

Corangamite Shire – A Stone Upon A Stone



Consumption Dyke – The consumption dykes were built primarily to consume the stone in relatively close proximity to the wall. A number of these walls are located on private property in the Kolara area and are unique to the area.

The dry stone walls in the Corangamite Shire form part of an extensive system of walls in south west Victoria which comprise the greatest network of walls in the country. Built by skilled wallers, the walls are distinguished by their function, variety, number, length, height and overall size. Some of the walls in Corangamite are the most technically accomplished, aesthetically pleasing and enduring in the state.

The stone walls of the district are a direct result of the volcanic activity on the western plains over a long period of time. The natural landscape was given new form and function by the immigrants from Britain and Ireland who began arriving in the middle of the 19th century. In many cases the immigrants used the stone in an attempt to recreate the look and feel of the familiar place that they had left behind. Realising the fertility of the volcanic plains, the early immigrants set about clearing the land first of natural vegetation and then of the surface stones in order that they could introduce stock and grow crops. Although back-breaking work, building stone walls or fences was a sensible, economical and practical way to utilise the stone cleared from the land.

From their violent beginnings in the turmoil of volcanic eruptions, the stone walls now form part of peaceful and fertile landscape, standing like some beautiful and natural monument to the past.

“The dry stone walls of Corangamite provide a blend of natural and social history of the region and contribute to its sense of place: its special look and feel. Few could pass through the district without realising their impact on the landscape; in some places they dominate it. In fact some of the walls look as though they have always been there; looking so natural and in harmony with the environment.”¹



Rabbit Wall – The Rabbit Wall is a magnificent example of a dry stone wall built specifically to impede the progression of rabbits through the stony rises by using overhanging copestones and timber slats placed under the copestones.



Cock and Hen – Wallers often varied the copestone configuration to provide some uniqueness in the wall. This is an example of a Cock and Hen from Rands Road, Pomoroneit North.



Through Stones – Through stones were used to indicate to a landowner that good walling practice had been used in the construction of the wall. Stones only protrude on one side of the wall. This particular wall can be found on the Pomoroneit – Foxhow Road in Pomoroneit North.

- 1830 – 40 Scottish Immigrants arrived in the Western Plains area.
- 1856 First record of a dry stone wall constructed in the South West at Purrumbete.
- 1859 Wild Rabbits imported to Australia.
- 1860 – 80 Many dry stone walls constructed by labourers returning from the goldfields. The walls were constructed to define land divisions and to combat the infestation of rabbits, plague and fire.
- 1880's The price for walling was generally 120 pounds per mile.
- 1930s Saw the reconstruction of many walls due to rabbit plague and later the depression which essentially brought an end to the dry stone walling.
- 1942 – 43 The construction of the last 'serious' wall in the Corangamite region.
- 1960s Renewed interest in stone walls due to cultural significance and acknowledgment of their potential ongoing use as 'working walls.'
- 1987 The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) conducted a seminar on the history, construction and conservation of dry stone walls in Victoria at Purrumbete.
- 1990s Glenormiston Agricultural College began hosting work shops on the art of dry stone wall construction.
- 1994 Corangamite Arts and Hampden Shire launch the Terang Stone Gateway on the eastern approach to the town.
- 1995 Corangamite Arts published 'If These Walls Could Talk': Report of the Corangamite Dry Stone Walls Conservation Project.
- 1997 Corangamite Arts with Arts Victoria funding and Corangamite Shire establish the Corangamite Dry Stone Walls Heritage Trail.
- 2001 Glenormiston College launched the Dry Stone Wall Gateway dedicated to waller Bill Harlock. (7.2.1937 - 25.11.1998)



Consumption Wall or Dyke, Darlington-Terang Rd. Illustration – Dolores Skowronski-Malloni



Rabbit Wall. Illustration – Dolores Skowronski-Malloni

Sources
 1. **If These Walls Could Talk**, 1995 Report on the Corangamite Dry stone Walls Conservation Project Corangamite Arts Council. Excerpt Courtesy Terang and District Historical Society Inc. Newsletter Vol XVI Aug Sept 1992.

