

A Problem to Ponder *by Colin Murdoch*



Dry stone wall across ridge-top at Umberatana is just visible on the skyline

The last few kilometres of the drive in to the homestead at Umberatana Station, at the north end of the Gammon Ranges (SA), is dominated by a dry stone wall on the hill-top to the south. Umberatana caretaker/managers, John and Sue Mengersen, have lived in the area for over 50 years and believe that there is an Afghan link, suggesting that perhaps it was built for camels, but there is little hard evidence to support this.

Checking on Google Earth, and having walked it, I feel the wall is about 1.6 to 2 kilometres long. On the ground it is clear that it runs until there is no more building material (a clay-rich silt-stone). Then it changes to 5 strands of the oldest wire I have ever seen with local wooden posts. This wire fence leads all the way into the stock yards and the windmill near the homestead. Generally, it runs along the highest point of a small range running east-west from the main working area.

Approaching the wall from the southern side it was consistently 1500-1700 millimetres high with significant foundation rocks which pass all the way through. Sometimes these are “found” as in utilised in their original position without moving them for the wall. The next layer most often has three rocks lying in the direction of the wall next to each other; that is one on the north side, one in the middle and one on the south side. These are topped by a layer two rocks thick, again generally laid with their long axis in the direction of the length of the wall. Finally, there are the copes where rocks lie across the wall and on their narrow side to create greater pressure on the wall below.

The first two articles in this edition of The Flag Stone have been submitted by travellers, intrigued by walls they have ‘discovered’ in dramatically different environments. Thanks to Colin and Colin for their keen observations and their research.

Umberatana cont.



Wall leading to Umberatana woolshed

After all of the years since construction this amazing wall is very solid with few breaches for almost its entire length. At the three creeks various strategies were tried but even with a catchment of five hectares or less the rock walling was no match for the volume and speed of the running water. We noted only two or three collapses of up to a metre, and four or five roo pathways where just a single or a couple of copestones have been displaced.

The fence appeared more likely to stop animals travelling North than travelling South. There are 3 or 4 small places where it would be easy for an animal to walk up a large rock feature to the top of the wall from the North side and jump to the southern side. There are no such opportunities on the southern side.

I have found one historical reference that indicates that part of a (the?) wall on Umberatana was washed away, presumably early in its life, in unusual storms in August 1865. In a letter printed in the Australian newspaper the *Empire* Fri 22 September 1865: 'A stone wall which formed the eastern boundary of a horse paddock, though at an elevation of 500 feet, was precipitated to the vales below'.



We conjectured there might be an Afghan influence in the construction of the wall. During the big drought of mid 1860s many European workers left, the station but it retained the energies of 31 cameleers with little else to do. Afghan shepherds were credited for the successful lambing of 1867. However the *Empire* places the heavy rain event prior to Samuel Stuckey's second and successful 1865 trip to Pakistan to purchase camels and engage Cameleers which arrived at Port Augusta on 31 December 1865 (Stuckey's *Memoirs of Mixed Fortunes*).¹

This leaves us as much in the dark as we were before walking this interesting construction and after our modicum of research. It is an impressive structure which has lasted a very long time, so it would be greatly appreciated if any readers were able to fill in the knowledge gaps about its origins.



Detail of Umberatana wall

Growing up on a mixed farm, then teaching for nearly 40 years in country South Australia, Colin Murdoch came to feel most at home in the Northern Flinders Ranges. 'Always keen to learn as much as possible and to promote wonder and enjoyment of all aspects of the local environment, the Flinders, with its timeless geology and ecology, effectively timeless Andnyamathanha culture, and almost two centuries of European influence, ticks all my boxes.'

¹ Philip Jones of the SA Museum and author of *Muslim Cameleers* has commented that the wall would certainly have qualified as an 'improvement' under the Government's leasing conditions, and would have been inspected and reported upon. It was incumbent on lease-holders to undertake improvements such as fencing, and the original owners of Umberatana (Elder & the Stuckey brothers) may well have engaged the Afghans to construct the wall – possibly using techniques applied back in their home country.

Perched on a Swiss Alp – the Mattertal dry stone wall

By Colin Hughes



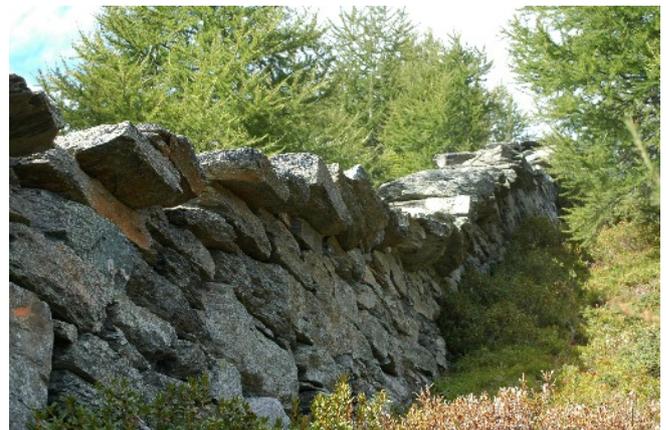
There is plenty of rock in Switzerland, more than enough to go round for everyone, and stones have been widely used to build retaining walls for terracing, especially for vineyards. Indeed, the extensive hillside vineyards of the Lavaux region above Lake Geneva are a protected UNESCO World Heritage site because of the incredible system of stone walls found there. However, in Switzerland there are very few dry stone walls marking boundaries between fields or properties.

Coming from the U.K. where dry stone walls are a ubiquitous feature of upland farms, this lack of stone walls in the mountains of Switzerland has always surprised me. That is why when hiking recently above the Mattertal, the valley running up to the famous ski resort of Zermatt in the Valais region of southern Switzerland, I stopped in my tracks when I stumbled across a magnificent dry stone wall. I knew this had to be a significant wall and I was intrigued to know more about its history.

The Mattertal wall is unusual. It is made of massive blocks of stone, rough grey mica-gneiss, many of the stones much too heavy to be lifted by even two people. It is over a metre wide, sturdy and built to survive deep winter snow and avalanches. The wall is capped by even larger blocks, overhanging and protecting the wall. It runs directly up a steep mountainside emerging from the high elevation larch forests into the high Alpine shrublands above the treeline at 2200 m and continues up to 2400 m,

or nearly 8,000 feet up in the Alps. The wall was apparently built around 1926 to protect reforestation from grazing by livestock and wild animals.

To reach the Mattertal wall it is a stiff two-hour climb up from the small village of Embd at 1300 m elevation up to the wall at 2300 m. The walk follows old paths. There are scattered ancient larch wood chalets roofed with massive stone slabs where people still live today – completely without road access, on incredibly steep ground. These people are growing small patches of potatoes, cutting grass for hay, and keeping small flocks of 10-15 sheep or goats, milking cows, beef cows and yaks, often relying on traditional local breeds like the Valaisain blackneck goat and Blacknose sheep.



People and livestock move up and down with the seasons, taking their cows up to high pastures each summer to make cheese, and down again in the autumn, the traditional transhumance system still largely intact. It seems unbelievable that just a stone's throw from Zermatt, one of the most glitzy high-end ski resorts in the world, people continue to farm pretty much as they have been for centuries.

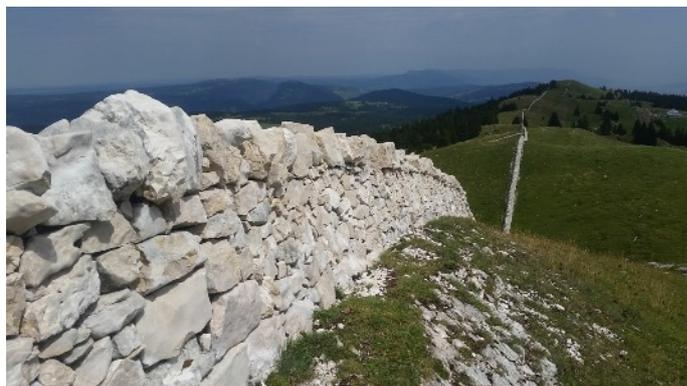


I went back to the Mattertal wall a few weeks ago and with clear weather I was rewarded by fabulous views of several of the highest mountains in the Alps - the Dom, Monte Rosa and the Weisshorn - all topping 4500 m, their glaciers gleaming in the sun, and was lucky enough to see chamois scrambling on the rocks above. It was good to stop and rest, sit on the wall, admire the view and think of the tough mountain people who built this magnificent wall nearly 100 years ago.

Colin Hughes studied forestry at Aberdeen University, worked for nearly ten years as a tree seed collector in Latin America, before doing a PhD in botany at Oxford University. He is now an assistant professor in systematic botany at the University of Zurich.

Guillaume de Buren, Directeur, Fondation Pour le Développement Durable, captured this image of a fine limestone wall in the canton of Jura, north-west Switzerland.

'I took this picture on my cycling tour this weekend. We have thousands of such dry stone walls that are still used to fence the cows. This one has just been renewed, probably by the civil service. Civil service is a military service for people refusing to serve in the army.'



These walls are protected by law. Sounds like an idea!

Higher up the path enters the forest – European larch – majestic trees with deeply fissured reddish-orange bark, the foliage turning golden in Autumn. At 2000 m elevation the trees thin and diminish in size, here mixed with shrubby blueberry, juniper and rhododendron at the



treeline and finally, just as the trees are left behind, the wall appears, striding straight up the mountain-side.

President's Message



Greetings!

The administrative life of an association like ours has as its focus the Annual General Meeting. Often seen as inconvenient but necessary, the 2017 AGM at historic Buninyong south of Ballarat had memorable and pivotal features for the 46 attendees.

This was not an election year, the biennial process of calling for nominations for executive and committee positions will be in 2018. However, a key item on the Agenda was the Strategy to carry the Association forward for the next three years and beyond.

Issue 39 of *The Flag Stone* mentioned a facilitated Strategy Day in April, a membership survey, and working sessions to bring the Strategy to the level of resolution that it could be put to the AGM for endorsement. This lays the foundation for the growth of the Association and the on-going but more focused implementation of our Vision.

The Strategy process revealed the growing scope of issues, topics and challenges that we face, and which cannot be efficiently pursued by a Committee of nine people. Enlarging the size of the Committee, and thereby broadening the skills and experience of the group, was seen as essential.

Our Secretary Andrew Miller not only arranged the venue for the AGM, but also the Annual Report, lunch for attendees, a guest speaker and, in the afternoon, a short car tour of some dry stone walls in the Buninyong area, followed by a casual meal back at the Town Hall.

The Annual Report contained the usual executive reports on the 2016-17 year, the financial report for the year ended 31 May 2017 and, importantly, a draft of the Strategy for endorsement.



I brought the meeting up to date with the development of the Strategy, presented the Strategy and its ten component portfolios and the scope of work within each. The Strategy was endorsed unanimously.

The second important step forward was the nomination of three members to join an expanded Committee; former Committee member and pre-eminent dry stone waller Geoff Duggan from Bargo in NSW, Chris Payne from Mt Pleasant in SA, and recent member Ian Crouch from Melbourne. Calling for additional nominations, Natalie Paynter from Melbourne offered her services and these four people were duly added to the Committee. Sue Jones, who served diligently as our membership secretary for five years, had tendered her resignation. Overall this gives the Association a greatly expanded capacity to meet the demands of the future.

All Committee members' positions will be declared vacant in 2018, but until our next AGM, we are well placed to move ahead with implementing the Strategy.

Our guest speaker at the AGM was Lorraine Powell, president of the Victorian branch of the Australian Garden History Society. Her illustrated talk included a challenge for DSWAA to partner with a local group of the AHGS to help restore a dry stone flume in the Buninyong Botanic Gardens. This opportunity has been embraced, and a productive co-operative process is now taking shape.

The 2017 AGM is an important milestone for our Association and sets the direction for the next few years.

Regards, Jim

The Association's vision is that dry stone walls and dry stone structures are widely accepted for their unique place in the history, culture and economy of the nation and for the legacy they represent.

Our goals are:

- *That governments and the wider community recognise the significance of dry-stone structures built by indigenous peoples, European explorers, early settlers and modern craftspeople as valued artefacts of our national identity.*
- *That this acceptance is manifested by appropriate statutory protection and landowner and community respect and celebration.*
- *That the craft of dry-stone walling grows as a modern reinforcement of the contribution that dry stone walls and structures have made to the culture of Australia.*

The Chinese wall, Mount Sturgeon *By Timothy Hubbard*

Many readers will know of the remarkable trek from 1856 to 1863 by over 16,500 Chinese miners from Robe, a small port in the south-east of South Australia to the Ararat goldfields, particularly to the fabulously rich Canton Lead. The men were avoiding the infamous and racist Victorian poll tax of ten pounds per man. Still they had to pay up to twelve pounds to sail to Robe, one pound to land, up to four pounds to be guided to Ararat, a one pound residence tax and a one pound protection fee. They were often mistreated on the way and also put to work for food, water, permission to pass and sometimes for wages. Their 350 km trek took them from Guichen Bay, through the agricultural area now known as the Coonawarra, into Victoria near Casterton, thence to Hamilton and Dunkeld passing south of the Grampian Range before turning north towards Ararat.

A strong tradition exists, with some supporting documentary evidence that the Chinese built dams, sheep washes and dry stone walls on the pastoral properties around the village of Dunkeld, including the property Mount Sturgeon named after the dramatic peak which dominates the village. One L-shaped wall across the back slope of Mount Sturgeon appears to be their work. It aligns exactly with the modern boundaries between crown land and freehold title land. It appears to date from the 1860s, the time of the first *Land Selection Acts*. While not well built in any of its parts, much of the wall has survived in relatively good condition. The stone used is an ancient pink quartzite/sandstone. It is traditionally detailed with large base stones, some through stones, fairly random walling and then topped with coping stones. It incorporates outcrops of rock, plunges down steep slopes, has no gates but stops abruptly at each end. Some of the wall has collapsed but is an evocative component in the broader cultural landscape.



The Chinese wall

Many dry stone walls in Victoria have *de facto* protection under the *Planning Act* for their local significance. A small number of walls of state significance have special protection under the *Heritage Act*. The Southern Grampians Shire is investigating the possible heritage value of this wall which, at present, has no protection. Heritage values can be tested against several criteria and a place under consideration can be compared with other similar examples.

One of the few examples similar to the Mount Sturgeon dry stone walls is a network of three walls which meet at the peak of Mount Napier, a much younger large and near perfect volcanic cone 30 km south west of Mount Sturgeon. These are well documented in official Lands Department survey plans and in the returns of squatting leases now held at the Public Record Office. They are likely to be of state significance.



The Grampians wall

Research into the Chinese Wall at Mount Sturgeon is just beginning. Any information readers may have or suggestions for lines of enquiry would be much appreciated. Please contact [Timothy Hubbard](mailto:timothy.hubbard@grampians.gov.au).

A temporary exhibition, *From Robe to Chinese Fortunes*, is now showing at the Immigration Museum, Flinders Street, Melbourne until 2nd April 2018. More information is available at [Museum Victoria](http://www.museum.vic.gov.au):

Timothy Hubbard, a retired heritage architect and town planner, is a long-time member of the DSWAA. He lives in Port Fairy and has a particular interest in the Western District, its history and cultural landscapes.

Temples of Malta *By Lyn Allison, DSWAA Patron*

Our next door neighbours and half a dozen kids in my primary school class in the 1950s were from Malta but I knew little about this tiny place until we took a side trip there in July. Recommended by friends, it turned out to be beautiful and a mecca for ancient dry stone construction.

The islands of Malta emerged from the sea through tectonic movements and continental shifts - rocky outcrops of layered limestone, sandstone and clay, laid down in the Oligocene and Miocene epochs of the Tertiary period, chemically weathered by acids in rain ever since.

Coralline limestone in the north was used for important buildings but the main limestone resource is the softer, more crumbly *globigerina*.

Stone is everywhere. Massive limestone walls built over time to repel successive armies of invaders turned Malta's harbours into fortresses that dominate the shores.

Fields are still being cleared of stones for increasingly marginal cultivation and dry stone walls consume them in familiar ways. However the use of stone by neolithic humans for temple and tomb construction - 23 of which have been discovered throughout the islands, some dating back to 4200 BC - is far more remarkable.

Six separate sites are World Heritage listed as *The Megalithic Temples of Malta*, meeting the criteria of originality, complexity, strikingly massive proportions and the considerable technical skill required in their construction.



Hagar Qim is considered the best preserved of Malta's temples, with only the tops of these very tall megaliths visible prior to excavation

The [UNESCO citation](#) states: Each monument is different in plan, articulation and construction technique. ...The façade and internal walls consist of upright stone slabs, known as orthostats, surmounted by horizontal blocks. The surviving horizontal masonry courses indicate that the monuments had corbelled roofs, probably capped by horizontal beams. This method of construction was a remarkably sophisticated solution for its time. The external walls are usually constructed in larger blocks set alternately face out and edge out, tying the wall securely into the rest of the building. The space between the external wall and the walls of the inner chambers is filled with stones and earth, binding the whole structure together.



Hagar Qim and Mnajdra have internal chambers (apses) with access through porthole entrances. Horizontal courses are the remains of the base of a corbelled roof.

The temple builders used locally available stone of which they had a thorough knowledge. They used hard coralline limestone for external walls and the softer *globigerina* limestone for the more sheltered interiors and decorated elements.

Decorated features found within the buildings bear witness to a high level of craftsmanship. These elements consist mainly of panels decorated with drilled holes and bas-relief panels depicting spiral motifs, trees, plants and various animals. The form and layout of these buildings, as well as the artefacts found within them, suggest they were an important ritual focus of a highly organized society.

Built between 3600 and 3200 BC, the neighbouring Hagar Qim and Mnajdra temples were excavated in 1839 and are now protected by buffer zones and a temporary shelter to protect against deterioration until a long term preservation strategy is developed.

Canary Island stoned vineyards *By Bruce Munday*



The Canary Islands is an archipelago of volcanic islands in the Atlantic Ocean, many of the volcanoes still active. During the era of global Spanish conquest the Canaries, particularly Tenerife, were the main stopover for galleons on their way to the New World, the latitude allowing them to pick up the northeasterly trade winds.

Some of the volcanic activity has been quite recent (particularly in geological terms) so that the landscape is generally treeless, and littered with volcanic rock and ash. Like most volcanic soils it is nutrient rich, so that there is potential for agriculture if suitable farming prac-

tices can make optimal use of limited water resources and avoid the impact of ever-present wind.

Lanzarote, the third largest island, experienced massive volcanic eruptions in the 1730s, burying much of its most fertile land. However the islanders invented a unique system for establishing vineyards that took advantage of the newly deposited nutrients along with favourable diurnal temperature variation, while managing the other climatic constraints.

Individual vines are planted in man-made depressions about a metre deep to capture moisture in the arid environment. They are then sheltered in the lee of a semi-circular dry stone wall, just high enough to provide wind protection but not to shade the vine.

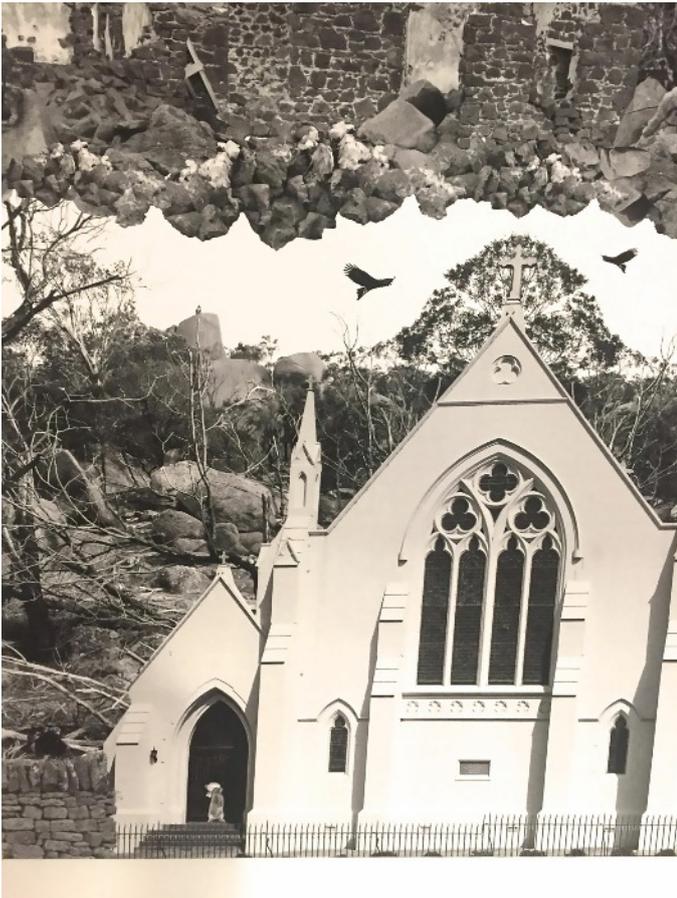
Canary Island wines have gained quite a following among wine buffs, particularly in Europe. Those from Lanzarote are generally marketed as artisanal wines having that all important point of difference.



Thanks to Greg Clinnick for drawing our attention to this unusual aspect of dry stone walling and for accessing the photographs.

In unexpected places *By Raelene Marshall, DSWAA committee*

On a recent visit to the Ballarat Photography Biennale I happened across an image that was initially challenging and confusing. An upside-down juxtaposition of landscape, stones, nature and religiosity. Even in these somewhat incongruous situations, the eye of we dry stone walls aficionados can spot a wall from a hundred paces. There in the bottom corner of this photo was a well-constructed wall adjacent to a church with windows and doors that either invited the viewer inside to contemplate and explore, or kept the viewer out – an onlooker who simply surveys the scene.



Even before reading the title and artist's statement I was immediately transported to a time several years earlier spent with historian, the late Dr Carlotta Kellaway. During her research for my exhibition *A Stone Upon A Stone*, [referred to elsewhere in this issue] she discovered the role of the now demolished 1883 Lake Condah Mission bluestone Church, the missionary Reverend John Stahle, and the part that Aborigines played in building dry stone walls in the Condah district well over a century ago.

The photograph is titled: *Even if the race is fated to disappear (Peeneeyt Meerreeng/ Before Now Tomorrow)*. Artist Hayley Miller-Baker states: 'Unfortunately due to colonisation, the assimilation policy and the stolen gener-

ation, my mob, clan, and the family were collected and relocated onto a mission. The Lake Condah Mission served as their controlled home where they were forbidden to speak language, practice culture and crafts without the risk of severe punishment such as starvation and violence.

'To take the place of our 60,000-year-old culture was the introduction of compulsory religious education with mission schools to teach the White way – the right way. In the 1870s to the early 1880s Victoria, a fully-fledged absorption policy was developed and was enshrined in law by the Aborigines Protection Act 1886.

'This Act virtually ensured that the missions would see to it that Aborigines would totally die out through forced White absorption (Royal Commission on the Aborigines, Victorian Parliamentary Papers 3, 1887-8: 111). This was the Victorian policy during the 1800s, seeking to "breed out" Aborigines from Australia and assimilate the "half-castes" to serve White Australia in the meantime.'

The old Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission Reserve is situated in the Glenelg Shire near Heywood and Tyrendarra on the south-western Victorian volcanic plains. Established in 1867 as a Church of England Mission, the Mission was managed under the jurisdiction of the Anglican Reverend John Stahle a pragmatic disciplinarian whose strictness and inflexible management style meant that the residents were subjected to a severe and strict regime.

Long before ancient volcanoes had stopped erupting the local Aboriginal tribes had existed for possibly 30,000 years on the basalt land that was both rich and fertile. These conditions enabled them to build houses of stone and develop a sophisticated fish trap aquaculture system. The skill and technology of dry stone construction was not new to them; they had been using it for thousands of years. As the lake waters rose and fell they caught eels using beautifully crafted hand-woven baskets and preserved them by smoking them in hollow trees.

In the pre-Google, early *A Stone Upon A Stone* exhibition research development days, local people who had an interest in the dry stone walls were invited to attend community forums in their area. Without exception the farming communities were not only extremely generous with their time and information but also became the greatest source of documents, anecdotes, maps and photographs needed to bring together a story that until that time had not been told.

The first forum held at the Glenelg Shire's Portland Art Centre was attended by local artists, farmers and repre-

Unexpected (cont.)

representatives from Windamara and Gunditjmara indigenous groups. It was a lively discussion and it soon became evident that not only was there a great deal of interest in the project but that some very interesting stories, photographs and memorabilia would be available to assist with the research process.

Fortuitously among those in the audience were several locals whose information would become key to the critical details needed to develop the stories of the area. Of particular significance were the Gunditjmara representatives, a local Arthur Weston who brought with him copies of mid 1800s diaries that discussed 'working on the wall' and farmer Pat Muldoon. Pat and husband Neil are still the current owners of the Condah land formerly selected by the pioneer John Dashper and his family.

The Mission Reserve stretched from the south side of Darlots Creek. The adjacent Dashper land had walls on it that covered the five crown allotments and although the early histories of the remarkable Serpentine and Blacks' Walls is somewhat different, Carlotta's examination of Lands Department records confirmed that district Aboriginal labour was responsible for the original construction and maintenance of both of these long dry stone walls. To that end the early Parish Maps the Muldoons provided enabled Carlotta to examine historical records at the Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV). A comprehensive outline of the history of the Lake Condah Mission and the Serpentine and Blacks walls, is on the [DSWAA website](#).

John Dashper migrated to the area as a Cornish stonemason by trade and it was not long before he'd commenced a notable career of building that included the construction of the Mission bluestone church. I still remember Carlotta's joy as day after research day she began to unravel the dry stone puzzle. We discovered from the Parish map that the properties of 'Alf and Marc C' referred to in the diaries were adjacent to each other with other diary notes that referred to 'Jonnie' whom we understood from the daily narrative to be an indigenous waller who assisted them 'working at the wall.'

Also to her delight the PROV file was very intact as the details regarding the land had not been separated into two research categories as had others at the time. As she worked through the correspondence I still recall her comments that in the early days Dashper referred to himself as a stone mason but by the end of the file he'd become a pastoralist, and that sadly, he and Reverend Stahle from the Mission had collaborated to try to evade paying the appropriate fee to the Lands Department for improvements on the Dashper land because the walls on it had been built by aborigines under Stahle's charge.

Buninyong walls *By Andrew Miller, DSWAA Secretary*

The Dry Stone Walls Association of Australia chose Buninyong as the venue for its 2017 Annual General Meeting. Buninyong township, 13 kilometres south of Ballarat, sits on the south-west side of Mount Buninyong.

Along with our AGM obligations, we enjoyed a presentation titled 'Stones in the Garden' by Lorraine Powell, President, Australian Garden History Society. After the AGM, we toured eight dry stone walls in Buninyong.

The stone in the Buninyong walls comes from the volcanic activity of Mt Buninyong, which is part of the vast volcanic plain extending from Melbourne in the east to the South Australian border in the west. Mt Buninyong was known as Bonang Yowing (man lying with leg raised) by the aboriginal people. The aboriginal people's connection with the land and the European settlers' use of stone are an important part of Buninyong's history.

The Buninyong walls were commissioned by the first European settlers to define boundaries and partition the land. They are unique in style, the stone from the Mt Buninyong eruption being relatively small and uniform. Consequently the walls are wider and lower than many other dry stone walls and generally without copestones. These walls can be defined as 'consumption dykes' because, as well as dividing the land, they were often built to consume the vast amount of stone in the landscape.



Dry stone walls are dotted over this vast volcanic plain and there is no other township in Victoria like Buninyong, which has such a number of dry stone walls in its urban precincts. This adds a very special character to the town and needs to be promoted in the community, amongst wall owners, developers and local government. The DSWAA intends working with these groups to ensure the walls in the urban and semi-urban precincts of Buninyong receive appropriate levels of care and recognition.

A Cope Stone that never made it to the wall!

By Andrew Miller, DSWAA Secretary

A traditional dry stone wall construction typically has the following key structural elements: foundation stones, face stones, through stones and copestones. The copestones have a particularly critical role in many of these traditional dry stone walls.

Now.....'the Cope Stone that never made it to the wall'..... Back in the 1990s I was a member of a very enthusiastic community arts group, now known as Corangamite Arts. Much was achieved by that group in terms of bringing performing and visual arts to the rural communities of Corangamite in Western Victoria.

The local government authority at that time was developing entrance structures to the towns under its jurisdiction. Corangamite Arts offered to auspice the project for local government and was successful in this request.

What a wonderful community led project it became! Corangamite Arts commissioned sculptor Neil Roberts (dec.) from Queanbeyan to work with the community to develop a design for the Terang Gateway (as the project became known). Neil set up a space in a vacant shop in the main street of Terang for one month and oversaw a range of well attended community consultation processes. The outcome was a dry stone structure of contemporary form. Dry stone walls are a common site in the Terang district and such a structure had meaning and ownership to the Terang people.



After much thought we approached Bill Harlock (above), second generation dry stone waller from Pomborneit near the Stony Rises. Bill didn't have to think for long. He knew the Rises like the back of his hand. Bill took us to his farm ute and said 'jump in'. After a very slow and bumpy ride through Bill's amazing Stony Rises property, Bill pointed to a low depression in the landscape and said "we'll find your copestones here", and sure enough we did. At this point the volcanic lava had flowed out in a thin layer across the landscape and appeared to have collapsed in on itself. The one or two hectare area was like crackled egg shells. The stone made for perfect copestones on the Terang Gateway! We collected sufficient for our project PLUS one I could not part with!



The task was then to find a waller and build the Terang Gateway. Skilled dry stone waller David Long 'cut his teeth' on this project. Neil's beautiful sculptural design was delivered by David's fine workmanship.

David and the project leaders had to locate the appropriate stone for the construction. Foundation stones, face stones, through stones and cope-

stones all had to be located in the Corangamite landscape. The stones came from eruptions such as Mt Noorat, Mt Elephant and the Stony Rises.

It was locating the copestone that was the challenge. Neil Robert's design had stones standing 600mm high, atop the wall. We queried Neil, but we soon understood that size of copestone was an important feature of the design.



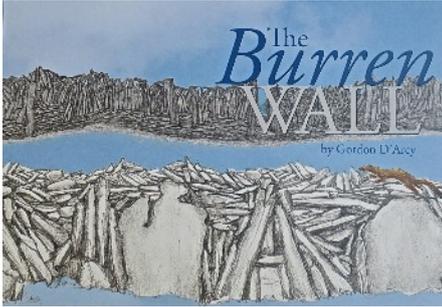
That stone is in the image.....a piece of the lava flow, 100mm thick, with the 'ebbing lava' pattern clearly evident!

So important are the copes that when a waller is embarking on the restoration of a damaged wall he or she immediately sets aside the copes from the old wall, making

sure they are not used as building stone – they are too valuable.

Book review *By Andrew Miller*

'The Burren Wall' by Gordon D'Arcy



Last October Karen and I travelled to Ireland to celebrate a wedding in the tiny village of Castletownroche, just north of Cork. You won't be surprised that the conversation turned to dry stone walls! So many locals advised us 'be sure to go to the Burren' and we subsequently spotted the book *The Burren Wall*. It is a delightful read on what is an outstanding landscape with some of the most distinctive dry stone walls to be found anywhere.

Our journey after the wedding was somewhat unplanned so the Burren, which was a half day drive to the north, was in our sights. The word Burren means 'great rock' and it is a strange lunar-like region of mostly bare grey limestone, near the towns of Lahinich, Ballyvaughan, Enistymon and Corofin.

The book deals with the social history of the walls from the earliest prehistoric examples to the most modern.

Different styles of walls can be attributed to specific periods of their construction.

Author Gordon D'Arcy, a naturalist, environmental educator and artist has assembled an entrancing and informative story of the Burren walls through history. He conveys via text, photographs and wonderful artwork, the powerful visual impact of the natural landscape, with its absence of high vegetation and other obstructions, thus making the walls a dramatic feature.

The book also is very informative on the natural history of the Burren, presenting the walls as a '*habitat for a myriad of flora and fauna*'.

Dry stone walls are a remarkable feature throughout Ireland and more than half a million kilometres of walls exist across the country. The walls in the Burren are unique in terms of their built form and cultural heritage, and to quote the author '*the Burren's habitats.....appear stitched together by lines of walls. Their image remains in one's consciousness, even after departing the region*'. After visiting and walking in the Burren, we can vouch for that, without doubt!

Coming across Gordon D'Arcy's publication, prior to exploring the Burren, made for a heightened experience and understanding of one of the many unique areas of Ireland. Published in 2006, it is still available via the web.

Also in Ireland



[Gathering of Stones](#). This festival, in the Lough Boora Parklands (County Offaly), kicked off in 2013 to create a dry stone monument 'built by the people of Ireland for the people of Ireland across the world'. 1500 man-hours and 300 tonnes of stone went into this project. The photo on the left shows the main circle made up of four segments representing the four provinces of Ireland. In the foreground is Connaught which includes the Burren. You will notice the rather exaggerated decorative copestones, some two-stones high representing the feiden style common in the Burren.

There is a nice little youtube [video](#) showing some of the stages and people involved in this impressive project.

Also in Ireland and apropos of Andrew Miller's piece on copestones, regular readers of *The Flag Stone* will be aware of the

The Grand Section - an odyssey on 2 wheels

By Bruce Munday



About 12 months ago I met a couple of young post-grad architecture students from Newcastle Uni. They were interested in dry stone walls as an example of 'building with found materials'. Shortly after, Bobbie Bayley and Owen Kelly set off on an extraordinarily ambitious (but mouth-watering) adventure: A bicycle and architectural odyssey across Australia's *Grand Section* following the 25° latitude - from Fraser Island to Dorre Island off Western Australia (around 6,900kms) to better understand the 'relationship of place and habitation.'

To paraphrase: 'Unlike historically, where the Grand Tour and Tourists look abroad for inspiration and architectural teaching, we propose to break the mo(u)ld of architect as tourist and travel Australia by holistically engaging with the broader whole.'

'The Architectural section is a crucial tool for understanding building, structure, phenomenology, topography and space through crucial moments, and so, we propose a section through Australia.'

I've been following their [progress](#) since Day 1 – it is full of unique experiences, insights, and wit, not to mention wisdom that I thought came only when much older than these two.

Their last missive was from Laverton between the Gibson and Great Victoria Deserts from whence they sent me images of dry stone walls at abandoned gold mines.

It is a massive undertaking but they never seem at all daunted. Take a look at their website - you'll love it..

Owen is undertaking his M Architecture at U Newcastle, periodically sending back assignments... mostly on time. He grew up in the Blue Mountains but has lived in Newcastle for the past six years studying and running his own design practice. He is very good at mistakes.

Bobbie has the prestigious Byera Hadley scholarship for this look at Australia. She completed B Design (Arch) at U Newcastle and has a Dip Int Design through an online something. Having worked in USA and Peru she is really into corn.



Protecting dry stone walls

The Victorian Division of the Planning Institute of Australia conducts a program of short courses aimed at planners but also at people interested in urban and rural planning and associated disciplines. It is known as the PlaNet program. This year, for the first time, the program includes a one day course on dry stone walls. The presenter is Gary Vines, a senior archaeologist and consultant. Gary's firm, Biosis, conducted the Wyndham Dry Stone Walls Study in 2014, the key findings of which have been incorporated into the Wyndham Planning Scheme to protect significant dry stone walls in the area on Melbourne's south-western fringe where urban development is occurring at an almost frenetic pace.

Topics in the course include the history and character of dry stone walls, planning schemes, management of dry stone walls in developing areas, undertaking assessments of dry stone walls, and heritage management.

The one day course is on Thursday 26 October, in Melbourne. The fee for the public is \$300. For more details, or to book a place, the Planning Institute can be contacted on (03) 9654 3777.

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The photo above, taken at Kyneton (Vic), illustrates one of the real threats to dry stone walls on roadsides. Gate sign reads 'Keep out. Leave stones alone'.

~

Cut Hill on the road from Adelaide to Victor Harbor is the site of one of South Australia's most iconic dry stone walls.

It was contracted by the Central Roads Board in 1868 to one Jabez Grimble, who had already built culverts and bridges in the district, to make the road safe for travellers. The metre-high dry-stone parapet is probably all that most travellers see, although there is a parking area with a commemorative plaque that few make time to study. Less obvious is the several metre-high abutment

sitting on an impossibly steep slope below. Not only is this stonemasonry of the highest standard, it is also first-class civil engineering. The stone, a grey-green meta-siltstone, was quarried on-site and this wonderful wall is rightfully on the National Heritage Register as an Indicative Place.



In June this year a motor vehicle crashed into the wall, sending a couple of tonnes of stone over the edge.



The fear (of wall lovers) was that this would be patched up with stone brought in and mortar – it has happened before!

Fortunately the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, along with Victor Harbor Council, are 'on the ball'. By October they had finally called for quotes from accredited (by whom?) wallers who can do a job fitting the heritage value of the wall. This will be watched with interest.

A Stone Upon a Stone Exhibition (Whittlesea Shire)

By Raelene Marshall (DSWAA committee)

Dry stone walls shaping Australia's cultural landscape

This article follows companion pieces in issues 34-37 of *The Flag Stone* featuring the Corangamite, Melton, Glenelg, Ballarat, Baw Baw and Hepburn Shire Panels.

In May 1999 and in October 2000 the Australian Government supported a Touring Exhibition designed to capture, promote and affect an awareness of the history and cultural significance of some of Australia's dry stone walls. Produced and curated by Raelene Marshall, the research and development involved twelve Local Government areas in Victoria and New South Wales.

The Flag Stone will continue to feature these local areas in subsequent issues. A view of the Exhibition can be found at <http://www.astoneuponastone.com/exhib.html>

Whittlesea Shire Panel

City of Whittlesea – A Stone Upon A Stone



Lava flows from outlets such as Mount Fraser, near Beveridge, sent molten rock to fill old valleys transforming the City of Whittlesea's landscape west of the Plenty River to become the basalt plain. While only subtle evidence of aboriginal occupancy remains, many basalt or 'bluestone' buildings and structures, built by 19th Century

European settlers, still survive. These include churches,

bridges, farmhouses, stables, barns, milking sheds, dairies and a chequer board network of dry stone walls.

By the 1870s dry stone walls in a variety of styles were common west of the Plenty River. The Whittlesea area was important as a location for fox hunting and the Findon Harriers, based at Mill Park, hunted widely across the basalt plains. Hunts west of Epping Road were said to take place 'practically all over stone walls.'

How did these fascinating dry stone walls come about?

At Westgarthtown, established in 1850, German settlers built many kilometres of dry stone walls as they cleared their land of stone and established dairy farms to provide milk and butter for Melbourne. Today Westgarthtown's

remaining walls, around the Lutheran Cemetery at Lalor, stand in stark contrast to modern suburban fences.

At Summer Hill in Craigieburn, Dr Thomas Wilson had by 1870 constructed more than 32 kilometres of dry stone walls. Wilson, an Irishman, considered dry stone walls, where stone was available, to be the cheapest form of fencing and the best. His first walls, built during the gold rushes of the 1850s, cost 44 shillings a chain for building alone, but by 1870 the cost had dropped to 26 shillings per chain, inclusive of raising and carting the stones and building.

At Epping, dry stone walls were still being constructed in 1891 at Sambourne Farm, operated by Englishman Stephen Morgan. The cost of erecting a wall four feet in height was 'about 25 shillings per chain, a man well used to the work being capable of building about one chain per day.'

At Yan Yean, Fenwick Farm has over ten kilometres of dry stone walls, believed to have been built between 1870 and 1890 by then owner Englishman John Horner, aided only by a boy and a horse. The approach to the homestead incorporates the best and most intact example of dry stone walling to a single farm in the City of Whittlesea. Another wall at Fenwick, magnificently constructed, stands over six feet high and runs for over 50 metres.

Today, despite the recent vast increase in population within the City of Whittlesea, many dry stone walls still remain to provide residents with an inspiring connection to the early days of their cultural heritage.

Timeline

- 1837 European settlement of Plenty Valley
- 1838 first land sales
- 1842 Plenty Bushrangers captured in shootout at Whittlesea, hanged at Melbourne
- 1850 Westgarthtown German/Wendish settlement established in Thomastown
- 1851 Black Thursday bushfires ravage the Plenty Valley
- 1853-57 Yan Yean Reservoir constructed
- 1870 Shire of Darebin proclaimed (name changed to Epping in 1894)
- 1875 Shire of Whittlesea proclaimed
- 1890 Railway to Whittlesea opened
- 1898 Findon Harriers Hunt Club formed (the Findon Hounds was originally formed in 1872 by the Miller family and kept at their family residence, Findon at Kew)
- 1915 Shire of Epping merged with Shire of Whittlesea
- 1988 City of Whittlesea proclaimed

DSW appreciation

Back in June a friend who shares my interest in dry stone walls and bluegrass music alerted me to a forthcoming Dry Stone Walls Appreciation Convention. This was to be a private gig at a home in the Adelaide Hills to celebrate some recently built dry stone walls and other landscaping features. The band would be The Cherry Pickers, well known in the Adelaide bluegrass scene. The waller, unbeknown to me, was John Moore who instructs at the DSWAA's SA workshops.

After a few phone calls I managed to inveigle an invite from the host (thanks Della) who had read my book. It seems that having a 'dsw guru' present was to be something of an asset or at least a curiosity.



It was a great winter's day with about 50 friends of the hosts enjoying good live music in wonderful surrounds embellished with some very nice dry stone walls. At least 50 people developed an enhanced appreciation of dry stone walls..

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Issue 39 of *The Flag Stone* featured a short article about a massive stone boundary wall built between the feuding Allison and Gatenby families near Campbell Town in Tasmania. David Gatenby has provided additional information showing that the dispute arose over the building of a post'n rail fence on disputed land in about 1840.

The disharmony persisted for 23 years, finally winding up in the Tasmanian Supreme Court where it took a jury 35 minutes to find in favour of Gatenby.

It appears that the fortress-like stone fence was erected following the court case, perhaps an extreme case of pique.

As mentioned previously, the two families get on well these days. Perhaps stone walls are so 'permanent' that they incite forgiveness.; or are they so unforgiving that they result in permanency!

~

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Membership

Annual membership fee

Corporate \$80

Professional \$50

Single \$30 (\$80 for 3 years)

Family \$50 (\$130 for 3 years)

Cheque: DSWAA Inc. and posted to DSWAA Membership, 87 Esplanade West, Port Melbourne 3207; **or**

Bank Deposit at any branch of the ANZ Bank **or EFT:** BSB 013 373, Ac. no. 4997 47356

Clearly indicate membership identity of payer

New members

Please complete the online membership form on our website: dswaa.org.au

Alternatively email or post name, address, phone number/s, and area of interest (eg waller, farmer, heritage, etc) to the membership secretary (above).

Renewals

Annual fees are due May 31 after the first full year of

Photographs

Pages 1 & 2 C Murdoch

3 & 4 C Hughes & G De Buren (bottom rt)

5 J Holdsworth; 6 T Hubbard; 7 L Allison;

8 K McCombie; 10 A Miller;

11 D Long & A Miller (bottom rt);

12 Sunny Wieler; 13 B Bailey & O Kelly;

14 N Hampson (col 1), K Munday, J Moore;

15 R Marshall; 16 K Munday.