

About Dry Stone Walling

The craft of dry stone walling is vital to the preservation of our landscape heritage. The Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain (DSWA) is a charity that works to improve knowledge and understanding of the craft of dry stone walling and conserve, protect and improve the built landscape. DSWA aims to establish a Built Landscape Awareness Campaign to promote our heritage craft. As part of this campaign, DSWA is producing presentation material and resources including an online educational reference library for schools and colleges offering material that relates to a range of subjects within the National Curriculum.

In Britain the traditional craft of dry stone walling has been practised for over three thousand years.

Some of the earliest structures are found in the far north of Scotland, such as brochs and the Skara Brae settlement in Orkney. Dry stone structures like brochs and black houses have significant historic and archaeological importance.



Many of the walls in Britain were built during the period of agricultural enclosure between 1650-1850. Walls were built of stones cleared from the adjacent land, so that the ground could be cultivated more easily, farm animals kept safe and shelter from the wind and rain provided for livestock and crops.



Dry stone walls are often seen as unifying features of the landscapes where they are found. Throughout the UK you can see areas where the patchwork of field boundaries stretch up from the valley floors towards the poorer ground on the slopes.

Dry stone walls are built without mortar or cement, which allows the structure to settle naturally and resist frost damage. Walls provide valuable wildlife habitat for plants, animals and insects and act as wildlife corridors for species to move about safely. Dry stone walling is a sustainable practice, using locally sourced materials, very few mechanical tools and requiring limited maintenance.



If you would like more information please contact the Training & Education Co ordinator at the Dry Stone Walling Association address below.