

**Oatley Heritage and Historical Society  
August 26<sup>th</sup> 2022 presentation of Peter Hall and Fiona  
Hall**

By Angie Sheinwald and Rodger Robertson

# Presentation On Fiona Hall August 2022

With thanks to guests who knew Fiona as a student at OWPS and Penshurst Girls HS – Helen \*\*\*\*\* and Janette/Janine \*\*\*\*\* who travelled from the South Coast to share their recollections of Fiona Hall.

This message was also received from Bruce Helman:

*I saw your upcoming meeting about Ruby Payne-Scott and Peter and Fiona Hall  
I lived around the corner in Mi Mi St and frequently played with Peter at their house from about the late 1950s. It was a very unusual design for its time and had many sun smart features and environmental features. They did not have a car and Bill walked to work at Peakhurst every day. They were keen bushwalkers and campers and Peter was a very good train photographer in his late teens.*

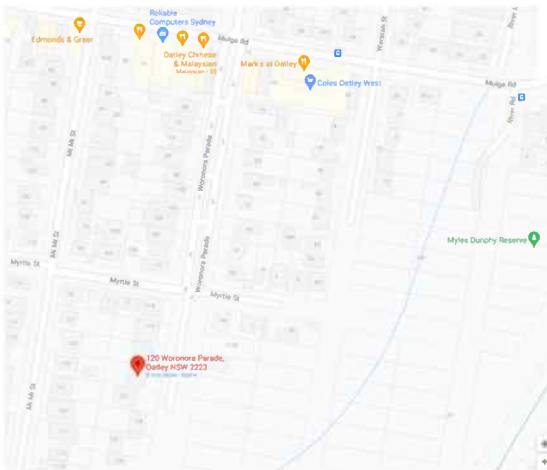
## Ruby Payne-Scott and Bill Hall



Lived at Oatley West- Ruby was a famous scientist working on radar in WW2



FIG. 2. Bushwalk, Easter 1941, shortly after Peter's parents met each other. Bill Hall is second top left, standing next to a eucalyptus leaf gatherer. Ruby Payne-Scott is sitting in the centre of the photo looking toward Bill.



Ruby and Bill designed and built their house in mid/late 1950s  
- on weekends they all camped out at the property.



FIG. 3. Peter as a young boy, with his parents Ruby and Bill and his sister Floma, circa 1900, at the traditional family Christmas Eve gathering in the Hall's home in Outley.



FIG. 8. Peter and his father, Bill, with Squeaker, the kitten that Peter and Jeannie gave him, circa 1989.



- Bill Hall born in Inverell
- Trained as a French Polisher – patience
- Carpentry – held him in good stead as he built their house and the furniture.
- Became a telephone technician with PMG

## Fiona Hall AO



Next-door neighbour's yard

- Born November 1953
- Attended OWPS between 1959 – 1965
- Penshurst GHS 1966 - -1971
- As children, her parents often took her and her brother bushwalking on the weekends where she developed an appreciation of nature.
- Strong influence on her art
- Interested in architecture but pursued art at the East Sydney Technical College
- Interest in photography developed

## On the Move



- Moved and lived in London from January 1976 to August 1978
- Returned to Australia in 1978 to see her ill mother
- First solo exhibition in Melbourne
- Left for New York – Masters of Fine Arts

- Was representative of her photographic art – new wave of photographic seeing.
- This 'cropping of the woman at Bondi Beach was a form of a *visual pun* - provocative as an example of 'bad photography'

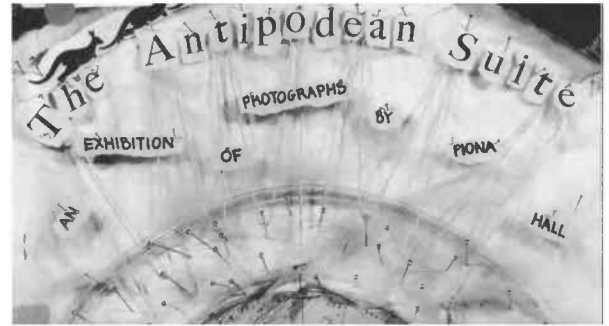
Julie Ewington 2005)
- What we do see is the sensitivity to the *physical and social environment*
- *Does not simply record or reproduce reality – give us a look at a new reality, giving us a new experience of the familiar.*

(Maureen Gilchrist, The Age Sept 1974)

## The Antipodean Suite

- Artist-in-residence at Tasmanian School of Arts
- *The Antipodean Suite* – beginning of recurring theme

*“the transformation of the everyday. . .into creations of imaginative beauty”*



- Featured diverse subjects and photographic techniques
- From sombre stuffed birds from Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery to a challenging image of our iconic echidna, but in this representation, flayed
- This suite was strictly structured, suggesting order amongst the chaos

*These photographs came about through a desire to transcribe into visual, photographic terms some aspects of what is often still referred to as the Antipodes. They are inspired by some of the phenomena in this part of the globe, and in relation to the other half of the planet. Literal 'meaning' is not the intention. Rather, a visual exploration, an apprehension and comprehension of the material which comes to hand, and eye, to arrive at the cohesion of an idea.*

Fiona Hall

## PARADISUS TERRESTRIS 1989-1990

This series came from the creative process from the question *‘What if?’* coupling it with media that could be worked on to express that idea into a material form.

- Re-ignited her interest in botany and its incorporation of the elevation of an original material – in this case the sardine cans
- In this series of Australian Plant species, included not only the botanical and common name of each plant (because everything in nature has been given a name, a Western world name) so this series is prefaced with the indigenous name and clan group, which has a huge bearing of where in Aust the plant evolved.
- Part of her process is going through supermarket fish can shelves to see the changes in packaging. Interested in these changes as a response to society becoming environmentally determined to reach zero waste target.
- Her interest in recycled materials also features in her work. The history that of the materials and subjects playing a part in her work.



## GIVE A DOG A BONE 1996



In her own word, Fiona is constantly surprised by her own work – how one piece leads her into another direction and another idea/concept

- This installation was part of the Copenhagen Exhibition and has the focus on ‘CONSUMPTION’. She comes to a realization that we are all consumers, especial in the urban areas:
  - From power/electricity to fuel, running our cars to what we eat and what we use for entertainment.
- This installation is made up of objects from our everyday life – as she describes, the “flotsam and jetsam’ of our lives – carved from SOAP.
- As a medium the soap is both cleansing as well as very fragile, it can be worn away into nothing, leaving no residue of its existence.
- *Give a dog a bone evokes connotations of ‘a dog’s life’ and the installation displays the detritus of our late twentieth-century urbanised lives as a multitude of objects, carved laboriously from soap and laid out on stacked, used, cardboard boxes.*
- The centrepiece of the work is the larger than life-size photograph of the artist’s father wrapped in a cloak knitted from soft drink cans bearing the globally recognisable symbol of consumption, Coca-Cola. The man, her father Bill Hall, has been compared to a tribal elder of industrial society yet he appears naked and vulnerable beneath the harsh material, and his expression is humble and sensitive rather than triumphant.

## FERN GARDEN NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA

COMMISSIONED IN 1996, COMPLETED IN 1998



- *'Fiona Hall sees gardens as being, essentially, about the relationship between the body and the natural world, and that the use of space in the world through architecture and gardens is a history of how people relate to the world around them at the most fundamental level.'*

## A FOLLY FOR MRS MACQUARIE

1999/2000

- the artwork implies an element of folly in the optimistic act of superimposing old-world traditions onto foreign surroundings.
- The design elements of the artwork echo those early aspirations but also remind us that there was much folly in the way Britain colonised Australia. The domed roof of Norfolk Island pine fronds, for example, refers to the colonists' regard for the tree. However, the brittle timber of the pines dashed hopes that it would make excellent ships' masts.
- include a range of references – indigenous and introduced plant species, early colonial tools, the clasped dagger from Macquarie's crest on the finial and fencing. The false ceiling represents interlocking animal bones of native species which would once have inhabited the site, while the structure of the Gothic windows represents the barbed wire that divided up the land. Sunken seating provides a place to pause, sit and contemplate the views over the Harbour.



## TENDER 2003-2005



- Self confessed 'museum junkie'
- Visited the Hornimium museum in south London – quirky and full of curios
- Saw these amazing nest hanging in the cabinet and when she looked at them, she thought they were fantastic and the thought came to her that she would make these nest out of American dollars
- As she began working on them, her appreciation of the how beautifully designed, how intricate they were realized. 86 nests created
- *The archeology of the lives of birds stored away*
- To make *Tender*, Hall paid face value for thousands of US dollars and sliced them to weave the nests.
- The artist is also commenting on one of the prices paid for capitalism – the destruction of the environment.

## ANZAC MEMORIAL

- Created by Fiona Hall, the eight walls of the Hall of Service display soil from 1,701 New South Wales' towns, cities, suburbs and homesteads given a place of address by First World War enlistees.





*"I regard the Hall of Service as both an informative space, and also as a hallowed site to realise the enormity of the service and sacrifice."*



- *"My resolution of the space is an artwork, but for me the benchmark of its success, now and over the long term, will reside not in its authorship but in its capacity to enable viewers to feel a deep connection and resonance with our service given in the face of war."*

## **WHO GOES HERE? PROJECT**

- *"A forest of signposts' set to spell out part of Sydney's convict history* SMH March 2021

*... meticulous record-keeping by colonial authorities, the passion of amateur genealogists who have shared their family histories, and the latest GPS tracking* Beth Hise Sydney Living Museum



- A forest of wooden signposts installed in the courtyard of the Hyde Park Barracks
- a bold visual representation of the journeys that brought convicts and migrants to the NSW colony.
- 300 signposts representing those who once lived at the Barracks, from its days as a dormitory for convict labourers to immigration depot and asylum for the sick and destitute.
- Of the 300, 200 will be convict stories, representing the proportion of convicts who called the Barracks home when mustered as government labourers.
- Of the remaining 100 signposts, half are about Irish women who had lost one or both parents in the potato famine and were given assisted passage to Sydney, staying in the Barracks until they could find domestic work.



# ORDER OF AUSTRALIA HONOUR 2013

*It's a bit of icing on the cake*

- *"for distinguished service to the visual arts as a painter, sculptor and photographer, and to art education"*
- *"I do think it does make a difference to people in the arts and to the arts generally to have recognition. It's always difficult for the arts to get airtime in the media and in the public mind."*

## AWARDS

- 1997: Contempora 5 Art Award, National Gallery of Australia
- 1998: Appointed to the Advisory Council of the Australian National University's Centre for the Mind
- 1999: Clemenger Art Award, National Gallery of Victoria
- 2011: Artist Award in the National Awards for the Visual Arts, Melbourne Art Foundation
- 2013: Officer (AO) in the general division of the Order Of Australia "for distinguished service to the visual arts as a painter, sculptor and photographer, and to art education"

## REFERENCES

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- Turner, Brook (May 2012), "The alchemist: [Artist Fiona Hall recycles materials into unique artworks]", *Australian Financial Review Magazine*

# Peter Gavin Hall

By Rodger Robertson

Born 20 November 1951 to William (Bill) Hall a telephone technician and Ruby Payne-Scott. Ruby was in a pioneering group of radar scientists during WW2 and obtained the distinction as the first woman radio astronomer. Peter's younger sister is a well known contemporary artist.

Both parents were foundation members of the Sydney Bushwalking Club. Bill was a strong advocate for national parks and maintaining parkland.



FIG. 3. Peter as a young boy, with his parents Ruby and Bill and his sister Fiona, circa 1960, at the traditional family Christmas Eve gathering in the Hall's home in Oatley.

Peter attended OWPS he was placed 9<sup>th</sup> in the year 6 list with 300/300 in arithmetic. He then went on the Sydney Technical High School developing an interest in Mathematics and Physics. He came third in his year at the HSC with level 1 passes in Maths, Science and General studies and level 2 in English and French. He shared the Year 6 Mathematics Prize. He does not appear in any of the STHS journals other than the yearly class names. So he rather concentrated on studies than other activities.

He commented about his early life. *I'm always interested to know what people's first vivid memories are of their life. For me, the first vivid memory is of the steam trains coming up the hill on the railway line through Oatley. And when you got off the train at Oatley Station, you walked down a ramp, and you were level with the running gear, you know, the pistons and cylinders of a steam locomotive as you walked along. And the impression you got of power and invincibility, particularly if you're a five- or six-year-old boy, just standing here hanging onto the railing and watching this train struggle up the hill.*

And

*I used to play backyard cricket at home but I was never very good at it. I also used to play rugby at school. But again, I wasn't very good at it, and I only played for one of the house teams at the school.*

After primary school, he then went to Sydney University doing a Science Degree. After his first year there he did three mathematics subjects- Applied, Pure and Mathematical Statistics. Which was then rare. He was the sole student doing an Honours year in Mathematical Statistics. He graduated with First Class Honours and the University Medal.

In 1973 he went to ANU and did a PHD but was also offered a place at Oxford to do the same degree. He wrote up his ANU work and was awarded a Master of Science as he studied at Oxford where he was awarded a PHD in 1976.

He went to Oxford via the Trans Siberian railway and visited a famous Mathematician in Moscow.

In 1974 he meet his wife Jeannie Chien Lo who had moved from Hong Kong Civil service to do a course at Oxford. They married in 1977. Jeannie worked in various Public service roles including the Prime Minister and Cabinet department.



FIG. 9. Peter and Jeannie, Oxford, 1976, when Jeannie returned to visit Peter before he headed home to Australia.



FIG. 10. *Wedding day, Hong Kong, 15 April 1977.*

Peter was interested in steam trains and also in photography where he was renowned for great photographic technique Below in Scotland.

He was also interested in aviation history and aircraft design where he accumulated significant knowledge.

Peter liked cats from his childhood and in adult life adopted them from animal shelters. He also liked birds especially Australian parrot varieties such as Galahs, rosellas, and cockatoos.

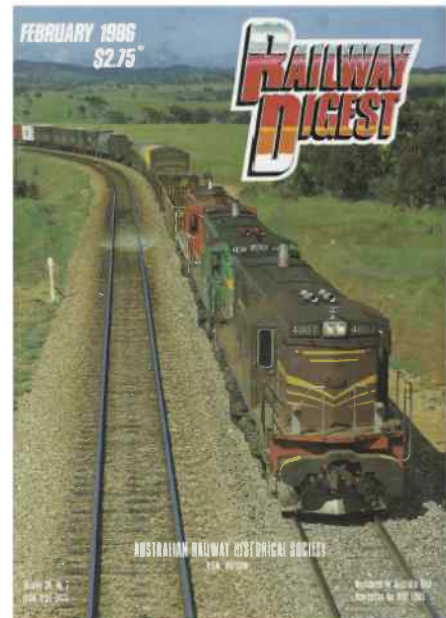
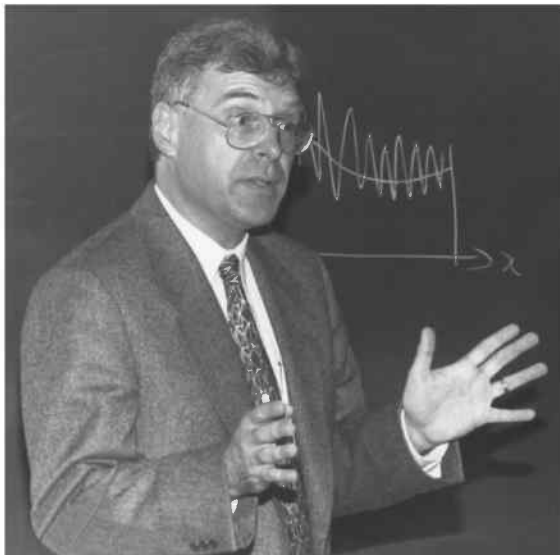


FIG. 7. *A photograph of Peter's that made the cover of "Railway Digest," published by the Australian Railway Historical Society. The photograph is of a train with three 48 Class engines and was taken by Peter in 1985 near Oolong, north of Yass, New South Wales, Australia.*



In 1976 he was a lecturer at Melbourne University but quickly moved to ANU in 1978 after a dispute about tenure at Melbourne University. He taught undergraduate and post graduate students and was described as “a very well organised and careful teacher”. He became a Professor at ANU in 1988.

He travelled a great deal and had brief stints at University of Glasgow and University of North Carolina whilst maintaining his role at ANU. In 2005 he took up a Professor of Statistics job at University of California Davis. In 2006 he also moved from ANU to Melbourne University.



At Ann Arbor Michigan 1994



Bushwalking in Scotland



Fig. 12.10 Professor Peter Hall on a visit to the National Radio Astronomy Observatory P.V. Dominici Science Operations Center, New Mexico, USA, on 12 May 1998. Photo by Miller Goss



Throughout his University career he was involved with Governments and Professional Bodies both in Australia and overseas. He was made an Officer in the Order of Australia in 2013. He had published 4 books and more than 600 research articles. He was a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science, Fellow of the Royal Society and numerous other awards throughout his career.



FIG. 19. Officer of the Order of Australia, 2013.



FIG. 17. Peter admitted as a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, 2000.

## A summary of his major Statistical achievements

He made contributions to nonparametric statistics, in particular, for curve estimation and resampling: the bootstrap method, smoothing, density estimation, and bandwidth selection.

- He worked on numerous applications across fields of economics, engineering, physical science and biological science.
- Hall also made contributions to surface roughness measurement using fractals.
- In probability theory he made many contributions to limit theory, spatial processes and [stochastic geometry](#).
- His paper "Theoretical comparison of bootstrap confidence intervals" (Annals of Statistics, 1988) has been reprinted in the *Breakthroughs in Statistics* collection.

## His awards

- 2015 Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia
- 2013 Foreign Associate, [National Academy of Sciences](#)
- 2013 Officer of the Order of Australia (OAM)
- 2011 [Australian Laureate Fellowship](#)<sup>l</sup>
- 2011 [Guy Medal](#) in Silver
- 2010 [George Szekeres Medal](#)
- 2009 Honorary Doctor of Science degree from The University of Sydney
- 2007 [Matthew Flinders Medal and Lecture](#)<sup>l</sup>
- 2000 Elected a [Fellow of the Royal Society](#) (FRS)
- 1998 Invited Speaker of the [International Congress of Mathematicians](#)
- 1996 Fellow of the [American Statistical Association](#)
- 1994 [Hannan Medal](#) of the [Australian Academy of Science](#)<sup>l</sup>
- 1990 Pitman Medal from the [Statistical Society of Australia](#)
- 1989 [Committee of presidents of Statistical Societies Award](#)
- 1987 [Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science](#)<sup>l</sup>
- 1986 [Rollo Davidson Prize, University of Cambridge](#)
- 1986 [Australian Mathematical Society Medal](#)
- 1986 [Edgeworth David Medal](#), Royal Society of New South Wales
- 1984 Fellow of [Institute of Mathematical Statistics](#)

## His books

- P. Hall; C.C. Heyde (1980): *Martingale Limit Theory and its Application*, Academic Press, New York.
- P. Hall (1982): *Rates of Convergence in the Central Limit Theorem*, Pitman, London.
- P. Hall (1988): *Introduction to the Theory of Coverage Processes*, Wiley, New York.
- P. Hall (1992): *The Bootstrap and Edgeworth Expansion*, Springer, New York.

He died in 2016

## Obituary extracts

- *Peter was a wonderful person. He was gentle, generous, passionate, enthusiastic, optimistic and very supportive.*
- *He was an exceptional scientist who made many cutting-edge and influential contributions to statistics. He was an outstanding leader, one whose enthusiasm and passion for research has been a motivation and great source of inspiration for many. His absence will leave a huge hole in the hearts of many people all over the world.*

## References

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