



AUSTRALIAN ROUND DANCE ASSOCIATION INC.



~ Newsletter ~

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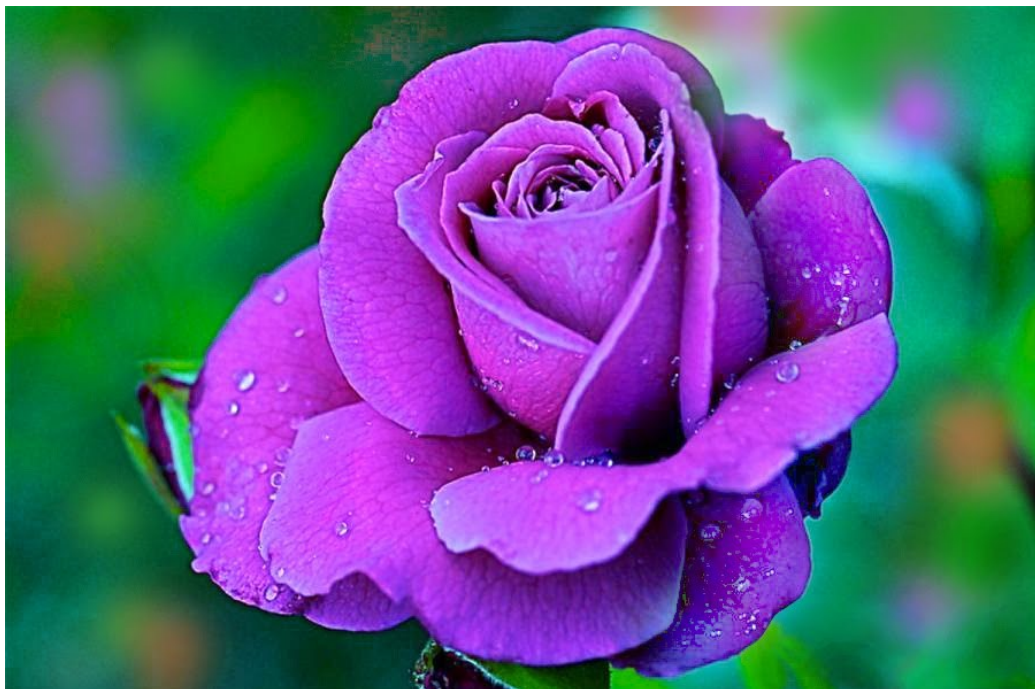
VALE

Ella Theresa Whyte

30/09/1932 - 10/12/2025

Life Member of ARDA Inc.

Once, Twice, Three Times a Lady





VALE

ELLA THERESA WHYTE

30/09/1932 - 10/12/2025

Life Member of the Australian Round Dance Association Inc.

My tribute and farewell to dear Ella. Once, Twice, Three times a Lady.

I met Ella Whyte (nee Barker) in 2003; the year I started learning round dancing; the year I joined the RDAV Inc. and attended my first RDAV AGM. (I was smitten by rounds I watched being danced at my square dance club.)

At the conclusion of that meeting my hand had somehow raised itself and I was appointed Editor of Around Rounds. Without the assistance of the former Editor, Tammy, I would not have held this position for the many years I did.

Back to dear Ella. I, along with many others had the utmost respect and love for this 'pocket rocket' - the first lady of round dancing. It wasn't until a couple of years later I became a member of Sunnyside Rounds. I diverse, so will get back on track.

When the world, including Australia, was taken by square dancing and round dancing, Ella and husband Ron Whyte (dec'd.) started their first club 'Swing Side Dance' at their home, Wickham Lodge. I believe Wickham Lodge was a nursery as Ella and Ron were passionate about gardening and the dance craze meant they needed to build a dance studio and later added a reception section. When this venue was destroyed by fire they moved to 61 Pietro Road and there in the hall/dance studio, within walking distance from their house, both square and round dancing was held several evenings of every week and over the weekends. My friend Howard, tells how the long driveway would have several hundred young folks lined up each Saturday, just waiting to dance the night away. Ron was the square dance Teacher/Caller and Ella the round dance Teacher/Cuer. "Sunnyside Lodge" as 61 Pietro Road was named, also became the name of Ella's round dance club. Sunnyside Rounds operated on a Monday, Thursday evening and Sunday afternoon. Sunday afternoon always finished with a meal and most always Ella's tasty homemade scones.

When the Australian National Square Dance Conventions started Ella and Ron were asked to demonstrate and teach a round dance. Back then, dances were not cued. Dancers were taught the figures and danced each dance by memory.

Ella and Ron danced and once this 'dance seed' was planted, round dancing grew to another level. Ella and Ron travelled down south to Hobart, Tasmania many times to teach the figures, coach and encourage the dancers.

Cont. over the page ...

VALE

ELLA THERESA WHYTE

30/09/1932 - 10/12/2025 cont'd



By now, a list had been created and said 'list' was edited at the round dance meeting held in June, 1976 at the Hobart ANSDC. What we now call the National Dance List (NDL). Also at that same meeting it was minuted congratulations were extended to Ella and Ron on being invited to attend the 1976 NSDC, in the USA to cue and teach at the round dance sessions. What an honour for Ella, Ron and round dancing 'down under'..

Ella and Ron presented Blue, Blue Day [Winter, J&W] 1976 Ph II TS, in Hobart

In 1977 it was agreed to hold a dance session at each future ANSDC, where each Australian State/Territory could present a round dance of their choice.

At the 1978 ANSDC in Perth, WA, the first of what we now call the 'showcase session' commenced. Representing Tasmania and dancing their first showcase were Kaye and Barry Chandler, Hobart, and they proudly danced Wildflowers [Foust, B&B] 1977 Ph II TS.

Ella & Ron programmed the rounds for the ANSDC Launceston 1981; Hobart 1989. In Hobart 2012, Ella programmed the rounds. I assisted Ella with the computer input and was one of the presenters.

Victoria nominated Two Steppin' Texas Blue [Weiss, C&S] TS Ph II+2+1.

In Bendigo, Vic for the 2016 ANSDC, Ella again programmed the round dance program, with the assistance of C Wegmann.

Ella was devastated when on 30th January 1993, 'Ron danced on alone'.

To keep going or close down?

Ella told me, when I was preparing an article for Around Rounds, that this was the biggest and possibly hardest decision she had to make. Alone, could she do it; was she strong enough to 'dance in two pair of shoes'? Hence why I referred to Ella as a 'pocket rocket'.

Ella's passion for dancing, both squares and rounds, gave her the strength to go on alone. Ella's passion for teaching and encouraging together with her love for everyone and, with the support of her 'four legged friends', ensured Sunnyside Rounds and Square dancing continued at Sunnyside Lodge. With the support of close friends Ella kept the square dancing active until about 10 years ago.

Those who danced with Ella, visited or attended the RDAV Spring Festivals will have their special memories of Ella entering the dance room with two of her beloved four legged friends, racing to get into their baskets and sleep the night away - at Ella's feet.

Over many years, Ella held the position of President and Vice President of the Round Dance Association of Victoria Inc. At one point of my time on the management committee I raised the matter of a Criteria for Life Membership. Ella was horrified at the notion that Life Memberships could be handed out to 'just anyone'. I assured Ella that was not why I wanted such a Criteria set in place. There are two special ladies deserving of such an award - Ella and Patricia Saunder. They both received Life Membership for their lifetime of loyalty, commitment and love for Round Dancing. Well done Ladies.



VALE

ELLA THERESA WHYTE

30/09/1932 - 10/12/2025 cont'd.

Christmas at Sunnyside Lodge. When my four grandies were younger, I took them to see both inside Ella's home. I will never know how, Ella managed to turn both her home and dance hall into the most magical Christmas display possible, including Santa's train.

Every organisation seeks to find different ways to raise funds, ie. funds to help cover the cost of staging the Spring Festival. Discussions led to a family day and Ella hastened to offer her gardens and dance hall for such an event. I believe we had at least three of these super fun days at Ella's and again, my grandies talk fondly of playing croquet on the manicured lawns and surrounded by the beautiful garden, More wonderful memories.

Back in 2012 at the last Hobart ANSDC, Ella was able to attend and stayed in the Woolstore Apartments as did Warwick, Paula, Helen and Christopher. After each evening session the six of us sat in front of an open fire, in a wonderful restaurant and listened to Ella's stories.

The topic of our 'evenings with Ella' is raised at every ANSDC we attend. Our biggest regret? We did not record Ella's memories, as they were absolutely wonderful and we hold dear that time spent with Ella.

It was Ella who encouraged me to learn to cue, create choreography and 'gently insisted' I should start a round dance club and teach. It was Ella who telephoned me a few years ago and talked for almost two hours. Thank you for that so very important call Ella.

Everyone who knew Ella will remember her for her

- generous hospitality ... ring the doorbell and out came the flour and scones were ready with your cuppa.
- overnight or regular accommodation
- her gentle, but persuasive way of making a point
- never raising her voice
- dances such as Laurann [Preskitt] WZ Ph IV+2 & Castles & Kings [Slater] WZ Ph IV
- her joy and passion for her garden
- her unending love for her family
- her unending love for every four legged or winged creature
- for a lifetime of dancing, teaching and cueing *So we could enjoy ourselves.*

Rest now Ella ... your journey with us is over and we are the fortunate ones.

Once, Twice, Three times a Lady

Sincere condolences are offered to all Ella's family and friends
together with our thanks for allowing us all to be part of her amazing life.

Miss me, but let me go.

'ROUND UP'

Hi fellow ARDA Inc. members,

This is a very small ARDA Newsletter, albeit a very important one.

It has sadness and also it has some joy.

I am sad as when the deadline came and went, my inbox was empty.

I did promise another ARDA Newsletter prior to Christmas however I was not expecting it to be full of sadness.

Not only the passing of dear Ella, but the sadness of members who 'danced on ahead' during this year.

Our thoughts are with all our members and committee who have had every reason to be saddened by the loss or illness of loved ones.

Please accept our sincere wishes that 'tomorrow is a better day'.



QUEENSLAND

ROUNDS BY THE SEA 2026.... Save the dates ...

When: Friday 15th, Saturday 16th, Sunday 17th May 2026.

Where: Coolum Civic Centre, 2 Park Street, Coolum, Qld.

I hear tell Paula is recovering well following surgery to her knee. We are wishing you the very best Paula and an end to the pain and disappointment of not being able to dance.

This is the time Nev and Bev carry out their annual Turtle Expedition and Research and we wish them well as they trudge along the beaches throughout the night in an effort to protect the precious unborn.



Hear Ye!

Your association is now fully incorporated.

Australian Round Dance Association Inc.

This is a result of your hard working Committee.



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

I hear Les and Anne Tulloch SA, are heading over to the USA in 2026 to attend the ROUNDALAB Convention and also to receive a certificate for their 30 year teaching Award. *Congratulations Les and Anne.*

Also heard on the grapevine that a committee has been finalised to take SARDA into 2026. Well done to the new members and very, very sincere thanks to those people who, after many years, have decided to take a break. Well done and THANK YOU ... Monica & Terry and Terri and Ralph.

'ROUND UP'

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Looking for somewhere to go in June 2026? Why not consider WA? Marilyn Van Sam-beeck is Convenor for the 50th WA State Convention and Marilyn would just love to have some more round dancers make the dash across the Nullarbor.



KINTYRE Rounds (Carol S) will be dancing 'in the daylight' in 2026. We are going to see if daytime is more appealing to folks plus a change to Tuesday afternoon. As of Tuesday 27th January, KINTYRE will be dancing from 1.00 to 3.00 pm Werribee Masonic Hall, Werribee. Fortnightly.



A gentle reminder from Secretary Bev... If you have registered to cue at the ANSDC, Hobart 2026 and your registration has been accepted, you will have received an email asking you to list the dances you are confident to cue and have a legal copy of the music. Have you sent done this list? Deadline is 31/12/2025 Paula A and Helen H are our programmers for 2026. As rounds programmer for 2025, Bev is the PAC. I have no doubts Paula and Helen will do a great job.



GENERAL

Thank you to all the States/Territories who submitted dances for the 2026 Showcase and Intermediate sessions at the 66th ANSDC. You should have received an email from ARDA. NO, then panic! YES, then *thank you*.

General reminder from me

The ARDA Annual General Meeting will be held in Hobart, during the ANSDC. PLEASE attend. Up for election in 2026 are the positions of PRESIDENT and TREASURER.

FINALLY on behalf of the Management Committee

*Thank you for your continuing support to both ARDA and the Management Committee and may YOUR Christmas be a time of HAPPINESS and LOVE and shared with family and/or friends and let us all wish for a better year in 2026. Sincerely Editor Carol S.
ps. I did set up my Editor gmail however I do not have time to enter all the ARDA emails, so thank you Christopher for coming to my rescue. I haven't even sent Christmas Cards!!!!*

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