## Kiama Municipal Council – A Stone Upon A Stone







View of the Mount Pleasant Ridge with ocean in the background showing how the dry stone walls enhance the landscape. Photography – Wally Abraham

The landscape around Kiama was formed from periodic volcanic flows that laid down beds of latite, a type of basalt. These were inter-laid with layers of sandstone formed from the weathering of the latite deposits. Further weathering generated newer sandstones, which overlaid the old rocks and formed the area's rolling topography. Later weathering, tremors and moisture exposed the old rock, which broke up into large stones on or near the soil surface.

The first Europeans settlers cut and exported timber and cleared the bush to plant crops. With the close of the cedar industry, lands were cleared for agricultural purposes. Ploughing exposed the weathered rock, which was collected and stored in piles on the edges of fields. New, smaller farms created needed fences to define boundaries and keep out stock.

Thomas Newing used walling techniques from the British Isles to build twin skin dry stone walls. Walls appear within and around farms in west Kiama along Saddleback Mountain Road, and then west towards Jambaroo. The dry stone walls create strong patterns on the land. Tecomaria hedges and Coral Trees were added along walls to provide windbreaks and shade. New residential subdivisions in west Kiama necessitate protection of walls.

"The walls reflect the transfer of a craft from Britain and Ireland to Australia. They express the toil of early settlers in setting up their farms, and they provide a patterning to the landscape which gives Kiama a distinctive sense of place. They are also very powerful sculptural forms in the landscape."

W. Mayne-Wilson, Sydney Morning Herald, June 22nd 2001

"Stones are like people, some are good to work with, they fit in anywhere, but others are cranky, you've got to humour 'em. Leave them to one side a bit and you'll get a place for them alright."

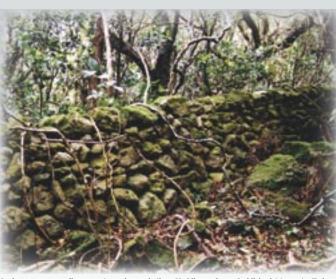
Thomas. Newing, quoted in Jeff Carter, Stout Hearts, Leathery Hands' Rigny, 1968.



 $Original\ dry\ stone\ wall\ with\ Cabbage\ tree\ palms\ and\ Illawarra\ Escarpment\ in\ the\ background.$   $Photography-Wally\ Abraham$ 



A paddock wall characteristic of those walls built by Thomas Newing in the high country of the Kiama Hinterlands Photography – Wally Abraham



In the 1860s stone walls to contain cattle were built on Hoddles track over Saddleback Mountain. Today those same walls covered in moss. Photography – Raelene Marshall

Permian Age Volcanic activity.

Triassic Age Last 100 million years.

Last 50,000 years Aboriginal people lived in and travelled throughout the region.

1812 – 1820s Visits by timber-getters

820s First land grants in the district Clearing leases to low income workers.

Crops of wheat, peas and potatoes grown.

1850s First subdivision of early grants

Farmers turn to dairying.

and builds first dry stone wall at

1860s – 1920s Most walls built by Thomas Newing, but a few others built

1927 Newing dies. Few walls built

1986 Walls first listed as heritage items in Illawarra Regional Environmental

1989 National Trust lists walls on its

1990 First of Kiama's 11 town entrance

1992

Kiama's Stone Walls Committee is formed and initiates the listing

of the dry stone walls as heritage

1997 Commencement of the Centenary

of Federation Dry Stone Wall Drive project.

99 So far 380 walls in municipality have been recorded and assessed by consultants to Kiama Council.

"Council now requires heritage impact statements on developmen proposals that may affect the walls."

