

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** BALOCHILE HOMESTEAD SITE

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Balochile Road KONONG WOOTONG

**STUDY NUMBER:** 123

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**OTHER NAME/S  
OF PLACE:** STRONE

**PRECINCT:** outside

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**PARISH:** PARISH OF KONONG WOOTONG

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 430 A-37, located approximately 200 metres south of Fassiferne Road, off Balochile Road

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the remaining gardens and all of the land in a 10 000sq metre radius from the plaque erected at the centre of the site.

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The site of the Balochile Homestead complex is located on land which is part of "Strone" homestead, in a paddock overlooking Salt Creek. Access is via Fassiferne Road, and a 200 metres walk down hill. The site has been marked by a plaque erected by the Coleraine Historical Society. No trace of the original homestead complex remains, however a number of mature European trees survive in the formerly extensive gardens, which surrounded the house and outbuildings.

## **HISTORY:**

Balochile homestead site was originally part of the much larger Kononwootong run, owned by William Swan.

Duncan Smith was born at Cragdon, Glencrow, in Argyshire, Scotland, in 1840, and was educated at Adantiny and Lochlongside schools. In 1853, he emigrated to Australia, landing in Portland, and continued his education in a private (unknown) school (Smith, 549). After completing his education, he worked on the family property near Portland, and studied sheep farming and at the end of six months proceeded to "Konongwootong," then owned by his uncle, Mr. William Swan, where he met his future wife, Mary Swan. Duncan and Mary had five children; Duncan, Agnes (Nancy), Ellen, John and Archie.

Duncan Smith remained at Konongwootong until 1861, when he was appointed Manager of Bongmire Station (Springwood) at the Wannon. Under the Nicholson Land Act of 1860, large areas of William Swan's Konongwootong Station were thrown open for selection, and in 1865, Duncan Smith (in partnership with his brother John Smith, and sisters) took up 1300 acres of land, which they named Balochile (Smith, 549). The name "Balochile" is derived from a place in Scotland (CHS File).

The original homestead was built in 1865, and a photograph dated from 1867 shows an extensive homestead complex of main house, cottage, woolshed, and other outbuildings. The garden is of rectangular form, with division into utilitarian and ornamental sections, all surrounded by a simple picket fence. The garden contains extensive plantings of Eucalyptus species, and a large orchard. The perimeter of the homestead garden is planted with Eucalyptus species. Within 200 metres of the house are the woolshed, two cottages (one ruined) and an extended length of post and rail fencing. The original homestead was demolished by fire in 1868, and another homestead was built. The financial difficulty, which this placed Smith in, may have been responsible for his frequent absences from Balochile in later years.

Between 1868 and 1880, Smith dabbled in other pursuits, such as trying his luck at mining in New Zealand. In 1888 he took up the management of Mt Koroit Station, on the other side of Coleraine, where he remained until 1897. By the turn of the century, Balochile had been reduced to 500 acres, described as "the soil being volcanic and black flats, very rich, and watered by never-failing creeks and springs. About 1,100 crossbred sheep are shorn annually, and, in addition, the property carries about fifty head of cattle" (ibid.).

After Duncan Smith's (snr.) death, his unmarried sons Duncan (jnr.) and Archie continued to run Balochile. The second homestead was also destroyed by fire in the early nineteenth century, although the remains of the once extensive garden remain.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

3.5.2 Breeding animals

3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries

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Theme 5: Working  
5.8 working on the land

**CONDITION:**

There is no remnant of the homestead complex. The trees are in good condition.

**INTEGRITY:**

Fair degree of integrity to the turn of the century (garden only). May be archeaological potential

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

The site of the Balochile Homestead complex is located on land which is part of "Strone" homestead, in a paddock overlooking Salt Creek. The site has been marked by a plaque erected by the Coleraine Historical Society. No trace of the original homestead complex remains, however a number of mature European trees survive in the formerly extensive gardens, which surrounded the house and outbuildings. The gardens are in fair condition and retain a good degree of integrity.

How is it significant?

The Balochile homestead site is of historical significance to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Balochile homestead site is of historical significance for its association with the early and important Swan family, who owned the large Kononwootong run. It is of further importance as a rare surviving example of a substantial established selector's garden which has survived without the selectors homestead. It provides an example of the gardens which were typically planted around the better connected selector's homes, and provides insight into a previous way of life.

**COMPARISON:**

119 Konongwootong Creek Homestead (former), Coleraine-Balmoral Road, Coleraine.

**ASSESSED BY:** AEN

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

20-Jan-02

**EXISTING LISTINGS:**

**HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Include in VHR  Include in RNE  Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

**REFERENCES:**

Author	Title	Year	Page
Coleraine Historical Society	File Note - Balochile Homestead Site		
James Smith, ed	The Cyclopaedia of Victoria	1905	548-9
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	