

# Stories of Village Life an Oral History Project

## The Stuart Town Community

Ness Hartge

Interview Transcript

27 September 2023



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## The Geurie Community



This Oral History interview was conducted by John Bayliss with Ness Hartge on 27 September 2023.

In this interview Ness discusses her family's decision to move to the village of Geurie and what she loves about the Geurie Community.

Transcript created by Simone Taylor



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*This recording created on 27 September 2023 is part of Dubbo Regional Council's oral history project 'Stories of Village Life'. Each recording contributes to the developing story of life in our region.*

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(I): Interviewer – John Bayliss

(S): Subject – Ness Hartge

**(I): Thanks for participating in our Oral history village life project today. For the benefit of our recording could you please state your full name and year of birth?**

(S): Ness Hartge, 1979

**(I): Thank you, and where do you live today, what village in Dubbo regional council do you live?**

(S): I live in Geurie

**(I): Fantastic and how long have you lived out at Geurie?**

(S): 10 - a little bit over ten years.

**(I): And just for context Geurie is about 28-30km east of Dubbo on the Mitchell Highway, between Dubbo and Wellington. Why did you chose to move to Geurie?**

(S): I am originally from the North West and West of NSW and I spent some time down in Victoria. My partner - well when we were based in Victoria he was up in this area throughout the week for his job and I was down in Victoria by myself. So we decided to move to the area, and we moved up here in 2012 and we lived not far from Geurie but sort of in between Geurie and Wellington. And when property came up for sale at Geurie I just thought it was a logical place to live, its close enough to Dubbo, its far enough away from Dubbo and the whole community was just - it just was really good. So yeah I'm originally from small towns so living in a small village just seemed like the right fit.

**(I): Wonderful. Did you think about living in Dubbo or Wellington as the bigger centres? For the other things that they offer?**

(S): Yes, at the time I was about 7 months pregnant and I just wanted somewhere to live. [laughs] So we did explore options in Dubbo, not so much Wellington, my job at the time involved a lot of travel and Wellington wouldn't have had access to childcare so much then.

But neither of us wanted to live in Town where not in town people. So to get property - the price was right at Geurie at that time.

**[0:02:55] (I): Ok, so what do you think is different about living in a smaller village, smaller township?**

(S): Umm everyone knows nearly everyone that can be a good and bad thing. [laughs] I don't know, it is probably just that fact that most people know people and everyone looks out for each other because you're all together yeah, I don't know. Like I said I've never lived in bigger towns but I just enjoy small communities.

**(I): And is there something that is unique of different about living in a smaller place and in this case Geurie?**

(S): I don't think there's anything unique, I think my sort of small villages - when we lived in Victoria we lived in a small village outside of a major like regional centre. And when I think about it know, they're both a lot the same like everyone - you knew each other you could to the pub or the club and have a beer and you could get chatting with someone. That's probably - the unique thing is probably most people know everyone.

**(I): I guess that's the special thing isn't it, that there develops a sense of community that way?**

(S): Yeah it's very easy to become part of a community in a small village if you're willing to meet new people. It's quite easy to become part of it. [laughs]

**(I): We might talk about a bit of that a bit later. For you what are some of the challenges of living in a smaller community?**

(S): Umm, probably for me with two small children, childcare is an issue. I have two year old at the moment so I come into Dubbo two days a week for him to go to childcare because obviously Geurie being a small village we don't have any childcare. The small school, although I don't find it a challenge, some people would. I quite like that it's only 25 students. I don't find there's any challenges - having lived in small places all my life. I don't see that there's any challenges living in Geurie, apart from childcare.

**(I): Umm, - from what I'm gathering you quite enjoy living Geurie?**

(S): Oh I love it. Love it, wouldn't move anywhere else. [laughs] I'd like more acres I'd like to - yeah I'd like more country but yeah, I'm not gonna leave Geurie.

**[0:05:32] (I): Wonderful. Describe Geurie to me and the streetscape and the village I guess and its building - type.**



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(S): Yeah, it's a funny little village in that there's lots of old original buildings when you come into Geurie from the Dubbo - way and you hit the main part of the street - we have an old service station, and we have car yard, and then you have lovely old original building that's currently got a cafe and a hairdresser and gift shop/homeware shop in it. But then you've got the pub which I'm told the original burnt down and it'd would've been lovely to see the street with a nice old pub in it. The one now's like a - modern brick building and then you have the old corner store which again is one of the old original buildings in the area. And when you drive around the back streets of that you can see some really old homes that would've been businesses in the original days of Geurie. I think one of them is like an old Commonwealth Bank building, before the Commonwealth Bank was the Commonwealth Bank. But then on the road up to my place there's a whole new estate gone in and there all beautiful new houses going in there. Which I don't have any issue with it, some people in the community are probably thinking they shouldn't be there, but yeah. And I mean, you drive around like we've got a beautiful hall again our school has the old original building at the front of it and the old school houses either side of it that would've been building in the day. Yeah, but then lots of newer houses, it's a real mix, it's lovely seeing the old buildings though. You can just imagine what the old buildings would have been like.

**(I): Ummm when you're driving between Dubbo to Wellington, on your left-hand side in Geurie is the railway line...**

(S): Yes

**(I): ...through year. Does the railway impact on the town at all, on the village?**

(S): No we probably have a laugh about it like over the left hand side over the railway line that's Geurie heights cause there's a bit of a hill there so Geurie locals we probably laugh about it and then the other side is just Geurie. No, look I don't think it impacts, I think we like to have a joke about it. It's good for directions, using the railway lines, like which side of the railway line are you? No were not over the railway line, yeah it's good.

**(I): So in terms of what you have in Geurie what are the amenities and facilities like?**

(S): I think there pretty good for a small village, you know from a personal point of view we have a shop, a corner store where we can get everything, we have Australia post, we have a pub a gift shop-homewares, a cafe a hairdresser, a servo, a club. We have the local swimming pool which I have heard of friends coming out from Dubbo to go to our swimming pool



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because it's lovely. We kids play ground we have a tennis court. We have basketball facilities, a skate park. I should know because my 10 year old goes there a bit. ([laughs] The hall, the race course and sports ground which is used by all different horse sports. There's public toilets. The train stops there. I think that an awesome thing for the village. I think we're well ahead of other small villages, I think.

**[0:09:30] (I): Ummm I know you mentioned about childcare is there anything else that - to complete the town in a sense, or what is offered? Is there anything else that would make life even better for you in Geurie?**

(S): I don't think so, like I - no there's nothing when I think of it - when I think Geurie would be great to have this....there's things in there that we wouldn't wanna lose like our swimming pool. I think it's great over summer for giving the kids and local families somewhere to go when it's hot. So there's things that I wouldn't want to lose but I can't think of things that we need.

**(I): Just in terms of shopping, there is the general store and the cafe and things. But do you do a major shop in Dubbo or Wellington?**

(S): I get the deliveries, they deliver to my front door even though I'm about 2ks out of town [laughs] I'll avoid a supermarket like the plague, and then if I run out of things I just grab them at the store but yeah.

**(I): Is that a general thing that a lot of people would do.....have delivery to their front door, but do their major shopping in either or Dubbo or Wellington.**

(S): Yeah for sure, like there's no - the corner store has most things but you wouldn't do your whole grocery shop there. They keep it well stocked with your essentials, if you run out of something on the weekend or through the week and you don't want to drive to Wellington or Dubbo. The store and service station also has grocery items. And frozen goods like sausages and rissoles and things that, so...

**[0:11:32] (I): Alright yep - how are you involved in the village? In what goes on, are you part the race course people, or anything else?**

(S): Oh well it's a good time to talk about that um I am currently the secretary of the Geurie Picnic Race Club,

**(I): Oh yes, great.**

(S): And I have been for about eight years I think I worked out recently. Um we put on one race meeting a year there and this year we didn't have any horses, we raced sheep instead.



And although I have horses I'm not into horse racing it's not my thing, but it's my community thing. I put this on so that the money that we make from our day goes back into keeping that sports ground - the upkeep on the sports ground for all the other things to use and we would love to get to a point where we actually have the funds to do things in our community to benefit the whole community not just the uses of the sports ground, yeah.

And I'm also - I'm think I'm the secretary treasurer of the PNC. Because again I'm like, I send my child to the school and my two year old will also go there if it's still going, um and I just believe that if you send your child to the school you should involve in the PNC, yeah so there probably my two big community things. But then happy to help out, you know...if someone puts their hand up and says they need a hand on this committee or something I can't sit on my hands [laughs]. Oh that's right I'm the vice president of the Camp Draft Club too [laughs]

**(I): Well you've plenty to occupy yourself with.**

(S): Too much

**(I): Are there lots of community groups like that, like what you're involved in?**

(S): Yeah there, there are quite a lot there's a Hall Committee.<sup>1</sup> Which the hall committee I think used to look after the pool in the original days. But the Hall Committee they help out on ANZAC day, they help us out at our race meeting and various things. There's a - we have a rodeo in Geurie and there's a committee for that. The trust which actually looks after the whole sports grounds. So they have their own committee and then that might nearly be it. Apart from the Race Club, PNC, the camp draft, yeah.

**(I): And I know there's markets they're monthly or three monthly or something?**

(S): The markets are on every - on the month were they have five Saturdays. So there's actually the markets this Saturday on the 30 September cause you've got your five Saturdays, so they vary and if it gets rained out well that gets rained out, it's not on till the next time there's five Saturdays. So the Lions Club run those, I think the Lion's Club's pretty active in Geurie, as well.

**[0:14:42] (I): Yeah, and do many - is that a way for Community groups to fundraise there, or is it more people selling their goods and plants, fruit and vegetables those things?**

(S): It's more people selling their stuff there, but we have thought about it on the PNC to have like a bric-a-brac plant store or something there, as a way to raise some money for our school

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<sup>1</sup> The Geurie Memorial Hall, is located on Narragal Street, Geurie. It is managed by a volunteer committee.





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and we couldn't get enough. It might have been, we couldn't get enough people to put their hand up to help out. Which seems to be a bit of theme across all the small little organisations in the town. But I think it's a good way for the Lion's Club to make their money like I know there BBQ there I'm sure they would charge the stall holders money, but it's mainly for people to go and sell things and the locals will go and catch up with everyone.

**(I): And when there's a race meeting or a sheep meeting [both laugh]**

(S): Sheep races

**(I): Or camp draught or whatever, do you find that the majority of the community come out and participate or is it those that that are only interested or, does it work that way that everybody goes ok where off to the races, and lets go.**

(S): It generally does and I know noticed this year we had Camp Draft in April. And I was competing as well as helping out and at the PNC ran the canteen and being in the canteen gave me a good opportunity to see, there was lots of locals that just came down to have a look, like they'd never seen it before. Our Race meeting we put on a day for our community so we have lots of activities for children, there's the standard fashions on the field. The horses were just offshoot you know to get people to come.

So this year when they took our horses off us and we decided to race the sheep, there was for a little bit our committee were like 'Oh you know, I don't know what we're going to do,' and so we decided on the sheep to do something for our community and people that wouldn't go to horse races came out for the afternoon to have a look, you know, they brought a steak sandwich, they had a bit of fun. The kids went in the footraces so it is well supported, if the communities knows there's something on they'll turn up to it. And we have our Carols, that's probably the other major event in Geurie we have Carols at the end of the year and the Lion's club do the BBQ and the school do some singing and we have sing Australia come to do that. Most locals probably turn out for that if there home, you bring a chair, you sit down in the part and you catch up with people that although you live in Geurie in the village you may not see them all year, but you see them at the Carols, so I think our community events are well supported throughout the year.

**[0:17:48] (I): Just finishing on that the ANZAC day commemoration - that's well supported?**

(S): [laughs] That is very well supported we have the hall sits on a corner over the railway line and - so every traffic that wants to head across the backroad over towards Dunedoo I guess you'd say, they have to come through there. But on ANZAC day the road is full of people. We



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have horses, we have the school marching. But that's probably the biggest one that people come down and - well I wouldn't say celebrate, shouldn't say that about ANZAC day should we....

**(I): Commemorate**

(S): Commemorate - but's always well supported and it's really lovely like. Its very old school sort of service. It's great. I love it.

**(I): Alrighty now you mentioned that your eldest child goes to school, in Geurie and your youngest will go?**

(S): Will Go

**(I): So is it just primary school?**

(S): Just primary so kinda to year 6. So then they go either to Wellington or Dubbo or away to school for high school.

**(I): And how many students would be there now?**

(S): I think we have 24 or 25.

**(I): Ok yeah, so do find that your eldest child there is enjoying that smallness of the school.**

(S): Oh he loves, he loves it. And it's really nice ever since he started there, you go there and you see the older kids, 'cause the whole schools smaller than most school classes for each year. You go there and the older kids are interacting with the younger children and vice-versa, and it's just, I don't know, it's just wonderful. But he loves it. During Covid when we had to home school for a bit, he really missed that interaction - it was fine for about the first week and then after that it just wasn't the same. So no we love our school.

**(I): Umm are the - is there any local junior sporting activities - if you were participating in say soccer you would have to come to Wellington or Dubbo is that the case for everything like that?**

(S): Yes, no there's no junior sports stuff, my son does football and we come into Dubbo for that, and cricket the same. So it's good because that also gives them the opportunity to meet new people outside their little tiny school.

**(I): Did you mention before - is there tennis court at all?**

(S): There is a tennis court, yeah.

**(I): So there are - the ovals and things, there is capacity to play here?**

(S): Yeah.



**(I): Alright, will they - will he [your son] go on to school in Dubbo or?**

(S): I haven't thought too hard about that [laughs]

**(I): It's just getting through - finishing primary [school]**

(S): [laughs] No, umm yeah look, he probably will.

**(I): And if he was, is there a school bus service into either Dubbo or Wellington...**

(S): Yes there is.

**(I): ...for higher education?**

(S): I know that there is a bus that comes into Dubbo. Well there's buses there's usually three or four of a morning lined up to do the various runs and I think there's one's that goes to Wellington as well. I'm just not sure of that.

**[0:21:10] (I): Yep ok. Ah, so a little about you, what do you do for your work?**

(S): I have a book keeping business.

**(I): Ok and is that - have you a shop front in Geurie**

(S): [laughs'] No, No Umm I don't have a shop front most of my work is done from my home office which I share with my son and my partner in their little corners as well. I'd love to have a little shop front in Geurie, but just at the moment it's easy to do it from home.

**(I): And umm - so with book keeping that would be both perhaps local clients as well as clients in the broader region?**

(S): I have clients all over Australia from Birdsville to Perth and back again.

**(I): So in terms of online connectivity and those sorts of things, are you well supported that way, is that something that's not a problem.**

(S): Yes we are well supported for a long time we just had the normal ADSL internet and then we NBN. The NBN tower I can see from my office. But you can also get satellite internet and everything yeah. That's essential - I couldn't run my business without good internet.

**(I): No ok, and I guess that helps with whatever your partner might be doing and also the kids with their schooling as well.**

(S): Yeah, yeah cause I know at school they use the internet quite a bit there all always on iPad and computers doing lots of things. [laughs]

**(I): Yes very different.**

(S): Yes very different.

**(I): Alright you did mention that there was some home schooling during Covid [Covid-19]<sup>2</sup> how do you think the village coped during Covid, was that something that closed it down?**

(S): Umm look it did, I think it did close us down. I live on the edge of Geurie and out of town and I had a new born [baby] as well as home schooling, so I just didn't go anywhere. And I imagine there was a lot of people in our community that just didn't go anyway. We have a lot of elderly people in our community so I guess they would have been fearful too, so they stayed home. You know, places like the pub which was the meeting place for people, you go on Friday afternoon to catch up - you'd go down to have meal. That wasn't open so - and that's really struggling to come back. Whether people just go used to not going out or not doing things. Yeah - it was really hard, well I think it was hard on every community but I think it was hard on our small community too.

**[0:24:10] (I): You mentioned the pub maybe needing just to get back to its pre-covid clientele and support, are the businesses have they come back well? I know that the little gift shop I think that's new since Covid is that correct?**

(S): Yes, did she start in Covid? I can't remember, she's a good friend of mine, but her business has come back, umm yeah, which has been well supported and the cafe, like the little coffee shop next to her well it's sort of started up after Covid and it's real little asset to our community, somewhere nice to go and sit - safely off the highway were sit, yeah. And the shop, they stayed open during Covid I think. But I think it's back to - it's just things like the pub and the club where I think people are just - they're a little bit slow to come back to, even though we've sort of been out of Covid for a bit.

**(I): Yeah ok, the other things that affect us out here of course is particularly drought. Do you notice that on your own property, I guess water and things for yourself, have you noticed impacting on the village at all? Previously - it's getting drier and drier at the moment.**

(S): Yeah and again that goes - when you look at places like the pub and club and the gift shop this time around people don't have the money too just spend. So I think given the conditions that were currently in and look like heading into another bitter dry I think those business will suffer. It's really funny with the race club we could continue racing through the drought although our track was very hard but it was great for the community because you got lot of

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<sup>2</sup> 'Covid' Refers to the Covid-19 Pandemic that occurred over 2020 and 2022. The discovery of a deadly new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in 2020 known as 'Covid 19' saw a worldwide pandemic. The pandemic that lead to lockdowns and restrictions on the movement and interaction of people across Australia.



the farmers and people off the farm for the day, they could come along to the races. They could bring their families and have a really lovely day and not worry about what was going on back on the farm. Yeah so that's - but I think where in for a bit of tough times.

**[0:26:41] (I): Its important isn't it those social gatherings because people need to get away from what is really on their minds all the time things that you can't do anything if you can't make it rain...**

S: [laughs]

**(I): ...yeah so it's important that the race course and all the other community things function. So people can get together and I guess talk about where you're up to, or not talk about it but at least gather together.**

(S): Yeah, exactly and it's really nice - drought effects everyone, but I think it really effects males more - especially if they're a farmer. That's a lot of wait to carry when things are completely out of your control. So that was really nice to see that local farming families really support our races. As an excuse to get off the farm for one day.

**(I): Yes, yeah have you had impacted by fires at all in the last few years?**

(S): No, no touch wood Geurie's been pretty good, which is a bit - you know the highway passes through Geurie there's a lot of flammable material on the side of the road so it's always a worry in summertime of people driving on the highway and dropping a cigarette butt out the window ...

**(I): Is there a rural fire brigade?**

(S): We do have a rural fire brigade which they're quite well supported, we have one fire engine. They do, at Christmas time they go round and they dress up and Santa and through lollies out to all the kids, so it's really good. Geurie has a lovely community Facebook page and so fire brigade will put on there, where starting here and were doing it at about 2'o'clock and yeah, the kids love it.

**(I): Yeah, - in the 10 years has the village changed much or a lot?**

(S): It has in that the new - like towards my end of town the whole subdivision has gone in, and there's a lot of new houses. But that other than that it really hasn't - umm no. Apart from new houses but that's neither a good nor a bad thing.

**(I): Umm has there been a lot of change in terms of technology, roadworks, connectivity that way improvement bridges all of those things - has that - something that you notice or it doesn't change?**



(S): I don't think it changes umm now I'm trying to think - well after we had the floods all the roads were pretty bad so but's there no new roads being put in. No, not in terms of me, and it doesn't affect me.

**[0:29:56] (I): The impacts of the floods, you think about rivers flooding and things but that's not the case in Geurie necessarily - the conditions of the roads would have impacted on the local community in access and things but was that a big thing for Geurie?**

(S): I know of people in the lower areas of Geurie because the streets aren't curb and guttering so the water just flows off the road and if there's no - if the drains aren't cleared out well then the water just finds its own way. So when we'd have heavy downpours of rain there was people who had water up to their door. I'm not sure if anyone had water through there [house]. We're a long way from the river so weren't effected by the river water but it's just storms, and yeah just the constant rain and conditions of the road. We've got about - a kilometre of dirt up to our drive and yeah I wouldn't want any more than that, [laughs] it got quite bad, you know. Have to out and rum my child to school and yeah bundle down the drive way.

**(I): In the 10 years have you noticed the population growing?**

(S): I think it has, umm like I think there is a housing shortage in Geurie, lots of people wanna live there. The new area that's gone in the houses there are all occupied and I think it's a good thing. I can't like - especially when I look back 10 years ago I can't say that there was a lot of empty houses. But I just feel that now there's a lot more people.

**(I): And that new housing area is that younger families or just people building a new home?**

(S): Bit of mix - there are some younger families, but then there's middle aged people who live in Dubbo - not live in Dubbo work in Dubbo, who wanna live in Geurie or the other way vice-versa. But there are a few young people that have moved there so the same thing, they might work in Wellington, or one works in Dubbo so Geurie is a good spot 'cause it's in the middle of them. But there's also a few new faces that are enrolling children in the schools. So yeah, it's a bit of a mix, it's a good mix.

**(I): And you've touched on the fact that there are some newer businesses in town over the last few years. Is there something - I know talked what we might want - what facilities and amenities, but is there something that you would love to see, like a butchery or something like that?**



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(S): [Laughs] Oh pie in the sky stuff. Oh I would love a butcher, I'd love - like it'd be great to have somewhere, where you could get all your - do all your weekly shopping, like fresh fruit and vegetables and things like that but that's - I'd love a butcher though. [Laughs]

**[0:33:12] (I): But what about children, is there something that you would love to see, like it's great that you've got a swimming pool and it sounds like there's amenities for kicking the footy around or playing tennis and things is there something that you think the kids would love to have?**

(S): I can't think of anything because it's so - there's a lot for them to do. They ride their bikes around there's some really good mountain biking tracks on the edge of Geurie at the reserve so the kids can ride up there, but we had our playground equipment was upgraded in the last 5 years, so with a toddler I can go down there and he's happy to wonder around and play, and the skate park and the basketball facilities. There all open and available for everyone to use so prior to that there probably wasn't much, but now the kids get down there on their scooters and skateboards and have a bit of fun. So I don't think so. No.

**(I): You mentioned the elderly members of the community is there a - what are they called - a retirement village or anything like, and then in general is there care available the elderly members of the community?**

(S): No there's no retirement village as such. When you look around and drive around the village you see some of our older residents out walking or on their mobility scooter so they must be well supported to live in their own home as they age. But no specific facilities.

**(I): Ok, yeah just the normal support through government, and coming out here.**

(S): Yeah local area nursing and things like that.

**[0:35:18] (I): Ah, do you or the community have the opportunity to contribute to the change that might be required, is there engagement with the local council, the councillors that represent you and that part of the world? Is that a big thing for the community or people just get on with their lives?**

(S): Well a bit of both, a bit of A and a bit of B. I know and I'm not very up to speed to with it all but I know there is people from our community that are like the voices of our community, they can be involved with council to take any concerns back to council. But then there's also a lot of people that just get on with life. I know some people have issues with the town not having curb and guttering and it's like then you get the older originals are like 'why would we want that? It's been fine.' Yeah, and I know that the council do have consultation on different things, they can be down at the shop or at the hall and they have different meetings. But



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specifically I don't get involved in it, unless I really have to. But there is members of the community that are involved with them.

**(I): Sure I've always thought that the silos would've been a really nice part of that silo's artwork trail, is that something that the community talks about at all?**

(S): It is, it's on our Facebook page. No I guess this probably is - Geurie just gets on, and just - if somebody thinks they wanna to that, then there's a couple of people who've taken it on board and spoken to the right people to see about how we go about getting something, because you're right the silos are right on that highway there and they'd be perfect for something it's just yeah. The wheels are in motion for something like that. It might just take a bit of time.

**(I): I guess that is sort of similar to the development of the pool, community driven?**

(S): Yep, yeah

**(I): So what's your understanding of that process when it was happening?**

(S): So I came along after that had all happened [laughs]. But I know when we first moved to Geurie it was still run by the community and not so much a council thing, and then the council took over the running of the pool and have done for a few years. And I believe now they wanna but it back into - the council don't wanna run it anymore they want someone else to run it. And I'm not sure how our communities going with that, haven't heard any chat on the Facebook page. [laughs]

**(I): But I do now that the community hall is hands off - it's just run by the community.**

(S): It is yeah, and it is looked after by the community - the Hall Committee look after it. It's available for hirer, but again it's a lovely old building, one of the original buildings.

**[0:38:36] (I): Yeah, is there anything in the 10 years that's struck you being 'oh that's really Geurie.' Nowhere else would that happen [Ness laughs] is there anything like that?**

(S): Umm Tiger Paxton and the ANZAC day ceremony. I just think some days I just look and think this is real Geurie, yeah. It sort of really sums it [up] - it's very low key, it's very casual umm he does a wonderful job emceeding that. But that whole ANZAC day and then getting the different speakers that come and speak and they talk about various people from the area that went away to war and we had Nathan Byron who is an opera singer - he's actually our neighbour's son and he came back and he sang one year. It was like amazing, it's like where





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else - here is the gentleman who he sings overseas and here he is in little old Geurie. Yeah, our ANZAC service is definitely - it's very Geurie.

**(I): You mentioned Tiger Paxton, there are good number of local families that go back, 3-4 or more generations? Are they involved at all, are they active in the community?**

(S): Yeah they are, they are. And they're old stalwarts of the community and they wanna help out - like in our race club we've had Tiger sing at our race meeting, they do the national anthem before the cup. But then his son Ross and Karen there on our committees and their daughter she's away at Uni at the moment but I'm sure when she's home she helps out on things so it's those whole generations of people. But they do get in and they help out, or they support - you know they come and buy a steak sandwich or a beer and, yeah.

**(I): Yeah, anything else you'd like to mention that I haven't quizzed you on, things I might have missed 'cause I've tried to not get to board but is there something else that you think again that is unique or special about Geurie to talk about, to get on the record?**

(S): Nothing specific but it's just - I think small communities are what you get out of it, what you put it. There are probably that are in Geurie that don't contribute or help out or go to the pub, or the club, or the shop, and that's fine. But small communities are what you make it and if you chip in and you support local, and you buy local and you do things locally and you say hi to people, it's just the best. You know, and before we spoke and I said we'd been there for 10 years for not a local yet, but it doesn't take much to become a local you just have to be nice, join in. Yeah but it's pretty unreal, I like Geurie

**[0:41:54] (I): I think it's a pretty good note to end on. Just in the formal part of this, thank you again for you time today. Your story will form part of Dubbo Regional Council's Oral History project. This was interview was conducted by John Bayliss on Wednesday 27th Sep 2023. Thank you again Ness,**

(S): Thank you