

Open Garden Ercildoune

Victorian Heritage Register



Ercildoune (H0313) is one of the oldest pastoral properties in Victoria. It was founded in 1838 by the Learmonth brothers, Thomas and Somerville. The station diary notes that the gardens at Ercildoune were being laid out in 1842. These became the foundations of a grand and elaborate garden and parkland. Ercildoune also became a centre for merino wool production and breeding, with a reputation unsurpassed in the colony.

Ercildoune's buildings and structures date from the mid-19th century through to the early 20th. They include the homestead, caretaker's and manager's residences, gatehouse, garden plantings and structures, cemetery, water-ways and hydro-electric scheme, wind-breaks, and farm buildings, including a barn and shearing sheds.

In 1873 Ercildoune was sold to Sir Samuel Wilson, who added extensively to the homestead, developing the garden to include the long entry avenue of Himalayan Cedar and Monterey Pines, a walled garden and a deer park. He continued to produce fine merino wool, and developed one of the first trout hatcheries in the colony. Sir Samuel Wilson also installed the remarkable 'Palestinian well head,' given to him by his sons and believed to be 2,000 years old, (pictured).

In 1920 the property was sold to Major Alan Currie. He established a hydro-electric scheme and a horse stud, and continued breeding merino wool and trout. Sir Alan Currie died in 1942, but Lady Currie lived at Ercildoune until 1962. After her death the estate went into decline and was vacant for years. In 1999 John and Christine Dever (pictured p.2) bought Ercildoune, and are restoring it with great care for its heritage values.





Ercildoune is of **historical, architectural, aesthetic, archaeological** and **scientific significance** to Victoria.

Historically significant for its association with the Learmonth's, Sir Samuel Wilson and Sir Alan Currie. Also historically significant as a centre for merino breeding and fine wool growing, with shearing shed, sheep yards, sheep wash and shearers' quarters still extant.

Architecturally significant for its fine collection of granite buildings and structures, including homestead, water tower, gatehouse, old men's quarters, stables, walled garden and fences. The homestead is an important example of the rare Scottish Baronial style,

Ercildoune's parkland is **aesthetically and historically significant** as an extensive picturesque landscape along a narrow valley transformed into a series of dams and lakes at the foot of Mt Ercildoune. The designed landscape and garden around the house, with extensive use of water and the avenue of cedars and pines, has very few comparable examples in Victoria.

For more information see www.heritage.vic.gov.au:



The Victorian Heritage Register
The Register was established under the Heritage Act 1995 to protect Victoria's most significant heritage places. It covers buildings, industrial heritage, archaeological sites, shipwrecks, heritage objects, cemeteries, gardens, trees and cultural landscapes.

Over 2,000 places and 600 shipwrecks are now on the Register. The Heritage Council of Victoria decides what go on the Register, based on established criteria for heritage values.