

A Message from your President

Greetings! We are an Association that neither has sportsfields, clubrooms, trophy cabinets or the other physical attributes of many clubs and voluntary organisations. Nor do we have Halls of Fame, uniforms, winner's pennants or a guaranteed media presence.

Our Newsletter is the most tangible evidence of the Association's existence. Over time, the Association will accrue a track record, a heritage and a reputation; hopefully based on our success in achieving our primary goal of celebrating the place in Australia's physical and cultural history that dry stone walls represent.

This Newsletter is our fourth and, like previous issues, brings you a variety of news and stories of interest about Walls and their people, both local and overseas. And as such, the Newsletter serves as a historical record of the Association's activities and the issues that affect Walls at that time.

As your Committee continues to develop ways of raising the image and profile of the Association and the craft of walling, it is the Newsletter which, for the time being, is our main marketing tool. This raises the topic of the identity of the Newsletter, and opportunity of giving it a name; a title that uniquely identifies it as the Association's voice and record. I therefore seek your suggestions, which we'll publish in a forthcoming issue.

I am often fascinated with the wide range of people who have an interest in dry stone walls and who form our Newsletter's readership. Whether they are landowners, historians, townfolk, landscapers, wallers, history buffs or whatever, many have fascinating backgrounds that have brought them into contact with one or other aspect of dry stone walls. At our April meeting, the diversity of those who attended the field visit to three gardens in the Camperdown area was a testament to the wide appeal that Walls can have.

Our guest speaker at the Annual General Meeting on Saturday 18 June is one such person. Sandy Roberts is best known for his role as a sports broadcaster at Channel 7, but until recently he owned a property near Lismore with walls on it. At his new property in West Gippsland, he has had a wall built "because I just love them".

So.....what name would you give this Newsletter?

Best wishes *Jim*



Gathering Stones... Two instances have recently brought to light the vulnerability of dry stone walls and the sensitive nature of the current inadequate protection for walls and the universal craft that they represent. In March this year, the DSWAA was contacted by a Western District farmer who sought help to prevent what she believed was to be the necessary demolition of a dry stone wall on the Macarthur to Hawkesdale Road in the Moyne Shire by proponents of a wind farm in that area. Removal of large components for the wind farm would require removal of some walls along the roadside. The second instance involved the likely damage to a wall on Robinson's Road, Truganina, in the Shire of Melton, by contractors laying underground services for the Remand Centre under construction nearby. In both cases the Statement of Purposes of the Association assisted in reaching mutually agreeable resolutions of these issues.

Calendar of Meeting and Field Tour Dates

Month	Date	Location
June	18	Scienceworks (AGM)
July 31 City of Whittlesea Heritage Program Bus Tour		
August	13 & 14	Walhalla
October	8	t.b.a

See further details Issue No. 5

FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS

June 18 AGM Scienceworks: 11.00 a.m Meeting in the Conference Room: 2.00 -4.00 p.m Auditorium: Guest Speakers: Well known Channel 7 Sports presenter Sandy Roberts. President Jim Holdsworth. Sec Raelene Marshall: Location 2 Booker Street Spotswood 9392 4800 Melway Map 56 B1 www.scienceworks.museum.vic.gov.au Entry Free to paid up DSWAA Members on presentation of DSWAA ID

July 31 City of Whittlesea Dry Stone Walls Bus Tour and Slide Show: 10.00 - 11a.m Slide Show: 11am - 12 noon Lunch (provided): 12pm - 5pm Bus Tour: Location - Meet at Fountainview Room, City of Whittlesea Council Offices, Ferres Blvd South Morang Melway Map Ref: 183 A10: Cost \$15: Bookings Essential (30 seats only available) Contact Renee Steain on 9217 2377 or e-mail renee.steain@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

August 13 and 14 Meeting and Field Trip: Walhalla Sat 13 11.00a.m Members Meeting at John and Deidre Collier's 70 Sanders Road Garfield 5629 1047. BYO Lunch: Sat 14 Walhalla Dry Stone Walls Field Trip conducted by long-time local identity and author John Aldersea. Due to the nature of this field trip numbers will be limited (Members first option) Costs: (Sat 13: overnight accommodation and meals) Sat 14: Field Trip \$5.00 (members) \$10.00 (visitors) Further Details available dswaa@optusnet.com.au 0418 523900

A reminder that: 1 Membership Fees are due and payable by May 31st 2 Next Issue Newsletter articles are due August 21st Send to Sec. dswaa@optusnet.com.au

Cheers Raelene

February 12 General Meeting and Field Tour Herring Island, South Yarra

The British sculptor Andy Goldsworthy has probably done more for the artistic side of dry stone construction than any other person. He has artworks in many locations in several countries and has published several books of photographs of his works in stunning landscape settings.

On Saturday 12 February, a small group of members enjoyed a memorable outing to Herring Island, a man-made island of a couple of hectares in the Yarra River where Parks Victoria maintains a permanent outdoor sculpture exhibition.

The main outcome of the Meeting was a resolution that the Association's Model Rules should be altered to better reflect our requirements. In essence, the intention was to establish the period of office of the Committee at two years instead of one, to increase the number of Committee members and to alter the date of the end of our financial year from 30 June to 30 May. These changes would assist in the administration of the Association as our tasks increase and our responsibilities as the voice of dry stone walls in Australia expands.

After a picnic lunch, we wandered across the Island, visiting the various sculptures that are scattered throughout its hilly bushland. Not all sculptures are of stone, and collectively they represent an eclectic mix of large and small works by local and overseas artists.

We are fortunate in Victoria to have two works: *Cairn* and *Stone House* 1997, constructed by Andy Goldsworthy on Herring Island in Melbourne. *Cairn*, made from Castlemaine slate, sits in the only natural valley on the Island and is one of a series of markers across the world.



Stone House is made from Dunkeld sandstone is sited in an area which he called the "dip" of the Island. Best viewed from a distance it responds to the challenge to work with the large red stone which sits in a wall built stone by stone which into the levee bank. It is regrettable that they are not able to be more readily enjoyed, as access to Herring Island is by private boat or the intermittent punt operated by Parks Victoria.

Herring Island is well worth a visit, for its history and its rustic setting as well as its sculptures. For those members who attended the February meeting, the visit was a pleasant contrast to previous rural property visits, particularly for the opportunity to see the skills of dry stone construction applied to art works.

Jim Holdsworth

April 9 Field Tour to Three Gardens in and near Camperdown Special and General Meetings and Gardens'

The hottest April day for twenty years, a blistering northerly blowing across the plains, snatching hats, papers and conversations on its way, could not deter about eighty people from turning up to the DSWAA field trip to three gardens 'Wuurong', 'Purrumbete' and 'Meekri' in the Camperdown district in South West Victoria. We started at 'Wuurong', a bluestone homestead which dates back to the mid nineteenth century and is today is the home of Dr. John and Caroline Menzies. The property, surrounded by extensive gardens has a beautiful view over Lake Bullen Merri and a series of stone walls ranging from retaining walls, terraces and the front gateway to the homestead. Some built prior to the 1900s others in the 1980's by Tom and Graham Larkins and more recently the wonderful retaining wall in front of the cottage by John Menzies a keen dry stone waller.



Next stop was 'Purrumbete', the original seat of the Manifold

family. The current owners, Max and Anne Magilton gave a short talk on the history of the homestead and the gardens. We then inspected the retaining walls on the east side of the homestead and the walls at the entrance of the cave where boats once were moored. Again, Tom Larkins was responsible for much of 'Purrumbete's stonewalling.

At 'Meekri' Robert and Louise Manifold are in the middle of landscaping their garden. Stone walls are a strong architectural feature of the planned garden and, as such, we were able to look at several recently built examples, some of the most interesting being two single stone walls, one lining the vegetable garden and the other, a low single stone wall under a line of buddleias, and two walls that rise out of the ground like dragon spines.

Alistair Tune, who built most of the walls at 'Meekri', gave a very interesting talk on the technical aspects of building different styles of wall, from single to dressed, from retaining to free standing, which increased everyone's knowledge and respect for his craft. These gardens all relate back to the geographic landscape surrounding Camperdown, to the basalt plains and rocky barriers, and to the historical landscape, where local stone was used to build the stonewalls and the infra-structure of early European settlement. It was fascinating to see this relationship in old and new gardens and to see that the living craft of dry stone walling produces not only functional structure in the garden but real works of art with a beauty their own.

Louise Manifold

The Garden Wall

You wouldn't call Steve lazy. That would be quite unfair. A lazy person is one who takes more reward than his efforts deserve. Such as a lawyer, or that chap in Lawson's story, who impressed the drover's wife with a huge stack of firewood – but it was hollow. Steve wasn't lazy: he was intelligent, which is a long word meaning one who seeks the easiest way of doing something and eventually discovers that the long way is the only way that works.

Steve was new to the stony rises country and in love with it. 'Stones', he would say, 'Are forever. Something built with stone stays built.' He was going to build himself a stone cottage. The farmers who were born in the district knew exactly to what extent he was right, and that they couldn't make hay in their stony paddocks like the big-income flatlanders, but they didn't like to see the flatland cows shivering in the winter gales. So they were pleased that Steve could see glory in what the outsiders ridiculed.

The government, though bounteous, was not quite generous enough for Steve's tastes, and at times he was reduced to offering his exercise in exchange for money. Thus it was that he came to talking about building a stone wall for the widow Johnson's vegie garden. 'It'll keep the wind off, and even stop a bushfire,' he said. Mrs. Johnson had always wanted a wall there, for those precise reasons, and a very moderate hourly rate was agreed to because what Steve really wanted was to experiment with the magic of building a stone wall. At any higher rate he wouldn't get the job.

After the first day, Steve decided to work only in the last two hours of daylight – the first two were not to be thought of – because the flies were so bad that year that even with corks hanging round his hat, he could barely see what he was doing.

After the first week he'd erected several metres of impressive wall. The stones, mostly quite small, were placed to make beautifully smooth sides. Larger stones formed a capping. The end, where the gate was to be, was neatly held together with concrete.

Fred Nolan, who was courting Mrs. Johnson though neither of them quite knew it, was visiting. 'Very nice,' he said. 'But isn't the base rather narrow? Shouldn't it be two stones wide?'

'Same as that,' said Steve, pointing to an old wall nearby. The base of this one had a single row of stones so big that only a few of medium-size were needed above them to bring the wall to its full height. Not a professional wall. Not neat like Steve's.

'Mmm,' said Fred as he looked critically along Steve's wall from one end. 'And you haven't dug a trench. The rabbits'll soon undermine this lot.' 'I don't think so,' said Steve, who was starting to tire of trying to please the old fool. 'And if they get under, we can just put a strip of netting there to stop them.'

In the second week Steve limped over to the house to ask for a cash advance because he needed a pair of steel-capped boots. And finished the first side of the

garden. In the third week he was getting into stride and finished another side. In the fourth week some cows came to see what he was doing. They were on the other side, of course, of the old wall with the big stones, which was to be the fourth side. Even though Steve was close by, finishing the last bit of his wall, they crowded up and some at the back pushed for a better view. One at the front was scratching her jaw against the top of the old wall.

What exactly caused the trouble we never found out but Mrs. Johnson came running when she heard a loud rumbling noise and some yelling. She was just in time to see the last of the third side come tumbling down like dominoes. The cows were running too – away.

Steve was badly disappointed. He couldn't just leave the mess, but he'd been getting pretty tired of lifting up stones and dropping them and bashing his fingers and putting on band-aids, and was looking forward to finishing. So, being an intelligent man rather than a lazy one, he accepted the inevitable and re-built the fallen wall, using bigger stones at the bottom, wider apart than before. Not long after that he left the stony rises and was last heard of in Queensland.

And the only part of his wall standing today is that last side. The wide one!

Gary Richardson

Editor's Note: *Gary started farming in the Stony Rises, Pirron Yallock (V), in 1975. He says "This was about 100 years less clever than the early squatters who got out of the Rises when the rabbits got in, and had stone walls built for them instead. If you live in the Stones you soon learn how to patch a stone wall, and how not to. Steve really did build some some wall, for the reasons described. His wall didn't fall down, because the cows couldn't reach it. The one with the huge stones, frequently patched by me frequently fell down. There should be a moral here. Eventually I retired to live in a stone house in an irrigation area which means I have no fear of bushfires, but cannot see what I'm doing in summer because of the flies"!!!*

Dry Stone Walls Workshop

Until his death in 1998, fourth generation waller Bill Harlock was the instructor at Glenormiston and in fact the magnificent dry stone wall and entrance gateway to the Glenormiston Campus is dedicated to his memory More recently David Long has been the instructor. The DSWAA and certainly Corangamite Arts are often asked how and where one can learn the craft of dry stone walling. In 2005 Ruth Pollard has conducted workshops at Glenormiston near Terang. The next one is Oct 1st & 2nd
A Two day advanced workshop covering:

*Construction of arches within a wall

*Construction of pillars in a range of shapes

Saturday and Sunday 9 AM - 4 PM Cost \$300 including BBQ lunch. For bookings and further information phone

University of Melbourne Glenormiston Campus on
5557 8200

Josie Black OAM

Extract from School Newsletter to Parents: from Jeremy Madin Principle Cranbrook School NSW

Dear Parents

Last weekend, fired by an ambition to build an elegant wall at our bush retreat, I took part in a dry stone walling workshop at Mt Annan. I ended up with blisters, a sore back and bruises ... the latter painfully reminding me of rather too many lapses in concentration.

I learnt much. I discovered that very few rocks are ideal for dry stone walling. One spends a disproportionate amount of time wielding sledgehammer, wedges and scutching tool knocking stones into shape. I found that when shaping rock, brain is mightier than brawn. Misdirected strength means ruined stones, split in unexpected ways ... useless for the job in hand.

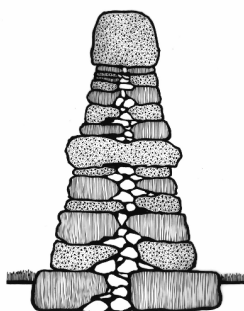
I learnt that for every metre length of dry stone wall high enough to deter stock one needs a tonne of rock. And in finding, sorting, breaking and organising stone, amateurs like me lift, remove and re-lift considerably more than that. I was shown that to make a dry stone wall strong enough to last 100 years, the builder has to concentrate far more on getting the insides right than on ensuring the beauty of the faces.

Laying proper foundations is the starting point. We all know that. But in dry stone walling it takes infinitely longer than one expects, especially as each piece of rock must be set length ways towards the centre of the wall; in other words, at right angles to the face. From the outside we see very little of each carefully chosen stone, just one of its shorter faces. So too with every higher course; the essential bonding takes place within the wall.

Secondly, connections between rocks build strength. Every face of every stone inside the wall must press tight against at least part of the face of another. Maximum friction is vital, or a point of weakness will develop over time.

Third, the centre of the wall cannot be filled with earth or gravel. Fine grained material will sink or leach away over time. Although looking strong on the outside, in time the wall will collapse. Each big or little gap must be filled with the right shaped rock, on the principle of "one gap, one rock"; and in doing so one must be mindful of the need to ensure that each course is properly flat before the next is laid. Constant stone shaping and fiddling is de rigeur when packing the gaps.

Finally, after every few courses one must find and carve into optimum shape a mighty "through stone"; to be placed, as its name suggests, right through the wall, bonding both sides, like the crossbar of the letter A.



On inspection, if any facing stone wobbles to the touch or - worse - is loose enough to pull out, all upper courses have to be removed and then built again once the offending piece has been re-shaped.

I re-shaped a lot of stone. Eventually I learnt to slow down, think harder, be more thorough about each piece, and seek inspection, appraisal and advice more often ... from fellow learners as well as from the master craftsman.

I'm doubtful, now, about the idea of building my own wall. Even if I could work at the experienced craftsman's rate of a couple of metres per day, I don't think I'd live long enough to complete it. Steel posts and barbed wire are beginning to appeal to my aesthetic sensibilities.

However, along with the other members of the motley band of bushies and pseudo-bushies from Bathurst, Braidwood and Bellevue Hill, I felt some satisfaction on Sunday afternoon, gazing at our few metres of finished wall in the Banksia garden at Mt Annan. We had learnt much more than how to build walls. What we had been doing is a kind of metaphor for the work of all involved in enterprises like schools. It's not just what you see that counts, it's the foundations, and the bonding of the parts, and the carefully placed throughstones that together give substance to the final "product".

Furthermore, like building dry stone walls, human enterprises have their share of almost intractable challenges. But when guiding the minds and shaping the character of our young charges gets too hard we can take solace from some Yorkshire walling philosophy - when certain stones, however shaped or re-shaped, refuse to fit any which way, it's best to stop and have a cup of tea. On returning to the wall, the problem will be solved. The stone will fit.

There's something in that, for parents as well as teachers.

Jeremy Madin



Jeremy is third from left

Researching Dry Stone Walls: The Remarkable Serpentine and Blacks' Walls at Lake Condah.

One of the most exciting discoveries made during recent research into Victoria's historic dry stone walls is the story of the remarkable Serpentine and Blacks' Walls at Lake Condah in the Western District. The origin of those walls, which have survived for more than a century, can be traced back to early European pastoral settlement from the 1840s in the Lake Condah area, and later to the establishment in the 1860s of an Aboriginal Mission there. The Mission Reserve stretched from the south side of Darlots Creek and the nearby Serpentine Wall down to the north side of Blacks' Wall. The site of the walls covered five crown allotments. This land was later, in the early years of the 20th century, selected by the pioneer Dashper family. This followed the return of the Mission Reserve land (which contained the Serpentine Wall and part of the Blacks' Wall) to the Victorian Government. An assessment of the walls made at the time of the transfer to the Dashpers confirmed that the original construction and maintenance of the walls was carried out by district Aboriginal workers. *Today, most of the former Dashper land at Lake Condah, north of Blacks' Wall, is under the management and control of the Aboriginal community.*

RECORDS THAT TELL THE STORY

The story of the historic dry stone walls at Lake Condah was pieced together from a number of sources. Most important was an examination of historical records held at the Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV) in North Melbourne, and published material concerning the Lake Condah area held at the State Library of Victoria (SLV) and in other repositories. These publications included heritage studies and local histories. In addition, much useful information was gathered from knowledgeable local people.

Lands Department records relating to Lake Condah were viewed at the PROV and were of particular significance. Selection files from the 1870s and later, provided a rich source of information and answered many questions, such as who built the walls and when, how and why they were built. Under Victoria's Selection Acts of the 1860s and 1870s, lessees of land were required to provide detailed information about improvements made to their properties. This included information about the construction of buildings, boundary fences, walls and dams, and details concerning the clearing and cultivation of the land. Such improvements had to be carried out before a selector could apply for a Crown Grant, which gave greater security of ownership. When a Selection lease was transferred, improvements made to the property had to be assessed and the previous lessee compensated. In the case of the former Aboriginal Mission allotments at Lake Condah, the only improvements made prior to the Dashper occupancy were the erection of the two long dry stone walls.

The PROV's splendid collection of Selection files is available to members of the general public.

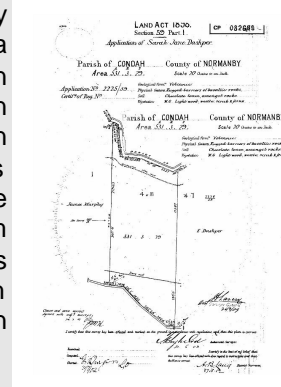
Anybody wishing to search these files to uncover the story of a particular property and its stone walls, can order the relevant documents from the North Melbourne offices of the PROV. If a researcher holds a current Reader's Ticket, files can be ordered over the Internet. It is important, however, before beginning such a search, to have a Title description of the property, the Parish name, and the allotment and section number of the portion of land being researched.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE TWO WALLS

Although the early history of the Serpentine and Blacks' Walls is somewhat different, an examination of Lands Department records confirmed that district Aboriginal labour was responsible for the original construction and maintenance of both of these long dry stone walls.

The Serpentine Wall

All the information collected so far suggests that the Serpentine Wall is the older of the two historic dry stone walls at Lake Condah. This wall is located on the south side of Darlots Creek and extends from east to west for about 2,000 acres towards Lake Condah in an uneven, snakelike manner, hence its popular name. This long wall crosses five crown allotments, Allotments 1,4,5,6 and 7 in Section 11, Parish of Condah. The wall probably dates from the pastoral era and may have been constructed as the northern boundary of the Ellengowan run. This 8,000 acre run was established south of Lake Condah in the 1840s and, from the early 1850s, was associated with the Learmonth family, prominent Western District pioneers.



Many Glenelg Shire pastoral pioneers used the local volcanic stones to construct dry stone walls to mark their boundaries and later to protect their properties from the rabbit plague, which spread across Victoria during the second half of the 19th century. According to the Victorian Fencing Acts passed from the late 1860s, boundaries of properties had to be marked by a fence (post and rail, paling or wire), by a hedge (a 'live fence'), a log fence, or a wall, provided it was of substantial material, at least four feet high and not less than two feet at the bottom, or by a combination of these. Occupiers of adjacent properties had to share the cost of construction.

Evidence found in Victorian Lands Department records suggested that the construction of the Serpentine Wall most probably pre-dated the passage of the Fencing Acts and that it was associated with early European pastoral settlement in the area. There was confirmation that this historic wall was constructed by Aboriginal labour. The Rev. Henry Stahle, who was in charge of the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission from 1875, writing in November 1902, explained that 'The Serpentine line of stone wall was erected before I took charge of the station but was kept in repair by the local blacks until

the stony Reserve was handed back to the Lands department.' The 'stony Reserve' was the Lake Condah land in Section 11 held by the Mission. It was common practice throughout the region for Aboriginal men to find work on district pastoral properties.

Blacks' Wall

There is evidence in Lands Department Selection files (held at the PROV) that Blacks' Wall to the south of the Serpentine Wall was constructed in c1875 by a team of Aboriginal workers from the Lake Condah Mission, supervised by the Rev. Henry Stahle, the Mission's superintendent. Like the Serpentine Wall it stretched across five crown allotments.

This wall was known to John Dashper from c1881, when he



purchased Allotment 2 on the wall's southern side. Dashper was a stonemason from Devonshire in England who settled at Lake Condah in 1879. Although he was skilled in the construction of stone walls, most probably of the kind built in England, Dashper claimed no part in the construction of Blacks' Wall and, in 1906, told how it had been 'erected (sic) by blacks.' This account of the building of the wall was confirmed by Stahle in November 1902, when he told how 'the amount of stonewalling which was done by me with Aborigines under my charge was something over 4 miles.' He described the wall as '3 feet wide at the bottom and 5 feet high and was valued at the time it was erected, at 35 pounds per mile.' He told how 'some places over which it had to be erected.(were) very steep and very rough, so that if the work had been done by white labour it would have cost considerably more.'

After the Aboriginal Mission land was handed back to the Government, and was thrown open for selection, Dashper applied for the 2000 acres, which included both the Serpentine and Blacks' Walls. By this time, Dashper was known throughout the district for his skills as a stonemason and had supervised many of the buildings and walls constructed for the Mission on the other side of Darlots Creek. This work included the historic bluestone St Mary's Church of England, opened in 1885 but now demolished.

SURVEYING and ASSESSING the WALLS: 1901- 2

Before the former Mission land in Section 11 could be leased to the Dashper family, improvements carried out by its former owners had to be assessed and compensation paid. As discussed earlier, the only improvements were the two long dry stone walls. A number of interesting Surveyor's plans and field notes, prepared in 1901-2 for the five allotments, have survived in Lands Department Selection files held at the PROV. These files also contain correspondence and maps which show the location of the two walls

south of Darlots Creek. *This discovery provides exciting clues for researching Victoria's other historic dry stone walls.*

Surveyor's sketches and field notes were prepared for each of the five allotments applied for by the Dashper family. Underneath the sketches of the 'Serpentine Wall' it was noted that this wall was 'in parts not continuous in connecting with natural barriers of rocks in stone wall'. The southern wall (known now as Blacks' Wall) was described as 'in good condition' and valued at 10 pounds. The Surveyor, J.Twist, noted on 3 December 1902, that he had reported separately on 'each of the 5 files' relating to the allotments and concluded that only the stone wall which crossed the blocks near the south end was of value in working the properties.

Nevertheless, in April 1903. John Dashper in a letter to the local MP, Ewen Cameron, complained that the 'wols(sic) are not sheep proof nor rabbit proof as sheep just get over these wols (sic)...you cannot keep your neibours(sic) sheep out nor mine from my neibours(sic) sheep.' Cameron, writing to the Lands Department on Dashper's behalf, said that the boundary fence 'does not seem in a straight line but to use a common expression is as "crooked as a dog's hind leg".'

Some agreement seems to have been reached between Dashper and the Department and by 1909 the Dashpers claimed that they had made great improvements to their Lake Condah properties including 'clearing off the land dead wood scrub and rubbish. And stones put in heaps, cutting drains through rocks' and rebuilding some of the old walls. The properties in this 'rough stony country' were now 'fit for any Officer off (sic) the Department to inspect.'

RECENT TIMES

In 1962, the sites of the historic Serpentine and Blacks' Walls were purchased by the Muldoons, a district farming family. Some years later, in 1984, the land north of Blacks' wall (known as 'Muldoon's Aboriginal land') was sold back to the Government. It is currently under Aboriginal community management. Ownership of land to the south of Blacks' Wall is retained by the Muldoon family.

REFERENCES

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Dr.Carlotta Kellaway

Editors Note: *Pat and Neil Muldoon and Carlotta were active and invaluable contributors to the development of the dry stone wall Touring Exhibition A Stone Upon A Stone.*

From Across the World Rock Fences of the Texas Hill Country

Readers will remember in the February issue we published part one of an article on 'Rock Fences of the Texas Hill Country' which was sent to our Secretary by its author Laura Knott of the Historic Preservation Programme, School of Architecture, University of Texas. Laura's article illustrates, in a most interesting manner the spread of the dry stone craft to newly settled areas of the world, the universal problems of contemporary location and preservation of walls and the commonality of the creative solutions to such problems.

**The second of three instalments:
Methodology of the Research is presented here**



Methodology

During the winter and spring of 2004, I drove the entire length of every state, county, and local public road in Blanco County, looking for historic dry-laid rock fences. For each fence spotted in the field, I noted the location on a map; photographed the elevation, section, and any special details; and filled out a survey form, recording a total of sixty-one sightings of historic rock fences. I evaluated each in fourteen separate categories: location, source of rock, height, width, length, coping, cap course, coursing pattern, block height, course height, ft, joints, construction method, and condition. In general, I found that the rock fences of Blanco County were fairly utilitarian structures, built to either keep animals out of a cultivated field, or to contain them. Most were constructed of field, creek, or ledge stone from 1- 8" thick. They range from three to four feet in height, are 18-24" wide at the top course, and most possess no coping or cap stone. The lack of coping may be due to loss from fence deterioration, but when there is coping present, it is always angled (Figure 3).

Because of the nature of the materials used, usually irregular field rock, most fences were assembled with no consistent directional coursing, with a fairly open fit, and inconsistent joint coverage. All were dry-laid and appear to be constructed of nearby material because the rock is usually consistent with the local underlying geology. Most of those fences were of double-walled construction, but many were also either single-walled or a hybrid of the two, being double-walled in the bottom third and single-walled in the top two-thirds. Unfortunately, over half of the fences found in Blanco County are in only fair-to-poor condition.



Figure 3. Rock fence with angled coping. Blanco County, 2004

During my survey, I also found specialized features in fences, such as water drains, drain dams, or spring boxes. On a cattle ranch, I discovered a water lane, consisting of two rows of rock fence spaced 20-25' apart, which was once used to herd cattle from high pasture down to a creek for watering (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Water lane. Blanco County, 2004.

Discussion

Where does this rock fence building tradition come from and how did it get to Blanco County? The 1870 United States census reported that, excepting Texas, the three highest contributing regions to the county were Tennessee (12%), Alabama (9%), and Prussia (9%). German immigrants made up 21% of the total population. Of those who came from within the United States, immigrants those from states known to have rock fences make up 56% of the total—this includes the Upland South as well as states farther north and east. These immigrants comprise a fairly large group, and one that could have been very influential in farming practices in the county. It is useful to consider rock fences built in these areas and in Great Britain and compare them to the same in Blanco County.

Laura Knott



Building Walls...with AI

"Many hands make light work", so the saying goes, and there was some truth to that saying on a project I was recently involved with.

Wallerers from all over the state and even interstate gathered on the Mornington Peninsula to turn a raw pile of granite into a fine piece of dry stonewall. Master craftsman, Geoff Dugan flew down from Sydney, Billy Elliot and employee from Maldon, David Long, his former apprentice Alex, three labourers and I were bought together to built 140 meters of retaining wall in the shortest time possible.

David Long-ISS fellow, landscaper was the man in charge and this particular project was part of a landscaping job that David has been involved with for many years. The wall that we were to build was not a first for this landscape development, in fact this one is the smallest of the previous ones David has already built on the property, some of the walls already built are up to 4.5m in height and are over 200m long,

The wall that we were to build was 1.5m high and 140m long, the building stone being used was quarried granite, from nearby Dromana and the wall was capped using sandstone from Castlemaine. The time taken to complete the job was just over two weeks, and considering that all the wallers were not present for the whole time, means it was a great effort for all involved. At the beginning of the project there was a little concern that the differing styles of each waller would be noticeable, but that was far from the case, in fact at the finish it was hard to tell where one waller finished and the other started.

The end product was one I'm sure David was more than happy with, and all those involved are proud of. I know I was. It was great to work with so many wallers, all the time exchanging ideas and learning different methods and techniques. It's not often you would find so many wallers on the one job, and it goes to show you that the art of dry stone walling is not completely dead.

Alistair Tune



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Payment: Monies can be deposited in the Association's bank account 013 274 4997 47356 at any ANZ Bank OR send a cheque payable to The Dry Stone Walls Association of Australia inc. to the above address. (*Please indicate payment method below)

The Dry Stone Walls Association of Australia inc. no.A004473S Application for Membership

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Some websites you may like to visit

www.astoneuponastone.com; www.dswa.org.uk
www.rbgsyd.gov.au; www.pierreseche.net
www.iboyweb.com/drystonewall/index.html

Contributors: Photographs and Illustrations

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