

City of Ballarat – A Stone Upon A Stone



Ba arat•eureka!

Ballarat Visitor Information Services
Telephone 1800 44 66 33



Lal Lal St, Buninyong has an excellent example of a dry stone wall, which appears to have been built not only to define the road and property boundary, but also to consume the abundant small fieldstone. The wall has large proportions (1.5 metres high) and has no copestone, perhaps indicating an early period of construction.

Ballarat, a celebrated goldmining city, is built on a small lava plain with a number of prominent eruption points such as Mt. Buninyong, Smeaton 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 Ballarat mining district.

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. Balla-Arat 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 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.



The dry stone walls in Buninyong were originally constructed to define property boundaries and to contain stock. The walls now, however, compete with the expanding urban landscape, potentially impacting upon their integrity.



On Webbs Hill Road, Buninyong a large (1.5 metres high) well-preserved traditional dry stone wall can be found. The wall incorporates medium sized angular building stone and copestones.



A less formal dry stone wall exists in Hasties Lane, Buninyong. The wall is quite low (1 metre high) and is unusual in that it incorporates large angular building stone and has no copestone.

- 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."

The History of Moranghurk 1973 Derek G. Scott
Investigation for Gordon Institute of Technology.

CITY OF BALLARAT

