

Dry Stone Wall Driving Trail

The Shire of Melton lies on a vast volcanic plain stretching from Melbourne's northern outskirts to the South Australian border. In pioneering times, resourceful farmers used the volcanic nuggets that littered their fields to build dry stone boundaries. Some of the oldest and most intriguing examples are found in the Melton Shire. This Driving Trail will help you appreciate and explore them.

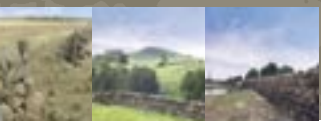
The 1½ hour-long, 90 km (approx) journey guides you to 8 areas, each with significant examples of the craft of dry stone walling. Along the way, keep an eye out for many other remarkable walls and stone structures that dot the landscape and hug the low hills, from very squat single-layer dividers to double-course fences boosted with post-and-wire tops.



Preserving History

One of the aims of developing this driving trail is to raise the awareness of the importance of the early settlers who constructed dry stone walls in those areas abundant with stone and contributed to the shaping of our rural landscape. Today these same walls are symbols of a past era in a fast growing municipality on Melbourne's urban fringe. We hope you will respect and preserve this aspect of our heritage for future generations.

Dry Stone Wall Driving Trail



Melton Visitor Information Centre

323 High Street, Melton.
Open 9am-5pm daily

Phone: (03) 9747 7300
Email: visitor@melton.vic.gov.au
Website: www.melton.vic.gov.au



The Driving Trail

After viewing the sculpture *Volcanic Genesis* at the Willows Historical Park, leave Melton via the Melton Hwy (C754). Turn left into Ryans Lane. Just past Minns Road is the first of many walls – a crumbling and rare example of a low stone base course topped with remnants of a post-and-rail fence.

Area 1

Just beyond the “dog-leg” in Ryans Lane is a fine example of an all-stone double wall, with two rows of stones forming its base. This wall extends for 600 metres and is in surprisingly good condition for its age.

Turn right at the Diggers Rest–Coimadai Road (C706) then left into Blackhill Road.

Area 2

On the left is a low-level wall with a double row of stones as its base course and a post-and-wire top. To the right at the Blackhill Road intersection, and extending diagonally across the paddock, is an excellent low-level wall.

Here you can choose to either turn around and head back to the Diggers-Comadai Road or to extend your drive further along Blackhill Road. This optional section lets you enjoy the 3.8 km stone wall for its full length, and also to admire several other appealing walls. Approximately 6km along Blackhill Road there is a turnaround space at Mt Aitken Road allowing you to retrace your steps back along Blackhill Road to the Diggers Rest-Coimadai Road, where you turn right and then left into Holden Road.

Area 3

As you approach the ancient volcanic cone Mt Kororoit, you will see your first real view of the rocky outcrops of the mountain. Turn right into Leakes Road which rises up along the mountain's flank.

Mt Kororoit Road is a no through road offering panoramic views of dry stone walls sculpturally defining the pattern of long east-west paddocks. Look for the private farm with several old garden

walls, stockyards and paddock walls, all built from stone using traditional, mortar-free methods. At the road's end is an all-stone Galloway wall, identified by the double rows of stones at the lower part, graduating to single rows up to the top coping course. You can view all the stone structures from within your car. Remember this is a private property. Please respect the privacy of the people who live here by not entering the property or tampering with the walls in any way.

Backtrack and turn right into Leakes Road, then left onto the Melton Hwy before turning right at Plumpton Road. Beyond Beattys Road, look to the right for a single stone wall with a remnant post-and-wire fence on top.

On the approach to Taylors Road, observe the two double walls to your right. Turn left into Taylors Road and as you travel east look to the right across the paddock for an excellent example of a dry stone dam wall, the largest of several in the Shire. Giving the appearance of a paddock wall, it was not unusual for these dam walls to be over 3 metres high. Turn right into Sinclairs Road.

Area 4

Just beyond where Sinclairs Road dips sharply into Kororoit Creek there are several walls of interest on both sides of the road, particularly the double stone walls, skilfully topped with coping stones. Almost immediately you pass another group of walls with double row bases, visible on the approach to Neale Road.

Turn right into Neale Road then left into Hopkins Road, cross the freeway and follow the signs towards Werribee.

Area 5

Marked with a brown tourist sign, not a numbered marker. Just after Middle Road is a fine double wall topped with post-and-wire fence. It is part of a private farm complex which has many dry stone walls and other structures surrounding the bluestone homestead. This whole area is rich in dry stone walls, visible in almost any direction you look.

Turn right into Boundary Road and travel west.

Area 6

Much of the landscape along Boundary Road is dotted with dry stone walls. In particular, the area past Troups Road South provides many examples of double walls in varying condition.

Follow Boundary Road, then turn right into Mt Cottrell Road.

Area 7

Approximately 4km along Mt Cottrell Road just before Greigs Road West is an historically significant disused farm complex. It features several dry stone structures, illustrating just how versatile stone walling can be.

From the road you can see dry stone construction in sheep yards, a long sheep dip and paddock boundaries.

One wall is in stark contrast to the old, roughly constructed walls nearby. It was rebuilt in May 2006 from remnants of a former wall by the artisans of the sculpture at “The Willows” Historical Park in Melton and participants in a community workshop.

Continue north along Mt Cottrell Road and turn right into Greigs Road.

Area 8

This section of Greigs Road takes you past three excellent walls. On the left as you approach Leakes Road is a fine example of a double wall with post-and-wire, with another similar wall on the right, beyond Leakes Road. About 700m past Troups Road, on the left you will notice a first-rate but short double wall – this is the last of the stone walls on Greigs Road.

Turn left into Hopkins Road and return to Melton on the Western Highway. As you drive back along the highway keep an eye out for more drystone walls in various degrees of conditions.

This Driving Trail takes you past some of the best examples of Dry Stone Walls in the Shire of Melton.

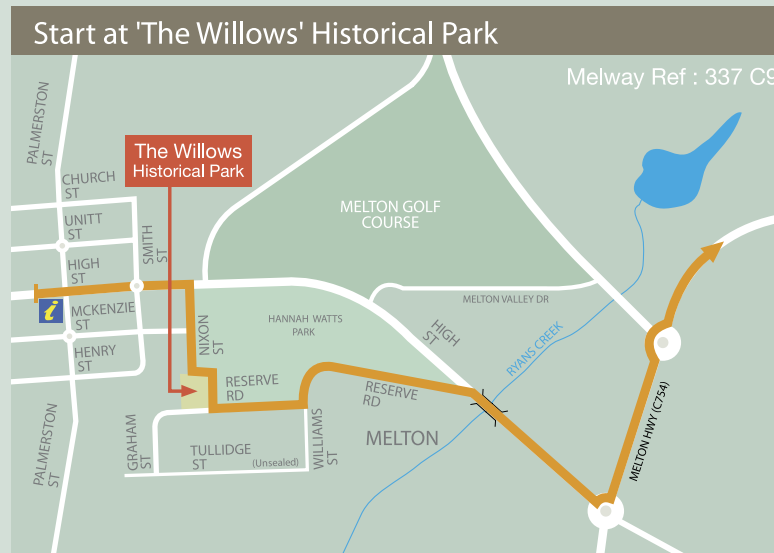
Start Here

Your journey begins at "The Willows" Historical Park (see break out map below), location of *Volcanic Genesis*, the dry stone sculpture created in 2006 by eminent wallers, David Long and Alistair Tune. Designed by Melbourne architect Jim Holdsworth, the artwork portrays the hard and labour-intensive task that was faced by Melton Shire's early settlers, clearing the land of field stones and using them to build walls around paddocks or farms in order to make the volcanic plains productive for grazing livestock and growing crops.

Please Take Care

The trail takes you along some gravel and narrow bitumen roads, so take care when approaching oncoming vehicles or slowing to take in the sights. Many of these walls border, or are within private property, we ask that you please respect the privacy of the landowners. Please do not enter any of the properties or touch or tamper with the walls in any way. The walls can all be viewed and enjoyed from your vehicle.

Keep an eye out for the Area Markers



MAP LEGEND

- DRY STONE WALL TRAIL
- UNSEALED ROADS

- AREA MARKER (1-4) (6-8)

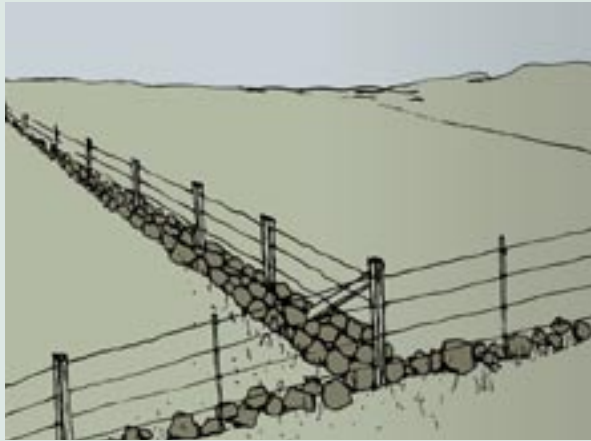
PLEASE NOTE
'AREA 5' IS MARKED WITH A TOURIST SIGN, NOT A NUMBERED MARKER



The landscape around the Shire of Melton bears the signs of its volcanic origins. Low hills that are long-extinct volcanic cones, deep valleys of the creeks that cross the otherwise flat landscape and the profusion of rocks that are scattered across the sparsely-treed plains.

Unlike the more angular stones found elsewhere in Victoria, the characteristic rounded or oval shaped volcanic stones found in the Shire enabled the wallers of the past to build composite walls using materials at hand in both creative and practical ways. The Shire has some of the oldest and most interesting examples of the different styles of dry stone walling fences that can be seen close to Melbourne. The following sketches explain the differences in some of these wall types.

For locals and frequent visitors to the area, these somewhat unusual walls are familiar elements of the Shire's landscape, however for other visitors they are an interesting feature to be understood and appreciated for the visual interest and curiosity that they generate.



Post and Wire Double Wall

This is a common type of wall in the Shire of Melton. It comprises a double row of stone tapering to a top row. The wall is built around a typical post and wire fence.



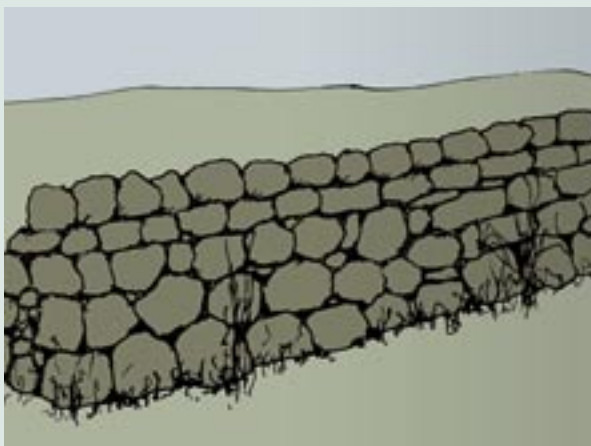
All Stone Single Wall

This type of wall has just one row of base stones and upper courses are carefully placed to overlap the join between the stones below. Smaller 'plugging' stones help hold the larger stone in place.



Post and Rail Double Wall

Similar to the post and wire double wall, this older style wall is notable for the timber posts and rails and its weathered beauty is quite unique.



All Stone Double Wall

The construction style of this type of wall is similar to walls found elsewhere in the State. It has two rows of base stones and several courses of stone tapering to a single course. Occasionally a row of copestones is added. Smaller 'hearting stones' fill the space between the tapered walls.



Galloway Wall

This unusual style comprises a tapered double wall surmounted by a single wall of several rows, topped by copestones. Galloway walls consume large quantities of stone and often incorporate very large rocks.