

Memories of the ALTON DOWNS HALL



Illustration by James Saunders

**120th Anniversary Event
Saturday 18th October
2025**

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Nancy BARRETT (née WEISSE)

Remember - Christmas trees, up to stage for present, leaving to dance with the 'oldies', minding the littlies sleeping under the forms, and the lovely array always for supper.

Later years, the wonderful friends and neighbours being there for funerals.

Anne BLANCHFIELD

Lived South Yaamba 1942 - 1964.

**Came to dances every Saturday night- two a month.
My sister Patt Watts (née Connor) had her 21st birthday
party in this Hall in 1958.**

Hugh CHIPPENDALE

1949

Attended dances with my parents.
Still here.

Hugh

Julann CHIPPENDALE

Rob, I have attended dances, cent sales, ANZAC services and indoor bowls at the Alton Downs Hall.

We have met many new faces, all friendly.

**Congratulations from the Ridgелands Hall Committee.
Thank you for an informative morning and a great morning tea.**

Rob CHIPPENDALE

Memories of Alton Downs Hall as a boy attending dances fortnightly.

Congratulations to Alton Downs Hall 120 years.

Bev COOKE

I got lost and ended up here at the Hall.

Peter CRAIG

To my knowledge and according to the Title documents, the Hall came about around year 1904, through the Alton Downs Farmers' Association. These are reflected on the plaques in the Hall.

Sidney Hoare Junior, Sid, is the third 'Sidney Hoare' on the Hall Committee for 120 years which is a great achievement of founding Family.

I have been a Hall member since moving to Alton Downs in the late 70's; and elected President in 2017. I have been an active member, with my late wife Pam who for a number of years was Secretary (about 1991 to 2005 approximately); Pam as a Committee Secretary, signed the Model Rules for Incorporation September 1994.

Over the years, the Hall has been and continues to be used for a variety of community events and activities. Thank you for attending and sharing this recognition of the long-term benefit of having the Hall in place and the continued use of its services.

Ann-Maree DYER

1991-

My husband and I used to go to dances in the Hall about 20 years ago. He would grab me, hold me close - and waltz around in a circle at the back of the Hall because we didn't know the dances. It was fun!

Margaret FOXWELL

1971 arrived.

Diane and Robyn were Brownie leaders.

Jill FRY

**1998 came to area.
2002 - to live until 2021.**

ANZAC Day dawn services.

Fundraiser dinner where Craig Reid and friends dressed as bushrangers, galloped around the Hall cracking whips.

'Cent Sales' at Alton Downs Hall and all the Elections!

Council information meetings are always lively.

Margo HARRIS

1976

We used to come to all the dances when the children were little, and they used to sleep under the seats.

Peter HARRIS

1976

Used to play in the orchestra in earlier days.
I played the sax.

Debra HARRISON

Arrived in Alton Downs 2015 (January)

My biggest memory of the Hall was the ANZAC service, such a big turnout!

I had no idea there were so many people in the area.

Philip HARRISON

Arrived January 2015.

Being welcomed by Cyclone Marcia in February was my biggest memory. We still hadn't unpacked!

First cyclone for me.

Ben HOARE

Lodge meetings with my Grandad John Hoare, Vera Hoare.

Doug HOARE

Part of the Hoare family.

We moved back to Alton Downs in 1946 where I went to school.

**Lived here until 1960. Went to Yaamba to live.
Have lived in Rocky since 1978.**

Went to dances every fortnight where I met my wife Merle and married in 1957.

Lived here until we moved to Yaamba in 1960 and now have two grandsons who live in Alton Downs.

When we were kids (because we lived next to the Hall) after the dance we would collect empty beer bottles and cash them in to help buy soft drinks for Christmas.

Merle HOARE

Met Doug Hoare in 1956 at a dance (in this Hall) and enjoyed dances every fortnight.

Lived at 'Pandora' where Doug worked for Pat Winter.

I come every year to the Cent Sale to support the Hall.

Roland HOARE

**As a child we came to dances, then I joined the Lodge
M.U.I.O.O.F.**

My father lived next door to the Hall - John was his name.

Dawn HUNTLY (née RUTHERFORD)

20th September 1951

As a child my parents would bring my brother Ken and myself to the Christmas Dance where there was a massive Christmas tree and Santa Claus.

My mother was a Hoare. We lived at 'Redbank' Morinish and when we finished school Mum would drive us down to attend the dances every fortnight.

On dance nights in the early days, I remember Grandad Hoare walking up to the Hall to start the generator.

Anne JEPSEN

We were members for a number of years and always enjoyed the friendship.

Len JEPSEN

Enjoyed the company of the members.

Sylvia FISHER

Johanson, Fisher (now Wowan) & Sheldrake.

I lived at Pink Lily. Dad met Mum at Alton Downs dances in the 1920s. Dad worked for Murray's Dairy Farm and Mum lived on 'Springdale' owned by Sheldrakes.

I came to a dance with my uncle, aunt and cousins in the 1950s.

Grandfather donated land for the cemetery - was involved in taking produce displays to Brisbane.

Gloria KELLEY

1986 first came to the district.

Coming to the Hall: 1990s?

Alton Downs community trying to access water.

2000?

Held a children's special history project.

Darryl KELLY

Attended Primary School Sports Day 1949.

Junior Farmer's had many great days at Alton Downs.

Glen KELLY MP Mirani

Old time dances.

Ridgeland's Branch L.N.P Meetings.

Many Federal polities came to the Hall.

As member for Mirani very proud to have come through the ranks of this Hall.

Carol KENYON (née HOARE)

Went to Alton Downs School.

I lived at Alton Downs Post Office 1 Jan 1946 - April 1964.

Moved back to Rocky 9 years ago.

June KILLEEN

I am June Killeen and I came to the district in 2010 from Victoria. I am a member of the QCWA and have been to many Cent Sales and ANZAC morning services.

I hope the Hall continues its operation as a community Hall.

Best of luck, June.

Robyn KLEINHANS

1977 -

Early 1980s - I remember a hungi here at the Alton Downs Hall one evening.

Late 1980s - my sister did Brownies with Mrs Chippendale.

I remember a fashion show one time for fundraising. I was one of the models.

Fay KRAUSE

I have driven past several times on my way to a Bible Study group.

Colleen LASSEN-OHL

2012

Over the years I've attended the Ratepayers meetings, Rural Fire meetings; meet the Council candidates; Cent Sales and ANZAC Day services.

The most memorable would be hiring the Hall for my late mother's 90th birthday celebrations in 2016.

Rose LEGGE

My name is Rose Legge, great granddaughter of Sydney Hoare who donated the land for the Hall.

I have lived in Rockhampton for the past nine years.

My earliest vivid memory of Alton Downs Hall was in 1983 when my family had a reunion at the Hall. Since living in Rocky I have visited the Hall many times for dances and cent sales.

Elaine LLOYD

Some 70 years or more ago my mother would bring me on the bus to the Alton Downs Hall dance nights.

I was a small child and would sleep on the floor of the Hall. On the way home to Park Avenue many songs were sung:

'Ten green bottles hanging on the wall'.

**'She'll be coming 'round the mountain when she comes'.
and many more.**

Great and wonderful memories.

Mary OSBORNE

Met David here at a dance.

He has lived here since 1960, and I came here in 1969.

We are still dancing here in this Hall.

Patricia PIERCE

1956 - 1958.

Came out with my husband to dances - wonderful floor.

Some of those times (Morris Pierce, a cousin) used to ask the other men on the verandah for a contribution to ask the bands to play for another hour!

He married Mavis Kahl from the district.

Greg REA

Frequented country dances from 1967 to 1972.

When I married Sharon Watson and left the district to live at Kunwarara.

Sharon REA

I was Sharon Watson, daughter of Bill and Nora Watson of Ridgелands Post Office.

My grandparents Fred and Ethel Morris lived at 'Ivanhoe' next to the Alton Downs Church.

From 1953 to 1972 when I left Ridgелands we frequented the Ridgелands, Alton Downs and Dalma dances.

Dad was in charge of most things to do with Ridgелands Hall.

Alex REID

Moved to Alton Downs in 1953 and parents joined the Hall Committee. Dad was president for many years.

I remember helping jack up the Hall to replace stumps. The Polocrosse Club ran a 7-A-Side cricket to raise money and bought the tank for the toilets when they had playgroup.

We held a mock wedding with sit down reception, which was one of the many events in the 1970s.

I was on the Committee and many working bees up to the 1990s.

Carol REID

Moved to Alton Downs in 1960.

Mum and Dad joined the Hall Committee. Dad sold bullocks to pay for painting the Hall in early 1970s.

We attended all Hall dances from 1960.

Kids slept in cots where toilets are now. Older kids slept under seats.

Boiled water outside in kerosene tin drums.

Debra RICHARDS (née CRAIG)

My parents came from property in the Wowan/Dululu area of Central Queensland and due to circumstances had to leave this type of living and move into towns. Even with this transition into suburbia, there were many weekends of dancing in community Hall. Eighteen acres of land became available in Alton Downs 1977 and the Craig family moved there.

I lived in the Nurses Quarters during my nursing training 1978 -1981 and when shifts allowed spent many weekends at dances in the Alton Downs Hall as well as others of the district - old time and disco (1980s). Only one boyfriend of several like to old time dance; fiancé/husband could dance though due to a back injury could not dance for long.

Square dancing was fun though scary as the floor was extremely slippery - these were the days of platform shoes and long skirts.

Mum and Dad were extremely involved in several community groups and as such my siblings and I were expected to help set up for events eg.

Dances, Cent Sales - tables and chairs; sweeping floors; setting out crockery and cutlery; washing up; tidying up after the event. These activities were directed by such local identities as Hugh and Joyce Chippendale, Tom and Daphne Hoare, Sid Hoare, Margaret Foxwell plus Lynne and Sue,

Dorothy ROSENBERG

1935 to 1942.

Came to dances at the Alton Downs Hall and danced my legs off.

Betty RUTHERFORD (née HOARE)

29 June 1930.

I was born and lived at Alton Downs.

As a small child we lived at 'Rosemount' on Stanwell/Waroula Road. Upon the death of my grandfather, we moved to the dairy farm near the Hall.

On leaving school I worked in the area.

I married 1949 and moved to 'Redbank' Morinish. Still keep in close contact with family at Alton Downs.

Over the years I organised many fundraisers at the Hall for the L.N.P.

James SAUNDERS

Friends of Hoare family approximately 1955.

Barb TRAVERS

My family (the Weders of Laurel Bank) settled here in early 1900s.

My mum, Daphne Weder, loved to tell of the times when as a young one they would come down to the Hall for Christmas celebrations -big tree all decorated and big get together with lots of food and Santa coming.

My husband and I settled here in 2000. We were on the Hall Committee from 2000 to 2014.

Joyce WEDEL

I lived at 'Netherton' from 1970 to 1981.

I remember the Saturday night dance with the kids sliding up and down the Hall and getting splinters. When they got tired, they went to sleep under the forms and men went out to their cars drinking.

Rob WEDEL

1960 - 1981.

I was Secretary early 70s. In the Whitlam era we got a grant and with donations from locals, notably Boy Boys. We repainted the inside of the Hall.

We moved the ladies toilet upstairs which was an old library. The men stood outside guarding the car boots. Replaced the old Masonite with fibro ceiling.



This project received assistance from Rockhampton Regional Council's
Community Assistance Program.