

In the Shadow of the Mount

By Andrew Miller, Secretary DSWAA



Above: Mount Elephant from the Hamilton Highway. Below: DSWAA members and friends gather at noon in Derrinallum in hot, windy conditions



The dry stone walls of Victoria's south-west provide a wonderful blend of the natural and cultural history of the region. The DSWAA has organised many field trips into some very special precincts in the south-west: 'The Rabbit Wall Walk', 'The Dry Stone Wall Heritage Trail Drive', the Mt Pordon Precinct, walls in and around Camperdown township, to name a few.

Our December 2012 field trip, 'In the Shadow of the Mount' focused on the natural and built landscape in the vicinity of Mt Elephant. Approximately 35 members and friends of the DSWAA joined the field trip, on what was one of December's hotter days. The cool change arrived during the tour, however the heat gave us all some comprehension of the harsh environment encountered by the first immigrants and settlers to the district.

Mt Elephant (393 m) is a striking landscape form visible from as far as Beech Forest in the south and from Mt Buninyong in the north. The volcanic activity that shaped this landscape occurred in the relatively recent past, between 5000 and 20,000 years ago. The dry-stone walls were built from field stone that resulted from the Mt Elephant eruption.

As one approaches Mt Elephant, no matter from which direction, it presents a powerful symbol of the way in which the landscape evolved and was given new form and function by the immigrants who began arriving about the middle 1800s.

Tour participants gathered for a picnic in the shade of the trees in the avenue of High Street, Derrinallum before departing on the tour that encompassed visits to wall sites on the Corangamite Dry Stone Wall Heritage Trail, Laweton French's garden walls on Bass Road and walls in the homestead precinct at 'Larra'.

Our first stop on the tour was at the 'Hamilton Highway Wall'. This wall was selected for the Trail because of its context with the Mount Elephant landscape and the prominent structural feature, 'throughstones'. Typical dry-stone wall construction incorporates two inwardly tapering stone walls. These two walls are tied by regularly spaced throughstones at approximately mid-height (roughly 1.5–3 metre intervals along the wall) and copestones tie the two walls together at the top of the wall. Both throughstones and copestones are important structural components of a well constructed dry-stone wall.

In good practice, copestones are a clearly visible component of a dry-stone wall whereas throughstones are not necessarily so. Constructing a wall with protruding throughstones was often a waller's style, to show the inclusion of the important structural component of the wall. Sometimes it was the prerogative of the landowner to request the waller to confirm the inclusion of throughstones by making these visible along the face of the wall.

The second wall site visited (which is also on the Heritage Trail) was the Galloway Dyke. The name originates from Scotland, where the wall is traditionally a single stone in width. This wall incorporates a traditional double wall for the first 60 per cent of its height, then single wall construction for the remainder. A fine wall, but relatively fragile.

We were delighted to have Laweton French join us on the field trip. Laweton's family has farmed land immediately west of Mt Elephant for more than 70 years and he is also a dedicated contributor to the Derrinallum community. Most communities have their 'living legends' and Laweton fits that category. His humour and anecdotes dramatically set a scene of the difficult life of the servicemen, returning from the First World War. Laweton shared his special knowledge of the cultural history of the district and its First World War Soldier Settlement (more than 30 original settlers). We enjoyed the stories associated with the development of the garden walls, all built by Laweton, and looked over to the remnants of his father's First World War Settlers cottage and outbuildings.

We travelled further south, still feeling almost in a hand's reach of the Mount, stopping briefly at the site of the former Geelengla Primary School, which served the families of the First World War Soldier Settlers. Dry-stone walls surrounded us and there was minimal evidence of a former school



Eugene von Guérard's Larra Homestead. Mt Elephant in the distance, 1857



Laweton French at the Hamilton Highway Dry Stone Wall Heritage Trail Site



Galloway Wall Heritage Trail Site



Wall in Laweton French's garden that he built himself



Artist's portrayal of Manager's cottage on 'Larra'

community. We looked across the stone barriers to the remnants of a stone cottage that once housed one of the managers on 'Larra'. The cottage was the subject of an oil painting, in a private collection. The painting clearly depicts the well-developed garden and stone walls and conveys an oasis-like environment in this relatively harsh landscape.

Our next stop was at the property of Ray and Heather Thompson. We were made welcome to this wonderful precinct that included old and new walls adjacent to a restored First World War Soldier Settlement Cottage and the ruins of another. The aesthetic and functional benefits of dry-stone walls are numerous however we marvelled at a new attribute – a very well established vegetable garden in the shadow of a wall, looking more like growth typical of a tropical climate. The amazing growth probably, in part, resulted from the warmth of the sun being absorbed during the day and then radiated at night as well as minerals leaching from the stones. In addition, I am sure there was lots of TLC from both Ray and Heather!!!

Our final stop on the field tour was at 'Larra'. Travelling in to the homestead, it was clear that dry-stone walls are an important part of the fencing on the property and more so in the area near the homestead and outbuildings. Allan Willingham (DSWAA Committee Member) delivered



Memorial plaque that Laweton French had erected for Geelengla Primary School



Ruin of First World War soldier settlement cottage at the Thompson property showing how the internal walls were made from the surrounding field stone

a fascinating history of the early settlement of 'Larra' as we walked around the homestead garden and across to the heritage significant bluestone stables.

Afterwards, in the evening, DSWAA members and friends gathered in the dining room at the Derrinallum Hotel where heritage architect Tim Hubbard gave a presentation on his archeological work in the Lake Condah district. Tim will lead the DSWAA April field trip into this fascinating region of Western Victoria (see page 7).

As we left the Derrinallum Hotel, I turned and looked back on this wonderful precinct and commented, 'Look at the light on the Mount', as I most often do (my passengers are a little over my enthusiasm and passion for the Mount and its moods)!

Many thanks to Laweton French and Allan Willingham for the way in which they related the walls to the cultural history of the precinct. Our thanks are also extended to the Mann family and also Ray and Heather Thompson for their hospitality.



Old walls and remnant farm equipment on the Thompson property.



The stunning bluestone stable complex at 'Larra' with stabling for more than 30 horses and a special windowless stallion stall



Extensive dry-stone walls spread right across the 'Larra' landscape



Ray Thompson in his vegetable garden that is nourished by the wall



Allan Willingham entertains the gathering with many amusing anecdotes while sharing his detailed knowledge of the history of 'Larra'



Mount Elephant in evening glory

Those dry-stone walls

By Charmian Brent, DSWAA Committee Member

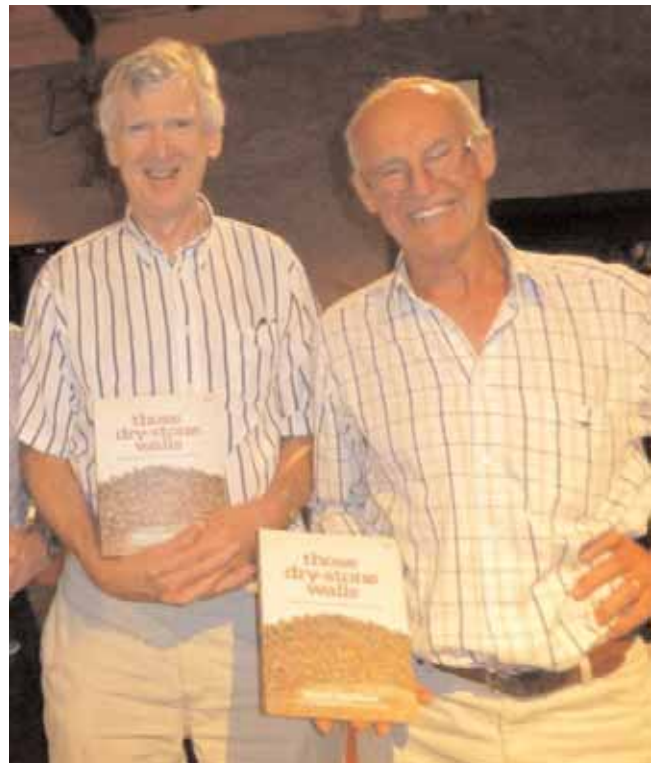


The launch of Bruce Munday's book, 'Those dry-stone walls: stories from South Australia's stone age' took place at Rosebank in the Adelaide Hills. Many in the front row were descendants of Levi Meakins, a renowned waller in the 1860s and 1870s

It is difficult for someone who has been involved with the DSWAA for seven years to write an impartial review of Bruce Munday's (DSWAA Committee Member) recently published book, *Those dry-stone walls: stories from South Australia's stone age* because, from my point of view, it is heaven sent – a whole book, wonderfully illustrated with Kristin Munday's superb photographs, on a subject that is dear to my heart. However, I will do my best to be objective.

I lived in Adelaide for a year in the 1960s and although I travelled around the State on the weekends, after reading this book I realise just how many fascinating places of historical interest I missed and have determined that I simply must make the effort to visit in the next year or so. That's what reading *Those dry-stone walls* does to you – it fills you with enthusiasm about the places, the people and the structures so that you feel you must go and see them for yourself. It's not an impersonal text-book account of South Australia's dry-stone walls, it's a lively personal journey by a wall-builder and his wife, who appreciate the beauty of walls and stone buildings. Bruce talks to people who either build or own walls and are prepared to reveal their history and, if the walls are very old, their owners are willing to speculate on who built them and why and along the way tell many an interesting anecdote. You hear their voices and share their love for the walls they describe.

This is an extremely comprehensive book that examines a particular aspect of South Australia's heritage and breathes excitement and interest into a subject that many would consider mundane. It describes the early history of walls as used by the Indigenous tribes as fish traps and dwellings and then moves on to early European settlement in the 1800s and tells why the need for stone fences grew when the discovery of gold in Victoria and copper in South Australia lured the shepherds away from their flocks to the goldfields. Large flocks of sheep comprising tens of thousands of animals needed containing and protecting and due to the abundance of natural materials lying on the ground, to whit loose stone,



Well-known playwright, David Williamson was on hand to give the book a good send-off (left) with author Bruce Munday (right)

building stone fences was the obvious answer to the problem as many of the early settlers brought the craft of walling with them from Britain, Ireland and Germany.

Bruce's book encompasses South Australia from north to south and treats each of its eight regions separately, spelling out its underlying rock formation, its history and just how the craft of building stone walls grew and flourished over the past 180 years or so. Most of all, it's the personal encounters that set this book apart – the people you meet, the tales that are told. It is elegantly written, lavishly illustrated, a mine of information and not to be missed at any price!

The book retails for \$39.95 (plus \$10 postage) and can be obtained from: Bruce Munday, Box 375, Mt Torrens, SA 5244 or www.storiesbehindstonewalls.com.au

President's Message



Jim Holdsworth

Greetings!

In the pages of our newsletter we frequently see articles and references to dry-stone walls and structures beyond our shores. One of the most enjoyable aspects of the *Flag Stone* is that these articles connect us to the history, the richness and the diversity of dry-stone construction in other parts of the world. The occasional page 'Gathering Stones' often has photographs of walls or structures in far-flung places.

There are voluntary associations like ours in several countries that support the craft in various ways, and these associations have websites that are well worth looking at. As always, our editor includes a list of several of these websites in the pages of the *Flag Stone*.

While we have a largely under-appreciated range of dry stone walls in Australia, dating from well before European exploration or settlement, it is in Europe that dry stone structures, some dating back two millennia, are so numerous and so important as built artefacts of earlier peoples, civilisations and lifestyles that they are an invaluable record of human habitation.

A visit to www.pierreseche.net opens a vast array of stories and photographs of dry stone history and activity in France and beyond. Currently, under the tab: artistes, there is a large and universally charming series of photographs of dry-stone huts in the Dordogne region of western France by local resident Michel Chanaud (see below). These modest structures are all similar in basic design; walls laid out in a circular pattern and built up to resemble a drum, and all with a conical-shaped roof also of stone. They can be compared with the borries of Provence in south-eastern France, discussed by Andrew Miller



in his article in the February 2011 issue of this newsletter. What struck me about the photos of these small circular huts, as well as their rural settings, was the enthusiasm Michel exudes in his comments about the joy of seeking out these buildings in the countryside of Perigord and, especially, his enthusiasm to share not only the photos but the pleasure this search has brought him, with visitors to the website.

I went to www.dswac.ca to discover that our kindred association has changed its name to Dry Stone Walling Across Canada. The home page gives the reasons for this change as being a geographic broadening of their activities, from one side of the country to the other, the need to focus community attention to the use of dry stone construction, and to avoid any confusion of name with the Dry Stone Walling Association of the UK (DSWA).

As with the French website, DSWAC has a wonderful photo gallery of mostly recent projects, which is well worth a look.

Over the last few years, various members of DSWAA have visited the home of the Dry Stone Walling Association of the UK in Cumbria, and their past-president, Richard Love, has visited us in Melbourne. The DSWA's main activity is in the training of wallers to maintain Britain's extraordinary wealth of dry stone structures, and this is evident in the DSWA's use of the word 'Walling' in its name.

The range of wall styles and stone types that are to be found across the UK has been cleverly brought together at the DSWA headquarters in a series of linked sections of wall constructed of stones and using traditional techniques from all over Britain. A photo of part of this remarkable composite wall adorns the masthead of the DSWA website.

The DSWA website www.dswa.org.uk has a wealth of information on walls in the UK and, as with the other websites, has an interesting photo gallery.

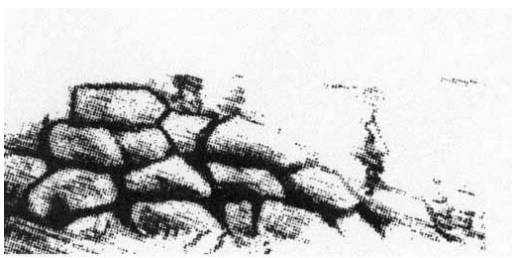
While these different organisations all have the broad aim of promoting the history and craft of dry stone walling, each has a different focus and way of working towards that overall objective. In that regard we as an organisation, and even within our state-based groups, do it our own way.

Do take some time to get online and discover what members of dry-stone wall associations in other parts of the world are doing.

In similar vein, elsewhere in this issue, you'll see Charmian Brent's review of Committee Member Bruce Munday's recently published book on the dry stone walls of South Australia. Bruce's book is a tangible presentation of what is revealed by many fine photographs and entertaining text to be a fascinating range of wall styles, landscapes and people involved in this prolific aspect of that State's history.

Bruce is to be commended for taking up the challenge of publishing a book, and to be congratulated on the marvellous outcome. It serves to further reinforce and promote the wonderful history and stories that dry stone structures represent.

**Best wishes,
Jim Holdsworth**



Gathering Stones...



Above: very old dry-stone wall in Siam Reap, Cambodia. Below: right and left: examples of dry-stone construction at Angkor Wat, Siem Reap, Cambodia



Wall in the process of being repaired in the Derbyshire Peak District, UK 2012



The completed wall totally restored, UK 2012

A weekend in Western Victoria: a major DSWAA event



Part of the amazing Bessiebelle sheep wash

Following a very successful weekend in the area in 2007, the DSWAA Committee has arranged another 'Weekend in Western Victoria', to visit a range of sites of historic and geologic interest. The weekend will be based in Port Fairy and will commence on **the evening of Friday, 12 April and conclude on the afternoon of Sunday, 14 April.**

Two fascinating field tours will be led by Dr Timothy Hubbard, architectural historian and member of the DSWAA, who is an expert in the history of the area and a most knowledgeable and entertaining guide.

The program for the weekend is being finalised but will begin with a get-together on the Friday evening in Port Fairy. This will include an introduction to the weekend, an overview of the sites to be visited, provision of tour notes and arrangements for car pooling and car convoy protocols. There will be advice regarding the occasionally difficult terrain and strenuous walking required at some sites, and alternative sites for those unable to visit all locations.

On Saturday and Sunday there will be a tour on each day to the area north of Port Fairy. Highlights will include visits to Rowbottom's Homestead, Tyrrendarra, the recently restored and magnificent dry-stone Bessiebelle sheep wash, the Tarrone Standing Stones near Port Fairy, selectors' walls at Byaduk Caves, and squatting run walls on Mount Napier. Some sites are not normally open to the public.

On Saturday evening there will be a dinner in Port Fairy, and the Sunday tour will conclude at about 4.30 pm, allowing time to return to Melbourne or other local destinations.

The tour cost is not finalised, but will include light refreshments on Friday evening and the Tour Dinner on Saturday evening (where drinks will be at own expense). Members and guests will be responsible for their own transport to and from Port Fairy, accommodation, breakfasts and lunches. Car pooling will be used for the tours.

Numbers are limited and you are encouraged to register your interest by emailing the **President, Jim Holdsworth at jim@planningcollaborative.com.au by 10 March.** Please include your name and the names of any others in your group. Acceptances will be in order of registration. If your registration is successful, you will be provided with further details and arrangements. Full payment will be required by 1 April.

This is a major event on the DSWAA's calendar for 2013 and is shaping as an exciting and enjoyable weekend.

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 May 2013 issue is
20 April 2013
All material to: chabrent@bigpond.net.au

Where walls rule

By Bruce Munday, DSWAA Committee Member

A few years ago I saw photos of the Aran Islands off the west coast of Ireland, whole landscapes dominated by dry-stone walls. Pondering just what must life have been like on these islands when the walls were built, I knew that one day I would have to see and feel first hand this extraordinary labyrinth.

Kristin and I arrived at Inis Oirr, the smallest of the Arans, in September 2012 on the very weekend of Feile na gCloch – the annual dry-stone wall festival sponsored by the DSWA of Ireland. There were wallers from Ireland of course, but also England, Scotland, Spain, France, Switzerland, Netherlands, Finland, Ukraine, Canada and USA. Not to mention a couple of ‘enthusiasts’ from Australia.

The Arans are in Galway Bay and the most common route to Inis Oirr is by ferry from Doolin, a little town in County Clare which just happens to have the very best pub music in all of Ireland. Geologically the islands are part of the Burren – a massive Carboniferous sheet of grey limestone.

The three days of the Feile na gCloch involved communally re-building a freestanding double wall, building from scratch a four-metre-high retaining wall and a series of talks from wallers of international renown. Added to that, an opportunity to explore on bike the maze of walls that define this remarkable piece of the planet.

The free-standing wall workshop was led by renowned Scottish dyker Nick Aitken from Inverness. Nick outlined the principles and everyone got stuck into it. While it's a lot of fun working with people from many parts of the world, it is also problematic working shoulder to shoulder with the complete range of experience (and inexperience) along with personalities from meek to overbearing. Inevitably one finishes with a wall that looks a bit committee-built.

Pat McAfee, an Irish stone wall legend, oversaw the creation of the retaining wall. Of course it is always easier when you have only one face to finish and the whole thing has something to lean against, but this was still quite an engineering feat, using a vertically stacked style that is far more stable against soil moisture pressure from behind.

If there is such a thing as an Inis Oirr style it would have to be eclectic, but the dominant style is the feiden, something quite unique to the Arans. The stone is irregular, although obviously of sedimentary origin, and the walls up to three metres high in wonderful condition and still fully functional. But each wall seems to have had a different builder and some walls several. Many walls have fairly regularly spaced large vertical stones – ‘mother’ stones (cloche mhathar) – between which smaller stones (the ‘children’ – na paisti) are laid horizontally (or not – in some walls the deliberate misalignment of stones is a dominant feature, and yet the walls are remarkably stable). The lower section of the wall is generally double skin, tapering to single skin and then capped with the ‘fathers’ (na hAitheracha).

There are an estimated 1500 km of dry-stone walls on the Arans, although goodness knows how they calculate that number. A major threat to the stone walls on Inis Oirr is ivy, crawling all over some fences and gradually pulling them apart. If ever you travel to Ireland in September I would highly recommend the Feile na gCloch.



1. Building dry-stone retaining wall. 2. Four-metre-high dry-stone retaining wall
3. Walled fields on Inis Oirr

Ancient Cultures, Ancient Structures: A Stone Upon A Stone

By Raelene Marshall, DSWAA member

The universal craft of placing a stone upon a stone for survival, permanence and artistic purposes has been used by ancient cultures for centuries. The eminent psychiatrist Carl Jung in his book *Man and His Symbols* refers to the importance of stone as symbol, speaking of man with his symbol-making propensity endowing stones with great psychological importance. For ancient and primitive societies unhewn stones held a highly symbolic meaning. They were often believed to be the dwelling places of spirits or gods and often used for tombstones, boundary stones or objects of religion. Some built for practical and survival purposes, others as art forms in their own right may be also be regarded as a primeval form of sculpture, an early attempt to imbue the stone with a more expressive power than nature or chance could give it.

For several years now I have been passionately drawn to the vernacular differences of the universal craft of dry stone walling. Yet, despite the tyrannies of distance and remote landscapes accessibility, the artisan craft has an almost fascinating yet archetypal similarity. A stone upon a stone. At the time of submitting my Paper Abstract to present at the 13th International Dry Stone Walling Congress in Sardinia Italy, I was unaware of the spiral structures of the ancient Sardinian nuraghi, and the muraggio of Sicily.

So a new journey to explore and try to understand dry stone structures within the context of the universal motifs of the spiral, circle, rectangle, serpent and line was begun. Precipitated by the eerie similarity that exists between the spiral design of these European structures and the Kurtonitj dry-stone sculpture built in south-west Victoria as part of 2007 Regional Arts Victoria's 'Fresh and Salty' project, a question arose: was this centuries old evidence of humankind's innate affinity with and symbolic understanding of the universal dry-stone craft, or merely a coincidence? Or is there another coincidence that might suggest a yet-to-be-uncovered relationship between the dry-stone skills of ancient cultures and their modern day custodians' desire to preserve their ancient structures for future generations?

Indeed, the remnant Australian stone house structures of the Budj Bim (Lake Condah) and, in other parts of the world, the dome-shaped borries in France, the tholos in Sicily and elsewhere, and the brochs in Scotland, all present a challenge to unlock this mystery.

Although it is the second largest island in the Mediterranean, Sardinia's cultural treasures are still largely undiscovered. Its jagged coastline and clear blue seas have earned it a well-deserved reputation for beach tourism. Villas and resorts cling to the cliffs along the Costa Smeralda and the wealth of prehistoric sites, Punic and Roman remains, Pisan-Romanesque churches and ancient dry-stone structures known as nuraghe, make it a fascinating destination.

Delegates at the 13th International Dry Stone Walling Congress were fortunate enough to experience the richness and diversity of this rugged landscape, when, in late September 2012, we left the luxury of our hotel in the small town of Santa Maria Navarrese on the dramatic east coast, to make the long daily climb into the mountains.



Tholos circular dome structure, Sicily



Muraggio on a private access farm site in Sicily



Kurtonitj sculpture, 2007, in south-west Victoria



Replica of Indigenous stone house, Lake Condah area, Victoria

The Congress is held every two years in a European country. On this occasion it was facilitated by the Société Scientifique Internationale pour l'étude pluridisciplinaire de la Pierre Sèche [SPS] and hosted by the Province of Ogliastra in collaboration with, and the involvement of, the Town Hall administrators of Baunei, Ilbono and Talana.

The program was held over the three days. It included lectures, exhibitions and workshops together with three heart stopping half-day site visits. In all, some 40-odd papers were presented by people from Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

The Sardinian landscape is mountainous and challenging. Its rocks date from the Palaeozoic era. Due to long erosion processes, the island's highlands are formed of granite, schist, trachyte, basalt, sandstone and dolomite limestone. The terrain is extremely dry and relatively inaccessible so the site visits to the ancient nuraghi [spiral-shaped structures whose original use is unknown] gave us a wonderful insight into what might have confronted the early inhabitants in their day-to-day efforts to survive.

Sardinia is dotted with remnants of 'nuraghi' – bronze age dry-stone megalithic towers. The structures centre on a main tower or fortress, together with the 'tombs of the giants' (monolithic burial chambers). These bronze-age people existed during the second millennium BC and little is known of them or the use of these towers. More than 7000 nuraghi are on the island, most partially ruined and unexcavated. However, the sites are significant enough to be included on the UNESCO World Heritage List and are represented by the Su Nuraxi Nuraghi at Barumini.

On the evening of Sunday, 22 September the SPS also held its bi-annual Assembly. At this gathering, individual country representatives contributed their ideas and knowledge to the Society's move towards the inclusion of the dry-stone craft as: Intangible Cultural Heritage on the UNESCO World Heritage register. At a Symposium held in the Heywood Hall in south-west Victoria in June 2011, the Gunditjmarra people also determined to secure UNESCO World Heritage listing for the Budj Bim (Lake Condah) landscape.

In my presentation I mentioned the Gunditjmirring's cause and discussed Australia's early settlement history and the displacement of the Aboriginal peoples from their land and livelihoods in the 1800s. I focused in particular on the ancient dry-stone fish traps and structures at Lake Condah and those in the Brewarrina area surrounding the Barwon River, a tributary of the Darling River in north-west New South Wales.

In both areas, the lifestyle of the indigenous peoples was settled and complex and involved gathering food from the substantial wetlands of the area. In the Lake Condah area the Gunditjmarra people built stone houses and developed a sophisticated aquaculture system for farming eels. Indeed, thousands of years prior to European settlement, the abundance of stone for dry-stone structures and a sophisticated knowledge of aquaculture systems played a major role in their day-to-day survival. Here they stayed close to their food source and lived very much in intuitive harmony with the ebb and flow of the seasons and their land.

Sacred to the Gunditjmarra people, the dry-stone structures that survive today are likely to be Australia's largest aquaculture systems and sites of permanent stone houses. Dating back thousands of years, the area shows evidence of a large, settled Aboriginal communities using the abundance of stone in the landscape to build houses and fish traps for farming and



Nuraghi, Sardinia



Fish trap, Lake Condah, Victoria

smoking eels for food and trade. The landscape is formed on the lava flow created by the eruption of Budj Bim also known as Mount Eccles. Developed over many millennia, the area reflects the intrinsic layering and heritage values that range from ancient Gunditjmarra cultural practice to their early European contact and post-contact experiences.

Today the Gunditjmarra people are the proud and hard working custodians of around 20 square kilometres of property on this highly significant area that includes the magnificent Bessiebelle sheep wash – probably the best surviving example of a traditional early European settlement pastoral sheep wash in the country.

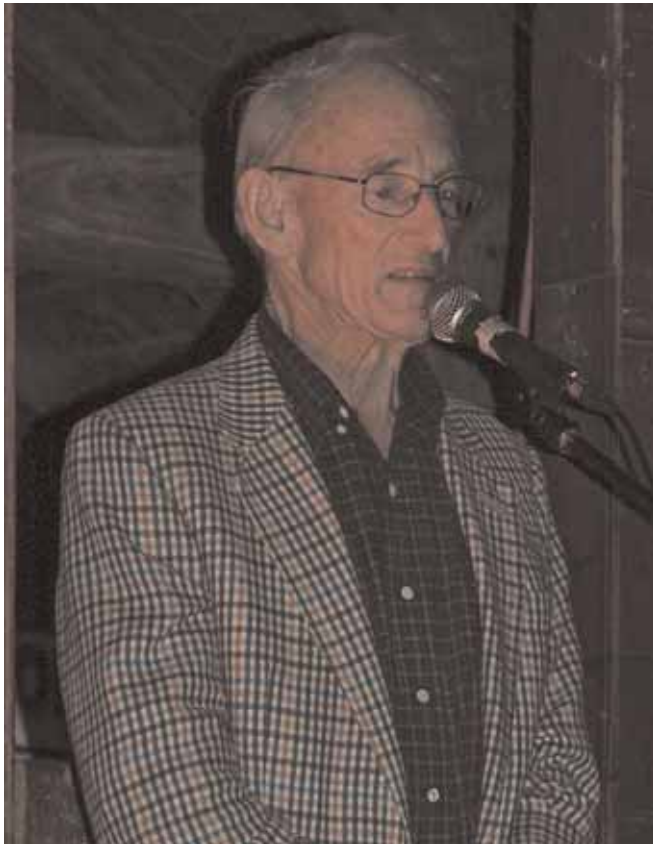
For the Aboriginal people across western New South Wales, Baiame's Ngunnhu is a special place. Also known as the Brewarrina Fish Traps complex, the area is a central landmark imbued with spiritual cultural traditional and symbolic meanings that demonstrate a sophisticated fishing enterprise that required a thorough understanding of dry-stone construction principles, river hydrology and fish biology.

For contemporary Aboriginal people, both landscapes provide tangible links and lifelines to their past, their country and their future. Fortunately, these landscapes are now in the custodianship of their rightful owners, who bring an innate relationship between the stone structures and the ancestors who produced them. As modern day custodians, not only do they understand, manage and promote the economic, social and cultural values of the land and building aesthetics, but in the process nurture their people and train them to keep their ancient traditions alive.

Pietra su pietra, A Stone Upon a Stone.

Obituary: Niel Black

By Andrew Miller, DSWAA Secretary



Niel Black at the DSWAA's Volcanic Plains Dinner in May 2010

The DSWAA received the news of the tragic death of Niel Black with great sadness. Niel died when his utility overturned on the side of Mount Noorat on his property on 4 November last year. It was at Glenormiston where Niel's great-grandfather, a Scotsman, took up land back in 1840 and the Black family had farmed land there ever since.

Niel had a strong interest in the wellbeing and advancement of the dairying industry that was the principal activity on his property and he made a significant contribution across a range of industry organisations.

Members and friends of the DSWAA will remember Josie Black, Niel's first wife, who passed away in 2009. She was a passionate contributor to communities in the Corangamite area. It was Josie who saw the opportunity to initiate the Corangamite Dry Stone Walls Conservation Project in the early 1990s, which contributed in part to the formation of the DSWAA in 2002.

Niel contributed in a wonderful way to Josie's many interests, including raising awareness of heritage and the cultural importance of dry stone walls. He always found time to participate in the activities and discussions associated with achieving the goals of the DSWAA. We highly valued Niel's thoughtful and considered input and will miss that greatly.

Following the passing of Josie, Niel maintained contact with the DSWAA and we were working with Niel towards him taking a role as our Patron. Sadly this will not happen. The DSWAA was represented at the memorial service for Niel which was held at Glenormiston College.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to Niel's family and his wife Eve.

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Please complete (or photocopy) and post to:
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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

pages 1–2	Charmian Brent, Jim Holdsworth
page 3–4	Andrew Miller, Charmian Brent, Jim Holdsworth
page 5	Georgina Wilson
page 6	Raelene Marshall, Michel Chanaud
page 7	Charles Evans, Jimmy Mack
page 8	Raelene Marshall
page 9	Kristin Munday
page 10–11	Raelene Marshall
page 12	Jim Holdsworth