

1: Ireland's Dry Stone Walls DTJ DESIGN | DTJ DESIGN

These stone walls are nothing odd or unusual for the Irish population, but visitors question about them a lot. Although Ireland's landscape is mostly green, you only have to dig a little way beneath its lush verdant carpet to discover that underneath the rolling greens lie a thick layer of hard, blue limestone.

History[edit] The Lion Gate of the Mycenae acropolis is dry stone. Some dry-stone wall constructions in north-west Europe have been dated back to the Neolithic Age. Some Cornish hedges are believed by the Guild of Cornish Hedgers to date from BC, [2] although there appears to be little dating evidence. In County Mayo , Ireland, an entire field system made from dry-stone walls, since covered in peat, have been carbon-dated to BC. The cyclopean walls of the acropolis of Mycenae have been dated to BC and those of Tiryns slightly earlier. In Belize , the Mayan ruins at Lubaantun illustrate use of dry stone construction in architecture of the 8th and 9th centuries AD. Location and terminology[edit] Terminology varies regionally. When used as field boundaries, dry stone structures often are known as dykes, particularly in Scotland. Dry stone walls are characteristic of upland areas of Britain and Ireland where rock outcrops naturally or large stones exist in quantity in the soil. They are especially abundant in the West of Ireland, particularly Connemara. They may also be found throughout the Mediterranean , including retaining walls used for terracing. Such constructions are common where large stones are plentiful for example, in The Burren or conditions are too harsh for hedges capable of retaining livestock to be grown as reliable field boundaries. Many thousands of miles of such walls exist, most of them centuries old. In the United States they are common in areas with rocky soils, such as New England , New York , New Jersey , and Pennsylvania and are a notable characteristic of the bluegrass region of central Kentucky as well as Virginia , where they are usually referred to as rock fences or stone fences, and the Napa Valley in north central California. The technique of construction was brought to America primarily by English and Scots-Irish immigrants. Mosaic embedded in a dry stone wall in Italian Switzerland Similar walls also are found in the Swiss-Italian border region, where they are often used to enclose the open space under large natural boulders or outcrops. Sometimes also the dry stone terracing is apparent, often combined with parts of stone masonry house foundations and shed walls that are held together by a clay-cum-needles[definition needed] "composite" mortar. They also employed this mode of construction for freestanding walls. Their ashlar type construction in Machu Picchu uses the classic Inca architectural style of polished dry-stone walls of regular shape. The Incas were masters of this technique, in which blocks of stone are cut to fit together tightly without mortar. Many junctions are so perfect that not even a knife fits between the stones. The structures have persisted in the high earthquake region because of the flexibility of the walls and that in their double wall architecture, the two portions of the walls incline into each other. Most older walls are constructed from stones and boulders cleared from the fields during preparation for agriculture [3] field stones but many also from stone quarried nearby. For modern walls, quarried stone is almost always used. The type of wall built will depend on the nature of the stones available. Construction work on dry stone. Illustration of the Valencian Museum of Ethnology One type of wall is called a "double" wall and is constructed by placing two rows of stones along the boundary to be walled. The foundation stones are ideally set into the ground so as to rest firmly on the subsoil. The rows are composed of large flattish stones, diminishing in size as the wall rises. Smaller stones may be used as chocks in areas where the natural stone shape is more rounded. The walls are built up to the desired height layer-by-layer course by course and, at intervals, large tie-stones or through stones are placed which span both faces of the wall and sometimes project. These have the effect of bonding what would otherwise be two thin walls leaning against each other, greatly increasing the strength of the wall. Diminishing the width of the wall as it gets higher, as traditionally done in Britain, also strengthens the wall considerably. The voids between the facing stones are carefully packed with smaller stones filling, hearting. The final layer on the top of the wall also consists of large stones, called capstones, coping stones or copes. As with the tie stones, the capstones span the entire width of the wall and prevent it breaking apart. In some areas, such as South Wales, there is a tradition of placing the coping stones on a final layer of flat stones slightly wider than the top of the wall proper coverbands. In addition to gates a wall may contain smaller purposely

built gaps for the passage or control of wildlife and livestock such as sheep. Single walls work best with large, flatter stones. Ideally, the largest stones are being placed at the bottom and the whole wall tapers toward the top. Sometimes a row of capstones completes the top of a wall, with the long rectangular side of each capstone perpendicular to the wall alignment. Galloway dyke on Fetlar, Shetland Islands, UK Galloway dykes consist of a base of double-wall construction or larger boulders with single-wall construction above. They appear to be rickety, with many holes, which deters livestock and people from attempting to cross them. These dykes are principally found in locations with exceptionally high winds, where a solid wall might be at risk of being unsettled by the buffeting. The porous nature of the wall significantly reduces wind force but takes greater skill to construct. They are also found in grazing areas where they are used to maximize the utility of the available stones where ploughing was not turning up ever more stones. Another variation is the "Cornish hedge" or Welsh clawdd, which is a stone-clad earth bank topped by turf, scrub, or trees and characterised by a strict inward-curved batter the slope of the "hedge". As with many other varieties of wall, the height is the same as the width of the base, and the top is half the base width. Different regions have made minor modifications to the general method of construction – sometimes because of limitations of building material available, but also to create a look that is distinctive for that area. Whichever method is used to build a dry stone wall, considerable skill is required. Correcting any mistakes invariably means disassembling down to the level of the error. Selection of the correct stone for every position in the wall makes an enormous difference to the lifetime of the finished product, and a skilled waller will take time making the selection. As with many older crafts, skilled wallers, today, are few in number. With the advent of modern wire fencing, fields can be fenced with much less time and expense using wire than using stone walls; however, the initial expense of building dykes is offset by their sturdiness and consequent long, low-maintenance lifetimes. As a result of the increasing appreciation of the landscape and heritage value of dry stone walls, wallers remain in demand, as do the walls themselves.

2: Find a Stone Wall Contractor – The Stone Trust

A unique history and 'how to' book on one of Ireland's most distinctive landscape features - the stone wall. The Irish countryside is a patchwork of over , miles of stone wall.

Very well illustrated with photos, drawings and diagrams, this is of real value as much to the professional as to the amateur stonemason. The wealth and variety of the Irish stone tradition is displayed as never before. A source of joy This book should be on the desk of every local authority architect, engineer and planner. One should not be distracted by the word Irish in a title. These are NOT field manuals for modern masonry construction using portland cement, steel reinforcing, assemblies and details now in widespread commercial use. Rather McAfee focuses on load bearing stone, dry laid or with lime mortar. Thorough knowledge of these "outdated" materials and techniques are of critical import in conserving and restoring old buildings. Some of the principles we admire in old stone walls and historical buildings are properly applicable to new construction. For those who are interested they also appear intensely practical, whether or not one is in a position to use the methods elucidated. The author dares to posit rarely a few aesthetic judgements, with which a reader might disagree or might find inconsistent with local project considerations. But even these opinions are valuable to anyone who strives to understand, or judge the qualities of, historical structures. The Irish countryside is a patchwork of over , miles of stone wall. We offer unbeatable prices, quick shipping times and a wide selection second to none. All items are from licensed Distributors. We do not deal with any Bootleg or Used items! Seller assumes all responsibility for this listing. Shipping and handling This item will ship to Germany, but the seller has not specified shipping options. Contact the seller- opens in a new window or tab and request a shipping method to your location. Shipping cost cannot be calculated. Please enter a valid ZIP Code. Illinois, United States Shipping to: Philippines, Brazil No additional import charges at delivery! This item will be shipped through the Global Shipping Program and includes international tracking. Learn more- opens in a new window or tab Change country: There are 1 items available. Please enter a number less than or equal to 1. Select a valid country. Please enter 5 or 9 numbers for the ZIP Code.

3: Irish dry stone walls – The Helpful Engineer

IRISH STONE WALLS, and its cohort STONE BUILDINGS by the same author and publisher, are truly outstanding. One should not be distracted by the word Irish in a title. I'm not an art historian, but expect the principles and techniques described apply to any traditional masonry construction with English or Irish (and to some extent any European).

Comments There is a young, lean man with a centuries-old face building a stone wall in front of a new house these days near Carrygerry Chapel. I pass him almost every day and admire the work. There is something quite exquisite and even exciting about stone walls and the men that build them. These craftsmen are working with grey chunks and flags of eternity building boundaries which will be still young when they are dead and gone. Stone walls last forever. The new generation of Irish stone walls is different to the walls I grew up and spent my adult lifetime among in Connemara and Roscommon. These are the stone walls of the New Ireland. The cut stones arrive on site in stout construction bags, the sand and gravel and cement likewise. It is a neat modern job from start to finish, and the new generation of stone workers work with quite amazing speed. Most of their walls are of the ornamental type with battlement style tops. They are straight as a die where they need to be, sweetly curved towards stone gateposts invariably fitted with black iron gates. They perfectly match the relatively huge new houses behind them. A neighbor, looking at one of these new houses recently, said dryly, "When I was a child we had small houses with no bathrooms and big families within. Nowadays we have big houses with far more bathrooms than children. The stones involved are near enough of uniform size. They are not at all like their ancestors marching up and down the mountains along the west coast in the Burren and Connemara and Kerry and Cork. You can readily see through these old "dry" ones where no plaster was used at all, just the powerful sleight of the hands of mountainy men who intuitively knew which one would fit as comfortably against its neighbor as an ass fits into a cart. And then they used the stones that were lying around the mountains irrespective of their shape or size. They were clearing the little fields at the same time as they were building their boundaries. And it was not just areas that had their own styles of building them. The individuality of men that are long dust is still indelibly etched forever across their home places. Near Oughterard, a farmer pointed me out a wall that had been built by his great grandfather. It was far taller than any others around the landscape, and the sun shone through it in a regular pattern that was certainly not haphazard; it had been designed into the structure for sure. Here in Clare the Moher and Doolin flagstones, and similar flagstones from adjoining regions, create totally different walls, the flags apparently growing out of the earth rather than lying atop it, their edges supporting each other snugly and strongly, like the planks of a clinker-built boat. And they were used too for the rooves of many of the old sheds and the tumbledown cottages that long ago crumbled under their weight. But the walls march on and on. I prefer to just look at what I see with awe and pleasure. Sometimes too much knowledge erodes the wonder of things. There is a roadside stone wall on the side of a hill on the twisting road up to the Cliffs of Moher as one approaches from the Lisdoonvarna direction. The builders of the wall incorporated existing outcrops and buttresses into it in a cunning way as they worked. There is one spot, high against the sky, where such an outcrop has the shape of a Madonna, but you only notice the resemblance in the late spring and summer because it is then that a natural bouquet of bright wild flowers form the Babe at her breast. Look out for it if you pass that way in these fleeting days of summer. There is a quite remarkable stone chapel on St. It featured for many years on one of our postage stamps because it was of the very early Christian and Celtic type which disappeared afterwards. It needed restoration about 25 years ago and I went out to cover the work. The department in charge of our ancient monuments at that time was called the Office of Public Works, and they had a permanent team of skilled traditional stone masons of the highest caliber whom I met on the island. They were all members of an extended family from South Roscommon, from around the Moore area. They were all quietly proud of their skill, and when they looked at their refurbished chapel they all wore the same faces as the young man now working down the road with his heavy chunks of eternity that will almost certainly outlast the dwelling before which the wall is being built. When I was in my teens I once met a pretty girl by contrived accident in Donegal and was in love for 48 hours. She was studying architecture in Glasgow and was fascinating on the

subject of the techniques used both in the Highlands of Scotland and in Ireland for building with stone. We were out beside Mullaghmore and we strolled by a beachside stone wall, all bleached by the winds, and saw a pair of flickering stoats hunting through it. And we exchanged a kiss or two leaning against that wall wearing its summer waistcoat of green glossy ivy and flashes of aromatic wild woodbine. Now I am silvered by the years, and I heard through her Donegal relatives years ago that she died in a road accident in Malaya about seven or eight years after we met. But that old wall is surely still there. The sun warming its back. The winds and the seas washing and scrubbing its eternal face. I must go back there sometime soon just to check it out.

4: 11 best Irish Stone walls images on Pinterest | Stone walls, Ireland and Irish roots

The ubiquitous stone walls or fences seen in Ireland are the object of much curiosity from visitors, particularly those built without mortar in the west and south.

By John Vivian Building stone walls is gratifying, and the product will last into future generations. SMITH A plumb line gets you started with even courses when building on uneven ground dashed line shows ground level. They are shown here shaded. The Pyramids, in Egypt, the Great Walls of China and Peru, temples most everywhere from Latin America to India, the castles of Europe, and the mile upon mile of stone walls running through our own New England countryside were all laid by hand and without a speck of mortar. They endure in part because rock is as near a definition of "forever" as exists. But more important is their main construction ingredient — gravity. In a properly built stone wall each rock sits square on the ones below it, and so long as gravity keeps pulling, that wall is going to stay put. Next, buy a pair of horsehide work gloves or a pair molded of rubber with grit imbedded into the palm and fingers. Finally, be sure you have the needed time and ambition. There is no such thing as a half-built stone wall. Continue Reading So a little decorative wall only 3 feet high, two feet wide, and 20 feet long weighs some 5 tons or more depending on the amount of air space built in and comprises a thousand or more average-size stones. If you have to fetch stones from somewhere, there is the loading and unloading in addition to the building to consider. That little foot wall can have a man lifting well over 20 tons of dead weight before it is finished. In any event, plan to take your time and use carts, ramps, barrows, and levers to move larger stones. And no point at all in busting a gusset doing it. Just keep your back straight and the stones close to your body. Quarrying by hand and dressing stone is devilishly hard work, and paying to have rock trucked any distance is expensive. Certainly, good stones are easier to build with and make a classier-looking wall. But if some or all of the stones you have are in the "not-so-good" category, go ahead and plan to use them anyway. Many will break naturally into stones with flat sides as well. Others may not come with good flat faces, but can be dressed quite easily. Hardest to build with are igneous stones found in fields or running water. Glacial action or gradual erosion in a stream will round even these very dense and hard rocks. Though nearly all rock has a "grain," or a tendency to split along a fairly flat plane, finding the grain in granite and the like is difficult, and splitting faces off small rocks takes more time and effort than it is worth. Most are relatively soft, and easily split or cut by nature or a quarrier into good building stone. But they also wear faster than other kinds of rock. Windborne particles will wear down sandstone in time, and limestone gradually gets eaten away by the natural acids in rainwater. A sandstone or limestone wall might not hold up for more than 10 or 12 thousand years! Marble is the traditional medium of sculptors, and much ancient Greek and Egyptian marble sculpture has withstood wind and rain for thousands of years. Another metamorphic rock, slate, was used for gravestones by the earliest settlers in America. Markers made from igneous rock have nearly worn flat. Sources of Stone Lacking a supply of stones on your own place and not wanting to buy them, you can look several places. Perhaps another landowner will let you haul off rocks from his walls or abandoned stone buildings. Rock ramps, cellars, and foundations left after an old house or barn has burned down provide one of the best "good" stone sources you can find. Often these old cellar holes are dangerous or an eyesore, and owners are glad to have part of the demolition or fill-in job done for free. Construction sites often provide excellent flat-sided rock picking, especially where new highways are dynamited through hilly country. Some streams, rivers, lakes, and seashores are good sources for frost-split or water-rounded stones. If there are a good many old stone buildings or foundations in your area, you may find abandoned quarries or gravel pits scattered throughout the countryside that were dug by the original stone builders. Ask around, or consult a U. Geological Survey topographical map. Abandoned and active quarries and gravel pits are shown on these detailed maps. You can tie one up on its square end and just roll the stones in. Used sensibly, the carts save much lifting, and you can run larger stones up planks to the wall top with one. However, it has many uses-pick, wedge, pry bar, and hoe. If you plan to do any trimming or dressing of stones, get a pair of safety goggles. Rock can splinter into razor-sharp fragments, and even a dull chunk in an eye can mean trouble. These come in a variety of widths and shapes, and are used mainly for scoring and

splitting both brick and stone. Used with a heavy crack hammer, this inch tool easily open seams and crevices in stone. It has two hammering faces that pen-nit you to drive the bar down into a seam and then drive it to the side to force the crack or seam apart. Hammers come in two types. The other, a Bush hammer, has a flat, toothed head for really getting a purchase on a piece of rock. It is for more delicate work and has a small pounding face and a long, thin chipping blade on the other side. If the wall is to run along your property line, be sure that the whole thing is within your boundaries, unless your neighbor is eager to share in the cost, construction, and upkeep of a shared wall. In the old days, New England farmers would patrol shared stone fences every spring, each replacing the smaller winter-dislodged stones on his own side, and joining forces on the big ones. First, lay out an outline the full length and width of the wall with cord looped to short sticks. For a curved wall you may want to lay out a thick rope or garden hose to describe a fair curve. That little maple sapling a few feet from the wall is going to grow. In time its roots will heave the rock, and the trunk may expand and push the wall aside. A low wall can be built right on the ground. In a few years the lowest stones will sink into the sod a bit and no one will know the difference. In most places where you find plenty of native rock, the topsoil layer will be shallow a foot or less deep, and removing it will be a minor chore, likely turning up an additional supply of rocks in the bargain. In some valley and lowland areas with deep, loamy topsoil a stone wall set just on the surface would gradually sink out of sight. Make sure the tops of the stakes are several inches higher than the planned wall. Next, tie your cord to the four stakes at wall-top height and stretch the cord as tight as you can. Every 6 to 10 feet, on both sides of the wall, hammer in more stakes. Make sure they are outside the wall area so string touches the inner-facing sides of each stake. You may tie or staple line to the stakes if building up or down grade or if the wind is bellying the upwind line on you. A good many wall builders, this writer included, have neglected to use the auxiliary stakes only to find that their supposedly straight wall ended up with a slight curve due to a prevailing wind blowing the guidelines. Now, attach the line level to the cord and adjust until all four sides and both ends are level. This will define the approximate plane of the top of your wall. For the most pleasing appearance, sturdiest construction, and most satisfaction from the work, the wall top should be flat and level from side to side, either following the lay of the land in the long dimension or remaining horizontal, following the grade in carefully graduated steps. Sides of the wall should be vertical, or in higher walls they should have a slight inward slope a slight batter on each side. Ends and comers should be square and vertical. Come fire, bail, or high water, it may be the one thing standing for your great-grandkids to remember you by. Remember that gravity pulls straight down: Unless the wall rests on a flat, horizontal, and level plane or sections rest on a succession of flat steps on hilly ground, gravity will slowly pull your wall downhill. So either level out the ground or dig footings with bottoms having a plane parallel to the guideline. Having worked mainly with odd-shaped stones the glaciers left in our cornfields, I pick the absolute worst stones for the bottom, the ones with not a single flat surface or with oddshaped protuberances. I find the least unreasonable side, then bury the stone in whatever shape hole is needed to get the best side exposed at the depth I want the bottom of the first course to run. The objective in all this is to give the wall a good, level base to rest on. Even if you must dig a series of notches in a hillside, your wall will be the better for it. In all below-grade work, keep stones several inches apart, filling the open space with smaller rocks. This will permit water to drain through easily. The footing course or courses should be laid to be a bit lower in the center-higher out at the edges. This slight "V" angle is often maintained throughout construction. Thus the outer walls of the structure lean in against themselves. Aboveground Building With the footing laid to ground level, lower the guidelines to what will be the top of the first aboveground course. This should be the average height of the thickest, heaviest rocks you have. No point in lifting them any higher than necessary. Do try to save the flattest rock with the most uniform thickness for the top. Now begin layering the wall. Keep the best flat face of the narrow dimensions of each stone facing out when possible. Be sure each stone is bedded solidly on the stones below it. If a stone wobbles, it is better to chip off a wobble knob or dig out a hole or make a joint in the rock below than try to shim it up with smaller rocks and wedges. If you do use smaller rocks to get the wobble out of a big stone, be sure they are wedged in tight and held in place by other large rocks. Keep the guidelines level, and continually sight along the side of the course, adjusting rock placement with level and yardstick to make sure all remain square. To be sure the sides are as vertical as

possible, or that they slope inward at the desired angle, hang a small pebble from a length of string. Put a bent wire on the other end and hang it from the guide line. Run the plumb bob along as you lay up wall.

5: On Dry-Stacked Stone Walls | A Trip to Ireland

In his fascinating book "Irish Stone Walls" Patrick McAfee describes three main types: Single stone walls common in Donegal and Down; Double stone walls common in the southwest; and combination walls which have a small double wall at the base on top of which a single wall is built. These appear to have been introduced to Galway by improving.

Wednesday, April 29, Read Travelling across rural Ireland from the east to the west, one thing that arouses curiosity among many first time visitors is the hundreds of miles of stone walls that meander across farmlands in all directions as far as one can see. These stone walls are nothing odd or unusual for the Irish population, but visitors question about them a lot. This famous blue limestone is found all over the country and it lies under more than half of the island. Ireland is mostly a rocky island composed of Carboniferous limestone formed about million years ago. At that time, Ireland was part of a shallow sea between two land masses near the equator. Shifting continents raised a part of seabed above the the sea level, which later became Ireland, and over hundreds of millions of years, the mud evolved into a tough, finely-grained limestone just below its surface. These rocks extracted from the earth became the most commonly used building material for the Irish population. From the Stone Age tombs on the Burren, to the Iron Age hill forts of Inishmore, to the battered castles and monasteries of the Middle Ages, these stones are everywhere. Particularly ubiquitous are the stone walls that criss-cross the country. The stones for these walls are usually unearthed from the field itself. The fields need to be cleared of the stones in order to be farmed, and since there is no easy way to get rid of the rocks the farmers use the material at hand to build low walls to delineate each others property. The walls are nothing more than boulders piled on top of each other without mortar. They are often quite low and not very stable because of which they need constant maintenance. The instability of the walls, however, work in their favor making them good barriers against livestock that are reared in the area. Animals who have learned from experience that they collapse rather easily keep themselves away from the walls. Photo credit One of the most beautiful places where you can see a vast network of stone walls is at Aran Islands. The Aran Islands are a group of three islands located at the mouth of Galway Bay, on the west coast of Ireland. The largest island is Inishmore also known as Aranmore. The middle and second-largest is Inishmaan and the smallest and most eastern is Inisheer. Once a series of barren rocky outcrops on the edge of the Atlantic, its inhabitants have over thousands of years, created life where there previously was none, making things grow out of the rocks by developing a unique farming technique where dirt dug from cracks in the rock are combined with composted seaweed. Today, the islands are impossibly green with low stone walls dividing the farming fields, segregating livestock, and keeping the thin layer of soil from blowing away. Stone house at Inisheer, Aran Islands.

6: The Stone Walls of Ireland | Amusing Planet

Irish dry stone walls. The sheer volume of stone walls in the West of Ireland is amazing. These simple but effective structures are used as field boundaries.

The wide fields and flat bogs of the Midlands give way at the river Shannon to the rich farm lands of east Co. Galway, but these farm lands are different. Where once the boundaries between the fields were ditches and hedgerows, now they become dry stone walls. The further you travel into Co. Galway, the smaller the fields become until you reach Connemara. Here the whole landscape becomes a patchwork of tiny plots of land with the dry stone walls the thread that binds them. It is the same all along the Western seaboard from Donegal in the north to Cork and Kerry in the south. For many visitors to Ireland, their abiding memory of the scenery is not the great sweeping seascapes or the ancient mountains shrouded in mist, but these tiny fields emerging from the stony land, surrounded by tens of thousands of miles of stone walls. They are silent witness to hundreds of years of Irish history and reminders to all of us of where we have come from. New farming system Many of the existing walls are not as old as you might think. Most were built after the great Famine of the s when the open system of farming, known as the Rundale system, was replaced and the land redistributed. Stone walls not only defined fields but also helped to clear them. Nonetheless the tradition of dry stone wall building is still very ancient. Mayo nearly four thousand years ago. Covering nearly five square miles some of the walls are over a mile long and about , tons of stone were used in their construction. However it is in Kerry along the Dingle Peninsula that you can see the most spectacular and beautiful example of these ancient walls. The Gallarus Oratory was built sometime between the 6th and 9th century and is the finest example of an early Christian Church in Ireland. It looks like an upturned boat and was built using a technique developed by Neolithic tomb builders - dry stone corbelling. Each stone is laid at an angle, slightly lower on the outside than the inside, so that the water runs off. Despite more than a thousand years of exposure to the Atlantic storms and without even a handful of mortar, the inside of the Church is bone dry and the structure is rock solid. In addition to the Gallarus Oratory there are literally hundreds of smaller beehive huts scattered around the Dingle Peninsula which were used by early Christian monks, and the tradition survives. At Brandon Creek only a few miles from Gallarus, where St. Though not as finely built as the Oratory, you can still see in its gables and walls the style and technique of the early church. More modern examples can be seen in the boundary wall of the Silent Valley Reservoir in Co. Down, which is twenty two miles long. It took eighteen years to build - and is made of locally cut granite, is eight feet tall and - as if that is not enough - it climbs over fifteen summits in the Mountains of Mourne. It must be one of the longest dry stone walls in the world, although it is not the tallest. That honour seems to go to a wall in the Memorial Park at Islandbridge in Dublin. The Park was laid out in the late s to a design by Sir Edward Lutyens to commemorate those Irish men who died in the Great War of The wall rises over 20 feet behind the Memorial Cross and was built by stonemasons brought from Connemara especially for the task. Three main types Looking at a dry stone wall it would seem to defy the laws of gravity. Usually only one or two stones thick, they are very sturdy and can rise to a considerable height. They are quick and easy to build, having no foundations, and can be built from local materials; they require little maintenance. The style may vary from county to county depending on local tradition and the material available. Single stone walls common in Donegal and Down; Double stone walls common in the southwest; and combination walls which have a small double wall at the base on top of which a single wall is built. These appear to have been introduced to Galway by improving landlords in the 19th century. All have their advantages and disadvantages: Single walls appear particularly unstable, so sheep are not inclined to jump them; double walls provide more shelter, and combination walls give a little of everything. The large rounded boulders of the Mourne Mountains make for good strong single stone walls whereas in Dingle double walls are made with the local flat sandstone. Patrick McAfee also says that "some dry stone walls deserve to be listed as national treasures. Perhaps it was their association with the Famine or a past when we were all that bit poorer, but there was a time, not too distant, when dry stone walls were not held in the high regard that they are now. Sean Fitzgerald, a dry stone wall builder from Ballydavid in Co. Kerry,

dates the change there to the arrival of an artist in the village of Dunquin in the early seventies. Instead of having the walls around her house built of breeze block, as was the then fashion, she wanted a traditional dry stone wall. Suddenly everyone realised what they had. Sean Fitzgerald is constantly busy now, building new walls not only on the Dingle Peninsula, but also as far away as the United States. Dry stone walls are not merely piles of rocks. They live and change with the season. Like a good bottle of wine they improve as they mature, becoming a home for all kinds of wild animals and birds. In the Winter they glow with lichens and mosses and in the Summer they come alive with fuchsia, montbretia and many other wild flowers. If they are the thread that links those small fields of Connemara to one another, then they are also the threads that link the people to the land. Patrick McAfee gives lessons in stone wall building and conservation. Larch Hill Kilcock Co.

7: dry stone walls | retaining walls | dry stone masonry contractor

Irish Memorial Stones: The Stone Walls of Ireland Find this Pin and more on Irish Stone walls by Teresa Monahan. Stone Fences stretching out in green Irish Countryside. Stone fences spanning across an Irish countryside-virtually untouched by modern influences.

Tuesday, July 19, Stone Walls and Famine Walls Easily over-looked by the locals of Ireland, yet strangely conspicuous and peculiar to the visitor, the stone walls of southwest Ireland divide the landscape into a quilted pattern of beautiful greens, browns and occasionally yellows. Tourists and visitors often inquire about these short, unstable, beautiful walls. One may initially propose the walls serve as a division of property. Perhaps, they serve as an organizational method for various types of livestock. However, the real reason for this magnificent display of stone walls across the Irish landscape is a practical and annoyingly obvious vindication one may be embarrassed of not thinking of immediately. The rocky soil in an area on the Island of Inishmore of the Aran Islands The soil in some parts of Ireland- the southwest, for example, is very rocky by nature. The soil needed to be cleared of all the stones in order for the land to be farmed. The stones were then used to make the walls we can now see today crawling along the hills and through the valleys of Ireland. The stones found in the ground were typically carboniferous limestone, especially in areas such as Galway, Clare and the Burren. Building these walls required no special skills beyond those acquired through the passing down of generations. No mortar is involved with building these walls. The larger stones are placed on the bottom and they become smaller once you get towards to top. Each stone is fitted as carefully as possible. The walls can easily fall down and often need to be repaired. The Burren While visiting the Burren, one may wonder about the solitary walls that creep up the surrounding hills appearing to be there for no reason at all. The truth about those particular walls is dismal and heavy spirited. During the infamous Potato Famine beginning in , those walls were built by starving and impoverished men working for a work scheme run by local churches and landlords who would pay in small amounts of food. The Irish are a proud people and would not receive any charity without working for it. While this was the main reason for the Famine walls, it was not the only reason. These walls also served the usual, practical purpose of ridding the local soil of the stones so the land there could be farmed. The stone walls of Ireland are a beautiful and extraordinary display of the hardworking mentality of the Irish people. They are also a breath-taking site there to remind both locals and visitors of the histories of the brilliant country in which they were built.

8: Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland

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By Angie Nelson One of the most distinct elements of the Irish landscape is the dry stone walls. When visiting the countryside of Ireland these walls are visible in many different regions of the country. They are sometimes seen in dense groups, dividing the land into many small fields. Other times these walls are seen traversing steep terrain, leaving one wondering how they were even built. From a design perspective these walls are fascinating. There are several different types of Irish dry stone walls and of course the history of the walls is just as interesting. Historically, the practice of building dry laid stone walls by hand dates way back and is not unique to just the Irish culture. In Ireland, many of the walls still standing today were built during the years of the Irish Famine, less than years ago. The walls were built to separate and protect crop fields as well as create separated fields for livestock grazing. A unique element of these walls is that they did not have gates. When livestock needed to be moved from one field to the next, the farmer would deconstruct part of the wall, move the animals through, and then rebuild the wall. This was possible because the walls were built without mortar. In fact, they were built without even a foundation. Often the stone used to build the wall came right from the field itself when the soil was cleared and prepared for planting. The single walls are thinner with just one layer of stacked stone. These walls look more precarious and let more wind through. The double walls are two stones thick so they are more stable and better protect the field, but are more time consuming to build. The final type, called combination, has a base that is a double wall and then a few feet up switches to a single wall. These different types of walls all have their advantages and are used in different regions of Ireland. However, there are also distinct stylistic differences in the exact way the rocks are stacked. Some walls are made of big blocky boulders, others are flat slabs of rock that are stacked horizontally, other stacked vertically, and still others seem to be stacked randomly and look like they might topple over if pushed. Either way they add a uniqueness to each wall when examined up close and one can come to appreciate the skill and patience it took to build these walls by hand. In many parts of the country the walls are still used, though now gates have been added. In just the last twenty years or so the walls have been recognized as an important cultural element. It is now becoming more common to see these walls appearing in communities and around homes as a design statement and nod to the tradition, both in Irish communities and around the world.

9: Irish Stone Walls and Stone Buildings

The new generation of Irish stone walls is different to the walls I grew up and spent my adult lifetime among in Connemara and Roscommon. These are the stone walls of the New Ireland.

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