

Issue No. 37, October 2016

Patron: Lyn Allison ISSN 2204-8316 Editor: Bruce Munday

The dry stone walls of Redesdale – a memorable DSWAA field trip *By Jim Holdsworth*



It's a little on the chilly side on Fathers' Day, Sunday 4 September, as over 40 members and guests gather in Romsey, an hour and a half north-west of Melbourne.

Committee member Geoff Thomas welcomes the group and the convoy heads north through Lancefield and onto the Burke and Wills Track, named after the doomed 1860 Burke and Wills Scientific Expedition to cross Australia from south to north.

Our first stop is a fine roadside wall at Glenhope. Secretary Andrew Miller provides a commentary about the style of this and other walls we inspect during the day.

Across the road is *Rowanston on the Track* Winery where John and Marilyn Frederiksen walk us through the vines and over soggy ground to where the waller has managed to straddle the creek with two broad stones which form two openings in the base of the wall (see above).

The wines on offer are most appealing and we enjoy a break, John describing the different varieties and wines produced on the estate.

North of Redesdale Steve and Katrina Kimmel show us two dry stone walls, a metre and a half in height, of

standard double style and in excellent condition, stretching several hundred metres in an L shape.



The walls, over 150 years old, are in such good condition today because they were not visible from the road and hence not damaged by rabbit hunters. Also they are built on a basalt cap hence there is minimum movement of the walls' foundations.

A feature of one of these walls is the netting projecting horizontally below the copestones, evidently to prevent

Redesdale (cont.)



rabbits from scaling them. We wonder why the rabbits didn't just run around the ends of the walls!

Approaching Redesdale we pass various remnants of stone walls, now little more than rows of stones, previously fencing for holding yards. This 3 chain road was for droving of stock to the port of Melbourne, drovers using these yards for overnight stays.



Lunch is at Geoff and Libby Thomas's property overlooking Lake Eppalock. Geoff and Libby built their house of stone found on the property, which has a number of old but dilapidated walls. Geoff had arranged for some dry stone wall repair work on these walls to be done by TAFE landscape gardening students.

Geoff then introduced Luke McGrath, son of the late Henry McGrath, recognised in the local community for many walls, gateways and dry stone landscaping structures on properties around Redesdale.

Our next stop was a composite wall, not common in Victoria and rare elsewhere. It comprises a broad-based low double wall with a height of less than a metre, with timber fence posts and wire set about five metres apart.

Our last stop is to walk a few hundred metres to a group of walls forming a square about 30 metres on a side, with several openings at the mid-points of three sides (see below). Geoff's research revealed that this is a sheep fold of heritage significance. The Victorian Heritage Register states that it is of high integrity and was built on part of an allotment that was granted by the Crown to John Ferguson on the 28th June 1864. While the date of construction is not known, it was probably built before Ferguson died in 1867.



We've had an altogether fascinating day, made all the more enjoyable by the field notes, thorough preparation and excellent hospitality of Geoff and Libby Thomas.

A few thirsty souls drifted into the pub at Redesdale to draw breath and reflect on the day's events.

Field trips remain a cornerstone of the Association's calendar and are a unique way for members and friends to visit places not normally open to the public and to learn about the geology, history and people of an area, enabled by the theme of dry stone walls.

President's Message



Greetings!

Like throwing a stone into a pond, one doesn't know how far the ripples will spread or what they'll touch as they move out from their origin.

Our Association's small beginnings some 14 years ago have spread far and wide and

continue to grow. I doubt that the Association's founders, among whom are our Secretary, Andrew Miller, Committee member Raelene Marshall and the very influential Josie Black, who passed away in 2009, would have foreseen how far the ripples of the metaphorical stone would disperse.

Both previous issues of this journal and, in particular, this issue carry stories of our connections to places well beyond our shores.

Several members were pleased to host Louise Price, Secretary of the Dry Stone Walling Association of Ireland (DSWAI), to dinner in Melbourne in March. You may care to visit her blog of her time in this country. Her photos are excellent and her brief comments, some complimentary, give us pause for introspection. Louise's blog is at <https://limewindow.wordpress.com/2016/05/21/australia/>

Wayne Fox, from Wagga Wagga, has visited Ireland and worked with members of DSWAI at a recent stone festival in County Donegal. Louise's story about the festival is in this issue.

The Dry Stone Walling Association of the UK (DSWA) is by far the largest of our kindred organisations around the world. It has active branches throughout the UK and focuses on the training of wallers, the practice of the craft and the celebration of the diverse stones and techniques of walling that are found in the UK and which have endured for centuries.

The North Wales Branch of the DSWA puts out an occasional booklet titled *Stonechat* and the Spring 2016 issue is of particular interest. Of the eight articles in its forty-four full-colour pages, six are about Australia! Two of the

articles are written by Raelene Marshall, adapted from papers she has presented to International Dry Stone Walling Congresses in 2002 and 2012.

The other articles are a most complimentary review of our Committee member Bruce Munday's book *Those Dry Stone Walls: Stories from South Australia's Stone Age*, a personal reflection of dry stone walls in western Victoria written by Sally Hodgson, and a review of Raelene Marshall's recent and beautiful photo book *In Search of Stones: a dry stone connection to land*.

These recent examples of the ever-widening ripples build on others, as attested by back issues of *The Flag Stone* about dry stone structures, old and new, in places across the globe.

This Association's connections to like-minded people and organisations elsewhere help us understand our place in this international community and enable us to compare notes, visit and interact and, most importantly, reinforce our responsibility as advocates and champions of Australia's unique dry stone heritage and the practice of dry stone walling.

The Association's vision is that dry stone walls and dry stone structures are widely accepted for their unique place in the history, culture and economy of the nation and for the legacy they represent.

Our goals are:

- *That governments and the wider community recognise the significance of dry-stone structures built by indigenous peoples, European explorers, early settlers and modern craftspeople as valued artefacts of our national identity.*
- *That this acceptance is manifested by appropriate statutory protection and landowner and community respect and celebration.*
- *That the craft of dry-stone walling grows as a modern reinforcement of the contribution that dry stone walls and structures have made to the culture of Australia.*

Irish stone festival going strong

By Louise Price (member)

Hello from the Donegal Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland. We've just held our third annual *Tír Chonaill* stone festival in the north west of Ireland, an area of outstanding beauty on the edge of the Atlantic ocean.



Schist is the native stone which splits easily

We are happily growing stronger with each year that passes. Our festival is witnessing a dynamic revival in traditional stone crafts. Workshops are booked out, both dry stone walling and stone carving, and we have a great mix of nationalities, both tourists and professional wallers. Post-festival feedback tells us that what beginners enjoy most about the experience is meeting new people and having a bit of 'craic' – sharing some laughter together while building the wall.

The wallers have great in-depth technical discussions such as how closely should one build to the line, and how tightly should one pack the hearting or not. Styles vary between countries, and often climate dictates the rules. We learned that Swedish walls are packed loosely to allow for frost expansion, while Irish wallers are less strict and use artistic licence when it comes to building to a line!

Alongside get-your-hands-dirty workshops, we hold talks on various topics such as *The Secret Language of the Masons* which dealt with an ancient, almost forgotten tongue used by stonemasons in Ireland in years gone by. I wonder did a few words of "Bearlog" get carried across to Australia by the many who left our shores?

Our tribute to a hundred years since the foundation of the Irish Republic (1916) was to build this collaborative monument which was unveiled during the festival. It took a whole year to create. Each county of Ireland is carved by a stonemason from that particular region. This very special piece shows the variety of geology in our small country, with carvings depicting a rich cultural heritage.

Ties with Australia are strong, Wayne Fox from Wagga Wagga a regular friendly face instructing on our walling workshop.

Re-birthing walls on Kythira

By Greg Clinnick (member)

Last month, my wife and I visited Kythira, a rugged, rocky, sparsely populated island just off mainland Greece. Following World War II, many young Kytherians emigrated to Australia and the USA; three generations on, many are returning to claim their ancestral land and building houses to escape southern hemisphere winters.

Greece is rock walling heaven, the craft dating back to the Romans, Venetians, Ottomans, and of course to the Greeks themselves. A bonus for me was to find my friend's house (called Villa Faros after his ancestors) was surrounded with ancient olive groves and vineyards with the terracing formed from local stone. Terracing was used to create arable land, this part of the island known for its orange and almond crops. The locals of bygone eras must have been tough and tenacious to complete such impressive terracing and walling by hand. The area is known as the Verduni as the general terrain and miles upon miles of stone wall terraces recalled images of the long and costly battle of Verdun.

Crops and walls have been abandoned for many years, but there are plans to return the slopes to their former glory by rebuilding and replanting, a significant task on steep terrain even with modern tools and equipment.

We decided to have a go at restoring a collapsed section of wall, and despite the heat and a visiting snake we were surprised at how quickly and well the wall was reformed. Before-and-after photos were beamed around the world much to the delight of the Faros relatives back in Australia.



Before (inset) and after

Since our maiden attempt at walling, further sections of the terrace have been rebuilt and my friend is now a member of the DSWAA. We are both signed up for the beginner's course being run by the Association in October so that our next rebuild will be of an even higher standard!



Kristin and I did an eight day bike tour of north-west Sardinia in September. What a great way to see dry stone walls – you can take a lot more in as you slog your way up a hill on a bike than rushing through in a car. When you are up close to the wall there is a much greater sense of it as something built by a person (or people), a feeling for how heavy the stones are and even for how old they must be given their condition.

Sardinia is steeped in history, old and new. It was the springboard for the unification of Italy in 1848 and almost every town has vias or piazzas named after Cavour, Garibaldi and/or Victor Immanuel II. The rural landscape also has reminders that stone is man's oldest building material. Aside from the ubiquitous dry stone fences demarcating property boundaries and enclosures, there are also the uniquely Sardinian nuraghi dating back to 1600 BC when humans first occupied the island.

A nuraghe is a tapered conical tower, typically about 10-15 metres diameter at the base and perhaps 7-10 metres high, finishing with a tholos roof of overlapping stone slabs. A small doorway through the thick wall leads to a vestibule with a helical staircase on the inside of the wall for access to a mezzanine. These structures were surrounded by villages of circular stone huts, partially preserved in a handful of selected sites (such as Santa Cristina and Palmvera), but mostly now victims of agricultural development or simply neglect.



The rural fences were mainly just functional structures, goodness knows how old. We got a clearer idea of just how extensive these were when we passed through an area burnt days earlier in what we in Australia would refer to as a bushfire. Several thousand hectares were burned in this *incendi*, an event that is apparently becoming ever more frequent. As in South Australia, we saw several instances where a stone wall protected a vineyard or an olive grove from the fire. Surely there are lessons in



Sardinia (cont.)



this for Australia, albeit the assets to be protected here are generally much larger than those in rural Sardinia where a large vineyard might be a few hectares.



The fences vary in style, reflecting both the stone available and the preference of the builder. The wall shown here seems to be making a statement about power. Some walls were built entirely of stones scarcely larger

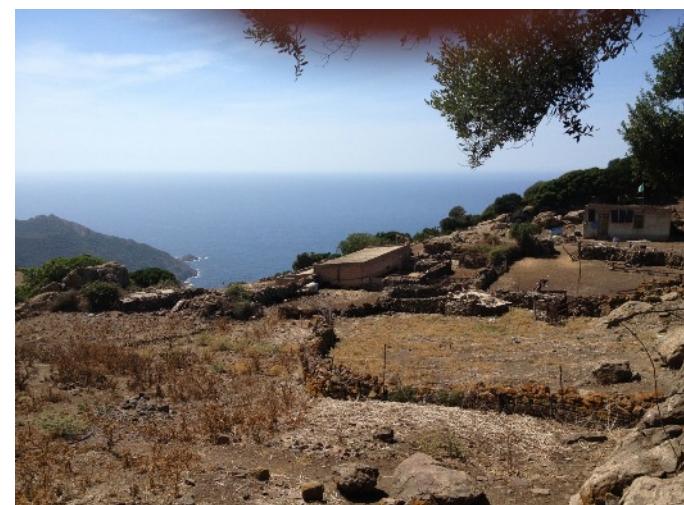
than a tennis ball, perhaps saying something about patience. Rarely did we see walls with cope stones. Many of the double skin walls were concave on top (see here), gathering rainfall rather than

shedding it – we could not find anyone to explain, at least not in English, the reason.

Briars, brambles and prickly pear smother many of the walls, but if these represent an agricultural weed problem or harbour pest animals no-one seems to be doing anything about it. They certainly make the walls more formidable as barriers to livestock. Prickly pear has been in Sardinia since the seventeenth century, brought from South America by the Spanish.

In the apparently affluent horse breeding region near San Leonardo De Siete Fuentes there are many new walls, beautifully built from field stone to embellish the property. There is clearly no shortage of skilled wallers at the right price.

By contrast this apparently impoverished farm on the coast between Alghero and Bosa still functions with a network of dilapidated walls but with a view of the Mediterranean to die for.



The not-so-dry stone walls of Georgia

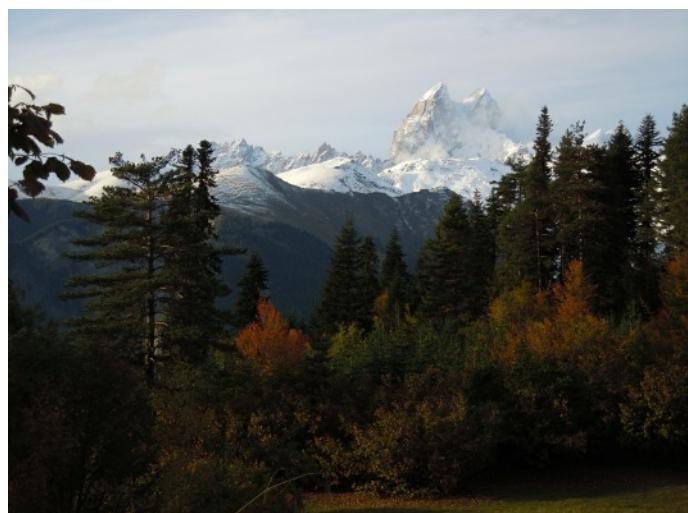
By Joan Powling (member)



The great wall of Sighnaghi

In 1995 Joseph Jordania and Nino Tsitsishvili, ethnomusicologists from Tbilisi, came to live in Melbourne, setting off a train of events which would lead to a group of local singers travelling to Georgia to participate in the first International Symposium for Traditional Polyphony at Tbilisi State Conservatoire in 2002. It was to become a biennial event. In 2010, a women's Georgian choir made the journey from Melbourne, a first for Australia.

Following the 2010 Symposium the Australian singers travelled to Svaneti to spend a week with a family of traditional musicians. Svaneti, a region on the Russian border, includes the highest inhabited area in the Caucasus. Mount Ushba at 4710 m (pictured) is not the highest mountain in Georgia but arguably the most picturesque.



The early history of habitation in this region is complex and goes back to the paleolithic in the 12th Century BC. Svanetia and the neighbouring region of Abkhazia be-

came part of Georgia in the 11th Century. Orthodox Christianity was practised from the 12th Century.



Svaneti is famous for its stone towers, three to five storeys high, erected between the 9th and 12th Centuries as living quarters for people and livestock, fortresses against warring tribes and as treasures for safeguarding their gold and silver and religious icons. The Svans were fierce warriors and many of the songs and dances of the region reflecting this are still sung today.

The towers stand amongst the houses and barns of the present day Svaneti villages. Some stand alone, crumbling, but showing the original placement of stones.

There were many examples of stone walls in and around the villages but more commonly they appeared to be packed with mud and sporting a colourful array of wild flowers and other plants. The region is under snow for at least 6 months of the year.

Georgia (Cont.)

More walls to the East



Sighnaghi is a small medieval walled town in Kakheti, the easternmost region of Georgia, a two hour ride from Tbilisi in a shared taxi. Its fortifying wall (previous page) with 23 towers and 6 gates, one of the longest in Georgia, was built in 1770, encircling the hillside town. Several more modern walls are in the town and the arrangement of stones in the next photo was a common pattern.



Dry stone walls were not obvious in the villages we visited in Svaneti but a Google search for a Georgian example turned up this one, near Lagodekhi, also in the Kakheti region towards the Azerbaijan border. I am sure there must be more, for someone else to find.



Working holidays *By Bruce Munday*

The website features a header with "Cotswolds Rural Skills" and navigation links for Home, About, Courses, Competitions, Team Building, Walling Academy, Contact, Book courses now!, and a search bar. A logo for the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is also present. The main content area shows a photograph of a dry stone wall in a rural setting with fields in the background. To the right, a sidebar lists course categories: Dry Stone Walling, Blacksmithing & Stone Carving, Hedgelaying & Scything, Lime Mortar & Tile Roofing, Horse Logging & Coppicing, Wool Weaving, Flax & Thatching, Brushcutter Beginners, and 50th Anniversary Courses. A testimonial at the bottom left reads: "Beautiful location. Excellent instructors" - Alan (Burford, Oxfordshire). A green button on the right says "Gift vouchers available here". A footer at the bottom includes a welcome message, a newsletter sign-up link, and a copyright notice: "© Cotswolds Rural Skills Ltd 2018".

This issue of *The Flag Stone* features dry stone walls in Europe (and elsewhere if Georgia doesn't quite qualify and perhaps Britain post Brexit). There is so much wall-history to be had there and it is indeed still a living craft.

Next time I visit UK I will do a walling course. There are many on offer from groups affiliated with the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain. You will find links to the Otley & Yorkshire Dales Branch, West of Scotland Walling Association and Cotswolds Rural Skills on our website dswaa.org.au/dry-stone-walls/international/

If any readers have had experience with these courses we would welcome their reviews.

Through the eyes of honest travellers

By Bruce Munday and collaborators

Many friends travelling overseas send me greetings accompanied by a photo of the latest dry stone wall they have come across. These gestures are most welcome and actually quite touching - to know that when someone sees a nice wall on the other side of the planet they actually think of me.

As this edition was to have a European 'flavour', I asked three travelling friends to also send me their thoughts on the walls – their reactions not as dedicated wall spotters (like many DSWAA members) but as casual observers who stumble across walls in their travels. Thanks to each of them – they will probably never send me photos again.

Brian Cooke, ecologist, Canberra - notes from Portugal

Around Vairão, in northern Portugal where I have spent some time lately, there is a labyrinth of high stone walls that border every narrow cobbled road and even the smallest laneways. Many of the walls are over 2 m high, making it difficult to view the surrounding farms. Even walking can be difficult; one must stay alert and keep close to the walls to avoid cars and trucks.

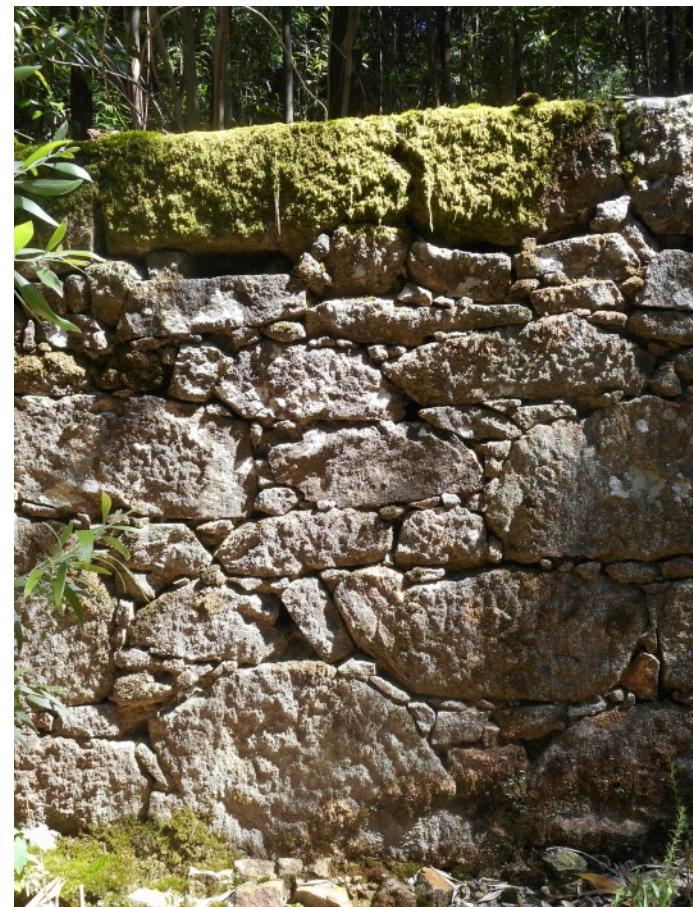
The country is generally poor granitic sand but the high rainfall and mild temperatures mean that there is a lot of organic material in the valleys, converting sand into productive brown loam. Almost every major cross road has a granite cross, the earliest dated being 1600 so I am guessing that the stone walls were built around the same time. Their height may be a simple consequence of the amount of stone that needed to be moved to create arable fields. Not only did this clear the land, it created laneways protecting the crops from cattle moving through.



It seems likely that the area was developed after Portugal established colonies in the 1400s (e.g. Brazil, Angola, Goa and Ceylon, Timor L'Este and Macau) and Portuguese population grew during the 1500s. Those colonies brought not only wealth, but also meant a change from crops like wheat to maize, introduced from South America. Maize was far more productive in the humid 'Atlantic' climate and is still the main crop grown today –

I haven't seen a cereal crop in the district. I've heard it said that Portugal's population trebled with that change.

As the picture below shows, many of the walls are beautifully constructed and have been colonized by plants adapted to those habitats especially where lanes wind through wilder areas.



About 120 km northeast of here there are some really old stone structures that date back to the Neolithic. Lots of simple dolmans and the 'walls' are more markers of paddock boundaries rather than structures for confining livestock. People shepherded sheep then I guess.

Travellers (cont.)



Lisa Robins, environmental scientist, Canberra - Dallying in the Dales

According to Google, 'dallying' is to "act or move slowly", but also to "have a casual romantic or sexual liaison with" – my dallying in north-east England's Yorkshire Dales was most certainly the former, not the latter.

My first impressions of the Dales mirror that of James Herriot in 'All Creatures Great and Small', as the young veterinarian looks out the bus window and takes in the vastness and stark beauty of the landscape:

In the valley bottoms, rivers twisted among the trees and solid grey-stone farmhouses lay among islands of cultivated land which pushed bright green promontories up the hillsides into the dark tide of heather which lapped from the summits.

I had seen the fences and hedges give way to dry stone walls which bordered the roads, enclosed the fields and climbed endlessly over the surrounding fells. The walls were everywhere, countless miles of them, tracing their patterns high on the green uplands.

With the benefit of the public footpath system, ramblers (and dalliers of whichever form) have every opportunity to see dry stone walls up close and even clamber over them. Investing in an ordinance survey map is a smart move, as farmers who aren't fond of the public right of way system through their agricultural lands are very fond of removing the directional signposts. Another of James Herriot's quotations gives a taste of the locals:

About halfway down we came across a group of men at the age-old task of 'walling' – repairing a gap in one of the dry stone walls which trace their patterns everywhere on the green slope of the Dales. One of the men looked up. 'Nice mornin', Mr Skipton', he sang out cheerfully. 'Bugger t'mornin'. Get on wi' some work,' grunted old John in reply and the man smiled contentedly as though he had received a compliment.



Although I'm not a waller, I am a keen (amateur) photographer. My shots shown here are to tempt those wallers who are would-be travellers to visit this stunning landscape to admire not only the walls but also the magnificently crafted traditional stone barns that dot the fields and are a distinctive landscape feature. These barns were used to house cattle over the cold winter months, but are mostly now in a derelict state. There are some signs of renovation for farm stays and the like, but most barns aren't located in readily accessible parts of the landscape.



Check out all the great things to do in the Yorkshire Dales – I plan to go back, you should too: <http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk>

Travellers (cont.)



Kay Seirup, Pixar tech wizard (ret.), San Francisco – Walls of Cinque Terre

Recently in Europe, I was amazed by the dry stone walls I kept seeing, particularly in the Lake District of England and then Cinque Terre in Italy – aspects of the scenery I had scarcely thought about before reading Bruce Munday's book, *Those Dry Stone Walls*.

In the Lake District dry stone walling to enclose fields goes back at least as far as the Iron Age. Staying in Keswick, county Cumbria, I hiked the surrounding countryside, dry stone walls bordering many of the roads and paths, and stone forming steps and supporting the paths.

I then travelled to Cinque Terre in the Liguria region of Italy. I had heard about the beauty and amazing terraced hillsides of the Cinque Terre National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The five villages that form Cinque Terre on the Mediterranean coast between Genoa and La Spezia are criss crossed with dry stone walls, estimated to be a length at least equal to the Great Wall of China, some dating back a 1000 years. These were built to aid in cultivating the land because the hillsides are so steep. Unfortunately the area faces an uncertain future as there have been some deadly mudslides and rockfalls in the last few years. These have been directly attributed to the lack of maintenance on the stone walls. The population of the area has decreased dramatically and there are not enough people now able to maintain the walls.

From my balcony in the town of Manarola I could look out at the terraced hillside with miles of dry stone walls bordering vineyards, olive groves, and gardens.

The wall pictured below formed a semi-circle against the hillside immediately behind my apartment. As wall spot-

ters do, I wondered if there might be some mortar hiding behind, but there was no sign.



On one memorable hike from Vernazza to Monterosso, the views were incredible, the countryside beautiful with citrus and olive groves, vineyards and the natural flora of the area: maritime and

Aleppo pine, cork oak and chestnut to name a few. Some of the paths between the villages were closed shortly after I arrived due to erosion, although I believe they are open again now. There are organisations restoring the terraces in the Cinque Terre National Park, hopefully to preserve the area for future generations.

This has whetted my appetite for places where stone walls are part of the landscape.



Back to Oatlands by Jim Holdsworth



Garden wall and (partly) restored well by 'Wally' Carline at the Old Rectory in Oatlands

The Association's weekend field trips in northern Tasmania last March, which were reported in detail in The Flag Stone # 36, were complemented for some of us by a visit to the pretty town of Oatlands on the Monday following our tours of the Launceston area.

Oatlands sits just off the Midland Highway in central Tasmania and promotes itself as the State's most intact Georgian village. The Association visited the area in October 2006 and had a most enjoyable weekend under the excellent guidance of Eleanor and Barry Bjorksten. That visit was a truly memorable one, a highlight of which was the construction of a dry stone seat in the grounds of the Midlands Health Centre by the feisty George Gunn, on holidays from Scotland, and Gerhard Steiniger from South Australia.

The visit this year in March was hosted by Ian 'Wally' and Val Carline who last year moved from Stone Hut in South Australia to Oatlands. Their story, of how this lovely town became their home unexpectedly makes amusing listening. With Wally's skills as a waller and Val's enthusiasm for just about anything, Oatlands is lucky to have these two in its midst.

For those of us who visited in March, we were treated to visits to properties and places where Wally has put his great skill to good use. Oatlands abounds in dry stone walls and other features; some old and many of more recent construction. Stone is the defining feature of Oatlands buildings and its setting in its rolling rural landscape. To see new walls adding to this rich tapestry was a delight.



Left: DSWAA members at new wall by Wally Carline near farmhouse just outside Oatlands. Right: Stones for a new garden wall at the Old Rectory in Oatlands, meticulously laid out before build.

A Stone Upon a Stone Exhibition (Ballarat Shire)

By Raelene Marshall, DSWAA committee

Dry stone walls shaping Australia's cultural landscape

This article follows companion pieces in issues 34-36 of *The Flag Stone* featuring the Corangamite, Melton and Glenelg Shire Panels.

In May 1999 and in October 2000 the Australian Government supported a Touring Exhibition designed to capture, promote and affect an awareness of the history and cultural significance of some of Australia's dry stone walls. Produced and curated by Raelene Marshall, the research and development involved twelve Local Government areas in Victoria and New South Wales. Local farming communities and other interested parties generously came together to produce the information, histories and images of their significant dry stone walls and structures.

The Flag Stone will continue to feature these local areas in subsequent issues. A view of the Exhibition can be found at <http://www.astoneuponastone.com/exhib.html>

Ballarat Shire Panel

City of Ballarat – A Stone Upon A Stone



Ballarat, a celebrated gold mining city, is built on a small lava plain with a number of prominent eruption points such as Sovereign Hill and Mt. Warrenheip. These flows produced an abundance of basalt (bluestone) on and under the surface of the landscape.

Sovereign Hill recreates earlier mining days in Ballarat when alluvial deposits below four separate basalt flows were mined to depths of 150 metres. Over 290 tonnes of gold were recovered from the mine.

For over 40,000 years the Watha Wurrung people lived in harmony with the land surrounding Yuille's Swamp (now Lake Wendouree) and the adjacent volcanic landscape. Ballarat is an aboriginal word meaning 'resting place'.

The first white settlers began moving into the Ballarat region in early 1838, and they spoke of 'a few hundred' people living in the area. For thirteen years a handful of settlers occupied the land and employed shepherds to protect and contain

of gold were recovered from the Ballarat mining district.

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aboriginals' living in and around the area. For thirteen years a handful of settlers occupied the land and employed shepherds to protect and contain their stock.

Tranquillity of the pastoral runs ended in 1851 when gold was discovered initially at Clunes then Buninyong and Poverty Point (near Sovereign Hill) and from that period on nothing was ever the same again. A dramatic exodus from Melbourne and other areas swelled the goldfield population to in excess of 40,000 in weeks.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Ballarat experienced a period of rapid and optimistic development where bluestone was quarried and used extensively as a building fabric. Naturally occurring field stone was also abundant especially on the volcanic plains surrounding Mt. Buninyong.

The first settlers in the Buninyong region were predominantly of Scottish origin. It was these people and their descendants who recognised the potential of the field stone. They turned their skills, brought with them from their homelands, utilising the field stone to construct dry stone walls.

The Buninyong dry stone walls exhibit two distinct characteristics – basic walls for stock containment and walls of large cross sectional area which appear to have been built to consume the abundant field stone.

Today the City of Ballarat, which incorporates the township of Buninyong, is the third largest regional centre in Victoria. The walls at Buninyong are now rapidly becoming part of the urban landscape.

Timeline

1841 Buninyong first settled.

1851 Gold discovered.

1854 Eureka Stockade Rebellion.

1863 Ballarat declared a borough.

1864 Buninyong proclaimed a Shire.

1865 First dry stone walls in Buninyong.

1870 Ballarat proclaimed a City.

1870s Mining depression resulting in significant loss of population.

1918 End of large scale mining in Ballarat.

1994 Six local government areas amalgamated, with Buninyong coming under City of Ballarat.

"In 1870 the grazing lease was forfeited. During the goldrush many miners settled down and married in the district and as the gold ran out wanted blocks of land to make a living...it was probably about this time that the stone fences were built."

Willilinchina – original settlement on Stuart Creek?

By Rick Moore, John McDouall Stuart Soc.

As they pound along the mid section of the Oodnadatta Track, today's travellers often look for some of the historical aspects of the region near Curdimurka. It is there that The Ghan Railway Preservation Society has done such a good job of holding on to a significant part of the far north's history. Alerted by the cairn commemorating John McDouall Stuart finding Chambers Creek 40 km to the southwest, travellers may even wonder a little more about what people did out here and where they lived. But it's unlikely they'll see the hut at Willilinchina.

Listed on the State Heritage Register, Willilinchina is located on Stuart Creek (aka Chambers Creek), about 70 km upstream from Curdimurka, on Stuart Creek Station. It is one of several buildings of significant age in the region. One large ruin complex in the region is on the banks of Chambers Creek, near the present day Stuart Creek homestead. It is a former homestead complex of Stuart Creek Station. Another ruin of age is Mount Hamilton homestead, N-N-W of Stuart Creek homestead, the run surveyed in 1859 by Stuart.

Stuart, his companion Foster, and an indigenous person referred to as "the blackfellow" first reached the region in June of 1858 while seeking the infamous Wingilpin, a place reputed to be of good water. Stuart had suspected that Cooper's Creek may be in the region, based on his experiences with Captain Charles Sturt in 1844-45.



Given that regular visits were being made by Europeans to the locality from late 1858 onwards, it is not surprising that some sort of building may have been constructed. It is possible that it was built by Stuart and his companions, although there is no record of this being so. Re-evaluation of information recorded by two of Stuart's companions confirms this as the first building of Europeans on Stuart Creek, and the hut probably dates to 1860-61. It is certainly older than the homestead complex on the banks of the creek commonly referred to as the 'original' site.

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Membership

Annual membership fee

Corporate \$80

Professional \$50

Single \$30 (\$80 for 3 years)

Family \$50 (\$130 for 3 years)

Payment

Cheque: DSWAA Inc. and posted to DSWAA Membership, 33A Rothwell Road Little River VIC 3211; or

Bank Deposit at any branch of the ANZ Bank or EFT: BSB 013 373, Ac. no. 4997 47356

Clearly indicate membership identity of payer

New members

Please complete the online membership form on our website: dswaa.org.au

Alternatively email or post name, address, phone number/s, and area of interest (eg waller, farmer, heritage, etc) to the membership secretary (above).

Renewals

Annual fees are due May 31 after the first full year of membership. We send renewal notices prior to this.

Photographs

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