

Ireland Letters of Support List

NO.	Supporting individual/org	Contact information	Region of Ireland	Category
1	Mulranny Stone Festival	Carol Loftus chloftus29@gmail.com	Connacht (Mayo)	Safeguarding activities
2	Seamus Caulfield	Belderrig Heritage Research Centre	Connacht (Mayo)	Safeguarder & supporter of the practice
3	Patrick McAfee	mcafee@eircom.net 0872-631872	Leinster (Dublin)	Retired bearer and safeguarder of the practice
4	Clíodhna Ní Lionain	Lydon33@gmail.com	Leinster (Wexford/Dublin)	Safeguarder of the practice
5	Burren Beo Volunteers – Áine Bird	Glebe House, Kinvara, County Galway. 091638096, volunteer@burrenbeo.com	Munster (Clare)	Safeguarding practitioners/Heritage Volunteers
6	Ken Curran	ken.curran@gmail.com 0872689419	Munster (Tipperary)	Bearer, Safeguarder of the practice
7	Ailbhe Gerrard Brookfield Farm	ailbhe@brookfield.farm	Munster	Bearer, Safeguarder of the practice
8	Sunny Wieler	sunnywieler@gmail.com +353876474355	Munster (Cork/Waterford)	Bearer, Safeguarder of the practice
9	Tom Little	tomlittlestonecarving@hotmail.com 087 9642373	Munster (Cork)	Safeguarder of the practice
10	John Lyness	lynessmechanics@gmail.com	Ulster (Antrim)	Safeguarder of the practice
11	Emma Kennedy	ecmkennedy10@gmail.com	Ulster (Donegal)	Safeguarder of the practice
12	John Digney	John Digney / Industrial Design jdigney59@gmail.com	Cleveland, Ohio	Safe guarder
13	Jason Barcoe	jasonbarcoe77@gmail.com	Leinster (Dublin)	Bearer, Safeguarder of the practice
14	Philip Guiney	philguiney@gmail.com	Leinster (Wicklow)	Bearer, Safeguarder of the practice
15	Grafton Architects	admin@graftonarchitects.ie	Leinster (Dublin)	Specifier, Supporter of the practice
16	Clare County Council	planoff@clarecoco.ie	Munster	Specifier, Supporter of the practice
17	Karl Kennedy	karlkennedy@live.ie	Leinster/Munster	Bearer & Safeguarder of the practice
18	Kilkenny County Council	info@kilkennycoco.ie	Leinster (Kilkenny)	Safeguarder & Supporter
19	Francis Coady	francoady@hotmail.com	Leinster (Carlow)	Bearer & Safeguarder
20	Séamus Boland Irish Rural Link	seamus@irishrurallink.ie	Leinster (Westmeath)	Specifier, Supporter of the practice



Mulranny
Co. Mayo
Ireland

29th June 2021

To whom it may concern

Mulranny Environmental Group fully supports the Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland's (DSWAI) application to have Ireland's Dry Stone Construction listed by UNESCO in their File of European Countries as significant 'Intangible' Cultural Heritage.

Dry Stone Walls are an important and integral part of Ireland's landscape. Mulranny Environmental Group hosts the Mulranny Stone Wall Festival which takes place annually in May www.mulrannystonewallfestival.ie

This festival has become an important part of the Mulranny community's drive to maintain the important stone wall heritage of the area. Under the direction of master stone masons, participants repair and rebuild gaps in the magnificent stone walls along the Great Western Greenway at Mulranny.

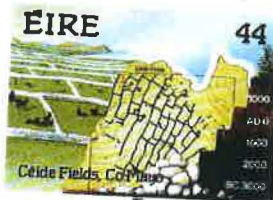
The festival includes an exciting programme of talks, demonstrations, workshops and local entertainment. Children are involved in the festival as they take part in stone art workshops at Essence of Mulranny Studio, where in 2018 they made beautiful stone mosaic fish that are now proudly displayed at the Old Irish Goat Centre, Mulranny. We also hold a children's Stone Totem Building competition at Mulranny Beach.

The festival has caught the imagination of both national and international tourists who have stopped on their journey along the Great Western Greenway to observe this ancient traditional craft and meet with the skilled stone masons and participants.

The Mulranny Stone Wall Festival is supported by the Heritage Council through Mayo County Council's heritage officer, Dr. Deirdre Cunningham.

Yours faithfully,

Carol Loftus
Event Manager
Mulranny Environmental Group



Belderrig Heritage Research Centre,
Belderrig,
Ballina,
Co. Mayo.
26 January, 2023.

Re: Art of Drystone Construction, Knowledge and Techniques.

To whom it concerns:

I very much welcome the proposed application as it would be difficult to find another country with an unbroken chain of drystone construction tradition extending back six millennia.

My direct involvement in studying drystone walling began in 1963 on the excavation of the almost six thousand year old Behy megalithic tomb in what is now known as Céide Fields. Both the two metre high outer revetment of the loose stone cairn and the ritual entrance court were constructed in drystone technique. In the immediate vicinity of the tomb were partially collapsed drystone field boundaries. My fieldwork with hundreds of students over many decades mapped over one hundred linear kilometres of collapsed drystone field boundaries in what came to be called Céide Fields. A dwelling area within the agricultural fields dated to the mid fourth millennium BC was also enclosed by drystone wall.

Many locations across North Mayo have similar early examples of drystone constructed walls in an agricultural context. At Belderrig the continuity can be seen where Bronze Age farmers have robbed the walls of their Neolithic ancestors to build new walls, in one case building onto the bog surface. In attempting to understand the function of the six thousand year old walls, the greatest insights come from the still living tradition of maintaining the walls. As an example, the absence of gaps in the walls can be readily understood when one has observed neighbours remove a few stones from the top of a wall, drive their animals over the lowered part and replace the stones removed.

The significance of ordinary but ancient drystone field boundaries can be seen in the artistic response in different media.

Artist Charles Rycraft has told the Céide Fields story on a postage stamp above.

Seamus Heaney, following a visit to Belderrig valley, observing the ancient and modern stone walls wrote in his poem Belderg:

A landscape fossilised,
Its stonewalled patternings
Repeated before our eyes
In the stone walls of Mayo.

Bill Whelan composed The Spirit of Mayo composition marking the opening of Céide Fields in 1993 and has acknowledged its influence on his composition of the music and dance world phenomenon

which is Riverdance. After naming Flatley, Butler, Anúna, Spillane and others from the 1993 concert he observes: 'It was remarkable that so many of the elements of that concert were to appear together again within a year for Riverdance'.

The simple stonewalls of Mayo were to figure even more deeply woven into the fabric of Irish cultural tradition as articulated by our most senior politicians. Within two weeks of visiting Céide Fields in July 1990, Taoiseach Charles Haughey had approached Lord Killanin seeking ideas which culminated in his announcing the Discovery programme to provide for the thorough investigation of Tara, Céide (Fields) and other sites. President Mary Robinson in her second address to the combined houses of the Oireachtas in 1995 on the theme 'Cherishing the Irish Diaspora' referenced the cultural significance of Céide Fields when she said:

'I think of projects like the Céide Fields in Mayo where the intriguing agricultural structures of settlers from thousands of years ago are being explored through scholarship and fieldwork'.

The surviving living tradition of drystone construction whether in agricultural or architectural context is worthy of recognition because of its cultural depth and how it can inform our understanding of the past. I consider it an honour to be asked to lend my voice to the application to have the Art of Drystone Construction, Knowledge and Techniques added to the UNESCO list and I wholeheartedly support the application.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Seamas Caulfield". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Professor Emeritus Seamas Caulfield, School of Archaeology, University College, Dublin.

Dry stone walls are a timeless, beautiful reality traversing lonely, windswept landscapes, still standing, often for centuries, their unknown builders long gone. Built from the most elemental of materials found nearly everywhere, unprocessed for the most part, taken and formed in to functional structures that delight the soul.

This is part of our cultural landscape, in many cases still doing the same job originally intended. Their various types and styles reflect their function, location and geology but above all else the skill and ingenuity put in to their construction. In the 19th century with mass emigration these same skills and walls were replicated in the New World.

Today there is an increased appreciation for these walls by the work of the Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland and the on-going work of the farming community and others. I very much support this and any further recognition and enhancement of the craft through education and training.

We still have so much, compared to many others, but it's all so vulnerable.

John Betjeman in his poem 'Ireland with Emily captures some of the spirit of this:

Stony seaboard, far and foreign,
Stony hills poured over space,
Stony outcrop of the Burren,
Stones in every fertile place,
Little fields with boulders dotted,
Grey-stone shoulders saffron-spotted,
Stone-walled cabins thatched with reeds,
Where a Stone Age people breeds
The last of Europe's stone age race

Patrick McAfee, stonemason and dry stone waller. Author of 'Irish Stone Walls'

Cabra,
Dublin 7,
Ireland.
31/01/23

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my support for the application to add Ireland to the UNESCO inscription for the Art of Drystone Construction, Knowledge, and Techniques. Ireland has a long history of drystone construction, stretching back almost six thousand years. Over that time, this practice has been expressed in a variety of different ways – from the Neolithic field walls and megalithic tombs of Ireland’s early farmers, to the stout walls of our later prehistoric hillforts, the medieval clachans of Skelig Michil, and the thousands of kilometres of field walls that still form part of our landscape today.

In my work as a field archaeologist, I have had the privilege to rediscover some of these ancient drystone structures, most recently as the site director of the excavation of the Dowth Hall passage tomb in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, Co. Meath. The knowledge and skills of drystone practitioners in Ireland today has been essential in helping me understand how these ancient structures were built, what happened to them over time, and how they can be conserved for the future. The inscription will help to ensure that these techniques and knowledge are not lost and continue to be a vibrant, living practice on our island.

My participation in several drystone walling workshops has also helped me to gain an appreciation of the skill of these craftspeople, both now and in the past, as well as providing an insight into how drystone walling not only creates structures but can create a connection with a place, with a community, and with the person working beside you. The longevity of this practice in Ireland, as well as its potential to help us understand our past while building in the present are the reasons why I am happy to support this application.

Kind regards



Dr Clíodhna Ní Lionáin



Medieval drystone souterrain inserted into the cairn of the Dowth Hall Passage Tomb.

(Photo reproduced with kind permission of Ken Williams)



burrenbeotrust
connecting people and place

Glebe House, Glebe Road
Kinvara, County Galway, Ireland
091 638096
info@burrenbeo.com
www.burrenbeo.com

18th May 2021

To whom it concerns,

I write to you to fully endorse the Dry Stone Walling Association of Ireland application to have Ireland listed by UNESCO in their file of European countries with a significant 'Intangible' Cultural Heritage of Dry Stone Wall Construction.

Burrenbeo Trust is a landscape charity based in the Burren in the West of Ireland. The Burren is renowned for its magnificent limestone pavements and rich heritage in which the iconic dry stone walls are embedded throughout. These walls are a constant reminder of the unique and historically important built landscape which surrounds us and gives us the Burren its unique identity.

Dry stone walls are constructed using an ancient building technique, which is unique to the geography of their origin – a skill which is still being used and practiced today in the Burren. Everywhere you look there are dry stone walls in the Burren but each one is different depending on its function, the local stone available and most importantly the craftsmanship of the person building it; leaving signatures of many generations before us strewn across the landscape. This magnificent craft has withstood the test of time for hundreds of years. In order to maintain this hugely significant part of the Burren's identity – it is important to be active with our conservation efforts.

These walls offer field boundaries for land, shelter for livestock and have huge significance for our farming communities – both practically and as a symbol of our farming heritage. Their presence also plays an important role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and promoting biodiversity within the Burren, providing habitats and corridors for a wide variety of species of plants, insects, birds and animals. Dry stone walling in the Burren is also an extremely sustainable practice, using locally sourced materials, very little mechanical tools and requiring limited maintenance.

As an organisation Burrenbeo Trust believes that dry stone walls deserve recognition and protection, something which this designation could assist.

Yours faithfully,

Áine Bird
Coordinator, Burrenbeo Trust

Patrons

Tom Arnold
David Bellamy
Olive Brinden
Gordon O'Aray
Michael Davoren
Julia Feeney
Mary Hawkes Green
Seamus Hiney
Michael Haulhan
Mary Angela Keane
Michael Longley
Ann Madden Le Brocqoy
Patrick McCarmack
Ann O'Connor Dunford
Michael Viney
Bishop William Walsh
Stephen Ward

Trust Secretary

Brianan Conford



EARTHSTONEIE
c/o Kenneth Curran
Templemore Road,
Cloughjordan,
County Tipperary,
Ireland.

Dry Stone Walling, Carving, Conservation, Consultancy, Design, Teaching

03/02/2023

The significance of Dry-Stone Construction in Ireland and its inscription on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

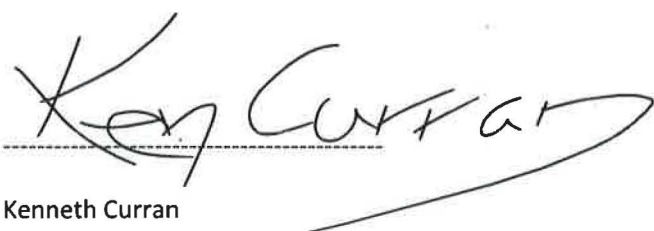


I am a member of the communities practicing dry stone technique in Ireland. I am also a teacher of the craft. I share my knowledge of the practice with others both as tutor through my own business EarthStone and as a volunteer with the DSWAI.

My first experience of the dry-stone technique was as a child helping to clear the fields of stone and make elementary field boundaries called 'ditches'. I changed my profession from an Archaeologist to dry stone mason in 2008. My abecedarian experience of the dry-stone technique was in a formal context at Kerry College, learning the basic principles of the practice of building with stone without the use of mortar. Subsequently, I have been self-taught and learnt informally, sometimes from '*wallers*' and master masons on Inis Oirr Island and through working and volunteering with dry stone builders from around the island of Ireland. I have been very fortunate to travel to many countries in the world to learn more and grow my connections within the global community who still practice this ancient craft.

Dry stone construction is part of my identity. It is part of my soul. It is also a key part of the intangible cultural heritage and identity of the Irish people. The products of the practice can be seen in every corner of the island and date back to the Irish Neolithic period. They are fashioned using stone in its natural form, to make strong durable and flexible structures that sit comfortably on the land. Embracing it in a way that resonates with all humanity. They are in-sync with the environment and create habitats for plants and animals. Expressions of the practice are as plentiful as there are people. So often, the individual's own identity can be seen in the way they build a dry-stone structure. Individuality of expression is something particularly evident in the products of the practice in Ireland.

I support the submission by the communities in Ireland to be added to the inscription for the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Dry Stone Construction. Ireland joining the inscription will raise awareness of the practice in a positive way, encouraging more participation and cooperation between countries, regions, communities, and individuals of any age or gender to share and celebrate the knowledge and practice as 'green craft' with a sustainability and resilience lasting long into the future. The practice uses locally sourced natural materials and I believe it is more relevant as a method of construction than ever before.


Kenneth Curran



Name: Ailbhe Gerrard

Profession: Farmer/ Agricultural Educator

Address/Region: Munster

Tel: +353 86 8551309

Email: ailbhe@brookfield.farm

Date: 15-02-2023

The significance of the Dry Stone Construction in Ireland and its inscription on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

To whom it may concern,

I am a farmer and enthusiastic dry stone waller and I support the inscription of the Irish practice of dry stone construction on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage elements.

I have been a member of the DSWAI for years and have subsequently gained knowledge and experience about dry stone walling.

Last summer I initiated a programme of workshops and gatherings around climate change, creativity and agriculture called Field Exchange. <https://www.brookfield.farm/pages/field-exchange-2022>

The most popular event was a workshop and training in Dry Stone Walling. We made a video featuring the Dry Stone Wall work here: <https://youtu.be/7hPIPyjQy2w>

Dry stone walling is a valuable and very precious technique as it allows the landscape to be supported in an environmentally-friendly manner and be protected from erosion and biodiversity loss.

It is also a practical and ecological way to rebuild hedges, field boundaries and other constructions around fields, along nature trails in our forests, around trees that require support, in sheds of protected animal and bird species as well as in anti-erosion works amongst others.

I support the knowledge and skills in this technique to carry out landscaping and general boundary work as well as more artistic projects. An important part of supporting stone walling is holding workshops so it can be taught by my local dry stone walling association.

Yours faithfully,



[signed]

Ailbhe Gerrard



Name: Sunny Wieler

Profession: Dry Stone Waller/ Artist

Address/Region: 25 Blenheim Heights, Waterford, Co, Waterford.
Munster, Ireland

Tel: +353 87 6474355

Email: sunnywieler@gmail.com

Date: 19/01/2023

The significance of the Dry Stone Construction in Ireland and its inscription on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

To whom it may concern,

I am a dry stone waller and artist and I support the inscription of the Irish practice of dry stone construction on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage elements.

Being an artist as well as a dry stone waller I have long been drawn to the unique aesthetics of dry stone walls. There is no other form of boundary construction that so encapsulates the geology of an area and unique construction methods and craftsmanship of the people who built the walls. This fascination I have with dry stonewalls has led me to travel much of the country documenting and reading the many different wall styles and landscapes.

Having learned the basic skills of dry stone construction as a teenager working as a farm hand, I quickly came to appreciate the process of removing stones from the ground to prepare the ground for plants and then using the same stones to build boundaries to protect the plants grown there.

In later years as an adult, this fascination I have with dry stonewalls has led me to participate in workshops and dry stone events so that I could further develop my skills and understanding of their construction. This passion for dry stone construction has influenced my own professional work where I often try to find ways to use these ancient dry stone techniques in new and artistic ways.

I strongly believe that dry stone construction throughout Ireland deserves recognition and protection ensuring they remain a part of Ireland's unique landscape and heritage into the future, something which I believe this designation will assist with.

Yours faithfully,

Sunny Wieler

SUPPORT FOR THE CRAFT OF DRY STONE CONSTRUCTION IN IRELAND AND ITS INSCRIPTION ON THE LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes"

DRY STONE WALLS are an intrinsic part of the Irish landscape. Many of these structures, such as Céide Fields, Creevykeel and Newgrange are thousands of years old and are among the oldest drystone structures in Europe. These examples along with early Christian sites such as Skellig Michael, Gallarus Oratory and Clonmacnoise are the stars of the dry stone construction world and are protected by the Irish State and some are UNESCO World Heritage Sites so their future is assured. For the thousands of miles of dry stonewalls, hedgerows and the countless and varied vernacular structures the future is not so secure.

Repositories for the Irish story, these dry stone structures contribute to give regions of the Irish landscape their diverse and unique identity. Built for utility, from stone and earth sourced close to hand, the enduring beauty of these structures comes from an attunement with materials and the natural environment. The craft of dry stone construction is a dialogue with place and landscape, using knowledge and skills handed down from generation to generation since time immemorial, to create structures as inevitable as the landscape they emerged from.

The inclusion of Ireland's tradition of Dry stone Construction on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage is a milestone for Ireland's dry stone tradition. It is a vote of confidence that affirms the work done by practitioners, individuals, communities and organisations in helping to preserve our dry stone structures.

The imperative for preserving and supporting our dry stone heritage is not just an aesthetic one. It's true significance goes much deeper. These structures are not static entities in the landscape but are part of rich ongoing living tapestry of interconnection between flora, fauna and people reflecting the identity and traditions particular to a place.

As a communal activity dry stone construction is a meeting ground for people from diverse backgrounds and cultures to build together, engage and exchange knowledge and experience; deepening understanding and connection. It is also a powerful educational tool to interface with other disciplines such as geology, ecology, structural engineering and local history. Ireland's dry stone walls, like its music, language and literature is part of the rich diversity that is the story of Europe.

I wholeheartedly support this application.

Tom Little,

17 February 2023

Ballymurphy Nth, Innishannon, Co Cork, Ireland

19 Sharman Way
Belfast BT9 5FU
County Antrim
1 February 2023

SUPPORT FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE DISTINCTIVE IRISH DRY STONE TRADITION IN THE UNESCO INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE LIST

Sir, Madam

My name is **John Lyness**, I am a Structural Engineer living in Belfast - I am also a Trustee of the Dry Stone Walling Association of Ireland interested in the construction and maintenance of Irish Dry Stone walls.

I am particularly interested in the continuity and maintenance of the Irish Dry Stone walling craft and the promotion of the practical use of Dry Stone structures. In my opinion much can be done to extend the practical use of Irish Dry Stone construction by the use of prototyping and model testing.

A large area of Ireland is covered by limestone – a layered/ tabular stone which is excellent material for Dry Stone Walling. Other Irish stone types such as sandstones, schists, shales etc are also easily worked to create Dry Stone Walls. In the North East of Ireland (Counties Antrim and Down), County Wicklow and some other areas, igneous rocks such as basalts and granites are found which are harder to work but which have generated their own very distinctive local Dry Stone Wall forms.

The traditional sourcing of stone was from field clearance, outcrops, rivers, coasts and small farm quarries. The stone types (limestone, sandstone, basalt etc) and the sources (quarried/angular, clearance/ rivers/ rounded etc) determined the distinctive local Irish Dry Stone Wall forms – such as Double Faced, Single Thickness, coursed, random etc. So that travelling across Ireland and observing the rural DS Walls, from the grazing lets to the upland areas – they are so distinctive as to allow the accurate identification of localities, geology and styles.

Irish Dry Stone construction is very ancient but following Irish agrarian changes most of the current rural walls are about two hundred years old – a testimony to their rural builders' sound construction. Also, at that time, Irish infrastructure (roads, canals, ports, railways) was also starting to expand.

Highway maintenance was originally based on the Irish County Grand Jury system which comprised local landowners – there were also military roads and post (or mail) roads leading to the ferry ports. This was gradually reorganised under the Irish Office of Public Works and City and County councils. The highway construction methods and improvements still relied heavily on Irish rural Dry Stone skills for building Retaining Walls, Culverts, boundaries etc. employing local skilled Dry Stone workers – perhaps in a seasonal employment pattern. In fact, Ireland contains some very notable Dry Stone constructions – for example the 36 km long granite DS Mourne Catchment Wall in County Down and the 6 m high limestone Antrim Coast Road Retaining Wall in County Antrim. So essential was the Dry Stone form of construction in 19th Century Ireland that the earliest Dry Stone Retaining Wall stability tests were organised by the Irish Office of Public Works in Dun Laoghaire.

Dry Stone construction and the maintenance of Dry Stone Walls remains very important and relevant today - to Irish agriculture (especially in upland areas), for the maintenance of smaller infrastructure elements (walls, drains, terracing) while also providing very typical Irish rural landscape features. At present the EU is sponsoring research into the effects of earthquakes and climate change on Dry Stone buildings, infrastructure elements and heritage structures. The outcomes will benefit the sustainability of Dry Stone forms including Irish rural DS Walls.

The maintenance of the existing Irish Dry Stone stock, the development of beneficial areas of infrastructural use such as sustainable drainage ponds, flood mitigation storage and new landscape/amenity design initiatives - will provide future opportunities for Irish DS craft workers and the further useful development of Irish Dry Stone construction in agriculture and its continuing application in infrastructure.

Yours sincerely, 

John Lyness PhD CEng CMath
Ulster University Reader Emeritus in Civil Engineering

Personal Submission – Letter of Support - Application to UNESCO for The Intangible Cultural Heritage of Dry-Stone Walling Ireland.

Emma Kennedy – Amateur Dry-Stone Waller & Stone Carver, History Graduate, Community Worker.

Emma Kennedy,
Ardara, Co. Donegal, Ireland.

20/01/2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I commenced attending Dry Stone Walling Workshops and Festivals in 2015, and my eyes were opened to the craft of dry-stone walling. Upon reflection, I realised this skilful craft has always inhabited such an important place in Irish culture, history and heritage.

The County Donegal landscape is rich in historical sites, many demonstrating the dry-stone walling craft and its significance in our built heritage – such as the stone forts of Grianan an Aileach, Doon Fort, The Monastery of St. Conall Cael on Iniskeel Island. I am currently involved as a member/volunteer with Donegal GAP Heritage and History Group in the repair of Doon Fort.

The above sites reflect the grandeur of dry-stone walling, but this craft is present in the every day. In my locality and growing up, dry stone walls were those that we tried to scale to get into a local abundant orchard (the dry stone walls stand high surrounding the former landlord's house), they surround a local graveyard – with the stones jutting out to make steps so you don't have to open the gate, the local stone-mason was held in reverent esteem; even as children we recognised his walling style and it was almost a status symbol within the parish to have a wall built by him. The walls act as boundaries throughout the county for farms and homesteads - the walls often climbing high into the rugged hilly terrain. Indeed, it was the dry-stone technique that would have been used in building some of our ancestral homes, such as my family homestead at Rubble, Co. Donegal where my great grandfather was raised. (Please see attached photos).

My family are involved in the knitwear trade, and the significance of dry-stone walling is also evident in another aspect of our cultural heritage – that of Aran Knitting. Stitches such as the Diamond and the Trellis are said to represent the dry-stone wall boundaries on the land.

I have attached a poem written by Francis Harvey for our dear family friend Nancy McHugh Yates (RIP). To me, this poem captures the beautiful simplicity of the place dry-stone walls hold in our everyday lives.



Emma Kennedy

THE MEASURE

for Nancy McHugh Yates

There's hardly a better way of doing
nothing than sitting on a Lough Eske wall
speckled with green and orange lichens and
overshadowed by foxgloves four feet tall.

Even better is to teach your children
this art of doing nothing at all
by making them sit at the lake beside
you on top of a lichened drystone wall.

And after all that they'll probably leave
you sitting alone on your Lough Eske wall
with nothing except foxgloves to show you
what they were like when they were four feet tall.

By Francis Harvey

(*'Making Space – New and Selected Poems'*, Francis Harvey, The Dedalus Press, 2001).

Walls of Grianan an Aileach:



Kiltiernan Graveyard:



Iniskeel Island Monastery:



My Kennedy Family Homestead, Rubble:



All photos belong to Emma Kennedy – use as part of this application and by UNESCO is permitted.

My first Dry Stone Wall Festival, Glencolmcille 2015 (with Elaine Phelan on right)



UNESCO APPLICATION AND SUPPORT

My Personal Story

Like many Irish Americans, I long to return to the land of my forefathers and try to imagine what life may have been like back then. Recently, I had the opportunity to visit Ireland, connect with relatives and learn a lot about my Irish history. Besides learning what life was like for my ancestors, my family and I rented a car and drove through much of the countryside. I was not expecting to be so moved by the beauty, magnitude and historical significance of the stone walls throughout the country. One doesn't have to travel far in Ireland to encounter the miles and miles of these structures. To sit and ponder why these exist, how they got built and the hardships associated with their construction is awe inspiring. To me, it became overwhelming and rather emotional to consider the families, men, women, and children who undoubtedly played a part placing each, and every one of these stones as a means of survival. They placed the walls around their plots and cultivated the land with hopes of building a life for their families. I found it interesting to consider the almost haphazard way the stones are placed and yet, these walls have stood for centuries, created boundaries, and protected crops from the great Atlantic winds. More importantly, these walls supported a community commitment to neighbors and family as they toiled alongside one another to create small plots on which to survive. During these challenging times of Covid, I often reflect on these walls as synonymous to life. We are currently experiencing isolation, separation from our loved ones, friends and community. However, this is not how we are designed. We need and depend on one another. The stones, much like community and family, are large and small, rugged and smooth, and hold the rest of the wall together.

I am an artist and for the past few years, this reflection on my heritage and that of the Irish people, have inspired the development of works that continue to foster a passion within to help in some way to protect and preserve the fingerprints of our past. This desire to make a difference to help conserve these stone walls and enrich my own understanding about them beyond just my artwork, drives me to get involved in some way. I hope to help in the education, knowledge sharing and collective advocacy for the conservation and preservation of stone walls throughout Ireland.

As I continue to study and learn about the uniqueness of the stone walls and the benefits associated with the natural materials, I discover more about the subtlety and intricacy of these structures and it's really quite fascinating. The impact on the environment and the contribution they provide as stand-alone ecosystems with a natural, inherent connection to the earth, not only provides shelter for insects, rodents and small nesting birds, but also provides the perfect environment for lichen, moss, flora and a plethora of fragile and delicate vegetation. These walls are not just part of the landscape, they are the fibers of life woven from the earth.

Please accept this correspondence and the attached images as support for Ireland's application to UNESCO for The Intangible Cultural Heritage of Dry Stone Walling.

All of the images included are of original artwork and I am the owner and creator of said works. Please be advised that I am granting the Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland (DSWAI) and

UNESCO the limited rights to reproduce, print, publish and/or digitally distribute these images
exempt of copyright infringement, for the purpose of supporting Ireland's application to
UNESCO for The Intangible Cultural Heritage of Dry Stone Walling.

With Kindest Regard,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Digney', written in a cursive style.

John Digney / Industrial Design
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440-387-7701
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E.MAIL Jasonbarcoe77@G.MAIL.COM

DATE 12/2/23

To Whom it may concern

I am a dry stone waller and I support the inscription of the Irish practice of dry stone construction on the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage elements.

I am a 3rd generation stone waller and practice the craft as a live I have been involved in this for the last 30 years learning from my Father. I am also a member of the dry stone wall association of Ireland. As a member I attend work shops as an instructor and help teaching the craft of walling.

YOURS FAITHFULLY
Jason Barcoe

February 4th 2023....

The Wilderness...

Lough Dan

Co Wicklow

IRELAND...

To Whom it May Concern...

I am a dry stone waller and I support the inscription of the Irish Practice of dry stone construction on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage elements...

I am 71 years of age, originally from a city background, and have been actively practising the art and craft of drystone walling for over thirty years...

My initial interest and practice of drystone work came about as a result of my moving to a house in the Wicklow Mountains, a place where there is extensive drystone walling throughout the landscape...

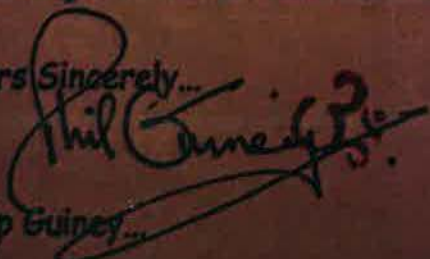
I began by rebuilding the walls around the property where I was living, and found that almost immediately I sensed a connection with the stones. I found it deeply satisfying to connect with the existing work of those who had gone before me, creating wonderful walls throughout the length and breadth of the Wicklow mountains...

In my experience drystone walling is an essential part of our island landscape, and I feel very strongly the privilege of being given the opportunity to carry out such work myself. It gives me a very special connection to the environment in which I live...

Being entirely self-taught it has been very satisfying to join the community of the Dry Stone Walling Association of Ireland, and to be given the opportunity to pass on my knowledge and skills through working as an instructor at drystone walling workshops...

I have been involved in the setting-up of a home for our future workshops here in the mountains, a place where it is hoped we will get the opportunity to pass on our knowledge of the art and craft of drystone walling here on the island of Ireland...

Yours Sincerely...



Philip Guiney...

Names : Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara

Profession: Architects

Address/Region: 12 – 14 College Green, Dublin, Ireland

Tel: +353 016713365

Email: admin@grafonarchitects.ie

Date: 08/02/2023

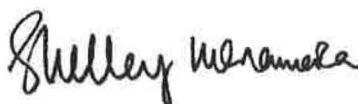
The significance of the Dry Stone Construction in Ireland and its inscription on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

To whom it may concern,

As practicing architects and co-founders of Grafton Architects, Dublin Ireland and professors in the Università della Svizzera italiana, Accademia di architettura , Mendrisio , Switzerland , we wish to add our names to the support the inscription of the Irish practice of dry stone construction on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage elements.

The construction craft of dry stone is an incredibly vital part of our national heritage, transforming stone into a weave of human expression that is structurally significant. Each wall is a unique example of the historic and enduring skill, where the natural resource of local stone is re-used to enclose, define and modify the impact of wind. Each wall is a functioning enclosure, as well as being a cultural artifact.

Yours sincerely,



Yvonne Farrell

and

Shelley McNamara



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

2nd June 2021

To Whom it may Concern

Re Dry Stone Construction

On behalf of Clare County Council I wish to support the Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland application to have Dry Stone Construction listed as significant Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. Clare County Council recognise the unique importance of Ireland's heritage of dry stone construction within the Irish landscape, as part of the built heritage infrastructure and supports the continuing tradition of the craft of Irish dry stone construction. Clare County Council are regularly involved with commissioning, recommending and maintaining dry stone walls and other structures, and wish to join in contributing to Ireland's submission for inclusion as Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Clare County Council wish to support the stone wall builders in county Clare particularly, who take a special pride in their creations. There is a very special heritage and history of dry stone wall construction in County Clare, particularly in both limestone and Liscannor slate. The stone walls today transverse the landscape and are very important to the organisation of farming in Clare.

The dry stone walls in the Burren are extensive and are a prominent part of the Burren landscape and visitor interest. The stone wall land boundary in the Burren date from the Neolithic and tell the story of reverse transhumance and pastoralist in this very special place.

The use and reuse of the stone materials in the Burren is particularly note worthy along with the additions for example of cross walls, animal shelters, sheep passes and Booley huts integrated into the walls, testify to the ingenuity of the generations. The mound walls are evidence of an earlier generation and the first farmers in the Burren. The great stone forts and the vast number of ring forts tell us much about our ancestors. The significance of the hill top cairns, ancient tombs, parish boundary walls, estate walls, famine relief walls among many other structures all serve to remind and interpret our history from the

An Roinn Pleanála
An Stiúthóireacht Forbairt Gheilleagrach
Áras Contae an Chláir, Bóthar Nua, Inis, Co. an Chláir, V95 DXP2

Planning Department
Economic Development Directorate
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare, V95 DXP2



Neolithic through to the Bronze and Iron Age, to the Medieval and to Modern times. While the many types and individual farmer and craft person styles have their own story and a witness to the proud display of ownership. The walls themselves with their rock fossils are home to many and varied flora and wildlife and are significant habitats in their own right.

It most heartening that this great tradition of dry stone walling continues today and leaves its mark for future generations.

Yours Sincerely



Congella McGuire
Heritage Officer
Planning Department

Karl Kennedy
Stone Cottage,
Tir na Hillane,
Castletownbere,
Co. Cork

15/02/2023

Hi,

I am Karl Kennedy and I am working as a stonemason now. I would consider myself a latecomer to the stone world. I had originally served an apprenticeship as a bricklayer in the Guinness brewery. When I completed my apprenticeship the building industry in Ireland was going through a bad time and there was not much work to be had. After a couple of lean years I got a job in another sector and stayed there for almost 24 years. When that job came to an end I had the chance to do something different and I looked into the possibility of doing something with stone. I have never looked back!

I enrolled in a 6 week course about stonescaping and was lucky enough to get to learn from an absolute master in the trade, Pat McAfee. I loved every moment of the course. I got to learn the basic skills of setting out and building various style of dry stone wall. Pat also spent some time telling us the history of stone building in Ireland which can be traced back thousands of years. At the end of the course Pat suggested to us if anyone would like to learn more we could go to the Feile na gCloch (Festival of Stone), held on the Aran Islands off the West coast of Ireland. The following September I made my way to the island for the festival and got thoroughly immersed in the world of dry stone building.

I met a lot of incredibly talented people there, from all around Ireland and beyond. It really opened my eyes to the staggering history of stone building in Ireland. The islands themselves are reasonably small but each Island has several hundred kilometres of walls built there, some standing for hundreds of years. An old aerial photograph of the island shows a virtual honeycomb of fields surrounded by these incredible walls. I learned about how the inhabitants had to clear the land of stone in order to create fields for growing crops and keeping livestock. The walls also served another purpose, being on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, the islands were exposed to the severe weather conditions that can sweep in from the sea. The walls provided shelter for grazing animals and for the crops growing there. The walls also helped to slow the sea breeze as it made its way inland.

Having met so many people I on the island, I began to hear about other festivals around Ireland and I started to attend those events. I soon realised that there is a thriving community in stonework in Ireland and there is a great camaraderie involved when everyone reunites for the festivals wherever they may be taking place. This has now progressed to international events. I have been lucky enough to attend festivals in Scotland, Majorca and Italy in the last few years. Having been to these places I can really feel the sense of community amongst stone workers of all nationalities.

Having seen for myself the amount of truly skilled and artistic crafts people working with stone in Ireland and having learnt so much about the history and benefits to the environment of the dry stone walls in Ireland I have no hesitation in expressing my support for the Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland in their application to have Dry stone building in Ireland included on the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage programme.

I have been a member of the DSWAI for quite a number of years now and have been involved at various times as a Board member and officer of the Association.

Karl Kennedy



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh

Halla an Chontae Sraid Eoin Cill Chainnigh
R95 A39T

Pobail agus Áiteanna Inbhuanaithe a Chruthú

Kilkenny County Council

County Hall John Street Kilkenny
R95 A39T

Creating Sustainable Communities and Places



16th February 2023

Dear Sir /Madam

I wish to express my support for Dry Stone Construction in Ireland and its inscription on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Kilkenny contains an abundance of limestone, with structures dating from prehistoric, early medieval and post medieval era dotted around the county. Stone walls are dynamic and valuable resource in the landscape of County Kilkenny, with many holy wells and small vernacular homesteads surrounded by dry stone walls, while extensive field systems are also present.

I fully support the Dry-Stone Construction in Ireland and its inscription on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Regards,

Francis Coady
Architectural Conservation Officer

Rathanna,

Borris,

Co. Carlow

16th February 2023

Dear Sir / Madam

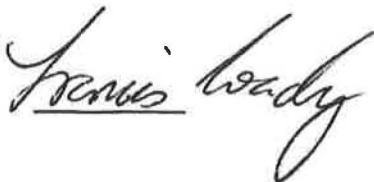
Having grown up in the shadows of Mount Leinster and the Blackstairs mountain range, which separates counties Carlow and Wexford, in Ireland, I am familiar with the vast array of dry-stone walls in the area. Here, random rubble uncoursed granite dry stone walls are an integral part of the landscape, while the memories of the builders are intertwined with the land. Field systems defined by these dry-stone walls form a lacework in the landscape, and are testament to the form of "meitheal" that existed in a different era. "Meitheal" was the coming together of families, communities and neighbours to deliver a body of work, and while this still happens today, it is on much lesser scale.

My love of dry-stone walls stems from my time as child rebuilding breaches in these walls or removing stone from the fields and depositing them in the many consumption walls. Occasionally, dark brown heavy-set bottles were uncovered, a remnant of an earlier "meitheal", where builders of dry-stone walls would stop to drink tea and eat sandwiches together. These too are memories from my childhood, the bottle replaced with a flask of tea, a short break to straighten the posture and discuss the topics of the day, or what stone will go where.

These walls still stand, providing shelter for man and beast, and providing a rich breeding ground for lichen, they are not only significant in a physical sense but also ingrained in our cultural identity.

I support the Dry-Stone Construction in Ireland being listed by UNESCO as a significant "Intangible" Cultural Heritage.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Francis Coady". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "Regards," text.

Francis Coady



Irish Rural Link
Nasc Tuaithe na hÉireann

A VOICE FOR RURAL IRELAND

13th February 2023

Re: The significance of the Dry Stone Construction in Ireland and its inscription on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of Irish Rural link, I wish to express my support for the inscription of the Irish practice of Dry Stone Construction on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage elements.

Irish Rural Link (IRL) represents the interests of locally based rural groups in disadvantaged and marginalised rural areas by highlighting problems, advocating appropriate policies, sharing experiences and examples of good practice. It has a membership of over 600 rural community groups dedicated to sustainable rural development and represents rural communities at a national and international level.

IRL recently engaged with the Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland as part of an Erasmus+ project - [NICHE](#) – where the practice of dry stone construction and the Association featured as a case study on Intangible Heritage Culture in Ireland. It helped to highlight the importance of this practice in Ireland's heritage.

The practice of dry stone construction has been a long tradition and feature of Irish agricultural and rural landscape. It is a very valuable and precious technique as it allows the landscape to be supported in an environmentally-friendly manner and be protected from erosion and biodiversity loss.

IRL believe inscription of dry stone construction with UNESCO would help to protect this long standing traditional practice and also protect the wider built heritage sector. As this practice is also a practical and ecological way to rebuild hedges, field boundaries and other constructions around fields, along nature trails in our forests, around trees that require support, in sheds of protected animal and bird species as well as in anti-erosion works amongst others, it will help to address many of the challenges on biodiversity loss and climate change.



Moate Business Park, Clara Road, Moate, Co. Westmeath

T: (090) 6482744/45 **F:** (090) 6481682 **E:** info@irishrurallink.ie **W:** www.irishrurallink.ie

IRL is core funded by the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development through Pobal.

Inscription with UNESCO would help to raise more awareness of this traditional practice and gain more support in passing on the practice to others. We would also see it as a valuable skill which could be learned and practiced among younger people; getting better recognition than is currently the case among national training agencies and local education and training boards. It is also a way to create much needed jobs in rural areas.

I sincerely hope that Ireland is successful in its application to UNESCO on this valuable Intangible Cultural Heritage technique.

Yours Sincerely,



Seamus Boland
CEO Irish Rural Link
seamus@irishrurallink.ie
00353906482744
00353862491153