

# Stones, Stones, A Stone Upon A Stone

*What is it about stones? Why are we drawn to...collect them...wear them...play with them...study them...carve them...dig them...build with them...and admire them as inherent elements of the landscapes they form?*

Well before the arrival of European settlers in Australia the Aboriginal people were familiar with the use of stone for art, tools and rituals. The construction of stone houses and stone fish traps is unique to the Gunditjmara people of southwest Victoria. Indeed throughout history, peoples of many cultures and civilizations have used, worshipped and built with stone for a variety of spiritual, aesthetic and practical purposes.

*This is a story about some of Australia’s dry stone walls. It is a story about people, lifestyles, history and romance...about creativity, adaptability, tenacity, skill and endurance.*

The craft of dry stone walling – which means building in stone without mortar or cement – has endured throughout the centuries and even today continues to capture the imagination of young and old alike.

*The story begins with the use of stone structures as practical solutions to the survival needs of our early European settlers.*

*It charts their uses and styles in the early days of farming development.*

*It acknowledges their application as terraces to create flat land and support structures in challenging terrain.*

*It explores their decline through neglect, misfortune and loss of skills.*

*It values their aesthetic and practical contributions to early public and private garden settings.*

*It links them with the romance of a past era, to memories and places of days gone by.*

*It celebrates their revival in domestic and public garden settings and as artworks in public places.*



*Stony rises at Lake Condah, Western Victoria. Shows rising floodwater passing through a channel, which probably formed part of a fish trap system. Several fish traps and stone houses have been recorded among the basalt rises in this area. Photograph – Courtesy Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.*



*Throughout history people of many cultures have used and built with stone for a variety of aesthetic and practical purposes. On this private property near Trentham Victoria dry stone footings dug well beneath ground level support large wooden bearers of the dwelling. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*'Bories' France. The origin of the Bories at Gordes is believed to date back to the time of the Ligurians who lived in the region several centuries ago. Familiarly known as Gallic huts, they are built using local stone on the principle of the corbel vault. The village was restored between 1969 and 1976 and looks as it did when the last inhabitants abandoned it some 150 years ago. Photography – Dolores Skowronski-Malloni*



*One of a series of stone circles found on a private property in Pomorneit Victoria. "An Archeological survey undertaken in the late 1990s has failed to determine their origin." King Everett, Pomorneit Feb 2002. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*Stone for remembering. Stone for carving and stone for making dry stone walls. An isolated private 'graveyard' Kiama New South Wales. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*"This image, an altar dedicated to Claude Lorrain shows a collection of stones from the coast of New South Wales intended to be formally grouped in the manner of a Suiseki meaning 'water-stone' a Japanese form of formal miniature landscape." Wally Abraham, Saddleback Kiama March 2002. Photography – Raelene Marshall*

The dry stone walls of Australia like their counterparts in other parts of the world have made an important contribution to the shaping of the cultural landscape. Although some dry stone walls are recognised in heritage studies of local planning schemes, at present there are no statewide or countrywide details or listings. The eighteen months research for this story has primarily been conducted via discussions with farmers and other interested people and groups in parts of Victoria and New South Wales.

Thank you to the following organisations for their participation in the Touring Exhibition and for their commitment and support in the Search for Stones...

- New South Wales
  - ~ Kiama Municipal Council
  - ~ Royal Botanic Gardens
  - ~ Sydney
  - ~ Mt. Annan
- Victoria
  - ~ City of Ballarat
  - ~ Baw Baw Shire Council
  - ~ Corangamite Shire
  - ~ Glenelg Shire
  - ~ Hepburn Shire Council
  - ~ Hobsons Bay City Council
  - ~ Melton Shire Council
  - ~ Moorabool Shire Council
  - ~ City of Whittlesea
  - ~ Wyndham City Council
  - ~ Shire of Yarra Ranges
  - ~ Parks Victoria
    - ~ Brimbank Park
    - ~ Herring Island
    - ~ The Mansion at Werribee Park

The Search for Stones continues. Other places that are known to have dry stone walls:

- New South Wales
  - ~ Robertson
  - ~ Alstonville
  - ~ Tintenbar
  - ~ Blue Mountains
  - ~ Lismore
  - ~ Lennox Head
- Queensland
  - ~ Bundaberg
- South Australia
  - ~ Burra
  - ~ Flinders Ranges
  - ~ Moonta
  - ~ Victor Harbour

- Tasmania
  - ~ Campbell Town
  - ~ Oatlands
  - ~ Nunnamurra
  - ~ Swansea
  - ~ Richmond
- Victoria
  - ~ Overmewton Castle and Gatehouse-Keilor

- Other locations within:
- ~ Brimbank City Council
  - ~ Colac-Otway Shire Council
  - ~ Hume City Council
  - ~ Macedon Ranges Shire Council
  - ~ Mount Alexander Shire Council
  - ~ Moynes Shire Council
  - ~ Southern Grampians Shire Council

History Connection Place Spirit



# Ancient walls, Old walls, Damaged walls, New walls

*If their stones were pages of a book the story they could tell would be a story that reflects the history of this land...*

*...a story about ancient volcanoes and early sea beds. About Aboriginal people and their stone working skills. About migration and the movements, talents and trades of our early European settlers...*

*The story would tell of grand homes and lifestyles, poverty, survival, gold, the introduction of rabbits and the great depression years...*

### Once upon a stone...

In the early part of the nineteenth century Australia was settled by Europeans who arrived as convicts, soldiers or those who left their native countries in search of adventure or a better life.

Many of these immigrants became squatters, pastoralists, selectors or miners. Once here, they established themselves in remote and untamed landscapes unfamiliar to those they had left behind.

Driven by the necessity to survive they were forced to clear the land in order to grow crops, graze stock and provide shelter for their families.

- In some areas much of the land was covered in stone
- Stone for clearing
- Stone for building
- Stone for crafting dry stone walls.

*“My uncles said as kids they nearly killed themselves because the paddocks were full of stones and they had to manually remove them so they could plough the paddock. Such hard work! As one of my uncles said ‘We busted our guts out and it’s a wonder we lived as long as we did.’ When my uncles cleared the land they couldn’t use a stump jump plough so they used to use a cock lifter tripod with a pulley system.” Noel Cornish – Childhood memories of family conversations. Altona July 2001.*



The walls of a simple stone cottage dwelling in the gold mining town of Walhalla in Victoria demonstrate the capacity of the early settlers to adapt to their new surroundings. The craft of dry stone walling is “combined with a simple mortar made from ground termites’ nests.” John Aldersea, Feb 2002. Photography – Jim Holdsworth



Even today the surface stone on this private property near Camperdown in Victoria reminds us of the challenges of the terrain that confronted the early pioneers. A typical quote of the time is discussed in the story of William Ison an early pioneer in the Werribee area. “We set to, and cleared about 10 acres, and had it fenced in with stones by the next sowing time.” Werribee The First One Hundred Years. 1985. Edited by K.N. James, Werribee District Historical Society Mulgrave Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall



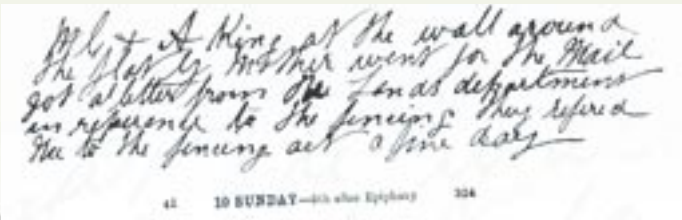
The original dry stone wall that abuts the shearing shed on this property outside Camperdown in Victoria is a constant reminder to the farmer of the lifestyle of his forebears. Today the low walls and steep shed roof are rare evidence of the challenges that confronted the farmers when the shepards left in search of gold. Photography – Raelene Marshall



Today the dry stone walls of this early pioneering property still define the boundaries and protect the stock of the sixth generation farmer just as they did for his forebears. Private property outside Camperdown Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall



“As a child my father George used to talk about how hard they had to work to clear the land for agriculture. This photograph was taken at Rockbank around 1905 It shows my father George Tarleton as a very young man and Tom Haines with the Clydesdale. The equipment they used was a frame with chains and a wooden wheelbarrow.” Mary Tolhurst Melton March 2002. Photograph – Courtesy Mary Tolhurst



Excerpt from Mark Cross’ Diary 1885 - 1889 Ettrick Homerton area southwest Victoria

January 28th 1886 “M.C. (Mark Cross) Alf and Walter working at the wall Put up a little over a chain Mr. Purcell came for the boring machine and took it away and good readness (sic) to it I wish I’d never seen it. a fine day.”

February 9th 1889 “M.C. and A. King at the wall...Mother went for the Mail got a letter from the Lands department in reference to the fencing they referred her to the fencing act a fine day.”

February 12th 1889 “M.C. and Alf at the wall. Robert Foote came here and stayed all night a hot day.”

February 13th 1889 “M.C. Alf and Foote collected the stones..Alf and I then done a little at the wall a hot day.”

Much has been done...in the way of permanent improvement on this estate. .For instance, no less than 20 miles of stone wall has been built at various times....Dr. Wilson considers stone walls, where the stone is available, as “the very cheapest form of fencing and the best.” From an article ‘A Visit to Summer Hill, the Estate of Dr. Wilson.’ The Leader Newspaper 10/10/1870.

70,000 BC Arrival of first humans to Australia.

22,000 BC Aboriginal peoples living across the whole continent.

Prior to European settlement, Aboriginal people in some locations had been using stone to make dwellings, cairns and fish traps for thousands of years. Although not widespread, the practice existed in areas where stone was easily acquired, the climate was severe and food stocks were plentiful.

1770 Captain Cook, on board the ‘Endeavour’, arrives in Australia.

1788 Arrival of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove to establish Australia’s first penal settlement. Land granted to officers, who use convict labour to work the land.

1800 Only two small European settlements exist in Australia, at Sydney Cove and Norfolk Island.

1800s Merino sheep introduced by John Macarthur. He believed that New South Wales had enormous potential for grazing livestock. Wool produced on his land could compete in quality and price with wool from Spain and Germany.

1813 – 1819 Exploration of area around Sydney. Fertile land for grazing found, providing the opportunity to expand the area of settlement at Bathurst, Hunter River Valley, Moss-Vale, Goulburn and Canberra districts and along the south coast from Illawarra to Jervis Bay.

1820+ The British press reports that New South Wales is an ideal place to settle. The British Government begins to encourage the migration of men of ‘capital and gentle’ birth to this ‘land of opportunity’. During this period the government set the minimum price of land. Land prices were too expensive for many settlers and squatters’, who complained that the land laws of the time favoured wealthy immigrants and landowners.

1830s – 1840s Overlanders from New South Wales arrive in Portland in Victoria.

The Henty family, pioneer farmers from Sussex in England settle in Portland and bring the first Merino sheep to Victoria. They establish a number of large pastoral runs and become important farmers and sheep breeders.

At this time Victorian pioneer squatters were forced to lease land on a short-term basis. They had no security of tenure, and this made them unwilling to put down roots, and build houses, schools etc.

“Squatters: Men who settled on Crown Land and grazed stock (usually sheep), initially without government permission, but later for the payment of an annual lease or licence fee

Stone walls built to contain stock around homesteads and cultivation paddocks in Portland Bay District, Victoria.

Survival  
Displacement  
Adaptability  
Endurance



# Crafted walls, Random walls, Terraced walls, Rubble walls

*These walls would speak about the areas and terrain of the landscape in which they are built. They would tell about the nearby mountains, the source of their stones and the people who built them.*

## Sedimentary, Volcanic, Metamorphic, Igneous

The source of stone varied considerably from place to place. In some areas, such as Victoria’s Western Plains and parts of New South Wales, the land was littered with stones that, as molten lava, had bubbled to the surface during volcanic eruptions several thousand years ago.

Faced with clearing this challenging landscape some settlers simply piled the stones together in large heaps or placed them randomly along boundary lines. Others, familiar with the craft of dry stone walling, built well constructed walls, pig pens, sheep dips and dam walls and used the abundance of stone at hand to define their large land holdings.

Today the variety of dry stone walls that shape our rural landscape stand as testimony to the technical and creative skills and local styles of the British, German, Irish, Italian and Swiss immigrants who brought with them a craft passed down from generation to generation.

*“The walls are more numerous close to the volcanoes. The lava flow dictates the fences. Smaller stones and plenty of them are closer to the mounts therefore more fences are built in these particular areas. Horse and drays would have been the only way to move and remove the stones.” Dr John Menzies. Camperdown Sept 2001.*



*Dam wall constructed on a private property on Melbourne’s outer fringe. The area is known to have many walls of varying standards of craftsmanship. This finely crafted wall demonstrates the wealth of the landholder and his capacity to pay qualified wallers. Photography – Jim Holdsworth*



*This farming area known as ‘the stones’ near Portland in Victoria is still littered with remnants of the volcanic lava that flowed from nearby Mt. Eccles. The ruthless landscape and harshness of the stone serves today as a reminder of the tenacity and endurance of the early settlers and their capacity to survive under such harsh conditions. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*Those familiar with the craft of dry stone walling, built well-constructed walls and used the abundance of stone at hand to define their large land holdings. We can speculate why one section the wall is in very poor condition. Rabbits. Stock. Private property near Heywood Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*Another time, another place. Today the variety of dry stone walls that shape our rural landscape stand as testimony to immigrants who brought with them a craft passed down from generation to generation. Once here their wish to re-create came in many guises. Lifestyles, flowers, birds, garden designs, hunting...and trees. Hehr’s farm private property in the City of Whittlesea an outer urban area of Melbourne. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*As years pass by the sheer majesty and age of the local Redgums create a visual contrast to the low rubble style walls that define the roadside and boundaries of these two properties in the City of Whittlesea on the outskirts of Melbourne. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*The source of stone varied considerably from place to place. In some areas where stone was scarcer, such as Melbourne’s western basalt plains, farmers began to fence with a combination of dry stone walling and post and wire. Private property near Bacchus Marsh Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall*

A craft passed down from generation to generation...from country to country...

In Scotland dry stone walls are called ‘drystone dykes’ The Galloway dykes of the south west use a variety of stones and the ‘dykers’ have perfected techniques from the eighteenth century to deal with the wide variety of stone.

Welsh walls generally demonstrate far less craftsmanship, partly because the British Enclosure Act was not so strong and partly because of less emphasis on the tradition of the craft.

In the Pennines, the sturdy but untidy appearance is due to the use of limestone, shale and sandstone and the shortage of larger stones for ‘throughs’.

The lack of regular easily worked stone accounts for the rough appearance of Irish walls. In the west of County Clare and Galway single walls are commonplace and many were built as part of sustenance schemes to alleviate local poverty.

Sources  
Brooks, A.J. 1977 **Dry Stone Walling**, The British Trust for Volunteers Ltd., London

Garner, L. 1984 **Dry Stone Walls Shire Publication**, Great Britain

MacWeeney, A. and Conniff, R. 1986 **Ireland Stone Walls and Fabled Landscapes**, London.

**If These Walls Could Talk**, Report on the Corangamite Dry stone Walls Conservation Project 1995, Corangamite Arts Council



*Galloway Dyke, Bass Road Derrinalum Victoria demonstrates the Scottish style of walling. Here the wall features ‘doubling’ on the lower section and rows of single stones on top. Illustration – Dolores Skowronski-Malloni*



*Small miracles of balance. This wall in Pomorneit North in Victoria exhibits the Irish skill of ‘single walling.’ “One evening I walked out on the uninhabited wet end of Inisheer among single walls and double walls where rocks were wedged in at an angle like books leaning on a shelf...the walls revealed a delight in the nature of stone...an almost artistic satisfaction with the slow shaping of this world.” Illustration – Dolores Skowronski-Malloni*



*The uniqueness of the craft of dry stone walling is evidenced in areas where styles and treatments often varied from wall to and waller to waller. Here in Rands Road Pomorneit North Victoria the Cock and Hen configuration stamps the signature of its maker. Illustration – Dolores Skowronski-Malloni*

Terrain Conditions Problems Solutions



# Grey stones, Coloured stones, Round stones, Flat stones

*Porous stones, Dense stones, Hard stones, Soft stones...  
...would tell of the wallers and their homelands...their skills, styles, tools  
and traditions. They would speak of necessity, practicality, diversity,  
protection and property division.*

To the observant eye, styles, shapes and designs vary considerably from place to place and region to region. Indeed some of the finest ‘double skin’ walling techniques in the country can be found in Victoria’s Western District. Here, the traditional styles of dry stone walls constructed by the British, Irish and Scots immigrants have merged with the landscape so well that today it is hard to believe they were once not there.

However, not all walls were built using traditional methods. Many of those that remain today serve as a constant reminder of the materials and needs of the time. Often what emerged was dependent on the experience of the builder, the type and quantity of material at hand, the constraints of the landscape or the individual landowner’s requirements.

*“Building stone fences or walls was a sensible and practical way to utilise the stone cleared from the land. The stone walls created boundaries between public and private land, subdivided properties, separated sheep from cattle, stock from crops and enclosed and protected the early homesteads and gardens. The stone fences also provided protection from the elements for both humans and stock. In some cases they also served as a psychological barrier for the settlers who endeavoured to create within the walls safe comfortable and orderly surroundings for their homesteads.” Josie Black. Noorat 1995.<sup>1</sup>*



Not all walls were built using traditional methods. In some places people simply piled stones to define their boundaries and adapted their needs to suit the circumstances and materials of the time. Private property Bacchus Marsh Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall



This fine example of double skin walling in Victoria's Western District demonstrates a creative use the abundance of material at hand and how, over time, the walls slump and settle to become at one with their surroundings. Property located on the dry stone Walls in Corangamite Heritage Trail. Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall



The view to the sea and remnant section of wall are all that remains today of an area believed to have once contained a yard for Kiama residents to leave their horses when they journeyed to Sydney by train. Photography – Raelene Marshall



Many of the styles of walls that remain today are a legacy to the stone walling skills of their builders, and their capacity to adapt to the materials and needs of the time. Private property City of Whittlesea Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall



The innovative skills of the early Swiss Italian settlers in Victoria's central goldfields area are evident in this boundary wall of a private property near Yandoit in Victoria. Here their creative approach to using what was at hand has transformed something utilitarian and practical into a small piece of art-in-the-landscape. Photography – Jim Holdsworth



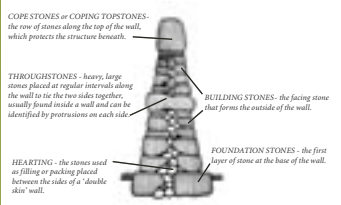
Foundation stones in position. Note the exact alignment of the guide strings.



The first row of 'foundation stones'



'A' frame and hammer used by Dave McGarvie now on display in the Camperdown Museum.



Glossary of Dry Stone Walling Terms. If These Walls Could Talk 1995 Report on the Corangamite Dry Stone Walls Conservation Project: Corangamite Arts Council.



Traditional techniques passed down from generation to generation. Section through a Yorkshire style retaining wall and a Scottish style retaining dyke. Technical specifications for simple retaining walls. The Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain.



Wall end treatment. Private property Pomborneit Victoria.



Wall end featuring large 'through stones'. Private property Western Victoria.



Variety of hammers to break up or shape stones. Spade to remove excess soil from foundation level. Pick or mattock for preparing and digging foundations.<sup>2</sup>



Crow bar used as lever to assist in moving large stones. Walling frame, 'A' frame made from straight-sided timber following the profile or cross section of the wall to be built. Profile bars to maintain correct dimensions. String lines to keep sides straight.<sup>2</sup>



- Sources
1. **If These Walls Could Talk**, Report on the Corangamite Dry stone Walls Conservation Project 1995, Corangamite Arts Council
  2. Descriptions of tools and equipment. Geoff Duggan Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. Qualified waller Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain.





# Settlers, Squatters, Shepherds, Miners

*Stone, stones...stones upon stones...  
...would tell tales of a period when economic, political and social events  
were occurring in both Australian and European history. Of a time of  
major change and social upheaval. Of farms, stock and agriculture. Gold.  
The increase in population and the decimation of the labour force...*

## Boundaries, Barriers, Buildings, Runs

In Victoria, the 1847 Orders-in-Council which granted squatters pre-emptive landholdings up to 640 acres saw the beginning of a new period in farming practices and lifestyles. Squatters now felt more secure and began to put down roots, build better houses and mark their runs.

Until this time stock had run free on fenceless plains. However the pressing need to protect and contain valuable stock arose in the mid 1800s when shepherds left the land ‘en masse’ in search of wealth on Victoria’s goldfields. Pastoralists, suddenly confronted with managing large unsupervised flocks, advertised in British Newspapers for wallers or ‘cowans’ to construct walls to define their land.

## Gold, Adventure, Migrants, Escape

In the mid to late 1840s parts of Europe were experiencing political and economic unrest. People were accepting offers of assisted passages and many came to seek adventure or a better life.

Once here, they tended to gather in communities of their own nationality. Some brought traditional walling skills from their native villages and farming regions. For example, the British and Irish settled in Victoria’s West and in communities around New South Wales.

The Italians settled in areas around Hepburn Springs and Yandoit and in the remote mountainous mining town of Walhalla in Victoria. The Germans used their traditional masonry and walling skills to recreate ‘home’ in Westgarthtown, now an ‘historical island’ surrounded by Melbourne’s urban growth corridor.

Indeed, legend has it that the many dry stone walls and remnant stone dwelling structures silhouetted against the sky near Daylesford in Victoria are the legacy of letters penned home to the Swiss Alps by an unnamed migrant who found his fortune in gold in the area. Back home, word spread about the ‘find.’ Soon fellow countrymen made the journey to ‘try their luck’ and eventually settled and made their mark on the local landscape.



*“This European style terraced flat land was constructed for housing in the mining area of Walhalla in Victoria. It was created using keystones – long stones of slate used to anchor the retaining wall to the steep slope.” John Aldersa Feb 2002. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*“Today the remains of stone fireplaces, house foundations and terrace walls stand as silent witnesses to the presence of an almost forgotten group of Italian people who made a significant contribution to the glory days of Walhalla.” Win Guatta October 2001 Descendent De Luis family Walhalla. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*Ziebell's farmhouse and stone wall Westgarthtown (now Thomastown). “The Germans at Westgarthtown erected a church, school and numerous farmhouses, barns, stables, milking sheds and dairies. All were located on neatly laid out properties bordered and divided by seemingly endless stone walls. Even the roads and yards were paved with stone.” Rob Wuchatsch March 2002. Photograph courtesy of John Borrack*



*“It is the skilful use of amorphous local rock...which increases their technical and aesthetic value. Their aesthetic value is also heightened by their bold sculptural forms, creating visual definition and patterning across Kiama's rolling dale-like cultural landscape.” Warwick Mayne-Wilson Kiama Dry Stone Wall Heritage Study 1999. Private property hinterland of Kiama in New South Wales. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*The early pioneers put down roots and marked their runs...Today this landscape knows no boundaries... Private property outside Camperdown in Victoria still run by descendants of the original pastoralist. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*Part of the rare surviving long stone wall constructed prior to 1863 to divide the properties of the Manifolds and the Roadknights, two well-known early pioneering families in Victoria's Western District. Even today, drivers in the Pomorneit area can glimpse this unique contribution to the early days of the shaping of our farming landscape. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*The early stone wall between the Roadknight and Manifold properties is graphically illustrated on this unusual 1863 map of the Parish of Pomorneit. Map – Courtesy State Library of Victoria*

1821 – 31	Economic power in New South Wales belongs to large settlers and merchants. By 1831, political and social power also belongs to these groups.
1831	British Government starts to provide assisted passages to the Australian colonies.
1835	Increased settlement means that Squatters move into new areas. They arrive in Port Phillip (then in New South Wales, now Victoria) and take up large pastoral runs for sheep and cattle.
1836 – 40	Squatters occupy area from Werribee to the Grampians and Western Port to Portland Bay.
1836 – 39	Squatting licences issued in Victoria £10 per year.
1840s	Abolition of transportation of convicts to NSW. Stock contained by the stone walls built around pastoralists' stockyards and stables.
1840 – 44	Almost ¾ of present day Victoria held by squatters, 4 largest occupy 7.7 million acres.
1847	Orders-in-Council First security of land tenure in Victoria. Pre-emptive right of squatters recognised for up to 640 acres of run, including home station and improvements. Squatters could take out leases for up to 14 years in return for a small annual rental.
1847+	Squatters build better houses, construct fences and stone walls to mark boundaries. Stone walls built in areas where plentiful supply of stone.  Major pastoralists want expert wallers advertise for stone wallers in British newspapers.
1850 +	German Lutheran families of farmers migrate to Westgarthtown (now Lalor, Thomastown). They build houses, walls, horse troughs etc. from local stone.
1851	Victoria separated from NSW and becomes an independent colony. Discovery of gold in Bathurst (NSW), and Ballarat, Bendigo and Mt. Alexander (Victoria).  Gold rush begins in NSW and Victoria: increase in population; radical land reform ideas; demand for small family farms.
1863	Discovery of gold at Walhalla, Victoria.  Following this discovery, many dry stone terraces were built on the steep slopes around Walhalla in order to create flat land for housing.

Sources  
**If These Walls Could Talk**, Report on the Corangamite Dry stone Walls Conservation Project 1995, Corangamite Arts Council

**Westgarthtown** 1998, R. Wuchatsch and D.Harris  
Heritage Council of Victoria and the City of Whittlesea

Struggle Displacement Re-creation Achievement



# Simple walls, Dividing walls, Functional walls, Status walls

*High walls, Low walls, Enclosing walls, Terrace walls...  
...would tell tales about wide-open spaces and the properties they divided.  
About the requirements and the movements of the animals they protected.  
Of needs, of uses and creative solutions. Traditional styles, simple styles,  
mountainous land and flat land.*

The majority of walls were made in landscapes littered with stones primarily to define agricultural boundaries or protect and process stock. Cattle. Sheep. Horses. Pigs.

However, not all walls were the result of cleared surface stones. In some challenging areas of Victoria and New South Wales, European style terracing constructed from blasted mountain rock created flat land for housing and roadside retaining walls.

## Memories, Links, Re-creation, Homeland

Along with settling in a new land came the need of migrants to associate with what was familiar...what they had left behind.

This wish to re-create came in many guises. Lifestyles, trees, flowers, birds, garden designs...and hunting. In Western Victoria in 1859 Thomas Austin, a member of The Acclimatisation Society, introduced the rabbit, which was to become both menace and provider for a long time to come...

In an attempt to halt the westward spread of rabbits the famous ‘Rabbit Walls’ of the Western District were built. Even today many remaining walls still display such features as overhanging coping stones, projecting wooden slabs and wire covered wall tops, all designed and calculated to keep the little pest at bay.



*“The basalt sheepwashes on a private property in southwest Victoria were built c1865 to wash the fleece before shearing, to enhance the price received...The flock was driven through the wash and manually washed, before exiting to a drying slope” Marten Syme President Port Fairy Branch National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Sept 2001. Photography – Marten Syme*



*This long since deserted, simple-style dry stone sheep wash is sited among remnant stone house and yard structures in the Shire of Melton Victoria. Photography – Jim Holdsworth*



*Cattle yards...“at the wall a hot day.” Remains of walls in the area referred to in Mark Cross' diary entries 1885-1889 Ettrick Homerton area southwest Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*Cattle yards. “My father listed 24 men of various times who had built walls on his father’s property. Each waller built differently and my father could tell who built the wall by looking at it...my father built some walls which are in evidence today.” Excerpt form a talk given by Meg McNab daughter of Dave McGarvie about the early days of Pomborneit. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*This no longer used pig pen located on a private property near Camperdown in Victoria is a legacy to the waller and his clear understanding of the day to day needs of his animals. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*The majority of walls were made in landscapes littered with stones primarily to protect and process stock. This holding yard is one of the many finely crafted walls located on a private property near Whittlesea in Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*Rows of European style terracing provides flat areas of land on this steep hillside near Daylesford in Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*European style terracing created flat land for housing around the gold mining town of Walhalla Victoria. According to local historian John Aldersea “The biggest and the best stone walls were built by Italian woodcutters who built dry stone bridges across gullies for access to firewood for the mines” Jan 2002. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*Creative walls, intricate walls meander seamlessly into the distance. When seen up close present another picture, lichens, ferns, insects, and lizards. Private property near Yandoit in Victoria. Photography – Jim Holdsworth*



*A fascinating and unique feature of drystone walls in this country is the vast array of cultural styles and treatments. Some are beautifully constructed works of art crowned with decorative ‘cope’ stones that years of weathering have rendered almost at one with the surrounding landscape. Others, simpler in style, have nonetheless served their owners’ well. Private property near Clydesdale in Victoria. Photography – Jim Holdsworth*



*One of the famous rabbit walls of Victoria's Western District. Constructed to keep the rabbit out. Or in! Private property Princess Highway Pomborneit. Photography – Raelene Marshall*



*“My father used to say to me. ‘There’s a rabbit in there Don. Pull down the wall and get it.’ “He said ‘Pull it down and I’ll rebuild it again.’ and that’s what he used to do.” Don Sefton Purrumbete Victoria. If These Walls Could Talk. Report of the Corangamite Dry Stone Walls Conservation Project 1995. Photography – Raelene Marshall*

1850s	Boom in wool industry, English market wants more Australian wool.  Walls built by pastoralists to protect valuable flocks of sheep.  In some areas it becomes more economical to build walls than to pay shepherds. There is also a shortage of shepherds, as many of them have left the land to search of gold.
1856 – 57	Manifold brothers build stone walls to separate Purrumbete property near Camperdown from Stony Rises (Victoria).
1857	Thomas Newing builds his first dry stone wall in Kiama, NSW. He soon becomes an expert waller, and builds countless walls in the Kiama area over the next 70 years.
1859	Rabbits introduced into Western Victoria on Thomas Austin's property near Geelong. (Austin was member of Acclimatisation Society). Neighbouring pastoralists object.  More stone walling at Purrumbete to keep out rabbits. Other pastoralists build walls.  Rabbit Wall built for Manifolds between Stony Rises and Purrumbete. Crossed and gated at Geelong Road. Biggest rabbit-proof fence in Victoria.
1860s – 1870s	More pastoralists build 'rabbit walls' to keep out rapidly multiplying rabbits.
1860	Beginning of Selection Era in New South Wales and Victoria. Legislation in both colonies leads to land being opened up for settlement and large estates split up to form small agricultural farming properties. Governments want to replace squatters with class of yeoman farmers operating in small family units. In Victoria, nobody could select more than 640 acres. Four million acres of land sold.
1861	Robert Torrens Real Property Act (Victoria), registration of land under title begins.
1862	Duffy's Land Act (Victoria). Selectors must improve properties by cultivation, building habitable buildings and enclosing land with a substantial wall or fence.
1863	A map of the Parish of Pomborneit shows long stone walls dividing Roadknight and Manifold (Purrumbete) properties.
1865	Fencing Act. All property boundaries to be marked by fences/stone walls etc.  Stone walls constructed on selectors' properties.
1866 – 1880s	Advertisements for stone wallers in Western District newspapers.
1867 – 69	Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission established near Heywood, Victoria. Stone walls built around the Mission said to be so well built that a person could walk along them for miles to shoot Kangaroos and other game. The mission provided skilled workers for local dry stone walls.
1869	Grant's Second Land Act (Victoria). Only 320 acres could be purchased and each person only allowed to purchase once.  Stone walls built around Selectors' properties documented in Selection Files held in Lands Department records at Public Records Office.
1860s/1870s	Squatters through 'dummying' etc. purchase most of the good farming land despite government legislation.



*Tilting Copestone. Illustration – Dolores Skowronski-Malloni*



*Wall containing protruding throughstones. Illustration – Dolores Skowronski-Malloni*



*Flat Copestones. Illustration – Dolores Skowronski-Malloni*

*New land Native land Style Purpose*



# Skilled, Unskilled, Settled, Itinerant

Waller, Workers, Labourers, Farm Hands...  
...would speak about skilled hands, cracked hands, bleeding hands, workers' hands...of carrying stones, sorting stones, lifting stones and placing stones...of camping, carting, water and supplies. They'd tell tales of traditions, farming and clearing of the land. Of the trade, its changes, fencing, and decline.

One of the surprises of seemingly dormant walls is their hidden flexibility. As years pass by they slump, they bend, they adjust with the weather and shift with land. Like their builders, once strong and youthful, they begin to age, change colour, gather lichens and mosses. They crumble. They fall. Some remain...their 'faces', 'hearts' and 'copes' settle and lock comfortably together like never-to-be-opened-parcels-of-stone.

'Cowans', 'Dykers', 'Pluggers', Apprentices  
The unsung heroes of our cultural landscape. Stories abound about the men who built these walls. Tales of skill, endurance and family traditions. Not convicts, as legend has it, but master craftsmen, apprentices, farm hands, woodcutters, miners and itinerant labourers.

A stone upon a stone...a one upon a two  
To today's observer many walls could be seen as works of art. Those finely crafted structures that tell as much about the artist as they do about the art. Was their builder strong? Was he patient? Did he take pride in a job well done? When building his walls did he select stones to fill spaces or find spaces to hold stones?

In the hey day of walling the wallers worked "in teams, pairs or alone, with apprentices serving at least two years collecting stones... 'Pluggers' would follow and fill the small gaps. A waller was expected to always have his tools within arms reach, or else there would be trouble from the master!...charging methods and rates varied upwards from working for 'baccy and tucker'. The general rate was 120 pounds per mile in 1880." <sup>1</sup>

However, the golden era of walling in mid 1800s was to be relatively short-lived. The early 1860s saw the beginnings of political, technological, social and economic changes that were to affect walls and wallers for many years to come...

The dry stone walls that survive today as important contributions to the cultural landscape are testimony to the skills of wallers such as...

Thomas Newing a 22 year old who arrived from Kent England in 1857 is attributed with building the fine 'double dyke' or 'twin skin walls' that remain today in and around Kiama in New South Wales.<sup>2</sup>



Photograph – Courtesy Kiama and District Historical Society.



Even today Newing's particular stone selecting skills and consistent high standards are regarded among some as nature's materials transformed into art. Photography – Raelene Marshall

In 1844 William Regan, born on October 15 1857 in County Galway Ireland migrated to Australia. Today his great grandson Gerald Moloney still maintains the family farming tradition and lives in an area which features several of the country's finest dry stone walls. Gerald says, "My grandfather was a great old storyteller and an accomplished stone waller who built many walls near Camperdown... many of the walls in the Kolora area were built by the Flemings. Some of them are six feet high and were mainly designed as shelter for cattle and to clear the paddocks."<sup>3</sup>

"Just before the turn of the century the original stone fences were built. Laird and Son of Lethbridge were the builders. They would have breakfast before daybreak, wait until it was light enough to see and work till it was dark. They wore leather palm protectors and dragged the stones up on a piece of tin because a horse and dray was too expensive." <sup>4</sup>

- Sources
1. McLellan, R. **The Dry Stone Walls of Victoria's Western District:** Australia ICOMOS Vol. V11 2 1989.
  2. Mayne-Wilson and Associates. 1999. **The Dry Stone Walls of West Kiama.**
  3. **If These Walls Could Talk,** Report on the Corangamite Dry stone Walls Conservation Project 1995, Corangamite Arts Council. Oral accounts of Wallers and Walling Mary Alexander.
  - 4 & 6. **The History of Moranghurk,** 1973, Derek G. Scott Investigation for Gordon Institute of Technology.
  5. **The Age Tempo Magazine (excerptl),** Darna Yeomans Sept 2 1992.



"A good waller tries to never handle a stone twice. He knows just what he needs and where it goes" Geoff Duggan Mt. Annan NSW Nov 2001. Double skin wall, private property in the City of Whittlesea Victoria. Note the intricate placement of the single row of 'cope' stones on top. Photography – Raelene Marshall



"Its like a huge jigsaw puzzle - the stones just lock in together. If one comes out there's no way you can get them back the way they were no matter how hard you try." Pat. Heywood Nov. 2001 Private property near Portland Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall



"Grandfather was dynamite on rabbits. He wouldn't let them pull a stone out of a fence. That's been the start of a lot of trouble...once you pull a stone out the wall's gone." Jack Baker Descendent of Lakeside pioneers. Private Property located on the Dry Stone Walls in Corangamite Heritage Trail.<sup>3</sup> Photography – Raelene Marshall



"Those illustrious settlers who were forced to contend with the ancient lava flows that knew no bounds... needed...to protect and guide their animals. However, not withstanding the necessary skills available in building fences and yards without bonding materials the amount of lava rocks to be relocated was an enormous effort. The time and money required would sort out the committed landholder." Gregor McGregor Heywood Victoria Sept. 2001. Photography – Raelene Marshall



"A dry stone wall is like a high rise apartment building...It seems some of the long-term residents grow mosses, lichens and other plants on their balconies." Geoff Duggan Mt. Annan NSW Nov 2001. Private property Kiama NSW. Photography – Raelene Marshall



"These dry stone walls form a part of our heritage. They will be standing long after you and I have vanished and are forgotten." Olga Lee, Templestowe Victoria July 2001. Photography – Raelene Marshall



"When you are fixing a wall the first thing you do is clear the fallen stones back from the wall. You then check the wall for other loose stones that have not yet fallen...Plugging makes it nicer to look at...Lots of farmers would like to repair them but are reluctant to pay." Note the 'running joint' weak spots in this wall and the clever use of the existing large stone. John Chapman Camperdown Victoria May 2001. Photography – Raelene Marshall



"As kids we used to walk along the stone walls. My dad would walk to his cousin's place and then they'd walk a mile along each other's fences." Gerald Moloney Camperdown May 2001. Photography – Raelene Marshall



Rubble finish copestone Kolora Western Victoria. When William Noel wanted to marry Jane McFarlane towards the end of the last century, her father, a farmer, told the prospective groom that if he cleared a paddock of stone and built a wall of certain dimensions then he could return and talk marriage. The stone wall was duly built on the property at Kolora near Mortlake in the Western District, and then the couple were wed, one must assume to live happily in a country that abounds with such practical, sturdy and sometimes romantic walls curling up and over the hills.<sup>5</sup> Illustration – Dolores Skowronski-Malloni



"There were dozens of stone wallers camped out on the job and miles of walls were built at that time. Most landowners had stone wallers on their staff. A lot of people think these stone walls were built by convicts, but that is not so." Excerpt from a talk given by Meg McNab daughter of waller Dave McGarvie about the early days of Pomboineit. Photography – Raelene Marshall

Pride Craftsmanship Change Decline



Boom, Bust, Depressions, Decline

More walls, Less walls, Destroyed walls...‘food walls’...  
...would tell of Fencing Acts. Land Acts. Closer Settlement Acts and the 1880s Rabbit Act. Of property division. Wire. Wealth. Poverty. Federation and the Great War. They’d tell tales of the 1930s Depression and the pressing need to survive...another War, social change and technological change...new and recycled building materials and new work practices...

From the 1860s onwards significant changes were taking place. The visual landscape was altering dramatically. Fences and stone walls began to clearly define rural boundaries as large pastoral estates were subdivided. Churches and schools were built. Times were good.

People were settling down. Homesteads were becoming grander. Pastoralists were protecting their stock with fences but the abundance of stone meant that dry stone walls remained economically competitive.

The cultural and social landscape was also undergoing important change. In the decades after the 1850s gold rush, wallers were in demand. In and around the Victorian goldfields areas, groups of people from many nationalities including British, Chinese, German, Irish, Italian and Swiss began to put down roots.

However the good times were to about to come to an end...

The Walls, The Craft, Despair, Decline

The 1890s Depression brought with it the beginnings of a steady decline in lifestyle and income. Food was scarce. People began to pull the walls apart to reach rabbits that took refuge among the stones.

By the time the second Great Depression of the 1930s arrived those walls that had fallen into earlier disrepair become fertile breeding grounds for ‘underground mutton.’ Dry stone walls changed from ‘containing’ to ‘container.’ The walls became a steady source of food and income to poor families.

Fewer wallers were working at the trade. Old wallers were dying. Times were tough. The Second World War was imminent.

The period after the Second World War brought about even more change. People were learning new trades and ‘making do’ with recycled materials. The lack of skilled wallers and the economic climate meant that post and wire fencing became a competitive alternative.

Dry stone walling for agricultural purposes began to decline...



“...In many cases these settlers used the stone in an attempt to recreate the look and feel of another place...for those of us who have origins in similar landscapes...there appears to be some psychological or personal attachment to the walls.” Josie Black – If these Walls Could Talk 1995, Report on the Corangamite Dry Stone Walls Conservation Project Corangamite Arts Council. Photography – Raelene Marshall



“Top stones laid flat were called capping stones or coping stones. Each stone being handled only once...Stones were collected from the paddock to be enclosed there being no shortage of material on much of the volcanic plains. Large stones were levered out with heavy bars and moved by dray or sled usually a shaped fork cut from a tree.” Rod McLellan The Dry Stone Walls of Victoria’s Western District: Australia ICOMOS Vol V11 2 1989. Photography – Raelene Marshall



In the decades after the 1850s gold rush the cultural and social landscape was also undergoing important change. The lasting qualities of European style dry stone terracing can still be experienced today around this swimming pool near Hepburn Springs in Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall



One of the charms of the craft of dry stone walling is that it can enhance and protect grand homes and simple dwellings alike. Private property near Clydesdale in Victoria an area known for its early settlers of Swiss Italian origin. Photography – Jim Holdsworth



“The home farm has been subdivided into seven paddocks, post, rail and wire and stone walls being used for the purpose. The latter is a favourite fence in the district, stones being plentiful. The cost of erecting a wall 4 feet in height is about 25 shillings per chain, a man well used to the work being capable of building about one chain per day.” Leader Newspaper -Whittlesea August 22nd 1891. Photography – Raelene Marshall



“The biggest problem the farmers had was people coming up from Melbourne. Locals knew the value of the walls and paid them respect. A good wall that hasn’t been touched is loved...our relations taught us to respect the walls and encouraged us not to pull them down...The sad part is that some people, not locals would pull down whole walls and shoot holes in the water tanks.” Noel Cornish Altona Sept 2001. Photography – Raelene Marshall



“The walls in this shire relate to the farming era as opposed to the bachelor pastoral era. They’re a hallmark of the original farming era...Not only do they dramatise the European impact on the landscape but they also provide tangible evidence, as yet un researched, about early farming practices.” David Moloney - Melton Heritage Study 2001. Photography – Jim Holdsworth



Purpose. Skill. Necessity. Creativity. The use of a variety of materials on this dividing fence of a private property near Clydesdale in Victoria demonstrates the capacity of the waller to adapt to, and work with, the materials and circumstances of the time. Photography – Raelene Marshall



“I like jigsaws and I’ve got miles of them... every time you repair a wall you have pull it back to where the stones haven’t shifted. Then you use a string line anchored by sticks wedged in crevices in the wall on either side of where you are repairing to give a line to work to.” John Chapman – Hobby stone waller Camperdown Victoria May 2001. Photography – Raelene Marshall

1880	Rabbit Suppression Act. (Victoria). Owners and occupiers liable for the destruction of rabbits on their land. Crown has to get rid of rabbits on Crown Land.  More rabbit walls built and mass trapping of rabbits begins.
1880s	Decline in construction of stone walls as labourers’ wages rise and wire becomes more available. But low stone walls still often built as base for wire fences.
1885	Long ‘Serpentine Wall’ constructed by team of Aboriginal people from the Lake Condah Mission.
1890s	Economic Depression throughout Australia
1901	Federation of the Australian States into a Commonwealth
c1913	Construction of garden rockery walls Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney
1904 – 06	Closer Settlement Acts. Victorian Government compulsorily re-purchases land, re-surveys it and offer rural lands for selection. Especially related to re-settlement of large pastoral estates.
1914 – 18	First World War
1917	Discharged Soldiers’ Settlement Act. Aboriginal Servicemen excluded from the scheme. Re-settlement of land by returned soldiers as part of the Closer Settlement scheme. Almost 10,500 soldiers settled on land but mainly unsuccessful farmers. Causes: inexperience, material poverty, stress, poor housing.  Soldier settlers build stone walls around properties in stony areas.
1930s	Economic Depression. Great unemployment in Australian cities and country towns. Many families lose their farms due to economic circumstances.  Rapid decline in stone walling in rural Australia.  Rabbits become source of income for poor families (sold to local butchers) or source of family food.
1930s/1940s	Stone walls around many properties throughout Victoria marked on Army Ordnance maps. Walls shown as distinctive landscape features in many rural areas particularly in the Western District.
1939 – 1945	Second World War
1945	Soldiers’ Settlement Act. Better system than after the First World War. Government provides houses outbuildings and finance for basic farm improvements, which result in greater success for soldier settlers.



Copy of one of a series of letters in the Lands Department File 2225/59 that relates to the serpentine stone wall on the Dashper property at Lake Condah. The letters are written to support Dashper’s dispute with the Lands Department regarding the valuation his walls.

Mission Station Lake Condah  
November 1st 1902

Sir,

In reply to yours of the 28th October I beg to state that the amount of stone walling which was done by me with the aborigines under my charge as shown on the enclosed chart was something over 4 miles.

The wall is 3 feet wide at the bottom & 5 feet high & was valued at the time erected, at £35 per mile.

I may however state that some places over which it had been erected are very steep & very rough, so that if the work had been done by white labour it would have cost considerably more.

The serpentine line of stone wall, marked on the map, was erected before I took charge of the station, but was kept in repair by the blacks until the Stony Reserve was handed back to the Land’s Department.

I should think that about £125 would now be a fair evaluation of the improvements on the stony land in question.

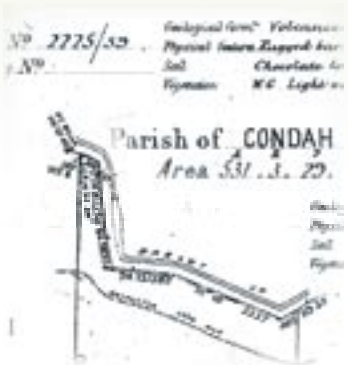
I have the honour to be

Sir

your obedient Servant

J.H. Stahle

The Rev. F.A. Hagenauer  
Gen. Insp to Secretary  
Board for Protection Aborigines Melbourne





# Decline, Revival, Changing form, Changing function

Stepping stones, Retaining stones, Garden stones, ‘Ellis Stones’...  
...would speak of the period when people began to re-connect with things of beauty. A time of creativity, of being at one with nature and her materials. They’d talk of the influence of early 1900s landscape designers and their physical and spiritual affinity with stone...and the aesthetic appeal and resurgence of the craft of dry stone walling...

## People, Gardens, Design, Desire

By the 1950s dry stone walls were no longer an important form of fencing for agricultural purposes. However, as early as the 1920s their slow decline and fall in favour for farming use, was paralleled by an increase in popularity in public and private garden settings.

## Straight Walls, Contoured Walls, Retaining Walls, Aesthetic Walls

In the period after the Second World War the craft of dry stone walling experienced a revival through the influence and work of a small group of innovative landscape designers.

At this time people were beginning to surround themselves with things of beauty. They became creative. In their gardens they used recycled materials to create a sense of place. Nature and the natural form suddenly became important.

The garden designs of Edna Walling and Paul Sorenson followed closely by Ellis Stones then Gordon Ford captured this new and exciting mood. Their talent lay in blending the stonework and the plantings to create gardens of exquisite beauty.

Each of these designers valued and respected the form, shape and placement of local stone. They understood and appreciated the inherent qualities of dry stone walls for their aesthetic value as well as their practical application.

## Form, Shape, Poetry, Art

Taking a Wall for a Walk... “I enjoy the idea of walls travelling - old walls becoming new – changing shape in the process.” says renowned British sculptor Andy Goldsworthy of his sculpture first constructed in 1984 by qualified wallers in a combined sculpture park and working forest in England’s Lake District.<sup>2</sup>

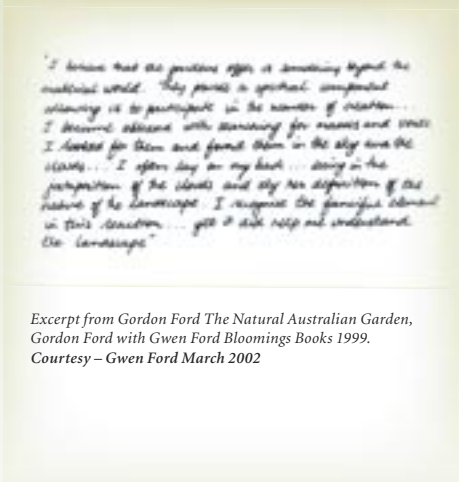
Today this now famous ‘walking wall’ meanders its way among the majesty of the forest trees and seamlessly joins remnant sections of century old agricultural boundary walls with another time... another art...

Dry stone...art, Dry stone...craft...Early wallers

Tradesmen,  
Craftsmen,  
Artisans  
Sculptors?



Steps, stairs, stones, strolling. A reminder of what’s to come or what has gone. Footsteps. Friends, family and others, will only know the maker by where these steps lead or what they leave behind...  
Photography – Raelene Marshall



Excerpt from Gordon Ford The Natural Australian Garden, Gordon Ford with Gwen Ford Blooming Books 1999.  
Courtesy – Gwen Ford March 2002



Steep land. Flat land...a necessary feature on a steep block. European style terracing has been used to great effect in this garden in the Dandenong’s in Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall



“I wanted to create an environment that was magical, mysterious and contemplative...similar to those free standing circles...I see art as an integral part of life something that shouldn’t be high falutin’ and overly intellectual...that everyone can access on different levels.”  
Artist Tim Jones speaking of his sculpture built in collaboration with Nathan Perkins Overnewton Gatehouse 1993.  
Photography – Raelene Marshall



Endeavouring to give something new the feel of great age is to challenge and work diametrically with nature, however, who better qualifies to create folly than the artist? Functional wall, sculptural wall, built by U.K. trained waller Nathan Perkins in 1993 at Overnewton Gatehouse Keilor Victoria. Photography – Raelene Marshall

c1913	Garden rockery walls built Royal Botanic Garden Sydney.
1911	Edna Walling (born in Yorkshire England in 1895) migrated with her family to New Zealand.
c1914	Paul Sorenson a professional horticulturist from Denmark migrated to Australia as an assisted migrant.
1914	Edna Walling moved from New Zealand to Melbourne Australia.
1916 – 17	Edna Walling attended Burnley Horticultural College as full time student.
1917	Paul Sorenson establishes his own business as a landscape architect in New South Wales. He continues to design gardens that have stone walls as an integral feature almost until his death in 1983.
1920s	In Victoria, Edna Walling starts designing and establishing gardens many of which feature dry stone walls and dry stone retaining walls. Edna Walling writes articles for The Australian Womens' Mirror, The Australian Home, The Australian Home Beautiful.
1930s	Economic Depression. Decline of dry stone walling for agricultural purposes. Edna Walling extends her garden designs to New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania.
1935	Ellis Stones, starts working with Edna Walling. He later becomes a famous garden designer in his own right and in 1968 was a foundation member of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.
1948	A Gardeners Log first published in 1948 contains a collection of articles written by Edna Walling for The Australian Home Beautiful.
1950	Gordon Ford (1918 -1999), Victorian landscape gardener, begins working with Ellis (Rocky) Stones.
1960s - present	The influence of landscape architects such as Edna Walling, Paul Sorenson, Ellis Stones, and Gordon Ford results in an ever-increasing popularity for landscape gardening using native plants and natural building materials.
	Amateur gardeners construct stone walls around their homes.
1990s	Dry stone sculptural works built in Victoria at Overnewton Gatehouse Keilor and Herring Island.
1999	Re-construction by Geoff Duggan and team of the rockery walls built c 1913 in the Sydney Royal Botanic Garden.
2001	New dry stone entrance at Mount Annan Botanic Garden constructed by Geoff Duggan.

Since commencing her career in Melbourne in 1916 Edna Walling in particular played a dominant role in the creation of Australian gardens as we know them today.

Early in her career she became a household name through her regular writings and musings on garden design. She was well known for expressing her views on issues of importance with vigour.

Famous for her understanding of nature and all things aesthetic, she leaves us with a legacy of innovative landscape design and a continuing connection to her passion, sensibility, and artistic style.



This garden at Braemore Homestead, in the City of Whittlesea, features a low, curved sandstone retaining wall on either side of the front steps. The simple construction built by Ellis Stones c 1943, creates an informal entrance to an architectural style which is characterised by regular bluestone coursework, fine quoins, and exacting tuckpointing. “An ‘irregularity of line’ and ‘undulations and miniature ridges’ were Walling’s preferences for stone wall constructions because dramatic light and shade effects were more observable on low, uneven walls.” Edna Walling, Gardens in Australia: Their Design and Care, Blooming Books, Hawthorn, 1999.  
Photography – Raelene Marshall



Edna Walling’s aim to always “create unity between the house and garden” is evidenced on this private property in the Shire of Yarra Ranges in Victoria. Her “style changed very little throughout her career... She is renowned for her use of stone, especially in low fences or walls and steps, where moss was encouraged to grow.” © Edna Walling www.abc.net.au/walling  
Photography – Raelene Marshall

Nature Romance Art Retreat



# Heritage, Recreation, Beauty, Conservation

*Farming Walls, Heritage Walls, Protected Walls, Parks Victoria’s Walls...  
...would speak of former times... grand pastimes and grazing sheep.  
Cottage gardens, market gardens, formal gardens and uninterrupted  
views. Of recent times... people visiting, people exercising, people  
picnicking and artists creating sculptural walls...*

A short punt trip across the Yarra River is the Herring Island Environmental Sculpture Park. Here sculptures made from natural materials such as earth, wood and stone blend comfortably into the island’s tranquil river setting. Dry stone structures provide visual and historical links with the dry stone craft and its European and Australian roots of origin.

### Private Places Public Spaces

When the need for public open space nearer to the cities developed, Parks Victoria became public custodians of many properties that were once working farms or large pastoral estates. Among them are two farms that once boasted a range of functional boundary and dividing dry stone walls. Dodds farm in Keilor and The Mansion at Werribee Park.

The remnant dry stone walls in and around Brimbank Park, are a link with some of Keilor’s earliest European settlers – the Dodd sisters and their brother George. They came from Ireland as assisted immigrants in 1840. By the 1850s, they owned farms on both sides of the river. They lived in homes built of bluestone, worked in bluestone dairies at skimming cream and making butter, and kept their stock in paddocks bounded by dry stone walls.

Today, the unique Ha Ha wall that surrounds the smaller early Werribee Park homestead is the only dry stone construction that remains on the once heavily walled estate. The Mansion completed in 1877 was modelled on the ideal grand English country estate. The property was established in the 1840s by Scottish pastoralists Andrew and Thomas Chirnside who settled here and owned large areas of land across the western basalt plains.

There is much speculation as to the origin of the words Ha Ha.



One of the rare surviving Ha Ha walls in the country. “It consists of a random rubble dry jointed basalt retaining wall...the earliest of these photographs dates from 1868...and shows pointing to the coping and a painted iron fence set into or standing immediately behind the wall...” Werribee Park Metropolitan Park Conservation Analysis Allom Lovell Sanderson Pty. Ltd. and Jessie Serle Dec.1985. Photography – Jim Holdsworth



“...In brief the sunk wall or ha-ha was constructed in July and August 1867 shortly after completion of the Homestead, and is referred to by Robert Chirnside in correspondence of this period.” Werribee Park Metropolitan Park Conservation Analysis Allom Lovell Sanderson Pty. Ltd. and Jessie Serle Dec.1985. Photography – Jim Holdsworth



Today the remnant dry stone walls that overlook the Maribyrnong River valley in Brimbank Park are reminders of another time another era. A time when the land was used for agricultural purposes not urban housing. A time when the Dodd sisters and their brother George owned farms on both sides of the river. Photography – Raelene Marshall



‘Stone House’ Andy Goldsworthy 1997. Sited in a clearing at the end of a hidden from view path, visitors to the island suddenly find this work constructed from Dunkeld sandstone. A house for a stone or a stone for a house? Somewhere between permanent and ephemeral. Between time and space. Photography – Raelene Marshall



Herring Island Cairn 1997. One of many markers constructed by Andy Goldsworthy around the world. Initially influenced by an ancient monument in Cumbria England and the connection between hilltop and valley, this work, like many others, is hidden away on the Island like a quiet reflective sentinel. Source Andy Goldsworthy Sheepfolds Cumbria 1996. Photography – Raelene Marshall

Parks Victoria manages a range of venues across the State from alpine parks, waterways and forests to coastal precincts.

Every year these venues are destinations to many millions of visitors. As the State’s public custodians we provide a unique blend of historical, aesthetic, environmental, recreational and educational experiences.

From the 1860s – 1880s the Chirnside Brothers set about improving their lands building miles of stone fencing. They employed stone wallers such as John Cameron and James Forbes to enclose the pastures. A typical wall being “2’8” broad at the base...16” broad at the top [with] copestones 8”... projecting 3” each side properly filled to prevent rabbits entering.” Letter from Robert Chirnside to James Forbes 1870’s State Library of Victoria.



Parks Victoria Information  
Telephone 13 19 63

Manage Protect History Landscape



# Flora, Fauna, Species, Habitat

*Terraced Walls, Restored Walls, Old Walls, New Walls*  
*...would speak of Sydney and its Royal Botanic Gardens from construction of the dry stone rockery walls around 1913 to their re-construction in 1999 in readiness for the Olympic Games. They'd tell of a revival of the craft and a new dry stone entrance at the Mount Annan Botanic Gardens...Even today visitors to the Royal Botanic Gardens in the centre of the city can still see natural outcrops of Hawksbury sandstone as well as heritage and contemporary dry sandstone walls...*

**History, Heritage, Sydney...stone**  
Founded by Governor Macquarie in 1816 in the Governor's private domain, which included the first European farm on this continent, the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney is the oldest scientific institution in Australia. From the earliest days it has played a major role in the acclimatisation of plants from other regions and the scientific study of native plants of New South Wales and the South Pacific.

Sandstone is the foundation of the city and its warm and richly coloured stone abounds in natural outcrops and majestic heritage buildings. An ideal material for constructing dry stone walls.

**Challenges, Solutions, Walling, Training**  
The development of the Mount Annan Botanic Garden commencing in 1985 required a creative solution to turn a 170 year-old dairy farm on heavy clay soils into interesting garden displays and public recreational space.

Dry stone walls were part of the answer. Aesthetically appealing and long lasting. They give character and identity, are free draining and retain the variety of soil types needed to grow a diverse assortment of plants.

**Ancient, Classic, Timeless, Tradition**  
Times have changed for walls and wallers. Old time craftsmen have passed away. Today technology surrounds us yet the passion for this ancient craft endures. In the land, and of the land, peoples yearning to re connect with their roots survives...

... and Sydney is one of the few places in the country where teaching the tradition of the dry stone craft lives on...



"The new entrance to Mount Annan Botanic Garden represents the culmination of my work to date and gives visitors a taste of what's inside." Geoff Duggan Feb 2002. *Photography – Jamie Plaza*



"A drystone wall is like a high rise apartment building. Frogs, ants and worms live in the basement; snakes and lizards live on the middle floors and bugs and spiders live in the penthouses. It seems some of the long-term residents grow mosses, lichens and other plants on their balconies." Geoff Duggan Feb 2002. *Photography – Jamie Plaza*



"These walls along Woolloomooloo Bay were built during the Depression, glimpses of them can still be seen behind the ever growing vegetation." Geoff Duggan Feb 2002. *Photography – Jamie Plaza*



It took twenty Gardens' staff three months to construct these retaining walls designed to display a rockery of Australian natives. It was completed in time to celebrate the Opera House's 30th Anniversary and to showcase Sydney to the world during the 2000 Olympics." Geoff Duggan Feb 2002. *Photography – Jamie Plaza*



Early 1950s dimensioned stone retaining wall forming terraced garden beds above the Herb Garden, stonemason unknown. *Photography – Raelene Marshall*

The ancient craft of dry stone walling can still be learned today. With a little training anyone can learn the basic skills and create their own masterpieces. Any stone can be used. The basic construction principles are the same.

Geoff Duggan is one of the country's very few qualified dry stone wallers who is maintaining and passing on this age-old tradition. Working as a Senior Horticulturist with the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and Mount Annan, Geoff is rare among the breed of present day wallers.

A craftsman with a job to do Geoff believes that "A dry stone wall is like a giant jigsaw, however it is three dimensional, the pieces are a lot heavier and there is no pattern to follow."

Since 1987 he has been involved in the development and construction of the 400-hectare native garden at Mount Annan in Sydney's southwest. On a Friend's of the Royal Botanic Gardens Horticultural Scholarship he travelled to the United Kingdom and worked with leading Master Craftsmen around the country to learn different styles and application of this ancient craft.

Geoff obtained qualifications from the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain, which is believed to be the only body in the world devoted entirely to maintaining the continuity of this skill.

Since his return, Geoff has highlighted the significance of historic dry stone walls in the Sydney and Mount Annan Gardens and has coordinated the construction of many more. He regularly conducts training courses and has helped over 500 people acquire skills of their own.



*Restore Retain Revival Retrain*



# A Stone Upon A Stone... our Past, our Present, our Future... our Heritage

*Beautiful walls, Unique walls, Damaged walls, Threatened walls ...would speak of stones and their importance. Of legacies and their meaning...of culture, connection, landscape and passion. They’d tell tales of research, training, guidelines and the future...of threats and thieving, farmers and protectors...whose voices heed...*

**The Landscape Architect and Historian...**

*“Dry stone walls express above-ground the underlying geology of their area and human ingenuity in turning nuisance surface rocks into functional fences of sturdy, sculptural form. If regularly and correctly maintained, they can still serve that function today...and provide a distinctive sense of place and visually arresting landmarks for tourists...If a community comes to value its local walls, its residents will need to support proposals that provide Council incentives for local owners to repair and restore them.”* Warwick Mayne Wilson, March 2002.

**The Project Supervisor of the Corangamite Dry Stone Wall Conservation Project...**

*“Dry stone walls are an important feature of our landscape and cultural heritage. A range of factors is currently affecting their continued integrity...the impact, in some areas, of the encroaching urban landscape; theft of stone from the walls; lack of guidelines pertaining to their preservation and no stuctures to support regular and skilled maintenance of the walls. Another important issue is the owners’ privacy as many of the walls are on private property.”* Andrew Miller, April 2002.

**The Local Government Planner...**

*“The dry stone walls throughout Melbourne’s Western Plains are a unique feature of the character of the area... they present a reminder of the early agricultural settlement of Victoria. Stone wall fences throughout the State are under threat...This is for a number of reasons, varying from neglect, replacement fencing, removal of stone for commercial purposes and sales and unfortunately through theft for private gardens and other use. Planning scheme protection is proposed for the most intact and significant features, but this would not guarantee protection from unlawful destruction of fences.”* Greg Wood, City of Wyndham, Jan 2002.

**The Research Historian...**

*“During the last year I have been privileged to be involved in historical research concerning the development of some of Victoria’s most important dry stone walls. This work has led to some exciting new discoveries, which could not have been made without detailed and time-consuming research. There are still many gaps that need to be filled to adequately assess these historic walls. It is my hope that more time and money will become available to continue this important work, so that Victoria’s priceless heritage of fine dry stone walls can be preserved for future generations.”* Dr Carlotta Kellaway, March 2002.

**The Sixth Generation Farmer of the pioneering ‘Cole’ family in Victoria’s Western District...**

*“In today’s farming climate the future of the dry stone walls is under threat. If farmers could get the support and incentive to maintain their walls with both funding and craftsmen available to help repair and teach the art, many more generations would be able to appreciate this magnificent legacy of the early pioneers. Indeed if that doesn’t happen, the tour guides of the future will be saying ...see that pile of rocks over there, it was once the site of a magnificent dry stone wall built in the early days of settlement of this country. I have a photograph if anyone would like to have a look.”* Nicholas Cole, March 2002.

The study undertaken has identified the following contributions to acknowledging the importance of dry stone walls in Australia’s cultural landscape:

1980s  
Walls in Kiama, New South Wales listed as heritage items in the Illawarra Regional Environmental Plan, 1986  
The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) holds a Seminar on the history, construction and conservation of dry stone walls at ‘Purrumbete’ Camperdown Victoria, 1987

National Estate Grant Program funds Melbourne’s Living Museum of the West to undertake a survey of dry stone walls in Melbourne’s western region. Research for this survey undertaken in 1989 by Gary Vines.

Paper published in Australia (COMOS Vol V11 2, The Dry Stone Walls of Victoria’s Western District. Rod McLellan 1989

1990s  
Queen Elizabeth Trust fund Nathan Perkins to undertake professional training with the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain.

Melbourne’s Living Museum of the West publishes **Built to Last:** An historical and archeological survey of the dry stone walls in Melbourne’s western region. Gary Vines 1990.

National Estate Grant Program funds the Corangamite Dry Stone Walls Heritage Study. Field Days held; demonstrations of how to construct dry stone walls; encouragement for training courses so stone walls can be preserved and walling skills retained. 1991

Glenormiston College (Western Victoria) holds workshops including weekend residential training on the skills of dry stone walling.

Corangamite Arts publishes **If These Walls Could Talk:** A Report of the Corangamite Dry Stone Walls Conservation Project 1995

Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney (Horticultural Scholarship) fund Geoff Duggan to undertake professional training with the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain.

Corangamite Arts with funding from Arts Victoria establishes the Corangamite Dry Stone Walls Heritage Trail.1997

Heritage Office New South Wales fund Kiama Municipal Council’s project to locate, record and assess all dry stone walls in Kiama. Study conducted by Warwick Mayne-Wilson and Associates of Sydney 1999. Preparation of a manual for Council and community use.

Heritage Victoria records a number of Places that have dry stone walls on its Heritage Inventory. Several dry stone structures recorded as parts of Places recorded in the Victorian Heritage Register.

Conservationists begin to acknowledge the identification and survey of walls in Heritage Studies. Some stone walls recognised under local planning schemes, or included on Heritage Registers.

2000+  
Department of Communication Information Technology and the Arts fund Melbourne’s Living Museum of the West. Visions of Australia Cultural Touring Development Grant to research the history of dry stone walls in parts of Victoria and New South Wales. Study undertaken includes, development of Website <http://www.astoneuponastone.com> State Library and Public Records Office searches; Local Government and Historical Societies’ research; community consultation workshops; private consultations and field trips with farmers and other interested parties and groups in local participating communities:

Department of Communication Information Technology and the Arts funds Melbourne’s Living Museum of the West. Visions of Australia Cultural Touring Grant to tour the Exhibition ‘A Stone Upon a Stone.’

A report published by the Lennox Head Heritage Committee on the history and location of the dry stone walls in Lennox Head, New South Wales.

Master Builder’s Association of Victoria International Specialist Skills Institute, award fellowship to David Long to undertake professional training with the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain.



*“These fences are part of our cultural landscape and will fall down if they aren’t looked after. However farmers are concerned about their stone walls being classified...The farmers own the fences and for them to have to fix and maintain them costs a lot of money. Whilst we realise the significance of these structures, we are often faced with a balancing act of how to preserve them.”* Gerald Moloney, Kolora Western Victoria March 2002. **Photography – Raelene Marshall**



*“A major concern to the welfare of the walls today is the thoughtless destruction by some collectors who are knocking out stones to search for bottles, coins and other artefacts.”* Barb Hood, Trafalgar East December 2001. **Photography – Raelene Marshall**



*A fine example of the industrial use of the craft of dry stone walling is seen in this bakery oven construction and water wheel abutments of these bread ovens near Daylesford in Victoria.* **Photography – Raelene Marshall**



*Dry stone walls can be threatened where land use changes. Development for housing is one such change of use. We make no comment about this particular development, but it is up to local authorities, the public and developers to be alert to heritage issues and consult with one another to strike a balance between the needs of everyone affected and the broader issue of heritage and habiitat preservation.* **Photography – Raelene Marshall**

Research Safeguard Maintain Preserve



# A Stone Upon A Stone... A One Upon A Two

## Dry stone walls...the future...

Like silent reference points in an ever-changing world, the dry stone walls that shape our cultural landscape stand today as testimony to a time when artisan skills portrayed the patterns of early settlement.

Captive moments in time, strong, sturdy and reliable, they provide places to gather, to shelter, to reconnect with the past and catch glimpses of the future.

In many areas of the country these finely crafted structures are under threat of further deterioration or complete destruction by development or theft. Yet those that survive still manage to evoke a strong sense of connection to place, history and our roots of origin, which if lost can never be replaced.

In places such as the United Kingdom the craft of dry stone walling and its contribution to the cultural landscape are acknowledged, valued and preserved as integral parts of the farming and tourism industries.

This exhibition was conceived to give Australia’s dry stone walls that same recognition

Thank you to the farming communities in Victoria and New South Wales who gave so generously of their time, knowledge and intimate understanding of their land and its connections with the past. Without their generous support the realisation of this exhibition would not have been possible.

### Recommendations

The recommendations listed, include and build on discussions with people involved in this study together with recommendations from existing Local Government Heritage Studies and the following reports:  
The Dry stone Walls of Victoria’s Western District: Rod McLellan, Australia ICOMOS Historic Environment. Vol V11 2 1989: Built to Last, Melbourne’s Living Museum of West 1990: The Report of the Corangamite Dry Stone Wall Conservation Project 1995: Kiama’s Dry Stone Walls Location Recording and Assessment Project 2000: The Dry Stone Walls of Lennox Head 2002.

If this craft is to survive for future generations it is recommended that:

- ~ Representatives from peak National and State bodies such as The National Trust, State Heritage and Planning and Tourism Instrumentalities as well as Landcare Conservation groups be encouraged to form a working party that would initiate the formation of a Dry Stone Walling Association of Australia modelled on the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain. That one of these instrumentalities eventually manages the Association
- ~ A database of qualified and experienced dry stone wallers be established and located with these instrumentalities
- ~ Dry stone walls be included on Historic Registers and strategies for their conservation be included in Local Government and State, Cultural and Heritage policies
- ~ Local Government Planning Schemes provide for the protection and preservation of significant walls and include them as essential features in any cultural mapping
- ~ Local Governments take a lead in encouraging their communities to restore and maintain their walls
- ~ Funding be made available to locate record and assess walls with social or cultural significance
- ~ Training in the craft of dry stone walling be included in landscape, horticulture, landcare and building courses especially in those regions where dry stone walls are prevalent



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



Photograph of Queenie taken around 1927. Getting ready to take Jack Poole on his journey back to Sydney. They used to drive the jinker and spring cart to the Rockbank railway station. "They'd leave her at my grandmother's property Bonnie View". Photograph supplied courtesy Mary Tolhurst



Sue Bickley riding in the Findon Junior Hunter's Plate in 1963. The course took the rider over four stone walls at "hunting pace" under the watchful eye of the judges. Photograph supplied courtesy Sue Gotchin (Bickley)



Photograph of Les Batten taken in the late 1930s on the Batten property Inverloch in Wollert rounding the Clydesdales into the yard in readiness for their day's work. Photograph supplied courtesy Bruce Batten

Research  
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Historical Research  
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Clare Gervasoni – Ballarat Heritage Services, David Endacott – Daylesford Museum, David Moloney – Historian and Heritage Consultant, Denise Lovett – Windamara Aboriginal Corporation Heywood, Glenelg Shire Drystone Wall Action Group, Geoff Duggan Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and Mt Annan, Josie Black – Corangamite Arts, Judy Scurfield State Library of Victoria, Les Davey, Wally Abraham and the Kiama Drystone Wall Committee, Laura Mecca – The Italian Historical Society, Malcolm Milner – Lennox Head Heritage Committee, Olwen Ford – Melbourne's Living Museum of the West, Rhonda Rathjen Librarian City of Wyndham, Roger Taylor Parks Victoria, Rob Wuchatsch and the City of Whittlesea Drystone Wall Action Group, Warwick Mayne-Wilson, Mayne-Wilson and Associates.

Exhibition  
Panel Design – Cameron Marshall, d-lin E8 Design  
Panel Production – Rob Evans, Evan Evans  
Website Design – Michael Raoss, d-lin E8 Design

Research, Development and Touring Participants  
New South Wales Kiama Municipal Council, Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and Mt Annan.

Victoria City of Ballarat, Baw Baw Shire Council, Corangamite Shire, Glenelg Shire, Hepburn Shire Council, Hobsons Bay City Council, Melton Shire Council, Moorabool Shire Council, City of Whittlesea, Wyndham City Council, Shire of Yarra Ranges, Parks Victoria Herring Island, The Mansion at Werribee Park.

Farming communities in Victoria and New South Wales

Research support organisations  
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Australian Heritage Commission Canberra, Australian Multicultural Foundation, Corangamite Arts – Camperdown Victoria, Heritage New South Wales, Heritage Victoria, Historical Societies (Victorian Branches) – Altona, Bacchus Marsh, Ballan, Melton, Werribee, Williamstown, Whittlesea, Kiama Family History Centre, National Trust of Australia (Victoria) – Branches Inner West, Port Fairy, Portland Family History Centre, The Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain, Wombat Arts – Moorabool.

Curator  
Raelene Marshall – Culture in Action

Project Support  
Peter Haffenden Director – Melbourne's Living Museum of the West



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