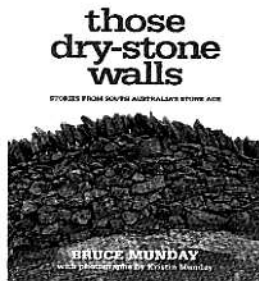
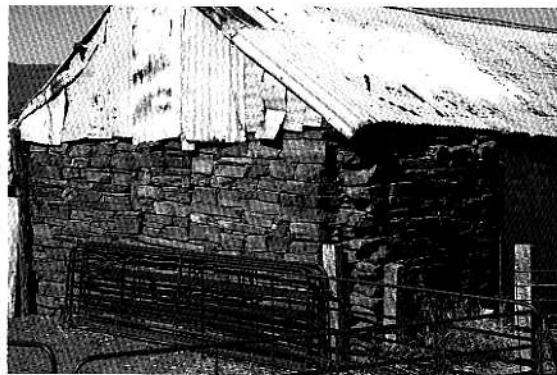


Those Dry Stone Walls

BRUCE MUNDAY TEXT, KRISTIN MUNDAY PHOTOGRAPHY

REVIEWED BY MARCUS BERESFORD



TOP RIGHT Shearing shed behind Love's Hut, Palmer Hill Photo: Bruce Munday

TOP LEFT Front cover Photo: Kristin Munday

ABOVE Old sheep dipping yards, Rosebank, Mount Pleasant Photo: Kristin Munday

CENTRE Garden wall under an oak at The Hermitage, Photo Kristin Munday

BOTTOM Near Mintaro Primary School, Photo: Kristin Munday

An important new addition to heritage writing, this fascinating book describes the rich South Australian heritage of dry stone walls and certain other stonework.

The author was apparently inspired by walls in the western district of Victoria and Geelong Gaol, but is now probably *the* aficionado of the previously rather unsung and unrecorded dry stone walls of South Australia. The photographer has recorded many of these walls on their joint excursions around different parts of SA, providing superb images to accompany the text and making the book a delight to either read, superficially peruse, or take on one's own excursions.

The first chapter discusses how dry stone walls have not been mentioned much in the history books despite the fact that, particularly in SA, they provided much mid 19th century fencing before wire took over. Dry stone walls perhaps themselves took over from the early shepherds, when the latter went off to the great mining rushes of the colonial period.

The following chapters look at the many different walls in the Eastern and Western Mount Lofty Ranges, Mid North, Far North, Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas, South East, and Kangaroo Island. This forms something of a tour itinerary and whets the reader's appetite to visit the many unfamiliar sites described as well as revisit those already known.

Starting with the superb early limestone walls of Point Sturt; the author goes on to describe the "beating heart" of dry stone walls at Woodchester (near Strathalbyn), the delights of Rosebank near Mt Pleasant, the stunning 65 km wall starting at Hill River station traversing

the Browne Hill Range in the Mid North, the 50km of wall at Kanyaka station (overshadowed by the better known homestead ruins), and the fine dry stone wall road abutments in Port Germein Gorge from the 1930s. Apparently many of the dry stone walls on southern Yorke Peninsula have been removed and crushed for road gravel or lime making. Here and on Eyre Peninsula some dry stone walls are topped with posts and wire. There are fewer walls in the South East, although one of the finest in SA is found near Robe.

A delight is the attention throughout to contemporary walls, reminding that some of the original advantages of dry stone walls have a new meaning in terms of ecologically sustainable use of local materials. Although originally cheaper to build than post and wire fences, low cost could not be included as a modern advantage of such walls. However their undoubted beauty and durability against fire remain, and the walls form what is very much a *living heritage*.

Later chapters discuss selected natural wall effects, some overseas examples of dry stone walls, contemporary art works related to dry stone walling, obtaining stone and actually building dry stone walls.

A paean of praise for dry stone walls, the book will appeal to many who have admired such stonework but not necessarily understood its significance. The authors are passionate and preservation orientated, and have searched out

many examples that will be new to a lot of readers. People who have never really paid much attention to dry stone walls will find the book a fascinating insight into SA history and may take a new view of the heritage landscape.

Some of the past and present builders of such walls are profiled, the frequent contribution of women and boys is alluded to, the size of wall building teams and the time they took is considered (a mile took about 4 months), and difficulties and costs are discussed. The author reflects on some of the lost landscapes prior to settlement, and some of the issues facing preservation of dry stone walls today.

Those Dry Stone Walls is an impressive work and both eye-opening and enjoyable to read. Although the author has a PhD in physics and the book includes some references and footnotes, the style is colloquial and easy to follow. It is clearly written by a well informed and widely read person.

Copies at \$39.95 may be obtained from the publishers,

Wakefield Press,

1 Parade West, Kent Town 5067,

ph. 8362 8800 or visit their website

www.wakefieldpress.com.au.

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