

From a rock to our best-known sculpture



From this – a massive piece of bluestone weighing more than 10 tonnes... (Image courtesy of Glenn Morgan via the late David Jones).

By Carol Altmann

One of the many great things about *Bluestone Magazine* has been our recording of the revival of the Fletcher Jones factory and gardens in Warrnambool (having [been part of the campaign to save it in the first place](#)) and the many wonderful stories that have emerged about its past.

One of those wonderful stories is this one: the making of the bluestone sculpture commissioned by the Jones family as a tribute to the late Sir Fletcher, created by [the late artist Robert Ulmann](#).



To this....the completed Robert Ulmann sculpture that pays tribute to the ethos of the late Sir Fletcher Jones. (Image courtesy of Glenn Morgan via the late David Jones).

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]T[/dropcap>he sculpture, which is now a prominent and much-loved feature of the Pleasant Hill gardens, was hewn from two massive pieces of bluestone selected by Robert from the Panmure quarry.

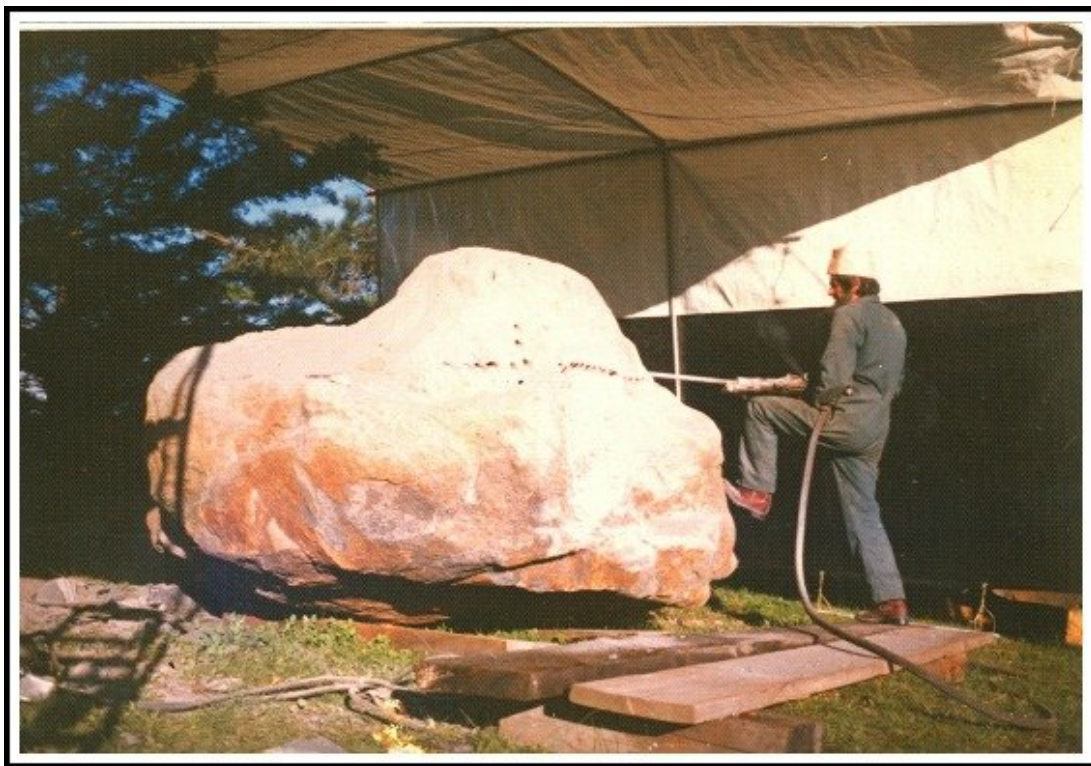
The two pieces together weighed more than 20 tonne and, over the course of four months from July to October 1977, Robert reduced them to two pieces weighing five tonne.

This meant, of course, hacking away 15 tonnes of solid rock in a make-shift workshop at his Naringal property (later lost in

the Ash Wednesday fires).

In our March edition we [revealed a rare archive of images](#) from the personal files of **David Jones**, son of Sir Fletcher, who gave them to local artist **Glenn Morgan** eight years ago for use as inspiration in his quirky works.

Within these more than 100 images are those capturing the making of the Ulmann sculpture and most likely taken by the Ulmann family (see our slideshow a little further on in this story).

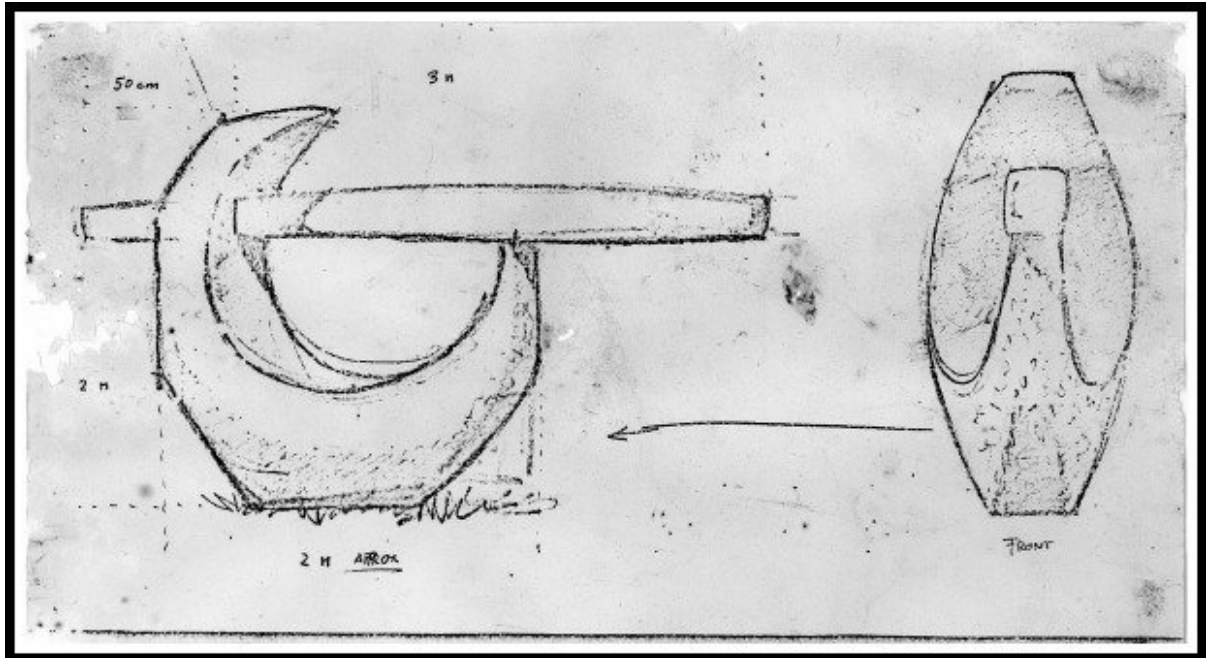


Putting his back into it: the late artist Robert Ulmann gets stuck into the bluestone with a jack hammer at his Naringal property, later lost in the Ash Wednesday fires. (Image courtesy of Glenn Morgan via the late David Jones).

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]S[/dropcap]uch was the excitement around the commissioning of the sculpture – which came just a few months after Sir Fletcher's death in February 1977 – a memo and photographs were sent around all of the Fletcher Jones factories and shops

to keep staff updated.

The finished sculpture may look like a hand holding a sewing needle, which fits with the Fletcher Jones story, but in fact it represents a germinating seed.



Robert Ulmann's preliminary sketches for the sculpture that represents a germinating seed. (Image courtesy of Glenn Morgan via the late David Jones).

The plaque next to the sculpture explains more:

"Viewed from the ends, the form suggests the shape of a seed – the germination of an idea and the inspired determination to develop it."

The three-metre long "needle" points to limitless potential.

"The horizontal lines of the straight stone suggest infinite potential for exploration and expansion of the initial ideals," the plaque reads.

The sculpture will be 40 years old next year and stands as solid and true (and as popular with climbing kids) as it did on the day it was unveiled while a new chapter of the Fletcher Jones factory unfolds around it.

Watch our one-minute slideshow of the sculpture being created below:



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