

# Hepburn Shire Council – A Stone Upon A Stone



Well over 100 years old the robust dry stone walling of the creek containment diversion on the Jim Crow Creek has withstood floods and protected the willow roots to this day. Photography – Raelene Marshall



The waller who constructed this example of dry stone walling on a private property in the Trentham area is believed to be of Cornish origin and one of the early settlers. Photography – Raelene Marshall



This fine example of European style dry stone walling located in the heart of the Mt. Franklin Aboriginal protectorate area demonstrates the marks made on the cultural landscape by the early settlers. Photography – Raelene Marshall



The remains of what was once a functional post and rail fence is surmounted here by a rather unusual example of a dry stone retaining wall. Photography – Raelene Marshall

Stone is a special resource. The Hepburn Shire is located within a wider area known as Victoria's central highlands. The landscape of the district is a diverse topography of forests, mountains and plains that are derived from volcanic and marine sedimentary rocks.

The varied geology provided the area with a rich collection of goldfields and mineral springs. It also provided two prime sources of construction stone for the early settlers to use, bluestone and freestone.

The Shire is named after one of the early pastoralists in the district. John Hepburn. In the early days of settlement the squatters introduced hard hoofed animals and boundary fences to the landscape. The long Djadja Wurrung tradition was overlooked, and the Aboriginal people relegated to the Aboriginal Protectorate at Mount Franklin.

In 1851, gold was discovered at Jim Crow (now the Daylesford district) and the area soon became known for its extensive alluvial deposits. As miners sought their fortune at Jim Crow the land was turned 'upside-down'.

The stone was ideal for constructing 'solid housing' in a cold climate and marking boundaries as paddocks were cleared.

The Jim Crow goldfields were also known for their mix of cultures. As well as a significant Anglo Saxon community in the area there were also large communities of Italian speaking Swiss, Northern Italians and Chinese.

The craft of dry stone walling was among many of the crafts the immigrants brought to their new homeland and their new life in the goldfields area provided opportunities to exchange their traditional skills. Their legacy to the shaping of the cultural landscape of the area remains to this day.

Today the region draws visitors from all over Australia to experience at first hand the heritage buildings, mineral springs and other rich cultural and environmental treasures the area has to offer.

- Pre 1838 Djadja Wurrung people sole occupiers of the district.
- 1838 The arrival of the first European settlers. Commencement of pastoral era.
- 1839 Mount Franklin Aboriginal Protectorate established. Disbanded 1849.
- 1851 Discovery of gold and the consequent commencement of the mining and industrial era. The first discovery of payable gold made at Clunes in this district and other goldfields fields such as Creswick and Daylesford followed soon afterwards.
- 1859 Municipality of Daylesford formed.
- 1864 Formation of a committee to protect the Hepburn mineral springs from detrimental effects of mining. The following year the Hepburn Springs reserve was created.
- 1906 Fire destroys much of Hepburn Springs. Parma House and the Macaroni Factory survive.
- 1915 Amalgamation of Mount Franklin and Glenlyon Shires.
- 1966 Amalgamation of Borough of Daylesford and Shire of Glenlyon.
- 1995 Shire of Hepburn is created, and includes the towns of Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford, Hepburn Springs, Trentham and Yandoit.

*"The intermix of nationalities with the cheek-by-jowl land use in the steep gullies of the Daylesford and Hepburn goldfields produced a rich collection of stone artefacts. These include stone retaining walls, diversion walls, fences, water wheels and flume abutments, water race support walling, machine footings as well as actual stone buildings and chimneys."*

David Endacott, Daylesford Museum March 2002.

