

## I survived a 'Week of Walling in Tasmania'

by Geoff Duggan, Master Craftsman, Landscape Planning Officer, Mount Annan Botanic Garden, Botanic Gardens Trust, Sydney, NSW

It all started with an invitation to come to Tasmania by Eleanor Bjorksten, one of a group of women dry stone wallers from the central Tasmanian town of Oatlands, through our mutual interest in the craft and the network that is forming through the DSWAA, of which I am a Committee member. The invitation was to coincide with Heritage Tasmania's 'Saving Our Stones' program of events being held in Oatlands in November 2007. For my part, this involved building a sculptural installation in the grounds of the historic and impressive Callington Mill, giving a walk and talk to members of Heritage Tasmania and describing the construction process, historic, cultural, aesthetic and environmental values of dry stone walls and their significance in the landscape. Following this, I was to examine three Tasmanian dry stone wallers under the guidelines of the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain's accreditation scheme. Then on to Deloraine to conduct a two-day dry stone walling workshop on the local basalt and dolerite of the region.

Arriving in Launceston, I headed toward the picturesque Meander Valley to Deloraine to prepare the site for the workshop for the following weekend. I was met by local waller Andrew Garner, who had done much in preparation for the event. We arrived at a farm gate near where the old wall was to be dismantled. Here I was



Andrew Garner building the wall on which he was assessed by Geoff Duggan

greeted by a tiger snake curled up on the ground just outside my car door. After narrowly escaping with my life, we took some measurements of the wall and made up some suitable 'A frames' in order to accommodate the 14 people booked in for the workshop.

I then drove to the Tasmanian Midlands, stopping briefly at Ross to admire the stone work on the impressive sandstone convict-built bridge. On to Oatlands, where I found Eleanor and husband Barry in the stone wall-enclosed parterre garden adjacent to the Callington Mill. It was here that Barry described to me the sculpture that he had designed and I was to build. Essentially, it was to be a dry stone column or cairn built from the local sandstone, that started out round at the base and tapered to a rectangular top about a metre in diameter and height. The stone column was sandwiched between four courses of recycled pavers that Barry had meticulously planned and cut and was topped off by a huge piece of sandstone that resembled a lintel and this locked everything together. I do love a challenge, so, in the unusually hot weather and with the mill as a backdrop and inquisitive passers-by stopping for a chat, I chipped away at Barry's concept. Upon completion and rather sunburnt, both Eleanor and Barry seemed to be very happy with my work and thanked me. I thanked them both in return for inviting me to Tasmania and also for trying to do my head in with this most unusual column that transformed its shape.

The next day, three Tasmanian wallers arrived at Oatlands ready to be tested. The first was Andrew Garner, whom I had met a couple of days previously when setting up the wall for the workshop in Deloraine. The second was James Boxhall, who was also a trained hedge-layer and had only days previously returned from the British hedge-laying championships in Shropshire, UK. John Wilson was



Dry stone sculpture in parterre garden, Oatlands, Tasmania



*Although jet-lagged, James Boschall toiled away at his 'test' wall*

the third person and came along preceded by a reputation not only as a very good waller but also that he, amazingly, only had one leg.

The three were given a set piece of wall and were allowed seven hours to rebuild a 2.5 m<sup>2</sup> section of freestanding wall. Andrew's section of wall was closer to the mill, with a fence post in the middle of the wall. James and John had a more straightforward section on a roadside wall some kilometres from the mill. Throughout the day, I went to and fro, marking each candidate on their building techniques and on each stage of the wall build. This included how they dismantled the old wall and laid it out, termed 'stripping out'. Next was preparing and laying foundations, followed by building to 'throughstone' height. The next marks were given for the location and placement of 'throughstones', the final build, copestones and finish, and an overall mark for general approach and safety.

During the course of the day, I also gave a brief talk to the members of Heritage Tasmania and the people attending the 'Saving Our Stones' workshop, explaining the building process of the sculpture, dry stone walls in general, and also the examination process Andrew was going through. Following this brief interlude, I headed over to the roadside wall where James and John were working and noticed they were running a little short on stone. I told them to continue working and I would fetch some more from the fallen down section of the old wall further on. The first stone I picked up had a large huntsman spider on the underside. I guess it would have been about 12 to 13 cm in diameter (and that was just around the legs). Recovering from a near heart attack, I continued to deliver more stone



*John Wilson was up on his crutches each time he changed to the wall's other side*

to them, finding huntsman spiders with abdomens the size of 20 cent pieces under most of the stones. I'm not sure who was getting more of a fright, me or the spiders, as I yelled and carried on each time I came across one. As for James and John, I think they were having trouble concentrating as they were laughing too much at my antics.

At the end of the day, I can say that all three passed with flying colours and built impressive sections of wall. I was particularly impressed with all of them as Andrew had a stomach bug, James was jet-lagged, and John built his wall seated on a milk crate fetching each stone that he needed with a hoe and getting up on his crutches each time he had to go from one side of the wall to the other. I look forward to one day examining them all again at higher levels as they all proved to be very capable. After a long day, it was a drive back to Deloraine to start the workshop over the next two days.

The first day of the workshop started at the Meander Valley Enterprise Centre with a brief introduction to the craft and an explanation of the principles involved in dry stone construction. Following this, with 14 people in tow, we formed a convoy and descended on an old wall in a field about four kilometres from town. The stone was quite small in size and very angular with some good faces and also a lot of very flat pieces, excellent for training people on. Over the two days, assisted by Andrew and James, we dismantled and rebuilt the basalt wall around 14 m long by 1.7 m at its highest point, incorporating a fantastic wall end near the gate. Toward the end of the second day and nearing completion, I grabbed a small stone for one of the participants, as I turned the stone I noticed the other side was all furry and started to crawl across my hand. With my suburban arachnophobic, lightning reflexes and a yell of fright, I delivered the stone to the participant much quicker than they expected. They were just lucky that it wasn't a foundation stone. Upon completion, everyone was quite exhausted and deservedly proud of what they had achieved.

Over the years, during my time training people, I have heard some odd comments and this workshop produced another. I was discussing with the group some of the benefits of dry stone walls in an ecological sense, as they provide homes and shelter for many animals.

One person said, 'Have you ever thought of setting fire to the walls once a year?' 'Why?' I asked. 'To get rid of all of the bugs in there', was the reply.

So there you go, I managed to survive my week in Tasmania avoiding tiger snakes, massive spiders that could kill you just by looking at you, the hole in the Ozone layer giving me sunburn and the mental anguish Barry put me through. Having said all that, I had a great time, met some wonderful people, made new friends and saw some amazing Tasmanian scenery and walls. Should the occasion arise, I would love to come back and would gladly put my life on the line again. So now I look forward to returning to the relative safety of Sydney to my 40 degree summers, funnel web spiders and eastern brown snakes, not to mention the four or five million people.

Hopefully, by coming to Tasmania, my passion for the craft has sparked further interest in the cultural and heritage significance of the remaining dry stone walls in the landscape. I hope that the people familiar with the craft that I met have some renewed enthusiasm and that people new to the craft have gained a greater appreciation and will apply the building techniques they have learnt. For all involved, including myself, I am confident that the 'Week of Walling in Tasmania' was a success. I would particularly like to thank Eleanor and Barry Bjorksten, Andrew Garner, Heritage Tasmania, Southern Midlands Council, Friends of the Oatlands Parterre Garden, Jim Holdsworth from DSWAA and Wildcare Tasmania for their organising and support.

And by the way, I will not be setting fire to any of my walls, despite the spiders.

# TASMANIA: wiser after the event

Eleanor Bjorksten, DSWAA Convenor, Tas. November 2007 [a plain report on the Week of Walling, with thanks implied]

In October 2006, the DSWAA meeting in Oatlands inspired me to link together some of my interests and to organise a 'Week of Walling in Tasmania'. I could instantly see a need for formal qualifications for dry stone wallers working in the State.

The original Week of Walling was to be six days long. The final version was for five days, not really a week, but the name stayed. The program was designed to make maximum use of DSWAA member Geoff Duggan, Australia's only Master Craftsman qualified dry stone waller, and his time in Tasmania. Therefore the proposal included a dry stone sculpture, a two-day workshop on how to build dry stone walls and an accreditation session for experienced wallers.

Geoff is employed by the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens Trust and is charged out by his employers on a daily rate. As fees charged to participants in the Week of Walling in Tasmania could not be expected to cover these costs, ways of finding sponsorship/subsidies had to be found. Many and varied were the sources.

Heritage Tasmania and the local Council (Southern Midlands) helped by subsidising the two-day workshop and the accreditation session. Both groups felt some empathy for the program since Geoff's and DSWAA's agenda includes the preservation of old walls and walling skills.

The Friends of the Parterre paid for two of Geoff's days. For years, the Oatlands Parterre Garden had wanted a sculpture to grace the circular stone base sitting in the centre of the pattern of garden beds. The chance of employing Geoff to construct a dry stone sculpture was too tempting to miss.

With a tight budget and uncertainty regarding numbers of participants, two further steps to secure funding were undertaken:

- DSWAA member Steve Cronin from Exeter helped (twice) to write and submit an application to Rio Tinto for financial assistance. This strategy was not successful.
- DSWAA executive members voted to cover any shortfall in the budget up to the value of \$400.

The two-day workshop was based in Deloraine, where DSWAA members Andrew Garner and Robert Wilson live and work. The workshop was delivered through Adult Ed. This arrangement meant all fee-collecting, bookings and advertising were handled by Adult Ed. However, this idea produced my first big mistake. Instead of using Adult Ed's public liability insurance and, therefore, increasing the cost of the workshop for participants, I assumed that between Heritage Tasmania, the DSWAA and the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens there would be appropriate public liability insurance cover and therefore Adult Ed insurance would not be needed. This assumption led to much heartburn. A week before the event, the public liability insurance issue was not resolved as the farmer on whose land the workshop wall was to be built was not covered to Adult Ed's satisfaction. Everyone was in a panic and the whole 12 months of preparation was under the threat of cancellation.

To the rescue came Wildcare Tasmania! The problem was solved painlessly overnight. The laid-back super-efficiency of this organisation cannot be described adequately. Wildcare is also now handling all the paperwork to do with the Week of Walling. Pure magic.

Another mistake (or setback) was the paucity of media exposure. This was not brought about through lack of trying, but may have been due to the timing – one week before the election and mid-November, when so many events happen in Tasmania.

However, Tasmania now has three accredited wallers (Level 1), 14 new enthusiastic dry stone wall builders, 50 people who have met Geoff Duggan and heard and seen his passion for his craft, a new Heritagecare group called Dry Stone Walls Preservation Group ([www.wildcarea.org.au](http://www.wildcarea.org.au)) and one Australian Master Craftsman who envies Tasmanian farmers because of all the loose stones in evidence in their paddocks.

**What a week! What a wonderful, wonderful week.**



*An impressive wall was built by enthusiastic workshop participants at Deloraine in northern Tasmania*

# President's Message



DSWAA President Jim Holdsworth

Greetings!

Our General Meeting in October was held in Melton, on Melbourne's western outskirts. (You will see our editor's article in this issue.) Melton is in an area which is rich in dry stone walls, some of which date back to the 1860s; the early decades of European settlement in Victoria. Melton lies close to the eastern extremity of the vast volcanic plain that extends from Melbourne into South Australia; one of the world's most extensive. There are areas in the rural landscapes of the Shire of Melton that are densely covered with basalt field stones of many shapes and sizes, as well as stony outcrops and the low hills that are remnants of ancient volcanoes; a prime place for dry stone constructions.

With DSWAA members Raelene Marshall and David Moloney, I was part of a consultant team which has recently completed a study of Melton's dry stone walls, funded by both the shire and the Victorian Government. The study broke new ground in that it endeavoured to locate and describe all dry stone walls in the shire. Our database listed some 50 facts about more than 310 walls and other dry stone structures as well as mapping and photographing them all.

David's meticulous research into the history of the area included the paragraph below, which is part of the Study's citation for the area near the extinct scoria cone known as Mt Kororoit.

The Mount Kororoit Dry Stone Wall Precinct is significant as a collection of characteristic and outstanding dry stone walls in a compact cultural landscape which also includes a volcanic eruption point of geological, landscape and historical significance; a nineteenth century farm complex whose buildings and layout are of high heritage significance; and an 1860s selector's bluestone cottage. It is significant in terms of the variety, number and overall high quality of its all-stone walls, which include types very rare in Victoria such as galloway-walls and distinctive double-single walls; for the quality of its composite walls; and for its quantity of former post-and-rail fences and composite walls. The precinct demonstrates nineteenth century rural settlement patterns, and has high potential to provide both research and educative information regarding mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century fencing practices within Victoria.

This narrative gives some idea of the importance that dry stone walls and their interpretation have in enhancing our understanding of the geology and the landform of an area as well as of the pattern of the first subdivisions and the rural lifestyles of the area's first farmers. Similar stories are hidden in dry stone walls across Australia, whether built by indigenous or European hands.

In August 2007, an Advisory Committee set up by the Victorian Government to review the heritage provisions in municipal planning schemes handed down its report. The DSWAA had made a submission to the Committee in which we stated that steps need to be taken to ensure that a significant and representative range of dry stone walls should be statutorily protected. While there are difficulties with any form of legal protection, we

suggested that a blanket protection of all dry stone walls should be contemplated by the Committee, as 'this is a simple strategy that would avoid the need to actually identify and map walls, which is a very difficult task' and that 'the provision offers the possibility of saving many significant walls that would otherwise be lost before mapping and introduction of traditional heritage controls could be completed.'

The Advisory Committee's report recommended that measures be introduced into planning schemes in Victoria to conserve dry stone walls, and that this 'would not only allow regulation of their demolition and alteration but it would also heighten the appreciation of their heritage value and thus potentially assist in their maintenance and repair'. In other words, a blanket control, in regard to which the Committee stated: 'In response to concerns about adverse public (farmer) reaction to a blanket control, we are of the view that...this tends to be the exception rather than the rule.' In terms of time frames, the Committee proposed 'that a 'sunset' provision, perhaps of five years, should be applied...[and]...that this might encourage detailed dry stone wall studies to be undertaken by Councils which could then lead to the inclusion of locally significant walls in whole or in part in the Heritage Overlay or the Significant Landscape Overlay [of the Planning Scheme].'

Following the Advisory Committee's report, the DSWAA has been contacted by the Department of Planning and Community Development seeking our views on this proposed addition to some Planning Schemes in Victoria:

A permit is required for demolition or alteration of fences that are dry stone walls constructed before 1940 in the municipalities contained in the schedule to this provision.

(The schedule lists Ballarat, Colac-Otway, Corangamite, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Hume, Macedon Ranges, Melton, Moorabool, Moyne, Southern Grampians, Warrnambool, Whittlesea, and Wyndham.)

Note that, significantly, this proposed wording omits the 'sunset' provision anticipated in the Committee's recommendation, thereby protecting dry stone walls 'ad infinitum'.

This proposed addition to these Planning Schemes is one that our Association enthusiastically embraces. It complements our Vision perfectly. It coincides with our Statement of Purposes. In one bureaucratic stroke of the pen, it can achieve what we could spend years of advocacy trying to achieve.

Pass the champagne! But it doesn't save one dry stone wall!

Two things need to happen now; one, the State needs to be given the confidence to turn this intended provision into legal fact and, two, adequate funding needs to be made available so that all those municipalities can carry out studies of their dry stone walls to identify those walls worthy of legal protection, hopefully in the near future given the increasing rate of deterioration that is evident in older and neglected walls.

And there is a third goal; to get other States to follow Victoria's lead! The gauntlet that the DSWAA has thrown down at the State's feet has been accepted. We now have to ensure that the rare opportunity that lies before us is realised. Regards

**Jim**

*The Advisory Committee report on the Review of Heritage Provisions in Planning Schemes (Aug 2007) is at [www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning)*

# VICTORIA: dry stone wall sculpture completed

by Jo Grant, Regional Arts Development Officer, South West

For those of you who have been keeping in touch with the progress of our 'dry stone wall sculpture' project in the south-west of Victoria (near Tyrendarra), I am happy to report that we completed this massive task with an unveiling and open day on Wednesday 5 and Saturday 8 December 2007. Local Federal member David Hawker unveiled the project with some pertinent words about how the arts can impact on the community and, after a short ceremony around the fireplace, visitors were invited to speak to artists Vicki Couzens and Carmel Wallace. Over the two days more than 200 people visited the site to view the sculpture.

This project was initiated by Regional Arts Victoria in partnership with Lake Condah Sustainability Development Project (part of Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation). The project was part of a statewide initiative called 'Fresh and Salty' that was developed by Regional Arts Victoria to assist in addressing water issues in regional areas. Local artists Carmel Wallace and Vicki Couzens designed a sculpture with artistic references to the traditional use of water by Indigenous and European people. We also engaged Camperdown stone waller and DSWAA member Alistair Tune to train us in the skill of dry stone walling and guide the project technically. In October 2007, after nearly 12 months in development, we began the project which took us 12 days over a period of a month to build.

A number of partnerships and initiatives were implemented in the project that helped us complete this huge undertaking. Our partnership with Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation gave the project access to a wider network of interested parties and helped to get the word out in ways we couldn't have resourced. The partnership was also most valuable for the in-kind support the Land Management Team were able to give us in labour – they moved tonnes of rocks for us and prepared the site before and after completion. We also enlisted three young indigenous trainees on the project to help build the sculpture and learn new skills, and conducted a dry-stone-wall workshop on site for the general public and local artists. Through local networks and the partnership networks, we were able to generate significant interest in the project and were delighted that so many people were able to see the sculpture at the time of its completion.

Like all successful community art projects, this one had the ability to reach a cross-section of the community, the capacity to develop networks and new skills, and the potential to promote future projects and relationships. But all analysis of the outcomes of the project evaporate when one visits the site to view this amazing piece. This sculpture on Aboriginal land has an indescribable aura about it and we couldn't be happier that it will exist on the site for cultural purposes for many years to come. Produced on a small budget and with a small team of people, this project has been a wonderful example of what is possible in regional communities.

*In the future this sculpture will be a feature of Winda Mara's Budj Bim Tours initiative. Visitors must be accompanied on site by a guide. For more information, contact Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation or go to the website: [www.wmac.org](http://www.wmac.org)*



*Aerial shot of the sculpture with artists Carmel Wallace and Vicki Couzens*



*Detail of sculpture – coping stones placed on the walls*



*Artists and volunteers work on the sculpture*



*Community workshop day*



*Alistair Tune on top of the sculpture – final day*



*The finished sculpture*



*Fire ceremony at the unveiling*

# Dry stone walls in Newfoundland

by Tim Lowe, DSWAA member



There are few stone buildings in Newfoundland but there are two remarkable sites that are well worth visiting for anyone interested in dry stone walls.

Grates Cove, on the northern tip of the Baccalieu Peninsula, was settled in 1790. The settlers erected dry stone walls around their houses using the local stones. This was probably to help clear the land and to protect their vegetable gardens from the wind and livestock. The walls are enormous, about 2 m wide at the base and 1.2 m high. They look loosely constructed and are not finished with coping stones but have lasted the centuries well. Their historic value is recognised and a pathway has been constructed through the heathland behind the town so tourists can see the patterns they make in the landscape.

At Ferryland on the southern shore of the Avalon Peninsula is an archaeological site which has been yielding more relics than any other early European site in North America. The colony of Avalon was established in 1620 by English settlers and lasted until 1696 when it was destroyed by French soldiers. During the past decade archaeologists have exposed the remains of the buildings. They were constructed without mortar from the local slate stone. What is visible now are the bases of the buildings, demonstrating the skill that went into their dry stone construction.



*Above, below and left: the archaeological site at Ferryland dating from 1620 until 1696, when it was destroyed by French soldiers*



# SOUTH AUSTRALIA

by Steve Bottroff, DSWAA member

The South Australian arm of the DSWAA has had an active initial six months of existence. After the first meeting of interested people occurred in July 2007, we organised a field trip during October in an area known as Pine Hut Road near Eden Valley, SA. Pine Hut Road was chosen because of its close proximity to Adelaide and the beautifully preserved walls in the area. The day of the field trip, 21 October, was forecast to be an extremely hot and blustery day and unfortunately this led to a few people withdrawing the night before the adventure. However, for the nine people who attended the event, the hot 35 degree day and windy conditions did not spoil the fun of stripping down and rebuilding a section of dry stone wall that had collapsed around a farmer's property boundary. Under the direction of experienced waller and local member Ian Carline, participants got down and dirty to work on rebuilding the wall. After a few hours of walling, the finished wall was standing well against the existing structure and we all felt a great sense of



achievement and satisfaction. We also had a very happy local farmer whose wall we had repaired at no charge!

After the hands-on walling was done, it was time for a cool drink and then it was off to explore the kilometres of walls on Pine Hut Road. The changing terrain that the walls sat upon added to the experience as we drove from the hills near Eden Valley down the escarpment overlooking the Murray Valley Plains. Many stops and photos later, we stopped in the foothills for lunch where we ate and discussed our plans for the next 12 months. All attendees confirmed their commitment to the organisation in SA and agreed to form a core group to look to further the aims of the DSWAA in the coming years. We all agreed the field trip had been a great success and set in place plans for further field trips in April and October 2008.



*Around Woodchester, SA*

Hopefully, a large group of interstate members will come to our October 2008 field trip so we can share our stunning walls with our fellow lovers of dry stone walls.

In late October 2007, the group was fortunate to have the South Australian position of convenor filled when member Keryn Walshe volunteered to lead the group until 2010 when the official positions in the DSWAA will next be open for review. From the members in SA, thanks Keryn.

I was lucky enough to attend an informal meeting with Committee members of the DSWAA in December at Ballarat (see p. 8). Attending this meeting allowed me to put faces to names and also to get a better perspective of the work the Committee has been doing and the passion they have for protecting and increasing awareness about dry stone walls in Australia. Having had this experience, the SA mob will be in a better position to expand our membership base in the next 12 months and make a whole lot more people aware of the existence and importance of dry stone walls in our patch of ground.



*Above and left: Woodchester, SA*

# Melton and the Dry Stone Wall Driving Trail

by Charmian Brent, DSWAA Committee member and newsletter editor

On 13 October 2007, the DSWAA held a Committee and Working Group Meeting in the Melton Shire Community Hall and this was followed by a talk by historian David Moloney and DSWAA President Jim Holdsworth on 'The Shire of Melton Dry Stone Walls Study'. Together with DSWAA Secretary, Raelene Marshall, David and Jim have been engaged on this study for the past three years or so.

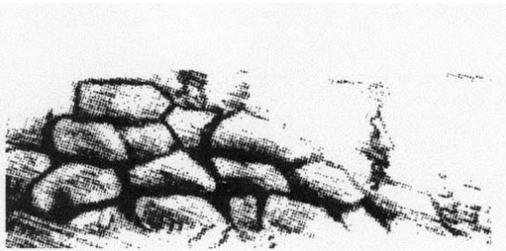
Subsequently, DSWAA Committee members met at 'The Willows' historic park to view the interpretive panels describing the history of dry stone walls in the shire and the sculpture *Volcanic Genesis*. After that, we all followed the Melton Dry Stone Wall Driving Trail, one of the outputs of the study, with brief talks at nominated points along the trail.

The shire of Melton lies on a vast volcanic plain stretching from Melbourne's northern outskirts to the South Australian border. In pioneering times, resourceful farmers used the volcanic nuggets that littered their fields to build dry stone boundaries. Some of the oldest and most intriguing examples are found in the Melton shire.



*Above top: an all-stone double wall with two rows of base stones and several courses of stone, tapering to a single course; centre: a farm wall; bottom: the typical field boundary fence*

*Above top: bronze A-frame sculpture at 'The Willows'; centre top: a boundary fence; another farm fence incorporating huge stones; bottom: a Galloway wall – tapered, with copingstones*



## Gathering Stones...

### Caithness Arts Event stone seat unveiling

We received this communique from our old friend Master Waller Geoge Gunn in Scotland, who built the stone seat at Oatlands, Tasmania in October 2006.

'At 5.30 pm on a Tuesday (September 2007) evening as the wild Westerlies stirred Thurso Bay into a maelstrom, some hardy souls turned up to see the unveiling of the stone seat built by volunteers during the Caithness Arts Festival.

This stone seat project was led by Master Drystone Waller Geoge Gunn of Thurso.

Sixteen people attended the unveiling, including some of the six volunteers involved. Volunteers Ethel Kuhn and Bob Dancer (pictured with Geoge Gunn, left, in picture top right) performed the unveiling ceremony. Ethel participated in all six days of the event.

Thanks to everyone involved who made this a very fulfilling event.

George Gunn'



### Christmas gathering at Ballarat was great fun

On Sunday 9 December 2007, the DSWAA Committee and Working Group met in Ballarat for a round-table meeting, where we discussed 'Media initiatives for 2008' followed by a Christmas lunch. The venue was 'Saffron', a restaurant with an Australian/Indian fusion-type menu, and we all agreed that the meal was scrumptious.

Once the formalities were done with, the excitement of the annual Kris Kringle (with its strict rules drawn up carefully by Raelene) took over, though the rules did seem to be flaunted more than somewhat!

The aim of the Kris Kringle is to guess who had brought/made the anonymous creative stone-related gifts (which must not be purchased), and this was mostly achieved (by various suspicious means).

An added pleasure of the event was that we were joined by Steve Bottroff, a member of our fellow travellers group in South Australia, and his family, who were here visiting relatives in Victoria. It is always good to be able to put a face to a name and to round up future recruits (Steve's children) to the cause! Late in the afternoon, we went our separate ways, agreeing that we had all had a really good time!



Josie is thrilled with her Kris Kringle gift



Jim with a young Bottroff recruit

### DSWAA event and meeting calendar dates

- February 16: 4.00–5.00 pm Ordinary General Meeting followed by our 'Stone Soiree' Celebratory Dinner commencing at 6.30 p.m
- May 2–4: field trip and first meeting of the DSWAA in New South Wales to coincide with the launch of the (dry stone wall-retained) Grevillea Garden at Mount Annan Botanic Gardens.
- Annual General Meeting scheduled for 14 June; venue and date to be confirmed.

### Not so eccentric after all! Gathering Stones across the world

There is something alluring and parallel between the joys of looking under a stone and finding something unexpected, and the surprise outcome of an unexpected meeting with someone on the opposite side of the world.

Dear Raelene,

*Do you remember meeting me on the Thames river bus? I spent a thoroughly enjoyable lunch and afternoon in your company at the Tate Britain. We must do it again sometime. Attached are photos of some unusual dry stone walling taken on a visit to the Isles of Scilly in May (see right below). We have never seen anything like this in our area. They must be stable considering the amount of lichens on them. The strong winds are probably filtered through the spaces as in a hedge. Best wishes from Margaret*



# VICTORIA: Lorne sculpture competition

by Andrew Miller, DSWAA Vice-President



*This dry stone sculpture at Lorne, by waller David Long, won the Great Open Road Sculpture Award*

The recent Inaugural Annual Lorne Sculpture Exhibition provided the opportunity for sculpture to be presented in a coastal environment. One of the features of the event was a stunning dry stone wall creation by waller David Long. The exhibition was initiated by Graeme Wilkie, Director of the Qdos Gallery in Lorne and supported by Arts Victoria and the Lorne community. The theme was 'the littoral edge' – 'the exhibition allows and encourages a diverse range of contemporary Australian sculpture to be sited along the coastline in Lorne.'

'Some of the sculptures highlighted environmental issues, some made quirky statements about cultural habits and current practices on the coast. All the sculptures showed great empathy with, and awareness of the setting, the expanse of the sea, the vegetation and the terrain...'

David Long's work was awarded the major prize, 'The Great Ocean Road Sculpture Award', ahead of entries from a number of acclaimed professional sculptors including Deborah Halpern, Peter Blizzard and Anderson Hunt.

Whilst all sculptures were to be dismantled at the end of the exhibition, there is certainly a push to retain David's sculpture or re-erect it elsewhere.

David's sculpture symbolically represents the Western Victoria basalt plain and links with the serious and current environmental issues of global warming and rising sea levels. The dry stone sculpture incorporated small viewing apertures to enable viewing of the interior space... 'The centrepiece, a granite boulder represents the world and the blue painted band surrounding this rock represents the rising sea levels.'

## Some websites you may like to visit

[www.rbgzyd.gov.au](http://www.rbgzyd.gov.au)

[www.pierreseche.net](http://www.pierreseche.net)

[www.stonefoundation.org](http://www.stonefoundation.org)

[www.dswac.ca](http://www.dswac.ca)



*The sculpture shows great empathy with and awareness of the setting, the expanse of the sea, and the terrain*



*The sculpture incorporated small apertures to enable viewing of the interior space*



*The centrepiece, a granite boulder, represents the world, and the blue painted band surrounding this rock represents the rising sea levels*

**Contributions to *The Flag Stone* invited.  
Deadline for the May 2008 issue is 14 April 2008.  
All material to: [chabrent@bigpond.net.au](mailto:chabrent@bigpond.net.au)**

# Sacrilege in the Adelaide Hills

by Steve Bottroff, DSWAA member

There are some wonderful dry stone walls where I live in Greenhill Road, Uraidla, a major roadway into the Adelaide Hills from metropolitan Adelaide. However, I feel that the contrast between the old dry stone walls and the new 'caged stone walls' is quite marked.

The caged walls have been made recently to retain a landslide and instead of replicating the beautifully constructed nineteenth century dry stone walls to retain the steep slopes, rocks are dumped into metal cages and used instead, with little thought for craftsmanship or aesthetics.

It is a sign of the times to find the cheapest way to fix a problem. It is also a missed opportunity because a dry stone waller's skills could have been used to shore up this area where a landslide has occurred. It would also have maintained the integrity of the landscaping material already in use on this major arterial road.

This is the sort of issue that needs to be raised with councils where dry stone walls exist, that is, if retaining work is needed, the lasting beauty of dry stone walls should be considered to maintain consistency and integrity in the landscape, rather than dumping sandbags and rock-filled cages to do the job!

## Raelene in the UK

My last day in England dawned very wet, very windy and very cold, and as I waited in the bus shelter in Kendal for the bus to Milnthorpe, I wondered what my visit to the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain would hold in store. I'd lived in England 10 years earlier and am forever lured back to the gentle beauty of the Cumbrian landscape. I'd also visited the Milnthorpe area on several other occasions but had never been to the DSWA UK, the group with which we have so much affinity.

The bus, full of locals, hugged the narrow winding 'A65' wall-bordered road towards the Crooklands Hotel, which was where I was to meet DSWA Secretary Alison Shaw.

On entering their 'home' in the Westmorland County Showground in Crooklands, we passed by the exquisitely crafted 'Millennium Wall', constructed by many regional groups who had sought to perpetuate the 'distinctive regional styles' of their districts. Today, these walls stand like silent sentinels, a far cry from the busyness of their original construction days, not just as a demonstration of the skills involved but also as a reflection of Britain's regional geology.

Over a cup of coffee, Alison and I exchanged dry stone wall notes during which time she explained how the DSWA and its branches operate and showed me their wide range of educational publications and products. It is indeed a well-run and well-supported enterprise that is highly regarded across the country.

However, it was their training and accreditation scheme that really captured my 'dry stone' imagination. A short walk down a hedge-lined road from the DSWA office leads to a farm property used to train and accredit wallers in their Certification scheme (pictured right).



*Above: the beautifully crafted nineteenth century dry stone walls in the Adelaide Hills.*

*Below: the recent, ugly 'caged rocks and sandbag' solution to fixing a landslide in the same location*

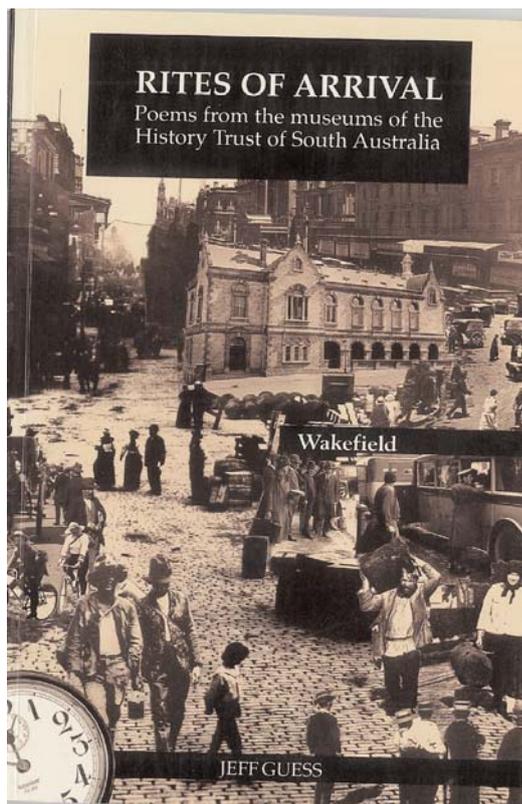


By this time the sun was smiling and I was smiling and, comforted by the fact that I was 'overseas' and 'couldn't read English', I jumped the fence and excitedly clicked photo after photo, completely oblivious to the meaning of the sign 'Trespassers will be prosecuted!' *Raelene Marshall 2007*



# Dry Stone Walls

At 97 looking back he says  
 'It's a dying art'  
 and he should know.  
 Been apprenticed, a mate  
 a plugger and a master.  
 Collected stones for years  
 before they let him lay  
 his first one down.  
 'Only ever handle  
 them big basalt rocks once,  
 learned that pretty fast.  
 They stay  
 where they're set right.  
 Stand through their own gravity  
 300 years or more.  
 Got to have a bit of nous  
 to go with it though.  
 What folks now don't know...  
 take one stone off  
 for the garden, or a souvenir  
 sure as eggs  
 you'll bring a section down.  
 It's all got to do with balance  
 one rock against another  
 for mile after mile.  
 Nothing to do with magic -  
 the mortar's in the making, and  
 of course a few dead marines'  
 And although he says  
 'And none of mine  
 have ever fallen down'  
 Some of them have -  
 but I understand what he means.



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## New members

Please complete (or photocopy) and **either** email to OR post to DSWAA Membership c/o Rob Wuchatsch, 2020 Princes Highway, Pirron Yallock, Vic. 3249 Tel. 5235 4220

**Payment:** monies can be deposited in the Association's bank account 013 274 4997 47356 at any ANZ Bank **or** send a cheque payable to: The Dry Stone Walls Association of Australia Inc. at the above address.

(\*Please indicate payment method below.)

**The Dry Stone Walls Association of Australia Inc.**  
**No. A004473S. ABN 31 721 856 687**

## Application for Membership

Professional (voting rights)	\$40.00
Individual (voting rights)	\$25.00
Corporate (voting rights)	\$80.00
Family (voting rights)	\$40.00

\* Paying by: Cheque enc. • Bank deposit •

Name

Address

Telephone

Mobile

Email

Area of interest, for example, farmer, heritage, etc.

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page 10	Andrew Miller
page 11	Steve Bottroff, Raelene Marshall
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