

## **My name is Joan Halls nee Roles.**

I was born in England on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1922. In 1933 I came out to the Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra under the Child Migrant scheme. Early in 1939 I took up a job as a domestic at a large dairy farm in the south west. There were three men working on the property plus a grandfather and the boss. It was a very pleasant job and I was very happy.

I remember the Sunday morning when war was declared. A sudden gloom descended on this once happy place. Suddenly the boss joined up then the workmen, leaving only the 80 year old grandfather and a married man.

Previously on my afternoons off I had been learning to ride a horse, which I must admit took some months to do. With the onset of war all the available workers were gone and the old boss was getting worried. One day I plucked up courage and asked if I could help on the land because domestics were easier to find. He gave me two weeks trial and I heard no more from him. I loved working in the open air. There were many aching muscles to begin with but they soon hardened up.

There were 55 cows on the property, calves as well, also a couple of flocks of sheep and some breeding pigs.

Over the following years life settled down and I learned to muster cattle, feed calves, even got up the courage to relieve a "calves bloat" by stabbing it and relieving him though it took a while. Helped one old cow to calve and delivered a couple of lambs.

I nearly came to grief under the rear end of a large shorthorn bull when I went to rescue him from a swollen creek, and my leg was stuck under him. A jab with a large stick which was sailing past made him flinch and my leg was free. Sadly we got him out, but he died. We had to do our own veterinary work as vets were nonexistent. The sheep needed crutching before lambing. Later the lambs had to be tailed and the little rams had to be de-sexed, a job I did not like.

The cows had to be milked twice a day and the cream went to the butter factory twice a week. The health of the stock was my job and riding the horse daily made that job easier.

I stayed on this property till the war finished. Some months earlier we had heard that our real boss had died in a prisoner of war camp and the property now belonged to his younger brother who was a difficult man to deal with and now that men were available I was no longer needed. It was not a happy time and when I went on holiday I did not return. During the war years when I went to Perth on holiday I received many white feathers from different old biddies for not being in uniform, so it was then I joined up in the Army as a private. I was offered an officers place in the Land Army but I had had enough of that I went to Hollywood Hospital and had a job in the diet kitchen. A very busy job as all the prisoners of war were being hospitalised.

My future husband came to work as a corporal cook before being discharged and once I saw him that was that and we were married on Christmas Eve in 1946. That was nearly 58 years ago and luckily we are still together. We have two children six grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

So endeth my saga.