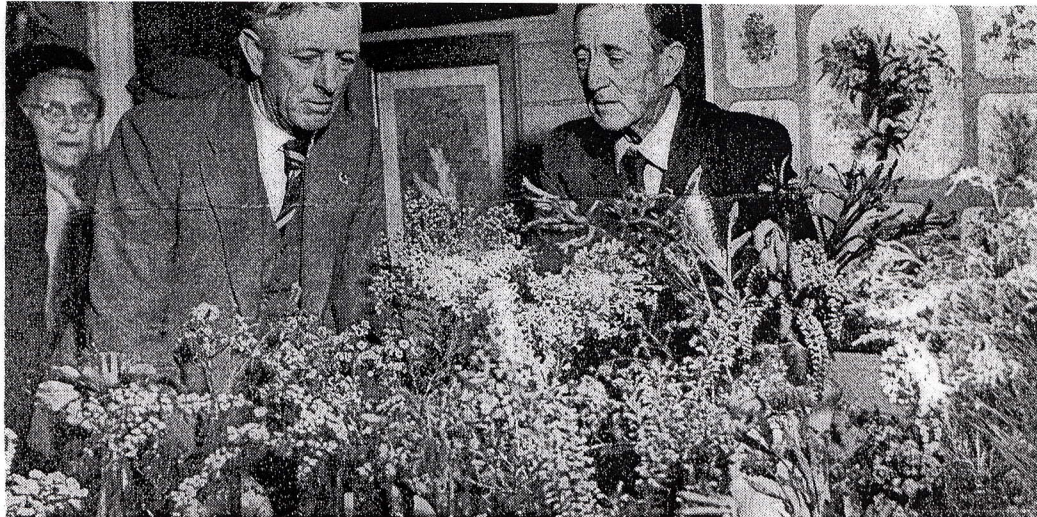


*Mr. C. W. D'Alton and his botanist brother, Mr. James D'Alton, cast a keen eye over show exhibits. Floral paintings by the late Miss D'Alton form background.*



*This is the little hall at Hall's Gap, Victoria, where, each year, Australia's premier wild flower show is held. It draws visitors from every State.*



*Each year, this modest country hall proves*

## **A FLORAL MAGNET**

*for lovers of wildflowers  
from every State and from overseas  
as well. It's at Hall's Gap,  
Victoria, gateway to the Grampians.*

**By OLIVE MELLOR**


**T**HIS spectacular flower show even attracts overseas tourists, who are fascinated by the delicate, quiet beauty of Australia's natural flora.

This is an amazing triumph for a tiny township, because for many years Australia's premier wild flower show was held in Melbourne. It was held usually in the Melbourne Town Hall, but later shifted to the St. Kilda Town Hall, and then to Hawthorn, where it died out four years ago.

Hall's Gap held its first wild flower show in 1938. By 1952 it was attracting more than 5000 people, and the total should be even higher this year.

The tiny township has a geographical advantage, of course, for it lies at the very foot of the Grampians — that magical area of rugged mountain peaks and boulder-strewn uplands, where, acre upon acre, wild flowers flourish as far as the eye can see.

In spring, the Grampians are a glorious splash of color. Wherever you look are masses of thryptomene,



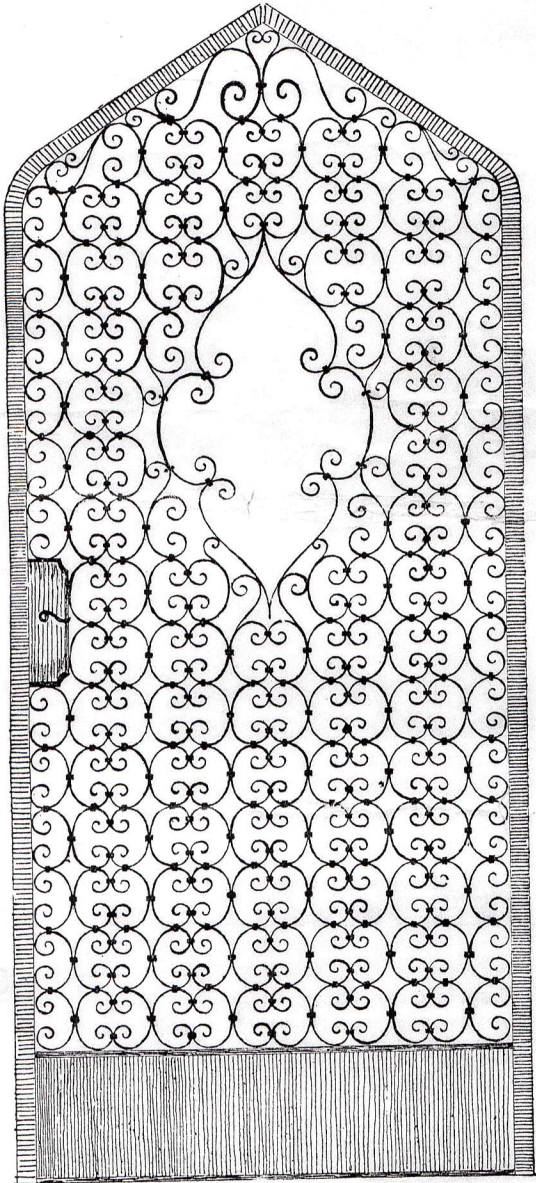
# CASLAKE

Silver Medallist Franco-British Exhibition, London, 1908

## METAL CRAFTSMEN

42 MACFARLAN ST., SOUTH YARRA. S.E.1

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WROUGHT : IRON : FLYWIRE : DOOR

DESIGNS : SUBMITTED : TO : SUIT  
THE : PARTICULAR : CHARACTER  
OF : YOUR : HOME

hakea, wattle, heath, native honeysuckle and calytrix, sprinkled with everlasting flowers, the fringe lily, bulbine and many species of native orchids.

Hall's Gap caters for holidaymakers who like to spend a quiet time away from the more populous resorts, and to whom the study of native flora is of particular interest.

The locality has an interesting historical background. It was discovered accidentally by a cattle drover, C. B. Hall — not the bush-ranger Ben Hall, as many people erroneously believe.

Hall was taking a mob of 1300 mixed cattle from Monaro to Melbourne. At Goulburn he heard the market was glutted, so altered course to look for suitable grazing country. In his wanderings, he crossed the Campaspe and Loddon Rivers, but finding the best country already taken up pushed on to the Avoca and Wimmera Rivers.

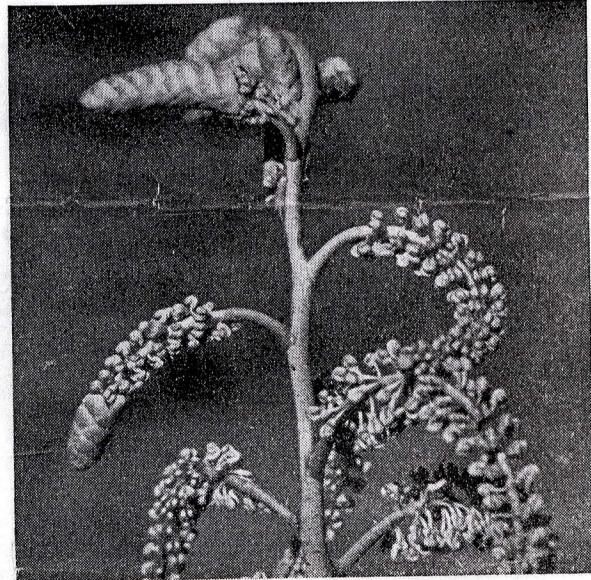
Eventually he found himself in the heart of the Grampians, and fascinated by the inspiring scenery began to explore for the sheer joy of discovery. And so he came upon the fertile valley of Fyan's Creek, where he took up his holding. Today, this spot is Hall's Gap.

Another name has had a marked influence on the district. In 1860, there arrived in the district a family named D'Alton, who were destined to play a major part in the development of the area. Botanically-minded, they quickly realised the beauty of the native flora, and, in some instances, its unique nature. They set to work to collect and classify the wild flowers of the Grampians, working in close collaboration with the staff of the Botanic Gardens in Melbourne, and the great exploring botanists of the day.

The orchid *Thelymitra d'Altoni*, a species with a single spiral leaf and blue flowers, was named after Mr. Charles W. D'Alton, and a shrub, *Cryptandra d'Altoni*, was named after his uncle, Mr. St. Eloy D'Alton, the Dimboola engineer who was responsible for the water scheme in this mountainous district.

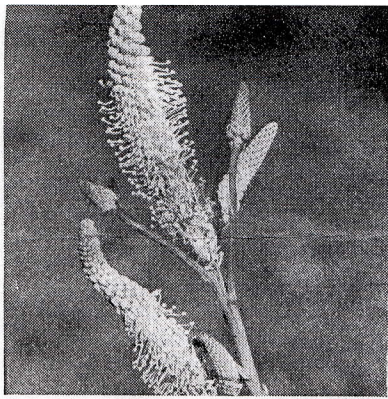
The Misses D'Alton devoted their time to painting the flowers of the district, and Mrs. Henrietta D'Alton became famed abroad for the beauty and accuracy of her pictures. One collection was shown in Paris, London, Chicago and Calcutta, and won many awards. Mr. James D'Alton is today president of the very active Hall's

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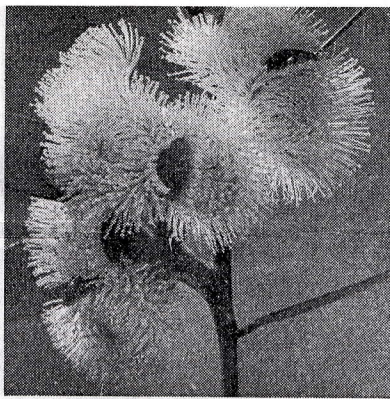


*Grevillea Leucoptis, from Western Australia.*

*With an armful of Thryptomene, five-year-old Margaret Black, of Hall's Gap, introduces Gwen Dickson, of Elsternwick, Victoria, to a table laden with spider orchids, greenhoods, sun orchids and candles.*



The Flame Grevillea (*Grevillea excelsior*) was flown from Perth.



The Eucalyptus *preissiana* produces this fine head of bloom.



Common heath, *Epacris impressa*, flourishes round Hall's Gap.

Gap Tourist and Progress Association.

This is the setting of the annual wild flower show. At the last show in September, 1952, bus loads of people poured in from Melbourne, Ararat, Bendigo, Hamilton, Horsham, Inglewood, Maryborough and Stawell (where there is a very active branch of the Field Naturalists' Society). There were also many visitors from other States.

During the show, the small hall is packed with wild flower specimens. The rarer species are represented by small vases of flowers, but those that flourish by the acre in the surrounding countryside are there in lavish armloads of bloom. Last year, more than 100 species were represented.

Mrs D. Dean, of Hall's Gap, arranged the stage as a natural garden, even adding a kangaroo and emu to the scene. Against a background of tree ferns were attractive natural arrangements of Blackboy flowers (*Xanthorrea Australis*), heath (*Epacris impressa*), swamp heath (*Sprengelia incarnata*), Bendigo wax flower (*Eriostemon obovalis*), Showy Bauera (*Bauera sessiliflora*) wattles (*Acacia myrtifolia*, *A. rhetinodes*), Shrubby Velvet Bush (*Lasiopetalum dasyphyllum*) and *Pultenea*.

Mr. J. A. Gray, of Wail Nursery in the Little Desert, sent a very fine collection of native flowers that he had grown in his nursery. They are native to widely-separated districts, some coming from Western Australia. His collection included *Grevillea lavandulacea*, *Chorizema cordatum* and *C. dixonii*, *Boronia pilosa*, *Lhotzkia alpestris* and *Swainsonia procumbens*.

Mr. D. Hately, of Bellellen, near Hall's Gap, showed

a good display of seedling plants he had raised, the eucalypts being particularly worthy of note.

One of the most interesting displays was sent by air from Perth. This was a collection of West Australian wild flowers from Messrs. Frapes, of Perth. It arrived in good condition and gave an even wider interest to this truly Australian show.

The specimens included Kangaroo Paws, Smoke Bush, *Hibiscus huegelii*, Geraldton wax flower, Feather flower, native honeysuckle, several *Grevillea*, *Isopogon* and a beautiful bowl of the delicate blue *Leschenaultia*.

A table of orchids and other small flowers of the district made a particularly attractive exhibit. Among the flowers on this table were bowls of orchids including the Fringed Spider Orchid (*Caladenia dilata*), the Wax-lip Orchid (*Glossodia major*), Pink Fingers (*Caladenia carnea*), Sun Orchid (*Thelymitra*). Small bowls of Native Violets (*Viola hederacea*) and Candles (*Stackhousea monogyna*) were displayed among them.

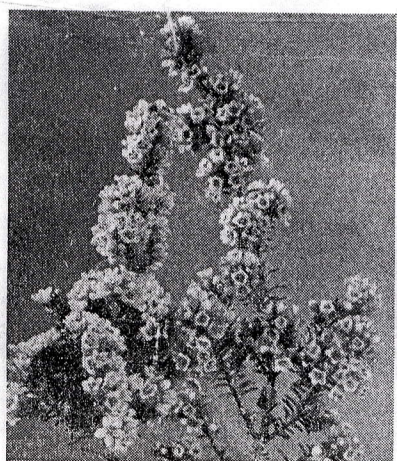
The mass display was largely of flowers gathered in the district. — *Thryptomene calycina*, *Acacia myrtifolia* and *A. rhetinodes*, *Prostanthera denticulata* and *P. rotundifolia*, *Epacris impressa* and *E. paludosa*, *Correa speciosa*, *Calytrix sullivanii*, *Dodonea viscosa*, *Astroloma conostephioides*, *Lasiopetalum dasyphyllum*, *Leptospermum scoparium*, *Helichrysum* and *Boronia pinnata* in abundance.

*Conospermum Mitchellii*, one of the rarer flowers shown, is a plant confined to the Grampians district.

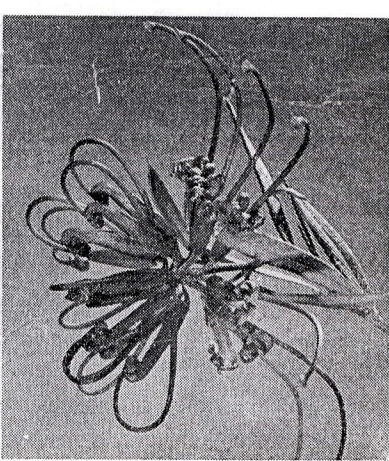
A Victorian posy showed that our native flowers can be used to advantage in floral work. The flowers used in it were Swamp Heath, *Thryptomene*, *Boronia pinnata* and Showy Bauera.



It's *Banksia ornata* — but you'd probably know it as honeysuckle.



*Micromyrtus ciliatus* is densely covered with attractive blossoms.



*Grevillea punica* would make a fine ornament for any lady's hat.