

📍 Ngunnawal Country

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Hall



Hall

Hall Heritage Village is located at the edge of the national capital, in a rural setting within open country.

The village is surrounded by an endangered Yellow Box/Red Gum grassy woodland ecological community, which also supports vulnerable plant and animal species. Archaeological sites within the woodland and along Halls Creek remind us of generations of Aboriginal people who have lived here in Ngunnawal Country across more than 25,000 years.

Hall has a distinctive 'sense of place' within a broader cultural landscape, having strong historical and social associations with the early pioneers of the Ginninderra and Gungahlin districts of the ACT.

European settlement in the Ginninderra district commenced about 1826 when George Thomas Palmer established 'Palmerville', followed by Henry Hall at 'Charnwood'.

By 1861, settlement in the Ginninderra district was well advanced. William Davis' property included homesteads, workers' cottages, a store and a post office. By 1881 it had become an unofficial Ginninderra village.

Following a survey, the NSW Government chose a different site for a permanent village, on Halls Creek, three kilometres from the old village. This was proclaimed in 1882, and initially named Ginninderra. After protest from Ginninderra residents, the new village was renamed after local landholder Henry Hall.

Hall village was laid out in a rectangular grid, the custom of the time, and this is still evident today. The first sale of land occurred in 1886. After a few years the village comprised one residence and a store, with a population of two. It took some time, but Hall eventually replaced the functions of the earlier Ginninderra village.

The Hall district was considered a possible site for the Federal capital after the Yass-Canberra district was selected in 1908, but it was rejected in favour of the Canberra site.

In 1911 the federal Capital Territory (now the ACT) was proclaimed, with Hall Village situated just inside the straight line part of the ACT/NSW border, which runs from Mount Coree to One Tree Hill.

There were few amenities and no town water supply, so many residents moved to the city. The school was threatened with closure in 1958.

The declining population trend was reversed, and new businesses were established once Hall was provided with a water supply in 1967, and the advantages of living in a rural centre close to Canberra became evident.

Until 1980 the Barton Highway ran through the centre of the village. The diversion of heavy traffic to the by-pass has helped to preserve the village character.

This has also been aided by the decision not to proceed with planned suburban development adjoining to the east. Instead, the Kinlyside Nature Reserve (Canberra Nature Park) protects remnant box gum woodland and habitat for threatened woodland and grassland species.



See map in centre spread

A walking tour of stops 1 to 16 can take one to two hours. A walk to One Tree Hill starts from stop 16, and takes about two hours return with a pause at the top.

Stops A to H are in outlying areas of Hall village, and are better visited by car. The driving part of the tour will take approximately one hour, depending on how long you spend at each place.

Cyclists should allow more time, and perhaps make this a day's outing.

There are public toilet facilities in the park in Gladstone Street.

Park on Hoskins Street or Palmer Street.

1. Primary School – Hall Heritage Centre

A Canberra Tracks sign on Victoria Street tells the story of this site.

Based in the old Primary School grounds on Palmer Street, the Hall Heritage Centre is a volunteer-run centre for the collection, conservation, study and display of materials and stories concerning the history and development of the Hall–Ginninderra and surrounding district.

The school was built in 1910 following closure of the school at Ginninderra, and was extended in 1924. The mature pine trees around the school were planted by pupils around 1918.

Additional buildings were constructed after 1960 and in the 1990s facilities were improved with the addition of a hall and separate library. The school was closed to students in 2007.

The original school building was set up as an education museum by Laurie Copping, former principal of the school, and opened in 1986.

Now housed over four buildings, the Heritage Centre includes multiple exhibition galleries, a Family and Local History Program, an education program for school visits, Aboriginal displays and the Lyall Gillespie Collection.

See the website [museum.hall.act.au] for more information including opening hours.



Empire Day celebration at Hall School [Hall Heritage Centre]



View uphill along Victoria Street 1912 [Hall Heritage Centre]

2. 'Avoca' 32 Victoria Street

A Canberra Tracks sign nearby tells the story of this site. 'Avoca' was the residence of William Jones, a carpenter, with the original building dating from about 1897. Jones and his wife ran a haberdashery store from the premises until 1915 when it once again became a residence.

An art gallery was built on the same block in the 1970s and was used for this purpose until the 1980s when it became part of the residence.

After a fire in 2004 the residence was rebuilt in a sympathetic manner.

3. Hall Village Reserve

The Village Reserve is a wooded area of two and a half acres (a hectare) on the western side of Victoria Street between Hoskins and Loftus Streets. The original village plan designated the whole of sections 7 and 8 as 'Reserve for Public Buildings', but half of section 7 became housing blocks. The remainder was officially named 'Hall Village Reserve' in 1995.

This respects the intent for Sections 7 and 8 to constitute a central landscaped reserve within the village. Trees in the reserve are mainly yellow box and red gum.

4. St Michael & All Angels Anglican Church

This church is located on the corner of Victoria and Loftus Streets. The foundation stone was laid in 1941 and the building was officially opened in May 1948.

Its rendered external walls have been coursed to look like stonework. A stained-glass window depicting two eucalypt trees has since been installed at the Victoria Street side of the church, commemorating the deaths of two young local people in road accidents.

The church bell in the yard was cast in 1854 and originally hung in St John's Anglican Church spire in Canberra. It was erected in the Church grounds here in 1965.



William Morris and family at 'Dellwood'
[Hall Heritage Centre]

5. William Morris Bootmaker 10 Victoria Street

A Canberra Tracks sign outlines the history of the site. The original shop, built around 1907, was a small worker's cottage with a weatherboard front, verandah and corrugated iron roof.

William Morris used the same premises to trade as a bootmaker, bicycle repairer, barber and banker ('the Four Bs'), while living at 'Dellwood' just over the border in NSW (now demolished).

Hides were tanned for boots made at the shop, and in the 1920s possum skins were made into rugs, hand sewn and lined. A cement above-ground tanning pit was relocated from 'Dellwood' to the Hall Heritage Centre, and interpreted with a Canberra Tracks sign (Palmer Street). The old shop was demolished and rebuilt in the 1980s in a similar style, and is now used as a commercial business.



Southwell & Son Hall Premier Store and Post Office, and 'Banksia'
[Hall Heritage Centre]

6. Hall Premier Store and Post Office

A Canberra Tracks sign on Victoria Street tells the story of this site.

The original store was operated by Eva Southwell from a house known as 'Banksia', built in 1889 and located two blocks to the north from the present store. Another small shop was built next to the house in 1898 as the first Premier Store (both since demolished).

In 1901, Charles Southwell and Ebenezer Brown took over the store, and erected a new building on the current site in 1908. Ebenezer's son Ross took over ownership of the store in 1934 after the partnership dissolved.

Later, Jean Southwell MBE ('Miss Jean') ran the shop and Post Office for many years until her retirement. She was also the Sunday School teacher.

The store was demolished and rebuilt in 1982, and is now a café, the exterior replicating the earlier building.

7. 'Winarlia' 3 Victoria Street

A Canberra Tracks sign tells the story of 'Winarlia', one of the oldest surviving buildings in Hall. It was built in 1901 of pisé (rammed earth) and displays building techniques typical of the era.

This was the residence of Ebenezer Brown, who ran the Premier Store with Charles Southwell, and later Jean Southwell.

8. Kinlyside Hall 6 Victoria Street

A Canberra Tracks sign marks Kinlyside Hall, built in 1907 as a meeting and recreation place for the local community by George Kinlyside, next door to his blacksmithing and coachbuilding establishment in Victoria Street (stop 9).

John Southwell JP performed the opening ceremony at a ball attended by 60 couples. Previously community functions were centred on the Cricketers Arms which operated from 1864- 1918. Until 1905 it was run by George's parents-in-law, Malachi and Susan Hollingsworth.

Kinlyside Hall soon became a popular venue for balls, concerts and plays. It was used by the Canberra Mothercraft Society, Anglican congregation, School P&C for their annual Christmas tree, for Hall Progress Association meetings and as a dressing shed for the invincible Hall Football Club in 1925 to 1928.

From 1914 it was regularly used by the Red Cross and other groups fund-raising to support the troops, and from about 1921 films were shown there. Colin Southwell of 'Sunny Corner' gave fortnightly film screenings for some 30 years from around 1936. 'Central heating' was a drum of burning coke.

After more than 60 years as the hub of meeting and entertainment, from 1971 to 2018 the hall had a second life as a shop for antiques, collectibles, craft and old wares, and later for local wine and craft beer.

The refurbished Showground Pavilion (stop 12) later became the main community meeting place.



Jim Rochford's Garage 1938 [Hall Heritage Centre]

9. Hall Village Motors 4 Victoria Street

Hall Village Motors traces its origins to 1898 when George Kinlyside began operating in Victoria Street as a blacksmith, wheelwright, coachbuilder, tank maker and undertaker. In 1900 he purchased two blocks from Joseph Bolton – one for the business and one immediately behind it for a home ('Kenmira', stop 14). The business soon expanded and hired workers.

A successful inventor and entrepreneur, Kinlyside actively managed the transition from the horse to the motor car, and used his own car to provide a community 'taxi' service. By 1924 he promoted his business as a 'Motor Garage'.

In 1938 Kinlyside sold his business to Jim Rochford and it has operated as a service station/garage ever since. Jim added agricultural requisites, dealerships for vehicles, refrigerators and other household appliances. Later proprietors added panel-beating and spray painting to become a major district service provider.

Hall



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10. Hall Village Well

A Canberra Tracks sign is located at this site.

The Reserve Well (McClung's Well) is located in the park at the southern end of Gladstone Street, 20 metres south west of the intersection with Alexandra Street. It is the only remaining well of the three that once supplied Hall with water.

11. Memorial Grove

A grove of trees near the corner of Gladstone and Victoria Streets was planted after World War I as a living memorial to the seventeen young men of the Hall district who served in the Australian Imperial Force. Each tree has a plaque bearing a soldier's name.

Additional trees are in memory of Clyde Hollingsworth, Morley Brown and Malcolm (Mack) Southwell, who were killed in action.

As these trees age and die they are replaced with the same species. This was last done in 2013.

A memorial cairn was built in 1992 in memory of those who served in the armed forces.

12. Hall Showground and Sportsgrounds

A Canberra Tracks sign marks this area which has been used continuously for recreational purposes for more than a century.

It has been home to the Canberra Show (1925–1963), the National Sheepdog Trial Championships (1978–present), and the monthly Hartley Hall Markets (1987–present). It has also been a venue for many community sports, including cricket, tennis and rugby.

When the Showground Pavilion was refurbished in 1974, the Showground became the main community meeting place. Other Showground buildings have been repurposed – the horse stables as a Pony Club and sheep pens as barbecue sheds. These simple vernacular buildings in wood and corrugated iron are typical of their time.

13. 'Glenona' 19 Gladstone Street

Located on the corner of Gladstone and Palmer Streets, 'Glenona' was built in about 1900 and was the home of the Smith family. Leon Russell Smith wrote the well-known 'Memories of Hall', published in 1975.

14. 'Kenmira' 3 Palmer Street

This weatherboard cottage was originally built by George Kinlyside (about 1900), backing on to his business premises. It was later the property of Jim Rochford, who established the Hall garage in 1938.

15. 'Lavender Cottage'

On the corner of Palmer and Hoskins Streets stands a weatherboard cottage which was transported to Hall in 1960 from Acton, Canberra's first suburb. It is a reminder of the early Federal Capital.

This ends the walk around Hall Village. Other places of interest can be visited with a hike up One Tree Hill or with a short drive.

16. One Tree Hill walk

One Tree Hill is 3 kilometres from Hall on the Centenary Trail. From the corner of Hoskins and Hall Streets, the walk takes about 2 hours return, including a pause at the seats and interpretive signs on the summit. The trail is steep near the summit and is shared with mountain bikes. Take water with you. No dogs are allowed on this trail.

One Tree Hill was used as a vantage point and landmark in the earliest surveys of this area, by Robert Dixon (1829) and Robert Hoddle (1832).

In late 1908 Charles Scrivener used One Tree Hill as his 'commencement point' for the detailed survey of the 'Yass–Canberra district' to identify the best site for the nation's capital city.

Due to the distance between stops, the remaining stops are best visited by car or cycle. Head north along Victoria Street.

A. 'Cooee' 39 Victoria Street

A Canberra Tracks sign is located at this site.

Just before the end of the village, on the left, this early 20th century weatherboard cottage is relatively intact, with a corrugated iron gable roof, decorative bargeboards and verandah. Lyall Gillespie, a well-known local historian, spent his childhood here.

B. Travelling Stock Reserve

A narrow strip of unfenced land on the left hand side as you leave the village is part of an old Travelling Stock Reserve, set aside for movement of stock from one place to another, with grazing along the way. The reserve originally crossed the NSW border but has since been cut by the Barton Highway.



*St Francis Xavier Catholic Church 50th anniversary 1961
[Hall Heritage Centre]*

C. St Francis Xavier Catholic Church

Located past the edge of the village on the right, this church was built in 1910 in the neo-Gothic style from locally quarried bluestone volcanic rock. It is an ornate building with rendered brick window and door surrounds and has not been altered since its construction.



Opening of Wattle Park Church 1880s [Hall Heritage Centre]

D. Wattle Park Uniting Church

Turn right onto the Barton Highway. The church is about one kilometre from the turn, just across the ACT-NSW border, on the right. After a U-turn at Church Lane, you can drive or cycle into the church grounds.

This picturesque Gothic style church was built in 1882 for the Methodist congregation in the district.

It was built of local volcanic rock, with a timber shingle roof, fretted bargeboards and decorative ridge finials. The shingles were later covered with corrugated iron. The Sunday School Hall was built next to the church in 1928, using concrete blocks.

The vestry was added in 1954. Its walls incorporated stones from the homes of pioneers of the church and the district, along with an Aboriginal axe.

The church was founded by members of the Southwell family who were early settlers in the Ginninderra Creek area having moved there in the early 1880s.

Since the Federal Capital Territory was proclaimed in 1911, its location has been outside the Territory. It is historically very significant for its associations with the pioneer settlement of the Limestone Plains.

E. Hall Cemetery

Head south on the Barton Highway and turn right into Wallaroo Road. There are no signs to indicate the location of the cemetery, which is not visible from the road. Park at the second gate on the right. The pedestrian gate is unlocked.

Two Canberra Tracks signs tell the story

The Hall Cemetery was established in 1883 as the district's first official cemetery outside Queanbeyan. It is the oldest public general cemetery still in use in the ACT, and is administered by a self-funded statutory authority.

The earliest known burial was that of Bessie Lillie Shumack, who died aged 3 months on 9 June 1907. The cemetery contains graves of early pioneers, local families and a number of eminent persons. Hall Heritage Centre holds profiles of most of those buried here.

Pioneer cemeteries have become vital refuges for plants and animals that are threatened elsewhere, as they are some of the few areas that were fenced from livestock more than 100 years ago. Hall Cemetery is home to the endangered Tarengo Leek Orchid (*Prasophyllum petilum*), known only from this site in the ACT and two other sites in NSW. It is also thought to support populations of a rare grasshopper (*Keyacris scurra*).

Since 1994 mowing has been restricted here to help the survival of the orchid. Long grass may hinder your movement around the cemetery in Spring and Summer.

F. 'Sunnyside' (private property)

Turn right onto the Barton Highway and left into Gladstone Street first on the right (private property).

David Rule, of 'Allwood' on Wallaroo Road, purchased 3½ acres (1.4 hectares) on Halls Creek in July 1886 for £17, with access to the water of Halls Creek and rich alluvial soil. Rule sold the land in 1904 to Ben Southwell who months later sold it to George Southwell.

Around 1906 George built a four-roomed pisé (rammed earth) cottage with verandahs. After their marriage in 1913 he and his wife Ethel (née Moon) lived there and called the cottage 'Sunnyside'.

George worked as a labourer and as a shearer before his marriage, travelling as far as Tibooburra. Ethel was a school teacher at Brooklands School from 1903 to 1906, and she had boarded with the Southwell family.

They developed the land for poultry, bee-keeping and an orchard, specialising in plums, peaches and apples. Ethel was an accomplished cook who won many prizes for her jams and preserves.

George and Ethel lived at 'Sunnyside' until their deaths in the 1940s. The cottage looks much as it did 100 years ago, and many original fruit trees remain.



'Sunnyside' [Hall Heritage Centre]

G. Hall Common

On the left along Gladstone Street.

Originally a 'Recreation Reserve', a large area to the west of the village was later known as 'the Common' or 'the Cow Paddock', where villagers were able to keep a horse or milking cow.

Much reduced in area by the highway by-pass, its main use now is horse agistment, which assists with bush fire mitigation by reducing fuel loads.

The Common is rich in native flowers during Spring, set in box gum woodland of high to very high conservation value.

Saleyards at the northern end became the venue for district livestock sales up until the mid-1970s.



Looking down Victoria Street c.1910 [Hall Heritage Centre]

H. Cricketers Arms Hotel, Hall

Turn right into Victoria Street and head south.

On the right, about 250 metres past the bridge, is the site of the Cricketers Arms Hotel (also known as the One Tree Hill Hotel), marked by a mature pine and a Canberra Tracks sign.

Established in 1864 by Patrick Grace, it was the first hotel in the district, providing refreshments to locals and to travellers between Queanbeyan and Yass. It catered for weddings, balls and sporting events, and was a meeting place for political, social and sporting clubs.

From 1881 a second building provided accommodation and a samples room for travelling salesmen.

In the heyday of the hotel the former cricket ground was across the road, and this was a popular venue for a wide variety of sports and activities. The ground had earlier been used for ploughing matches.

For a time this was the only licensed hotel in the Federal Capital Territory, but it closed in 1918 due to alcohol prohibition laws in the Territory. It was a private residence for a number of years until its demolition in 1938.



Sportsmen at the Cricketers Arms c.1910 [Hall Heritage Centre]

Kinlyside Hall, Victoria Street 1912 [Hall Heritage Centre]
Front: William Morris and family at 'Dellwood' [Hall Heritage Centre]

Visit *Hall* to discover the charms of this historic rural village, right on the doorstep of the National Capital.

Hall

2024



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