the Dry Stone Walls association of Australia inc.

The Flag Stone

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Dry stone walls on *Landline*

By Andrew Miller (DSWAA Secretary) and Bruce Munday (DSWAA committee)

ABC TV Landline interviewing Nic Cole, West Cloven Hills, near Camperdown, Victoria

Readers of *The Flag Stone* hardly need be told that dry stone walls and structures are a wonderful feature of our landscape. Beautiful, historic and often full of mystery, they are ready-made for ABC TV's signature rural program *Landline* to be screened nationally in April.

The DSWAA recently partnered the ABC, backgrounding the story and introducing the team to some iconic walls and top class wallers.

Filming began in **South Australia** last October, making the most of a workshop at Mt Pleasant. A dozen locals suddenly became film stars, or rather 'extras', as the real attraction was Ian (Wally) Carline. Wally didn't pause for the cameras but just kept on doing what he does – showing the students (and now a national audience) how to select and place the right stone in the right place with absolutely no wobble.

The crew then took in some historic walls on the host property, *Rosebank*. Settled by George Melrose in 1843, *Rosebank* still has beautifully maintained dry stone sheep yards, wells and walls along with a heritage-listed shearing shed where 70 000 sheep were shorn annually in its heyday. As producer Prue Adams commented: "Absolutely loved Angus [McLachlan's] place! A real treat to visit."

The eastern Mt Lofty Ranges boast some of the finest walls in SA so the film crew went on to shoot the Linke family's property *Weroona* near Keyneton where the stone walls would do justice to Yorkshire. Not only are these remarkable walls, they also distinguished themselves early in 2014 when they arrested the progress of the huge bushfires that swept through the region. Final filming will be of the famous Camel Hump wall, 62 km long through the Mid-North.

Filming for this program has been done in stages, based to some extent on where the film crews are available. In February it was **Tasmania**'s turn, homing in on Andrew Garner at work on a new wall near Elizabeth Town with cock-and-hen coping and flush through-stones every metre.

Andrew Garner, dolerite entrance wall, Longford, Tas

No stranger to ABC, having featured on Stateline back in 2008, Andrew also took *Landline* reporter Fiona Breen and her crew to several notable walls at *Bonney's Farm* near Deloraine. These walls, the work of at least three different wallers, are without copes or through-stones but the field-stones are set with care, crossing joints and with a good batter.

The final stop was at the historic walls near Bowerbank, two totally different types of wall: one an unusual decorative style of wall using massive boulders; the other a remnant of a practical sheep fold which housed sheep at night for safety or for handling.

Old wall, Bonneys Farm, Delloraine

These lichen covered walls were also a poignant reminder of where once only sheep and cattle grazed but now metres from a major bustling highway.

In **Victoria**, where better to focus attention than the Corangamite area in the south west of the state. At Pomborneit the *Rabbit Wall* between Lakes Corangamite and Purrumbete, to impede the westerly movement of the rabbit plague in the 1870s, still stands like a fortress. Alistair Tune was there for the cameras, repairing a gap in this wonderful wall with his fine walling skills.

Alistair Tune, repairing the Rabbit Wall

Meekri, the property of Robert and Louise Manifold near Camperdown, has a special mix of dry stone walls and sculpture throughout the garden, separating the various precincts and showing how old and new can be such a good fit with proper planning and expert building.

Nic and Sue Cole at *West Cloven Hills* worked their prize corriedales in the dry stone yards, providing *Landline* with the sort of action that always makes good viewing.

The final stop was the *Consumption Dyke* near Noorat, so named because its massive proportions result from the need to clear the field stone from the adjacent land.

We look forward to seeing the show which will parade not only some of our most notable walls, but also some top class wallers. Thanks to everyone who has given up their time and access to their properties. Also to ABC TV's *Landline* team led by Prue Adams: "… I've learned a thing or two about building dry stone walls. Only problem is, I keep finding fault now with my own garden walls. Clearly built by an enthusiastic amateur. "

Filming workshop, Rosebank, Mt Pleasant, SA

Vale Charmian Brent

By Jim Holdsworth, DSWAA President

The Committee and many of our members were very saddened to learn of the death of our valued member and friend Charmian Brent. As editor of *The Flag Stone* Charmian was outstanding in her efforts to keep members informed, to promote our Vision and to bring stories and information about dry stone walls in Australia and overseas to our membership and the newsletter's wider readership.

Charmian passed away in Melbourne in December last year as a result of cancer. In November she told me that she hoped, at least, to edit this issue of *The Flag Stone* but she couldn't be sure of the one after that. This commitment, under increasingly difficult personal circumstances, is an example of her tenacity and selflessness. The previous issue, number 32 of September 2014, stands as a fine tribute to her invaluable decade-long contribution to this Association .

Since February 2006 Charmian edited every issue, each a testament to her editorial and organisational skills. It was also testament to her capacity to coax stories, snippets and photos from people so that each issue was an engaging mix of reports, erudite articles, social happenings, places and people. *The Flag Stone* stands as a fine record, not only of this Association's activities and aspirations, but of the breadth and variety of dry stone walls and walling across the world.

Charmian was born in the UK, and came to Australia in unique circumstances and those not of her own making. As the wife of Great Train Robber Ronnie Biggs, she followed him here after he escaped from Wandsworth Prison. Their life in various parts of Australia was not easy, occasionally having to pack up and move on quickly whenever the police net closed in. She lived and worked under pseudonyms until after Ronnie left her, establishing a new life for himself in Brazil, away from possible extradition back to the UK. After that, Charmian settled into a quiet life in Melbourne, free of the distress and upheavals of her past.

At the suggestion of Rob Wuchatsch, Charmian came on our field trip to *Turkeith* near Colac in October 2005. We have Rob, and the wonderfully restored garden of *Turkeith* with its wealth of dry stone walls, to thank for Charmian being bitten by the DSW bug. Charmian offered to edit the next issue of *The Flag Stone* and, just five months later, the first of 27 editions under her diligent editorship was published.

As a member of our Committee, Charmian could always be relied upon to bring that rare dimension of enthusiasm and pragmatism tinged with her acerbic tone to any discussion. Straight and to the point, one never wondered where Charmian stood on any topic, and her views and suggestions always made eminent sense.

At a committee meeting in late 2013, Charmian remarked that *The Flag Stone* has, over the years included a vast range of stories and photographs from around the world, written by members, friends of the Association and others, and that this was a wonderful resource that should be capitalised upon. Charmian proposed that suitable articles be gathered together in a compendium which would be a further celebration of the diversity of dry stone walls and structures across the globe.

Charmian had made early inroads into this large task, which remains a substantial project for us to complete. It is one that your Committee wants to see completed, in Charmian's memory as much as a fascinating publication in itself.

One significant aspect of Charmian's professional interest as an editor was to arrange for *The Flag Sto*ne to be issued with an ISSN at the National Library in Canberra, and for copies to be archived there. We are very pleased that our newsletter joins many others as part of this country's printed records and its social history.

The Committee, the members of this Association and, by implication, the welfare of dry stone walls in Australia, are the poorer for Charmian's passing.

Sutherland Creek Field Trip

By Andrew Miller, DSWAA Secretary

Spectacular wall built by Bronte Payne snakes through the peppercorn trees at the entrance to Austin's Wines

It has become traditional for the DSWAA to finish the year with a field trip and social gathering and 2014 was no exception. We had no difficulty identifying a destination when member Bronte Payne suggested Sutherland Creek, a rural area approximately twenty kilometres north-west of Geelong. Bronte and wife Ade reside nearby, south of Teesdale, and hosted fifty-six tour participants at the end of the field trip, in their wonderful artful garden and café/reception room.

For me, the pre-planning of the field trip with Bronte, touring the district and identifying sites for an informative tour, was thoroughly enjoyable. There is no substitute for intimate local knowledge and empathy for the landscape when planning DSWAA field trips and Bronte was exceptional on both fronts! In addition, he is a dry stone waller himself and his skills extend from traditional dry stone wall construction to contemporary dry stone sculptural forms.

In all, we selected four sites for the day, all so incredibly different in their own way. Let me share the stories.

Participants met on the Geelong-Anakie Road, from where we departed for a short drive to the property of Mrs Margaret Herd. The delightful 1860s bluestone home sits on a small rise overlooking the Moorabool River and is surrounded by a (dry stone) walled garden. The whole precinct oozed charm and heritage. In fact the built landscape here was so intact, one could almost imagine a horse and jinker appearing down the driveway during our picnic lunch.

We shared a picnic whilst enjoying Margaret's stories on the walls, cobbled courtyard and garden. An interesting aspect of the walls was that the stone clearly had broken faces, perhaps indicating that it had been quarried, as would have the stone used to construct the house.

We then moved ten kilometres north to *Austin's Wines*. This vineyard is one of a range of well-respected vineyards in the Moorabool valley. The property entrance, situated on Geelong-Anakie Road, is a very special mix of formal and informal walls. Towering dry stone pillars support wrought iron main gates to the property. To the left of the gateway, an amazing dry stone wall snakes its way around a small group of ancient peppercorn trees – an impressive and appealing sculptural form. All of the walls at the vineyard entrance and extensive formal walls within the vineyard were built by Bronte. An *Austin's* pinot noir was shared beside one of Bronte's walls.

A few kilometres to the east is *Woodchester Park*, owned by Ivan Barber and his son, Daryl. Old, well maintained traditional walls line the road. Impressive wall construction with a backdrop of sugar gums, these walls date back to the latter part of nineteenth century. A large sign adjacent to these walls clearly stated 'Please do not take stones off Wall'. Unfortunately, stone theft is a very frustrating aspect of wall ownership, here and elsewhere.

We moved a few hundred metres to the east to inspect an abandoned property entrance. Daryl explained that the dry stone entrance and cypress-lined driveway had never served as an entrance. The owner commissioned the en-

trance for his wife to be, but story is that the marriage and associated home construction never happened. The gateway stands as a sentinel to that failed relationship, the dry stone only disturbed on one occasion when an internet 'game' (geo-caching) placed their 'clue' in the wall. Daryl noticed gamers removing stones from his wall in their search for the 'clue'. What an inane game! Some smart tactics by Daryl brought the game to an end. DSWAA member Danny Spooner delighted us all by singing a walling ballad beside the dry stone entrance – what a treat!

Field trip participants then travelled on to *ArtRocks*, the home of Bronte and Ade. Not often are we able to experience the contemporary use of stone but here at *ArtRocks* dry stone structures presented a wonderful connection between landscape, vegetation, buildings and garden sculpture. Artful garden spaces and the creativity extended in to an entertainment area where we enjoyed dinner, conversation and Ade's coffee.

ArtRocks

Many thanks to Bronte and Ade Payne, *Austin's Wines*, Margaret Herd and Ivan and Daryl Barber for sharing their stories, walls and hospitality, and also Danny Spooner for his wonderful ballad.

On the weekend of 21/22 March the *Golden Plains Arts Trail* is active. Have a look on the web and you will see that Bronte and Ade's garden studio is open. It is well worth a visit!

(Left) Margaret Herd in walled garden at Sutherland Creek

(Below) Bronte, Ade and pampered poodle estimating the height of their next wall

President's Message

On 22 February several DS-WAA members attended a wonderful family celebration for Charmian Brent. In the words of Charmian's son, Chris : "It was Mum's expressed wish that we should have a 'party' to remember her and that there needed to be lots of friends, music, wine, dancing, laughter and love."

We did that, and both Rob Wuchatsch and Val Reilly spoke warmly of Charmian.

Elsewhere in this Issue you will read an article by committee member Raelene Marshall entitled *Dry Stone Art in the Cultural Landscape*. Raelene has a strong arts-related background, as evidenced by the themes of her occasional articles in this newsletter, and it shows that she sees dry stone walls in a light brightened by her personal interests and artistic bias. This perception and appreciation of dry stone walls is different from that of people for whom dry stone walls resonate in other ways.

I find it instructive to consider what dry stone walls mean to different people. A farmer sees walls as functional dividers of land and, probably, as costly ones to maintain, as well as habitats for pests and weeds and, hopefully, as unusual expressions of the efforts of their predecessors.

Travellers, observing dry stone walls from their cars, are probably puzzled as to why they are there but hopefully are able to appreciate them. Geologists see them as physical manifestations of how the earth was formed. Photographers may see beauty, composition and contrast in the contribution of walls in their landscape setting. We know that rural firefighters see them as ready-made firebreaks. Historians will want to interpret the story of local history and the patterns of settlement.

Whoever casts their eye, be it learned or casual, upon a dry stone wall in its natural habitat will see it differently. And therein lies one reason why we are members of this Association.

On a commemorative note, your president had a birthday in February. It was celebrated at a family barbeque on a warm summer evening. It was a typical happy event, with friendly jibes about 'wearing well', 'looking good considering your advancing years' and other tongue-in-cheek comments, amply enhanced by good conversation, fine food and a few drinks. The event hit its high spot when, with eyes closed, the discordant strains of *Happy Birthday* encouraged me to feast my eyes on a unique cake, superbly arranged by Jenny and met with enthusiasm by the kids who competed to see who could eat the most icing 'stones'. Slices of the underlying chocolate cake were passed around with the words: "*Rock cake, take your pick*". Thanks, Jenny!

Best Wishes

Jim

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.*

Dry Stone Cottage Gets New Lease on Life

By Bruce Munday, DSWAA committee

Peterborough sits uncomfortably on the 'wrong' side of Goyder's Line – the line mapped by South Australia's Surveyor General in the 1860s defining the area of reliable rainfall. For many years it was a major railway town at the crossroads of the national east-west and north-south lines along with the line from Port Pirie to Broken Hill, all operating on a different gauge.

Nowadays Peterborough is still an important regional centre for the sheep industry, an industry Michael Burford's family has been part of for five generations. Like many in the region the Burford property, Merngenia, has stone relics which tell stories of the early days of European settlement. One such is an old single-room cottage, dry stone, built 1882 and until recently little more than a skeleton of its admittedly modest heyday.

Michael has a keen sense of history and knew the 'story' of Caroline Lenartowitcz who raised, almost single handed, 13 children, several in this cottage. A fourteenth child died at birth.

"I have always valued history and heritage and I felt that this little cottage deserved better than to just fade away", says Michael. I often wondered if it would be at all possible to restore the cottage, but it looked a huge challenge, particularly in dry stone.

"Salvation came when I saw in a shop window at Wilmington a photo of Ian (Wally) Carline's work. I immediately realised that this was my man!"

Wally is something of a legend among the dry stone fraternity of South Australia. Originally from Derbyshire, the son of a master dry stone waller, he has left his mark right across this state and has conducted five dry stone walling workshops for DSWAA.

"When Michael rang and asked me to have a look at a dry stone cottage he wanted restoring I could hardly wait", says Wally. "When I saw it I couldn't wait to start – this is the sort of work I love to do.

"The workmanship in the original building was first class for the era. The stone quoins were beautifully dressed and had the building been protected it would probably have been still intact today. Unfortunately someone had taken the steel lintel out from over the fireplace and so the chimney breast had fallen down.

"The restoration took about four weeks with Michael's workman (Sam) passing me stone and mixing the lime mortar.

"I used lime mortar in the side wall to fasten the bolts to secure the new wall plates, and in the gables and the chimney breast. However no mortar is showing and the whole building is predominantly dry stone."

It is nice that Caroline Lenartowitcz is not forgotten.

Michael and Brodie Burford, at the front door

Old Gold at Adelong

By Jim Holdsworth, DSWAA President

Last December, the opportunity presented itself for Jenny and me to visit the old gold workings at Adelong, near Tumut in southern NSW. There had been two articles in earlier issues of *The Flag Stone* by DSWAA member and dry stone waller John Cox (#20, September 2010 and #25, May 2012). The stories that John told in those articles whetted my appetite to see this fascinating historic area for myself.

John kindly travelled from his home near Holbrook and arranged for Louise Halsey, an active local resident very much involved in the management of the site, to join us.

The Adelong gold field and the remains of the workings sit in an open valley about a kilometre north of the small town. To arrive at the rural site and look down into the valley with its river, rocky outcrops and wooded hills as a backdrop is to have an immediate overview of this place where gold was discovered in the 1850s. The most striking feature of this view is the extent of dry stone walls and other stone structures, some in ruin and some restored.

Louise's enthusiasm for the place is infectious, and we were soon following her down into the valley to learn about the process of retrieving gold. She pointed out the water races which carried water to the two water wheels which drove the machinery which crushed the ore to separate the gold. She told of floods that swept down the valley and damaged the aging structures in the years after gold production ceased in 1916. A major flood, in October 2010, washed the tailing dams away.

It's an evocative place.

Gold mill ruins on Adelong Creek

John has been an invaluable asset to the restoration of the site, having repaired or rebuilt many lengths of dry stone walls. Impressive among these are the retaining wall and ramp leading to the ruins of *Ferndale*, the cottage built for William Ritchie, one-time manager of the reefer battery.

In the main area of the site are other examples of John's skill in action; work carried out over many months in often hot and dusty conditions.

As with any historic site, understanding the purpose of the structures, machinery and other artifacts is critical to one's visit being memorable and instructive. At Adelong, the heritage-listed ruins are much more meaningful because of the restoration work of the walls undertaken by John Cox, and by many others in repairing the waterwheel or cleaning up the site and building walking trails and installing interpretive panels, and visitor facilities.

Ruins of the reefer battery

While work continues, the amount of rebuilding and restoration is not intended to restore the site to its condition when it was in full production. This would leave the site open to being charged with unauthenticity.

Projects such as the *Adelong Falls Gold Mill Ruins* restoration are frequently reliant on external funding and volunteer labour and commitment. Tumut Shire Council has, since 2006, contributed, as have groups such as Green Corps and Conservation Volunteers of Australia and funds were forthcoming through the Federal Government's stimulus package in 2009.

There is a fine line to be drawn between full reconstruction and leaving a site in its ruined state. *Adelong Falls Ruins* has benefitted from the extensive work already completed; enough to engage the visitor in the place's history and intrigue, but not so much that the demise of the site over the decades can't still be appreciated.

A visit to the site is complemented by interpretive material on-site, on-line and in the Adelong Alive Museum (at http://www.adelong.org.au/adelong-alive-museum.html) where a scale model of the reefer battery is displayed.

A visit to the Museum and the *Adelong Falls Gold Mill Ruins* is certainly well rewarded. John Cox's two articles told the story very well, but a visit confirms the skill and commitment of John in helping to bring the site to life. It is a fine example of another practical use of the dry stone waller's skill.

Wannabe Wallers in SA

By Bruce Munday, DSWAA committee

Two more walling workshops were held at *Rosebank* last October. These represented a milestone, being the last workshops delivered by Ian (Wally) Carline. A master waller, Wally grew up and worked in Derbyshire so he has dry stone walls in his veins. Fortunately for us he is as good an instructor as he is waller, but unfortunately for us he and Val are moving to Tasmania. It has been a great experience working with Wally and Val and I have learned a lot – I hope!

As we go to press there are another two workshops about to happen, this time under the combined tutelage of Jon Moore and myself. Jon is a 'young gun' with wonderful skills in the craft of dry stone walling. His reputation around Adelaide is spreading fast. As for me, well I have been part of Wally's five workshops and seen what works well for the students. Our exit survey has always shown that what we offer is just what they want. So I'm excited to be partnering with the next generation of artisanal craftsmen. There will be a full wrap-up of this project in *The Flag Stone* #34.

The first workshop in October was filmed by ABC TV for a forthcoming *Landline* program discussed in our cover story.

Dry Stone Art in the Cultural Landscape[1]

By Raelene Marshall, DSWAA committee

The Compact Oxford Dictionary describes Art as 'the expression of a creative skill in a visual form' and the Arts as 'creative activities' and or 'subjects of studies concerned with human culture'.

Long before we put public art on street corners, Australia's indigenous and immigrant artisans were influencing and creating works of dry stone art that would change the face of the Australian landscape for centuries to come. Although the years have seen many changes, today modern-day walls and sculptures made by equally dedicated artisans add to that genre and preserve the essence of this ancient craft in new and exciting ways.

So why, where and how did the idea of also interpreting this ancient and universal craft as an art form emerge? To provide some answers I'd like to briefly explore some personal experiences that led me to this way of thinking. But more broadly to delve into the notion, from both an audience and an artist-practioner's perspective, of the cultural landscape as Museum or Gallery

The use of landscape as museum or gallery is not new. Postmodern artists such as the late American Robert Smithson, and a short while later others including Britain's Richard Harris and Andy Goldsworthy are practitioners in a Land-art (Earthworks-art) movement that emerged in the late 1960s in the United States. Key elements of this movement are about the landscape and the work of art being inextricably linked. Made using natural materials such as soil, rock, organic media and water, sculptures are not 'placed' in the landscape, but rather the landscape is the means of their creation.

Land art is understood as an artistic protest against the perceived artificiality and ruthless commercialisation of art at the end of the 1960s in America. Ironically the movement came about as a rejection of the traditional museum or gallery as the setting of artistic activity. Its genre was about developing monumental landscape projects beyond the reach of traditional transportable sculpture and traditional art market forces.

But the irony neither begins nor ends here. Those 1960s artists who had chosen to reject the notion of the museum or gallery to display their artworks, had by desire, design and or default, chosen the landscape as a gallery for that very same purpose. That is, a place to display their art. The major difference being that of the audience, with respect to their visitation intent, involvement or participation.

Dry stone walls are a creative endeavour made in nature, of nature. Surely then, albeit constructed as a practical agrarian craft, rather than for more esoteric reasons, all this had been done before. Centuries earlier, artisan wallers across the world had also by need, design, desire and or default chosen the landscape as the setting to display works of their artistic endeavour. The landscape was their museum or gallery.

So, were the 1960s Land-art artists at the cutting edge of a new movement or simply reinventing and artistically reinterpreting an innate, intuitive human process?

Art, craft or both?

My first inkling of this thinking happened in the mid-1980s whilst photographing in a walled farmland in Victoria's Western District. There within the scope of the eye, were two beautifully crafted walls on opposite sides of the road made with the fine hand of only an artisan maker. Both were equally superb. Geologically the landscape was the same yet each wall was quite different in style, stone size and structure.

Surely these were artworks, man-made imprints on the natural landscape constrained not within the walls of a museum or gallery but juxtaposed against the pale blue sky of the open plains. Just who made these walls, where did those settler artisans come from, what were their stories, and why had they chosen to build in such a variety of styles?

In Australia structures and designs vary considerably from place-to-place and region-to-region. Indeed walls that survive today are a constant reminder of the tenacity of immigrants who responded to a harsh and unfamiliar geological landscape to reinterpret styles from their homelands in new and creative ways.

Kurtonitj.Southwest Victoria

However several thousand years earlier Australia's indigenous people, had also built dry stone structures for habitation and aquaculture in areas where abundant food resources were available. Today ruined remains of dry stone shelters and fish and eel traps are still found in places such as Lake Condah in southwest Victoria and at Brewarrina in New South Wales. Built low with rectangular or circular walls the shelters are constructs of common and universal symbols found in art and architecture, practical interpretations of an innate, intuitive human process.

In the English Lakes National Park

Let me transport you to this side of the world. In late 1995 I spent a five-months professional development residency living and working in the Grizedale Forest Sculpture Park here in the Lake District. Such was the fame of the area's dry stone walls and sculptures, that even in pre-internet days, word about Andy Goldsworthy's sculpture *Taking a Wall for a Walk* (*left*) had spread to the arts community in Australia.

It was my experiences here that began to shape my thinking about the esoteric qualities of landscape as museum or gallery in a slightly more structured way. Driving each day to Grizedale as the kaleidoscope of the seasons' colours slowly changed from autumn to winter I came to love and understand the beauty and intimacy of this ancient landscape. To this day I still feel the anticipation of rounding a corner to see what had become familiar sections of wall, shrouded in icicles, snow, or a palette of fallen leaves. It is no wonder that this cultural landscape has inspired poets, writers and artists to interpret it in their own unique way.

In Grizedale, the award winning Ridding Wood Sculpture Trail offers easy access and provides an exciting introduction to the visual arts. But it is much deeper in the forest, where *Taking a Wall for a Walk,* the fascinating sculptural work which snakes its way mysteriously between and around the age-old larch trees, joins seamlessly with remnant sections of the ancient agrarian dry stone walls.

For a modern day audience this particular work tests the notion of cultural landscape as museum or gallery and raises as many questions as it does answers. Where does history end and modernity begin? Where does the dry stone craft end and the dry stone art begin? Who is the artist? Andy for his artistic vision and design of the work, or the professional wallers who built the sculptural section of the wall with and under his guidance?

Back in Australia

Today in Australia, Andy Goldsworthy is a household name. Old-timer descendants who learned the dry stone craft from their ancestors' ancestors have died out and the current handful of talented wallers have mostly undertaken their training and qualifications under the auspice of the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain (DSWA).

Our highest qualified waller, Geoff Duggan, conducts regular workshops and is the accredited examiner for Australia's professional wallers on behalf of the DSWA. Geoff's sculpture *Door to the Sun* (above *right*) accompanied a touring exhibition for which I received funding from Federal Government in 1999 and 2002. It took pride of place during that tour at the Botanic Gardens in both Sydney and Mount Annan and generated a new audience and resurgence of interest in the craft as an art-form.

It is however difficult to pinpoint just how and when the groundswell really took off, or indeed what, if any, influence Andy Goldsworthy's 1997 sculptural works on Herring Island as part of the Melbourne Festival have had on the thinking of the broader arts community. Though it is fair to say that ten years later, David Long's circular dry stone piece entitled *Revolution – Whatever Happened?* took out the $15,000 first prize in the inaugural Victorian Great Ocean Road Sculpture Awards in Lorne, Victoria.

The ruined remains of dry stone fish and eel traps built thousands of years ago by the local indigenous Gunditjmara people in south-west Victoria inspired the construction of a dry stone sculpture that interprets the ancient and universal spiral motif in new and contemporary contexts. This collaborative work between waller Alistair Tune and artists Vicki Couzens, a Keerang Wurrong Gundjitmara woman and Carmel Wallace, seamlessly and aesthetically joins time, space, art-forms and cultures

Today Geoff, Alistair and David are booked in advance for a year or more. In part, this is due to the overall upsurge in awareness for the craft and high quality of their traditional walling workmanship. But, more likely, I would think it is because each of them is also producing sculptures that take the craft to a whole new and artistically savvy audience.

Discussing the notion of cultural landscape as museum and gallery and the debate about dry stone walling as an art or a craft, I was heartened to read a question posted by Mandy Jean on Heritage Chat, an internet forum for heritage advisors and planners in Victoria to discuss significant matters of heritage: 'Can art theories and artists influence the way we assess landscape more than say the Burra Charter for example? Isn't landscape assessment just another form of looking for something; the production of a vision; communicating a desire, an exchange, an engagement? What do you think?'

So, in conclusion the question I would like to pose is this. If you were to land in from Mars on the site of Andy Goldsworthy's *Taking a Wall for a Walk* in the Grizedale Forest, what would 'you' think?

Is it art? Is it craft? Is it history or modernity and where does each begin and end?

[1] Edited version of paper presented at 12th Int'l Congress on Dry Stone Walling, Cumbria University, 2010

Can a reader solve this puzzle?

By Bruce Munday, DSWAA committee

My colleague, Phil Cole, has spent a lot of time in the Rangelands of South Australia where he is fascinated by the quite numerous and imposing stone cairns:

"I understand that the early surveyors (such as George Goyder, Surveyor General 1861-94) used stone cairns, often with a central post, and placed them on high points, to assist in the laying out of cadastral boundaries. Many high points in the Flinders Ranges and Gawler Ranges have a stone cairn on them, this one at Mt Hiltaba, almost three metes high, being just one example.

"In fact in 1860 Goyder laid out a 20 mile baseline on what is now Witchelina Reserve; this was necessary for the initial survey of the north of the State. The baseline has a substantial cairn at its southern point, Termination Hill, that can be sighted from some distance.

"I find this all very interesting and the quality of the stonework is exceptional – presumably the survey teams would have included dry stone wall tradesmen, or was it a basic skill that many would have had in those times?"

Over 150 years old and still marvellously intact, the early settlers clearly did not anticipate the advent of satellites and GPS.

If any readers have an insight into the history of these cairns you might like to contact Phil at phil.cole2@bigpond.com .

Jim Holdsworth notes that the highest point in Victoria, Mount Bogong, is marked by an impressive stone cairn, of dry stone construction of course. The lowest point in Victoria is sea level, occupied in many places by large rock groynes, partially submerged but of dry stone construction!

Who's Who in DSWAA

President: Jim Holdsworth
0417 648 218 jim@planningcollaborative.com.au
Secretary: Andrew Miller enquiries@dswaa.org.au
0408 139 553 aksdmiller@bigpond.com
Accountant: Brad Purvis
brad@yarragroup.com.au
Membership: Sue Jones
Sirius.associates@westnet.com.au
Newsletter Editor (interim): Bruce Munday
0417 895 249 bruce.m42@bigpond.com
Committee Members
Raelene Marshall raelenemar@optusnet.com.au
Stuart Read stuart1962@bigpond.com
Allan Willingham alberti@ozemail.com.au

Membership

Annual membership fee
Corporate $80
Professional $50
Single $30 ($80 for 3 years)
Family $50
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 013 274, Ac. no. 4997 47356
Clearly indicate membership identity of payer
New members
Please email or post your name, address, phone number(s) and area of interest (e.g. waller, farmer, heritage, etc) to the membership secretary (above)

Contributors to photographs

Page 1	A Miller
Page 2	A Garner, A Miller, K Munday
Page 3	Chris Brent
Page 4,5	A Miller
Page 6	J Holdsworth
Page 7	M Burford
Page 8	J Holdsworth
Page 9	J Mayfield
Page 10, 11	R Marshall
Page 12	P Cole