

Wyndham City Council – A Stone Upon A Stone



Large dam with extensive stone retaining wall attributed to W.J.T. Clarke one of the early pastoralists in the State of Victoria. By early 1837 the Werribee plains were fully stocked with sheep to a distance of forty kilometres inland from the coast of Port Phillip Bay. Photography – Jim Holdsworth



Stone walls are found throughout the North West of the City of Wyndham. Notable examples can be seen on Edgars Rd, Boundary Rd, Ballan Rd and Doughertys Rd. Photography – Raelene Marshall



Wyndham is entirely within the Western Plains, which stretch west from Melbourne. Most of the plains are of recent volcanic origin, formed just 2.5 to 5 million years ago, by lava flows bursting from fissures and low lava cones. Green Hill, in the northwest, and Cowie's Hill, along Tarneit Road, are the most prominent lava cones.

The fiery volcanic era left tough basaltic rocks, which litter much of the landscape and line the creeks. They are found in most of the City's urban and rural areas, and were used by the early European settlers to construct many dry stone walls, bridges, wells and other structures.

Dry stone walls are still to be seen in the farming areas of Truganina and Little River, where English, Irish and Scots migrants first settled in the 1850s. The vast Chirnside property, which once covered much of Wyndham's land, had many types of fences, including dry stone walls. One of Wyndham's best dry stone wall examples is within the grounds of the historic mansion at Werribee Park. This is the 'sunk fence' or 'ha-ha', surrounding the early Chirnside homestead there, built in 1866-67. A report of a hunt between Point Cook and Werribee Park commented: 'we had to negotiate a number of fences of all sorts and sizes, but principally walls'. (Australasian, 7 September 1878)

In Laverton North, the stone walling tradition has been revived, with the industrial community redeveloping feature walls as a 'signature' motif of the area. The 'Angliss' Industrial Park has used stone walls, to striking effect, along Fitzgerald and Boundary Roads.

'During the depression and after people would pull down the dry stone walls, looking for rabbits, so repairing them was always a Monday thing to do.'
Bill Wall, Werribee July 2001



'Pioneer Farming', an image from 'The Plains of Iramoo', 1974, by Esther Murray

City of Wyndham

WYNDHAM



- 1800s Werribee River serves as a territorial boundary for the Woiwurong and Woithwurong indigenous tribal groups
- 1824 Hume and Hovell camp on the Werribee River
- 1836 European settlement begins. Town land sales in Wyndham (Werribee) commence in 1850
- 1864 Shire of Wyndham proclaimed
- 1887 Pastoralist Thomas Chirnside dies at Werribee Park, in the mansion he built in the 1870s
- 1909 Shire of Wyndham is renamed Werribee
- 1914 Point Cook RAAF Base is established
- 1925 Market gardens established in Werribee South
- 1966 Shire of Werribee experiences Victoria's most rapid population growth
- 1987 With a population of 58,000, the Municipality is officially proclaimed the City of Werribee
- 1994 Wyndham City Council is constituted as a new Council

WYNDHAM CITY COUNCIL