

My favourite walls

By Andrew Miller, Secretary DSWAA



The stark beauty of the Crochet Wall near Pomborneit exemplifies the waller's art – it has stood for more than 100 years

I find it very difficult to decide upon my favourite dry stone wall. Perhaps I should re-badge this contribution 'One of my favourite walls!' Maybe this column can become an occasional feature of the *Flag Stone* so others can share their favourites?

I recall in the early 1990s when the Corangamite Arts Council (now Corangamite Arts) embarked upon the Corangamite Dry Stone Walls Conservation Project; one of the first phases of that project was identifying people who had the skills and knowledge to help us achieve the objectives of the project.

There were seven key objectives, one of which was 'to identify, research and document significant dry stone walls in the Corangamite area'. That objective could not have been achieved if we had not been introduced to wallers or decedents of wallers from the district. Bill Harlock was one of those people we met early in the project. A very special relationship of knowledge-sharing developed.

Bill regularly participated in project group meetings, imparting his incredibly detailed knowledge of walls and walling. I vividly remember that Bill introduced us to the Rabbit Wall, the Cock and Hen Wall and the Consumption

Dyke, to name a few. There were many wonderful journeys into some remote areas of the volcanic Stony Rises.

When we felt Bill had finally led us to all of his 'secrets', he remarked, 'There is one more wall that is better than all I have shown you'. We thought this not possible because we had only recently completed a walk along the remarkable Rabbit Wall with Bill.

He followed on and said, 'This wall is known as the Crochet Wall'. How could a dry stone wall, solid and rugged and timeless, be named after a delicate hand woven fabric we pondered.

We parked and walked approximately two kilometres into a private property near Pomborneit, across low volcanic rises country. As we came over a low rise, there it was – no doubt in our minds where the wall got its name from. Most walls are built with two faces of stone, competently filled with smaller stone called 'hearting' with no daylight showing through the wall. The Crochet Wall was a single wall of stone, it snaked across the rises bracing itself on each turn. It was indeed like a wall of 'crochet', a patchwork of light and stone.

Bill stood back and quietly observed our amazement at what was truly a work of art.

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New South Wales: DSWAA at the Goulburn Show

By Simon Badway, member DSWAA, NSW

Whilst attending some of the country agricultural shows around New South Wales (NSW) in February/March, it was observed they would be a great vehicle to advertise the DSWAA. So towards the end of March, I enlisted the help of Wayne Fox, who has been one of our instructors in NSW events, to attend the Goulburn country show with me. We organised a stall site to setup and display the art of dry stone walling and had available handouts, plus pictures of completed projects for perusal.

Goulburn marks the start of the Southern Tablelands, which joins the Southern Highlands – an area in which the NSW branch of the DSWAA has had much success. We found great interest in this new area for both:

- participation in workshops
- hosting/sponsoring an event.

We recorded names and are beginning contact to organise events. We are slowly working our way down towards the Victorian border.

Other shows we aim to attend are:

- Orange, 5 May
- Murrumbateman, 20 October.

It was great day out and we had a very authentic display among the traditional country agricultural show events.



Starting from scratch at the Goulburn Show



Things beginning to take shape



Building the wall, showing different types of construction



Wayne Fox and Simon Badway organised a stall on which to set up and display the art of dry stone walling and had handouts and pictures of completed projects available for people to look at

Some websites you may like to visit

www.budjbim.com/tours.html

www.astoneuponastone.com

www.rbgsyd.gov.au

www.pierreseche.net

www.stonefoundation.org

www.dswac.ca

South Australia: Six Mile Lagoon, Kangaroo Island

By Graham Kelleher

Mick Kelleher started building these walls in approximately 2000 as part of his 'therapy' after an operation. Stone by stone he has created a marvellous feature to an already beautiful property on the south coast of Kangaroo Island, SA.

Named after a large natural lagoon, viewable from the house, and being six miles west of Vivonne Bay, it shares the same bit of coast that the world famous Southern Ocean Lodge resides on.

Mick purchased the land in 1980 and ran sheep until the bottom fell out of the wool market (Where's a Royal Commission when you need one!). Health and age limits what he can do now but the walls continue to grow.

The walls have become a bit of a tourist attraction and the Sealink buses make regular stops to look at them. Mick will be featured in a book by Bruce Munday, *Stories Behind Stone Walls*, to be released later this year (hopefully in time for Fathers Day). www.storiesbehindstonewalls.com.au

We also have our own website for the farm:
www.sixmilelagoon.com.au
which also features some pictures.



Mick Kelleher with his dog, Elsie

President's Message



Jim Holdsworth

Greetings!

We all travel away from home on occasions, whether close to our home region or further afield. The purpose of those journeys varies, whether for business or family reasons or to see another part of the world.

While tourist brochures and guided tour itineraries focus on the popular and well-known attractions of a place or area, when we travel we see what is around us from our own particular perspective. That perspective or our travel plans are determined by our own personal interests.

Issue number 21 of the *Flag Stone* led with a story by our Secretary about the ancient borries of southern France; structures built entirely of slate without mortar, the tops of the low walls then corbelled to form conical roofs of dark and functional barns, granaries or shelters.

Andrew and Karin's trip to visit these borries is an example of special-interest tourism, within a longer itinerary in France.

But sometimes, coming upon a dry stone structure is entirely happenstance. Issue number 22 carried a story about the geology of Iceland and its dry stone walls. It was written by a friend who had recently stopped off there on her way from Europe to North America. Upon her return to Melbourne, Kerryon phoned me and said, 'We were travelling across Iceland and I thought of you.' Curious, I asked why. She replied, 'Every time I see a dry stone wall, I remember the wonderful evening at the DSWAA's biannual dinner at that woolshed at West Cloven Hills. Now, I keep looking for dry stone walls wherever I go.'

Kerryon is probably not alone. Her travels will forever be enhanced (or marred?) by a corner of her mind that is now preserved for dry stone walls!

I suffer the same affliction, but it is a pleasurable one, and I'm sure many members of the DSWAA are similarly affected. I hope you enjoy the delight that often comes when seeing a skilful example of dry stone construction used as the front fence of a house or a weathered barn at the back of a farm. Maybe you catch a glimpse of a wall in the background of a shot in a television drama or in a photo in a gardening or motoring magazine.

While the distribution of dry stone structures in Australia is largely dependent on the presence of field stones, the locations of old and newer examples of the craft of the dry stone waller are surprisingly widespread. The purpose of those walls and structures is similarly

diverse, and many articles and stories in this newsletter reflect this.

As we enjoy reading articles in our newsletter we are made aware of the different ways our members get involved in dry stone walls. The previous newsletter told of walling workshops for interested landowners in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales and of action to preserve the dry creek bed and its stonework at Brown Hill Creek in South Australia. We are occasionally updated on the activities of the amateur walling group in Oatlands in Tasmania. Their enthusiasm has helped affirm that village's heritage of colonial stone structures. The skills of Victorian specialist wallers are often featured in these pages.

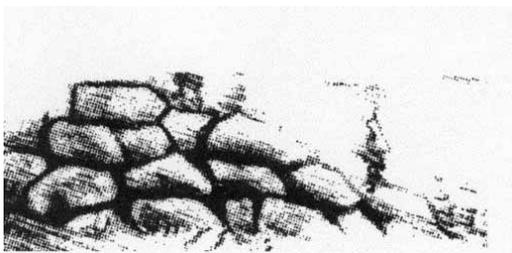
Looking ahead, the DSWAA is about to embark on its next two-year phase. Our Annual General Meeting on 9 June is the opportunity for more members to become actively involved in the DSWAA. New ideas, new people and new initiatives are the lifeblood of any voluntary association. I encourage you to consider nominating yourself or someone else to one of the executive or committee positions. While the DSWAA began in Victoria, and most members reside in that State, this is not an inhibitor to people from other parts of Australia joining the committee and being effective and valued contributors to the advancement of the DSWAA and its Vision.

The role of the DSWAA in lobbying local and State Governments to have higher regard for the cultural and heritage value to this country of dry stone walls and structures is an important area that we need to focus more closely on in the coming two years. If you live in regional Australia, I particularly encourage you to stand up for your region's dry stone heritage and use the DSWAA to help awaken our decision-makers to the need to preserve the best examples of this special feature of our landscapes.

Best wishes Jim Holdsworth

Contributions for
The Flag Stone
invited

Pictures of unusual walls/damaged walls
Dry stone wall-related literature
Any item of interest to members of
DSWAA
News from overseas
Deadline for the September 2012 issue is
14 August 2012
All material to: chabrent@bigpond.net.au



Gathering Stones...



Above: dry stone walls at a heritage site at Sigiriya in Sri Lanka. The ruins of the capital built by the parricidal King Kassapa I (477–95) lie on the steep slopes and at the summit of a granite peak standing some 370 m high (the 'Lion's Rock'). King Kassapa I, son of Dhatusena, only came to power after he had engineered the assassination of his father and had, briefly, dispossessed his brother, Moggallana. During the eleven years that Kassapa resided in Sigiriya, he created a residence of exceptional splendour and founded his capital there, impressive vestiges of which are still evident.
Photo courtesy of Charles Evans

Left: Raelene Marshall spotted this painting of a Corriedale sheep in a city gallery – it was painted at Nick Cole's property West Cloven Hills, where the DSWAA had its Annual Dinner in 2010. Remember the walls!



Above: no vertical joints!
Photo courtesy of John Cox
Left: the ha ha wall at Eynesbury Homestead, near Melton, Victoria, built in 1872

Sad passing of Gwen Ford

From the Ogdon Family, Eltham Garden Retreat

To all of Gwen's friends and associates

It is with great sadness that Gwen's family advise that Gwen suddenly passed away on Sunday, 25 March 2012.

Due to the extensive nature of Gwen's contacts, some people may already be aware of this news, so we beg your indulgence as the family do not want to miss any in her networks.

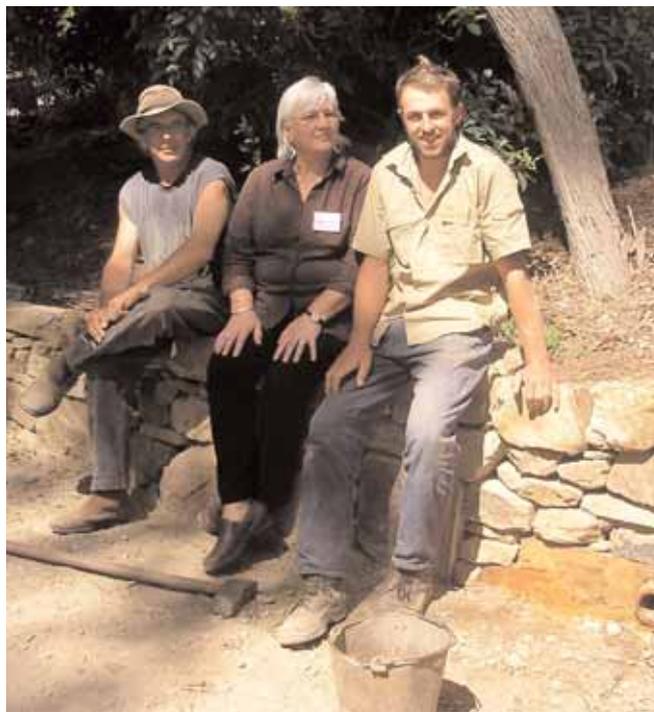
The funeral was held at Montsalvat on Monday, 2 April 2012 and was followed by a celebration of her life at her property at 141 Pitt Street, Eltham.

You'll probably remember her as the widow of the well-known landscape gardener, Gordon Ford, who was influenced by Edna Walling, and also as the hostess of a DSWAA field trip to her home, Füllung, in Eltham, Victoria in February 2006.

The garden at Füllung features excellent stone landscaping and a mud-brick house in the Eltham tradition, which sits within the natural look of the local rocks.

The central feature of the garden at Füllung is the waterfall and ponds, designed and constructed later than the rest of the garden (early 1980s).

On the day of the field trip, which was a very well-attended event, Alistair Tune and Gerhard Steiniger gave a wall-building demonstration, building a dry stone wall adjacent to Gwen's wood-fired pizza oven.



Gerhard Steiniger, Gwen Ford and Alistair Tune at Füllung in February 2006

DSWAA: June field trip, AGM and Biennial Dinner

The Association's Biennial Dinner will coincide with our Annual General Meeting (AGM) this year. The Dinner and the AGM will be held on Saturday, 9 June. The weekend of 9–11 June is the Queen's Birthday long weekend.

The AGM and Dinner are being held in Melbourne this year so that members and friends from interstate can attend, rather than having to travel to our usual destinations in the Western District. We hope that many members can come to Melbourne and make the most of the Queen's Birthday long weekend.

Please mark these dates in your calendars and set aside the long weekend for various DSWAA activities.

The day will begin with a BYO picnic at Westgarthtown, (the early German-Wendish settlement in Melbourne's north), followed at 1.00 pm by a tour of this fine collection of buildings and dry stone walls, artifacts, etc.

At 6.00 pm there will be the AGM and election of office bearers for 2012–14, to be held at the *North Fitzroy Star* hotel, at 32–36 St Georges Road South, North Fitzroy, followed by drinks.

At 7.00 pm the Biennial Dinner will be held at the same venue. The cost is \$60 for three courses, with drinks at bar prices. Our guest speaker at the Dinner will be Damein Bell, an elder from western Victoria and, until recently, custodian of many examples of indigenous and post-contact dry stone construction, including the recently-restored Bessiebelle sheepwash. We are very pleased that Damein has agreed to be with us.

Entertainment will be provided by the acclaimed 'Suns of Suction' duet (Allan Willingham and Alex Selenitsch).

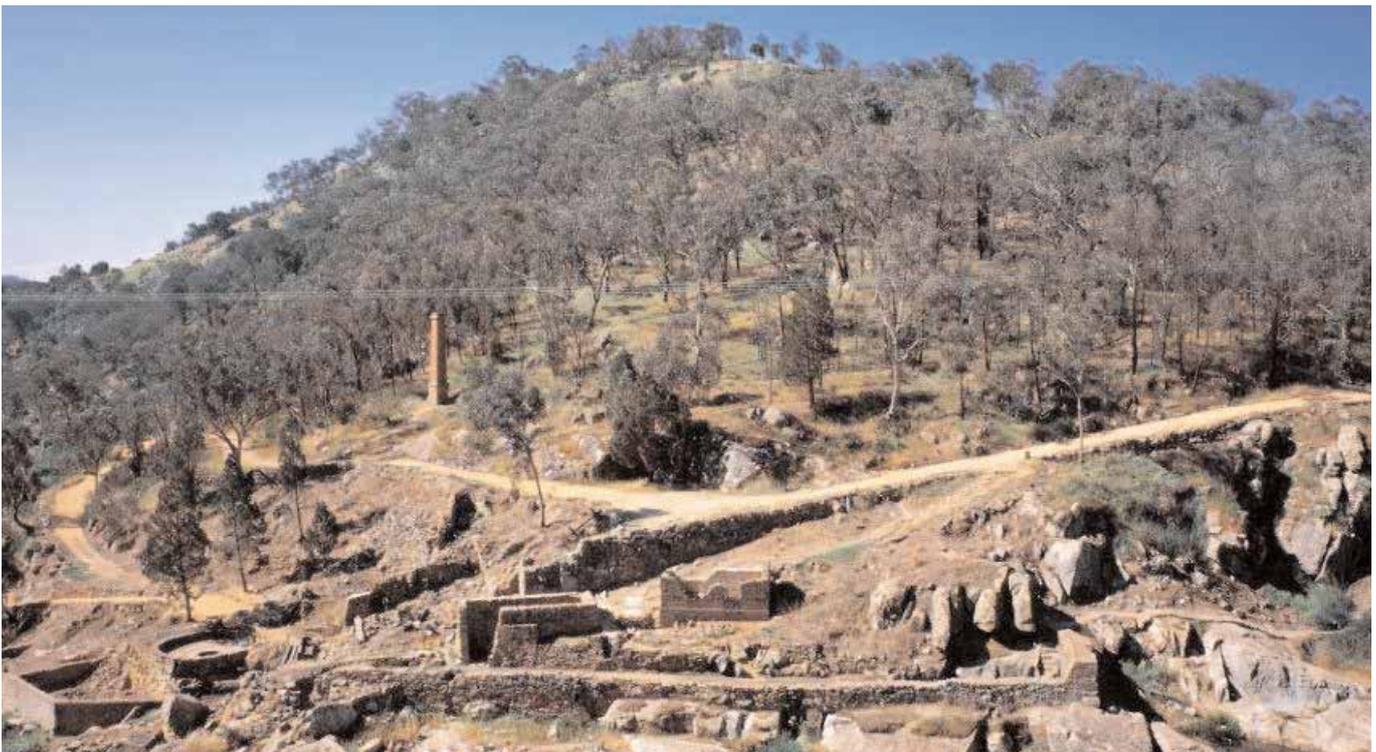


Suns of Suction. *We play several times a year, completely unrehearsed, with the core of the routine more or less the same. The fact that we rehearse in public means that we never play the same way twice, maybe even once. Very few people seem to tire of it, which suggests that the interest might be elsewhere than in the actual musical compositions. We are constantly being asked to play at official openings, birthday parties, club concerts, weddings, funeral wakes and farewells. Highlights have included a hostile audience at the old George Hotel in St Kilda where we were put on as a warm-up before the stripper at an Intersvarsity Basketball Finals dinner; the serenading of the journalists of the closed-down Sunday Press at their break-up barbecue on the banks of the Yarra; breaking the media silence on our version of 'Rock Around the Clock' by forcing it down the wire to astonished friends in the middle of the Scottish Lowlands; being on police radio while giving a demo at 2 am in La Trobe Street to an enquiring police van; and a trifecta in 1997 when we played at Clive Stark's farewell party at the ABC, snuck downstairs to the Iwaki Auditorium which just happened to be open (so that we could tell everyone, without exaggeration, that we had played there, too) and then heard a (pirate) recording of the farewell performance being broadcast the following morning.*

Remember the Adelong Falls gold mine walls?

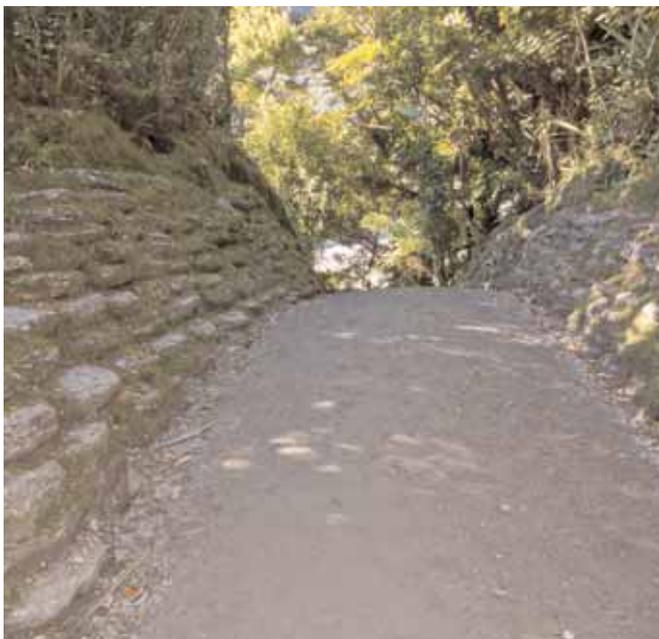


First featured in an article by DSWAA member John Cox in the *Flag Stone*, September 2010, Issue No. 20, the Adelong Falls gold mine (1869) sported several really impressive dry stone walls, as well as an extant grinding machine powered by a water wheel (see photos above). Sadly, the floods of 15 October 2010 swept some of the best walls away, so that the site is now a somewhat denuded version of its former self. Dry stone walls can last for centuries, but, unfortunately, are not immune to 'acts of God'. The photo of the current Adelong Falls site (bottom of page) is courtesy of TSC. Other photos at top of page and below were taken by John Cox, DSWAA member NSW



Walls in New Zealand's South Island

Photos by Gary Richardson, a member of the Melbourne Camera Club



The Franz Joseph images above are from sections of the walk to various viewpoints over Franz Joseph Glacier. The walls are in the forest part of the walk and are covered with moss as the area is regarded as a temperate rainforest, receiving 2-4 metres of rainfall every year.



Mitchell's Cottage is located between Alexandra and Roxburgh at Fruitlands in Central Otago. Built by John Mitchell, a goldminer at the Central Otago goldfields, it was not completed until 1904. He used the building techniques typical of the Shetland Islands, his homeland, to construct the cottage and dry stone fences

Dry stone milestone!

By Andrew Miller, Secretary DSWAA

This is the 25th issue of the *Flag Stone* and we must pause and celebrate the three things that have made this wonderful milestone possible.

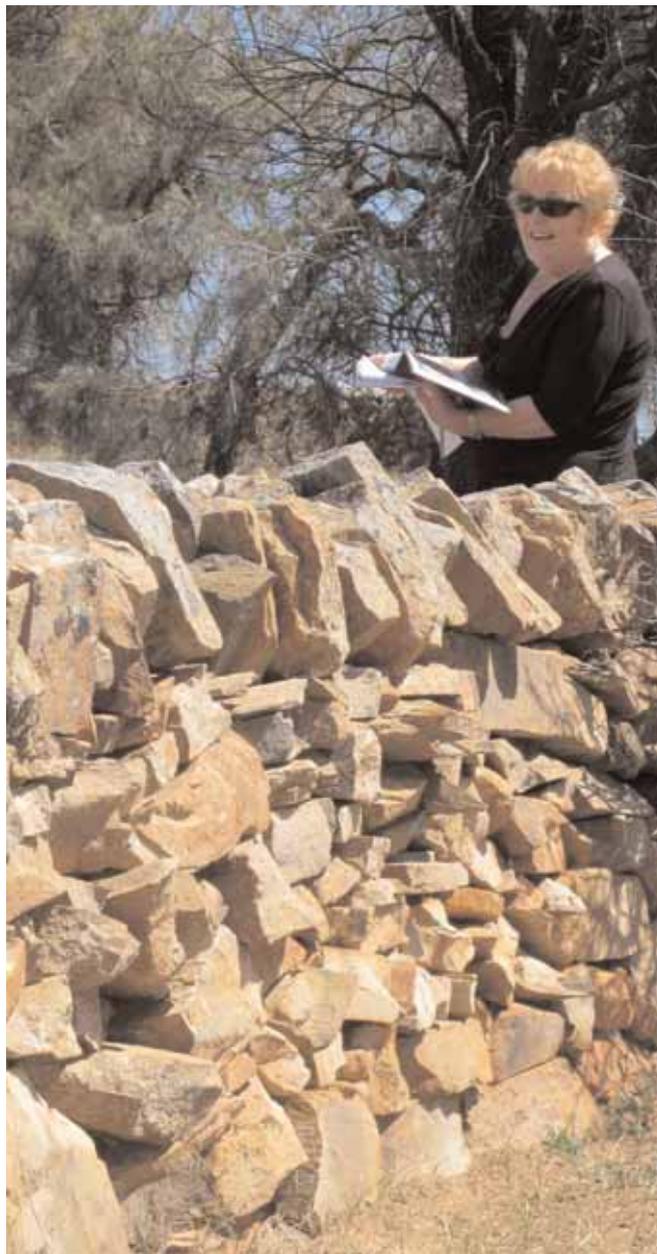
Firstly we celebrate the fact that Wendy Bitans took on the challenge and initiated the first two issues of the *Flag Stone*. Due to family health issues, Wendy reluctantly took a step back and Raelene Marshall and Anne Mulholland willingly took on Issue 3. Raelene edited Issues 4 and 5, further developing the publication. Those first five issues set the scene for a regular publication for the DSWAA.

Secondly, we celebrate Charmian Brent's role as editor for Issues 6 to 25. Charmian has been relentless in pursuing a publication standard that is sustainable amongst our membership and respected amongst our peers.

I always enjoy making the publication available to new readers who may like to develop an understanding of the role and purpose of the DSWAA. The feedback from members and the wider readerships is, without exception, highly complimentary. A very big THANK YOU Charmian! We are indebted to you, not only your passion for the craft, but also your passion for assembling a publication of such a high standard that provides us with so much reading enjoyment.

Thirdly we celebrate the fact that the *Flag Stone* would not have reached this milestone issue, if it were not for the contributions from our members and friends. Dry stone stories from Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales keep our passion for this wonderful 'rare trade' alive. And then there are the stories emanating from the travels of our membership and friends – travel destinations ranging from New Zealand to East Timor, from India to England, from France to the USA, Scotland to Spain, and so much more! Stories often complemented with some wonderful images. In my case, the walls in many instances were not part of a planned itinerary, but rather, we have just happened upon them. Doesn't that make the experience and the stories such great reading! THANK YOU to all of the contributors to the *Flag Stone* over the 25 issues!

Finally, the Committee of the DSWAA has considered publishing bound copies of the *Flag Stone*. Maybe this is the time to start the discussion again...a bound copy of the 25 issues? We hope to provide more detail on this proposal in due course. We would be happy to have your feedback of course to aksdmiller@bigpond.com



Flag Stone Editor, Charmian Brent admires a particularly good dry stone wall in the Adelaide hills in South Australia

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It appeared such a fragile wall. Then Bill responded with his amazing empathy for the craft, 'the cattle never go near it because they can look through the wall, you know, like a piece of crochet, you know what crochet is don't you?'

Why is the Crochet Wall my favourite wall? Firstly because of the way in which I was introduced to the wall by Bill, and secondly, it demonstrates such fine workmanship and is such an unusual walling style.



Right: another favourite wall. This modern single wall at Meecri, near Camperdown in Victoria was built by Alistair Tune

One stone at a time

By Fiona Clinton, ISS Institute

Taking it one stone at a time: building a dry stone wall starts and ends with a single piece of stone.

Early on Saturday, 5 May in rural Victoria, 30 people gathered to learn the art of dry stone walling. Arriving through the entrance of South West TAFE's Glenormiston College, the grand dry stone walls either side provided the perfect hint of what was to come. In amongst the magnificent heritage-listed trees on the campus, the participants started to assemble.

This popular, hands-on workshop is run by International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute) with the help of presenter David Long and his colleague Alistair Tune, both master wallers with more than 30 years experience between them.

David received an ISS Institute Fellowship in 2001 to travel to the UK and research dry stone structures. As part of the ISS Institute Fellowship Program, each Fellow must share the skills they have learnt overseas within Australia. David presents at these ISS Institute workshops to enable others to benefit from his knowledge.

Some of those who attended the workshop are involved in the landscaping arena but there were also those with no experience in this type of hands-on work. 'Prior to this workshop I only had the skill of administration. This is something that I've always wanted to learn!' said Dominique Cordani.

After arriving, the participants assembled under an old oak tree to meet one another and to be introduced to David and Alistair. They then split into two groups and each group of 15 participants began work. Under David and Alistair's expert guidance, each group started out by preparing the site and marking out where each wall was to be constructed.

Once each group had marked out where their wall was to be constructed, they learnt how to create the frame used to assist in construction of the wall. The frame was put together using poles and a string line. The frame helps to provide a guide to help maintain the shape of the wall and the height of the wall at each stage in its construction. Once the frame is erected and the string line is in place, it is time to start with the first stone.

The first stones put in place are the foundation stones. The foundation stones are traditionally large pieces of stone that sit directly on the earth, depending on how the site is prepared. The stones that are laid at the start of the foundation layer are very important, as are those laid at the end. These two ends are called 'cheek ends' and the stones here must be placed in such a way that they seal the ends of the wall and provide the maximum amount of stability. 'I've walled before,' said Ben Papandrea, 'The "stop end" or "cheek end" interested me.'

When placing the stones in the foundation layer, the participants made sure that large stones ran down both lengths of the wall and where these stones did not quite touch in the middle, hearting stone was added. David and Alistair guided their groups and suggested where a stone could be placed or better positioned to provide the best result. Constructive feedback was given as to whether a stone should be turned 'this way' or 'that way' to fit better.

Once the foundation stone layer was complete, the string line was raised to indicate the level of the next layer and so on



ISS Institute workshop: participants preparing to build a wall



Alistair Tune's team working together



Participants ISS Institute dry stone walling workshop

until the wall height was reached. When the wall height was reached then the cope stones were added to the top of the wall. These stones are also traditionally very large and help to stabilise the wall.

'The cope stones start to tie together and there is dead weight on the wall. We've built the wall in such a way that with the depth of the stone into the wall and the weight on top, the thing should all be one piece.' David said.

Once all the cope stones were added to the top of the wall, all the participants stood back and congratulated one another. They talked of their own plans and how they planned to use their new skills to build their own walls. 'One of my daughters lives at Pomberneit and I intend to build a dry stone wall along the front of her garden!' said Francis Conheady.

There was also much talk of people taking part in another workshop in the future to learn more. 'I can't wait to do the Advanced Dry Stone Walling Workshop!' Margaret Moloney said.

To find out how you could benefit from the Fellowship Program offered by ISS Institute, please visit the website <issinstitute.org.au> or call 03 9347 4583. ISS Institute welcomes your interest.



The cope stones being added to complete the wall



Alistair Tune, left, and David Long, right

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New members

Please complete (or photocopy) and post to:
DSWAA Membership, Secretary, PO Box 185, Ballarat,
Vic 3353

Payment: monies can be deposited in the DSWAA'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)	\$50.00
Individual (voting rights)	\$30.00 (1 year) \$80 (3 years)
Corporate (voting rights)	\$80.00
Family (voting rights)	\$50.00

* Paying by: Cheque enc. • Bank deposit •

Name

Address

Telephone

Mobile

Email

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

Contributors: photographs

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