show Camp, which was to bring other

children from around the district in and they would camp, or stay in the Pavilion here at Hall and they'd go in each day to the Canberra Show and I became a steward then and look after the Rural Youth stall.

We've been stewards ever since and now we're the preserves and pickles and jams stewards at the Canberra Show. We've done that ourselves for over 40 years and for the last eight years we've also been invited to be stewards for the crafts at the Queanbeyan Show. We believe that the competition is healthy and good for people to improve their talents and we enjoy presenting the judging in a way that people can ask the judges questions and that sort of thing. So it's a really good educational process for the community.

Your two children went to the Hall School.

They did, yes.

I know it's a lovely little school and it was very unfortunate, if that's the right word that it closed in 2006. What were your feelings about the school closure back then?

We were greatly disappointed and we joined the protest groups and did our best to force the government to have it remain open, but that wasn't to be, so we then pitched our efforts into trying to get something active going on the school site, so that we might be able to at least preserve the site. We worked towards that with many others in the village since.

It's amazing how the Hall School was such an important connection with the village, from what I've read and spoken to other members of the Hall community, the linkage, your ancestors who went to the Hall School and your family that went to the Hall School.

The school was basically the heart of the village. It's where everybody's children went and they met each other's children, they learnt together. All the community worked for the school. It broke down the religious barriers, everybody... from all the religions worked together in the school. So, it was basically a hub, a hub of contact and communication and also enjoyment, recreation. People worked for the school fete, everybody came to the school fete. People came to the school concerts, all that sort of thing. Schools are really... If a country town loses its school, then it falls to pieces, basically.

What's your favourite memory of Hall? Do you have a particular favourite?

I don't, actually. I just enjoy the village completely and the people and those that come and visit. It's just... everything's a favourite memory for me.

Where do you see the village being in 20 years time?

Well... it will evolve. I've always said the village is an evolution of architecture and society and people. And there will be some older buildings preserved, there will be people who will build newer buildings and that sort of thing and things will change. They always change and they have to change. But, hopefully, we'll be able to preserve enough of the old to keep the village being viably economical in its own way. And that we can keep our shop and our post office and our service station and all those services, which have been here for... since the start of the village.

Yes, the last 20 years have been quite an important time for Hall. I've been associated, as you know, for the last 20 years, and we've had the closure of the school, we've had the possibility of a residential development on our border. There's been the discussions with the ACT government about establishing a master plan. The village is now heritage listed, so a lot of protection has gone in to protect that environment that you are talking about.

It has, yes.

So, hopefully, that will continue and I know that with the passion of people like yourself that the fight will still continue.

It will. It certainly will.

All right, thank you Tony, on that note I think we'll conclude and thank you for your time.

Thank you Phil, I've had a wonderful morning.